

Regional Oral History Office  
The Bancroft Library

University of California  
Berkeley, California

George S. Livermore

ARCHITECT GEORGE LIVERMORE REMINISCES ABOUT THE PIONEERING  
LIVERMORE FAMILY: 1850-1999

With an Introduction by  
Putnam Livermore

Interviews conducted by  
Caroline C. Crawford  
in 1996 and 1997

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Introduction by Putnam Livermore, brother.

Interviewed 1996-1997 by Caroline Crawford for the Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.



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## PREFACE by George Livermore

There is a thread of optimism, vision, and industriousness that characterized the sturdy Livermore Yankee pioneers.

The early history of our branch of the Livermore family in America began in 1634 in Ipswich, England, when John Livermore, the first Livermore pioneer in America, migrated to the Massachusetts Bay Colony. His direct descendant, Elijah, who fought in the Revolution, founded Livermore, Maine, in 1779, and built the first sawmill and grist mill in what was then forest wilderness.

In 1850 Horatio Gates Livermore went West to make his fortune in the "Gold Rush" of 1849 and 1850. The following excerpts of his letters show his spirit:

To Mrs. H.G. Livermore, No. 8 Allston St.,  
Boston, Mass.--May 24th, 1850: My Dear Wife, I  
have arrived at Fort Kearny, about 300 miles  
from St. Joseph. We drive twelve hours per day,  
and with feeding morning and evening, harnessing  
and cleaning the horses I have enough to do ...  
I am in good health and spirits ... The train I  
belong to stops here only a few minutes, and of  
course I must continue with them ... Give my  
love to all. Take care of the boys and wish me  
good fortune. Yours in haste, Horatio

\* \* \* \* \*

Fort Laramie--Sunday, June 9th, 1850: We are  
called at about three o'clock or so in the  
morning to put out our horses and get our  
breakfast and then we start at about six o'clock  
and drive slowly along till about noon when we  
stop two hours, then move along till near night,  
and then look out a good camp ground, drive our  
teams in a circle and picket out our horses,  
prepare supper, light camp fire, set the watch,  
and retire to sleep in our waggons or tents, and  
so we sleep ... But all the way is a moving  
cavalcade. I can compare it to nothing I have  
seen before, unless it is a Fourth of July  
procession.

\* \* \* \* \*

Sacramento City--Nov. 1850: 'Tis truly a delightful country in climate, soil and scenery. You descend from the snowy summits through succession after succession of still descending hills, every mile of which is clothed with a most majestic forest, many trees being giants in size. Then come the wider and more level slopes covered with oaks like a cultivated park, interspersed by the most pleasant and green meadows. At last you come to the wide plain of the Sacramento Valley, a verdant carpet interlaced and embroidered with lines of still greener groves ... It has truly the best promise of any land on earth. I doubt not that I have found my home at last. What with Indians, cholera and scarcity of food, I have seen about the worst scenes of war, pestilence and famine, but never had any disquiet for myself, when I saw the fresh mounds piled up on the roadside, I might almost say in one interminable row. I do not regret the overland journey. I have seen the midland portion of our country. I regret not the hardships and cost the sight has required, nor the labour--but such labour--I would not have thought I could have endured it. Think of my walking day after day thirty miles. I got through, however, with six horses, their harness, waggon, tent, cooking utensils, camp equipage and all the thousand et ceteras of housekeeping in the open field. But thousands and thousands that started out with handsome outfits lost everything and came in with only a few tattered clothes on their backs, while I started with three [horses] and have now eight, including two I left at Salt Lake and which will be sold for me probably at a high rate in the spring.

\* \* \* \* \*

Sacramento City--December 11, 1850: So be a little patient; you shall see some of the gold yet ... Besides I have my health. Almost everybody is more or less sick on coming here, and thousands I have seen buried by the roadsides hither.

\* \* \* \* \*

Big Bar, Middle Fork, American River--October 11, 1851: I have been here but six months and am sure my interests would sell for one thousand doll's, but I came here bare handed and had no advantage above an Irish labourer.

\* \* \* \* \*

Big Bar, Middle Fork, American River--January 16th, 1852--To his son Horatio P. Livermore, still in Boston: My Dear Son, So don't despair, Horatio, but your children a hundred years hence may say, with the song, 'My grandfather was a great man.'

\* \* \* \* \*

Fords Bar, Georgetown--May 23, 1853--To his son, Chas. E. Livermore still in Boston: My Dear Son, So my dear little family must be with me here ... You must understand that this country is worth something more than gold that is in it.

\* \* \* \* \*

What followed is a story not unique in Western history. The title of a recent book about the Gold Rush days in California, Everything Seemed Possible, characterizes the energy which drove a whole wave of these pioneers. However, if this spirit was shared by thousands then and was not unusual, it is unusual that for a period stretching from then for almost one hundred and fifty years--from 1850 to 1998--a family of pioneering men and women has been actively involved, and still is, in land and natural resources: mining, logging, farming, viticulture, and building all the supporting structures such as dams, canals, and lumber mills. More recently, it has provided leaders in the movement to conserve, renew, and preserve land and natural resources. It has also been continuously active, starting with "H.G.'s" election as the first state senator from El Dorado County, and still is, in politics and government, as well as other civic affairs such as church work, social service, women's suffrage, and other activities of the time.

Our California Livermore family is not related to the Livermores of Livermore Valley, whose progenitor arrived in San Francisco Bay from England in 1836.

We have been a family of explorers and risk-takers and have enjoyed reading, learning, envisioning the future, and fostering progress. My father, Norman B. Livermore, carried on this tradition of "starting things" and "building things." He explored in the Sierra

Nevada mountains for sites for hydroelectric dams which later became part of the Pacific Gas & Electric system, started a heavy machinery company, and later combined several gravel companies to start a new company, Pacific Coast Aggregates. He spent most of 1923 exploring the Ngorongoro Crater area in Tanzanyika (now Tanzania). When he asked my brother Put, after he came back from World War II, what he wanted to be and Put said a lawyer, he said, "What do you want to be a lawyer for? They don't build things."

A momentous occurrence for our California branch of the Livermore family was the arrival in 1909 from Texas of my mother, Caroline Sealy, and her marriage to Norman B. Livermore. The Sealy family were also pioneers. Two brothers, George and John Sealy, arrived in the 1840s in Galveston, Texas, to get in on the cotton boom and helped start the first bank, the first railroad, and many other enterprises in southern Texas. George Sealy's and H.P. Livermore's wives were both very progressive and sent their daughters, Caroline Sealy and Beth Livermore, to Vassar College.

The Livermore and Sealy women were very public-spirited. Caroline spent her early married years in church work and was the first woman to serve on the governing ("presiding") committee of the Episcopal Church of California. She spent the last forty years of her life starting and developing conservation projects in Marin. She used to quote the old saying, "If you never start 'til you know the way, you'll never stir 'til Judgment Day." Beth was a tireless worker for underprivileged children and for better pay and working conditions for employees.

My four brothers and I have followed the examples of the early builder, pioneer Livermores and our mother Caroline. Norman was in the timber business and Resource Secretary of California in Governor Reagan's cabinet. John is an exploration geologist who found the Carlin gold mine in Nevada. Robert was in farming in the California Central Valley where H.G.'s son H.P. Livermore had large farms. Put is a natural resource lawyer and active in politics, and I am an architect.

With thirteen grandchildren of Norman B. and Caroline S. Livermore living mostly in California, three surviving brothers living in California and one in Reno, Nevada, close by, and with our Montesol ranch at Calistoga, which has been our family home since 1880, to unify us, we have been a close-knit family.

We are grateful for the examples of steadfastness we have had from our English forbears in New England and the warmth and humor from our Irish ancestry in Texas. We are also grateful for the struggles borne by H.G. Livermore and his decision to move our family into the wonderful American West.

George Livermore

October 1999

## INTRODUCTION by Putnam Livermore

I have been asked to write an introduction to the oral history being done by my brother George, who is our family historian and archivist, for our branch of the California Livermore family. It has been completed by Ms. Caroline Crawford of the Regional Oral History Office of The Bancroft Library at the University of California at Berkeley. It is appropriate that George has done this because he has, for many years, collected the originals of our family diaries, letters, photographs, and other documents.

George was born on March 18, 1914, in San Francisco, the second oldest of five brothers. He has always had a great interest in literary, historical, and cultural matters. Our neighborhood on Russian Hill was a "Bohemian" center of writers and painters, including Ina Coolbrith, California's first poet laureate, and Burgess Gelett, the writer, Willis Polk and Addison Mizner, the architects, Maynard Dixon and Virgil Williams, the painters, "Annie" Laurie, a very well known and loved columnist for the San Francisco Examiner, and Laura Ingalls Wilder, who wrote Little House on the Prairie. The first organizational meetings of the San Francisco Opera were held on Russian Hill Place, and there were plays in some of the homes on the Hill in which George performed with other neighborhood children, including future movie stars Olivia de Haviland and Joan Fontaine. As a teenager, he attended the San Francisco Opera, and met many of the opera stars.

He was, and still is, a person of tremendous physical strength. Someone once said, "He is as strong as an ox." He is an outstanding horseman and was the captain of the Gymkhana team when he was at the Thacher School, a preparatory school in the Ojai Valley. This sport involved races and other contests on horseback.

Our father and mother encouraged him in his cultural interests. My father used to tell him that someday he should attend the "Beaux Arts." George remembered hearing this word as a child when it meant nothing to him. He said it sounded like "Bozar" and had no idea what it meant. He went to Stanford during the years 1932 to 1936 and then went to Yale Architectural School where he received a Bachelor of Architecture degree in 1940. In 1934 he worked his way across the Atlantic on an old government freighter as a "work-a-way," receiving no pay and living in the boiler room. Upon his arrival in Europe, he commenced a three-month, mostly walking, tour of Europe as a next step in his architectural career. In 1946 he joined the architectural firm of Arthur Brown, Jr., who designed the San Francisco City Hall, Opera House, and War Memorial, the Supreme Court building in Washington, D.C., and the administration building (Sproul Hall) at UC Berkeley, among many other famous buildings.

He was the first among us brothers to enter the service in World War II, being inducted into the United States Army in 1940 and was sent to New Caledonia (Noumea), where he stayed for three and one half years working on General MacArthur's staff and doing other assignments. While in the service, George wrote a reminiscence of our family ranch "Montesol," on Mt. St. Helena, describing memories of its sounds, sights, and scents which was based on his letters home and literary works of members of the armed forces.

Upon George's return from the war in 1944, he married Janet Clifton, to whom he'd become engaged while in the service. They had four children: Richard, Tom, Beth, and Bill. In 1953 George started his own architectural firm, concentrating on building residences, churches, and church-related structures and restoring and remodeling buildings. He was also very active in civic activities. He was a trustee of Grace Cathedral Episcopal Church in San Francisco, president of the San Francisco Civic Light Opera, a member of the board of the National Council of Churches from 1966 to 1970, and a delegate to three annual national Episcopalian Conventions, and a trustee of seven schools. His professional and civic accomplishments were recognized when he was chosen by Time-Life magazine in 1953 as one of the "one hundred newsmakers" under forty in the San Francisco Bay Area.

From 1953 to the present George has been increasingly engaged in restoring structures, either for clients or by buying and restoring them for his own account. This activity led to his being chosen to restore the eighteenth-century houses facing Lafayette Square, adjacent to the White House. The restoration of these residences, beginning with Blair House directly across from the White House, and continuing around the block to Decatur House across from the Hay-Adams Hotel, was part of the project commenced by President Kennedy to construct a new Executive Office Building.

He is today, at eighty-five, still actively at work in his architectural profession and is frequently called on as a consultant by writers on San Francisco and California history and architecture.

George has followed in the footsteps of our pioneer ancestors who were "builders" and community leaders and is one of San Francisco's best-loved citizens.

Putnam Livermore

San Francisco, California  
September 1999

## INTERVIEW HISTORY--George Livermore

The oral history of four generations of the colorful, entrepreneurial, civic and social-minded Livermore family was tape-recorded with George Livermore in six sessions from October, 1996 to February, 1997. The meetings took place in George Livermore's seventh-floor office on Mason Street, San Francisco, where he works on his architectural projects standing at a broad drafting table. There the family archives are shelved, including the handwritten letters of Horatio Gates Livermore posted to his wife in Massachusetts during and after his journey by covered wagon from St. Louis to California in 1850. In the office are life-sized portraits of Norman Livermore, father of George and George's four brothers, and photographs of Montesol, the family ranch near Calistoga. As we spoke, Mr. Livermore, a large, energetic man with enormous zest for life, often took calls from one of his children or a brother to make evening plans for the theater, one of his lifelong interests.

The oral history begins in 1850 with Horatio Gates Livermore and his sons Horatio Putnam and Charles and their enterprises in California, including the Folsom Dam, the Redington Mine, and land in Kern County that eventually became the Kern County Land Company. The Livermore fortunes came and went, but the family always maintained a strong interest in architect-designed houses and left a remarkable legacy, including city and country homes designed by Julia Morgan and a home in Marin County designed by Arthur Brown. Caroline Livermore's parents engaged Stanford White to build their home in Galveston, Texas, the only one designed by White in the South. George Livermore kept returning to the theme of his grandfathers as pioneers in late-century American boomtowns.

A chapter on George Livermore's parents Norman and Caroline Sealy Livermore chronicles the development of San Francisco's Russian Hill, where the family built and remodeled several homes; other sections deal with Montesol, the lives of the five Livermore brothers, and Caroline Livermore's extensive work in land conservation. The oral history continues with reflections on Bay Area music, theater, and architecture in the 1930s and 1940s and focuses on various Livermore houses. The concluding section brings the family up to the 1990s.

The interview transcript was reviewed and slightly edited by three of the brothers, George, John, and Putnam, and George and Putnam contributed the preface and introduction to the volume. The result is a valuable addition to the cultural and social history of the Bay Area. The Regional Oral History Office has also produced focused oral histories with Norman (Ike) Livermore, Jr., (Man in the Middle: High

Sierra Packer, Timberman, Conservationist, and California Secretary for Resources) and exploration geologist John Livermore (in process).

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Caroline Crawford  
Interviewer/Editor

June 1999  
Regional Oral History Office  
The Bancroft Library  
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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please write clearly. Use black ink.)

Your full name George Sealy Livermore

Date of birth Mar. 18, 1914 Birthplace San Francisco

Father's full name Norman Banks Livermore

Occupation Engineer Birthplace Oakland

Mother's full name Caroline Sealy Livermore

Occupation housewife Birthplace Galveston, Texas

Your spouse Janet Clifton

Occupation divorced Birthplace San Francisco

Your children Richard, Thomas,

Elizabeth, William

Where did you grow up? San Francisco

Present community " "

Education Thacher School, Stanford,  
Yale architecture School

Occupation(s) architect

Areas of expertise architecture

Musical theatre

Other interests or activities Secondary Schools

Music, Episcopal Church

Organizations in which you are active

Olympic and Bohemian Clubs



## I EARLY FAMILY HISTORY--HORATIO GATES LIVERMORE: 1850-1916

[Interview 1: October 31, 1996] ##<sup>1</sup>

By Wagon Train to the West: 1850

Crawford: I am with George Livermore in his San Francisco office and we are looking at a family history, *Pioneers in California*, which is a book of correspondence between great-grandfather Horatio Gates Livermore, his sons, and his wife Elizabeth. So let's begin the Livermore family history by talking about your great-grandfather.

Livermore: I find it very interesting that so much of the family moved out West at the time of the Gold Rush. My great-grandfather was born in Livermore, Maine, and he moved to Boston. I always thought they moved around so much because they didn't have much success, wherever they were. In any case, he went to New York for a while, and his letters from New York are sort of discouraging, really. So he came back to Boston, had a wife and two sons, and then just took off for the West.

Crawford: The call of gold, wasn't it?

Livermore: The call of gold and adventure, I think it was, as much as anything else. My grandfather, Horatio Putnam Livermore, was only nineteen in 1856 when he saw the sign saying: "8:30 Monday morning--sailing for San Francisco." He took off with a job from Coffin, Redington Company.

Crawford: It is so interesting to me that your great-grandfather went out and left his family.

---

<sup>1</sup>## This symbol indicates that a tape or tape segment has begun or ended. A guide to the tapes follows the transcript.

Livermore: Yes, he went because his brother Elijah had gone ahead of him to St. Joseph. I don't know how he got to St. Joseph, but I think the railroads went to Missouri in those days.

Crawford: He talks about a wagon train.

Livermore: The wagon train started in St. Jo', after you crossed the river. One of the men who did it in 1849 went by boat. He went to Buffalo, took a boat all around northern Michigan, and ended up in Chicago and went down the river from there. My great-grandfather came in 1850, by almost the same route. I have a new book that shows the three routes to the West and they're almost the same, really.

So, anyway, his older brother went West, and I don't think my great-grandfather had been very successful at business, frankly, so he just left his wife and two boys, and it took him ninety days to go from St. Jo' to Sacramento. Think of that!

Crawford: And did I read that he had an Indian attack and bouts of cholera, on the way?

Livermore: Lots of cholera, they had that terribly, and by the time he got to St. Joseph, he was a year late. We can't join the Pioneer Society, you know, because we're too new! [laughter] You had to arrive before 1850.

When he got to Georgetown in the Mother Lode country, he saw all the water power from the American River just rushing down from nowhere, and he went to Big Bar on the American River and built a saw mill at Ford's Bar before going to Georgetown; because he came from New England, Livermore Falls, where water power was the big thing.

Crawford: In Maine?

Livermore: Yes. And so he got permission to dam the whole American River, in order to float his logs down, because he was in the logging business, and also to produce electricity.

Crawford: That was the Folsom Dam.

Livermore: Yes, Folsom Dam. And that was the longest electrical line in the country, from Folsom to Sacramento. Twenty-two miles. So that was a big step, you know.

My great-grandfather died before it was finished--it opened in 1890-s-but his two sons had come out West by then,

Horatio Putnam and Charles Livermore, and he put them to work on the Folsom project, too.

That's about all I know about Horatio Gates, except that he was a state senator from El Dorado County. He had a good contact in a Maine cousin who was in the Lincoln administration by the name of Hannibal Hamlin. He was vice president from 1861 to 1865. And my great-grandfather was educated, as most pioneers weren't, and so he was nominated for the office. Then finally he came down to the Bay Area and lived with his son over in Oakland, and died there in 1879. He gets no credit for the dam because it was finished by Albert Gallatin, who had the money to finish it up.

Crawford: When your grandfather Horatio Putnam arrived in California in 1856, he wrote your great-grandmother that he couldn't find your great-grandfather. "He lives way out in the country somewhere," he wrote.

Livermore: Yes, that's right.

Crawford: When did his wife join him?

Livermore: It was approximately 1860. His second son Charles Livermore and his wife came together, and they later moved in with the establishment there in Oakland. At one time, they had three grandmothers living in Oakland--imagine!

Crawford: [laughter] That's a lot of grandmothers.

Livermore: My father said it was "so harmonious" and "so marvelous." My mother said, "Yes, you went to the office every day."

Crawford: They got into mining very early, didn't they?

Livermore: Yes. My grandfather Horatio Putnam came out with a job as a young fellow, as I mentioned. He had a job with the Coffin-Redington Company, which was a wholesale druggist in Boston. It was an uneventful trip, and it only took about sixty days, not much more than that. Traveling through the Isthmus, you went down and then went across by train, and then caught another boat on the other side.

Crawford: The wagon train across was about three months, wasn't it?

Livermore: Three months. The fastest ship went from Boston to San Francisco in ninety days, around the Horn, but after they got

the railroad built in Panama, it helped them get across. Otherwise, it was terrible--there was disease, yellow fever and so on.

Crawford: Was it soon after that that they tried logging, and they did some mining?

Livermore: Yes, they were involved with the Redington Quicksilver Mine in Napa County in the 1870s and '80s, and they started logging, but the main thing they did was the electric line, which turned into the PG&E--Pacific Gas and Electric.

My grandfather, unfortunately, instead of sticking to one thing, which was the way you made money in those days, went into several things. He first was in wholesale drugs and then the mining of mercury. He went into mercury through the drug company, and then he had some property down at Kern County, which later developed into the Kern County Land Company, which is a big thing now, of course. Horatio Gates's brother Elijah had owned property close to Bakersfield and that was left to him. The fourth thing was the Folsom Dam.

He also had this ranch, which we still have now, which wasn't a business venture, but something that he loved. Well, he had "financial reverses," which is what you said when you were short of cash, you know. [laughter] Fortunately the ranch cost very little.

#### Properties in Oakland and Montesol Ranch: 1872 and 1880

Crawford: The history of the ranch is that your grandfather bought a little piece of land up by Calistoga to be near your grandmother, as I recall.

Livermore: That's right. Eight acres, I believe.

Crawford: She was ill with tuberculosis, and there was a sanitorium there?

Livermore: Yes, Dr. Blake was experimenting with a cure for TB by keeping patients out of doors, but we're a little bit ahead of ourselves. Before that my great-grandfather and my grandfather got together and bought the land in Oakland in 1872, which is now the Claremont Country Club.

Crawford: They purchased that first.

Livermore: They purchased that first, and that's where they lived. Then, in 1880, my real grandmother, blood grandmother, had terrible TB, and there was never any cure for that. First, she went to San Diego, then Pasadena, then Santa Barbara, all by boat.

Crawford: For the doctors?

Livermore: For the doctors and for hot air. Then she came back home. It seemed to help her, but not much. Then she heard about this amazing sanitorium, near where Robert Louis Stevenson had gone for his honeymoon. He had consumption. So she went up there and died there, near Mt. St. Helena. My grandfather bought the land there in 1880 to be near her while she was under treatment, and that is the ranch we still own today.

So now we're up to 1880, when they lived in Oakland and worked in the City. Horatio and Elizabeth were there, and Horatio Putnam and the other grandmothers, and also his brother Charles.

Crawford: Who were the grandmothers?

Livermore: There were three. Old Mrs. H.G. Livermore, who came out from Boston--old Granny. She died in 1892. Then there was the mother of my grandfather's new wife, Helen Eells, and then there was the mother of his wife who died, Mattie Banks. Maybe all three of them didn't live there that long, but what did old ladies do, in those days? They had no place to go. It was a family joke in those days. My mother said, "You went to the office every day. You didn't see what happened at home."

Crawford: So your father was born there. Is the building still there?

Livermore: No, our old house--and it was the most hideous house you ever saw--was bought by the Claremont Country Club in 1904, and they put in one of the first golf courses in California. The family bought in San Francisco, on Russian Hill during the time when they had "financial reverses," in 1889. We all grew up in that house on Vallejo. It was perfectly wonderful.

Crawford: On Russian Hill?

Livermore: Yes. 40 Florence Street [formerly 1045 Vallejo]. I think it was named for Florence Atkinson. The Berggruens have just bought it and remodeled it into a beautiful house.

Crawford: Before we go further, because I'd like to spend a fair amount of time on Russian Hill, what happened to great-uncle Charles's family?

Livermore: He never married. In each generation, we have had two or three bachelors. It's a family tradition. We started in California with two men with the Livermore name, and after four generations we have two men with the Livermore name.

Crawford: Isn't that interesting?

Livermore: Yes, Uncle Charles never married; he and his mother lived over at what is now the Claremont Country Club, and then, when we sold it, it was used for a number of years as a club house. But it burned down, in 1925, the whole thing.

Crawford: And you said it was ugly?

Livermore: Hideous.

Crawford: Why? What was the style of it?

Livermore: It was an old remodeled Victorian house. They raised it up high and gave it another story, and there were big verandas all the way around. They shingled the whole thing. There was a tower on top and they added more rooms in the back, and it just looked like the most ridiculous house you've ever seen. The house was moved from another location by horses, who pulled it up on rollers to the new location--what is now the Claremont Country Club--after the old shingled house burned in 1925.

#### Financial Reverses and a Move to Russian Hill: 1897

Livermore: So the family moved over to the City in 1897--my grandmother was quite social; she loved the City and didn't complain at all about how they didn't have much money.

Crawford: What had failed, at that point?

Livermore: Everything failed. The mine declined in the 1880s, and as I said, grandfather inherited some Kern County land which eventually became the Kern County Land Company, and finally he got pushed out of his land down there in 1875. That was one thing that was bad.

Crawford: How did that happen?

Livermore: Some very wealthy men who had spent an awful lot of money on lawyers saw to it that they grabbed his land. It was very dishonest. But they did. He had the biggest plow in the world, there, I think. It was enormous. We have a picture of it, somewhere. Then the quicksilver mine gave out. That wasn't his fault. That was the second thing.

Crawford: It was out of ore?

Livermore: Yes. That's what happened to the quicksilver up near our ranch. There was a big mine with 1,000 people working there, but the ore gave out and the price dropped. Then they moved to the Russian Hill house, and he still had Montesol, the ranch, where he bought another small amount of acreage. Now, of course, we have an awful lot more, and we've been there since 1880. That's pretty amazing.

Crawford: Talk about Russian Hill, what you know of it in those days. Am I correct that the house was built in 1860 and bought by Horatio Putnam in 1889?

Livermore: Yes. The family had a tutor, Joseph Worcester, who was a minister in the Swedenborgian Church, and he built one of the historic little houses up on top of Russian Hill, and lived there [1030 Vallejo Street, 1888], and told my grandmother about this wonderful piece of property that was for sale. It was a quarter of a city block.

Crawford: Was she a member of the church?

Livermore: Yes, over in the East Bay. They all grew up over there, you see. Anyway, she just fell in love with the house, and she shingled the whole thing and added another story to it. The literati of San Francisco all lived up there.

Crawford: It was supposed to have been very bohemian. I read about Gelett Burgess and "Les Jeunes" and *The Lark*.

Livermore: Yes, Ina Coolbrith, a famous poetess, was there, and Willis Polk, a famous architect. My grandmother offered to let him and Addison Mizner, who became a famous Palm Beach architect, live in the basement of the house if they'd remodel it. So they remodeled it, and it hasn't changed at all; it's redwood. They had a marvelous time, rolling tin cans down the hill and acting up. Afterwards, Polk built his own house next door in 1893 [1013-1019 Vallejo Street].

Crawford: It was Mizner who designed the Cloister on Sea Island, didn't he? Well, what were they like?

Livermore: Polk was an amazing person. He didn't have much training. Arthur Brown is our great architect, of course. He built our City Hall and Opera House, and he admired Polk tremendously because he didn't really have much training.

Polk started out in the shingle style, and he ended up with Filoli, you know, the great National Trust mansion, which is totally different. I always admired him because he had a great feel for classical architecture, but also did a lot of the shingled redwood buildings.

Crawford: What would have been the year of the remodeling?

Livermore: 1893. It's written on the fireplace, there. When Berggruen bought the house from us just a few years ago, he had this wonderful eastern architect remodel it just beautifully, but he did not touch the Willis Polk room. They left it just the way it was. So we've been there for a hundred years, too, on Russian Hill.

And then, in 1916, my grandfather died. And my father bought the house from his mother and so we five brothers moved into that house.

Crawford: You grew up on Russian Hill.

Livermore: Yes, it was a unique house, with a lovely view over all the city. There are three streets that don't go through, so it makes it kind of like living in the country. Green and Vallejo and Broadway do not go through; they're too steep. So we had the most ideal childhood--someday I'm going to write about my childhood because it was so exceptional.

Crawford: Going between San Francisco and the ranch?

Livermore: Yes. As a doctor said once, "Mr. Livermore, you grew up with abnormal serenity." Isn't that a gorgeous term? If I write about my childhood, that's going to be the title of the book. I'm sorry to say that I guess it is abnormal now to have that kind of life; people just don't have those serene childhoods of family love and discipline, and example. But it was just perfect there, on the Hill. We went to school next door, and lived there for twenty years.

Crawford: What do you remember of the neighborhood? Was it very different than Pacific Heights?

Livermore: Yes, very different. In the first place, all the mothers around us were Christian Scientists.

Crawford: Your mother was not.

Livermore: No, she was Episcopalian, very strong. But I thought it was kind of unusual, the way they clustered together there. They were fascinating people. For instance, Mrs. Stine, who started the opera here in San Francisco, lived there. She got Gaetano Merola to start the first opera season.

Crawford: What was her first name?

Livermore: Mrs. Oliver Stine. Isabel. And then she married a man called Leis, so she called herself Isabel Stine Leis. We grew up across the street from them, and all of the children were all great friends.

My mother was very musical, too, so Mrs. Stine just marched on ahead as if she was Mrs. Vanderbilt or something. Of course you have done that wonderful oral history of Kurt Herbert Adler, but to me, it was such an experience to have this talented, beautiful widow living close by. Gaetano Merola used to come over to our house and play the scores of the operas that we were going to hear the next year.

Crawford: What do you remember of him?

Livermore: I remember him well; we were very good friends, and he was very good friends with my wife's family. Horace Clifton and Mr. Stine went to college in the East, and came out and married Western women. When I met my wife, Janet Clifton, she called Mrs. Stine "Aunt Belle." Mrs. Stine went to Horace Clifton, who helped raise a lot of the early money for the opera. She also got people like Robert Watt Miller and Robert Bentley to be on the board.

#### Clubs and Affiliations ##

Crawford: Do you want to talk about family club affiliations way back?

Livermore: Yes. Looking at this social register list, I think it's awfully interesting that when these pioneers came out in the old days, they made lists immediately. How they made lists, nobody knows.

Crawford: If you look at the list, what would you see?

Livermore: Well, if you look at the list, you'd just see a bunch of names. But somehow or another, it's still quite an honor to be in the social register. Why? I don't know. This company was the social register company; they put out this huge volume at the turn of the century. And then in 1879, there was a book called the Elite Directory, and my grandfather was on that list. So he had already come up quite a way since 1856.

My grandmother was Mrs. Thomas Banks; she lived in San Francisco and she was on the list, and they even made a little comment about her here. In the very beginning--of course the wording of it is so screamingly funny--this was San Francisco society. It says, "There was a kind of stylish people gathered on California Street west of Stockton in 1853 and '54, and at the corner of Prospect Place and California resided Mrs. T. C. Banks." My grandmother. "All of these ladies were the wives of well-to-do businessmen and their houses were agreeable places of social resort." [laughter] That's marvelous; our first introduction to San Francisco society.

Crawford: What other names do you see there who would be close friends?

Livermore: Well, the Kittle family, for instance. They lived down here--Folsom Street--Rincon Hill. They lived on Rincon Hill. Huntington is here--of course, C. P. Huntington was one of the big names; one of the big four. Donahoe Crocker. This is way back in 1879, but he was already a big cheese before the railroads came in. No, the railroads came in 1869, so in 1879 he lived in that big palace up on that hill. Eells is here. We sort of hit the jackpot socially I would say. In 1915, my great-uncle, Charles Eells, was president of the Pacific Union Club. That's getting up there.

Crawford: Were you a member of the Pacific Union Club?

Livermore: Yes, we've all been members of the club, but nobody has been president. My grandfather, H. P. Livermore, was first a member of the Pacific Club before it merged with the Union Club.

Crawford: All your brothers are members?

Livermore: No, just my older brother. We don't care that much about clubs; especially my brother Putnam.

Here is the Concordia, which is a big Jewish club, and here is the Pacific Club. Let's start with that: Coleman, Crocker, Hagan, Daniel Hagan, Livermore--my grandfather--Kittle, Hooper, McAllister, Tobin, Parrott. That was a big, big name. And it's a very small list; only two pages here. Sharon, who built the Palace Hotel.

Crawford: Sloss is listed as belonging to the Bohemian and Family Clubs.

Livermore: The Bohemian Club took very few Jewish members, so they formed this other club they called the Family Club. It's just outrageous of course, because there are loads of Jews here and they are fine citizens. The best.

Crawford: Are they still not members of the Bohemian Club?

Livermore: Hardly any.

Crawford: That is outrageous.

Livermore: The Pacific Union Club is even more outrageous because when I was on the board, the most prominent Jews in San Francisco came to confront the board. They said, "We think it's outrageous that they are no Jews in this club, and we're going to tell you which Jews to invite." That's kind of a shock to tell prominent people what to do with their club. They didn't allow anyone but Jews in their club until recently.

Crawford: They do now.

Livermore: Yes, and at the time we took in three very attractive, young, unknown Jews who were in the business community.

Crawford: Who were they?

Livermore: I can't think of their names now. But anyway, the whole issue just died right there. Since then, Walter Haas has been a president of the club. But that just shows you what happened at that time. This is just recently. This only happened about twenty years ago. Anyway, now it's just as easy for a Jew to get in as anyone else.

Crawford: To both the Pacific Union and the Bohemian?

Livermore: Not the Bohemian Club--I don't know why they're not welcome. We have five black men in the Bohemian Club, but I still don't think we have too many Jews. The consular service are all members, and they don't ask whether they're red, white, or blue.

But in the case of these early pioneers, it's perfectly logical that they stuck together and formed clubs.

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## II NORMAN LIVERMORE AND CAROLINE SEALY LIVERMORE

### Grandfathers Livermore and Sealy, and Bonanza Cities

Crawford: Let's talk about your parents, your father Norman and your mother Caroline, because they met in such an unusual way.

Livermore: What I think is so fascinating is that both my grandfathers were penniless at the beginning--of course, both were ambitious and smart. One came all the way around the isthmus with his job, to San Francisco, one went from Pennsylvania to Galveston. That was magical--San Francisco and Galveston, Texas.

Both of these men, in one generation, had big houses and big families with all the money, like the Silicon Valley people are doing now. I told a young Silicon man the other day, "You are the young pioneers. You're just bowling us over with all your money."

Horatio Putnam Livermore came to San Francisco, went into these different businesses and was very successful. Grandfather Sealy, who went to Texas, was very successful in the cotton business, and railroads. He built a grand house for his family, which was Stanford White's only house in the South. Both men were very anxious to educate their children with the education that they had not had.

Crawford: They hadn't been to college, had they?

Livermore: No. And of course, women rarely went to college in those days.

Crawford: And your mother went to Vassar?

Livermore: Yes. She had been put on the boat, sixteen years old, in Galveston, to go around to New York to go to Miss Spence's school. Then she went to Vassar.

The Livermore family sent their son to Cornell, and they sent their daughter Beth to Vassar, and she met my mother there. So that's how my parents met--my mother came out as a debutante. In those days by the time you finished your college education, the men were all picked off.

Crawford: They married early.

Livermore: You know how the Southerners are, and Mother was twenty-two years old--just an old maid. The pickings weren't very good when she came back home, and so she and her mother went on a trip around the world. When they landed in San Francisco in 1909, she looked up her old friend from college, Beth Livermore, and my father was an old bachelor, and he said, "My God, you mean that girl isn't married yet?" He thought she was so attractive she would have been married years ago.

Caroline and Norman Livermore: A Pack Trip and an Engagement

Livermore: So then my Aunt Beth arranged a horse pack trip, which was pretty far out in those days for a Southern girl, and he took her off on a pack trip and they became engaged.

Crawford: He was a great Sierra man.

Livermore: He was a great Sierra man, yes. And that was a wonderful story.

Crawford: She wasn't an outdoorswoman?

Livermore: No. My father asked her what sport she was interested in, and she said, "I like rocking on the front porch." [laughs] But she became a great gardener and a beekeeper when she came out here, and lived here all of her life, from 1910 until she died.

