

# *The* **PALIMPSEST**



Herbert and Lou Henry Hoover at their S Street home in Washington.

**Lou Henry Hoover — Gallant First Lady**

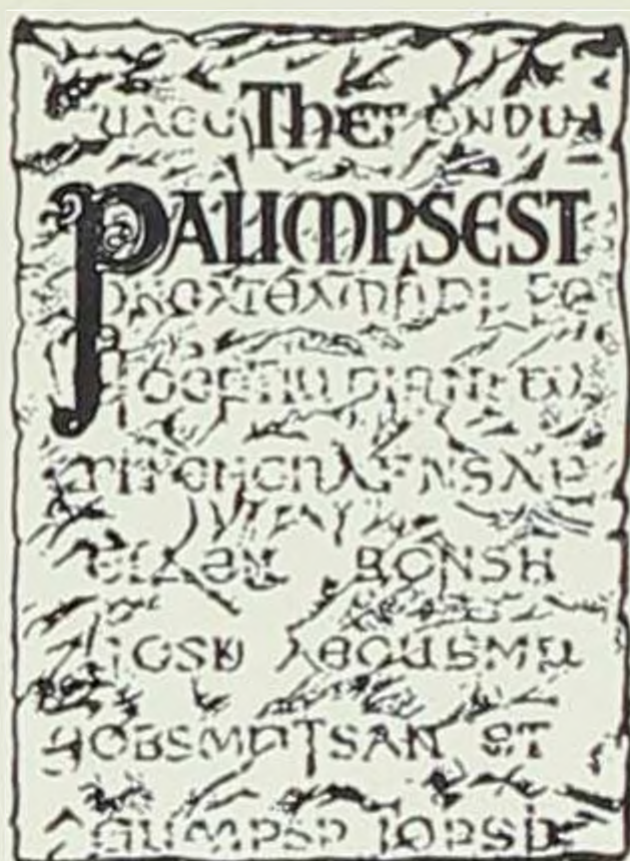
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## *The Meaning of Palimpsest*

In early times a palimpsest was a parchment or other material from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the record of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

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HELEN B. PRYOR

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## *Illustrations*

Most of the illustrations were loaned to Dr. Helen Pryor by members of Lou Hoover's family, by friends, and by the Hoover Institute, etc. The Hoover Presidential Library in West Branch also loaned pictures and furnished information on them. The *Waterloo Courier* loaned the photo of her Waterloo home.

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# THE PALIMPSEST

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## Girlhood in Waterloo

Lou Henry and Herbert Hoover were both born in Iowa in 1874 within one hundred miles of each other—she in Waterloo and he in West Branch. They were destined not to meet, however, until they met at Leland Stanford Junior University (Stanford University) in Palo Alto, California. There is a distinguished lineage of sturdy pioneers and many outstanding people in both family trees.

Lou's father, Charles Delano Henry, was born and reared in Wooster, Ohio, where he married Florence Weed. Charles came from a pioneer family, his grandfather, William Henry, having been born in 1776. William Henry was married in a Quaker ceremony to Abigail Hunt. The Henry ancestors came from North Ireland and Scotland and the Hunts from Pennsylvania. Their son, William Henry, Jr., and his wife, Mary Dwire, had three sons—Charles Delano, William D., and Addis M. Grandfather William Henry helped make the original surveys of the town of Wooster, Ohio, in 1807, the men being interrupted several



times by hostile Indians. William Henry, Jr., was a member of the General Assembly in the State of Ohio.

Florence Weed's grandparents, Joshua and Jennie Weed, had one son, Phineas, who was born in Wooster in 1823. As a young man Phineas moved to Shell Rock, Iowa, where he married Mary, the daughter of Dr. John Scobey. Their children were Janey, Wallace and Florence. Phineas returned to Wooster and conducted a livery business on East Liberty Street until the Civil War. During the war he purchased horses for the government.

As a little boy, Charles Henry and his brother went with their father to celebrate the arrival of the first railway train to Wooster amidst great excitement and the shooting of the town's cannon. Charles remembered his father as a member of the State Legislature, six feet tall, weighing 225 pounds, smooth-shaven, dignified in carriage, a kindly man who wore a black suit, long Prince Albert coat, and always a high silk hat.

The Henry family lived in a five-bedroom, two-story white house that had no trimming but a roof of handmade oak shingles. It was set in a yard full of flowers and shrubs. The front door opened out directly on the street while the back yard had a stable and buggy house near the alley, all enclosed behind a board fence.

Charles started to Miss Henderson's private



school at age five. He rode horseback a great deal until roads were improved enough to drive a buggy. Florence, the daughter of Phineas Weed, was a student in the Grove Female Institute (later Miss Pope's School in Wooster). The Weed and Henry families were friends. Charles, who was tall and broad-shouldered, loved out-of-door living and frequently went hunting and fishing. He served for a time in the Northern army during the Civil War.

When Charles returned from the army to Wooster, he told Phineas Weed, his father's friend, that he was determined to become a banker. After his father's death in 1868, when Charles was twenty-three years old, he and his widowed mother moved to Waterloo, Iowa. His heart remained in Wooster, however, for in five years he returned to marry Phineas' daughter, Florence Weed, on June 17, 1873.

By 1874, Charles Henry was engaged as a bookkeeper for the First National Bank in Waterloo, the county seat of Black Hawk County. Located in a rich agricultural region, Waterloo proved an excellent place in which to grow. As a result, Charles Henry took an active interest in both business and civic affairs.

Charles Henry took great pride in the town of Waterloo, in his own home, and in his beautiful young wife. In short, he had everything a man could wish for—except a son. He eagerly awaited



the birth of his first child and confidently hoped it would be a boy. But fate decreed otherwise. March 29, 1874, was a cold stormy day, but all was snug and warm in the spare bedroom of the Logan house where Florence Henry gave birth to her daughter—Lou.

The little newcomer was welcomed by both parents and, if in his heart Charles was momentarily disappointed, he did not show it outwardly. It was not long before his gay, active daughter had wrapped herself around his heart completely and Charles could not imagine giving her up for a boy. Whenever possible, Charles Henry took little Lou with him, no matter where he went.

By the time she was five years old Lou was allowed to go fishing with her father on the Cedar River. On these occasions Lou bravely learned how to tie penny-apiece fishhooks at intervals along a butcher string, while her father cut willow poles for them. Angleworms for bait completed their equipment except for a sturdy jackknife used to clean their catch before going home to the immaculate kitchen of Mrs. Henry.

Lou learned to ride horseback on her Grandfather Scobey's farm at Shell Rock. When she was six she was lifted on to a big farm horse for a bareback ride in the open fields. She loved it and begged to return often for more. As she grew taller, she learned to ride easily, securely, and gracefully behind the high pommel of a western



saddle. She very early exhibited a love for and great skill in handling horses. By the time she was ten, she had mastered the sidesaddle, then rather mandatory for girls.

Lou Henry first rode in saddles with her father. She would sit sideways with a foot resting in the sash which her father had taken from around his waist and looped over the saddle horn for her support. He would then mount the apron of the saddle behind her, his feet stuck into the stirrups and his arm holding the reins, passed over her shoulder to steady her, and often he would place his hat on her head. Her father encouraged her riding and later taught Lou to master the wiry western broncos, which she was allowed to ride astride like a boy, on their long trips into the country.

Saturdays, in the fall, Lou went tramping through the woods with her father gathering hazelnuts. He showed her the right place to catch rabbits and how to cunningly hide their wooden cracker box trap in the bushes.

As a little girl, Lou Henry paid scant attention to her dolls, always preferring a game of ball, or any form of play that took her out-of-doors. The corner lot of their block on Fifth Street was a playground for the children of the neighborhood. Lou was the youngest child and her favorite game was hide-and-seek, in and out of all those neighborhood yards with the Chamberlain girls,



the Alfords, and others. Her special friend in pre-school days was Joe Rickert, who sensed Lou's alertness to sympathize with anyone in misfortune, and particularly after Joe received a spanking from his father. Lou and Joe liked to play anti-over, throwing the ball over the porch roof to be caught without seeing the thrower.

She went camping with her father at the tender age of six, sleeping on a canvas spread on the grass. She loved the pioneer stories told her by her Grandmother Henry and when she went on outings with her father they talked about pioneer qualities of courage and resourcefulness. Her outdoor experience stood her in good stead when she reached maturity.

But deep as was her love of outdoor life, Lou enjoyed domestic interests, too, and this tug of war in her nature continued all her life. Florence Henry, secretly worried about her daughter's eager preference for boyish activities, resolved to teach her feminine graces and skills. Sewing was high on the list.

On her eighth birthday, March 29, 1882, Lou had spent three hours under her mother's careful guidance, sewing on a new dress. She turned anxiously to her mother, "Is my dress all right? May I put it on now?" Mrs. Henry examined the small plaid garment carefully. "Yes," she replied with a smile, "you have turned a good hem and you may wear the dress to show your father."



With the dress over her arm, Lou ran eagerly upstairs to her room. As she passed the window on the landing, her eye was caught by a red kite snared in the branches just outside. Dropping the dress, she threw open the window. At the foot of the tree stood a small neighbor boy staring up disconsolately. His face brightened at the sight of Lou. "Can you get it loose?" he called.

Lou never hesitated. "I'll try," she answered, and leaned out precariously. She stretched as far as she could, but the kite stayed just out of reach. She stretched farther, and might have tumbled out had not the wind blown a branch within her reach. Lou caught it and pulled until the kite was in her hand.

"There!" she called triumphantly, as she set it free. "There's your kite." For just a moment, as she watched her grateful little friend run off with the tugging kite, Lou was tempted to leave the new dress where it lay and slip outdoors to play. It was a glorious day for kite flying, tree climbing, and all the other tomboy activities she loved. But then she thought of the tiny stitches she had so painstakingly put into that hem. Domesticity won. She caught up the dress and ran into her room.

Dressed in her new plaid dress, Lou waited impatiently for her father to come home. When she saw him coming she ran to meet him. "Look, Papa, this is my new dress. I helped Mama make it too."

"What a clever little girl," he said as he gath-



ered her into his arms. He carried her into the house and deposited her, laughing, in the middle of the floor. He turned to kiss his wife and then took his accustomed place in front of the pot-bellied stove with his hands behind his back and his feet apart. Lou, who liked to imitate her father in every way possible, stood beside him, with hands behind her back and her feet apart.

A moment later Mrs. Henry sniffed the air. "What is that?" she asked. Lou jumped and felt the back of her new skirt. "I've burned a hole in it," she wailed in dismay. Her mother comforted her and allowed her to use the family sewing machine to mend the dress and also to make a gingham sunbonnet to match. Following the current fashion, it had a wide, poke brim stiffened with interlining and a full soft crown gathered to the brim. There was a ruffle to protect her neck and tie strings that matched. Lou was proud of her new clothes and pleased that her mother allowed her to help make them.

A girlish looking, rather frail young woman, Florence Henry spent many sessions in her sitting room making Christmas presents for her family. She was expert with her needle and gave Lou many ideas for little gifts which they worked out together. Grandmother Henry was a stately woman who teasingly questioned the value of so much time spent in making Christmas "gewgaws." Lou frequently laughed over the busy hours she



and her mother spent assembling their numerous gifts, all gotten together with love and ingenuity and finished off in a rush just before Christmas.

Everything was simple and unpretentious about Lou Henry—even her name had no middle initial. She wore her hair bobbed because Florence Henry considered short hair sensible for little girls, even though it was not the height of fashion.

In those days, when "nice" girls were expected to be rather prim and sedate, a girl who liked outdoor sports was unusual and one who liked to climb was extraordinary. No wonder that Lou Henry was labeled a tomboy when she climbed up a tree at the school picnic and tied a long rope to a strong branch to provide a swing! On another occasion, a student on a stepladder wrote words at the top of the schoolroom blackboard. Then the ladder was removed but when the teacher arrived he demanded angrily that the writing be erased. Lou quickly mounted a chair, held in place on top of the teacher's desk, and erased the writing.

The father-daughter camping trips continued. Lou adored her father. She admired his easy way of handling horses, the deft motions of his hands as he built a campfire on a weekend outing, and she listened fascinated when he explained different kinds of rocks, trees, and flowers. She was unafraid of the dark and enjoyed watching those violent midwestern electric storms. She observed the lightning and thunderclouds with interest.



When they went tramping together and came to a fork in the way, Lou always chose the unknown path to see where it would lead and then returned with much to tell. One day she asked, "Why doesn't Mama like to go camping with us?"

"This rugged kind of living doesn't agree with her," explained Charles. "She wouldn't mind if she could go in a surrey and carry along a mattress to sleep on, but she really doesn't enjoy roughing it. We won't be camping so much now because pretty soon she is going to need you to help her take care of a new baby." This realization stirred all of Lou's maternal instincts and for the time being she became more her mother's girl while they discussed the coming of another child.

Lou helped her mother make baby clothes. She shaped a dozen flannel bands ten inches wide to be wrapped around the baby's abdomen. She helped to hem several crib blankets and was trusted to make flannel covers for the hot water bottles by herself. Lou watched Florence's skillful fingers fashion little woolen shirts with high necks and long sleeves and long petticoats supported from the shoulders. She learned from Grandmother Henry that Canton flannel and stockinet were both superior to linen as absorbents for diapers.

Lou looked forward eagerly to the coming of the new baby and wondered if it would be a boy or a girl.

Finally the great day arrived. Lou, awakened



by the commotion in her mother's room, tiptoed down the hall and eventually was admitted. She heard protesting wails and saw a wrinkled little red face through a small aperture in the blanket.

Fascinated by the newcomer, Lou loved learning how to take care of a baby and was a great help to her mother. But she continued her outdoor interests too and she thoroughly enjoyed her school. She was active in other school activities as well as sports. She especially enjoyed nature study and history books and took a lively interest in what she read, particularly in history.

If Lou had had a brother to be a companion to her father, her life might have been very different. Spending time with her father developed her ingenuity and courage but she was taught by her mother that the home is the cornerstone of civilization and she learned such feminine pursuits as housekeeping and baby care. Gentleness and grace developed naturally through her mother's example but her parents did not insist on her following the rigidly "feminine" pattern of that day. Instead, they encouraged her to develop her own interests, which, uncurbed, were very broad.

As a child, Lou had more than the average chance to initiate her own activities and carry out her own plans. However, the discipline in the Henry home was such that she never argued with her parents but accepted their decisions without quibbling.



## A New Life in California

When slender blue-eyed Lou was ten years old, and Jean was two, Charles and Florence Henry moved to Whittier, California, hoping to improve Mrs. Henry's health. Charles continued in banking at Whittier, just as he had at Waterloo. Meanwhile, Lou and her father explored the hills by horseback and visited Pio Pico, the old adobe mansion of the last Mexican governor of California. Its thirty-three rooms, partially destroyed by floods in 1867, served to stimulate an interest in history and the Henrys were quick to help their daughter, Lou, to find books dealing with early California days.

It was at Whittier that Lou came to know the poems of the sturdy homespun Quaker—John Greenleaf Whittier. It was at Whittier, too, that Lou absorbed some of the Quaker teachings at an impressionable age. She found it easy to accept their simplicity of speech and dress and she remembered that women had absolute equality with men in all their meetings. Nevertheless, she remained an Episcopalian all her life.

After six years in Whittier, Charles Henry went to Monterey to help inaugurate another bank. He and his wife and two daughters moved



into the big frame house at 302 Pacific Avenue, which Lou called home until she was married.

Lou remembered how the bank started out as a one-room institution with a heavy iron safe. As soon as there were two rooms, her father, who enjoyed the human side of banking, always sat outside where he could talk to the people as they came in. "A banker must keep in touch with the public," he told Lou. "I sit out here in the open to explain what a letter of credit is to a professor beginning a sabbatical leave or outline what steps are involved in buying a house."

Lou went tramping and trailing and camping out with her father on countless adventure trips out of Monterey. Lithe and athletic, she learned how to find her way about the woods, to locate the points of the compass by day from the sun and by night from the stars, which was of great aid to her in later years of world-wide travel. She avidly absorbed her father's knowledge about the rocks, the birds, the trees, the animals and the vegetation on the hills. She learned all manner of woodcraft; how to build a fire with wood either wet or dry, how to pitch a tent, or how to enjoy sleeping on a blanket on the ground. She became expert in catching fish or shooting game and cooking over a campfire, skills which she later taught the Girl Scouts. There was an irresistible appeal for her in the freedom and exhilaration of the great out-of-doors and the beauty of the Monterey Peninsula.



Always the student, Lou loved to dig into the colorful history of Monterey. At school she read about how Sebastian Vizcaino (1550-1628) discovered beautiful Monterey Bay in 1602 and claimed California for Spain. She was impressed with the fact that her sleepy little town of 1700 people had housed the first established government in the western United States.

In 1893 Lou Henry attended the Normal School at San Jose, where her friends described her as having a peculiar mental and physical vitality. A bubbling over, tireless girl, she was usually found in the midst of a group.

During the school year Dr. John Casper Branner, head of the Department of Geology and Mines at Stanford University, gave a series of lectures on geology. An animated girl with smiling blue eyes under strongly marked eyebrows, Lou gave rapt attention to everything he said about the earth and its structure. After classes Lou told him about the pine-covered hills around Monterey Bay and her love of everything out-of-doors. "Do you think a woman could study geology at Stanford?" she asked him.

The following year Lou Henry entered Stanford University as a freshman, determined to study geology even though at that time it was very unusual for a girl to enter this field. Dr. Branner recalls Lou's spontaneity and the keen interest she brought to his classroom. She was always the



leading spirit in the many excursions made by Geology Department students into the foothills, led by young Herbert Hoover, assistant to Dr. Branner.

In his memoirs Herbert Hoover says of this period:

I felt it my duty to aid the young lady in her studies both in the laboratory and in the field. And this call to duty was stimulated by her whimsical mind, her blue eyes, and a broad grinnish smile that came from an Irish ancestor. After I left college she still had three years to complete her college work.