Crawford: One of your brothers told me they were a great pair.

Livermore: Oh, they were marvelous, they really were. That's what I remember most about my childhood, because they were such a perfect pair. He was the great rock of the family. I never heard him lose his temper, ever.

Crawford: He was a shy person, I heard.

Livermore: Yes, he was. That is his portrait there. [shows picture]

Crawford: A very handsome man.

Livermore: He was shy, very shy, but he had wonderful self control. My mother was Irish, of course, and my father was very New England, and his family was very standoffish, but the Sealy family was a big, walloping Irish family.

Crawford: Where did they come from, in Ireland?

Livermore: Cork. I was just there, this last year. I wanted to see the ruins of the old Sealy house, but the family is all gone now. They came during the potato famine and settled in Pennsylvania, and then the two brothers went to Galveston and were in business together, there, just as the two Livermore brothers were in business out here. Galveston was the biggest city in Texas, then--nobody had heard of Houston.

Both cities were not only bonanza cities, but they were ethnically mixed cities, which is fascinating to me. My mother knew an awful lot of German people, Jewish people, and in so many American towns, you know, you wouldn't even speak to a Jew at that time. It was just unbelievable. They came first, and right now they are the greatest citizens we have in the Bay Area, these great Jewish families; they support everything. In Galveston it was exactly the same thing, and the Germans too, of course; there were a lot of Germans.

Crawford: How did your father court your mother?

Livermore: He knew he couldn't impress her like some of the other suitors. They used to call them "parlor snakes" in those days, men who were socially perfect. They were perfect in the parlor, but they wouldn't be so perfect on a pack trip!

Crawford: "Parlor snakes." [laughs]

##

Crawford: Did you visit her family in Galveston?

Livermore: Oh, yes. When I was at Stanford, I took a whole year out and worked on ships in Texas, and I went back and stayed at the old house down there--the marvelous, beautiful big Stanford White house. We have now given it to the University of Texas, so it's open to the public.

Crawford: Your family is talked about as being one of the most colorful families in San Francisco. For instance, we've done a history

with the Crowley family, and they talked about the flamboyant Livermores.

Livermore: Yes, they were neighbors on Russian Hill. Old Tom Crowley of course was the most rugged old guy. He was married to this sweet Christian Scientist, and I teased the children: "No one could have put up with your father except that sweet Christian Scientist." They joked about it. Now of course Crowley Tugboat is one of the biggest shipping lines in the world.

Crawford: Another Irish family--no doubt.

Livermore: Yes.

Crawford: I read somewhere that when your mother and father moved into the Russian Hill house, Helen Eells Livermore built a house for herself right next door.

Livermore: Right next door. It was a nice way to handle it because in those days, as I said earlier, what was an old lady going to do? She couldn't work, she couldn't walk the streets. The family just had to take care of her.

Crawford: So she was anchored to her family.

Livermore: Instead of being right in the soup with us, she had Julia Morgan build her this beautiful little house right next door. My brother Putnam still lives in it. She was near but not interfering. That was another thing about my childhood; I'd walk right across the lawn to this dreamy grandmother.

Crawford: What was that like?

Livermore: It was just like a dream. I've always loved the theater all my life, and she was very dramatic. She'd take me to the matinees. San Francisco was lucky because all these famous actors would come through on tour by train: Otis Skinner, Ethel Barrymore, Gertrude Lawrence, Katherine Cornell; all those people.

Crawford: That's where you got your love of the theater.

Livermore: Yes.

Crawford: How old were you then?

Livermore: Well, the opera started in 1923. I remember that because I'll never forget my first opera. I was nine years old.

Crawford: What was it?

Livermore: The first opera I heard was *Gianni Schicci* and *I Pagliacci*, a double bill. It was in San Francisco, in the Civic Auditorium. But my grandmother was absolutely unique.

Then she built another house up at the ranch to be near us--Julia Morgan built her these two beautiful little houses, where she lived with this marvelous old Chinese man.

He worked for us for eighty years. The only thing he did except constant work was to go to church on Sunday. Can you imagine? I mean the dedication of those wonderful Asians, and always church on Sunday. My grandmother always used to say, "Ark is not a servant, he's a Christian gentleman."

#### The Livermore Daughters and Life on Russian Hill

Crawford: What happened to the Livermore daughters?

Livermore: The Livermores had four daughters, and the Sealys had four daughters. The four Livermore daughters produced two children, and the four Sealy daughters produced sixteen children. That's the difference between the two families--the big Irish family and our family, which was kind of shy, I guess. [laughter]

Edith and Mattie, two of the Livermore daughters, went to Europe. They did that quite often in those days when they didn't marry, and these two sisters lived in Europe for twenty years after 1904. Edith translated operas, and she was a brilliant, brilliant woman, something of an invalid, never married. Then Beth married late.

Beth was the second wife's daughter. My grandfather first married Mattie Banks and had four children. She was the one who died at the ranch. Then he remarried Helen Eells and had one child by her. That was Beth. But of the four daughters, one named Grace died at twenty-one--Christmas eve

at the age of twenty-one. Then two never married, and one had two children. It's amazing--considering the Sealy girls who had all those children.

Beth was a radical thinker and social worker--I could write a book about her. She was described as "parlor pink," meaning you were sort of a socialist but also a lady, and nobody could criticize you because you came from a good family! She admired Lenin, Trotsky, and the Revolution. She subscribed to the *Daily Worker* and befriended all these longshoremen. We adored her; she was marvelous, and when she married Schmidt she ended many of her old associations.

Edith could have been a poet. She translated operas, as I mentioned. She was a remarkable woman, always kind of an invalid, no strength at all.

Crawford: Who was Beth's husband?

Livermore: She met a labor radical and organizer, Matthew Schmidt. He had been in jail for many years for being associated with a group of labor radicals who were carrying the dynamite which blew up the *Los Angeles Times* building, although he had been in San Francisco when that occurred. He was finally pardoned by California Governor Culbert Olson.

Crawford: How did that come about?

Livermore: She was friendly with his sister who was also a social worker, and the sister said, "Our brother was wrongly put into jail, and he's coming out in a couple of months." So Aunt Beth said, "Have him stay right here." He had no place to go. So they fell in love, and were married just a few years before they both died. Beth said she wasn't going to marry and have children, although my mother said she would have been such a marvelous mother, and she was sort of a mother to me.

Schmidt was a charming old guy. My father said that he had two brothers-in-law with totally different backgrounds from his: one was a musician--his name was Alfred Hurtgen, he was married to Mattie--and the other was Matt. He said, "I'm more congenial with Matt than I am with Alfred."

Crawford: Who was Alfred?

Livermore: He was a temperamental musician, and my father had to support him, because he never earned anything. But Matt was an engineer, and an interesting guy, even though he did time in jail.

When my grandfather died in 1916, my parents moved into their house at Montesol and on Russian Hill, and Beth was kind

of left out. So she eventually did the most amazing thing--she built a house on the cliff down in Big Sur. Everything was taken down by mule. She would drive her Model T Ford as far as Big Sur, and then rode horse or muleback down the trail. Imagine a fifty-year-old lady living in a cabin there. It's still there; now it's a state park called John Little State Park.

Crawford: She lived with all of you at some time?

Livermore: No, she lived with her mother in the little new Julia Morgan house. She didn't get along with Edith at all, because they are half sisters. Edith was a bit of an invalid, and Beth was a big active woman, among the first to wear a single-piece bathing suit and ride a horse astride.

Crawford: How did your father get along with her?

Livermore: Father loved her, When she was a debutante in 1903, he took her to all the parties. She was lovely looking. In 1910 she went down to Texas to be my mother's bridesmaid.

Crawford: She must have been interesting to you as small children.

Livermore: She was wonderful. She was very close to us, and close to my wife when we got married. She was just remarkable. She was head of the Blind Association here. Oh, I could do a biography of her that would be fascinating.

Crawford: Where did they study in Europe?

Livermore: They didn't study really--Mattie took voice lessons, as all educated women did in those days. It gave them something to do. Edith was very, very musical, but she didn't sing at all. She just lived there for twenty years in *pensions*--they had no money--and met interesting people. Beth stayed home, you see. So Beth was spoiled. She was the only girl up at Montesol, she had her own private horse, and of course was her mother's only child.

Crawford: But they all got along up there on Russian Hill.

Livermore: Up on Russian Hill and at Montesol. In both places, you see, this wonderful grandmother Helen Eells was such a part of my life there, in her own house, of course.

But then, it was a little bit awkward. In 1916, as I said, my grandmother had these two wonderful houses of her own

that she loved, and my mother had to move into these two old houses with most of the furniture removed.

Crawford: Which ones?

Livermore: The Russian Hill house and the Montesol house were my grandfather's two houses, and when he died, I guess she didn't want to live alone in those big houses. I don't think she could afford it, either.

Crawford: The grandmother.

Livermore: Yes. So then my father already had a big family, and he gladly moved into both big houses, the one at Montesol and the city. Mother--I think she got along pretty well with her mother-in-law, I don't know. She always saw the good in everybody. My grandmother was a very dramatic, wonderful woman, very creative with her hands. She sewed and knitted all sorts of wonderful things. She was a wonderful cook. She was amazingly creative and artistic.

Crawford: Everything a boy would have loved--and theater, lots of theater, things your mother probably didn't have all the time to do.

Livermore: Yes, exactly. She didn't have the time. She had five little children, and she couldn't do everything.

Crawford: Was there lots of help?

Livermore: Yes, we always had lots of help. In those days, everybody we knew always had three that helped. You had a cook, maid and nurse. That was just basic. Some people had two maids--an upstairs and downstairs maid. Even small apartments had servants' rooms down below for a cook or someone. That's the way things were in those days.

My father said the most respectable thing a young girl could do was to go into domestic service because she was protected and she could save every nickel, of course, and eventually she could get married. That's what always happened. The Irish girls came over, and we had German girls, too. When we moved over to Ross, in that big house, then we had to have a gardener and another maid and all that sort of thing. That was a different story.

Crawford: That was in 1930, wasn't it?

Livermore: In 1930.

Crawford: Who did you see in those days? Who do you remember coming into your house?

Livermore: On Russian Hill?

Crawford: Yes.

Livermore: Well, of course of the neighbors I remember the Crowleys especially, who had four children, and we were close to all of them. Then Mrs. Varney had two boys, and then the Lynch boys were down the street--there were three boys. They all came up to Montesol. We had a regular sort of camp up there in the summertime.

Crawford: You lived up there one year when your father was in France.

Livermore: Yes. Well, you know a lot. My father wanted to go to France, and Mother agreed. He didn't have to go, he just enlisted, and fortunately he wasn't killed. We were up there, and I think Mother did the cooking, and there was an influenza attack; another reason to go up there.

Crawford: That was a terrible time--1918?

Livermore: 1918. So we lived up there while he was gone, all year round. We also stayed there one fall, I remember, when he went to Africa big game hunting in 1924.

Montesol was one of the two biggest influences in all of our lives--the other was the Thacher School. The Thacher School was a unique place--such a wonderful place for adolescent boys to go to, a place where you're out in the open air and not signing chits around country clubs.

Crawford: Before we move on, who else was up on Russian Hill?

Livermore: I have a little article there about it. I've mentioned Willis Polk, and Maynard Dixon who was quite a good artist, and Addison Mizner who was a great Palm Beach architect--he was famous down there, and Ina Coolbrith and Joseph Worcester who was quite a ringleader there, from the Swedenborgian Church.

Crawford: What was the nature of that church?

Livermore: It was a Evangelical version of Presbyterianism, I think.

- Crawford: Your mother was Episcopalian.
- Livermore: Her father and Mother were big in the Episcopal Church in Galveston, Texas. And Mother didn't even ask my father, since he didn't care, she just said, "Well, from now on we're going to be Episcopalians."
- Crawford: Where did the family go to church here?
- Livermore: Trinity Church, because their church was Trinity down there.
- Crawford: Gough and Bush?
- Livermore: Gough and Bush, yes. The scout troop met there, and there was a whole lot of social life that revolved around the church. That's why she wrote so beautifully about the Five Brothers Window.
- Crawford: We're talking here about the Five Brothers Window that Caroline Livermore commissioned the Connick brothers to design for Grace Cathedral in 1932.

Grace Cathedral and the Thanksgiving Window ##

- Crawford: So let's talk more about the 1932 thanksgiving window. Not to say memorial window, but thanksgiving window that Mrs. Livermore commissioned to honor her sons.
- Livermore: In 1930, which was her twentieth wedding anniversary, she decided she wanted to give something to the Cathedral because she was, I think, head of the fundraising, which started in 1928. Her great church friend, Mrs. Monteagle, was killed in an automobile accident, and her two boys wanted to do something in her memory. They gave the rose window on top, and Mother said, "I will give a window in thanksgiving for my five sons." There's a story about that, because my father said that was kind of a silly idea, and that boys would throw rocks through it, and that would be the end of that. He said, "I will plant five sequoia trees, which will grow for two thousand years." Mother said, "Yes, but you forget to water them, and they're all dead." [laughter]

So she watered her Christianity. The windows were dedicated in 1932. Mr. Connick, who did all those gorgeous windows, died. Years later we got Gabriel Loire, who comes from Chartres--his home is in Chartres, France--and he made a different type of a window. He made that beautiful rose window in the center of the church, with hunks of glass and cement, not stained glass and lead.

Crawford: Is that on the facade?

Livermore: Yes, it's on the facade. Then two other ones, right next to the Five Brothers Window, we brothers gave, in honor of Mother --we told her that she couldn't die because the most important thing was to have the thanksgiving, and so those two windows up there were donated by us.

Crawford: In 1963?

Livermore: Yes, when she was eighty.

Crawford: It says here that there's some glass from Chartres in the Five Brothers Window.

Livermore: Yes. Connick blue was famous; it's a beautiful shade of blue, and it's on the south, so when the sun shines through it, it's just like magic. But the Loire windows are much more brilliant, because they're one-inch thick pieces of glass, and they're set in concrete. They're beautiful windows; it's too bad they're not like Connick's, which are the best.

Crawford: Your mother donated the glass from France?

Livermore: Yes, that's right.

Crawford: How did she come across that?

Livermore: I think she just collected it when she was there. There's a window in England that we saw together called the Seven Sisters Window, in one of the big cathedrals. So why not have not the five brothers if they can have the seven sisters?

Crawford: That's where she got the idea?

Livermore: Yes, that's where she got the idea.

Crawford: Which cathedral is that?

Livermore: I don't know; I think it's York.

Crawford: And who are the sisters?

Livermore: I don't know who the sisters are. They might not even have been sisters; they might have been religious sisters.

Crawford: Your window depicts Christ, and four of the apostles.

Livermore: Yes, that's right. The middle one is the oldest brother, and Mother said, "Of course, the oldest brother has to be Christ."

Crawford: I see: so five figures.

Livermore: Five figures; the middle one is Christ, and the others are Peter, Thomas, James, and John. Mother said, "This is an example to you boys to stick together in Christian fellowship."

Crawford: And you have?

Livermore: And we have.

I brought Loire over to Mother in the sixties--I can speak pretty good French, due to my army experience, and so I had to bring him over to introduce him to Mother so that she could see his sketches. He didn't only do the rose window, he also did about eight other windows in the cathedral up high. I thought we were awfully lucky to get him, and he charmed my mother, so she told the committee that they should pick him.

Crawford: That's lovely. She was pleased?

Livermore: Yes. I don't know when Connick died, but this was not until '63 that Loire did the other windows. He designed and made them in France.

Crawford: And what is the story?

Livermore: The ones we gave illustrated "teach" and "preach". I think the plaque at the bottom tells that. One was somebody teaching, and the other was somebody preaching.

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Crawford: Did your father go to church when you were young?

Livermore: Well, he came once in a while. He came when we got a very good preacher. That's very New England--the ceremonies didn't mean so much, but if it was a good preacher, if he had something to say, he would go. When Dr. Deems came to Trinity Church then my father went to church and even enjoyed it because he was such a powerful speaker.

Crawford: So he wasn't your regular vicar?

Livermore: Oh, yes, he was a regular vicar in the twenties. Then we all went to scout troop 87 there, and every Sunday we got a dime to go on the streetcar, and if you saved a nickel by walking home you could buy a lollipop or something. That was Sundays.



### III THE LIVERMORE BROTHERS

#### Growing Up Independent

Crawford: Let's talk about your brothers. When were they born? Give your birthdate and their birthdates.

Livermore: We're all four years apart, it's very easy. From 1910 to 1926, my parents had a baby every four years. They loved that, they loved having a baby. Of course it does keep you young when you have babies.

Norman was first, and he was named for my father. George is number two. John's number three, our famous brother. And Putnam, number four. And Robert, number five. Mother finally gave up after five. She didn't try for another girl. She said, "I don't know what I'd have done if I ever had a girl. I just couldn't have given parties and things you have to do."

Another part of my childhood that was so interesting was that we lived in the smallest space in this great big house because it was sort of added onto--sleeping porches and so on. We were all so close together, and that's why we're so devoted. I think one of the reasons today we get along so well is because we were sort of squashed in together there during our childhood.

Crawford: Because the house was small originally?

Livermore: No, the house wasn't small, but it didn't have separate rooms. The house had a great big nursery where all the toys were kept, and we had to keep them neat, and then they had a separate room where the nurse slept with two of the younger children. Then as you grew up, you went out onto the sleeping porch. That was an honor, you know--it was freezing cold, I remember. Anyway, that nursery was just full of happiness for little children.

Crawford: Your great-grandfather said in his journal: "Every man is the architect of his own fortune." I think your father said something like to you, didn't he, to be your own, independent person?

Livermore: Yes. Be the captain of your soul. He had five businesses and five sons, but not one of us went into one of his businesses. I would have gone in a minute if he had said, "George, you're going to be the banker." Instead of that, he said, "George, you're going to go to the Beaux Arts." I thought it was spelled b-o-z-a-r. [laughter]

Crawford: What were the five businesses?

Livermore: The Crocker Bank.

Crawford: Did he establish that bank?

Livermore: No, he was just the director of it. The California Packing Company, which is one of the great big Del Monte concerns--these are ones he was a director of--the Pacific Gas and Electric Company, that's three, and he was president of the Pacific Coast Aggregates, which is the biggest rock company, and the Coffin-Redington Company, which was the wholesale drug company. All of them were big companies. I would have been glad to have been part of some of that, but he said, "You're going to the Beaux Arts."

Crawford: Why did he want you to go to Beaux Arts?

Livermore: He knew that I, of all the five sons, was the artistic one. In those days, you know, if you had an artistic son, you sort of wondered how to guide him--maybe he was going to be a toe dancer or something. [laughter]

Crawford: Instead he encouraged you.

Livermore: He encouraged me. I think I was the only one who played the piano, and I had to get up earlier than the other brothers to practice. I didn't like it too well then, but I do now, I enjoy playing the piano, thanks to him.

Crawford: Where did you study?

Livermore: I studied at the Conservatory of Music here, and later on I became a trustee of that, too.

Crawford: Who did you study with?

Livermore: Eda Beronio. She was just marvelous. Her family had the first lumber company in San Francisco, the Beronio Lumber Company, and I just loved her; she was patient. I never was very good at sight-reading, because my ear is too good.

Crawford: Was the conservatory on Sacramento then?

Livermore: It was a funny little Victorian house on Sacramento.

Crawford: Did you know Ada Clement?

Livermore: I met her, and Lillian Hodghead. I joined the board when we moved to that spectacular building on Ortega Street, and of course now it's one of the finest conservatories in the country. But Father picked for each brother a job. My brother John is exactly like his father, quiet, shy, and he became a miner. He went to Alaska to work right away when he was at college. He had a job with a mining company. Now he's learned how to get gold out of nothing.

Crawford: I read his profile in the New Yorker.

Livermore: What a marvelous end to a hard life, you know, to just suddenly become so famous.

Crawford: What is his temperament?

Livermore: His temperament is very placid--I've never seen anyone like him before. He must have a very low metabolism--we all have very low metabolisms. That's what makes us live so long!

Crawford: You've lived long, and accomplished so much, all of you.

Livermore: I think that may sort of go together. You never waste a lot of time screaming and yelling.

Then Putnam always got the best grades, so it was logical he would be a lawyer. Bob, the youngest one, was crazy about farming, so he's a farmer. I think it's really wonderful how it all kind of worked out. My oldest brother [Norman] is the perfect combination of everything--he was a director of resources in Sacramento under Reagan because he was half lumberman and half conservationist, you see. He was an "honest broker" between them, and Reagan sure picked the right guy for that job. So we've had very independent and very individual lives. And that's really a wonderful way to be.

Crawford: Most influenced by whom?

Livermore: By my father, I'm sure, because his image was so strong. My mother had optimism. My father was not quite that optimistic. When the old house burned down at the ranch, my father said, "You know, I've worked so hard all my life for this place here, keeping it up, enjoying it," and on and on. He said, "We just won't go there anymore. That's all." My mother said, "Why, not at all. I always wanted a big lawn for the boys to play baseball on." That's where the house had been, you see.

So we bulldozed the ruins away and now we have this wonderful baseball field, and they built a small house, just for the two of them, and he really enjoyed it for about three years before he died. That's the difference between the two of them, you see. She was full of energy and Irish sentiment. When she became so famous in Marin County, they didn't have committees in those days, it was just her contacts and her personality of contagious enthusiasm.

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Livermore: After living in Ross for twenty years, my father asked us if we wanted to sell the Russian Hill house. We said no, so he sold it immediately. He had made up his mind already, but he wanted to ask us anyway. So we were all sort of hurt about that.

Crawford: So he did sell it?

Livermore: Oh, yes, he sold it.

Crawford: But some of the family still live there--

Livermore: We bought it back. The McAteers lived there, and they remodeled it, and then when I got divorced, my brother and I bought it back; very cheaply too. I lived in the wonderful Willis Polk basement, and we rented the top two floors. Then finally, ten years later, Putnam needed the money, and we sold it at a profit to the Berggruens, who did the beautiful alterations. Putnam lives next door now in my grandmother's house.

Crawford: You obviously moved to Marin before the bridge was built?

Livermore: Yes, the bridge was built in '37, and that's what started my mother on all her projects. She said, "As soon as this bridge is built, think what's going to happen. There's going to be road signs; signs all over the place. Everything's going to be ruined." She was right. She got it all taken care of before the bridge was finished. You won't find a single billboard on that highway.

Schooling at Miss Paul's, Potter's School, and Thacher

Crawford: One thing we should cover before we move you to Ross, is your schooling in San Francisco.

Livermore: Yes. That's interesting, because in those days, everyone we knew went to private schools.

Crawford: What were the public schools like?

Livermore: Well, the public schools were much better than they are now, and Lowell was a very good high school. It's still now the only public high school that accepts by scholarship, and no city has that except San Francisco.

Unfortunately, we've had an awful time with the Asian percentage because it got to be 80 percent Asian and it would have been 100 if we hadn't stopped it.

Crawford: Where did you go to school?

Livermore: We had a wonderful school right next door on Russian Hill. Miss Paul's School. Absolutely wonderful. We all spoke French and read when we were about six years old. It was a little private, small school.

Crawford: Who were the Misses Paul?

Livermore: The Misses Paul, Jane and Florence, were related to the Atkinsons from the East, who in 1852 bought a house on the Broadway side of Russian Hill [1032 Broadway]. Mrs. Atkinson let her two cousins run the school in the house, which Polk had remodeled. Eventually the Crowleys bought it.

Crawford: Who was the architect?

Livermore: There was no architect--these houses were called "carpenter gothic." [laughter] It was just a wonderful school. Then we went from there to Potter's School--my father said that was *almost* a good school.

Crawford: What did he mean?

Livermore: He meant just that; that it wasn't really very good. But it was a boy's school; they didn't have co-education in those days. We went there until we went to Thacher's. So we went to Miss Paul's for grammar school, then Potter's which became Town School, and Thacher.

And then three of us older brothers (Norman, John, and I) went to Stanford, and Putnam and Robert went to Cal. They went mostly to Cal because they wanted to be on crew. Stanford had no crew. We were all Alpha Delta Phi's, and we're all very loyal to our colleges.

We had a very good education. My Aunt Edith said that someone came over one day and said, "The Livermores are charming, but uneducated." [laughter]

Crawford: Who said that?

Livermore: Some English friend. My aunt said, "The Livermores are not wealthy, but they are well-traveled and well-educated." I think the ranch has given us the reputation of having wealth, because it's such a big, gorgeous piece of property, but you have heard the expression "land poor"? People just assume that we must be rich to have that big ranch.

#### Music in the Livermore Family ##

Crawford: We didn't talk about music in your home, but I know you have spoken about singing in the family.

Livermore: Music in the family goes back several generations. Not the Livermores, but the Sealys, my mother's family. Both grandfather and grandmother Sealy had lovely voices, and sang in the church choir in Trinity Church in Galveston. Then in the next generation all four Sealy sisters had singing lessons, and there was lots of music around the house all the time. One of my mother's friends in Galveston was Lucy Hickenlooper, and she changed her name to Olga Samaroff and became a famous pianist, and later married Stokowski.

There was lots of music in that city. Of course, it was a very wealthy city. There was lots of music in San Francisco, too, and we grew up surrounded by music, but Mother was more musical than my father was. She played the piano beautifully, and sight-read, and sang; she had a very sweet voice.

All of my brothers sang in school, and we can all still sing now. We all sang every Sunday night in the summertime. Mother played the piano and we sang Sunday evening hymns. Such a warm remembrance.

Crawford: Up at the ranch?

Livermore: At the ranch, yes, because there wasn't any church to go to. I remember putting on the red-seal records on Sunday nights. My father always loved Fitz Kreisler, so I was allowed to put the records on on Sunday night, and wind up the machine too. Mother brought an awful lot of things into the family like music, and civic interest, and God, things like that, that were not there before.

#### Parents' Correspondence

Crawford: Could we talk about your parents' correspondence, which is unusually large and which you have preserved so carefully?

Livermore: My mother had little books of letters written to her mother from about 1920 to 1935, telling her mother about our family. George hurt his finger, or something like that.

Then I have the big volumes that I showed you; those are all typed and I've been going over those. One volume is letters to me written over nineteen years, and the others are war letters, and that ought to be kind of a separate subject, because they are so interesting: what was going on the world those days. All five of us were in different branches of the service; think of that.

Those two volumes I treasure, because they're from my wonderful father and how he was the rock of the family! He gave an awful lot of advice about cars, and money, and girls, and everything else in those letters. Of course, they're not quite as personal as Mother's, because they were dictated.

Crawford: He dictated them to his secretary?

Livermore: To his secretary.

Crawford: But you each got original letters?

Livermore: Each of us got original letters, yes. Then of course, he often would send copies of the others too, which was nice. Then

during the war, my mother used the system because it's so much easier than writing five letters. She'd write a letter, which the secretary would duplicate five ways. That's what I did with my own three sons who were off at school. I'd say, "Dear boys," and then send them a copy, which was perfectly good.

Crawford: People had more time or took more time for writing.

Livermore: I think so. Nobody telephoned in the old days. I didn't think of telephoning home; five years at school, and I don't think I made one single telephone call. But Mother consistently wrote to her sister every single day. Never once telephoned her. I guess they were kind of lonely too; they were away from home.

Crawford: She wrote to her mother?

Livermore: My mother wrote to her mother, too. But she wrote to her sister more. I don't have those letters--they weren't really letters, they were clippings and articles.

My father's of course were all typed; regular letters. In almost every letter he said, "I'm sure that your mother has told you all the family news. I'll just tell you about the government."

Crawford: The more serious things.

Livermore: I had those letters bound and I'm glad I did, because they're a nice family record. Then I have all the letters Mother wrote to me I'll tell you about, but she wrote to me because I was away so many years. I have the letters from the Yale years.

#### The Livermore Births: Hospital Deliveries

Crawford: I think it is interesting that all of you were born in the hospital. Could you talk about Dr. Florence Ward?

Livermore: Yes. My mother had all her children in the hospital; that was unusual in those days, when women didn't go to a hospital. But the mother of my mother's best friend at Vassar College was a doctor. In the 1880s and nineties, for a woman to go into medicine was unbelievable, but she was a sweet lady, I remember Dr. Florence Ward, and she delivered four of us children at St. Francis Hospital. Mother was big on birth control, and it was then against the law to tell anyone about birth control. But when she was having her first baby in the hospital, she told

these poor women who had babies every nine months, "You don't have to do this."

Crawford: Your mother never rested, did she?

Livermore: Never rested, no. [laughter]

Remembering Music in the Bay Area ##

Crawford: I wanted to ask you a little more about the city. Did you know any of the musicians: Ernst Bloch, for example?

Livermore: Well, I only knew him because I attended the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. He was a great figure out there.

Crawford: Did you have an impression of him?

Livermore: He was a typical caricature of a Jewish gentleman. He looked so somber; he never would speak to a little kid like me. I was sort of scared of him really, because he wasn't a bit ingratiating, or anything like that. He was there, and the head of the school, and a very well-known composer.

Crawford: And you said you knew Ada Clement and Lillian Hodghead.

Livermore: Ada was a very sweet person; I remember her very well. Lillian died years after Ada. Then when I got on the board as a trustee of the Conservatory years later; that's when we moved from Sacramento Street to Ortega Street. Robin Laufer was director. Poor man; he didn't work too well. But the building seemed like a huge place. Now, we're just bursting at the seams; we haven't got room enough.

Crawford: Are you on the board now?

Livermore: No, I'm not on the board. They rotate people often. I didn't give enough money, so I didn't stay on the board. [laughter] I'm going to try to get my family to give some money, because it's the finest conservatory in the West.

Crawford: Did you know Mrs. Stern?

Livermore: Yes, I did know Mrs. Stern. She had the box right below us at the opera. I remember that so well because when the opera house opened in 1932, my mother always had front row grand tier, and we looked right down Mrs. Stern's neck, practically.

Crawford: Oh, you didn't have a box?

Livermore: No, we didn't have a box. My father didn't like opera; and also, he didn't like the social part of it. But she had tickets always. She had four tickets, and she loved it. And everybody got dressed up, and we all went all the time.

Crawford: Who got to go? That wasn't enough for your family.

Livermore: Well no, because no one cared except me. Mother would take as an escort usually a minister, a church friend who didn't have any money and was glad to go. Then I and my wife; that would be the four tickets usually. Mrs. Stern was a wonderful person, and I helped her remodel her house. I gave her a lot of advice about it. I remember she had a green dining room; it was so unusual in those days. Then of course, her family was the most wonderful, donating Jewish family there ever was. Her son-in-law, Walter Haas, he was with Levi-Strauss Company then, and Mrs. Stern's daughter was Elise, and she was active in the Museum of Modern Art.

Crawford: Did you know them?

Livermore: I knew the boys. Elise had three children, Wally Haas, Peter Haas, and Rhoda Goldman--I sort of grew up with all of them. As a matter of fact, Wally Haas and I were both Alpha Delta Phi together; fraternity brothers.

Crawford: At Stanford?

Livermore: No, Wally went--I don't know where Peter went--but Wally went to Cal; University of California. Then Rhoda went to Miss Burke's with my wife, Jinny Clifton. We knew Rhoda that way. She just died, incidentally. Her husband Dick Goldman has always been a good friend of mine. He was in Scout Troop 14 with me; that's a whole other subject we'll get to discuss.

Crawford: You worked with Mrs. Stern; what was your impression of her?

Livermore: She was simply wonderful. She was such a grand old lady, in the old sense. Very stunning looking; she had white hair and black eyebrows. Very regal and public-spirited. She and Mrs. Koshland, the two of them, were the big ringleaders in the musical world. Mrs. Koshland had a house where she could have concerts right in the house, but Mrs. Stern didn't. She just had a regular, comfortable house.

Crawford: Did you go to the Sunday musicales?

Livermore: I went to Mrs. Koshland's musicales with my musical aunt, Edith Livermore, who I was telling you about. It was a little bit highbrow for me; I don't like chamber music, really, that much.

Crawford: Who did they have?

Livermore: Well, they'd have the Pro Arte Quartet, a great quartet. Then they'd have Margaret Tilly, a very good piano player in those days. There were three people that used to have concerts in their homes: one was Mrs. Koshland, because she had room for it, and one was Mrs. Tobin Clark, down the peninsula. Her daughter Agnes was a concert pianist.

Crawford: I was going to ask you if you knew Agnes Albert.

Livermore: Very well. She's one of my very closest friends, I see her all the time. She played with the San Francisco Symphony once; a soloist. And the third person was my mother. My mother built that big house in Ross, which was not only the town hall for meetings, but she used to give musicales there.

Crawford: Who did she have come?

Livermore: She had Margaret Tilly; she had Michel Piastro, who was a great violinist, and she had some other people--she was interested in encouraging young people, so she'd take some of these young students and give concerts in her house to get them going; to get them sort of known. That's what she liked to do, she and Maude Symington. Ever heard of her? Maude Fay Symington was an opera singer from the Fay family; big Catholic family. She went to Europe and became a very fine soprano. She lived in Marin County, and my mother and Maude together built up what they called the Marin Music Chest. That's away from the San Francisco subject. But anyway, Mother wanted to make it into a great music festival. Maude Symington said, "I'm going to make it into Valhalla." So they were quite a team, those two.

Crawford: How often did they do it?

Livermore: Just in the summertime, because the Catholic convent let them use their meadow, with portable chairs for the concerts. They were very successful. Then Mother would have some of those people give a concert in her house too. Agnes and her mother gave concerts all the time in that beautiful house of theirs down in San Mateo. I went there the other day; it's just gorgeous. It's for sale, in case you want to buy it.  
[laughter] People can't live that way any more.

Crawford: What's the name of that house?

Great Estates: House-on-Hill, Filoli, Saratoga

Livermore: "House-on-Hill" is what it's called. House up in the hills. Just beautiful. All English; half timbered. Our house in Ross and their house were built at the same time.

Crawford: Who designed it?

Livermore: David Adler, the famous Chicago architect. That's sold now; it's all developed, it's just ruined. Our house is torn down. So it shows you how people just can't live in those big houses any more.

Crawford: I guess Filoli is one of the only ones left.

Livermore: Well, Filoli is different because it has a garden. That's the whole thing. I was on the National Trust when they decided to buy it, and of course Mrs. Roth practically gave it to them. For a long time the house was empty, and I told them, "People are snoopers. People love to snoop. I don't care whether the house is empty or not; you've got to open it up for them to see. They want to go to the bedrooms to see how milady lived." it was just the biggest hit. As soon as they opened up the door people went in. Now it's all furnished. It's just beautiful.

Crawford: Who furnished it?

Livermore: They slowly got back some of the Roth furniture, and they borrowed furniture from museums and private collections. The garden is just so beautiful, and that's why it was accepted; it was for the garden. Fortunately, Mrs. Roth took good care of it when she bought it in the thirties. It would have been awful to let it go to wrack and ruin.

Crawford: Who's maintaining it?

Livermore: The Friends of Filoli. The women and their husbands get out to work in that garden, and it's more beautiful than it ever was. They have great Christmas festivals and things like that, and it's making more money than all the National Trust property in the East.

A woman told me the other day, who really knows, "This is as fine as anything in England." The Filoli gardens. Not the house, the gardens. I think the house is pretty good, but it's no masterpiece.