During the year, 1894, Lou Henry and Bert Hoover spent weekends and holidays together exploring the Stanford foothills for geological formations. Lou taught the busy financial manager of the student body how to dance and they attended campus parties together. They shared a great love of the out-of-doors, and intellectual interests, which included history and geology. After his graduation, letters soon were coming to Lou from Colorado, Nevada, Wyoming, Idaho, Arizona and New Mexico as the young assistant mining engineer moved from one project to another.

At age twenty-three, Bert Hoover wrote to Lou:

I'm growing impatient about waiting so long to marry a certain beautiful geology student but the London office is offering me a big opportunity in Australia where I'll be on my own in developing a mine.



Lou Henry graduated from Stanford in 1898 and started teaching school in Monterey. Letters from Bert Hoover were coming to her, postmarked Kalgoorlie, in the hot desert interior of Australia, where he was developing the Sons of Gwalia gold mine. One of these letters brought exciting information. "It is so hot here that I would go anywhere for a change and it looks as if it might be China." Soon Lou received a cable proposing marriage with a honeymoon trip to China.



## Homemaker in Many Lands

Bert and Lou were married at high noon on Friday, February 10, 1899, at the Henry home on Pacific and Jackson streets. They left for San Francisco at two o'clock and the Henry family went up to watch them sail for China at noon the next day. Bert and Lou learned much about the history of the Orient and did extensive sight-seeing and traveling in Peking and North China in connection with his work.

The Hoovers were engulfed in the Boxer Rebellion in 1900 and stayed in Tientsin during the month that the city was besieged. Lou Hoover demonstrated her unshakable poise and courage throughout the long month that the foreign compound was besieged. She pedaled her bicycle around the compound gathering bandages for wounded people before a hospital was organized. There was incessant artillery fire.

American Marines landed in Tientsin late in July and the siege was over. In August, Lou Hoover disposed of their household goods and returned with her husband temporarily to London via the Red Sea. She rented an apartment at Hyde Park Gate in London, which was to be their home base for further travel.



In 1902 the twenty-eight year old Herbert Hoover became a junior partner in the English firm in London which had sent him to Australia. His firm had coal mines in China, Wales, and the Transvaal; a tin mine in Cornwall; gold mines in Australia, New Zealand, and Africa; copper mines in Queensland and Canada; a lead-silver mine in Nevada and a turquoise mine in Egypt. For the next seven years Bert Hoover did field work and circled the globe five times visiting all these projects.

Lou Hoover remained by his side, involved in this vast amount of travel. She always enjoyed side trips to hunt for geological specimens and to collect objects of art from many places. However, she devoted her main energies to providing a home. She was thoroughly at ease under all sorts of conditions from the jungles of Burma to London society and the White House. She traveled by ocean liners, tramp steamers, railroads, motor cars, buggies, horses, or camels. Her personal courage was challenged many times but she always retained her equanimity.

Herbert, Jr., was born at Hyde Park Gate in London on August 4, 1903. Mrs. Hoover had him registered with the American Consulate at once. When he was five weeks old the family started for Australia with him in a basket. Baby Herbert had traveled around the world three times by the time he was three years old.



In Australia, New Zealand, and Burma the family lived in American style company houses built for their mining engineers, but these habitual globetrotters needed to acquire anchorages in various parts of the world. They joined with the Henrys to build a cottage in Monterey in 1902. Mrs. Hoover often dreamed of returning to this charming home under Monterey pine and oak trees high on a hillside and well-hidden, where she could look down on the old Pacific town so glowingly described by Robert Louis Stevenson. Among other Hoover homes during these early years were bungalows in Mandalay and Tokyo. Then there was a small house in St. Petersburg.

After being away for two years at various mines, the Hoovers returned to London to find that a junior partner of the firm, A. S. Rowe, had absconded with \$750,000. "It is completely unbelievable," Bert told Lou, "that this could have happened and we will have to make it good. It may take all the money we have now and all we can make in the next few years to do it."

Even though Lou realized that this meant the loss of their personal financial resources, she never hesitated and calmly reassured him, "Of course we will have to uphold the integrity of the firm."

Mr. Rowe, arrested in Canada, was imprisoned for ten years. Lou unhesitatingly responded to the desperate predicament of another mother. With her characteristic practical benevolence she



gave Mrs. Rowe an allowance to help support the children until their father's release from prison.

Allan Hoover was born in London on July 17, 1907, at the Hyde Park Gate apartment. After being registered at the American Consulate, he, like his brother, started off on a trip at age five weeks—to Burma. Mrs. Hoover told young Herbert, "It is your little brother who gets to ride in the basket this time."

Their objective was a big silver and lead mine in Northern Burma near the Chinese border. Lou Hoover and the boys had to travel, sometimes by elephant back and sometimes in sedan chairs, to cross the many miles of jungle in North Burma. Very primitive living conditions challenged Mrs. Hoover to create a safe and comfortable home at this old deserted mine.

Major concerns in these primitive mining locations were safety and good housing for the workmen. Mrs. Hoover often helped her husband in solving some of the housing problems and working out good sanitation. In their spare moments they worked together translating from the original Latin of Agricola's *De Re Metallica*, an old mining textbook, first published in the 16th century.

In 1908, after personally paying off his share of the company's indebtedness, Herbert Hoover withdrew from the firm and launched out on his own independent career as a consulting mining engineer.



The Hoover home in England was the center of hospitality for all their American friends. Lou bought and furnished the Red House in London, a roomy place for the boys to grow up in western American fashion, while her husband pursued his independent career in many different lands. The boys learned to live in faraway places and the family traveled over Europe during school vacations. Each year they made a trip home to California. During this time Lou and Bert completed work on their translation of *De Re Metallica* and both were given citations from Stanford University for this accomplishment.

The Hoovers lived on the Stanford campus briefly in 1913 and left the boys in the Campus school before going to the Kyshtim and Irtysh copper mines in Russia. Mining operations were fabulously successful and Herbert Hoover was on the verge of a tremendous personal fortune when war broke out and the Bolsheviki took over the entire project.

At the outbreak of World War I, Herbert Hoover, then in London, organized the return home of stranded American tourists from Europe, extending credit to thousands, most of whom repaid him later. Lou Hoover arranged for shelter, food, and clothing for women and children until they could sail.

When starvation faced occupied Belgium Herbert Hoover, a neutral volunteer, undertook



to get food to them. Lou Hoover once more kept open house for the young volunteer Americans who distributed the food to some 10,000,000 people. She formed a committee to find employment for the Belgian refugees in London. She helped organize and manage an American Women's Hospital for thousands of wounded British soldiers.

Lou Hoover kept her sons in England until it seemed safer, after American entry into the war, to take them to California, leaving them with relatives and trusted friends. She stayed with them when she could and at the same time aided in Belgian Relief appeals all over the U.S.A.

In 1917, with America in the war, President Wilson appointed Herbert Hoover as Food Administrator. Lou Hoover established a home for her family in Washington, D.C., and then set herself to finding housing for the hundreds of young women who were members of the Food Administration staff in the war-crowded city. She organized cafeterias for their meals and programs of relaxation for her husband's overworked colleagues and for Food Administration men and women from all over the country. She promoted food conservation among the women of the country and war gardens amongst the youngsters, especially the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. She led a war-time Girl Scout troop herself.

After the Armistice, and after her husband's



duty of feeding all Europe for a year, the Hoovers built, for the first time, their own home on the Stanford campus.

In 1921, President Harding appointed Herbert Hoover as Secretary of Commerce and President Coolidge reappointed him. So in 1921 Lou Hoover again moved to Washington and made a home for her family. Her natural friendliness and zest made their residence at 2300 "S" Street a gathering place of Washington officials and Hoover friends. During the eight years of official life, while her boys came and went to schools and colleges, Lou Henry carried on her Cabinet-wife duties, went with her husband on his many trips around the country to assess the Commerce needs and to devise betterments. She entertained constantly.

Lou and Bert Hoover traveled to Alaska with President Harding's official party in the summer of 1923. The whole Nation was shocked by the sudden death of the President in a San Francisco hotel.

Following the Teapot Dome scandal in 1924, Lou Hoover helped to organize a national woman's conference on law enforcement. She was much in demand as a speaker by women's organizations and colleges and served on many committees and commissions. She was awarded eight honorary degrees from universities.

In 1925, Herbert, Jr. was married to his Stan-



ford classmate, Margaret Watson. Lou Henry gained a daughter, in whom she took great pride.

Herbert Hoover and Senator Charles Curtis of Kansas were nominated to head the Republican Party in 1928. Hoover delivered his acceptance speech in the stadium of his Alma Mater at Palo Alto. The family then embarked for his birthplace at West Branch where he delivered his first major address of the campaign. After long and arduous hours in reception lines, after seemingly endless miles of travel on trains, the Campaign of 1928 ended in victory for Hoover and the Republican Party.

After making a pre-inaugural tour of Latin America, Lou Henry and her family prepared themselves for an even busier and more exciting chapter in their lives—a four-year residence in the White House.





LOU HENRY HOOVER  
Portrait of Iowa's First Lady—1928.





PHINEAS WEED



JENNY WEED—Mother of Phineas

THE GRANDPARENTS AND PARENTS OF LOU HENRY HOOVER

FLORENCE WEED

CHARLES DELANO HENRY







Florence Weed Henry and Baby Lou—1874.



Lou Henry—Age 6, Waterloo.







Lou Henry, Age 9, with her sister Jean,  
Age 17 months, Waterloo, 1883.

Lou Henry, Age 10, on ice skates.







Waterloo school attended by Lou Henry.

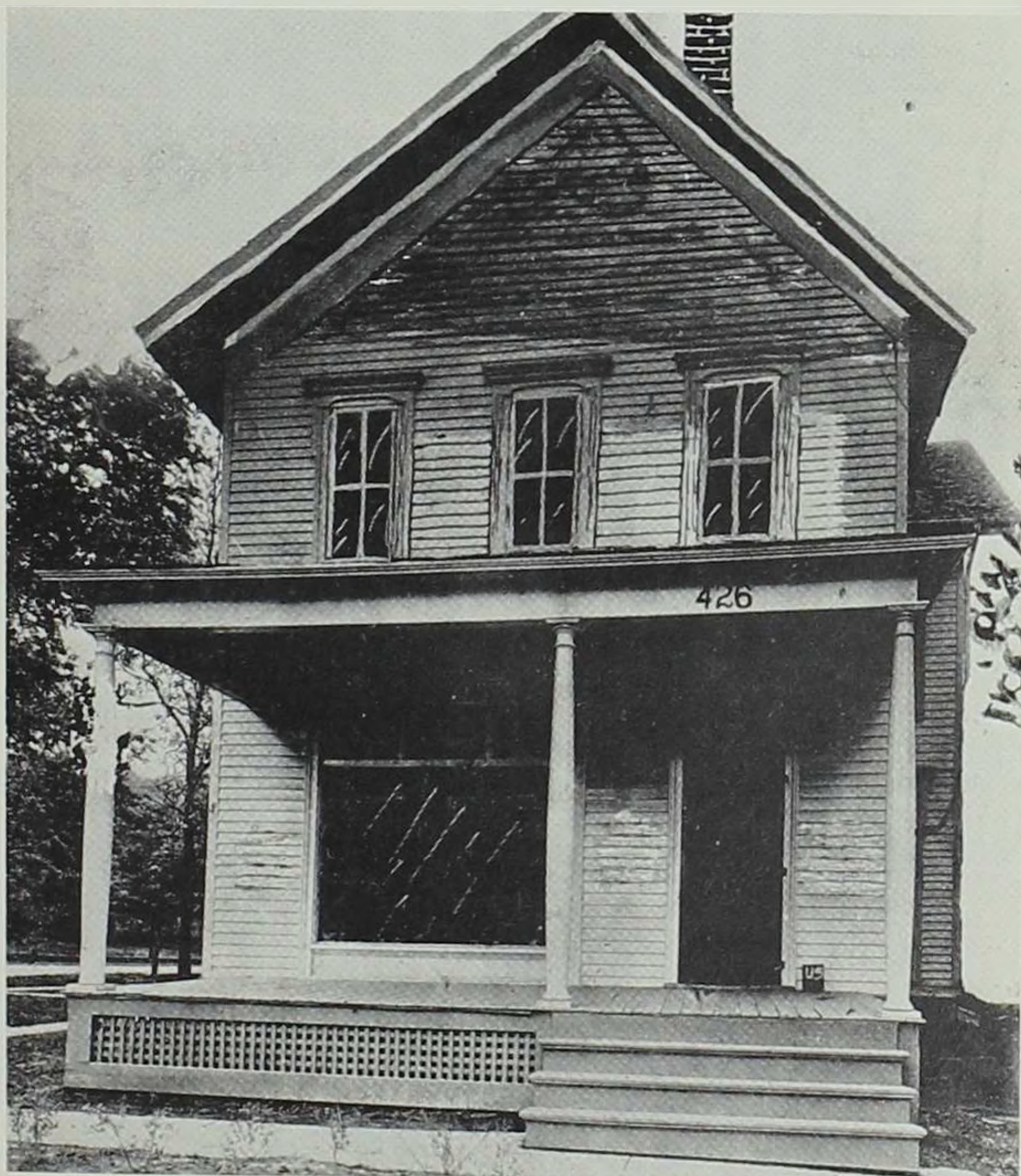


Photo courtesy Waterloo Courier

Lou Henry's home in Waterloo. Taken in 1928 when Herbert Hoover was nominated president and Lou Henry became the First Lady.



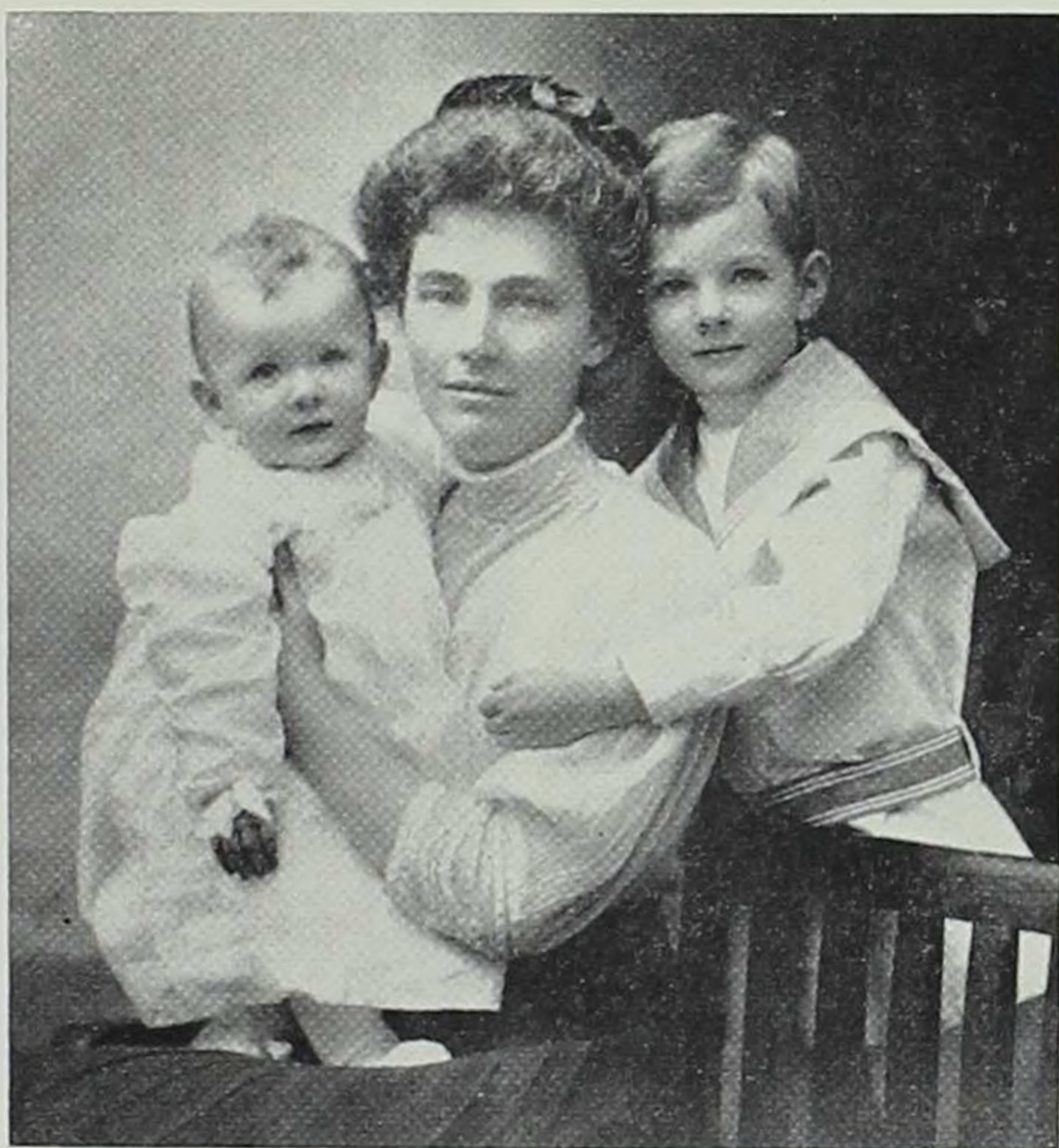


Fan Drill at Whittier School in California. Lou Henry is on extreme left.