Crawford: It's nice to hear music in the hall; that's the only part of it I know.

Livermore: And then the ballroom is wonderful. I used to go there when I was a little boy. We had to take the train to go down to Redwood City--I'm talking about eight years old--then we were met at the train station and driven all the way out to Filoli. You don't know how far out that is. Then it was just like an absolute fairyland.

Crawford: Was this Christmastime?

Livermore: No, this was a Valentine party. I remember it was fancy dress. All the little children were in fancy dress. My brother and I and the Chamberlain boys went as pirates, because that's pretty easy, but the girls all got fancily dressed up. That was my first big party I guess; eight years old. But the poor old Bourns themselves were ill upstairs, I think, for almost twenty years.

Crawford: They were the owners?

Livermore: They were the owners; they built it. Miss Ida Bourn was one of the spinster ladies that I have on this list. She was a wonderful, cute little lady. Her brother, William Bourn, had run the Empire Mine up near Grass Valley. It made an absolute fortune in those days, but the three poor sisters didn't get in on it. I don't know how he worked that, but Miss Ida Bourn would go down and visit them.

I was at Stanford, and she'd invite me over to dinner, and we'd sit in that gorgeous big dining room with the butler waiting on us, and just the two of us sitting there. It was sad to think that they really couldn't enjoy it much.

Crawford: But they kept the big house; did they have children?

Livermore: Yes. They had one daughter, I think; that's all. She married an Irishman named Vincent. The Bourns gave this beautiful Muckross Abbey in Ireland to the country. I just went to see it last year.

Crawford: Muckross?

Livermore: Muckross Abbey, it's something like thirty thousand acres. It's a huge old castle, and when you go into the ballroom today at Filoli, there are murals of Muckross Abbey.

Crawford: And that's the family the daughter married into?

Livermore: Yes, she had two children: one girl who's now dead, and a boy who lives here now. His name is William "Billy" Vincent.

Crawford: I know the name. He's a designer?

Livermore: Yes. Then of course the Roths bought it, and they kept it up just beautifully. They had twin daughters. They had the beautiful debut party down there for those twin daughters; I'll never forget it. It was nice to have someone who could keep it up, who really could afford it. Then she gave a million-dollar endowment to it, and now it is making money.

Crawford: So that was Filoli.

Livermore: That was Filoli. No other big places that I can think of now are used or kept up like that.

Crawford: Montalvo?

Livermore: That's another one. Phelan did that; before he died, he saw to it that it was going to be open to the public. It's pretty good; it isn't half as good as Filoli.

There were interesting people in Saratoga. The two de Haviland sisters, you know the movie actresses? Olivia de Haviland and Joan Fontaine.

Crawford: Yes.

Livermore: They're old friends of mine still. Mrs. Stine, who lived across the street from us--one of those Christian Science ladies--she went to Japan before anyone had gone to Japan, way ahead of her time. She came back and met the de Haviland girls' mother.

I could go around the whole Bay Area to talk about these different areas. As a matter of fact I'm working on [that]--Mrs. Stine had a Japanese garden in Saratoga, and I went down to give a talk on that just the other day, because I knew it in the old days when the de Haviland sisters were playing around in kimonos.

Crawford: They were friends of the Stines?

Livermore: Friends of the Stines, so they were friends of mine. All of a sudden they grew up into these gorgeous girls. I mean for two sisters to be that beautiful, it just knocked you out.

Crawford: Yet they don't look anything alike.

Livermore: Nothing, but it doesn't stop them from being beautiful. One is so dark, and one is so blonde. They're still alive: I just saw Olivia in Paris; and I talk to Joan on the telephone. They became fine actresses, and what a coincidence to have it all tie in with Saratoga.

    Their father, the rat--because men are no good, in case you don't know it--he went off with their cook when they were living in Japan. That wasn't too nice. So poor Mrs. de Haviland came to Saratoga with these two beautiful little girls. How she came to settle in Saratoga I don't know.

    She married Mr. Fontaine, and Joan took his name. I think he sort of took care of them, although the girls never liked him. But at least it gave them security; she had no money at all. They started acting in a little community house down there in Saratoga.

Crawford: What was Saratoga like then?

Livermore: Saratoga was a cute little sort of summer place in the almond orchards down there. A lot of people lived there, even year-round I think, and the train went down there. It was a nice little community, with sort of free-thinking, interesting people. I went to school there for a short time.

    Another of the big families there was the Goodriches. Chauncey Goodrich. Then there was Mr. Phelan at Montalvo.

Crawford: Olivia de Haviland lives in Paris?

Livermore: Now she does. She married a Frenchman, and she's lived there for years. I think since she ended her career, which is a long time ago now. And then Joan lives in Carmel, and they don't speak.

Crawford: Why? That's bad business, isn't it?

Livermore: Oh, it's so silly. Especially when two sisters get older; who do they have? Joan has nobody; she has a daughter she doesn't speak to. I won't put it in my oral history, but Olivia called me the other day and she said, "I hear Joan is not well." I thought, "Why doesn't she telephone her?" Well, they don't do that.

Crawford: She wanted you to confirm it?

Livermore: She wanted me to confirm it, so I called down there, and I said, "The rumor is that you've been quite ill." So Joan says,

"I'm not ill at all, I'm just building my rose garden here. I'm having a marvelous time." So then I called Olivia back, and I said, "Olivia, you'll be glad to know that she's perfectly well."

More on Russian Hill

Crawford: Anything to add about Russian Hill before we go on to Ross?

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Livermore: Charles Erskine Scott Wood. He was a famous old poet. He lived up there with his mistress. In those days, as I have told you before, I had to know what a mistress was. It sounds like such a happy term, nothing to be ashamed of. My father took me aside one day and said, "George, we don't talk about that." [laughter] I didn't realize he had a perfectly good wife at home. Paul Verdier also had a famous mistress up on the hill there; she lived out on Vallejo Street. He owned the City of Paris, the big department store, and of course, Frenchmen often had mistresses. In France, it didn't mean anything at all. No one ever got divorced, so the wife just had to put up with it, that's all.

Crawford: Who was Verdier's mistress?

Livermore: She was an opera singer. I thought she was glamorous, and I had no idea what their relationship was. But I thought she was great.

Crawford: Did you see her?

Livermore: Yes, I used to see her, and he had performances in that big house up there that's just been sold now, the house on the corner of Taylor and Vallejo. A huge house with a great enormous room that he used to give little operas in, almost next door to us. It was a Russian tea room for a while, and then it was a boarding house for years.

So Verdier was another colorful person up there besides Charles Erskine Scott Wood. Then Alfred Frankenstein and Annie Laurie--one of the first woman reporters.

Crawford: Who did she work for?

Livermore: The *Examiner*. And even before we moved there, Gelett Burgess lived there. Annie's main house was on Florence Street.

Crawford: What was the story about building the new contemporary building on Green Street?

Livermore: Mr. Bricca built this highrise. There weren't any regulations then. So the man next door says, "If you build that building, I'm going to build six inches away and block off all your view." And he did.

Crawford: Is the highrise still there?

Livermore: Yes, but the one next door is much bigger and everything, and it wraps around--it just ruins everything. So my father said, "Well, I guess that's the end of Russian Hill." He wasn't willing to fight for it, like my brother did. My brother Putnam got in there and really fought and lowered the height limit to forty feet and built The Hermitage apartments.



## IV MOVING TO MARIN ##

Life in Ross in the 1930s

Livermore: When my parents built this great big house in Ross, it seemed unlike them. We grew up in that dear old Russian Hill house with its redwood and wicker furniture, and then, all of sudden, we moved into this Georgian mansion.

Crawford: Who built that?

Livermore: Arthur Brown and John Bakewell. Of course, if it had gone to another architect, and Mother said this herself, she would have had a different type of a house. But Arthur Brown had done the city hall and the opera house--he was one of the most famous architects in America. He said, "Norman, you've got to live in a dignified house." So anyway they loved it. My mother and father just adored that house. It was a great success for them. I think we boys should have had a wing of space for us--three of us had already left home. They had moved over with just two boys in the house then; but very young boys.

Crawford: You got some of your ideas there?

Livermore: I got a lot of my ideas there.

Crawford: But you liked Russian Hill better, I gather?

Livermore: I think we all did. I noticed that John in his *New Yorker* article said that he grew up in a big redwood house on Russian Hill. No mention of Ross at all. Of course, John and I were both at Thacher and Norman was at Stanford when we moved over across the bay, and it was awkward to get there. I remember we'd bring girlfriends home from college, and they had to rush to catch the boat to get home in time for lockout.

Crawford: Why did they move?

Livermore: The Eells family lived there--relatives--and had married into some of the other families. Also, my father just decided that he wasn't social at all; he never liked anything social. And Mother didn't even come from San Francisco, so she didn't care. She went over there in 1930 and got active in all of her civic things, and before long they called our house the town hall. She had meetings there about twice a week and got all these things accomplished.

Crawford: What were the major things she did?

Livermore: Well first, she started out with the church; that's the first thing, when she was in the city. She was active in all the Diocesan conventions, and her own local church. That was her big thing when she lived in the city. Mrs. Monteagle was a big shot in the church, and she said, "Caroline, I'll let you have your baby, and then you're going to be on the Mission Committee!" [laughter]

She lived in the city about twenty years. Running a household was a hell of a lot of work. I remember she went out in the morning on Russian Hill and picked out the vegetables from the vegetable truck for the day. Then sitting down as a family was ten and help, so there was a lot of cooking. She did have help so she could get out.

#### Caroline Livermore's Conservation Work

Livermore: Then when she went to Marin County, she began to work in conservation. She helped start the Marin Conservation League and the Marin Art and Garden Center, worked for the Point Reyes National Seashore, the biggest seashore park in the world, and she got Drake's Bay, and she got Shell Beach--

Crawford: You mean that she got them for the government?

Livermore: Yes. She got the Audubon Society building there in Tiburon. She raised the money for all those things. We were a good team too, because twice we worked together. On that particular project, Sam Neider gave me the house if I would take it away. It's a gorgeous Victorian house. Mother got the eighty-year-old owner, Rose Verall--known as the "Goat Lady"--to give seven acres of shorefront to the Audubon Society for the Richardson Bay Wildlife Sanctuary.

Crawford: Who was the "Goat Lady"?

Livermore: She was just a little woman in rubber boots that Mother befriended--nobody else would bother doing that but my mother. She took her to the symphony in her rubber boots. She wanted to tether her goats and live there and that was fine with Mother. [laughter] So Sam gave me the house, and I said, "Mother, we've got to get that house onto your property; onto the seven acres."

So I met with Tom Crowley--our old friend from Russian Hill--and he moved it across the bay free, so that we had the house on the beach. Didn't cost us anything. Then Mother met a lady named Mrs. Dickey at the symphony, and said, "You know, your husband is so interested in birds, could you restore this house in his memory?" And she did!

So they moved the house and put new footings down; and now it's one of the most sensational things to visit. So those are the kinds of things that she did.

Then there was the Colonial Dames building in San Francisco. Mother got a lot free from the Allyne sisters, and I got, from across the street, for one dollar, this wonderful octagon house from PG&E; they were so glad to get rid of it. So we skidded it across the street--

Crawford: On Union Street? That's marvelous.

Livermore: Isn't that a wonderful story?

Crawford: How did you do that?

Livermore: PG&E was going to tear it down, and so they sold it to us for one dollar. But it had to be all restored; same old story. The Colonial Dames were pennypinchers, and Mother said, "For heaven's sake, your savings should go to fix up this house." So they did it. That's the kind of enthusiasm she had. She was a leader, and people loved to work for her, because she always insisted that they get their names in the paper. Don't mind about me, but you be sure to get Mrs. Smith's name in the paper.

And then Angel Island was up for grabs--that was one of her big things--she and two others bought thirty acres of it, so that boats could come and have picnics. Then, in later years, she led the efforts to acquire the rest of the island from the army.

Crawford: She wanted to preserve it.

Livermore: Then the state gave the whole island, and named the mountain Mount Livermore. As I said, she also helped start the Marin Conservation League.

More About Marin Conservation ##

Livermore: Then she got the Art and Garden Center from the Kittles. It was a beautiful piece of property, and when they started selling off parts of it, Mother said, "How could you do such a thing? You know that I want this property for the Art and Garden Center." "Caroline, I'm awful sorry, but the family needs money." Well, the end of the story is they sold it very, very cheaply because of Mother.

Crawford: Did she buy it or did she get her community to buy it?

Livermore: She got a bank loan, signed the note, and raised the funds to pay off the note.

Crawford: Who was on the committee, do you remember?

Livermore: Marin Superior Court Judge Jordan Martinelli and others. I designed the brick wall that goes around it; and it's still there.

Crawford: That's right, there's a story about the bricks, isn't there?

Livermore: They were tearing down a warehouse, and they said they'd give me the bricks, but I only had enough bricks for one thickness, so I made a curved wall, and it supports itself when it's serpentine like that.

Crawford: Who built the building there? Did you?

Livermore: No. Some architect built them. They're just meeting places.

Crawford: What about Stinson Beach?

Livermore: Putnam knows more about this than I do, but I do know a funny story about that: Bill Kent was one of the five Kent boys who owned that spit, and I met him at the club one day, and he said, "George, tell me something will you? Is your mother crazy?" [laughter] "She said she wanted me to give all of our land at Stinson Beach to the State Park." So that's the typical thing that Mother would do.

Crawford: Then he did?

Livermore: Their father gave Muir Woods, but the boys kept Seadrift. Mother said, "Nothing ventured, nothing gained." Stinson Beach has a public beach now, but they didn't get it from the Kents. The Kents developed their land so that it's worth a fortune now.

Crawford: Yes, Seadrift.

Livermore: Yes. Mother said, "I'll try anyway." The same thing way with the beautiful piece over there near Tiburon. The owner didn't ask me if she was crazy, but he said, "My family wants to keep it."

Crawford: She targeted all the beautiful property--

##

Crawford: What about the Conservation League?

Livermore: She founded the Marin Conservation League--she and three other women. They bought a piece of it, then the state came in. Samuel P. Taylor Park was done that way.

Then of course, she'd go down and argue with the supervisors about a variety of things; ladies didn't do things like that. She was called bad names and insulted.

Crawford: Was she? What did your father think?

Livermore: Well, my father was pretty proud of her. He didn't care, because he was interested in conservation too. He supported her too when she gave a few musicals at the house. Of course, our house was called the town hall! She charged a dollar admission at the meetings, and made several hundred dollars for her causes.

Crawford: You mentioned the Music Chest.

Livermore: The Music Chest was her idea too. Marin County was going to be the Wagnerian capital of music. Bayreuth. She got the Dominican convent to make an outdoor theater there, where she gave really wonderful concerts. Symphony, ballet, singers came over from the city, and that was one of her big things. Put lived over there, and so I think he knows more about her civic work than any of us probably.

One of the last things she did when she was eighty years old was to go out with the Boy Scouts and planted the trees you see as you come into Marin County through that tunnel.

Frank Lloyd Wright and the Civic Center

Crawford: She also engaged Frank Lloyd Wright for the Civic Center, didn't she?

Livermore: That was the funniest story. The local county committee had never heard of Frank Lloyd Wright. My mother told them he was the most famous architect in America, so they decided to ask him to design the Civic Center. He came out, and he'd never done a public building--it's the only public building he ever designed that was built--and of course, he just insulted absolutely everybody.

Crawford: Difficult!

Livermore: He just had a talent for that. They said, "Who the hell is this guy?" and my mother said, "You have to believe me. It will just put us on the map if we get him to design the building." Which it did, exactly. He died before it was finished. It's terribly interesting. Of course the roof leaks and everything. Righteous as he is, he probably said, "Put a bucket out? Who cares." He was so arrogant.

Crawford: Do you remember him?

Livermore: Yes. I only met him once, but I never liked his architecture or him.

Crawford: Was he at your house?

Livermore: No. He didn't come to the house. He was a genius in a way, and most of his best things were never built: his best schemes and sketches. He just built houses. But it was so funny that mother wasn't going to give up even after he insulted everybody.

The Livermores and Famous Architects

Crawford: It's interesting how your parents hired well-known architects for their own houses. Willis Polk, Arthur Brown, Stanford White.

Livermore: Well, it was very interesting on Russian Hill. My grandfather, who owned most of the top of Russian Hill, hired Willis Polk to live in his basement there and remodel the house, before he became famous. Then he got other very good architects to build speculative houses up there. So they had an interesting feeling for the hill up there.

Crawford: Yes, they did a beautiful job. Was it your father or your mother who was mostly interested in architecture?

Livermore: I think he was. So many men that I know have said, "If I wasn't selling eggs or something, I'd love to be an architect." It's very appealing to a man to build something. My father was in the construction business; he was in the concrete business and a trained engineer too. Everyone dreams of building something, and he built the Ross house finally. That was one of his masterpieces. He was so proud of that wonderful, big house, and the engineering feat of placing it on a hill.

Arthur Brown was consultant and he had a lot to do with it. He had a lot to do with slicing off the top of the hill. In those days that was something--you had mules--mules came up and scraped off the top of that hill. And the road up was not easy at all. Mrs. Coffin lived down across the valley, and she said, "I'll never drive up there. Much too steep."

Crawford: Describe it, would you--we'll have a picture in the book.

Livermore: Oh, marvelous. It was just so beautiful, brick veneer with a slate roof. Then, when they died we sold it because nobody could live that way any more in a big house. As I told you, they tore it down.

Crawford: I read a story about your mother, that she wanted to have some pillars taken out, I think, because she wanted to seat more people at meetings, and so she went ahead and did it without asking your father.

Livermore: That's just what she did. She didn't dare ask my father because he would have said no. She had it all planned ahead, and when he came home that night from the office, the beam was already put in and the pillars had been removed. [laughter]

- Crawford: Because the pillars were obstructions?
- Livermore: Exactly. And she had portable chairs all set down, just like a lecture hall. With the beam across, there wasn't a need for support. That was pretty smart.
- Crawford: Right. What was the family connection with Stanford White?
- Livermore: When her mother built her house in Galveston in 1888, she told my grandfather, "I'm going to go to New York to find out who the best architect is. I'm just not going to get somebody in Texas." She found that Stanford White was the most famous architect in their time, hired him, and it's the only house he built in the south. Now it's being used by the University of Texas; it's still there.

It's a wonderful old house, and that generation was already hiring architects and doing that sort of thing. My Livermore grandfather and grandmother didn't have much, so my grandmother built those cute little Julia Morgan houses.

- Crawford: Which are so wonderful.
- Livermore: Oh, they're delightful. Charming. In all the Bay Area books, they show that city house. The very top of the hill is my grandfather's house, which we grew up in. Then right next door is this cute little house tumbling down the hill.

#### Other Family Involvements ##

- Crawford: Was your father in favor of all your mother's conservation work?
- Livermore: As long as he was taken care of, housekeeping-wise, he was really sort of proud of her, and what she did. I remember Mrs. Crawford Greene was one of her best friends, she wrote a beautiful letter to her, she said, "Caroline, I just admire what you do so tremendously. Some of us have our talents wrapped in a napkin." That's so beautifully put--in other words, her husband didn't want her to do these things.
- Crawford: Your father was very active in the Save the Redwoods League?
- Livermore: Very. Oh, yes, he was active in many things. But he didn't care that mother was giving one of her church teas. Of course,

Crawford Greene didn't like the idea of his wife doing all the civic work.

Crawford: Your father was with Coffin & Redington?

Livermore: Yes, what happened when the Depression came was that they asked him to be president. He had such a good business head. His father joined the company in 1856.

Crawford: How did the Depression affect the family?

Livermore: Of course it affected everyone. My father worked half-time for the new company, and half-time for his own investment company. He got a nice salary for being president, and it certainly helped the company too; and that was during the time when everything was so terrible. I couldn't stand that commute for a minute, but it didn't bother him at all. He took the ferryboat and the train every day.

Crawford: Your mother was also involved with the Robert E. Lee Memorial House. How did that come about?

Livermore: Yes, the red brick mansion down near Williamsburg, Virginia, where he was born. Her sister was on the board in the East, and she made Caroline the Western representative.

Crawford: So she traveled?

Livermore: Oh, yes, she traveled to go back to religious meetings quite a lot. All by train, too, of course. She got to be head of the whole Women's Auxiliary of the Episcopal Church, and she was the first woman ever to do that. The women did all the work, and men got all the glory. It was just awful, especially in the church; it just didn't seem right. [laughter]

Crawford: Was there a church in Calistoga that she was involved in?

Livermore: No. It was too far to drive down there. We always sang hymns at home; we had our own little service at the house. But that road was so terrible before it was paved.

Crawford: How about your father's involvements?

Livermore: He was San Francisco vice president of the Boy Scouts, and was always interested in that.

Crawford: I read that he was a fabulous rider, but that he had accidents; riding accidents.

Livermore: Yes, he had a terrible coach accident, and his leg never healed right. I don't know how he ever got in the army, but he did. Somehow or another he faked it. But it was hard for him. We went on a final pack trip in 1933, and it was painful for him. The brothers continued to make pack trips every year.

Crawford: What was that like?

Livermore: Just so beautiful! There's nothing like getting up in the Sierra Mountains, and sleeping under the stars.

Crawford: Did your mother go?

Livermore: She went just once. She and Mrs. Greene went, and the costumes they wore were funny. Just sort of ill-fitting tweed skirts, because they never wore pants; never thought of wearing pants. And funny little hats. We were related to the Eells, Kittles, Greenes, Coffins, and the Dibblees. It was like England over there. Her husband, Crawford Greene, was from New England. He came out here, and he married one of these serene ladies--a Coffin lady educated in Paris by tutors. He was a very distinguished lawyer and leading citizen, but sort of a martinet.

The families were intermarried, and when we got over to Marin County, of course, our relatives all greeted us. So we got into the clubs and all the things that are hard to do.

Crawford: What were the clubs at the time?

Livermore: Well, there was one called the Lagunitas Club and the Meadow Club and Marin Country Club. It was fun for us in the vacation times, but it was hard to get there. You couldn't go anywhere without a car, of course. The younger boys did ride their bicycles around; it's all right going downhill, but it wasn't so good going uphill.

Crawford: Is the house still there?

Livermore: No, it's not. We sold the house, and they tore it down. They built a Japanese house--they said the ghosts of the Livermores were too much. [laughter]

## V MONTESOL

[Interview 2: November 8, 1996] ##

First Memories

Crawford: Let us talk about Montesol, and maybe you can tell me how Stevenson came to spend his honeymoon at Montesol?

Livermore: Well, he came from a dour old Scot-Presbyterian family, and he himself had the greatest sense of words there ever was. He's a writer's writer. You never heard of a writer that didn't admire Robert Louis Stevenson. So he had the genius--this gift of words. His father wanted him to be a doctor or a lawyer, or some big-shot and wouldn't help him at all, and he had very bad health; he had had tuberculosis all of his life. So he took the immigrant ship to the U.S. because he didn't have any money and went all the way from Scotland to New York on this rough sea voyage.

He went right through New York, and then took the immigrant train again and got to San Francisco in 1879, where he married a woman that he had met in France. Where could he go on his honeymoon with no money at all? Someone suggested this old mine shaft and Stevenson said, "That's good enough for me"--and he had a rugged wife. So they spent their honeymoon of several months in this old Silverado mining town. That was the mine where the vein had given out. This ties us into Montesol because he went there the same week that my grandmother went to the sanitarium for tuberculosis. I think they must have met; I don't know. They were both so sick and spent most of the time lying in bed.

Crawford: Did he die there?

Livermore: No, he died in Samoa. He went back--his father decided he had married a good woman because she took care of him in that mine shaft, and he did send him enough money to go back to Scotland.

Crawford: The water and air must have been healthy.

Livermore: The water and of course the gorgeous climate. Wonderful climate. That's why old Dr. Blake started the sanitarium, and that's the beginning of Montesol. Stevenson's wife went riding quite a bit up there when she was at Silvered, and he went down to the wineries once in a while; went on the old stagecoach. It's all written up in his book called *Silverado Squatters*.

So anyway, he went back to Scotland and wrote all of his famous books, but my grandmother died. She was too far gone. My grandfather bought eight acres to be near her, and he'd go up and visit. They slept in tents--the patients all slept in tents out of doors, just as they did later on in Switzerland. But he bought this wonderful old place with a house on it, and we've been back there every single summer since 1880.

After her death he came back with the four little children. His mother-in-law--the mother of the girl who died--went up there by stagecoach, six-horse stagecoach, to take care of the children. So Montesol was founded really on tragedy. Then, one of my grandmother's good friends, Helen Eells, from Oakland, wrote to him, and he married her. He had one child by her, and that was Beth.

Crawford: What are your first memories of Montesol?

Livermore: Well, my first memories of Montesol are just wonderful. In the summertime, we packed up and left for three whole months in this wonderful atmosphere up in the mountain, with a glorious climate, and a certain amount of discipline. We had to do a lot of work up there: cleaning out the pools, picking berries and pears and so forth.

Crawford: So it was a paying operation?

Livermore: Yes, a paying operation. Eventually it was; but not for a long time. He thought that was good discipline for his five sons too. Instead of signing a chit at a country club, which many other boys did, we were up there working, and having wonderful summers.

Crawford: You said that Montesol and Thacher were the two most important things about your childhood.

Livermore: I don't think my brothers would all agree on that, but those two places represent the spirit of our family. Places where every teenage boy should be, if possible.

- Crawford: I think you mentioned that one of the Thachers helped you?
- Livermore: Well, he helped me personally--one of my great problems was stuttering; I used to stutter. So, we all had to prepare something for "News of the Week," and you know when you're thirteen years old, you're pretty shy anyway, but if you can't speak, it's even worse than that. I told him I couldn't recite it in class. He said, "There's no question at all, you will just do it." And I did, of course, I got through it. Then he put me in all of his plays. I never stuttered in a play, and in two years, I was completely cured.
- Crawford: You got over it completely?
- Livermore: Occasionally I'll hesitate over one word or something, but I'm clever enough now to change the word around.
- Crawford: What's the cause of it?
- Livermore: Nobody knows.
- Crawford: What was Thacher like?
- Livermore: The buildings were sort of shabby, the wind whistled through the cracks, and we had no hot water; it was pretty rugged. Now, of course, the buildings are beautiful down there. I'd love to have my granddaughter go, but of course, it's so expensive it's just out of the question.
- Crawford: Must be. Well, all five boys went there.
- Livermore: They all went there; now twelve of us have gone there. My oldest brother, Norman, had three boys; they all went to Thacher. And one of my boys went there. And then my brother Bob had twins, a boy and girl, and they both went to Thacher.
- Crawford: You got your love of camping there, didn't you?
- Livermore: Yes. That's where we really got our love of camping because we'd go off on the weekends. Wonderful camaraderie. Into the beautiful mountains over the hill there, and into the forests. Then we were all on the gymkhana team, which is saddling races and all sorts of events on a horse.
- Crawford: You all learned horsemanship.
- Livermore: You have to have a horse at Thacher. You have to buy one, or have one somehow in the first year. The school feels that it's very good discipline for a thirteen-year-old child to take care

of a horse, and clean out the manure and do all those grubby things, because a lot of these young people nowadays are awfully spoiled.

Crawford: Yes, I agree. Did all of your brothers ride equally well?

Livermore: Yes, we all rode there. I would say my older brother Norman pushed it into a business really, because he went into the Sierra Mountains and became a mule packer. He was president of the Mule Packers Association, and we all worked for him in the summertime. It was very nice.

Crawford: I remember reading that David Brower said he thought Norman, your brother, would have liked to have that be his career.

Livermore: Yes. Well, he had a very good deal until he started getting a big family, then he realized that he had to have more of a year-round steady job, because this was only in the summertime. Then in the wintertime, he worked for Price Waterhouse, and he had a job in London one winter. Then he got into the Pacific Lumber Company in the 1950s and 1960s, and became treasurer of that, and then moved to San Rafael in 1953, and had five children. Of course, he was eight years in Sacramento with Reagan, but Thacher gave him his start in loving the mountains, I would say that.

#### Expanding Montesol

Crawford: Let's talk a bit more about expanding Montesol.

Livermore: Montesol started with eight acres, purchased in 1880. Then my father bought two big purchases in the twenties: one was the Sutro Place.

Crawford: Let's talk about the Sutro Place.

Livermore: The Sutro Place was to the west of us; up Mt. St. Helena through the mountains right there. Then, at the same time, he bought the Oat Hill Mine property, and they were both, I would say, approximately two thousand acres each.

Crawford: And Oat Hill Mine was a working mine?

Livermore: Yes, a working quicksilver mine. During World War II, we re-worked the old dumps--the process in 1890 wasn't so good, and the dumps were still full of quicksilver. My father made a

nice little income during World War II from that, because that's when you need mercury; it goes way up in price in wartime.

Crawford: For armaments?

Livermore: Yes, so he was glad to have bought that old mine; he only bought it because it was adjacent to us. Then we brothers have bought a big hunk of land in Bear Valley.

Crawford: And how about the Silverado property?

Livermore: We never did buy that. That's now part of a state park.

Crawford: Oh, I see George Dyer's name is on that.

Livermore: That's right. The state in about 1946 made most of the mountain into a state park. We own the top two hundred acres where we now have the television station, Channel 50. So now, we have two income-producing ventures, and we have our houses up there.

Crawford: What was the original house at Montesol?

Livermore: That was the one we bought in 1880. It was almost finished, and then in all those years until 1946, it was added onto until it was a huge old house, with sleeping porches and extra bathrooms and other rooms. It was a wonderful, big, huge house with four guest rooms. So, of course, its burning down was a terrible shock. My father lived four years in the new little house that he built in the early fifties. That's the one Norman has now. All five of us have a house there on the ranch.

Crawford: I want to find out about each one of those, but first I want to go back to 1923, when your father took a whole year off to go big game-hunting in Africa.

Livermore: He took two years off to go to the war first. It was pretty exciting; he didn't have to go, because he had two children, but he wanted to go, and it was a wonderful thing for him. Fortunately, he didn't get killed, and it was a great experience. Then just a few years later, in 1923, he took a year off to go big game-hunting. My mother always said that she allowed him to go. It was very nice of her, because it was quite a big thing to go off for a whole year like that.

Crawford: I should say so. Did he go with friends?

Livermore: He was the first white person to go to the Ngoro Ngoro Crater. First white man. He went with his friend, Andy Newberry, and a safari of ninety-three people; imagine. It was one of the last "foot safaris"--they are all done by Jeep now, of course.

Of course, he just loved it, and gave lectures for years about it. That's about the last interesting thing he did. The rest of the time, he just was trying to get out of the Depression and sending us to good schools. What a wonderful man he was. He also helped his mother and three sisters.

Crawford: How did Montesol expand?

Livermore: Over time, we each built a house up at Montesol. It's funny that women do not like to share houses. I don't know why; but women, God bless them, they're nesters and they want their own place. My wife said, "If it's *my* grease, that's one thing. If it's *your* grease, it's different."

Crawford: Do you want to talk about that? How each house was built?

Livermore: Yes. I think it was a good thing because it forced us into all having separate houses to make the wives happy.

Crawford: Were you the architect?

Livermore: I was the architect of all of them, yes. As I told you, my grandfather died in 1916, so my grandmother very tactfully built two lovely Julia Morgan houses: one in Montesol and one here in the city.

So that house is there in Montesol, and Putnam has that one, and then Norman is in my parent's house. My wife Jinny and I remodeled the old carriage house into a colorful house, which is still there, and then my brother John built the last new, big grand new house. He could afford that because he's a bachelor. [laughter] We use that for our big Thanksgiving dinner now. Then my brother Bob had four children, so he built a house for himself too, so there are five houses there now.

They all have different designs; the Julia Morgan is just beautiful: shingles and very rustic and rough. Put owns both of those houses. It seems funny that the bachelor brother got the two finest houses, but the others didn't want them especially. The one in the country is way off in the woods, and children like activity; so we let the bachelor brother have that house.

Crawford: That's kept you fairly busy. That's a lot of places to design and build.

Livermore: Oh yes. I had my eightieth birthday, and I don't like birthdays usually. But I said to the children, "If you could have it at Montesol, it would be wonderful." So we did have it at Montesol.

The Hands at Montesol ##

Crawford: Do you remember the foremen at Montesol?

Livermore: Oh, yes, Chester Johnson. When the Depression came, my father said, "Chester, I just can't pay you anything any more. What I'm going to do is just to give you what you can get out of the place; that's all." Times were so bad, and he already had debts from the new house in Ross. So Chester took in the crops and made enough to live on until 1937.

Crawford: The crops at that time were what?

Livermore: Well, we had some prunes and we had pears. Pears were a big thing. We won prizes at the state fairs for our pears. That's when Chester was there. Walnuts were the main crop.

Crawford: That's good pear country, isn't it?

Livermore: Wonderful. Since then, the pears have gotten a disease, so we have no pears at all, but we still have walnuts.

Crawford: I read about Frank Johnson, too. Were they father and son?

Livermore: They were; they were father and son. Chester took over in 1925.

Crawford: Did you use horses to work the property in those days?

Livermore: Oh yes. We had work horses, and saddle horses, the horses, huge work horses called Duke and Chub; I remember that. The cover crops were planted with the team, and the team hauled all the boxes of walnuts and pears. Of course, that's some time ago, now, but right up until the thirties we had that team of horses.

Crawford: How much help did you have then?

Livermore: In the old days, we had the foreman and about five men. They lived right on the place there: rugged old, hard-working men. One took care of the vegetable garden, one milked the cows and did chores, and another did the heavy work with the team. We did a lot of land-clearing at that time; clearing land for the orchard. So, there was a lot of rugged work to be done, then all of a sudden it was just Chester and his wife.

Since then, the Williams family came, and they were there for forty-two years. Think of that! Ralph Williams never spent a single night off the ranch. His son had three little girls. Now if you went up on the weekend, there would be no one there at all. Well, you can't demand that they stay there. Women don't like Montesol. Let's face it--men like it--but it's too remote; women don't want to be that far from neighbors.

Pete and Veronica McGee are there now, with their two little girls. And they go to Middletown, which is much closer for their school and shopping.

Crawford: That's a lovely town.

Livermore: Yes, and not a bad road. They go to the school there. We're delighted that, at last, we have someone who's connected with Middletown, instead of Calistoga.

Crawford: What was the Toll Road?

Livermore: The Toll Road was privately owned by the Lawleys. It was a very good dirt road that was used by the big stage from Calistoga to the Lake County resorts. Families used to go to resorts there in those days, they don't any more, and stay for at least a month.

Crawford: I've seen the photograph of your aunt traveling that road in the stage. Well, what was Clear Lake like?

Livermore: In the old days, it was an enormous excursion to get there. We'd go and have a picnic, and go swimming, and we'd love that. Recently we had a friend who came up and stayed with my son, who had a big boat, and we all went to Clear Lake, and had the most wonderful time water skiing, and having a picnic. So that's something new, and we can also go to Lake Berryessa, which is an enormous lake. So now we have those two things besides tennis and swimming.

Crawford: It sounds like paradise.

Livermore: Oh, it is, it really is.

Replacing the Original House

Crawford: What was the small house like?

Livermore: What small house?