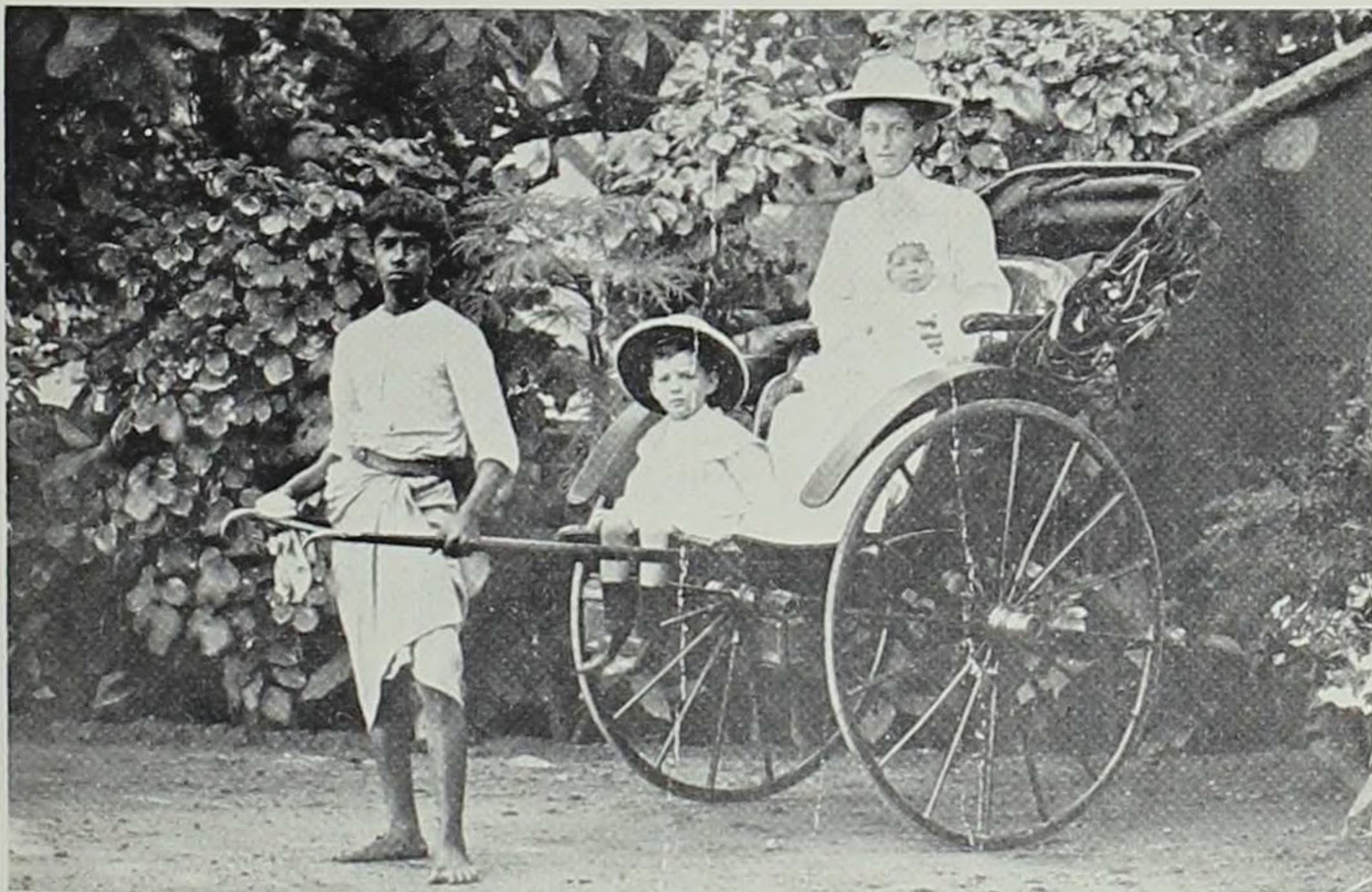


The Charles Henry home in Monterey, California.





Lou Henry and her children—Allan and Herbert, Jr., in London about 1908.



Herbert, Jr., and Allan take a ride in a rickshaw with their nurse.

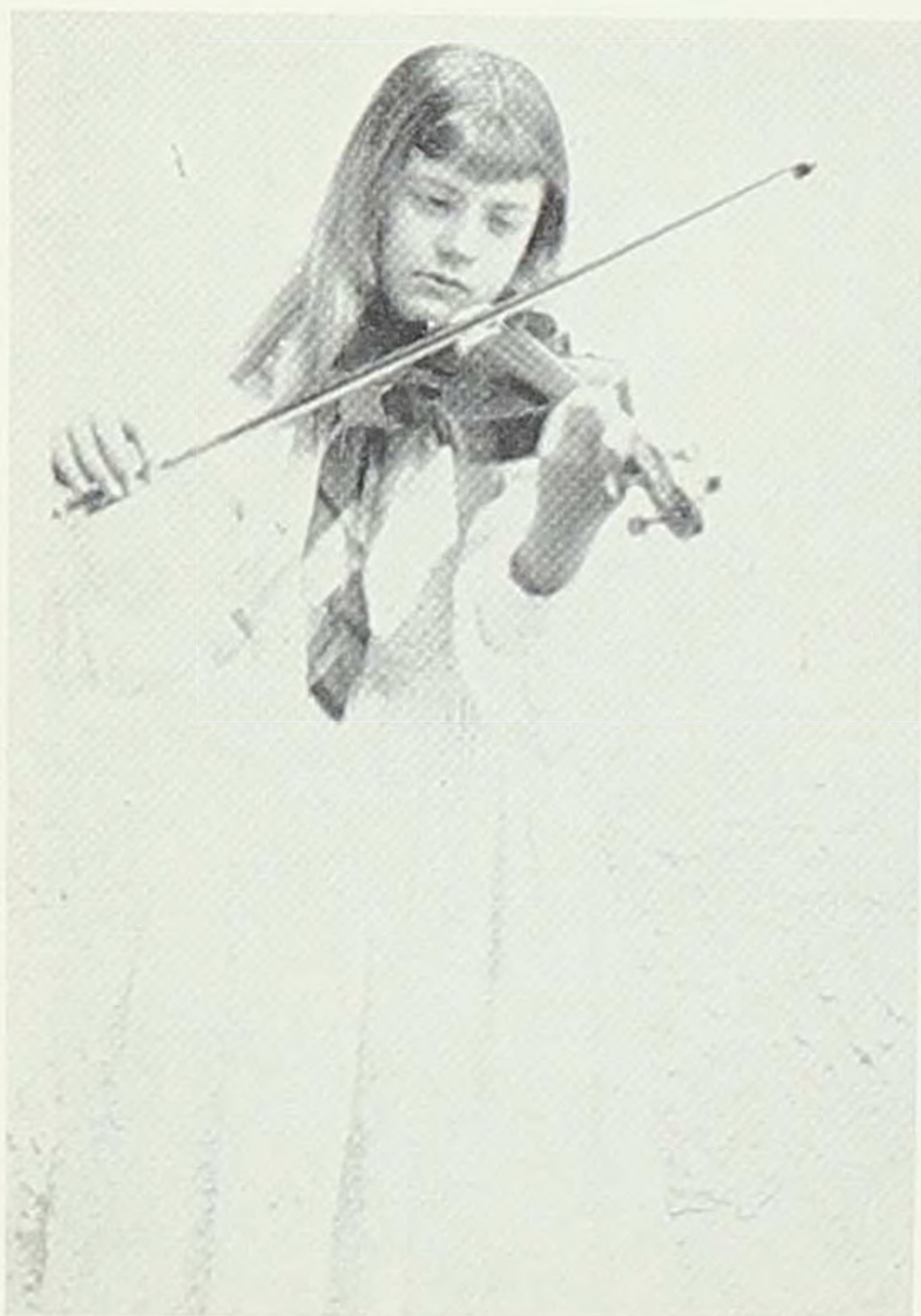




Lou Henry—Circa 1893  
San Jose, California.



Lou Henry Hoover in London—1903.



Jean Henry—with her violin.



Charles Delano Henry—in old age.





Herbert and Lou Henry at their favorite resting place. Camp Rapidan. Circa 1931.



Herbert and Lou Henry at Camp Rapidan —1,500 wooded acres at headwaters of the Rapidan River in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia.