Crawford: The house that was built after the fire.

Livermore: When I started designing that house for my father, he said, "The corner's going to be right here. Right here." I said, "Dad, we haven't even designed the house yet." He said, "I don't care, that's the edge of the house, right there."

Crawford: Why?

Livermore: I guess he loved the location; it had a nice view and a little vineyard next to it. I was very proud of the house. As a matter of fact, my sister-in-law, who lives in it now, finds it very comfortable and livable.

Crawford: Is it a ranch style house?

Livermore: Yes, ranch style and all on one floor because they didn't want to go up and down stairs. It was quite small; they've added onto it since then, a little guest house and a guest wing. They have three big bedrooms, plus their bedroom. So it's a nice house. Then I have the carriage house, to which I just added a spectacular room made of telegraph poles. John built his beautiful, big, new house about six years ago. He wanted a place so he could be by himself, and not have to stay with us all the time; sort of a log cabin-type thing. I said, "Couldn't you build it just a little bit bigger so we could all use it?" [laughter]

Crawford: Did he?

Livermore: Yes, and it's given us so much pleasure--he has his own bedroom and bath with a key, that's just for him. Then upstairs, he built two wonderful guest rooms that we use all the time, and this huge big room where we have our big family dinners. So that's the center of all of our activities. Then as I said, Putnam has the Julia Morgan house in the woods--just charming--and Bob has a very nice house. Everything's within shouting distance, which is nice.

The Van Ness Property and the Jake Property

Crawford: What was the Van Ness property?

Livermore: Well the Van Nesses--goodness knows how they ever found that property--but it was when he was mayor of San Francisco.

Crawford: Was that a fashionable place?

Livermore: Well, in the summertime everyone always went away, because it's foggy here in the summer. I had a friend who always went to Pebble Beach, and another one went to Woodside, and another went to Marin County, and a lot went to Tahoe. Van Ness liked it up there; it was good hunting--deer hunting. He went up there with his four children and built this very nice house, which we own now.

Crawford: What was that house like?

Livermore: A clapboard house. I can't describe it really. It was almost Victorian; built at the end of the century in the 1890s. But it had a big veranda--enormous veranda. And in those days, you lived out on the veranda in the hot weather. And old Mrs. Van Ness never got out of her chair, I don't think. It was sort of an outdoor living room.

Crawford: Where is that from the ranch?

Livermore: That's quite a ways from Montesol, about two miles.

Crawford: How much land?

Livermore: That was seven hundred acres.

Crawford: Do you use that property?

Livermore: The Livermores take turns using this house.

Crawford: What about Jake's area?

Livermore: Well, Jake's property is about 120 acres. That's way up on the cliff, a beautiful little piece of property, but we've never done anything with it; it's hard to get to.

Crawford: You have a lot of lodgings up there on the property.

Livermore: Oh, yes. We have eleven.

Crawford: Did the Scouts ever come to the ranch, or did any groups use it for a retreat?

Livermore: Yes. The Scouts come up all the time camping at our lake. Once in a while, we've let somebody come up to the houses, but rarely, although I've suggested it. The new man is living in my house now, and until the old one leaves. He just loves it. It's a funny old, rough house with lots of room in it, and a big fireplace.

### The Third Generation at Montesol

Crawford: Let's go on to the third generation. The five Livermore brothers. You took over and formed a partnership when your father died in 1953.

Livermore: Yes, and the first thing we did in our first meeting when Dad died was to put cash into Montesol, so that we wouldn't have to worry about it. That was a nest-egg for Montesol, until we could figure out how to run it, because my father had done it all by himself. He didn't think we could manage, but our professions fit right in.

Crawford: How do you mean?

Livermore: Norman is in the lumber business, so he helps us sell our lumber. I'm an architect; I build all the houses. John is a mining engineer; he takes care of our quicksilver mines, and geology for spring water.

Then you can't even turn around without having a lawyer, so that's my fourth brother, Put. And then when you're running a farm, you should have a farmer, and that's Robert. So our professions all work together to manage the place.

I told you before that we didn't go into Dad's businesses. If he had said, "George, you're going to take my position at the bank," I would have done it. Or my brother Bob could have gone into the Del Monte canned goods business. My father was on that board. But Bob didn't to do that, he wanted to be independent. In other words, instead of pushing up into the things we didn't want, he let us go our own ways. I have a friend, for instance, who was pushed into the Leslie Salt Company, and he was a very delightful, creative, wonderful person, and it just simply crushed him. Strict old father and brother; criticized all the time.

Crawford: Very important and unusual. We didn't talk much about the Bear Valley property.

Livermore: We five of us purchased Bear Valley, and that's one of our favorite pieces of properties. It has these great cliffs overlooking the Napa Valley, and it's not worth anything really, except to us. It's fairly good for deer hunting, but it is rocky and terribly hot in the summertime; imagine that it resembles the African area in Kenya.

Crawford: How much acreage?

Livermore: I guess that's about fifteen hundred acres. It all adds up now to over seven thousand acres. It's a unique property; and people don't even know it's there.

Crawford: What about the mountain?

Livermore: We bought the two hundred acres on the top of the mountain. We all looked each other in the eye, and said, "Everybody wants to own a mountain-top, it's just basic." [laughter] And it didn't cost very much. We didn't know about the television station, of course, because in those days there was no television. So here we have the top of the highest mountain around there--perfect for tv.

Crawford: Did your mother convert any of that to public access park?

Livermore: My father donated forty of the eight hundred or so acres for the Robert Louis Stevenson Park.

Crawford: Is it hard to reach?

Livermore: No. There's a big parking lot on the top of the hill, and there's a road where you have to park. It's a walking park, and all of us are very anxious to keep it a walking park, because there are so many parks for rich people--with skiing, and boating, and horseback, and dune buggies, and so forth. It's a beautiful hike to the top of the mountain. We still have access because of our two hundred acres at the top. We have to get up there, but actually no one can go up that road. It's very restricted.

Crawford: What about Starr Lake?

Livermore: Starr Lake was built by the brothers in 1963, and we put two big dams in; some of it paid for by the government, which was nice. John helped fix the lake so that it wouldn't leak: took all the water out and fixed the holes. He is the only

bachelor, and he's our richest brother, so when he wants to he can help out. Now it's full all year; it's just so beautiful.

Crawford: Is it a nice swimming lake?

Livermore: In the summertime it's perfect because our swimming pool comes right out of the spring and it's awfully cold. The lake is much warmer, and we have an island, a boat, and a beach. My son Dick has just fixed what we call the Lake House, which was for the help who lived up there, and he and his wife have moved into that house. That's one of the eleven houses I told you about.

Crawford: Your mother celebrated her eightieth birthday at Montesol in 1963?

Livermore: Yes, they had a wonderful family party there. Relatives came from the east and she was in very good shape even when she was eighty and a little bit after too. She died in 1968. My father had his eightieth birthday up there too, years before. Then we had the centennial; that was the greatest thing--in 1980. A great big party for people who had been there before, or relatives of people who had been there before.

Crawford: Have you had a number of fires at Montesol?

Livermore: Oh, we've had an awful lot of fires. The continuation of no rain for months, and the heat--every single fall you see in the newspaper there's some terrible fire some place; forest fire. But 1964 was the worst one. It burned a great part of our ranch. Two thousand acres burned, but no houses were damaged.

Crawford: The Blake House burned?

Livermore: Yes, the Blake House burned. That's where my wife and I lived before we got divorced. That was the old house at the sanitarium I told you about. We bought the place from Dr. Blake in about 1900. He went to live in Middletown and died there. It always was the foreman's house; all the time we all lived up there, and then in 1960 my family thought of using it, so we remodeled it and used it from 1960 to 1970, when it burned down.

Ranch Enterprises: Walnuts to Water

Crawford: What periods in the ranch's history was it self-sufficient or profitable?

Livermore: I know my father said it was sixty years before the walnuts made a profit. No wonder farmers are pessimistic. But he was very proud of that. Of course, we made a fairly good income on the walnuts, but our expenses went up so high at the ranch that it never paid for all our expenses, until we got the other two sources of income--water and tv.

Crawford: Could you talk about developing the water "crop"?

Livermore: The water. That only has happened recently. The water is fresh spring, and it all flows into Lake County. We never could have done anything if it flowed into Napa County, because they're so strict about water rights. But we dug a well, and we sell it to the Calistoga Bottling Company, who used to sell nothing but charged water--sparkling mineral water. Now people suddenly love spring water. I don't know why.

Crawford: It's an enormous industry.

Livermore: Yes, and the media helps--"Oh, you can't drink tap water, that's just terrible for you." [laughter] It's helping us, of course.

Crawford: When did this get started?

Livermore: This just got started about six years ago. The trucks go up the road, fill up with our water, and go back. Eight trucks per day.

Crawford: Is that lucrative?

Livermore: Oh yes, it is. Of course, we had a lot of expenses starting the operation, but eventually it will be very lucrative. They bottle it right in Calistoga.

Crawford: What was the geothermal lease with AMAX?

Livermore: That's all volcanic area around Montesol. Mt. St. Helena used to be a volcano, and on the west slope of the mountain are unbelievable steam jets. PG&E caps those to produce power, and they came to us asking if they could dig up there, but they didn't get any steam after drilling 8,000 feet down.

Crawford: So that didn't work out. What about the television station?

Livermore: They pay a good rental up there for that.

Crawford: So you're paying your bills?

Livermore: We're paying our bills, which is wonderful. We always say if we get hit by a truck next week, the cousins--all the children --thirteen children, will have a self-supporting place. They could sell it or keep it.

##

Livermore: It's nice that we have a Livermore living at Montesol now for the first time in a hundred years. Bob's daughter Sarah just got married to a nice fellow from Calistoga, and I don't think they'll live there forever, but it's nice because he works in Calistoga and so does she.

Crawford: What are they doing?

Livermore: He and his mother run a hotel and restaurant there. He was the head of the Chamber of Commerce there, is now Chairman of Calistoga's long-range planning committee. [He has just run for mayor--Ed.] It's a lot of work keeping the restaurant going and everything. It has ups and downs of course; it's much more popular in the summertime than in the winter.

Crawford: Is that Calistoga Hotel?

Livermore: I think it's called the "Calistoga Inn." It's just as you come into town there. It's been very successful, and he's doing very well.

Crawford: Well, let's talk about the centennial before we move on.

Livermore: Well, the centennial was really marvelous because we tried to invite people who had relatives who had been there over the period of a hundred years. We got a few, I think, and we asked all our neighbors and friends, and had a great, big, huge picnic, a summer barbecue. In fact I have a video record of that which I should give to you.

Crawford: We'd like to have a copy of that.

Livermore: It was the first video we ever did up there, in 1980, and I thought it turned out quite well. Nothing was rehearsed, and Norman and I sort of passed the microphone back and forth to each other and told stories about Montesol.

Crawford: We'll place it with the oral history.

Places to Go, and Things to Know: A Map of Montesol

Livermore: Yes, it's really quite nicely done. Also, I wrote a poem during the war, when we were all so homesick for the place, about the sounds and sights and sensations of Montesol; I listed them. So that's our Montesol poem now. It's just a list of the beautiful things about our ranch which we love so much.

Crawford: We'll add that, certainly. I have also a little map of Montesol that was prepared by your brother, I gather, for the centennial. It's entitled "Places to Go, and Things to Know," and it has things like the Gaut trout pond, the pig-rookard loop, and the peregrine falcon eyrie.

Livermore: It's very exciting, because we're all great conservationists. The peregrine falcon was almost extinct, it's an endangered species, and now we have them up in our cliffs overlooking the valley. The state pays people to try to help the species come back, and they put plastic eggs in the nest, and then climb up to the nest of ropes, it's fascinating to watch them, and the dear old mother hen doesn't know the difference; kind of mean really. So she just keeps sitting on those plastic eggs, and then they go back some time later, and they replace the eggs with live chicks.

Crawford: Oh, they hatch the eggs?

Livermore: Yes, they hatch the eggs. We love that. We always have a session when they come up and change the eggs; we go and watch them.

Crawford: So you're keeping the falcons alive. That's a very large contribution, isn't it, really?

Livermore: That's terrific, yes.

Crawford: And then there's an Edith Trail. That must be for your aunt?

Livermore: Yes, my Aunt Edith. There's always lots to do up there. I think the trouble with life nowadays for everybody, including the Livermores, is that we have less and less time to spend up there. For instance, my grandson is going to spend the weekend with me, and he's only eleven, and he already has a memorandum

of all the things he has to do all the time. There's Boy Scouts here, and this and that, and meeting, and meetings. It's amazing!

Crawford: It's too busy.

Livermore: Too busy. And we used to go up there and spend three whole months doing nothing much. But not anymore.



## VI THE LIVERMORE BROTHERS: TRAVEL, UNIVERSITIES, AND CAREERS

[Interview 3: November 25, 1996] ##

Visiting Europe, 1928 and 1936; Going Off to Stanford, 1932;  
and New Careers

Crawford: Talk about your European trip when you were fourteen.

Livermore: That, of course, was the biggest, most exciting, eye-opening thing, I guess, in my early life, because I always fantasized; I love imagination, and used to love the stories of castles and palaces. When I got over there and actually saw them, I just couldn't believe it. We went on a wonderful tour of France, Germany and England; just those three countries.

Crawford: With your mother?

Livermore: With my mother, and my aunt. That favorite aunt I was telling you about, and my older brother. I could remember every moment of that trip. It was magical. I had a wonderful preview of these great buildings that I would eventually study.

Crawford: And you already wanted to be an architect?

Livermore: Already wanted to be an architect. That trip also gave me the introduction to conservative architecture, because those European buildings were not the Le Corbusiers or any of those wild and modern things. So that was a wonderful experience, just at that age too.

Crawford: That was a summer trip?

Livermore: Yes. Then I went again--in 1936, when I graduated from Stanford, I went with Jim Greene, the Greene family, and we went over again for the summer in Europe. My older brother Norman was in the Olympic games in 1936, so we all went over to

see him play baseball in the Olympic games. Hitler had made so many improvements there since our 1928 trip.

Crawford: In Berlin?

Livermore: Yes. Then we went down to Venice, and up through Paris. So that was another wonderful summer. After the 1928 trip, the 1936 trip.

Crawford: You mentioned that Norman was in the 1936 Olympics.

Livermore: In 1936. He was on the baseball team. It was kind of an exhibition baseball team because the Europeans don't play baseball. That was an honor, and my brother John and I went over to see him play with Hitler standing up there in the stadium.

Crawford: What do you remember?

Livermore: I remember Hitler especially. It was so marvelous. They had a camp for all the athletes. And my brother Norman was there. John and I stayed--Hitler arranged to have everybody stay in people's homes. They're weren't enough hotels. We thought Hitler was just fine. He made his country so clean. This was before the Holocaust.

Crawford: There wasn't much overt anti-Semitism?

Livermore: No. I couldn't see it. Actually, the anti-Semitism was always there, but none of those terrible camps were there yet. Many of the architects had already come to the U.S.--for instance, Gropius was the great architect of the Bauhaus, and he must not have liked it over there. So he went to Harvard, and started there.

Crawford: He was Jewish?

Livermore: He was Jewish. Then Thomas Mann was another famous author, and he came out to Hollywood. Many great--who is that famous scientist with the frizzled hair? Einstein! He came very early. But they just left of their own will. You kind of sense you're not liked, and you leave.

Crawford: There wasn't talk of it?

Livermore: No, no one talked about it. I didn't realize these people were all Jewish. Bruno Walter became a famous conductor. A lot them said, "I don't care. This is my home."

Crawford: At one point Hitler said that Jewish musicians could not play Aryan composers. They could only play Mendelssohn and other Jewish composers.

Livermore: Yes. All those awful people were not very musical really. They liked Wagner because Wagner was an anti-Semite himself. They liked his crashing music. Also, Wagner did not like Jews; he was open about it. But, Mendelssohn--they could play his work.

I think Strauss was the one person that was sort of wavering on the fence all the time. He was the greatest composer in Germany at that time--at Hitler's time. They allowed him to stay, I think. When we were there in '36, we thought he was great. But, that was a long time ago--then we all went back to school after that.

Crawford: Where did you stay in 1936?

Livermore: Well, I just stayed at little small hotels. We never went to grand hotels. I remember the hotel in Venice was right under that clock where two men come out and hit a gong, and our hotel was right under that. I'd been to Venice before too, but that 1936 trip was just magical. Then in 1950, my wife had never been anywhere, so I took her to Europe so she could share my love of architecture. We bought a funny little car, a little Fiat Italian car, which was a wonderful experience, and when we got to Naples, the car was sitting right on the dock, waiting for us there. We drove all over Italy, and Switzerland, and France for three months, and it was the most perfect time--she just loved it, and it gave us more to talk about except just the diapers, and the children.

Crawford: Good for you. Let's talk today about Stanford.

Livermore: Yes. I followed Norman to Stanford just because he was my oldest brother, and I thought I would go there. We all started out at Miss Paul's School, and we all went to Potter School after that, and we all went to Thacher's after that, and then three went to Stanford and two went to Cal. I just never thought of going any place else. When I got to Yale, I really liked it a lot more than I did Stanford; it suited my temperament.

Crawford: What did you find at Stanford that wasn't pleasant?

Livermore: They used to call Stanford the Farm all the time, and I was trying to head for architecture, but they had no architecture there at all. There was a great engineering department, so I

took what they called the pre-architectural curriculum. Lots of mathematics, which I hate. Lots of mechanical drawing, and things like that. Some history of art and architecture. I liked that because I traveled an awful lot, and I knew a lot about the buildings in Europe. I went when I was fourteen years old with my mother and brother.

Crawford: Were you at the Beaux Arts?

Livermore: No, my father wanted me to go, but when I finally got there, it was not what it had been. A generation earlier, when Arthur Brown went there, any good architect went to the Beaux Arts, but not in my generation.

I don't have much to say about Stanford; isn't that funny?

Crawford: No special professors?

Livermore: No. I was in the same fraternity that my brother was in; Alpha Delta Pi. Most of my Stanford friends were from Los Angeles. A lot of my San Francisco friends all went to Ivy League schools, but all my southern California friends went to Stanford.

Crawford: Why did you choose Stanford then, instead of going back East?

Livermore: Well, I guess just because my brother had gone there, and I just followed him everywhere. I liked it at Stanford; I don't feel especially loyal to it. My biggest education there was getting along with people I think, because from the small, quiet schools--all-male schools--I was just dumped in this huge pit of lots of people. That was good for me.

Crawford: How big was Stanford then?

Livermore: I think it was only four thousand. There were five hundred girls, only. Not allowed to have more than five hundred. Of course, the girls just competed for years, trying to be admitted. Wilbur was the president then, but he was back in Washington. He was President Hoover's Secretary of the Interior. I can't even remember this man's name, but he was taking Wilbur's place while he was gone. I remember we all went to a reception at his house. I was fond of Stanford, especially fond of the girls. [laughter] All those sorority girls, and we'd bring them back to Ross for the weekend. That was something new, because I had no sisters, and no social experience with the girls until Stanford.

Graduate Work at Yale: 1936-1940

Livermore: After Stanford, I went to Yale, which is all men again. Four years, of just working--you worked so hard that you couldn't think of anything but your studies.

Crawford: You worked hard, did you?

Livermore: Oh my God. Morning, noon and night.

Crawford: Did you find it very difficult?

Livermore: No. The first year was difficult, but when I got through the first year, I was proud of myself, and then the next years were not so hard. I've always loved the theater so much that I'd get on the train, and get to New York, and go to see two shows in one day, and then come home. Cash a ten-dollar check; and ten dollars would pay for round trip to New York and back, two shows, and a sandwich in between. Isn't that amazing?

Crawford: Isn't that something?

Livermore: Now you pay seventy dollars just for the ticket! But anyway, I was there at the great time; the period before television. All the great actors--Lunt and Fontaine were there, and Leslie Howard, and John Gielgud, and Ethel Barrymore, and Gertrude Lawrence, and Helen Hayes. All the greats of the theater; many of them opened in New Haven. I used to walk down the street to the theater, the Shubert Theatre.

The Yale Drama School was famous. They opened plays in New Haven that were going to New York, and tested them out there. I used to love the musical comedies especially.

Crawford: Were you in the drama department?

Livermore: No, but I was always deeply interested in the theater, ever since I grew up in the city. But, somehow you thought, "Nobody goes into the theater," at least nobody I knew did. I didn't especially like the life of the theater; I loved the acting. I didn't like what went along with it, so I just gave that idea up. Also, you starved to death. That's not too good. Architecture's starving enough, without being in the theater. Then when you start aging--when you get to be about forty, nobody wants you at all in the theater.

Crawford: But it must have drawn you to some extent.

Livermore: It drew me tremendously. The Chamberlain girl was studying back there at the time, in a drama school in New York, and I'd go down there and visit her on the weekend.

Crawford: Did she become an actress?

Livermore: No, she didn't. She could have really; she was very good at it. But the same old story: a woman can always get married. You don't want to say "last resort," but you have that trump.

Crawford: That's right.

Livermore: Of course, they don't like to think about that now, but they can still do that. My thirty-five-year-old niece, Sara, for instance, is so beautiful, and so attractive, and had so many beaux; then she finally got married. She wanted to have a baby, and she has married this very fine guy from the Napa Valley. But that's still what you can do, if you want. She waited a long time.

Crawford: They get married later now, I think.

Livermore: They get married later because they really would rather not; it's much more fun not being married. Especially nowadays; they have jobs. She went down to Hollywood, and I encouraged her. I said, "You're just as beautiful as anyone in the movies," and she is. But who do you meet?

Crawford: And she never could break in?

Livermore: Never could break in.

Crawford: Well, who was at Yale that you remember?

Livermore: Two of my great pals in the four years at Yale, I just saw at Martha's Vineyard, classmates of mine. Went sailing with them. We had a crew of four, who are all over eighty!

Crawford: Good for you!

Livermore: Had the most marvelous time. They're still alive, and still my great eastern friends. Then, I just went to Portland a couple

of days ago and saw two old Thacher friends. They asked me to come up, we went to the world premiere of an opera.

Crawford: You've kept up with them. And how about professors? What was the faculty like?

Livermore: Faculty was just a blank nothing to me. At Yale, of course, there were famous lecturers. History of painting, for instance, with Meeks. Then, I had some other graduate courses. Famous English professor--I can't think of his name now. But I was so captivated by the learning qualities. First place, at Stanford you're always playing tennis or some outdoor sports because of our climate. When you go back there, you're living in a city, a totally different atmosphere.

Crawford: More serious?

Livermore: Yes, much more serious. In other words, it was like going from high school to college. I couldn't believe it; from Stanford to Yale. But that was fifty years ago. Stanford now is just as good as Yale.

Crawford: That's what they say. Were there famous architects on the faculty as well?

Livermore: No, the famous architects were at Princeton and Harvard. Gropius was at Harvard. The reason I didn't want to go to Harvard is because it was all Gropius and Mies van der Rohe.

Crawford: And you didn't like that modern style.

Livermore: I didn't like that. I started out here with Arthur Brown. But Princeton also had some wonderful people like Labatu. He was a Frenchman. But when I was at architecture school, we were just moving from Beaux Arts into the modern style. Then I had five years in the army, and I had time enough to think whether I wanted to go to that new style or not. And I never did. I held out, and now I'm the last of the classical architects in San Francisco. There's nobody else doing it. I think it's going to come back, eventually, but not yet.

Did I show you a picture of my Tuscan villa? Yes. I think it's going to be wonderful.

Crawford: Beautiful. Is it Palladian?

Livermore: No, it's Tuscan. It's not as elegant as Palladian. Tuscan means that it's more like a farmhouse, which, of course, is what it is. My client is going to have his little winery there

in Napa Valley. It's like being in the Tuscan hills. Surprised me, because he's a Frenchman himself; but he likes Italy. So that's thrilling for me to think that at my age, when everyone else is retired, I'm still active.

Crawford: Good for you.

Livermore: Of course, you can do that with a profession. When sixty-five years old comes in the business world, you're out! I did a job last year for this man who had just retired, and he didn't play tennis, he didn't play golf, he didn't garden, he didn't play soccer, he didn't swim. There's not one thing that man can do! I just felt so sorry for him because he'd been so used by his company, and suddenly, it's Saturday, you're watching TV, and the wife said, "Feel a little sorry for me, it's awfully hard on me too."

Crawford: Of course.

Livermore: She said, "The worst thing he says to me; you know what it is?" I said, "No." "'What are you doing to do now?'" Oh, it's just heart-breaking! She says, "I've lived with him for twenty-five years. I never had anyone say that to me."

#### Serving in the Army: 1940 and Marriage

Crawford: Let's talk about your years in the army.

Livermore: I finished twenty years of schooling and got this nice little piece of paper that said, "Greetings." It didn't bother me very much.

Crawford: You would have wanted to go, wouldn't you?

Livermore: Well, I would have wanted to go. I should have applied for the navy, but I wasn't thinking, so I was drafted into the army. But it was a great experience.

Crawford: Was Norman already in the service?

Livermore: No, I was the first one. Then of course, everyone else said, "Whoops! We better get going."

Crawford: Why were you the first one to be drafted?

Livermore: I think because I was single. It was only to be for a year; the first draft was only one year, and my year was almost up, then Pearl Harbor came. That was the end of that. Anyway, I had a fascinating time on the island of New Caledonia for three years. In the first place, they made me a meat inspector, which is pretty close to architecture!

Crawford: Yes. [laughter]

Livermore: There's no place for an architect in the army--an engineer, but not an architect. Of course, anybody with a college degree can be a meat inspector, so I'd go around pounding the meat with my hammer.

Crawford: You were assigned to the Pacific?

Livermore: No. I went through my basic training at Camp Roberts, down near Hearst Ranch at San Miguel. They dumped us off down there in pouring rain, and oh my God, what training! But it was an adventure, and then, you get on a train, and you don't know where you're going to go; they don't tell you at all. Don't know if you're going to Greenland, South America, Australia; you don't know where you're going to go. They had taken four of us out to be MP's because we were so tall--I'm 6'4"--and it saved my life. Then the train went up to San Francisco--right up along the docks.

##

Livermore: Then we were to go overseas, except the four of us MP's were left at Fort Mason. My entire battalion was killed in Java in the Pacific. We were untrained, and the Japanese had taken so much already. This is 1942. I was lucky--I was a statistical man, and I did nearly everything they could think of. A major in my office said, "I need a good statistical map man." Took me with him overseas. The general wanted to have maps made every day of all these statistics. So that was a little bit architectural, making the daily charts.

Crawford: What statistics?

Livermore: How many were dead; rations and food; ships; everything went through our service and supply. And then New Caledonia, a French island, was the farthest place the Japanese had not gone. They'd taken everything, Manilla, the Philippines--everything, but they had not taken this island. I was there three and a half years, and I learned how to speak French. That's the only thing I learned.

Crawford: How did you learn French?

Livermore: I just went up and spoke to the people on the beach. I spoke my high school French; and after three years, I was pretty good at it.

Crawford: How were the living conditions there?

Livermore: Terrible at first, because the navy, of course, always has the best of everything. Even captains were put in the mud in tents--the army didn't have anything fancy at all. I finally moved in with the American consul, which was wonderful for me--he had a nice house. He had me there because I could speak French, and I helped him with his job. The end of my stay was pleasant, a year in a comfortable house with a cook and everything.

Crawford: And what were you doing at the end?

Livermore: I was a claims officer. The French were claiming everything, of course: "You spoiled my heating system," or something. So I had to go out, and see whether we really did spoil it. They sued you for everything. I enjoyed that because I got all around the island, met all the people. Finally got home.

Crawford: Have you ever been back?

Livermore: Yes, I went back forty years later. And it really was a beautiful place. I knew it at the time, but it got awfully tiresome.

Crawford: Did you get to come home during that period?

Livermore: I came home just once to get married.

Crawford: Tell me about that.

Livermore: I was engaged when I left, and I left so quickly--

Crawford: Your wife was back East?

Livermore: No, she was here. We got engaged on a very dramatic last day. It was no use getting married, especially if I was not going to come home. I was gone for two years, and finally the general gave me leave to come home and get married. So I came home and we got married, and I had a wonderful leave; honeymoon, that was great. Then I had to go back for another year.

Crawford: You couldn't take your wife?

Livermore: No, couldn't take her at all. But she lived with my family in the big house up there in Ross. Very good for her.

Crawford: Where did you meet?

Livermore: I knew her older sister; she was an old friend of mine. People don't arrange matches anymore, except Pari, my sister-in-law, Put's wife; she's made forty matches. This wasn't one of them. Jinny's father had just died, and I had just got drafted into the army; they all felt so sorry for me. The Stine family asked us to lunch, and I just fell in love right away. She was just the most wonderful girl, and I think she sort of liked me. But she didn't have to get too excited about it, because I was going to go overseas. Then I came back two years later, and we married. So then I went back for another year, and it was very disruptive, of course, and hard on both us because we wanted to get started on our marriage. But she lived with my family, and it was very nice for her because her mother was working very, very hard--she worked all of her life--and it would have been hard to live with her, so I'm glad she lived with my family.

Crawford: Her name was Clifton?

Livermore: Janet Clifton. Mrs. Clifton was wonderful. Her husband died quite young and left her with three unmarried daughters and no money. Imagine. That's not easy.

A Wedding List: Family and Friends, Widows and Maiden Ladies ##

Crawford: We're looking at George Livermore's wedding-guest list.

Livermore: It's interesting because when I was on the Pacific island, I knew I was going to get married someday, and so I decided I'd make a list of all the people I knew, because I'd been away for nineteen years, and who did I know? These were the people I had met, mostly in San Francisco of course, at society functions or whatnot, and I considered them my friends. As I was telling you earlier, I have a list of single men, single women, married people, widows, and I had a separate list of what we used to call maiden ladies, and maiden ladies were women who would never marry. This list is the most powerful list. I had about fifteen on the list, which is pretty good, and I've added another fifteen.

Crawford: Were these women that your parents had known?

Livermore: Yes, great friends of my parents.

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Crawford: We're looking at a list of women, friends of the family, who were spinsters or widows in the 1940s.

Livermore: Here's Cornelia Pringle, who became a great naturalist; she was an authority on birds and wild flowers.

Crawford: Did she write?

Livermore: I think she wrote a few pamphlets maybe, that's all. But she was an amazing person. Here's Katherine Branson, who started a fine girls' school, and Alice Griffith, who founded the Telegraph Hill Neighborhood Association. And there were three unmarried Beaver sisters--Anna, Kate, and Ethel. And then the Jolliffe sisters--who married Spreckels, Allen, Moffitt, Jackling--Harriet and Mary never married. Then the four Josselyn sisters--Rathbone, Avenali, Duncan, and Marjorie, who never married.

Crawford: These are all women that you would see at your house?

Livermore: These are all our family friends, yes. The Jolliffe sisters married very well. One married Spreckels, which was a big name. One married Jackling, who was a copper tycoon, and another married Herbert Moffitt, who was one of the famous doctors here. So those three sisters were big cheeses in San Francisco. They had two maiden sisters; never married. They're the Jolliffes and the Josselyns; very interesting. Quite often, a spinster lady would live with her married sister. That happened very often.

Crawford: That was a tolerant husband.

Livermore: Yes! [laughter] There were two Chesebrough sisters down on the peninsula. They were very close, and very attractive, and finally one of them married. So, of course the other sister just moved right in with her. [laughter]

Crawford: It's kind of endearing, really.

Livermore: It's very endearing. It's very sweet, really. I remember them; they were so attractive. Of course, they had a grand air about them; real ladies. They spoke with what we called a broad "a," not really an English accent, but sort of a cultivated way of speaking--so, all the maiden ladies were unique.

Crawford: And they all came to your wedding?

Livermore: No, I don't think any of them did. All were dead by then. I've added these on to the wedding list since. The list I spoke about was everyone I knew. But we all grew up in such a small circle of friends, and the fact is that I, when I was thirty years old, made up that whole page of widows.

I told you about Edith Chamberlain, who had four children. And the Kittle family was very important because one of my mother's biggest successes was the Marin Art and Garden Center, which was the old Kittle place, and she persuaded them to sell it to her for almost nothing. In 1944, they were widows.

Crawford: It is an impressive list that you have here.

Livermore: Yes. It's interesting to me that there were so many attractive women who would never marry.

Crawford: What do you attribute that to?

Livermore: Well, there are two basic reasons: one, of course, very often was the father. The father was very commanding, and had to really approve of who that daughter married. It wasn't like today. In that generation, you had to ask permission of the father if you were going to marry someone, and he might say no. Fathers were very ambitious for their daughters, and these were wealthy women who didn't have to work. So the father was afraid that he'd get a ne'er-do-well.

Madeleine Haas Russell was one of the great Jewish families, very, very wealthy, and they were determined that she wasn't going to have a fortune-hunter. Of course, that's just what she got.

Crawford: The family disapproved?

Livermore: The family, yes. But that's a perfect example of what could happen to any of these ladies here: to find someone who was after their money.

Crawford: The parents were very watchful.

Livermore: Very watchful, especially when there were three sisters like the Beaver sisters. They weren't pretty either, which would have helped a lot in those days, because no one ever wore makeup. If a woman was naturally beautiful, she had a huge

asset. There were some bachelors too, but not that many. I have only about five bachelor friends on my list.

Crawford: Any names you recollect?

Livermore: Well, Sidney Pringle. He and Cornelia; she was stuck with her mother, and Sydney was very close to her; he never married. Then there were Tom Berry, and Ned Berry. Alan Kittle; he was a bachelor, lived in the Art and Garden Center house. As a matter of fact he died by eating poison mushrooms there.

Crawford: I heard that story; perhaps you told me. So there weren't many eligible for the spinster ladies, were there?

Livermore: Well, if you don't marry until you're fifty, you're probably not going to get a man. Sometimes they marry older, but not very often--they're just independent. Of course in these days, some people don't marry because they're gay. They never thought of that in those days.

Crawford: You were aware of homosexuals then?

Livermore: Well, no, I didn't know they were gay; we didn't know about gay, or didn't think about sex at all. But the women were just so different: very straight hair. I knew several of them; and they wore long skirts with heavy shoes. The men were very effeminate. It was obvious who they were. But there again, they were openly criticized by others as being "queer." That was the word--"queer."

Crawford: So we came a long way from there, didn't we?

Livermore: Yes, we have.

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Livermore: Here's another one: Louise Boyd. Boyd--she was an explorer. She went off with Ahmanson, imagine, to the North Pole, and discovered some lands up there--this maiden lady. There's--I think it's still called that now--Louise Boyd Land, I don't know, up there somewhere. She's another terribly interesting person. Here's another one: Miss Elsa Schilling. She was from the Schilling coffee family, and she did an awful lot of local things in the musical way. And she had lots of money because she was the Schilling coffee family, and it did a lot of good. Here's another one here: Miss Genevieve King was a reader in the Christian Science Church. I mentioned to you that so many of those women up at Russian Hill were Christian Scientists. Miss King was the most prominent one. Then there was Mrs.

Stine, Mrs. Crowley--the Crowley tugboat people--Colonel Rowan's wife, and Mrs. Dean. They were all Christian Scientists.

Crawford: And did they live together because they were drawn together by the faith?

Livermore: They could have. In those days, it was sort of an unusual religion. Most everyone we knew was either Catholic, Protestant, or Jewish. Those are the three main faiths.

Crawford: You had made the comment at one point that being Episcopalian you didn't really meet Catholics or Jews.

Livermore: No, you were just confined as children socially to your religious sect.

Crawford: You knew Alfred Frankenstein, your neighbor on Russian Hill?

Livermore: Yes, but I thought that was a German name. It just shows you how ignorant I was. Frankenstein, of course, was a great music and art critic. That's typical of the Jewish people in the city; what would we do without them?

Then Catholics; we hardly knew any Catholics.

Crawford: You must have known the Millers, Robert Watt Miller.

Livermore: But they're not Catholic. Were they Catholic?

Crawford: Yes. *She* was. Elizabeth Folger Miller.

Livermore: I guess she was. She was a Folger. I guess she was Catholic.

Crawford: Did you know them?

Livermore: Oh, very well. But we didn't know them socially; not until we were older.

The Livermore Sons and Military Service

[Interview 4: December 5, 1996] ##

Crawford: Let's go back and catch up with the wartime. I know all of you were in the service, and we talked last week about your service, but what about the others?

Livermore: My older brother Norman joined the navy. He went for training some place on the West Coast here, and he had an awfully interesting career. He was in on the Sicily landings in Europe, as a matter of fact, he was the only brother that was in Europe. I always wanted to go to Europe because I knew it so well, and I could speak French too. But they never sent me there.

Crawford: He was in the Pacific too?

Livermore: Yes. From Italy, he came back to America, and he was assigned to a ship in the Pacific. I think they were in Hawaii. His ship was centered in Hawaii. That was before the war was ended.

Then John, who was an engineer, was in the Seabees. It was the big construction battalion of the navy. He went to the South Pacific the way I did, and was an officer stationed in New Guinea, and all those tropical places.

Crawford: What were his projects?

Livermore: They were building airfields mostly. He landed with MacArthur in the Philippines. Then my brother Putnam was a Marine. They were all different branches; it's amazing. He went to training at Quantico. The famous Quantico. Tough, tough, tough training.

Crawford: Yes. What did he report about that?

Livermore: He said it was hard, but he got through it. He was a big strong fellow. He ended up on a heavy cruiser in the Pacific too, a Marine on a navy cruiser. Then Bob, my youngest brother, went to Burma with the army. So we all were all over the world.

Crawford: Did the three brothers marry during the service?

Livermore: No, Norman and I married during the service. We were the only two that married. Then, Bob didn't marry until about ten years

after the war. Of course, the other two brothers didn't marry for many years [Putnam married recently].



## VII A CAREER IN ARCHITECTURE

### Working with Arthur Brown in San Francisco: 1946

- Crawford: Talk about coming back and settling in San Francisco.
- Livermore: In 1946, we all came back, and I started out with these men that I got to finish the cathedral later on. They were Arthur Brown's men: Weihe, Frick, and Kruse.
- Crawford: Talk about that team.
- Livermore: I knew I did not want to be a very modern architect, and I knew I wanted to do domestic architecture. I didn't want to do great big skyscrapers. I was very lucky to be in that office because I got a lot of very fine training in proportions and scale and style. It was really great.
- Crawford: What were they working on then?
- Livermore: They were working on additions to some of their early buildings. The PG&E building was a wonderful big building that Arthur Brown had built, and when they added on the south wing, they got Arthur Brown's men to do it, because they knew all about the building.
- Crawford: Where is that building?
- Livermore: That's on Market and about Beale Street.
- Crawford: What is the style of that?
- Livermore: It's classical. It is a high-rise; not a skyscraper, but it's a high building. It's done in the classical style, with beautiful columns. Classical columns. It's right next to the Matson building, and instead of tearing them down, they're fixing them up; they're restoring the two buildings.

Crawford: That's wonderful.

Livermore: Very interesting, I think. PG&E still owns their building. I don't know whether Matson owns the other building or not, but it's still perfectly good; they were only built in the twenties, not so long ago. I worked on the addition to the PG&E building. Brown also did a lot of Stanford University work. I worked on remodeling the law school down there. He had built the library and that big high Tower they call the Hoover Tower. Brown was sort of the number-one architect in those days.

Crawford: So, they were responsible for those Spanish-style red tile roofs?

Livermore: Those date from the 1880's, designed by a Boston firm. But they thought of the patios and stone because our climate is so mild here.

##

Crawford: That was in the late forties?

Livermore: That was in the forties, yes. I started work there in '46, and I didn't start my own firm until '52. I went back to the same old building and started out as you always have to start: with just nothing at all; with dog houses and book shelves. [laughter] Anything you could do. Then I got into the business of remodeling, which is a marvelous thing to do.

Everybody said to me, "You're going to starve to death." You do anyway, unless you get into a big factory. But I had no competition. I was the only one that really specialized in remodeling.

Crawford: You were the expert?

Livermore: Yes.

Crawford: Let's dwell a little bit more on Brown.

Livermore: Brown and my father were bachelor friends together way back in the old days. My father always admired him so; I told you that's why he wanted me to go to the Beaux Arts. So he was very fatherly to me when I was a little boy, and watched my education and all that sort of business. He was the one that told me to go to Yale, because we really didn't have any architecture out here; Stanford had nothing at all. Then in

the summertime, I'd come back for vacation and work in Brown's office each summer, and I got a lot out of that.

Then the war came, and I decided that I wanted to be what you might call a conservative, classical architect. I started immediately with him on these things I told you about: Stanford Law School and the PG&E building.

Working Independently: 1952

Livermore: Then when I went off on my own, I started with the remodeling. I did quite a few ranch houses. I liked ranch houses. But I finally thought I was steaming up the highways all the time, and I couldn't get them accomplished. I didn't want to have an enormous office, because I personally supervised all my jobs. I just started out that way, and right in the same building was Mr. Brown.

Crawford: Where was that building?

Livermore: 251 Kearny. Kearny and Bush. Lots of engineers and architects were in that building. It was nice because my lighting engineer was there, and my structural engineer was there, and my heating engineer; all the things you have to have. It was so convenient. I just loved that building.

Crawford: And you felt that you wanted to be independent?

Livermore: I wanted to be independent, and I wanted to do residential work. Here I am, an old man, and I'm still doing residential work. I got this beautiful job in the Napa Valley which I'm so happy about. It's a big villa. But of course, the reason I got recommended is because people weren't doing this kind of work anymore.

Crawford: Architecture has changed a great deal.

Livermore: Yes. Men come in looking for work now, and I say, "You have two choices: you either get into a factory with three or four hundred draftsmen, or you just kind of starve to death." Being on your own is really much more fun if you can make it; because at least you're your own boss. That's sort of the tradition of anything that's creative, I think. You start out on a very low financial scale. It didn't bother me, and my wife was very understanding about it all. In those days, women didn't work,

and she didn't work at all. My daughter, for instance, has worked since she was twenty years old!

Crawford: Because that generation of women were there for their husbands exclusively?

Livermore: Absolutely. There were three big women's clubs here when I was a little boy.

Crawford: Which ones were they?

Livermore: There was the Western Women's Club, which is now the Marine's Memorial on the corner here. And there was the Women's City Club, which is now a wing of the St. Francis Hotel. And there was the Women's Athletic Club. And all of them went broke.

The husbands were paying their dues, and then the Depression came, and the husband couldn't pay the dues. The women had no money. Now there are plenty of career women; that's why they're trying to get into our male clubs. It's interesting that those big clubs went broke.

Crawford: Let's talk about your own architectural firm and the work that you did.

Livermore: I had wonderful draftsmen working with me, which I found by chance. For instance, one of my most accomplished draftsmen came from San Diego. He introduced himself to me and said he'd been told to contact me. He did the most beautiful renderings, which I have around the office. People didn't do that anymore. He moved his family up here, and he worked for me five or six years. He died, unfortunately, sort of early.

I had another fellow who worked for fifteen years for me. He was a wonderful draftsman! I could just give him the idea, and he'd draw it up for me. It took me so much time doing all the personnel work that I didn't get much time to do more than sketch. A working drawing means detailing every little shelf.

But I was awfully lucky to get the most wonderful guys working for me. They didn't make much money, but neither did I, and they knew I wasn't making much money. One little Jewish fellow said, "I've had a terrible time with ulcers all my life, and since I've been working with you, I haven't had any ulcers."

Crawford: That's a real tribute.

Livermore: Even if he got less money, he was in a calm, appreciative atmosphere, instead of having someone insulting him all the time.

Crawford: What was the working day like then?

Livermore: I usually spent my mornings out supervising the jobs. In remodeling work, you don't know what's going to be underneath what you've designed. You might design a perfectly wonderful thing, and you'll find it's all full of plumbing and electric lines.

Crawford: What were your major jobs?

Livermore: I would say that my major remodeling jobs were the Pacific Heights mansions. Beautiful big mansions.

#### The Art of Remodeling

Crawford: I know that you remodeled the Wattis house.

Livermore: The Wattis house was a beautiful job. It had a wide lot--a wide lot in San Francisco is everything, because you have to have only twenty-five feet. Twenty-five feet is not very much, but if you've thirty or forty feet, it's better. And it had a south garden.

The Wattis house was a perfect example of a funny, old, broken-down shingle house. I added a big garage underneath the wonderful south garden--the lanai we call it--with a brick floor. Of course, the main thing always was the kitchen and the bathrooms. Every house had to have those two things completely done over. But I think what I specialized in was south gardens and south decks. It was originally designed by Julia Morgan.

So many of those houses had lots of sunshine and just ached for a deck, but they never used to do decks in those days, they weren't outdoorsy. In my lectures I show all these outside decks before and after. Now everyone wants a deck. I know of one huge big house on Jackson Street of which the owner was Italian. You know the Italians love sunshine. I said, "You should have some little place to get out of this house." She said, "Where? I have no room." Well, there was eight feet from her and the street, and those eight feet I made into a little walled garden, and she had breakfast out there every

morning. That's a typical example of what I am talking about. All you need to do is have someone say, "Eight feet? That's pretty big for a little deck!"

Crawford: So you became famous in Pacific Heights?

Livermore: Yes. I had a wonderful contractor, and we just snaked through those houses, one right after another. Great electricians, and great plumbers, and great carpenters, and great craftsmen. Once in a while, we got a bad operator, but some of these houses I've remodeled four times.

Crawford: With different owners?

Livermore: With different owners, yes. People want different things. In one little, not very attractive house, I'd done the living room all over; it was plywood. I put in padded velvet walls, and a marble fireplace, and it's beautifully done. It's the same house exactly.

Crawford: Have you written anything about that?

Livermore: No. I tell about it in my lectures. But I'll tell you what I did. I advised people not to do something they shouldn't do. Sandy Lowengart had this beautiful big house on Broadway, and his wife wanted to make it into an English castle. I said, "I could float the Queen Mary on this house if you want me to do it. It's just a matter of money. But right next door is a beautiful house for sale, the Ehrman house. You could buy it."

So I didn't have to do much, he got a decorator in and beautiful curtains and everything, and then there was an extra lot beside that, and I told him he could sell it. He said, "I don't think you're right about that. It's all full of weeds and trees and everything." He sold that lot for a million dollars, and they moved into the house next door.

Crawford: In the fifties?

Livermore: No, this was the sixties. Now the Jewetts have just built this beautiful house on the other lot. That's a good example of how those things change hands.

Then the Zellerbachs had a beautiful house. I filled in the courtyard, which was an L-shape like this, with a windy, freezing cold courtyard. I just glassed the whole thing in, and made the most beautiful room out of it. It has just been sold to a millionaire, Mr. Stone. He said, "The reason I like this building is what you did to it, and I just want a place to

hang my collection." So it's just a perfectly beautiful house with moldings and refinements. He has the worst collection you've ever seen. [laughter] So what? He's happy, and of course, it cost five and a half million dollars.

Crawford: Very modern?

Livermore: The house is beautifully old-fashioned, but his collection is just terrible. But that's what he wants, what the hell? Money means absolutely nothing to these people.

I always start my lecture with the Gwin Follis house. I say, "This is my idea of the most beautiful house in San Francisco."

Crawford: The most beautiful. Which one is it?

Livermore: The Gwin Follis house on Washington and Maple. Beautiful corner French chateau. They're asking eight million for it.

Crawford: You did some other work for the Zellerbachs?

Livermore: Yes, they bought this wonderful country stone villa up in Sonoma, and my job was to make it into a house. It was really just a small, circular stone house, and they put in a swimming pool and all sorts of garages and made it livable for them. Dressing rooms, and baths, and a new kitchen. That was a great job. I loved that job. They now have a winery up there. I don't know who bought it because they both died. I think she sold it before she died. It was called "Hanzell." Her name was Hannah, and the other name was the Zellerbach, so they call it Hanzell. That was one of my big country jobs.

Crawford: What were some of the other big projects? I have Allan Lowry in Sonoma also.

Livermore: Yes, that was a wonderful job. Board and batten--a sort of ranch-type house on the top of a hill. Perfectly beautiful view all over. It was near Petaluma but it looked over into Sonoma. Funny, I just met the man the other day who owns it now. He said, "We want you to come up and see your house. We think it's just wonderful." It's nice to hear that, because often they say, "The roof leaks, and why didn't you do this?" So I'm going to up and see it. That was long ago that I built that.

Crawford: When was that?

Livermore: That was in the fifties, I guess. My first house I built in the forties for the Fullers in Woodside. They were saving money here, and saving money there, and they got me for almost nothing. I just saw Jane last night, and she said, "I love this house so." And the living room is still unfinished; the frame is showing. She said, "I like it. I don't care. I like it just like that." So that's nice to know. That was fifty years ago! Imagine. I can't believe it.

Crawford: Were you with Weihe before?

Livermore: Yes, Weihe worked for Brown, and I finally worked for him. Then when I wanted to go out on my own, I first went out with Wells for about two years, 1950-53, because we were friends and we had sort of the same jobs. It just didn't work out; our personalities didn't work out well. He wanted to do what he wanted to do, I wanted to do what I wanted to do. So I finally just gave up and went out on my own. I shared the office in that same Kearny Street place with my engineer until I could really go off completely on my own, and in 1955 I was on my own completely with nobody else there.

#### Ranch-Style Houses, Eichler, "Spite Building"

Crawford: What was the concept of the ranch-style house?

Livermore: First place, I love ranches, and I love horses because of Montesol. These houses were all done in what we call the board and batten style. It's a board with a batten in between, and a board and a batten, and a board and batten. It's a very California look, very simple and charming, really, and with high ceilings; I always insisted on high ceilings. Most of those Woodside houses and even Sonoma houses were all boards and battens. Then I went into shingles. I liked shingles very much; even the apartment house in the city had shingles. I started out with those really kind of ranch-house looking things in those days with very simple construction and big windows. Big, enormous windows.

Crawford: What about Eichler?

Livermore: He was an amazing guy. He built, I think, the finest designed tract house any place around here. It was simply wonderful.

Crawford: What was nice about that?

Livermore: The houses were designed around a courtyard, and in California, that's a nice way to live. He made a huge success out of them. But, of course, he didn't want to be known as just a tract-house man, so he took all his money and built this gigantic skyscraper--999 Green--out of concrete, not steel. It's there right now, and it's still kind of a monster, and he lost money on that. Eichler could have developed his wonderful little house. Instead of that, he wanted to do the other thing.

Crawford: I'm surprised that the city fathers let that kind of building go through.

Livermore: There was no height restriction then. You can't do that now. What really started it all was spite, a terrible thing in real estate. Mrs. Shaw was a great friend of ours on Russian Hill. Sweet lady, in a shingle house. Somebody got a piece of property adjoining hers illegally, and it made her so furious. She said, "You know what I'm going to do? I'm going to build a monster here, and just block off all these houses." That's what she did: she built 999 Green. It was one cute little shingle house before that!

People should realize how sensitive other people are about their property. I've seen it all my career. Last year, I put a window in a house to give more light, and the next-door neighbor planted a tree to block off the window. The other neighbor told me, "I'm laughing because I just poured poison on the roots." [laughter]

Crawford: This is a job that you had?

Livermore: Yes. She didn't want anyone to have a window there. It ruined her privacy. That's the way people are, but this woman was even worse with 999 Green.

Crawford: I always thought that was Mrs. Kent who did that.

Livermore: No, this was Mrs. Shaw. Mr. Crocker did the other spite building over at 945 Green Street, which was even worse. He said to Mr. Bricca at 947 Green, "If you build this apartment house (the first high apartment there), I'll build six inches away from you, and block off all your view." Bricca did build, so he did too. It just ruined the whole thing. That was what you call a spite building. Now, of course, there is a forty-foot height limit.

Crawford: Have you been on any planning commissions in architectural design?

Livermore: No, I wanted to be on the San Francisco Planning Commission and was asked to be on it, but it took too much time then. You just can't have a small growing business and get on the planning commission. So I said no. I tried to get on again later on, but then they didn't want me.

### Other Projects

Crawford: What about the Escobosa house?

Livermore: Escobosa was the head of the I. Magnin Company. I should show you my little article about some of the jobs I had. Anyway, Escobosa wanted to build this beautiful penthouse on Pacific Heights too. That was a wonderful job. I loved that. All brand new kitchen, and we put a high floor up on the roof that he used as a painting studio. That was a lovely job. [1957]

Crawford: You built the house from scratch?

Livermore: No, it was the top floor of one of those huge apartments. Then he wanted to put a penthouse on top of that. I did the apartment all over, and then put a penthouse on top.

Crawford: I guess you did the Roos house in Nicasio? Did you ever do anything to the Maybeck house in the city?

Livermore: No, never did. She's done a terribly modern kitchen. I don't know who did it. She gave a wonderful party last week for the National Trust for Historic Preservation. She's going to leave it to the National Trust--the house.

Crawford: Not to the children then?

Livermore: Well, the children--I don't think they care that much about it. It's such a landmark--it really is. So famous.

Crawford: The Hardy Stable in Orinda [1962]--what did that involve?

Livermore: Yes. I've done very few things in the East Bay. I've done Marin County and the Peninsula, but not East Bay. It was a nice little house with a wonderful little stable. I'm very proud of that stable.

Crawford: You built the stable?

Livermore: Yes. Built the house and the stable.

Crawford: What's the style?

Livermore: It's white; kind of a Monterey style. White clapboards with a red roof. It turned out very nicely.

Crawford: Then the last one is the laboratory for Stanford Hospital.

Livermore: Yes, that was interesting--that was for the eye department at the old Stanford Hospital out on California Street. This was an old Victorian house that they had. Fascinating! Dr. Barkan was the eye doctor, and I changed the old Victorian house into an eye laboratory. They had rats underneath, and I remember they experimented with the rats. It seemed to work out quite well for a little laboratory.

Crawford: What did you do to the old Victorian structure?

Livermore: Nothing to the structure. We just pulled the inside out, and made these great big rooms, because they had high ceilings already.

Crawford: How did that job come about?

Livermore: Dr. Barkan was one of our great friends. There were two Barkan brothers. They were both eye doctors. They recommended me because we were old friends, and that's about the only medical thing I've ever done.

William Wurster and Other Bay Area Architectural Work ##

Crawford: Maybe you'd like to talk a little bit about the other Bay Area architects you knew.

Livermore: I helped my brother who packed mules in the mountains in the old days, and one summer I packed Bill Wurster off on a pack trip. He was a very well-known architect, so we talked--up in the mountains was such a wonderful place to talk. I said, "I've always been interested in architecture." But there were two things I was not good at: sketching and engineering, and I thought they were the two most important things in architecture. He said, "Not at all. I can't do either of those either. But you get somebody else to do them. You get somebody else to make the sketch and you have to hire an engineer anyway. I would suggest you go to Yale University, and then when you come back you can work for me." I did. When

I came back from Yale then I worked for Wurster for quite a while because I liked that he did nothing but houses.

Then, Gardner Dailey was the other big, what we call, frame architect. In other words, they did small houses really. Bill Wurster used to design ten-thousand-dollar houses. Imagine! Ten thousand dollars, you can't even put a floor on for that.

Crawford: Where were they building, because San Francisco was so Victorianized?

Livermore: Most of Wurster's houses were country houses. He didn't do many city houses. I'm just the opposite; I do mostly city houses. He built all over the bay region here, and had a great reputation, and was a very fine architect. So I learned a lot from him in the way of small houses. I didn't learn as much as I did from Brown's office. But some of my early houses were so much like his. I'm looking through the list here.

Churches, for instance. I've done a lot of church work. I did a church in Livermore, and the bishop said (he was such a wonderful guy) it seems peculiarly fitting that this church should be designed by Mr. Livermore. So he got me the job. It was a nice and brand new church in Livermore.

Crawford: What is the church?

Livermore: Church of the Nativity, it's called. [1958]

Crawford: That was a new kind of work for you.

Livermore: Yes, I hadn't done any churches, I'd just done houses. Then I did another church in Marin County up on a hill which I was very proud of. It was a big structure all under one big roof: it had the church and two classrooms and a kitchen; and a lecture room all under this enormous roof. I went up there just the other day just to see what it looks like and it still looks in very good shape.

Crawford: Sounds very modern.

Livermore: It was very modern.

Crawford: What church is that?

Livermore: I think it's called the Church of Marin Wood.

Crawford: And where is it?

Livermore: It's over in north of San Rafael--you know that housing area up there? Marin Wood.

Crawford: And what is the denomination?

Livermore: Episcopal. And then I did an awful lot of work in the Presbyterian church in San Anselmo, that great stone seminary--that Presbyterian seminary. I remodeled all that up there. Then in San Rafael, I did a huge wing for St. Paul's Church. So that's some of the church work I've done.

Crawford: When you were building a church, did they come to you and tell you: "This is the idea that we have," or did you come to them?

Livermore: There, the site was very small because it was on top of a hill, and they had to get some room for parking if possible, so they didn't want to have a big rambling building. I came up with the idea of putting it all under one roof. Of course, it's not a very big church. The parish is not that big. But it just turned out really wonderfully; I'm reminded of that.

Then another big job that I've been working on for years is for Dorothy Spreckels, of the big Spreckels mansion. [1955-60]

[John Livermore enters office]

Livermore: John is our most famous brother.

John L.: I don't know about that.

Crawford: I read the profile in the *New Yorker*. I thought that was a marvelous story about you. Were you pleased with it?

John L.: In general. But you're never pleased because there's a lot of stuff about the family that I didn't particularly like. They made it look as if I was born with a silver spoon in my mouth and never had to work, and then I went off and became a prospector. That made a pretty good story; which wasn't true, of course.

[John Livermore exits.]

Crawford: You mentioned the Spreckels mansion.

Livermore: Yes.

Crawford: Was that Mrs. Munn?

Livermore: Mrs. Munn, yes. The mansion is just something. The same man who designed the Legion of Honor building. It looks just like a wedding cake. It's not as good as Arthur Brown, but it's pretty good. Mrs. Spreckels was a very dramatic woman and she said, "I want to have the finest." So then she made flats out of it on her own. She didn't have any architect or anything. She put an elevator in, and she started renting--well, because she was only one woman living in this enormous house. So she rented out the top floor for a number of years to various people that I knew. Anyway, her daughter came back from Paris, Mrs. Munn, and she decided she'd live on the top floor. That was a wonderful job for me because I remodeled it all; made a beautiful round room--that's the picture here over the mantelpiece.

Crawford: Let's talk in some detail about that.

Livermore: Here's the round room, which turned out beautifully. It was just an open, very cold terrace.

Crawford: It's very elegant, isn't it?

Livermore: Yes. Then she wanted a swimming pool, so I built this big swimming pool for her. But that was not in the house; that was a separate building.

Crawford: What are we looking at here?

Livermore: That's the north. Looking all over the northern part of the Bay. They just love this room.

Crawford: And your idea was to enclose it but to still have that marvelous view?

Livermore: She said she wanted curved glass. But I said, "You can't get it made."

Crawford: But it looks like you did.

Livermore: That's what I said: "I'll make smaller panes, and it'll look like a mural." And so it looks as though it's curved, but it's straight pieces. I'm very pleased about that. Then the pool was a huge feat. I first built the pool with a high fence around it. She said, "The maid next door is dusting their pillows out the window." It was dropping feathers onto her pool, so she wanted to cover it. I said, "Thanks a lot for telling me now--it weighs thirty-two tons, that roof!" So, engineeringwise, I had to boost it all up on the sides. It was terribly funny. She told me, "When I come back from Europe, I

want to punch a button and have that whole thing open up." So I did it. The roof slides on top of it there. That was quite a feat.

It's still there, and Mrs. Danielle Steel lives in it now. She has eight children, and they all go swimming there.

Crawford: What street is that?

Livermore: Washington. Then I did the bathroom for her--I just remodeled the whole thing for her. The old lady did the downstairs, so I didn't have to do anything for her.

Crawford: What was she like?

Livermore: Oh, she was wonderful. She was one of the great--a book's just been written about her; it's called *Big Alma*. She was just amazing! What she did in her life. One of her famous remarks was that she wasn't social at all. She was a social outcast. But she said, "I don't know why Helen Cameron is not very friendly with me. Maybe it's because my husband shot her father." You can't believe it; he did!

Crawford: I know that story, but you might want to recount it.

Livermore: Mike de Young printed something distasteful about Adolph Spreckels, so he went down to his office and shot him in the leg. Her life has just been one huge storybook. She went over to Paris a widow, and in those days--maybe she had twenty million--in those days that was a lot of money. Got to know Rodin, of course. Came back home and built that gorgeous museum, persuading her husband to build that museum [the Legion of Honor]. Nobody else has done anything like that.

Crawford: That was to scale, wasn't it?

Livermore: No, it wasn't. The scale is bigger; a bigger scale than the original. The original hotel is in Paris, Hotel de Salm, S-A-L-M --she copied an awful lot of it, but it wasn't completely copied and the scale was changed, because this was a big museum, not just a private house.

Then the funniest thing is the back of the Legion of Honor, which no one ever sees, in Paris, it's on the Seine River; these great big wonderful windows looking out over the river. Here they're all blocked off.

But anyway, in 1924, I think it was, they dedicated that amazing building. She always had quite a bit of money, but at

the end, she didn't have too much. She'd give them ten thousand dollars here, ten thousand there. That was a nice little gift for the museum.

While I was working for her, she was designing a Museum of Dance and Theater. I made a wonderful sketch for an addition to the Legion of Honor. I think she would have done it, but then she died right at that time.

Crawford: That's a shame. That was going to be on the same property?

Livermore: Same property. And she had quite a nice little collection to start. She bought some marvelous things from Paris. Sketches by Bakst, Benois, Diaghilev, and they were really marvelous. She only paid three hundred dollars each for them. She said, "Do you think I ought to get any more, Pet?" She always called me Pet. I said, "You tell him you'll take everything he's got." So it's lucky we have those now, because they're beautiful sketches. The Diaghilev sketches were all of the ballet.

Crawford: Was her idea that it would be an Impressionist collection?

Livermore: She was mostly interested in ballet and the theater, so everything she collected was usually dance, or theater. She didn't really get any of those Impressionists. I don't know why that was. I think it was because she'd met Rodin right away, and then a woman called Loie Fuller who danced with gauzy veils.

Crawford: There was a lot of wealth here at that time.

Livermore: All those society women--they just gave tea parties. What does that do? But she was a terrible mother; poor thing. She was all alone with all this money and three children.

Crawford: What happened to them?

Livermore: No happiness. So sad. The only son got married five times. One is still alive: Dorothy, who lives in Palm Beach. I just talked to her last week.

Crawford: Oh, you kept in touch with the family then?

Livermore: But she is awfully ill. Very ill. There's no happiness in that family.

Crawford: So the family dispersed; didn't stay here?

Livermore: No, Alma, the oldest daughter, stayed here, and had those three wonderful boys. The Rosekrans boys.

Crawford: Yes.

Livermore: And she had a big horse stable down at Woodside. It's very funny because young John now has a sculpture gallery in that property there. He told me not too long ago. I said, "I can't believe you're collecting sculpture." He's so unartistic. He said, "My grandmother didn't know anything about it either." I said, "The only thing is she did know Rodin." That's a little different. She has an awful lot of them in the museum. And there's a great collection in Philadelphia, too. Someone got a big collection there.

Crawford: And at Stanford.

Livermore: And Stanford, yes, you're right.



## VIII CIVIC WORK

Sitting on the Boards of St. Luke's Church and San Francisco Opera: 1950-1980

Crawford: Let's talk about--in keeping with your architectural work--what you were doing in terms of civic work. What was the first board that you joined?

Livermore: I came back without any money at all. The first thing I got into was church work because my mother was such a big church worker, and we went to Sunday school every Sunday. So the first thing I did when I came back and started having a family was join my church, of course. They put me right in as secretary of the vestry. Before I could hardly know what to do. Then that went to one job after another in the church. They got me started. I got on the vestry lay committee, then I got on the standing committee of the big church. Then I was sent to conventions all over the country.

Crawford: This is St. Luke's?

Livermore: Yes, St. Luke's. Then the next big interest in my life was music. I was naturally musical. I had a piano when I was six years old; a little tiny piano. Then I started taking lessons. Music was such a big thing in my life. Eventually, I became a trustee of the Conservatory of Music. That was my first civic thing. From then, I went to be on the board of the big opera company, because I was always deeply interested in the opera.

In 1950, when I was just doing these things for the church, they asked me to be on the board of the opera company. I was just thrilled. I couldn't give any money, but I knew a lot about it of course.

Crawford: Mr. Merola was still there. What was the board like? It must have been very small--

Livermore: Very small board, and all of us opera lovers altogether. I was very young then. I was the youngest person, but I was kind of happy to be on the board with all those swells. That was pretty exciting.

Crawford: Who were they?

Livermore: Well, all the box owners of course. I can't rattle them off now. But they were the deYoung sisters. They were big shots in those days. Mrs. Cameron, Mrs. Tobin, Mrs. Theriot, and Mrs. Tucker. Then there was Mrs. George Pope. I remember she was very elegant. I was thrilled because I always liked all that glamour. Then, from there, years later, I got to be head of San Francisco's Civic Light Opera which produced musical comedies.

Crawford: I remember that. But you were on that San Francisco Opera Board when?

Livermore: Yes, 1950 to 1980, I would say. And the reason I got off the board, frankly, is they needed money, and I couldn't give any money, so the function of the board changed to mostly fund-raising; that's all.

Crawford: I remember when Mr. Adler talked about that; he said, "In the old days, you asked Robert Watt Miller for what you wanted, and he either gave it or got it."

Livermore: Yes.

Crawford: But there was no money-raising function.

Livermore: And then when Prentice Hale was president of the board--he was a much more ruthless type.

Crawford: How do you mean that?

Livermore: Well, when he was president he wanted to expand the board, and he said, "We need money, and I mean right now, and I'll expand the board tremendously, and kick off people like George Livermore who can't give any money." I understood that perfectly well.

Crawford: Robert Watt Miller was the board president until 1966; Hale from 1967 to 1970.

Livermore: Oh, yes. Miller was the one that got Adler in there. When Merola dropped dead, Miller said, "Oh God, don't look any further, we got Adler."

- Crawford: That's a very interesting bit of history. You would have thought the company would have said, "We need someone from Germany, we need a Rudolf Bing." That sort of thing.
- Livermore: Yes. Well, I think they would have said it, but Miller knew Adler so well. He was a wonderful director, and made a great opera company.
- Crawford: What do you remember of him?
- Livermore: I remember when he was head of the chorus. Merola used to say, "Hey Adler, come over here." Nobody would think of saying that to Kurt Herbert Adler.
- Crawford: But he did then.
- Livermore: He did then, because he was just head of the chorus. He wasn't big stuff.
- Crawford: It's an amazing success story.
- Livermore: Yes.
- Crawford: How did it happen?
- Livermore: I think his knowledge and his--I like that word: ruthlessness too. He terrified everybody. Merola didn't.
- Crawford: How did Merola lead a board meeting?
- Livermore: Merola used to say, "This is my idea for next season. What do you think of it?" I was flattered, because I knew him so well, and he'd ask me. One year I said, "I think we ought to have *The Love of Three Kings* because we have three great singers for the parts." He said, "You're absolutely right, Giorgio"--he called me Giorgio--"I was thinking of it myself, and we're going to have it." I heard Tebaldi in Florence in 1950 and told Merola to hire her. He said he had already done it.
- Crawford: Did you used to keep company with Merola when he went to lunch in North Beach--
- Livermore: Oh, yes. He was a member of Il Cenacolo and they always, every year, had the most wonderful picnic up at Louis Martini Winery. Louis just loved the opera. All the singers would come up, and we'd sit under those wonderful grapevines, and have a picnic. It was just delightful. Louis and I went to a couple of operas together too. I tried to get him to teach me about wine, but he said everything I liked about wine was wrong.

Crawford: Who were the great singers?

Livermore: In those days--Merola had started his company out in 1923 with the top singers. Then he filled in with local people. That was lucky because San Francisco has always been a very musical city. For instance, when he had Gigli and Claudia Muzio and all the great stars, he'd ask Anna Young, who was a great friend of mine in the city--a lovely, lovely voice--but she would sing Musettas, some of the lower parts. Right from the very beginning, we had Gigli, Martinelli, Pinza--all these great singers with not-so-good underneath them. Then when Adler took over, he really helped create Leontyne Price. All of her first parts were set in San Francisco.

Crawford: Very loyal.

Livermore: Yes, very loyal. In those days, it was so far to get here. The season was very short. Claudia Muzio--I remember one season, she came from South America by boat. That takes a hell of a long time to get here. We had to change the program around that season because her boat was late.

Crawford: Wasn't that a much more rational way to live? These singers today jet from Vienna to Munich to Paris--

Livermore: Also, when they're here, they do other things. For instance, I was just talking to Sam Ramey about it the other night. Say they're singing the *Rigoletto* Wednesday night; Monday night they will give a concert in Canada. That's very hard on the voice. When Flagstad came here, she wouldn't do anything except just her performance. She always stayed with the Esbergs, and nobody could push her around like that. Now money's really everything.

Crawford: What was the Flagstad story?

Livermore: Merola said, "If we're going to do the *Ring*, we want to have the top cast." Everybody said, "You have got to get Flagstad." That's how she came.

Crawford: But she was refused at one point for being a Nazi, wasn't she?

Livermore: That was way after the war. She went back home, and I guess she did help a little bit--sang for the Nazis? I don't know what she did, but there was a big row about her coming back here. But then she came back, and that glorious voice was as wonderful as ever.

Crawford: So Merola asked the board and took suggestions.

Livermore: Yes, and then he used to even play the music ahead of time.

Merola was way ahead of his time. The first season of all, 1923, he gave the three new one-act Puccini operas. They had never been heard here before. That's pretty far out. And also, he gave Puccini's last opera one year after he died: *Turandot*. Of course, we have had *Harvey Milk* this year. But in one season, 1930, he gave three operas by Giordano!

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Livermore: The opera was almost always a case of sort of the local hierarchy: getting in. And the social thing is so silly. What has that got to do with opera?

Crawford: Well, it does have something to do with it--

Livermore: Raising the money.

Crawford: That's right.