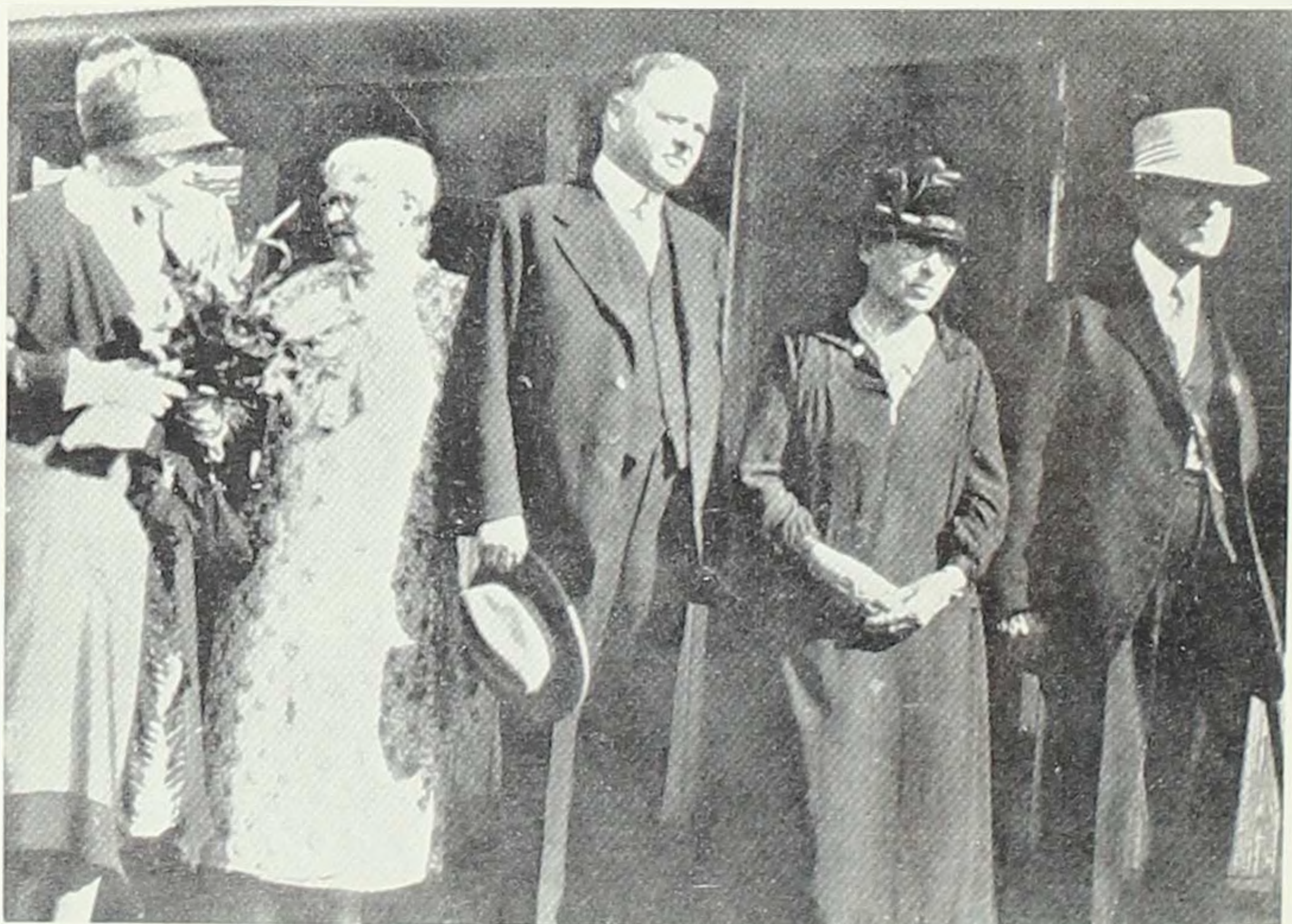


President's Cottage at Camp Rapidan. A series of cottages bearing such names as President, Prime Minister, Town Hall, Ishbel (MacDonald) Cabin. The Hoovers built 15 buildings on 165 acres as they developed the site.



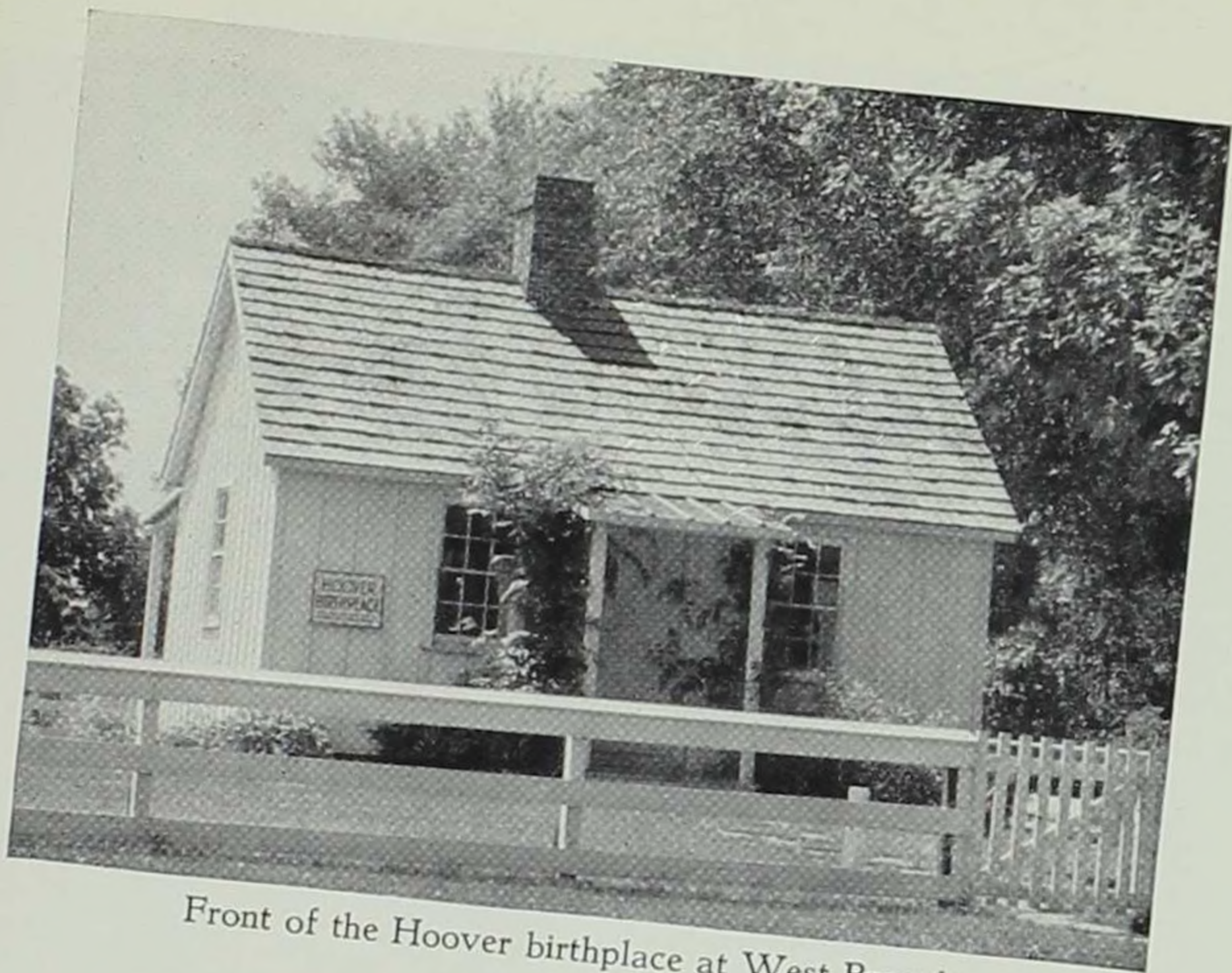


The Hoovers with their two sons, Allan and Herbert, Jr., at West Branch, birthplace of the President, on August 21, 1928.