Livermore: Now you can't believe--to get in those boxes for the Tuesday night series--people would just kill somebody. I don't know why--you're only just sitting in a seat; what are you going to do there? Of course now, if you want to get a seat in the Tuesday night series, you have to pay a fortune for it. I think it's fine. Who cares?

I used to know everyone in the boxes; now I don't know anybody. I'm not only getting old, I'm not a businessman. I sat in the box last year, and they said, "You know Bill Sharp, don't you?" I said, "No, do you?" He's head of the plastic association or something.

Crawford: It's interesting. It's changing--

Livermore: Naturally, if you buy a fifteen-thousand-dollar dress, you're going to show it off, I guess. Instead of going to a dinner party, you can be seen by everybody.

Crawford: That's right. What a wonderful tradition we have. In the Adler years, the *New York Times* said that it was one of the top ten houses in the world.

Livermore: Yes, it is.

Crawford: And that was Adler's doing, but it also was Merola's doing, wasn't it?

Livermore: The port city has so many Latin people, and for a long time, the opera was only French and Italian. Mostly Italian really. Verdi and Puccini.

Crawford: Adler made a funny story about the early chorus: he said that most of them were vendors from North Beach and they couldn't read a note of music. Glorious voices, glorious--and mostly Italian.

Livermore: Yes.

Crawford: Do you remember them?

Livermore: Oh, yes, very well. I used to go to the chorus rehearsals when I was ten years old. I had to even collect scenery; the opera was so poor. Didn't have any money at all. I remember I got the tablecloth for *Tosca* once at the St. Francis Hotel.

Crawford: How did you get it?

Livermore: Anybody would lend it if you asked them for it.

Crawford: Were you on some guild at that point? How did you happen to get the props?

Livermore: It was all such a big, homey thing. The season was only two weeks. They said, "We'll let George Livermore go down and do that; he'll do that well." So I did. I remember that was a big thrill. Then, everybody suped. Do you know what suping is? Suping is being on stage without singing.

Crawford: Oh, supering.

Livermore: Supering.

Crawford: Being a supernumerary.

Livermore: Now, I think you have the union or something; there are so many people trying to be supes. There's one speaking part in *Carmen*, and they knew I speak good French, which I do, so this fellow said, "George, we finally have a part for you in *Carmen*," the owner of a restaurant or something like that. So I went down, and like a damn fool I was so excited. I thought, "At last, I'm going to have a big part on the opera house stage." Well, Adler took one look at me. He was sort of embarrassed, to think that a board member would be an innkeeper there. Then the director, Jean-Pierre Ponnelle, said, "You're a member of the union, aren't you?" I said, "No, I'm not."

So that was out. But I was so thrilled. I thought, "At last, I can be on the stage." Because I had been in so many Bohemian Club productions recently and the Town School plays. I just jumped too quickly.

Crawford: I'm surprised they couldn't find a nonspeaking role for you, since you wanted to--

Livermore: Well, they could have done something, but Adler thought I was one of his directors, and it would be humiliating to him. I don't know.

#### Grace Cathedral Civic Theater

Livermore: My board work there led into theater work. I was director of the Grace Cathedral Civic Theater.

Crawford: It is no longer there?

Livermore: No longer there. That was Julian Bartlett, and he was my great pal. He said, "George, we're going to start a school in the fall." I said, "Julian, we don't do things that way in San Francisco. You can't just say you're going to start a school." He said, "We're going to do it, and that's that." So I was in the job of cleaning out a few broom closets and stuff, and we started a school with eight boys. That was so thrilling.

Crawford: Do you remember what year that was?

Livermore: Well, he came in '57, so I think the Cathedral School for Boys started almost in '58--I don't know, I'm just guessing.

Crawford: Who was head of the school?

Livermore: I can't remember who was head of it then. Just one of the priests; nothing fancy. Now it's one of the best schools here. Then he did the same thing with the Civic Theater. He needed money, so he put me in charge of that, and we had two seasons, and very good plays. The acoustics were very bad there.

Crawford: It was in the cathedral?

Livermore: In the cathedral. We had *Murder in the Cathedral*. We had some T. S. Eliot things. We had the silent version of *Hunchback of Notre Dame*. The Cathedral Civic Theater we called it. They

were very good productions, really. Ina Claire was a great actress and helped us. She lived next door.

Crawford: To the theater?

Livermore: Nob Hill, next to the Cathedral. I thought it would be wonderful if some of the young people could meet her, she was so famous. She said, "I haven't the slightest interest in that. It's all so poorly done." I was so mad at her. It's like Joan Fontaine, my friend you know, she came up to review the high school students who were taking public speaking. It was so awful that you could hardly sit through it. But Joan didn't let on. She said, "Children, you do pretty well." Afterwards she said to me, "Don't blame them, it's their teachers."

Crawford: Where was that?

Livermore: This was at the Century Club here. At least she didn't hurt the children's feelings, you know. Which I think was good. Ina Claire was so rude.

Crawford: How long did the theater last?

Livermore: That only lasted about four years, I think.

Crawford: And Julian Bartlett was part of that.

Livermore: Bartlett was trying to get the money together. It was pretty well attended. And they were nicely done. We had a wonderful man--his name was Rachmel Ben-Avrum. He was our leader; our coach.

Crawford: How do you spell that?

Livermore: Rachmel I guess is R-A-C-H-M-E-L. Ben, B-E-N. Avrum, A-V-R-U-M, I think.

Crawford: Did you act in these plays?

Livermore: No, I didn't act in any of those. I didn't have time to make the rehearsals. These last plays I've been in; the rehearsals are so exhausting. So this year, I'm not going to be in The Town School Play. In those days, it was worse because I had my profession, and I had my children.

Serving on School Boards and the National Council of Churches:  
1964-1969

Crawford: You were on lots and lots of boards. Weren't you on all the school boards?

Livermore: Yes, I was on seven school boards. That goes back to my childhood again. I attended the Potter School before I went to Thacher, and that developed into the Town School for Boys. And my two boys went to the Town School and so they put me on the board. I was the first man on the board, because it's always mothers that start things. I loved that school. That's why I'm still in the plays, because I had that connection with them. Then the second thing, of course, was Thacher. We all were just devoted to Thacher. So I was a trustee at Thacher.

Crawford: What did that involve?

Livermore: That involved going to the meetings down there at the school. We flew down in somebody's plane; it was very nice. I was always put on the building committee, naturally, because I am an architect. I worked very hard on the building of the new buildings of Thacher school--the gymnasium--and I chose the architect for it. That was my main function on the Thacher board.

But it was the same function on the Town School Board because they remodeled the whole school. And the same function on the Marin Academy. It was the San Rafael Military Academy, a third-rate school. We changed it into the Marin Academy, which is a coeducational day school. I knew if we could get it started, they just couldn't miss. I owned that whole school for one day. I'll never forget that. Everyone just dropped off. I had this board of directors all ready to go, and they did it all somehow rather legally. It had a good plant; we got a good headmaster, good board of directors, and now it's a very good school. Very proud of that.

Then two big church schools: the Church Divinity School in Berkeley. I think I got on that simply to help build a new wing.

Crawford: That's such a marvelous complex.

Livermore: Well, it was an interesting original building. The School of the Prophets used to be on Nob Hill. Then they moved it to Berkeley.

Crawford: The School of the Prophets?

Livermore: Yes, School of the Prophets. That was where they trained the ministers. So, they added on--and I got Skidmore and Owings and Merrill for the architects. They built this very interesting wing: part underground and part aboveground. Then I remodeled the old library into a new chapel by putting the altar between the old buildings. I had quite a lot to do there for a long time.

Crawford: When was that?

Livermore: I think that must have been in the seventies. Across the street, I was on the board of the Graduate Theological Union. There are so many different sects there.

Crawford: We call it "Holy Hill."

Livermore: Holy Hill, right. It was a logical place to get them all together.

Crawford: Wonderful idea.

Livermore: The Presbyterians and the Episcopalians are always the ringleaders; the most--ecumenical is a bad word, you know. It means getting together on things. But they had the Baptists up there already. They had so many churches up there on the hill. That's why I got on that board. That was very interesting.

Crawford: You weren't the architect--

Livermore: I wasn't the architect. I got the architect. I didn't do that big scale work from my office. I was still doing houses.

Crawford: What had been up there?

Livermore: There was just one building and one chapel; that's all. [Walter Ratcliff, 1924] The whole top of the hill was one big lot. The Alpha Delta Phi house was taken over and they put the monks in there. Quite a change from the hell-raising students to the monks. That's still there; it's a fine building. The GTU didn't build anything, the GTU met in one of those buildings up there. Then the new library was the biggest thing we did.

Crawford: That's the Hewlett?

Livermore: Hewlett. We got Bill Hewlett to do that in 1973. That was very interesting because it's a big ecumenical library.

Crawford: Do you like the style of that library?

Livermore: Yes, it's wonderful. It's very modern, but Louis Kahn was a great architect. I was busy over there for many years; working with the dean and working with the students and faculty.

Crawford: Who was the dean at the time?

Livermore: Johnson. Sherman Johnson. Wonderful man.

Then from there, I got into the National Council of Churches, which of course is a national organization. That was a great experience for me because we met three times a year, in different cities. So, I traveled for those meetings. We tried to stop the Vietnam War, but didn't do much good.

Crawford: Maybe it did.

Livermore: It might have done some good. I got so that I could almost tell a person's faith by looking at them. People like to worship with their own kind. Lutherans, for instance, are always the shock-haired German types. Martin Luther started the whole anti-Catholic movement. You see the cute little frail lady from the South--so Anglican. They all become thrown together that way. I don't think I look like an Episcopalian, but maybe I do.

Crawford: What were the meetings like?

Livermore: They were very interesting. Wonderful lectures. Billy Graham would come and talk to us, depending where we were. Every three months, we'd go to another city.

Crawford: Would you issue a paper after the meetings?

Livermore: Yes. We'd issue our opinion on things.

Crawford: Civil rights, for instance?

Livermore: Yes. I remember we went to Detroit, and we went to Des Moines. Memphis. I think once a year we went to New York; then we went to Madison, Seattle, Boston, and San Diego. It was really interesting. I loved that experience with the National Council of Churches.

They picked me out because I had been on so many local committees and other lists. I really enjoyed that.

Crawford: You were on that for how long?

Livermore: Six years, 1964 to 1969.

Crawford: What positions were important that you took other than the Vietnamese--

Livermore: Vietnam was worst of all, and we had to be very careful about what we said. I think by that time the boys were already fighting over there. There again, the Presbyterians and the Episcopalians were the two ringleaders of the National Council of Churches. They're the ones who started it; created the whole thing. It was kind of a new thing, the council. I can't remember what the other big issues were.

Crawford: Are the Catholics part of that?

Livermore: No, just Protestants. That means an awful lot of Protestants.

Crawford: But I think that they do make a difference; something the National Council says.

Livermore: I think so, yes. I certainly do. They represented the whole religious sector in America, and it has less power than it used to have. That sort of finishes all my religious efforts. Those two religious schools, and then the Military Academy.

Restoring Houses on Lafayette Square in Washington, DC: 1964 ##

Crawford: What haven't we discussed about your civic work? What about the work that you did during the Kennedy era in Washington, D.C.?

Livermore: That goes back to local contacts. Red Fay is a great old family friend, and one of Kennedy's best friends, and so when Kennedy got to be president, he made him assistant secretary of the navy.

Crawford: What was he like?

Livermore: Wonderful big whopping Irish-Catholic family. We went to Thacher School together, and I just adored Mr. and Mrs. Fay. There were five daughters; they're all my best friends. But Red ended up in Washington, and when the Kennedys had the wonderful idea of preserving the residential quality of Lafayette Square, which is right in front of the White House,

Red said, "Well, I'll bring my pal Jack Warnecke back here." So Jack came and asked me to work on the houses on the Square. It was a wonderful; I moved my whole family back there for a year.

Crawford: Did you know Kennedy?

Livermore: No, he had been assassinated before I got there; but this was his idea, so they followed through it. Johnson didn't know enough about it, so he didn't stop it. But we took these little houses in front of the White House and made them into offices. The facades were not changed.

Crawford: The Square is one of Washington's best. We appreciate what you did.

Livermore: It was a great job, and Jack wanted me to stay on, but I could see there wasn't much else I could do, and I wanted to get back home here, really. When I came back home after a year, I thought I'd be sort of a big hero and get a lot of jobs and everything like that, but it didn't help at all.

Crawford: Did they know about it?

Livermore: No, because it wasn't here. It was a great experience, though; I loved it.

Crawford: Where did you live?

Livermore: Had a wonderful house on Foxhall Road. I decided early in my life that I was not a big-scale person. In other words, I didn't want to do office buildings, high-rises, big things; I liked the relationships of people and their housing, and I was good at that. I got along with people, and I could see what they wanted to do in the way of living, which you can't do if you are building an office building.

Crawford: No, that's right.

Livermore: So I came back home to my small-scale work, and I've always stuck to residential architecture. It seems funny now that I'm an old man and I have been recommended for this big house up in Napa County because I have the classical Beaux Arts training.

Going back to the seven schools--I was head of the building committees, of course--I'm not a Latin scholar or anything like that! Two of the schools I went to myself: Thacher school and Potter School. The others were mostly religious schools that the bishop got me involved with.

Crawford: Did you work on the Town School?

Livermore: Yes, I got the architect for that; it was my idea to put the playground on top of the building, because they had no playground.

Crawford: They did that later at Cathedral School, didn't they?

Livermore: Yes, they did later.

Crawford: Were your other brothers as active civically?

Livermore: Well, John, of course, couldn't be. Norman was. The eight years he had with Reagan were nothing but governmental work, and he was very active in the forming of the Packer Association of the High Sierra, which was a big thing. Then Put was the only brother that was actually in politics; helping people run for politics. I think my brother Bob was too, in the East Bay. My brother and sister-in-law just went to a new church last Sunday, and they noticed that I designed it. They were amazed. They said, "Livermore? Are you any relation to the man who designed this church?" It's in Marin Wood.

Crawford: What about the Academy?

Livermore: The Norman B. Livermore Room at the Academy of Sciences?

Crawford: I've seen something written about it. How did that come about?

Livermore: My father was deeply interested in the academy. He was president for many years and our family contributed money to it. My brother John has been a trustee for many years.<sup>1</sup>

#### Architecture in the Bay Region

[Interview 5: December 18, 1996] ##

Crawford: Today we want to talk about local architecture: was there a culture of architecture here that was unusual?

Livermore: I wouldn't say so except in the period after World War I--the twenties. Did you see that book written by Patricia Woodridge

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<sup>1</sup>This paragraph added to transcript at a later time.

about the Bay region? It's awfully good. It says it all really, about the climate and the hills, which are something special. In the Midwest where everything's flat, you can't get anything like those houses staggered down hills. Architects moved out here because we didn't have any traditions; we didn't have to have colonial houses, we didn't have to have brick houses, we didn't have to have southern houses.

Crawford: When was the period of that movement?

Livermore: The modern Bay Area architecture started after the war; in the twenties.

Crawford: With Wurster and Dailey?

Livermore: With Bill Wurster and Gardner Dailey. At that time, the big architects like George Kelham and Brown--they didn't do little houses, just like Bill Wurster didn't think of building a French Renaissance house.

Crawford: Wurster was most important at the time?

Livermore: I think he really was. Joe Esherick was a very fine architect too.

Crawford: Talk about Esherick and Wurster.

Livermore: Esherick came out from Pennsylvania in the forties and worked with Gardner Dailey. He was very lucky, because Dailey was just pulling in his horns at that time, so he just gave all these jobs to Joe Esherick.

Crawford: What was Dailey's trademark--I know he did Hertz Hall at Berkeley in the late 1950s.

Livermore: I don't think he did many public buildings at all. He was a little bit more sophisticated than Wurster; a little more stylish. Wurster was just so honest--honest all the time. I told him once, "Bill, that cyclone fencing is not terribly beautiful." He said, "But it's so honest." I didn't want to say anything, but it was hideous. [laughter]

Crawford: That's a good story.

Livermore: "It's honest." He was such an honest person; and of course it was cheap too. But Gardner Dailey would never think of using chicken wire.

Crawford: He was a little more elegant.

Livermore: Yes. So that's the difference between the two, and Dailey started out also as a landscaper and did some beautiful classic houses down in the peninsula. Then he turned most of his profession--an awful lot of it--over to Joe Esherick. At least that's how Joe got started. Now Joe is one of the best architects here. Of course he's an old man now. I'm a little bit out of it all now, so I can't name the most modern architects. Sandy Walker, for instance, has a very good office.

When the Jewetts bought that last beautiful lot on Broadway, they got Sandy Walker to do the house. It's not modern and it's not classic, it's sort of comfortable. But most of the big houses out there--those big mansions--were all designed by people like Willis Polk and Arthur Brown. One grand house was designed in New York City, I don't know what architect. But they have pipes under the sidewalk to melt the snow; we don't have any snow here!

Crawford: Wurster's Gregory Farm House was in the twenties--

Livermore: Yes. That was Wurster's first famous house; about '25 I'd say, or '24. He got the wonderful feeling of that farm--very simple, cheap, rustic, and it sort of captured everybody. That started him going with a whole group of people down at Pasatiempo. Marian Hollins had started sort of a golf club down there, and Wurster and Dailey did a lot of those houses. Wurster worked all over the Bay region and so did Dailey, but I think Wurster went farther afield.

Crawford: Did their styles change radically?

Livermore: No, I don't think so. Most architects get more extreme as they age, just like painters. Picasso started out as sort of a regular painter, and then turned into this wild thing. It's the same with Wurster, and this fellow, Frank Gehry, is a perfect example of it. Now he's doing work in Europe. But it's certainly new, if you want to call it refreshing. What was the last thing he did? Oh my God! It's looks at though the building's falling down, but it's not.

Crawford: At some period, we got that flat international style--

Livermore: Yes. Well, that never hit here too well. Richard Neutra is the one who did it here. In Los Angeles, the heritage is Spanish of course, and because of the climate, the stucco and tile roofs is very, very practical.

Crawford: I like that, but I'm talking about something that's very boxy and rather bleak.

Livermore: I think Neutra was the one. He was German. As you know, Hitler kicked all those brilliant Jewish people out of Germany and they all came here, and some of them came out to the West here. So Neutra did the international style as you say, and a very fine architect.

Crawford: Are his buildings here?

Livermore: No, not here. They're all down south. In Santa Barbara--there were some wonderful architects there who really refined the Spanish style. Brown never did anything Spanish really.

Crawford: Talk about Brown and his outstanding work.

Livermore: I think he was a great designer. The firm was Bakewell and Brown and they both went to the Beaux Arts and they were just absolutely a wonderful combination because each had what the other needed. Bakewell was an engineer and the detail man. One of the reasons the City Hall looks so beautiful today is because all of the original hardware still there; that's what Bakewell did. Whereas Brown was the designer, the imaginative person; he did these beautiful plans.

The Beaux Arts architecture is very criticized for being overloaded with moldings, but actually one of the great things about Beaux Arts design is that the plan is so important. Once the plan was in place you could add columns and so on, but now they don't emphasize the plan as much. Brown started with a few houses, but then he won the City Hall competition. The 1912 City Hall was his big thing. Then in '32 he did the Opera House and the War Memorial--twins.

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Livermore: They recently had a dinner in the Veterans Building--Arthur Brown's--in the Green Room over on the museum side.

Crawford: The Green Room, yes.

Livermore: It was a warm evening, and the people wandered out onto the terrace there looking over at the Opera House all lit up at night, and these French people just couldn't believe that they traveled eight thousand miles to get here way out in the sticks to open their shop, and everybody who came to the dinner all spoke French. And those beautiful Arthur Brown buildings--you thought you were in Paris!

Crawford: He got such marvelous sound in the Opera House; I suppose that's not architecture per se.

Livermore: Isn't it funny that when they built Davies Symphony Hall they went to Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill, who are the finest high-rise architects in the country, but they had never done an auditorium, and everything about it is wrong. It not only looks funny--I could forgive that if it worked inside--but nothing works. We had to spend another enormous amount of money to have all the acoustics redone.

Crawford: How did Arthur Brown manage to get good acoustics?

Livermore: He got an absolute top theater man to work with him; the man had done the Orpheum Theater, which I remodeled for our Civic Light Opera company. That was done by him too. So he knew more about the stage than Brown did, and he did all that interior stage work which involves acoustics too. The acoustics are simply perfect. Nobody knows why; maybe those people then knew more about it. Skidmore doesn't know beans about anything theatrical but designs fine skyscrapers.

Crawford: You don't like Skidmore much?

Livermore: No. It's awfully cold architecture. They are good for business buildings--very good. I remember Nat Owings was adding on twenty feet to the back of the Opera House, and I told him, "Nat, this was originally designed by Arthur Brown and you have to study it." By God, he did! He added the bump onto the back of the Opera House, and it's just wonderful. He did a beautiful job, and was sort of impressed himself, I think, although they always hate that Beaux Arts style. But it looks as though it could have always been there.

Brown didn't have anybody making suggestions to him; he was so revered and so well-respected that he didn't have any opposition.

Crawford: Was the Beaux Arts tradition carried out in other cities at that period?

Livermore: Very much so, and what was so funny about it was that the Americans who went to the Beaux Arts then came back to their cities and formed a sort of a fraternity. For instance, somebody would ask Arthur Brown who an architect was in Seattle, so of course, he'd pick out his Beaux Arts classmate. Brown got a huge job in Washington, DC under Hoover because he had worked with Stanford, and when Hoover got to Washington, he said, "I'd like to have Brown as the architect." The buildings

were built during Roosevelt's period, but Roosevelt didn't know him and never heard of him.

Crawford: What was the commission?

Livermore: The Labor Interstate Commerce Building; huge building. Enormous!

Crawford: On Pennsylvania Avenue?

Livermore: Yes. It's one of the handsomest buildings in Washington today. Then John Russell Pope did the beautiful museum. He was a classmate of Brown's at Beaux Arts. McKim and White, too; they designed the great banks in New York City. The great banks and clubs and the big public buildings.

But back to San Francisco: the main beauty of San Francisco is the hills and the climate. That's the beauty. The architecture, I'd say, is sort of second to that.

Crawford: When they talk about a tradition and you look at the vocabulary, so to speak, of somebody like Maybeck--it was so eclectic.

Livermore: It was; and then you see money had a lot to do with it too. Nobody built an Arthur Brown house unless they had money, whereas the Wurster house was just the opposite. Ten thousand to build a house!

Crawford: Lewis Mumford said that California architecture was a native and human form reflecting the California life, which I thought was an interesting point of view. I wanted to ask you about one more, and that was Charles Moore, who built Sea Ranch.

Livermore: That was amazing. In the first place, the site had everything to do with it. It's rugged, cold--people don't realize that. It's always cold, windy and foggy on the sea coast, and that gives you an idea of what kind of house you're going to have right off the bat. They all look like sort of modern Wuthering Heights. Shingles with shed roofs. Moore went on to be head of the Yale Art School and did things other places. I would say that's probably his masterpiece.



**IX THE LIVERMORE HOUSES****Julia Morgan, Stanford White, Arthur Brown and Others**

Crawford: Let's move on now to the Livermore houses.

Livermore: As you know, my grandfather Horatio Putnam Livermore moved out here--of course he knew nothing about architecture, he was just a young boy. He and his wife--my grandmother--moved to Oakland, and they just had a nice Victorian house like everybody else did, except he already made a good deal of money, so he had a very large comfortable house and five children and horses and servants. His wife died at Montesol in 1880, and he married this amazing woman, Helen Eells. She really was terribly capable; she could do everything with her hands.

Crawford: Where did they come from?

Livermore: They came from Cincinnati. Her father was head of the whole Presbyterian Church for the United States, so I think they moved him around a good deal. He was head of the big Presbyterian Church in Oakland. That's how she knew my real grandmother. They moved that Oakland house--I have pictures of that house being moved with horses and block and tackles--and she shingled the whole thing.

Crawford: We should spend a little time on that.

Livermore: Yes, I'm going to give you this picture of the Oakland house, because it just shows you how hideous it was.

Crawford: That could almost be a Maybeck, couldn't it?

Livermore: Almost. I have a picture of the original too. They boosted it up a whole floor and shingled the whole thing, and it was an enormous house. As you know, it burned down, and the new club

is built right on top of it. So that's when they moved from there to the Victorian on Russian Hill.

Crawford: Talk about the first house on Russian Hill, would you?

Livermore: Yes. They were married in 1910, and they had a pretty good architect named Whittlesey who built this house at 1071 Vallejo, right across the street from the one we grew up in. It had no room in it at all and is made of heavy, heavy, stucco--sort of an Indian design. They sold that to the Stine family in 1916, when my grandfather died. Why they ever built this kooky-looking house--[laughter]

Crawford: How about the Russian Hill Julia Morgan house? [1023 Vallejo Street, 1917] Somebody wrote that it could have been a "child's block dropped on the site by a careless child"--something about "forceful clumsiness of some vernacular designs."

Livermore: The two--in San Francisco and at Montezol--were knockout Morgan houses.

Crawford: Talk about both of those.

Livermore: As I've told you, my grandmother was very artistic and very creative. Although she came from the East, she had this sort of free-thinking western spirit. She told Julia Morgan, "I have this little, tiny piece of property and I want a little, tiny house just for me and a wonderful Chinese man." She did the same thing at the ranch, building in the woods this marvelous house. It's the thing to see up at the ranch now, because the others have all burned down. Just to see that Julia Morgan house is something. Long sugar pine shingles.

Crawford: Are the houses similar in design?

Livermore: No, very different. Over there at the ranch in the summertime, it gets very hot, and my grandmother felt the heat a lot, so she designed the house with a big, huge drafty corridor going through the whole thing with big doors at each end to catch the breeze. The porch hanging over the cliff is just something. The city house is entirely in redwood--everything in the whole house is redwood; and the country house is all Douglas fir.

Crawford: The house on Russian Hill is so delicate.

Livermore: Isn't that a wonderful house? When she moved from the big house on the ranch into her little Julia Morgan house, she had all this Victorian furniture, and at that time, Victorian furniture was really kind of looked down on, so she painted it

all green. I'll never forget it. The furniture was all painted green--this elaborate Victorian stuff. It looked so fresh; it looked so different. But those Morgan houses give sort of an atmosphere to the family.

Crawford: Do you remember Julia Morgan?

Livermore: I can't say I remember her very well, but I remodeled two of her houses here in the city, and I went to see her that summer when she was in bed. She was sort of a sick old lady, but just as charming as she could be.

Crawford: Which Morgan houses did you remodel?

Livermore: The Wattis house up on Pacific Avenue, on the wall. Coxhead did several houses there. We lived in a Coxhead house in the end, just before I got divorced. A beautiful house right on Pacific Avenue. Maybeck did several of those houses, too.

Crawford: They look surprisingly modern, some of them.

Livermore: Aren't they amazing? One of the little houses is very narrow. The end of the house is just six feet wide.

Crawford: How would you describe the Julia Morgan style?

Livermore: She had a lot of different styles. Imagine doing San Simeon. Never in her wildest dream did she think she'd ever do anything like that.

Crawford: How did she get that job?

Livermore: I'll tell you--she was Hearst's mother's architect, and she designed all these cute little shingle libraries for the University of California--here and there and all over the place. Mrs. Hearst--Phoebe Apperson Hearst--gave these little shingle libraries to the community. They're all up and down everywhere. She also built a big wild thing called the Hacienda, which is kind of a ranch over near Livermore way over there.

Then she did the Woman's Faculty Club at UC Berkeley too, all done in the teens, I would say. San Simeon wasn't started until about 1919--it's quite recent, you know.

But he had this huge piece of property, and he said, "Well, I like that funny little woman"--she was about five feet high--"and I'll just tell her what to do." [laughter] He always thought he was having a picnic in that gorgeous palace,

thinking of how they first used to live there in tents. So to change from tents to that Baroque palace is just unbelievable. Julia was able to handle it; I don't think anyone else would have.

Crawford: Quite a woman.

Livermore: Imagine designing a room from the ceiling down. You very seldom get that chance. But he'd buy one of these gorgeous ceilings and she would work from there.

Crawford: What about your family furnishings?

Livermore: That's a wonderful subject. My grandfather bought furniture, and I still have my grandmother's music chest from 1870, and it used to be so hideous. My mother moved it around in all the different houses. Finally my father said, "I like that. That was my mother's music chest." So she had to keep it. I still have it. It's very elaborate, from the time of Napoleon III.

Crawford: Sounds wonderful.

Livermore: It's crazy--it doesn't hold anything, but I like it. That's the kind of stuff they bought. Both at the ranch and in the city--whatever W. J. Sloan could sell them.

Crawford: I remember Sloan's.

Livermore: Sloan came out because all these houses were carpeted in those days, and they had so many square feet of carpet that they had to establish a store for the carpets out there. When my grandfather lost his money--a lot of it anyway--he had these two big houses--one at Russian Hill, one at Montesol--with just typical old Victorian furniture. They have wonderful outdoor porch chairs made out of hickory. That's the history of the furniture.

#### Stanford White and the Sealy House in Galveston ##

Crawford: Let's talk about the Galveston house.

Livermore: I told you both my two grandfathers went to bonanza cities--one went to San Francisco, one went to Galveston, where they just couldn't miss. Grandfather Sealy married a wealthy woman from down there; she had big farms and estates. So as I said, she

went, in around 1882, up to New York and got the finest architect you could get.

Somehow or other, she heard about Stanford White, and he had never done a house in the South before, and he liked the idea. He was a young fellow--kind of just starting out. He was a member of that wonderful firm of McKim and White, and he built this absolutely amazing house out of Tiffany brick.

Crawford: Tiffany brick?

Livermore: Tiffany brick they call it.

Crawford: Why is that?

Livermore: They're narrow, skinny little buff-colored stones. It wasn't red brick, and it wasn't clapboard--all Victorian houses were usually done in wooden clapboard that need a lot of painting. But the house had amazing terra cotta eaves all baked in terra cotta bricks. Then that tile roof, which is a perfectly beautiful roof. So it was a big showplace.

Crawford: Do you call it a Victorian?

Livermore: I think most people would call it Victorian.

Crawford: What is it like inside?

Livermore: All the furniture--for instance, the living room or the parlor --all white with gold trim. The hall just dark as a tomb. All those houses were so dark. See how dark that is?

Crawford: And there's very, very heavy ornate furniture--what style is that?

Livermore: Sort of Jacobean really. It's all plain old Victorian, but it's sort of good Victorian. You see that room? Isn't that beautiful? The gold curtains and a big French rug. White was a wonderful architect.

Crawford: What was special about his style?

Livermore: He was a Beaux Arts architect, but he sketched beautifully. He had a wonderful sense of style. He was an older edition of Arthur Brown is what he was. They both had this sort of a talent.

Crawford: He came from New York?

Livermore: Yes.

Crawford: How could they persuade him to do a house in the South?

Livermore: That was amazing to me. Of course, they could do all the drawings in New York. I don't suppose he did much supervision. He tied it down so thoroughly with the specifications. For instance, the entrance hall was all walnut; the dining room was all mahogany--imagine all the walls were mahogany; that parlor had brocaded walls instead of wallpaper. It was a beautifully done house.

Crawford: I'm surprised he didn't do more Texas houses.

Livermore: I am too. He may have found, with this house, it was too far away. He couldn't do it justice.

Crawford: Do you know if he liked the house?

Livermore: He said he did. Later on grandmother filled the arches in the front with glass. She wanted to use it as more of a room--that corner room--so she filled them all in with glass. Then she had to get the original drawings from New York. That was about 1910 or so, and they came down and measured all the windows. We've given it to the University of Texas Medical School, and they're using it as a club now, which is nice.

But the Livermore family, which at first didn't have the money this grandfather had, just kept shingling all these houses. [laughter]

Crawford: Where had Mr. Sealy gotten his money?

Livermore: Galveston was the biggest cotton port in the world--when Houston was nothing; it was just swamps. He had then the Cotton Concentration Company, and then the bank--the big bank down there--and he got into absolutely everything, and made a lot of money.

Crawford: That would have been Caroline's father?

Livermore: Her father. But then the channel went right by Galveston. They dug it all out up to Houston, and then of course all the ships went up to Houston, so that was the end of Galveston. They had a terrible hurricane too, which blew away a lot of the city. So in 1900, Galveston was almost destroyed, and in 1906, San Francisco was destroyed. So both these pioneers experienced destruction.

Crawford: When was the house completed?

Livermore: 1889.

Crawford: That must be the master house of Galveston?

Livermore: It's the second biggest house I think. There's one bigger than this, which is now owned by the Catholic Church. The man who designed it, Clayton, was very famous. He was sorry he didn't get the Sealy job, but he did do the stable in the back area.

Crawford: Those were personal stables?

Livermore: Yes. The house took up a whole block, and the carriages went in and out at the back of the house there.

But Grandmother Sealy wanted everything right. Of course her three sons all went to Princeton, and her daughters all went to college--so she was another amazing grandmother. My two grandmothers--they were both pioneers, and wanted the best education for their children.

#### Brown, Bakewell, and Weihe: A House in Ross

Crawford: Let's move on to the Ross house.

Livermore: As I told you, Mother had inherited these two old, broken-down houses--the one at Montesol and the one on Russian Hill, at 1045 Vallejo. They were sort of big, comfortable old dumps. We call them dogs in my business. Having come from college, Mother was an independent type of a woman, and she grew up in Texas with this beautiful house with all the furniture that came from Paris. That fancy, gilded furniture.

Crawford: How did they get it from Paris?

Livermore: Well, they didn't have it in Galveston I guess. Maybe White told them about it.

As I said, they moved into the 1045 Vallejo house in 1916. Grandfather had lost his money and died, but his wife Helen had inherited it. She had been adventurous, and she had fixed things up, and used canvas on chairs very artistically; she moved from this sort of artistic house in Oakland into the Russian Hill one and she furnished it with interesting old rocking chairs and things.

When my grandmother inherited the 1045 Vallejo house, my father said we had to move in there because he had to pay his mother for the house to give her something to live on. So we moved in and meanwhile my grandmother had taken all the furniture out, of course, and then we had mostly wicker furniture because my aunt Beth was president of the Blind Association and they made all these chairs.

Then my father decided that with five sons, the family really should live in the country, so finally Mother could have the house that she wanted.

Crawford: They could build their own!

Livermore: Yes. They were a wonderful combination because my father was an engineer, and this house site in Ross was on a hilltop, so he had to scrape the whole top off. A mule team came up there and scraped it all off--

Crawford: To make a plateau?

Livermore: Yes. Then he went to his friend, Arthur Brown--they were bachelors together--and by that time, Bakewell and Weihe were a separate firm and so they did most of the drawings--Bakewell and Weihe. They had more fun doing that house. It took years to build it and plan it, and Mother went to auctions to buy all this beautiful furniture--eighteenth-century furniture--something she always wanted. So it was their dream castle.

Crawford: Do you have some interior pictures of that that we could talk about?

Livermore: Yes I do. The trouble is--I hate to put this on record, because I hate to make any criticism of it all--but it really was not a terribly good house for us five brothers. Mother always said that if she had met Bill Wurster, he might have built her a more suitable house for the children. But with all of her civic activities, it was wonderful--she could get 150 people in this big, huge long hallway for her meetings. And my father just loved it, so they were perfectly happy. As soon as they died, we sold it right away.

The Ross house was a perfectly beautiful house, but the fact that it was immediately torn down by the subsequent owner tells you something.

Crawford: What does it tell you?

Livermore: In the first place, there were the Livermore ghosts. I guess that's true. As I told you, the man who bought it said, "It will always be called the Livermore house."

Crawford: How did the new one work out?

Livermore: It's a stunning Japanese house; it's really beautiful--with courtyards, but no view. No view at all. The lawn used to look right out to the city. Everyone in town was just so shocked about it. The same front driveway is there--the driveway comes up on the left there. The man died, and his wife asked me to come up and see it last year. It was interesting, but kind of sad. But that was father's dream: to have that great, big place.

Crawford: So he and your mother worked on the plans together?

Livermore: He worked on the plans, he loved it, and we had wonderful times there--Christmases and everything when I had my family. They loved that place. But of course, the Depression came right away, and it was very hard on them financially to keep it up.

Crawford: Is there a house with the same style that Brown designed that you know of?

Livermore: No, I don't think so. My father's name was Norman, and we decided it's sort of a Norman style with a slate roof and with a tower on one side. It's very English. The brick makes it look Georgian, but the steep slate roof makes it look more Norman. Then that great, big living room which didn't match anything at all--huge, high ceilings--and her beautiful eighteenth century drawing room. It was just a lovely house.

The boys were sort of stuck off in the sleeping porch--we didn't care much about that. Our quarters were not emphasized, whereas Wurster did another house at the same time for a family of five brothers down the peninsula, and they had a whole wing for the brothers.

Crawford: What was the house?

Livermore: The Himman house. It was a lovely house. I used to go down there, and I sort of thought, "This is the way ours should be."

Crawford: Yours was more palatial.

Livermore: Yes, and after all, they were the ones living in it. Mother gave concerts and lectures--and it was sort of the town hall at Ross.

Crawford: That's what she wanted.

Livermore: That's what she wanted. My father was very proud of it. He was not particularly social, but he loved walking around the garden. It was their house, and a big success. That's all I could say. They lived there thirty years, which unfortunately, I find, is about as long as people live in their houses now.

Crawford: It's sad, because the children don't take over.

Livermore: It's sad to think of it. People can't believe I've lived here in the City my entire life.

Crawford: Your children didn't take any of the family homes, did they?

Livermore: Except the ranch. Of course, we have several houses up there, so there's enough up there for a long time. The main ones both burned down in about two minutes. John's and Bob's houses at Montesol. My older son has a little house down in Menlo Park; a tiny, little thing. My daughter has a wonderful, old, big dog of a San Francisco house which she loves. My other two boys aren't married, so they don't care. I think that the whole Livermore family here, the Sealy family in Galveston, and this big house in Ross, shows that we always liked big family houses.

**X THE LIVERMORE FAMILY TODAY**

[Interview 6: February 14, 1997] ##

Livermore: The original people came here and they stuck together. It's perfectly logical that a German sticks with a German; New England people here stuck together very closely. You find a lot of these people in these privileged clubs were New England people, mostly English and Irish, and I guess even German.

Crawford: It is interesting in this city that the Jewish element was so strong, as you've said.

Livermore: Especially that they were here so early. They came right off the bat. They got ahead tremendously, especially financially. Look at Levi-Strauss making those pants. Let's see if the Haases are here, and the Hellmans, and Slosses.

Crawford: Those families intermarried a great deal, didn't they?

Livermore: Yes. The Hellmans married into the Ehrmans and they married into the Slosses. They are intermarried tremendously. For instance, two sisters married two brothers: Mrs. Sigmund Stern was the sister of Mrs. Meyer. That's the Meyer family which now owns the *Washington Post*.

Crawford: Katherine Graham.

Livermore: Yes, Katherine Graham was Kate Meyer from San Francisco.

Crawford: Here is the Sigmund Stern family: Rosalie Meyer. I didn't realize that. It's interesting to look at the different generations.

Five Sons; Five Careers

Crawford: We should talk about your brothers at this point and give a bird's-eye view of their lives and careers.

Livermore: All right. I think we inherited our civic feeling from our parents, actually. In other words, you were expected to do more than make a lot of money: you were supposed to help your community, and that's what all five of us have done, remarkably. My brother John hasn't lived here, but he certainly has done an awful lot in the mining world.

Crawford: He's perhaps the best known, isn't he?

Livermore: Yes. Not here, necessarily, but certainly in the mining profession.

Crawford: What has been his significant contribution within his field?

Livermore: He knows how to get gold out of practically nothing. Miniature gold I call it. Nuggets; invisible almost. But of course if you put it all together, you get the gold. It's been a very exciting thing for him to have this sort of tedious career throughout the world and finally end up with this discovery.

Crawford: Why tedious?

Livermore: It's a lot of drudgery. I keep telling young people today, people don't like that word "drudgery." Everybody's life is full of discipline and drudgery. It's not all just exciting. You can be a star on the stage tonight, and tomorrow you will be working. Drudgery is an old-fashioned word--but discipline is a very good word.

Crawford: Do you see much of that among the younger generation?

Livermore: Young people don't like it. Look at the movie industry today. You get a million dollars for just doing nothing. That's sort of an undisciplined life. I happen to like the theater, so I'm very interested in the discipline of the old stars. Someone like Marlene Dietrich was perfectly beautiful; she wasn't much of an actress and she couldn't even sing very much, but was she disciplined! And did she become a star!

Crawford: Your friends De Havilland and Fontaine are another example.

Livermore: There's a perfect example. Those two girls signed movie contracts in the thirties. Their mother was an actress too,

and she taught them elocution. The two girls were English to start with, and they were so beautiful, one blonde, one brunette. They spoke so beautifully--and that was their mother drilling it into them.

I remember when we were all children my mother used to say, "Lower your voice. Don't yell." We didn't have any elocution lessons or anything like that. The way you spoke was important in any profession.

Crawford: Well, John never married?

Livermore: He never married, and so he finally ended up being president of Newmont Mining Company of Canada and Alaska, which is a huge, big thing. But the headquarters was in Toronto, and he didn't want to live in Toronto. He'd spent twenty-five years all over the world: two years in the Andes, and two years in Morocco. He'd been around so much that he wanted to come back home, but at that time, San Francisco was no longer a mining headquarters, as it had been. So he moved to Reno, and he just started his own little outfit in Reno, and that's how he got there. It finally all paid off with this wonderful prospecting that he knew how to do.

But as I mentioned, my father had five sons, and he had five businesses--at least he had five big businesses. He could easily have pushed us all into any one of those businesses. If he told me to go into the PG&E, I would have gone. But he didn't; he picked out our bents--that's an old-fashioned word, you don't hear it much anymore, but we all had strong bents or leanings.

Norman, my older brother, ever since he was a little kid, was a cowboy. He loved horses. So he ended up in this packer association in the High Sierras, and made a big career out of that.

I was the artistic one. In those days, if you were artistic, you were kind of locked up in closets; you didn't want to talk much about it. My father said I was going to go to the Beaux Arts, and I hadn't the slightest idea what that was, but I felt like somebody.

Crawford: It's a nice kind of recognition.

Livermore: Yes. So he encouraged me and pushed me into this field that he thought would be good for me. He helped my brother John enormously. I can't share the details, but when he was at Stanford University, he helped him get these summer jobs up in

Alaska, and he could see that he was interested in geology. So that's John.

Crawford: When I asked John about *The New Yorker* profile, he said that he didn't like it much; it made it sound as if he was born with a silver spoon in his mouth.

Livermore: I didn't think so; I thought that article was pretty good. He just said he grew up in a big, old redwood house. That's not terribly fancy. Could have been worse than that. We didn't grow up with a silver spoon at all. We had a combination I think is wonderful for children: every advantage and no cash. That's a wonderful way to grow up. Now children have less advantages and lots of cash.

Crawford: I don't think a silver spoon means cash, necessarily. I think it means advantage.

Livermore: Maybe it means advantages, yes. We went to the finest schools. We had that wonderful house on Russian Hill, and Montesol--it meant a lot in all of our lives; wonderful Montesol.

Well, my brother Putnam I would say is the smartest of all of us. He was always top of his class, got the best grades. Somehow or another it just seemed that he would be a lawyer--isn't it funny? His qualities seemed to add up to his being a lawyer.

Crawford: Has he been happy as a lawyer?

Livermore: I think he has. One thing I don't understand about him as a lawyer: he always takes the other side immediately whenever you mention anything at all because that's the nature of the profession. Put was always that way. He always said, "Wait a minute, just hear the other side." His mind was not made up yet.

Then Bob was the brother who was always out in the orchards at Montesol. We all worked at Montesol at one time, but his real love was growing things: plants, trees--he still does that today. He's up at Montesol now, planting chestnuts; he likes chestnuts. When the war was over, he got a job as the head of a huge farm near Livermore over the hill there.

Crawford: In the East Bay.

Livermore: East Bay. He had this huge walnut orchard.

Crawford: You said your father had been interested in walnuts?

- Livermore: Yes, in World War I; he decided that was the thing to grow at Montesol. Also, that was his hobby. He didn't like boats or other hobbies. He liked raising walnuts up at the ranch, and that was good for his boys too. So Bob just sailed right into a walnut ranch.
- Crawford: He made his living as a farmer?
- Livermore: Made his living at the Bishop Ranch in San Ramon, and he lived on the ranch. Had his four children there. So he stayed on there until the ranch was sold. That's the trouble with all these new developments; of course he had to leave. They made a development out of his walnut ranch--ripped out all the trees--so that he lost his job.
- Crawford: He didn't own the ranch?
- Livermore: No, he didn't own it, he was just the foreman of the Bishop Ranch. It was kind of sad. Then he bought another ranch of his own, which he still lives on. It wasn't a ranch; I think it's about five acres. In San Ramon.
- Crawford: Your brother Putnam told me that he was called the Mark Twain of Danville.
- Livermore: That's absolutely true! He was such a colorful person.
- Crawford: Does he come to Montesol?
- Livermore: Yes, he loves it. His daughter Sara and her husband are living there, and she's the first family member to live there in a hundred years. She is there with a little baby, and it's nice for him to go up there and have somebody in the house. His wife Jean does not like to go up that much. She's had bad back problems. But Bob goes up at least twice a month. This weekend is a long weekend, and all of the brothers are going to be up there. Well, that explains the five brothers and their professions.
- Crawford: What sort of law does Putnam practice?
- Livermore: Put got a job right away with Chickering and Gregory, which was our family's law office. He went one year to Yale Law School, and then graduated from the University of California Law School at Berkeley. So he has been working in that office a long, long time. He does all of our Montesol work, and I don't know what we'd do without him up there because the two big sources of income are all handled by him: the TV station on the mountain, and now the sale of our water.

Crawford: How much water do you market?

Livermore: They take out eight truckloads of water a day. Eight huge trucks as big as this whole office.

Crawford: Does that cover your bills at Montesol?

Livermore: Yes. The walnuts never made very much money. In the Depression, my father thought he had to give the ranch up because it wasn't making any money. But we had a wonderful foreman there, and he got what little money he could out of it: some apples, pears, walnuts, and that kept us going until the war.

Crawford: Who found the water?

Livermore: I think someone approached my brother Put and said, "Bottled water's becoming terribly popular now. Imagine if we could send trucks up to Mt. St. Helena and fill up and come back to the plant; it would be just too good to be true."

Crawford: So it's bottled there?

Livermore: No. It's bottled in Calistoga. Sparkling water--Perrier water--has been bottled in France, but this is fresh mountain spring water--not sparkling water. Calistoga also bottles "Calistoga Sparkling Water," but that comes from wells in Calistoga.

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Livermore: Then people here in the Bay Area decided that our city tap water was so terrible that they wanted regular spring water, not sparkling water, and so we've been selling our spring water. It's very, very pure water. Wonderful.

Crawford: Do you bottle by the name of Calistoga?

Livermore: Yes. Now I see in the middle of Safeway an enormous supply of our water.

Crawford: How do you know?

Livermore: Because it says "Calistoga Mountain Spring Water."

Crawford: All this spring water would be from the Livermore property? It would be interesting to know what the revenues are. How long has it been since you've been mining water?

Livermore: Four years, I think, now. But we've had a lot of expenses. We don't "mine" water in the sense that we deplete sources. It is

constantly replenished by rainfall. Our neighbors protested at first over our taking the water.

Crawford: How?

Livermore: The trucks. They didn't like the additional traffic caused by the trucks. Nowadays, you can sue anybody for anything. I could sue you because I don't like your handkerchief. The young lawyers just love it. Anyway, that's all settled now. We changed the route where the trucks come and go; legal expenses will be subtracted from what we made.

I think it's interesting that the five brothers, accidentally maybe, have feathered in with our professions to run Montesol. My father always said we could never do as much as he did alone, and maybe it is easier to do things alone than to have to keep asking someone for help all the time. But we've been managing it since 1953, and it's doing pretty well. We don't know about the cousins, though, and what they're going to do--

Crawford: What do you think will happen?

Livermore: I don't know. It depends on the children. Norman has five children, and only two of them go to Montesol because three don't live in California. I have four children, and three go. Bob's four children all go. What has always broken families up, of course, has been the daughters, and we have no sisters. The daughter will break up an estate. That's why England has primogeniture; they figured that out long ago. The older son gets the property, and that's it. The younger sons go off to Australia or some other place. We'll have to work it out.

Crawford: You're not retired, any of you, are you?

Livermore: No. I never thought about that. It's true, we're not even retired. [laughter]

### The Future of Montesol

Crawford: So that isn't something you're addressing right now: what will happen to Montesol?

Livermore: We're starting to. For instance, we've already divided the place on paper, at least: sixteen people now own Montesol.

Crawford: The children and their spouses?

Livermore: No, just blood relatives. The brothers and the cousins. The thirteen cousins, and four brothers, so that's sixteen people. Only four of the brothers married: Norman, George, Put and Bob.

Crawford: Putnam?

Livermore: He wasn't married until he was sixty-six. He was just a bachelor like John. So I have one bachelor brother and two bachelor sons. That doesn't make children very well. Then Ike (Norman) has five children, and of five children, two of the three boys have only one child--a girl. So it's not a big, producing family.

Crawford: Two of your sons are confirmed bachelors?

Livermore: I think so. They're so independent now. Just like me: I'm now a confirmed bachelor. [laughter] My daughter has two children and the other son has three.

Crawford: What is your guess as to what will happen to Montesol?

Livermore: I'm the only brother that doesn't want to buy any more land. My brothers are crazy about land.

Crawford: Do you have about eight thousand acres up there?

Livermore: We have about eight thousand acres, including the top of the mountain. If I was doing everything myself, I would sell everything in the eastern part of the ranch over the ridge. You can't see it anyway.

Crawford: That would help financially.

Livermore: It would help an awful lot. Then of course, not a single one of these thirteen children has much money. It would mean a lot to them. Well, we've given it to them, so at least they own that now. We put out a questionnaire, and they all answered it, and said yes, they wanted to keep Montesol. My house, which has been so active with the children coming all the time--now they have their families. And all the wives want to go to their own house. Women are nesters; in case you don't know.

I told you my wife made a wonderful remark--she said, "If it's my grease, that's one thing, if it's your grease, it's very different." Patty and Dick are now taking the house down at the lake. The Lake house. So at least it's their house

for two years. What a difference it makes for her, I can't believe it.

When we were first married, my wife loved to go up there, but she just wanted her own place. So we fixed over this old house--which is still my house--and she just loved it. It was rough with the squirrels, and rats, and mice, and everything. But it was *her* place.

### The Livermore Families

Crawford: How did the wives get along?

Livermore: They were terribly different. There were only two wives for a long, long time. They were about as opposite as anyone could be. Maybe that's the way they got along at all, really.

Then physically they were so different. Dina was 6'1"--very grand and straight. My wife was very flirtatious and feminine. So the two together were just like night and day. They lived together for a whole year over in that big house in Ross.

Crawford: That would have tested a relationship. What was her maiden name, Dina?

Livermore: Pennoyer. French name. Her father came from the East Bay, and then he married Morgan's daughter. J. P. Morgan. In the newspaper this morning it says we're having a big exhibit at the Legion of Honor from the J. P. Morgan collection. It's unusual because Dina hates to have her name in the paper.

Crawford: How about Bob's wife?

Livermore: Bob's wife was raised in the Napa Valley.

Jean lived as a farmer's wife over in San Ramon for many years, and she was a wonderful mother to the four children. I just love her; I think she's perfectly wonderful. But she has not been well recently, and that's hard.

Crawford: Who is the new wife?

Livermore: Put's wife everyone adores. Her name is Pari. P-A-R-I. She's just winning prizes everywhere, and started the Red and White Ball, which makes a lot of money. She's the greatest addition, I think, to the family.

Crawford: How did he meet her at age sixty-six?

Livermore: He had one girl after another. I think it's the funniest story how she caught him: the girls would all say, "After Monday, I'm not going out with you any more. Sick and tired of this, and I'm not going to be one of your girls." So then Put would say, "Well, I'm sorry, I'm going to miss you." [laughter] She got him; of course, he wanted to get married.

John said he couldn't get married because he was always off exploring. He said, "I never wanted a wife who lived in a mine shaft." He liked sophisticated women. That's a very good point: you're moving every two years, and your poor old wife has hair streaming in the soup and everything. It's just not very conducive to marriage. Put was the same way: he had his profession, he had his politics, and his law office.

Crawford: Let's talk about his political activity.

Livermore: It is funny how he got into it, because he's not a terribly outgoing person like most politicians are. He liked the fairness of the law; he was sort of Lincolnesque about it. How he got into it, I'll never know; I was so busy with my own profession, and my own domesticity.

But he lived up in this house on the hill which I remodeled for him, and he had his profession and his politics. And always one girl at a time; I'll say that. He never did anything socially; he thought that typed him too much. He didn't join any clubs; he is in the Olympic Club because that's an athletic club. But he didn't join the PU Club, or the Bohemian Club, the way I did. It helped me tremendously in my profession.

Politics didn't help his firm at all; not a bit. My wife was the most wonderful help to me because she came along like a Christmas tree and was wonderful socially. Eighty percent of my clients were social friends. So this was very important to me; we went out an awful lot socially. It tied right into my profession. Put didn't need to do that because somebody else did it in his office. John didn't have to do it for twenty-five years because the company did it. Norman finally gave up his Sierra work and went into the lumber business. He had a family, and had to earn more money.

Crawford: He probably regretted giving that up, didn't he?

Livermore: I don't think he did, because it led to his eight-year work with Reagan, which was the most exciting time of his life.

Crawford: Yes, talk about that.

Livermore: He had worked in the Sierra and in the lumber business and had been on the Board of Directors of the Sierra Club, so he was perfect to solve those kinds of problems. He understood the need for wilderness and for the lumber business. Reagan chose the perfect person for that job--he was there for eight years, then he asked him to go back to Washington, but he said eight years was enough. He's been retired a long time now; ever since Reagan was in Washington.

Crawford: What did that represent for him--his years with Reagan?

Livermore: In the first place it was a great honor to be on the governor's cabinet. Also, he was needed. He single-handedly stopped the road through the Sierra Mountains.

Crawford: Which road was that?

Livermore: The truckers wanted a new road--they have to go all the way from Yosemite, all the way down to Bakersfield--there's no road to go through the Sierra mountains. It was kind of scary there for awhile, because it had almost gone through, and it would have severed the John Muir Trail and ruined some wonderful wilderness country.

Norm is the greatest environmentalist in the family. We were all active--my mother especially; then Norman with his job; I in my architectural work did a lot of environmental work; John does a lot with his mining work. Put has worked with the Nature Conservancy and Trust for Public Land and Bob has been on the Board of the Farm Grazing Committee of the State Forest Service. So all of us are really environmentalists. My youngest son Bill is working with the environmentalists now. So is my nephew David. He's in Salt Lake City with the Nature Conservancy.

Crawford: Norman was really the most political of the brothers?

Livermore: He was a governmental administrator--Resource Secretary of California--like the Secretary of the Interior of California. Putnam was a political party worker--Republican State chairman of California.

Crawford: How so?

Livermore: He got a lot people into politics. He helped our present governor a lot. Unfortunately he worked during the Nixon administration. That turned out to be a disaster, but he also worked with many others.

Crawford: How did he help the governor?

Livermore: He developed candidates and helped the Governor and others run the office; that's what he did. I used to go to these political dinners often with him, but I just couldn't do politics. Lawyering and politics to me are the most boring things possible. I go down and sit for an hour or two in my son's court in San Mateo--he is a judge--and I just say, "How do you stand it?"

The trouble with the law and judgeships are that it's all problems. I would hate to have my own life be nothing but problems. That's why you're there: because there's a problem. I had an awful lot of problems in my construction work; but it wasn't all problems.

Crawford: What's the impact on Putnam's life of this new marriage?

Livermore: The impact of his life with his new wife is a miracle to me. He's laughing all the time. She's so sweet and dear. I just gave her one piece of advice. I said, "Pari, don't try to change him. If he says he has to work six days a week, say 'Yes, you're right.'" That's why she's so incredible.

Crawford: You were nominated for a *Time* award.

Livermore: I was named what they call the "Newsmaker of Tomorrow" in *Time* magazine. I wasn't even forty yet. You had to be under forty. I was a director of the Legion of Honor museum at that time, and secretary of the vestry of my church. I was on the California Roadside Council as well.

There were an awful lot of nominees, and out of all those names I was chosen.

Crawford: That's outstanding. I want to read from an article in the *Chronicle*: "George Sealy Livermore is ruggedly handsome in the best Gary Cooper, John Wayne tradition. His brown hair is combed back straight, his eyes are clear green, his voice compelling. And when you see him dancing in white tie and tails at the Cotillion, you would never guess that his whole life is the church." Would you say that's true?

Livermore: Well, I think it was then. That was true: whenever I had problems with my family, my marriage, my profession, I always could rely on my faith. And for thanksgiving; that's the *most important* thing of all. Stop complaining and count your blessings.

Crawford: Did you go as a family to church?

Livermore: Oh, yes, in the old days. My mother came from Trinity Church in Galveston.

Crawford: When you married did you go?

Livermore: Yes, I'll tell you what we did. I see it now with my son's family--getting the kids up on a Sunday morning and off to church. I did all that with our first child, then we had another baby, and my wife had to stay home with the baby of course. She didn't go any more, but she said, "If you went to my church, St. Mary the Virgin, then I'd go to church with you." I hated to do it, but I did.

Crawford: That was St. Luke's at that time?

Livermore: St. Luke's; and I was on the vestry and it was a big part of my life. The children were all baptized there.

Crawford: Do the children practice today?

Livermore: My oldest son has three children, and I went to church with him last Sunday. He goes to Trinity in Menlo Park. He's kind of a big shot there, and last Sunday there was this nice little notice about "the Honorable Dick Livermore"--he's a judge, you see--"is a Trinity parishioner and a graduate of the Bethel Bible Series, a two-year course of study in Bible history. He is a municipal court judge, and outdoorsman." I thought that was so nice.

But he takes all his children to Trinity Church when he's not up at the ranch. I've always told my children--I tell all my friends too--"Faith is absolutely free. It doesn't cost you one cent." Dick has quite a deep faith. I find the church a great comfort.

Dick went to the Presbyterian Church, which is much more relaxed. But now he realizes he likes the Episcopal Church because it has the discipline, the ritual, and it has the Apostolic Succession. I'm glad to see him part of the church there.

Family Names ##

Crawford: You had wanted to talk about some of the family names and your children's names.

Livermore: Aunt Edith, of course, was my invalid aunt, whom we all just loved. She never married, but the first grandchild--Norman's first daughter--was named Edith after her. We call her "Penny," because it's Edith Pennoyer Livermore. Aunt Edith had a lot of sadness--she never married and had an awful lot of health problems, as I mentioned. But that was the first Edith.

Then I always wanted a girl so I could name her Beth after my wonderful Aunt Beth, who said, when my daughter was born, "Oh for heaven's sake, don't name that child after me, that's ridiculous." Of course she was thrilled.

We had the christening before she died, when Beth was about two years old. That was a big comfort to her; she loved that, and she left her some money, which was so nice of her.

I will say this about my family's names: Jinny and I decided we wanted to have a reason for a name. So we named the first boy after her uncle Richard, and his name is Richard Clifton Livermore. Then our second child we named Thomas Banks after Aunt Lily Banks, who was very elegant--the aunt who lived in Peking.

Crawford: We don't know much about Lily.

Livermore: Well no, because she went to live in China. Her husband was Sir Robert Bredon, and so she became Lady Bredon. Everyone who went to Peking always knew Lady Bredon.

So we named our second son Thomas Banks Livermore because we thought it would nice to keep that name, after Grandfather Banks, and Lily. That's a wonderful name isn't it: Thomas Banks? We always had Tom, Dick, and Harry in the family because the dog's named Harry!

Then we finally had Beth, and then the last one we named for my uncle, William Sealy, who never had any children.

Crawford: It means something to the children, doesn't it?

Livermore: It means something.

Crawford: Was there a Caroline?

Livermore: We didn't have a Caroline. I loved my mother, but I never particularly liked that name. I guess it was sort of an insult to her that we had two daughters and one was Edith and one was Beth, but my brother, Bob, finally had a daughter and named her Caroline Sealy Livermore.

It meant so much to her. I don't know why I didn't even think about that--I was busy with Beth. But if I had another daughter, I certainly would have named her Caroline after my mother. But Beth likes her name, and if she had a daughter, she would name her that too.

Crawford: You mentioned that one son is a judge. What are the other careers in that generation?

Livermore: My son Tom, the second boy, has a big-shot travel bureau in Orange County. He lives in Orange County, and he has three offices down there, and he's done very, very well. Then there's Beth, who lives here on Webster Street. Bill is my youngest, and he's with the American Land Conservancy. Naturally we used my brothers as the godfathers for the boys; then there is one female godmother for each.

Norman's children are Edith, then Pauline, and then the three boys--the first one is Norman Banks Livermore III; then comes Samuel. I think it was an old Livermore name: Samuel. Very New England. After Samuel came David.

Crawford: No Horatios?

Livermore: No Horatios. Putnam was named Horatio, but he changed his name. He legally changed his name to Putnam Livermore. He was so teased that it wasn't fair, and mother did wait for the fourth son to use the name. The story is that my grandmother said, "You have to name somebody after Horatio." So she did. Robert was named after her brother, Robert.

Robert's children are Caroline Sealy, Lauren, and the twins Sara Sealy and Robert Sealy. That is all thirteen of them.

### More about Travels

Crawford: We could move on and talk about your travels, of which there have been many.

Livermore: I think traveling changes your whole life. As I said, when I was fourteen years old, we went to Europe. I always had a lot of imagination and an artistic bent, and I loved fairy stories, because they were all European--castles and dragons and all that sort of thing--when I was a little kid. Then I got over there and they were all real. I saw these beautiful buildings, beautiful castles.

We had the most wonderful three-month trip with my mother, my aunt, and my brother--and I'll never forget that trip. It was my first, because we only went to Montesol every summer before that.

Then my one dream was to get back to Europe--how was I going to get back to Europe. My father said if I didn't want to go back to college, I had to have some work, and he meant what he said. So I got a job on these ships in Galveston, which was quite easy to do in those days, and those were long trips: twenty-six days at sea.

I eventually got over to the other side, and I went all over Europe on almost nothing; it didn't cost anything in those days. You were allowed to be discharged from the ship then, which you aren't any more. So that was my second big dose of travel. 1928, and then 1934--I haven't mentioned that one--Italy, Austria, Germany.

Then I was in college, and I saved up enough money so I could go back that summer of 1936 when my brother Norman played baseball in the Olympic games--it was all terribly exciting.

We went all over to Europe together and drove--three of us brothers--Norman, John, and me. Those three trips got me into travel more than anything I could think of. As I mentioned, Norman played baseball before Hitler and 100,000 people.

Then I got married, and we couldn't even go over to Oakland. [laughter] Couldn't go; couldn't leave the children. But I wanted to expose Jinny to Europe. The magic of Europe. She had never been anywhere ever, and when the boys were old enough so we could leave them with my family, we went for three months.

That was a wonderful trip; it educated her to Europe; and we could do that together. So that was another magical trip to Europe, in 1950. Then we just couldn't go anywhere until I got divorced, really. We did have a wonderful trip to Canada on a brief raft trip with the Sierra Club.

Crawford: With the children?

Livermore: With the boys. As soon as I got divorced, the first thing I wanted to do was to go traveling. I could do anything I wanted, though I didn't have any money. I don't know how many times I have been back to Europe; it's my business, and my love, and my profession, and everything. There's a new trip coming up to the French chateaux, sponsored by the Alliance Francaise. Brother John and I have had several fine trips. We go to Germany this Christmas.

Crawford: Do you feel at home in Europe?

Livermore: Oh, right at home. I speak French, and I could do pretty well in German. This last year, I went to Russia with my nephew.

Crawford: Was that a tour as well?

Livermore: Yes, that was a tour, and you had to have a guide every minute; even to get a sandwich. That wasn't too good. But seeing those gorgeous palaces. Then I've been all over England I don't know how many times; I went to Ireland finally last year on a tour with my sister-in-law. So I would say that travel is deep in my heart. I think it comes a little bit from this interracial city that I live in. It's such an ethnic mix of people.

Crawford: Makes you a citizen of the world doesn't it?

Livermore: Yes, it makes you a citizen of the world.

Crawford: You were saying that the mayor invited you to go to Paris. That was an interesting invitation.

Livermore: Yes. I didn't go, but I was glad that he asked me. He asked me because of my civic work and because I can speak French.

Crawford: Who among your friends has had a similar kind of commitment to civic work in San Francisco?

Livermore: That's a very interesting question, I think, because the people that are high up in the social world are not that civic-minded, really. A great friend of mine, Agnes Albert, is the most distinguished person I know.

Crawford: Tell me about her.

Livermore: She's unbelievable, and she's even older than I am--if possible. [laughter] Her daughter lives in London, so that gives her an excuse to go over there. She also travels with the San Francisco Symphony all the time, wherever it goes. She has this wonderful accent, because she's lived for so many years off and on in Europe, and as I've told her, "Agnes you have an accent in every language, even in English!" I went on a hiking trip with her, when we were both pretty old, in France. But she is way up at the top of the list; I can't think of anyone that touches her in terms of civic work.

I don't know anyone that has really the excitement of travel the way I do, and Agnes. I have another friend whose wife loves to travel, and she said when they go some place he just sits on a bench in the park the whole time, and that's traveling.

Crawford: Do you travel with friends?

Livermore: Yes, I've always traveled with friends. The only time I went alone was when Agnes invited me to go to her granddaughter's wedding in Israel. I'll go anywhere I'm invited, but I wasn't going to go all the way to Israel without seeing something else, so I did take a beautiful ten-day cruise of the Greek Islands alone, and I had just a wonderful time. I sat at the French table, so I made a lot of French friends. I realized it is easy for me to make friends right away; especially on a boat trip. But I haven't traveled that much alone.

Crawford: I'm interested in knowing what you might have done differently in your life?

Livermore: I can't think of anything that I would have done differently. I've had the most fascinating life--that's a way of saying thanks. I used to say of my ex-wife that I always saw the donut; she saw the hole. That's not either of our faults; I

could have just as easily seen the hole, and she the donut. But it makes for a much happier life. My wife has always been looking for the button of happiness, and I hope she has found it.

Her sister says now she has everything she ever wanted: she has a little house in the country, and the nicest husband possible. I'm awfully lucky that way too. I consider that I had a wonderful marriage; I had a wonderful wife. She was remarkable.

##

Livermore: She was a wonderful mother of the kids before they turned twelve. Some women--the children just drive them crazy until they get older--and vice versa. Somebody asked me why I get along with children, and I said, "I'll tell you exactly what the secret is: an adult can become a child, but a child cannot become an adult." My grandchild and I have little forts in the forest, and all that sort of stuff, and I just feel like a child.

But when they get to be adults, the spell is broken. In other words, the children feel, "We had such a good time, and now you're not even talking to me any more." That's the way of human nature with children; adults don't understand that. It's fascinating for me to see how different people handle their parenthoods. My parents dealt with us with just absolute perfection; but of course we did have servants.

Crawford: There was never any unpleasantness?

Livermore: Servants made a lot of difference, especially the nurse was our big help. But nevertheless, I never saw my parents ever have a fight. Imagine! Or a disagreement. My brother sees it a little differently, because they were older, but I'm talking about my childhood. Of course, a father who is an absolute rock instead of being out drunk every night, and a wonderful, optimistic, serene mother gives you a good base. That's a huge start in life.

The Livermore Ghosts

Crawford: Earlier you said something interesting about the Ross house: "When we sold it, it wasn't easy for the new owners because there were the 'Livermore ghosts.'"

Livermore: Exactly. It wasn't the fact that they just didn't want a two-story house; that wasn't the reason they tore the house down. I think they didn't want to live in the Livermore House. Houses are named for whomever built them, and there is nothing you could do to stop that. I think that's what happened to Pomeroy. In the first place, he wanted a one-story Japanese house; but really, the Livermore ghosts were there; they really were.

Funniest thing--a woman at the bottom of the hill bought the staircase from the Ross house and she put it into her house. She said that my mother's ghost had been walking on that stair. She wasn't joking; she said, "I have seen Mrs. Livermore walking on that stair."

Crawford: Was there an estate sale and people bought parts of the house?

Livermore: Everything was for sale.

Crawford: Did you take anything out of it?

Livermore: Well, I got all the mantelpieces, and I got a few light fixtures. The mantelpieces were all colonial; English colonial.

Crawford: Are there still ghosts in the Russian Hill house?

Livermore: No, but I think that's another reasons why the fellow who bought it, Berggruen, ripped it all to pieces. We told him he couldn't change the shape of the house; it must be shingles, and so on. It's unusual for anyone to go for that, but we found a buyer who would. So he just ripped the whole inside out. There was nothing left at all.

Of course, we had added on so much to it. Changed the old Victorian house into a shingled turn-of-the-century house. But it was a wonderful, big, marvelous house and gave us loads of happiness. Almost everyone who lived in it loved it that way. It was always a happy house. But none of our ghosts are there any more; I'll tell you that!

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they are all active either as members of the Board of Trustees, officers of the Academy, or close friends.

There are two individuals, however, that I do wish to pay special respect to. The Academy probably has not had two more loyal and faithful leaders than two of the persons we are honoring today. We are indeed delighted to have with us their wives, Mrs. Livermore and Mrs. Mailliard.

(Introducing Mr. Sutherland)

It has often been said that one is known best by those with whom he is closely associated. Norman B. Livermore, in whose honor a room in this new wing is being dedicated today, throughout his life was a champion for preserving our natural resources. In this connection, he was for many years closely affiliated with what is today known as the Pacific Gas & Electric Company. Some people have said that the Academy and the growth of this great utility company commanded a major share of his life's interest. Thus, it seems appropriate that we have as one of our guests a man who knew and worked intimately during many years with Mr. Livermore, the President of the Pacific Gas & Electric Company, Norman R. Sutherland.

#### TRIBUTE TO NORMAN B. LIVERMORE

by

Norman R. Sutherland

It is my great honor to comment on the worthy lifetime of community service of Norman B. Livermore, San Francisco business and civic leader, and patron of the Academy of Sciences.