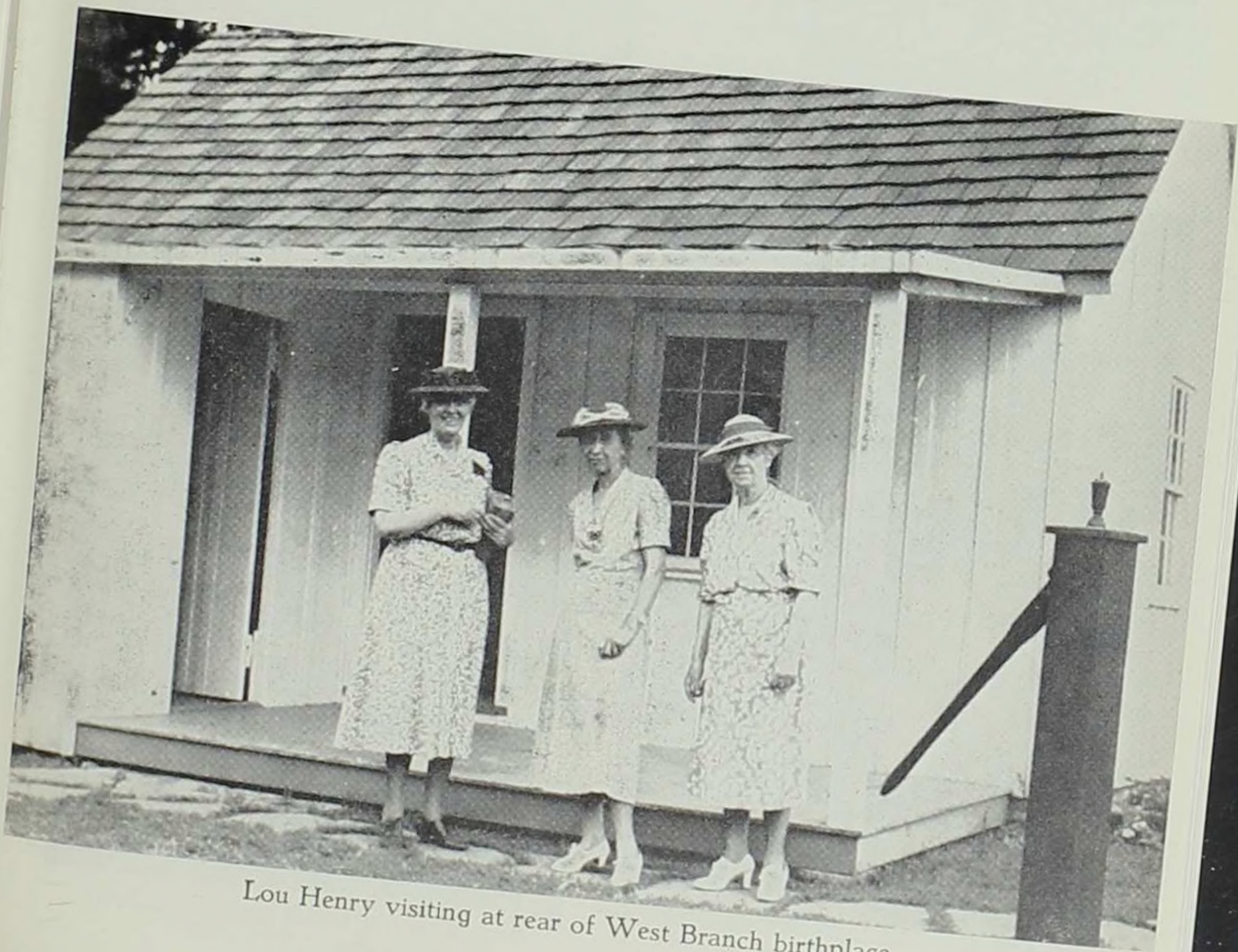


Lou Henry and Herbert Hoover visit with old friends at his birthplace.





Front of the Hoover birthplace at West Branch.



Lou Henry visiting at rear of West Branch birthplace.



SOME PORTRAITS OF LOU HENRY HOOVER



A Gallant First Lady, Circa 1931.



Lou Henry attired in cotton gown to help vitalize cotton industry—1932.



Lou Henry—Ardent Knitter.  
California—Circa 1938.



Lou Henry in her favorite Girl Scout uniform. Circa 1937.



## Lou Hoover—Gallant First Lady

On March 4, 1929, under threatening skies, Lou Hoover attended the inauguration of her husband as President of the United States in colorful ceremonies held outside the Capitol. She remembered her early faith in a young man working his way through Stanford. On this day she saw that faith fulfilled more completely than she could have expected, when Herbert Hoover became the thirty-first President of the United States.

When the White House became her responsibility, Lou Hoover made that a home, too. Lou Henry Hoover was, perhaps, the most fully experienced First Lady ever to enter the White House. All First Ladies learn the traditions, duties, graces and limitations of living in the White House. Lou Hoover already knew them. She knew Washington and she knew the world firsthand, by living in both. She knew the officials and the foreign diplomats, many of whom she had known abroad, and had hundreds of friends of her own, whom she never forgot.

Sensitive to the historical significance of the White House, Lou Hoover re-established the President's Study, which had been used by all the Chief Executives from Adams to McKinley,



but was changed into a bedroom by the Theodore Roosevelts to help accommodate their large family of children. Lincoln had signed the Emancipation Proclamation in that room and Lou Hoover, after studying a painting which depicted the event, discovered some of the original furniture stored away in an attic. She refurbished the room and restored much of the original furniture.

Lou Henry enjoyed discovering in the Monroe law office in Fredericksburg, Virginia, much of the old French furniture acquired by President Monroe after the British burned the White House during the War of 1812. She had many of the pieces copied and placed in the East Room, the huge formal reception hall on the first floor. She refurbished other public rooms and also quarters for the White House staff to make them all more comfortable.

She showed her fondness for children by making special occasions for them. The annual Easter egg rolling on the White House lawn was attended by thousands of children who scampered up and down gleefully, rolling their gayly colored eggs and putting on impromptu races. The Girl Scouts did folk dancing accompanied by the Marine Band and the Boy Scouts were commissioned to find lost children.

Lou Henry took on countless duties to ease her husband's work, to spare his time, to extend the friendliness of the White House to visitors, and



to keep up the human relations with Washington which her husband's obligations did not permit. Her days were as fully scheduled as his.

She dedicated orphanages, christened ships, and appeared officially to represent the President on special occasions for many organizations. With the help of her four young women secretaries, she made official entertaining as easy and informal as possible.

Lou Hoover was conscientious about maintaining social precedents, but she also introduced a number of innovations. Guests at state dinners and receptions were guided by the social secretaries and helped to mingle at will in the drawing room to keep the functions from being too regimented. Menus for receptions and dinners became much more generous than in previous years.

Many receptions were scheduled for specific groups in the course of each year. The largest one, by far, was held on the First of January at the White House and was open to the public. On New Year's Day, 1930, a long line of people waited from midnight to get in and shake hands with the Hoovers, even though the official time of starting was 11:00 A.M. By nine o'clock Lou Henry was worried.

"We can't keep all those people waiting another two hours," she told Bert. So the door was opened and the crowds surged in, in orderly fashion, all intent upon greeting the First Family. Be-



fore the day was over, 9,000 people had gone through the reception line.

Lou Henry found it a very exhausting experience, even though the President sent her away for a little rest several times during the day. Discussing it afterward, Bert said, "We should abolish all big receptions, because they put too much physical strain on you."

"They are just as much a strain for you, too," replied Lou, "but I know that thousands of people will be disappointed if they can't visit the White House and meet the President. So I'm afraid that the New Year's reception is one of the precedents we must follow while we are in the official residence."

Tradition assumed there would be the conventional Diplomatic receptions, Cabinet dinners, receptions for members of the Senate and House of Representatives, for Army and Navy officials, and many others. From past experience, Lou Hoover knew that these functions were sometimes stiff and formal so she planned ahead meticulously for each event.

Guests at afternoon receptions, instead of being obliged to balance their teacups on their knees, found a number of small tables on hand on which to rest them. Cords which once divided special guests and ordinary guests at the public receptions were taken down by order of the First Lady so that a Congressman's secretary could mingle



freely with Cabinet officers and Diplomats. This was a break with the tradition of former White House mistresses.

Lou Hoover also created an informal atmosphere for her White House teas, which were unlisted on the official social program. From the cards of those who made formal calls at the White House, she compiled her invitation lists but there were many last-minute invitations to chance visitors to Washington. A close-knit circle of her personal friends aided in putting guests at their ease on these occasions. The First Lady herself, always hatless and gloveless, took her place in the Green Room with one of her secretaries and chatted easily with her guests in groups of twos and threes as they were escorted in by the aides. Lou Hoover always asked some of her friends to pour tea in the state dining room behind, reached by going through the Blue Room. She herself always planned the dainty open-faced sandwiches, tea, iced cakes and candy, and arranged for beautiful bouquets, lovely linens, and silver to make her teas enjoyable. In order to make the full rounds, she gave teas always once and sometimes twice a week.

Lou Hoover was deeply hurt while giving the usual round of teas for the wives of Congressmen. On July 12, 1930, she invited Mrs. Oscar De Priest, wife of the Negro representative from Chicago, along with the others. In order not to of-



fend Southerners, she had arranged the tea on two different days, bringing in Mrs. De Priest with a group of women sounded out in advance as to their prejudices.

The tea party went off well and the tactful hostess was pleased. But at breakfast the next day, she saw her name in the headlines. The color drained out of her face. "Look, Bert!" she cried pointing to them. "It says, 'Mrs. Hoover Defiles the White House!' They can't mean it. Oh, it just can't be true!"

"Well, I guess that is the way lots of Southerners feel about Negroes," he replied.

This tea party caused a great commotion in Washington and particularly in the South. There were speeches and editorials in the South about Mrs. Hoover defiling the White House and on June 13 the Texas Legislature passed a resolution denouncing her for entertaining Mrs. De Priest.

Newspaper stories ran on for days and the issue just would not die. Editorials rebuking the First Lady appeared in the *Houston Chronicle*, the *Austin Times*, the *Montgomery Advertiser*, the *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, and the *Jackson Daily News*. In general, the editorials from the North were as laudatory as the ones from the South were censorious. She was complimented for her stand and praised by editors of the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, the *Boston Journal*, the *New York World*, the *Chicago Daily*



*Tribune*, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* and the *Boston Evening Transcript*.

Lou winced as she read one editorial from the *Mobile Press* stating:

Mrs. Herbert Hoover offered to the South and to the Nation an arrogant insult yesterday when she entertained a negro woman at a White House tea. She has harmed Mr. Hoover to a serious extent. Social admixture of the negro and the white is sought by neither race. The negro is entitled to a social life but that the two races should intermingle at afternoon teas or other functions is inadmissible.

In contrast, the following editorial in the *Bristol, Virginia*, paper helped bolster her courage:

The President of the United States is President of all the people, white, black, red or yellow. The First Lady entertained a Negro at the White House as a courtesy from one branch of government to another. Mrs. Hoover is internationally minded. Politically she put into practice the brotherhood of man and religiously the fatherhood of God, even if the individual is an image carved in ebony.