I hope that Mrs. Livermore and the members of the family present will sympathize with my efforts to pay adequate tribute, in the time allotted me, to a man who did so much for his community and for his fellow man.

Norman Livermore was a modest and unassuming gentleman. He never sought attention for the many things he did for the advancement of San Francisco and all California, industrially and culturally.

Yet I think he would be secretly gratified to know that the Norman B. Livermore Room will keep alive the memory of his name here at the Academy of Sciences. I believe there was nothing in a life of rich and varied interests that absorbed him more than the building of this institution. He was a life member, a patron, and a Fellow of the Academy. He became associated with the Academy in 1913; from 1929 onward he was a member of the Board of Trustees; he served as president from 1938 to 1946.

Mr. Livermore was a civil engineer by training and a naturalist and conservationist by avocation. In his profession he followed a tradition of his family. His grandfather, who served in the State Senate, and his father and uncle were the builders of the Folsom dam and powerhouse on the American River. That was one of the pioneering electrical developments of the state. Norman Livermore was a United States assistant engineer of fortifications and harbors and he later was an engineer of large water and power works in San Francisco. During World War I he served with the Army Engineer Corps in combat in France, and was decorated by the French Government.

As his business interests widened, he acquired a broad and deep knowledge of the electric utility industry, of mining, banking, and corporate finance. In 1916 he was elected a director of the Pacific Gas and Electric Company. Except for a two year interruption because of war, he was a PG&E director for 35 years. At his death in 1953 he was the senior member of the Board and a member of the Executive Committee. During his lifetime he contributed immeasurably to the growth of the company and the quality of its service to California.

He organized Norman B. Livermore and Company, in which his sons later joined him, and dealt in heavy machinery for the industry of this area for many years. His diversified business activities included the presidency of the Coffin-Redington Company, the presidency of Pacific Coast Aggregates, and directorships in the Crocker First National Bank, the California Packing Corporation, the Natomas Company, Fireman's Fund, and the Northwestern Equipment Company.

It was a mark of Mr. Livermore's exceptional capacities that, with all his business concerns, he could find time to devote himself so unselfishly to so many civic and avocational interests.

He and Mrs. Livermore shared an abiding interest in the preservation of California's natural beauty for future generations to enjoy. I trust Mrs. Livermore will pardon me this reference, for I am sure that in all he did in this field he was inspired and stimulated by his wife's love of nature.

He was a member of the Executive Board of the Save-the-Redwoods League, a member of the Sierra Club, and the donor of the land at Mt. St. Helena for the Robert Louis Stevenson Memorial State Park. Always interested in youth, Mr. Livermore was vice president of the San Francisco Boy Scout Council. He was a fellow of the National Geographic Society and the Society of American Military Engineers. He pursued agricultural investigation in

Africa and the Orient, engaged in African big game hunting, and contributed articles to journals on his travels and on engineering subjects. With all his activities, it is a wonder to men of lesser dimension how he managed also to rear a large, active and wonderful family.

Norman Livermore's great contributions to the California Academy of Sciences are a reflection of his active mind. In his leadership he attached particular importance to the Academy's research and publication activities. He became a member when the Academy had no permanent home, because of the great fire, and in his long association helped greatly to develop this splendid center of study and public education in the various fields of natural science.

There could be no more fitting commemoration of a life devoted to the enrichment of the community, in this and so many other ways, than the creation of the Norman B. Livermore Room in this newest expansion of the Academy of Sciences.

In conclusion, permit me to add a few personal references. It was at P. G. and E. that I acquired a deep respect for Mr. Livermore. I learned that he loved the mountains and the rivers -- and engineering projects associated with mountains and rivers, such as hydroelectric developments. When such projects were discussed at P. G. and E., his eyes were afire with interest -- and advice poured from his mind and heart. On the other hand, when steam-electric plants were discussed, I detected a wrinkle or two in his nose. At the end of steam plant discussions, he always asked the same question: Why don't we build a hydroelectric plant instead?

I shall always remember Norman Livermore as a kind, helpful, and understanding man. I believe that if we can be so remembered by our associates, we will have achieved the highest possible reward. Norman B. Livermore was truly one of California's great men.

Chairman (introducing Dr. Miller)

Our next speaker is a gentleman, who had the privilege and honor of being associated with Alice Eastwood for almost forty years. He knew her objectives; he worked with her here at the Academy and watched her establish her international reputation in the field of botany. It is my pleasure to ask our Director, Dr. Robert C. Miller, if he would say a few words.  
Dr. Miller.



*LINES WRITTEN WHILE ON AN  
ARMY TRANSPORT*

SERGEANT GEORGE SEALY LIVERMORE

*Smells*

Azaleas in Bear Creek.  
The barn.  
Nutmeg on the Claussen road.  
The blackberry patch.  
Warm milk from the cow.  
Fresh fir boughs thatching the hut.  
Muck in the ponds at the spring  
After the first rain.  
Walnuts at harvest time.  
A ripe bunch of Isabella Regias.

*Sounds*

The old ranch bell.  
Water gurgling through the pipe at Montesol  
spring.  
Crickets and frogs at twilight.  
The whirr of quail in Bear Valley.  
The slam of the front screen door.  
The daily breeze in the tall cottonwoods after  
lunch.  
Squirrels in the Chapman Place walnut trees.  
Horses' hoofs on the old asphalt around the house.  
The dogs anticipating a horseback ride.

*Sights*

The blue mountain at sunset.  
The "view point."  
The work-horses, Chub and Duke, hauling leaves  
away.

Mother's birthday dinner on the lawn.  
Moonlight at "Star Flat."  
Dad and his irrigation ditches.  
The great ash tree.  
Pink camellias on the bush at Blake House.  
The mail bag on the porch.  
Mother's sweet face at the dinner table.

*Sensations*

Driving up to the dear old house.  
A jump in the Montesol Pool.  
Taste of the summer's first Bartlett pear.  
An ear of Golden Bantam corn.  
Sleeping under the trees.  
A drink of the purest water in the world.  
Riding down the front road for the mail.  
Making cider in the apple shed.  
Siesta after lunch.  
Sunday evening hymns.



**G E O R G E L I V E R M O R E - A R C H I T E C T**  
**414 MASON STREET - SAN FRANCISCO 94102 - (415) 421-7705**

February 11, 1993

Janice Shippey  
192 Cascade Drive  
Fairfax, CA 94930

Dear Mrs. Shippey,

My mother, Mrs. Norman B. Livermore, was born Caroline Sealy in Galveston, Texas, 7 August 1883. Her father George Sealy was senior warden of Trinity Episcopal Church, and her mother sang in the choir. When she came to San Francisco in 1910 after graduating from Vassar College, she joined the parish of St. Luke's on Van Ness Avenue and later Trinity at Bush and Gough. Lydia Paige Monteagle was President of the Diocesan Womans' Auxiliary at that time (1907-1920). She told my mother that she could take time out to have a baby, but then she would be put to work in the church by being secretary of the Auxiliary. This led to being President of the House of Churchwomen (1941-1946). She brought these two organizations together to form one strong Diocesan Woman's Auxiliary which she became president of (1941-1946).

She worked with Mrs. Monteagle on the Grace Cathedral fund- raising in 1928 who was chairman of the drive for her memorial window after Mrs. Monteagle's death in a car accident in 1929.

In 1930 she moved to Ross where she became president of the Womens' Auxiliary of St. John's Parish and chairman for the Marin County Regional Women's Auxiliary Board. She worked with Bishop Parsons on a committee to draft a change in Diocesan Canons making it possible for women to serve on Vestries and allow one woman delegate and one alternate to be a representative from her Parish for the Diocesan Convention. She had the distinction of having been elected in 1948 the first woman member of a Standing Committee in the United States.

Elected delegate from 8th Province to serve on National Women's Auxiliary Board.

Chairman of dinner for Dr. Tensler of St. Luke's Hospital in Tokyo. Paul Rusch of Kyosoto Experimental Project remembered her when my two sons worked there in 1963.

Representative of the women of the Diocese for a speech at luncheon for Bishop Pike when he was ordained.

Member of Committee to raise money for the portrait of Bishop Parsons and also for his pulpit in Grace Cathedral.

Chairman of Pacific Coast for Washington, D.C. Cathedral Fund.

Our home was constantly overflowing with the happiness of her Christian Faith. The clergy were often invited to our home in Ross and our ranch in Calistoga. Even the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Fisher of Lambeth, visited us in 1962.

Mother was chiefly known for her Marin County conservation accomplishments - Angel Island, Art and Garden Center, Point Reyes Sea Shore, Audubon Society, Taylor Park - but her church work was a particular joy to her. She was survived by her five sons and thirteen grandchildren.

I hope, Mrs. Shippey, that the above will be of assistance to your efforts to preserve the history of the diocesan Episcopal Church Women.

Most sincerely,

George Livermore

## *The Livermore Family*



Horatio P. Livermore. Courtesy George Livermore.

Half a year after Gelett Burgess departed the Summit, Horatio P. and Helen Eels Livermore arrived. The move was not entirely by choice. The family had suffered financial reverses and were forced to sell their Rockridge Park mansion along with its spacious grounds.<sup>200</sup> Horatio still owned the house at 1023 Vallejo on Russian Hill which he had rented to Willis Polk in 1891-1892, and it now became their new home. For the Livermores, this two story house on a 50-vara lot definitely qualified as reduced circumstances.

According to an often-repeated story, Mrs. Livermore had been invited to one of Polk's

parties at this house, and she so admired his remodeling in redwood that she evicted him so the Livermores could move in.<sup>201</sup> This story cannot be true, for an interim tenant, Frank F. Stone, rented 1023 Vallejo from the Livermores during 1893-1897. Stone moved across the street to 1036 Vallejo when the Livermores needed 1023 for their own occupancy.<sup>202</sup> Thus began a century of Livermore residency on the Summit of Russian Hill.

Horatio P. Livermore was an industrialist on a grand scale, and like many industrialists who break new ground, he found development expenses to be overwhelming. Much of his work, were it to be undertaken today, would certainly be opposed by environmentalists, but in his own time projects such as Livermore's were by consensus considered vital to the needs of an expanding population.

The first Livermore in America came from England in 1634, and in 1779 Elijah Livermore founded the town of Livermore, Maine. In 1850 Elijah's grandson, Horatio Gates Livermore, traveled overland from Independence, Missouri, to California.<sup>203</sup> Already familiar with the lumber and water power industries, he hoped at an early date to develop an industrial city on the American River that would be based on logging and water-powered sawmills. The realization of such dreams would consume his entire life, and would reach fruition only after his death.

His sons, Horatio and Charles, followed him west in 1856. Horatio Putnam Livermore did not at first join his father on the American River, but went to work in San Francisco for the west coast branch of Redington and Co., a wholesale drug firm he had worked for in Boston. By the 1860s he was a partner in the firm and the treasurer of Redington's quicksilver company in Lake County.

Meanwhile, on the American River in

1862, Horatio Gates Livermore gained control of the Natoma Water and Mining Co. for the purpose of acquiring its water rights. He also purchased a large tract of land that had been part of William Leidesdorff's Rancho de los Americanos. He planted orchards and vineyards and built a fruit drying plant and winery at Folsom.

Water power remained his real goal, and the elder Livermore began construction of the first Folsom Dam in 1867. Delays consumed many years, but the dam project moved forward again in the late 1880s when, in exchange for the use of convict labor, the Livermores transferred land to the state for a penitentiary.

By this time Horatio P. Livermore had joined his father in the enterprise, and under his guidance its nature began to evolve. The use of flowing water as a direct motive force was being supplanted by hydro-electric power, and Horatio Putnam knew that the dam would be obsolete by the time it was completed unless it was adapted to that purpose. To create a market for the dam's projected hydroelectric power, Livermore obtained an electric street railway franchise and founded a power company in Sacramento, twenty-two miles away. Through a long series of transcontinental negotiations, he was able to get financing from the newly formed General Electric Company for the construction of a power house and transmission lines. Horatio Gates Livermore, who died early in 1892, did not live to see the completion of the dam and the generation of electric power the following year. For Horatio Putnam Livermore, the triumph was muted by competition from other power companies and by political opposition which blocked the sale of his electrical power. Cash flow became even more of a problem during the winter of 1897-1898 when a major drought reduced hydroelectric activity. With revenues low, General Electric began to assume more and

more control of Livermore's company, the Sacramento Electric, Gas and Railway Co., to protect their investment.

Another drain on Livermore's finances was his American River and Land Company, which he commenced in 1889 with the purchase of 9,000 acres of timberland located between the south and middle forks of the American River. A forty mile logging road was built, and the river was cleared of boulders so that logs could be floated downstream to a new sawmill. When operations commenced in 1897, however, it was discovered that rock shelves and other obstructions prevented the logs from reaching their destination in good condition. Although much logging was done, it had to be discontinued after a few years.<sup>204</sup>

Such were the problems that drained Horatio P. Livermore's finances and led his family to move to 1023 Vallejo Street at the end of 1897. The family then consisted of Horatio, age sixty; his second wife Helen Eels, thirty-nine; Horatio's adult children by his first wife, Edith, Norman, and Mattie; and Horatio and Helen's daughter, Elizabeth. They had a servant of long standing, Lim Ti Ark, a native of China



Lim Ti Ark. He was the Livermore family servant for eighty years. Courtesy George Livermore.



**The Livermore Meadow.** Immediately north of the Livermore residence these brick steps led to a broad grassy area, the "Meadow." Today, the Meadow is an excavated pit awaiting development. Courtesy George Livermore.

who had worked for and lived with the Livermores since about 1870, when he was seventeen. Ark would remain with the family until his death in 1950 at age ninety-seven.<sup>205</sup>

It appears that Horatio was not overjoyed with the prospect of living on Russian Hill, whereas Helen, who had more artistic sensibilities, felt attracted to the neighborhood and its shingled architecture. An added attraction for them both was the presence of Worcester, who had tutored the children many years earlier when he lived in Piedmont. A desire to be close to him may well have determined the Livermores' choice of residence after selling their Rockridge Park estate.<sup>206</sup>

The Livermores made some alterations to their house about the time they moved in. A two story addition was built on the west end,

facing Florence Street, and an extension to the second story was made on the east, overhanging the main entrance. Classical columns were placed under the overhang to support the second story, and the entire structure was coated with brown shingles. The result was a larger house, but one ungainly in appearance. The only element of David M. Morrison's 1854 house left intact after this work was the slightly pitched roofline.<sup>207</sup>

The orchard planted many years earlier by George R. Turner still grew in the yard facing Vallejo Street, and now a tea house was built near the northwest corner of the lot. Brick pathways led through the yard from Vallejo Street to the residence and tea house. As the path approached the residence, the elevation dropped, and the path became eleven brick



Ethel Parker and Edith Livermore, ca. 1900. Nurse Ethel, who lived nearby at 1601 Taylor, comforts Edith, who was badly injured in a riding accident. Courtesy George Livermore.

steps leading down to the house. The upper portion of the yard, that closer to Vallejo Street, was always referred to by the Livermores as "the Meadow."

H. P. Livermore's power company began to show profits at the turn of the century, but in March, 1903, when Horatio was sixty-five, he and his investment partners sold the Sacramento Electric, Gas, and Railway Company to an aggressive new power company, the California Gas and Electric Corporation. This company was founded by Eugene de Sabla and John Martin as a consolidation of their several smaller companies, and successive mergers over the next two years led to the creation of the Pacific Gas and Electric Company (P. G. and E.) in 1905. Horatio Livermore's Folsom Dam and hydroelectric power house were considered an important element of the fledgling, giant power

company. As for Livermore himself, after decades of struggle in this arena, he had had enough.<sup>208</sup>

Photo albums compiled by his daughter Edith record something of the family life on Russian Hill at the time of Horatio's retirement. Edith, then thirty-three, had been seriously injured in a riding accident not long before, leaving her a semi-invalid for life. In one photograph, she is sitting on the steps to the Meadow with her neighbor Ethel Parker, of 1601 Taylor. Ethel, granddaughter of Charles and Maria Homer, appears to be playing the comforting nurse to injured Edith. Soon afterward, in about 1904, Edith and Mattie left to pursue literary and artistic lives in Europe: Edith to Berlin, and Mattie to London, where she would marry a music teacher. Edith returned to San Francisco many years later, residing in houses on Florence Street that her

brother Norman had built.

Norman was just settling into his career. He had attended Cornell University and graduated in 1895 as a civil engineer. He worked in the east for awhile, then returned to help his father in the hydroelectric industry prior to the sale of Horatio's company to de Sabla and Martin. Now, in 1905, Norman formed his own company, which sold railway, logging, mining, concrete, and other heavy construction machinery.<sup>209</sup>

Horatio was now retired, but could not remain idle. He dabbled in various business investments and maintained, with Norman, an office in the splendid new Rialto Building at New Montgomery and Mission. Still, his time was freer now, and he turned his attention to the family home on Russian Hill.

He had never completely reconciled himself to living there. He liked the idea of moving to Santa Barbara, and floated the idea every now and then to Helen. She, however, wanted to stay on the Summit. Horatio, accordingly, began to make long term plans for



**The Livermore house, 1906.** This view is looking north from Nob Hill toward Russian Hill. Courtesy George Livermore.

the enlargement of their house and the further development and beautification of the neighborhood.

In June, 1903, three months after the sale of the power company became final, Horatio hired a neighbor, architect Edward L. Holmes, to make further additions to 1023 Vallejo.<sup>210</sup> A third story with a double-pitch hipped roof was added, and projecting additions supported by classical columns were built onto the north and south sides of the house. The house, still coated with brown shingles, was now rimmed on three sides by columns. The effect was unified and well-proportioned, a decided improvement over the additions of 1897-1898. As for David Morrison's one story house of 1854, it was now all but buried within the second story.

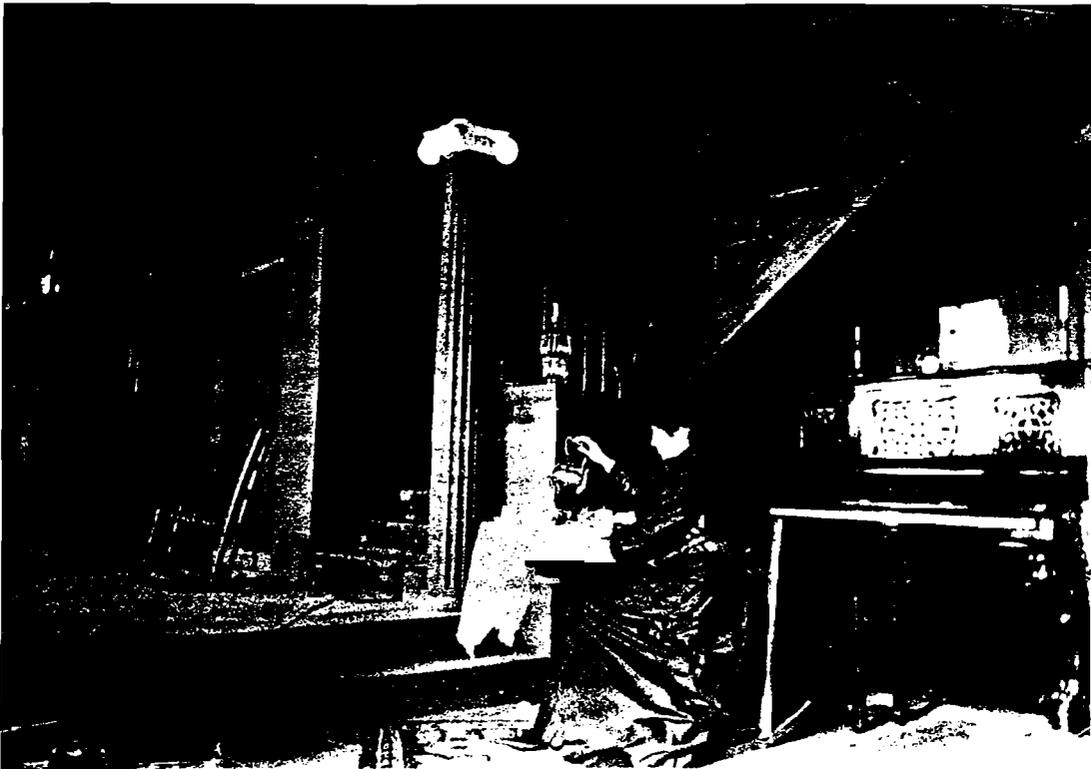
Horatio next turned his attention to the neighborhood. One of the drawbacks that Horatio felt needed correcting was the collection of small 1850s and 1860s houses on the west side of Florence Street, opposite his house. It appears that he felt finer residences should eventually be built there. He and Norman did buy one of the houses, 9 Florence (where #39 is today) and planned to build a stable there for the family's use. The Livermores may have been thinking of buying other lots for development purposes as 1906 approached.

Horatio also took upon himself the improvement of the Vallejo Street access to the Summit. As early as 1894 Willis Polk had written, "With the goat path up Vallejo Street properly converted into a series of terraces, and these lots properly improved, there could be no prettier place in San Francisco." Quite possibly Polk and Livermore had discussed collaborating on such improvements before the turn of the century.

Now, upon his retirement, Horatio canvassed the neighborhood for funds and retained Polk, now back from working for Burnham in Chicago, to design a terraced concrete stairway along the Vallejo Street right-

of-way, from Taylor west to the top of the hill. There would also be matching improvements at Vallejo and Jones which would replace an old wooden stairway that Horatio had often "anathematized." The neighbors negotiated with Gray Brothers, concrete contractors, to do the work, and it appears that the project was close to commencement when the earthquake and fire of 1906 resulted in its postponement for eight long years.<sup>211</sup>

In mid-April all of the Livermores were out of town except for Horatio. Helen, Elizabeth, and Lim Ti Ark were vacationing in Santa Barbara; Norman was in Seattle on business; and Edith and Mattie were in Europe. Horatio had the house to himself. Norman returned to San Francisco on the 16th of the month, in time to experience the city's great earthquake. Both he and Horatio would play major roles in the effort to save the Summit from burning in the subsequent fire.



**Helen Eels Livermore at home, 1904.** This shows the interior as remodeled by Willis Polk in 1891. Courtesy George Livermore.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 1997

**BAY AREA FOCUS**

# Treasure of a Hiking Trail



PHOTOS BY VINCE MAGGIORA/THE CHRONICLE

Hiker Guy Kay looked out at the recently acquired 588-acre Palisades Trail out of Calistoga

# Robert Louis Stevenson State Park grows with a classic 588-acre addition

By Jim Doyle  
Chronicle Staff Writer

**S**ome folks say the Palisades cliffs above Napa Valley are what Robert Louis Stevenson had in mind when he described the setting of his greatest classic, "Treasure Island."



Guy Kay on one of the trails recently transferred to R.L. Stevenson State Park

The Scottish author spent a few months in an abandoned mining camp here in 1880 while he worked on the novel. And it's easy to imagine this wild and rugged terrain as the backdrop for Jim Hawkins' harrowing island adventures with the pirate Long

John Silver.

Soon, a ridgetop trail will be opened to allow hikers to explore the Palisades — with their rocky cliffs where peregrine falcons live, steep canyons and dazzling vistas of Napa vineyards.

State park surveyors have begun

marking the new hiking trail as part of one of the state's most important land acquisitions in years: the recent transfer of the 588-acre Palisades to Robert Louis Stevenson State Park.

The land deal caps three decades of work by Bay Area conservationists to preserve the Palisades from the encroaching development of luxury homes.

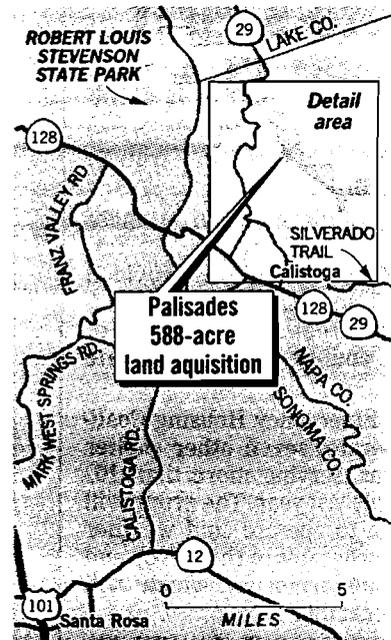
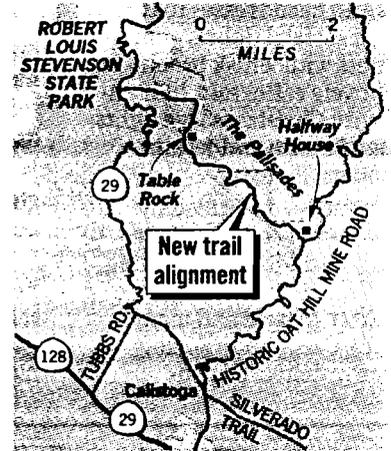
It was made possible by the Napa County Land Trust and the Norman B. Livermore family, which donated some of its land on the southeastern flank of Mount St. Helena.

"I think this will be one of the premiere hiking trails in California," said John Hoffnagle, the land trust's executive director.

Surveyors are using pink flags to mark the steep, narrow trail, and construction will begin in the spring — with piles of rocks used to designate key trail points.

When it's completed in 1999, the Palisades trail will provide a daylong wilderness experience for advanced hikers. The 5-mile-long trail will not be open to equestrians or mountain bikers.

The new trail will connect the 125-year-old Oat Hill Mine Road out of



**TREASURE:** Page A19 Col. 1

Chronicle Graphic

Calistoga to an existing trail that leads to the top of Mount St. Helena. Once the trails and easements are linked, there will be 15 miles of continuous trail from the summit of Mount St. Helena to Calistoga.

Conservationists say preserving the slopes will not only benefit hikers, but also maintain the vistas from the valley floor. "The hillside estates are creeping up the hill," Hoffnagle said. "Napa Valley prices are soaring, and everyone wants their estate in Napa."

The state paid \$640,000 for the 588 acres. The Napa Valley Land Trust previously acquired much of the acreage from eight families who ran a hunting club on the property.

Harry Tranmer, a founding board member of the land trust, worked on the Palisades trail project since 1965. "Over 30 years ago it was a dream," he said. "A good idea dies hard."

It's the latest success story for land trusts, a nationwide grassroots movement that has preserved millions of acres from development. Generally, land trusts are able to move more quickly and quietly than public agencies in acquiring land for conservation.

The state purchase was made possible by funds from Proposition 70, a parks and wildlife initiative passed by California voters in 1988.

The Livermore family donated 62 acres that includes one of the most prominent features of the Palisades: the Peregrine cliffs.

"This is all pretty much wilderness area, for four or five or six miles back," said Putnam Livermore, pointing to a swath of land above the Napa Valley floor. As a boy, Livermore, a San Francisco attorney, spent summers working with his four brothers on his family's ranch on the slopes of Mount St. Helena.

Livermore's grandmother first bought land here in 1880. His father, Norman B. Livermore, gave 40 acres in 1949 to help start Robert Louis Stevenson State Park. The recent addition brings the park's total acreage to more than 5,000 acres in Napa, Sonoma and Lake counties.

It is an area rich in history and natural resources.

The trail will begin in the Highway 29 parking lot across from the old toll house on the Lawley Toll Road — a few hundred yards from the old Silverado mining camp where Stevenson spent the summer of 1880 to honeymoon with his new bride, Fanny Osbourne, and to recuperate from a pulmonary condition.

Finished in 1868, mining companies used the toll road to deliver payroll to miners and to send shipments of gold, silver and quicksilver to the railroad yards. Stagecoaches used the road to transport vacationers. A toll bar stopped all traffic so that proprietor Mollie Patten could collect hefty fees from passing coaches.

Starting out at 2,100 feet above sea level, hikers will zigzag through the back country and traverse a few ridges to the foot of Table Rock, a spectacular rock outcropping that looks like a huge pedestal with 200-foot cliffs below it. The landmark resembles Ste-

venson's description of "the Spyglass" — Treasure Island's tallest summit.

A botanist once called this area a "floral island" because of its mix of Sierra and valley trees ranging from ghost pines to live oak and

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## ***"I think this will be one of the premiere hiking trails in California."***

— John Hoffnagle,  
land trust executive director

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buckeye. In spring, there are myriad shades of green, moss seems to drip off the craggy peaks, and the ridges are dotted with poppies, bitterroot and wild onions.

The trail will also skirt the base of the Peregrine Cliffs — volcanic rock formations that look like tall sugar crystals. Two pairs of Peregrine falcons are known to nest in the cavities of these stony spires.

"They like commanding views," says state park ranger Bill Grummer, a naturalist and historian who has worked in the Napa Valley for 23 years. "They like to rule over their domain."

The peregrine falcon can dive at 200 mph, making it the fastest creature in nature.

In 1977, biologists from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service aided the return of the peregrine falcon to this ridgetop. At one point, a federal ranger camped out here to protect falcons from poachers seeking to sell the valuable birds and their eggs on the black market.

Other wildlife in these canyons include roadrunners, rock wrens and occasional sightings of mountain lions.

The Palisades trail mainly will be a downhill trek, but rangers warn that it can get awfully hot and hikers will need to carry plenty of water. Signs will be posted that warn hikers to turn back if they haven't reached specific milestones by certain times of day.

"We want to keep it a primitive experience," Hoffnagle said, "(but) we've had experienced leaders get lost here."

Five miles from the toll booth, the Palisades trail will link up with the Oat Hill Mine Road near the deserted ruins of the Halfway House landmark. Chinese laborers once lived in this stone house, which is halfway between Calistoga and an abandoned mercury mine.

The Oat Hill Mine Road was built more than 100 years ago to service quicksilver mines in the Palisades area. It became a four-wheel-drive road in the 1970s, but off-road vehicles were banned after several fatal accidents. In recent years, it has become a popular trail for hikers and mountain bikers.

The lower portion of the old mining road winds down five miles to the Silverado Trail highway in Calistoga. At the base of the trail is the English Pub, known for its fresh brew and hospitality. "The beer's pretty good at the end of the day," Hoffnagle said



November 15, 1997

## Robert Sealy Livermore

Robert Sealy Livermore, prominent Bay Area rancher and member of a pioneer California family, died November 5 from an aneurysm at the family ranch in Calistoga. He was 71 and the youngest of five brothers, all of whom survive him.

"Bob" Livermore was best known as manager of the sprawling Bishop Ranch in San Ramon, before it was sold to the Western Electric Co. He and his wife, Jean, ran 300 acres of cattle ranchland, as well as orchards stocked with walnut and pear trees.

Mr. Livermore was not related to the family that founded the city of the same name, but he played a pivotal role in the region.

An entrepreneur, he insisted that it was the responsibility of people with "old money" to invest in young, small businesses — and although his roots were agricultural, he was also the chief executive officer of Zendex, a small computer company in Dublin.

The rangy, 6-foot-6-inch rancher was a man of remarkably wide-ranging interests. He was a member of Planned Parenthood and the National Rifle Association, Friends of the Bancroft Library and the Cattlemen's Association.

He spent his final weekend supervising lumber trucks at the Montesol Ranch, a Napa Valley spread that had been in the family for more than 125 years.

But he also moved effortlessly between the rugged and rural, the refined and urbane. "I just remember him being in his grubby clothes, cutting wood and then going to the opera," a friend recalled. "He wasn't particularly concerned about his appearance — but he could dress up with the best of them."

Mr. Livermore was born June 12, 1926, in San Francisco. His great-grandfather, Horatio Gates Livermore, walked across the continent in 1850, from Boston to California, behind a covered wagon.

An engineer, Horatio Livermore, built a dam on the American River to create the longest electric line in the United States — from Sacramento to Folsom — a total of 22 miles.

He was followed west six years later by his son, Horatio Putnam Livermore, who came by way of the Isthmus of Panama and settled in San Francisco's South Park.

Bob Livermore's parents, the late Norman and Caroline Livermore, were living on Russian Hill when he was born. They subsequently moved to Ross, where he grew up. His mother, a noted conservationist, was instrumental in saving Angel Island from development. The island's mountain is named in her honor — Mount Livermore.

Mr. Livermore graduated from the University of California at Berkeley, where he rowed on the national championship team. During World War II, he served in a mechanized cavalry division in China, Burma and India. After the war, he did graduate work in pomology — the science and practice of cultivating fruit trees — at UC Davis.

In addition to his wife, Jean Everett Livermore of San Ramon, he is survived by his children, Caroline Livermore of Castine, Maine, Lauren Gavin of San Jose, Sara Dunsford of Calistoga and Robert Livermore Jr., of Phoenix; his brothers, Norman Livermore of San Rafael, George Livermore of San Francisco, John Livermore of Reno and Putnam Livermore of San Francisco, and four grandchildren.

Mr. Livermore's ashes will be privately scattered in the fields of Montesol Ranch, the family estate in Calistoga. A memorial celebration of his life will be held later this month.

Contributions in Mr. Livermore's memory may be made to the Men's Crew Team, IA/RS, University of California at Berkeley, Berkeley 94720, or to the Department of Pomology, University of California at Davis, One Shields Avenue, Davis 95616.

J.L. Pimleur



June 22, 1999

A24 San Francisco Chronicle ☆☆

## OBITUARIES

### Beth Livermore Domergue

Helen Elizabeth "Beth" Livermore Domergue, member of a pioneering California family, died in her San Francisco home Friday at the age of 46, after succumbing to a brain tumor.

Known professionally as Beth Livermore, she was the founding partner of the Retirement Plan Office, a San Francisco administrator of pension funds for hospitals.



Beth Livermore  
Domergue

Born in San Francisco, Ms. Livermore graduated in 1970 from the Castilleja School in Palo Alto. After attending Wheaton College in Norton, Mass., she worked briefly in San Francisco and then in 1972 moved to New York, where she worked for Johnson Scanstar Shipping Inc. She returned to San Francisco after five years, and joined the Wyatt Co., a pension plan administrator. In 1995, she formed her own company.

Near the end of the 19th century, Ms. Livermore's family was instrumental in bringing electric power to Sacramento through a utility firm that was a predecessor of Pacific Gas and Electric Co.

Ms. Livermore, a fifth generation Californian, was active in the management of the family ranch above Calistoga, in Napa Valley. She was also a director of the Easter Seals Society and was a past board member of the Katherine Delmar Burke School in San Francisco. She also helped the long-range development of the Camphill Special School in Pennsylvania.

She is survived by her husband, Robert Francois Domergue Jr.; two sons, Charles and Olivier; her father, George Sealy Livermore of San Francisco; her mother, Janet Clifton Livermore Byington, and stepfather, Louis Byington of San Anselmo; three brothers, Richard Livermore of Menlo Park, Thomas Livermore of Laguna Beach, and William Livermore of San Rafael; three uncles and four aunts, Norman and Dina Livermore of San Rafael, John Livermore of Reno, Putnam and Pari Livermore of San Francisco, and Jean Livermore of Danville, and Margy Boyd of San Francisco; and numerous nieces, nephews and cousins.

Funeral services will be held at 3 p.m. Friday at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Clay Street and Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco. The family suggests contributions to the Camphill Special School, 1784 Fairview Road, Glenmoore, Pa. 19343, or the National Brain Tumor Foundation, 785 Market St., Suite 1600, San Francisco, Calif. 94103.



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