Because of constant government pressures the Hoovers took no vacations. Lou Hoover planned Camp Rapidan, one hundred miles from Washington in the Blue Ridge Mountains, as a weekend retreat for the President. She designed and oversaw the construction of several log cabins clustered around the main building with its big living room and open fireplace.

Weekends found Lou Hoover a gracious camp



hostess in a setting of trees and streams. Shod in flat-heeled walking shoes, she hiked along the mountain trails, across stepping stones and fallen logs, leading the way and talking to her guests of many things. She often covered eight or ten miles a day, carrying a basket to bring back woodsy plants for the "memory garden" at the Girl Scouts' Little House in Washington.

On many of the Rapidan weekends the First Lady was able to entertain in the delightfully informal setting of the camp as there often were officials with whom the President needed to talk.

As Thanksgiving approached, Lou Henry longed to be out of the public eye and to have a family gathering for the holiday. Herbert and his family were in Pasadena, California, and could not make the trip. But Allan, who was registered for a two-year course at the Harvard School of Business Administration, came to Washington to be with his parents. On Thanksgiving morning Lou and Bert Hoover attended church services and then went for a ride into the country. The remainder of the holiday was celebrated in the White House with a quiet family dinner, early enough in the afternoon for Allan to catch the train back to Boston.

On the way to the station, his mother confided to Allan that she was upset and worried because she had detected some unfriendly attitudes toward the President. "You wouldn't believe it,"



she said, "but some people are actually blaming your father for the Wall Street crash."

Lou Hoover was distressed to see her husband working day and night, struggling with problems of the depression, keeping an inhuman schedule as he strained every effort to create new employment with new construction and improvements. She led a campaign among women to give up silk clothing and dress in cotton to help the Nation's textile industry. Weekends at Camp Rapidan were kept as peaceful and restful as possible for her husband by asking guests to discuss neither government nor politics.

Between weekends, the First Lady was a familiar figure on the Washington bridal paths, where she rode like a veteran horsewoman. A striking figure, sitting easily in an English saddle on a handsome grey horse, she frequently appeared along the paths in Rock Creek Park.

Events of the depression weighed heavily on Lou Hoover and she planned to keep all entertaining as simple as possible. She sponsored Paderewski's benefit concerts to aid Americans who were hungry and in distress, and called upon the Scouts and the 4-H Clubs to take part in the national efforts toward recovery.

Every week, from all over the country, Lou Hoover received letters from parents asking help to keep their children in school. The main difficulty, according to the letters, was that the children



lacked proper clothes and that there was no money with which to buy necessary books. The First Lady asked the cooperation of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers and answered every letter received. Often she advised the writer to apply to the local PTA for help.

Lou Henry Hoover continued to be recognized in academic circles, as her seventh honorary degree was awarded on May 14, 1932, by the College of Wooster at Wooster, Ohio. The degree of Doctor of Letters and Humanities was given in recognition of her work in social service. She was especially delighted because her great-grandfather, William Henry, was one of the three men who had helped lay out the town. The college ceremony coincided with the 125th anniversary celebration of the founding of the town of Wooster.

During the depression years, Lou Henry read with dismay the newspaper accounts of hunger marches and a serious riot of unemployed persons in Dearborn, Michigan, and how the farmers in Iowa and the Middle West had organized to prevent mortgage owners from profiting by foreclosure. Then she began to see ragged members of the so-called Bonus Expeditionary Force on the streets of Washington and heard that they were building a shanty town on Anacostia Flats outside the city. These thousands of unemployed veterans demanded immediate bonus payments. White House functions were full of discussions of



this situation as the President held conferences with leaders of the great public works programs and industries to try to increase employment. Lou Hoover heard her husband plead that industry strain every effort to create new employment by undertaking new construction and improvements, and to put human well-being first and profits last.

She was relieved when Congress appropriated funds for transportation and about half of the Bonus Expeditionary Force left Washington and went home. But she was increasingly distressed by the organized smear campaign against her husband and his leadership during the spring and summer. In spite of this, the Republican Convention nominated him for re-election.

In the days following the nomination ceremonies, Lou was acutely aware of the "Smear Hoover" campaign and the many untrue statements being published about the President, but while seething inwardly she continued to go about her daily round of duties with her usual outward calm. She demonstrated remarkable stamina as she stood beside her husband through the economic earthquake of the great depression and saw him go down to defeat in the presidential election of 1932.



## The Years Following 1933

The daily mail was voluminous, but Lou Hoover struggled to answer the letters of a multitude of personal friends and well-wishers who expressed their affection and admiration for the First Family. Parting with Camp Rapidan, so full of happy memories, was one of the hardest things the Hoovers had to do. They gave Camp Rapidan to the Federal Government and expressed the wish that the camp be made available to future presidents.

They also decided that Bert would not seek public office again and that they would go back to California to live rather than move back into their S Street home in Washington. On board a train early in March, Lou read an editorial by Willis J. Abbot in the *Christian Science Monitor* that helped her understand the political situation:

If the Democrats in Congress should leave largely unchanged Mr. Hoover's plans for the reconstruction of the business structure, there might be a demand for recognition of his services. It is hardly likely, however, that Democratic policy will permit this. The party which out of office, devoted so much attention to the successful endeavor to "smear Hoover" is not likely when in power to leave undone anything for the completion of that particular task.



Tears welled up in her eyes as she read the editorial on March 7th in the *New York Herald-Tribune*:

To step down from high office as simply and with as complete courtesy and dignity as did Mr. Hoover, is in a great American tradition. But it none-the-less stirs a wave of admiration that deserves noting even in these crowded days. Let it be added that the reserved friendliness and the complete good taste with which Mrs. Hoover graced the White House, were not less marked in her leaving. Wherever their future may lead them, here are two citizens of whom America can always feel proud.

Editorial note was also made of the fact that Mr. Hoover refused to accept his salary of \$75,000 a year while he was president, turning each check back into the treasury. It was also noted that he built Camp Rapidan at his own expense and gave it to the government. "President Hoover looms larger in defeat than he ever seemed to at the peak of his power, perhaps because in the waning days of his term he felt free to say whatever he wanted to."

Finally returned to Palo Alto from that "perilous, pitiless pinnacle" that was the White House, Lou Hoover appreciated the tranquility of her San Juan Hill home on the campus. At last she had time for friends, books, family, and fishing trips with her husband. Busily, quietly, above all naturally, she took part in many community and University activities. Hospitality continued to play an



important part in her life and she entertained not only personal friends but also many campus organizations in her home.

She was known to always be doing something, little or big, for somebody. Her daily mountain of mail reflected this, with many appeals for advice or help. Some letters were from professional chisellers but many were from people who turned in their desperation to a lady they knew to be kindly and very resourceful. They ranged from requests for pieces of Mr. Hoover's neckties, autographed photographs, and endorsements of products for advertising purposes, to pleas for personal advice and money. She devoted the time between her eight o'clock breakfast on the terrace and noon to going through the mail and dictating to her secretary, but she also wrote answers to many warm personal letters herself.

Lou Henry liked the freedom of being a private citizen. She did her shopping in Palo Alto and sometimes paid by check without revealing her identity in advance. Saleswomen were startled by the name on the checks handed them by this quiet, unassuming customer.

Her lack of ostentation showed again when asked to contribute a dress to the Smithsonian Institution for their collection of historic gowns worn by the First Ladies of the Land. Instead of sending her inaugural gown, Lou Hoover sent a lovely dress of aquamarine tinted satin. It was



simply fashioned with a softly draped bodice and a skirt with pointed flounces. "This gown has no particular historical associations," she wrote in the accompanying letter. "It was just a dress that I enjoyed wearing, and for that reason I selected it from the others I wore in the White House."

The Smithsonian request was followed shortly by one from Mrs. Roosevelt asking for a portrait to hang in the White House. For this purpose Lou chose a painting by Lydia Field Emmet that hung in the Girl Scouts' National Headquarters in New York City. The picture was not hung in the White House during Roosevelt's administration and it remained for Bess Truman to reopen the subject in 1949. Hoover chose to commission a copy of the portrait from life executed in 1932 by Philip de Laszlo. This was graciously accepted by the Trumans and hangs in the White House today.

It was difficult to retire completely from public life. November of 1934 saw the former First Lady helping with the Community Chest Drives in both San Francisco and Los Angeles, following her stipulation that she represent the Girl Scouts.

"Because of her kindly spirit and her never failing interest in the less fortunate men and women of the world," explained the chairman of the Woman's Crusade in Los Angeles, "we have asked Mrs. Herbert Hoover to appear on our symposium entitled 'Women Leaders of Today and Tomorrow.' "



"I am glad to be here as a Girl Scout," responded Lou, "an active member of that great group of girls who are the women of tomorrow . . . . We hear much today about the need of right leadership. But we need to be good followers, too. Leadership develops with such an attitude and thus our cause is strengthened. It is together we get good things achieved. And we must be wary of would-be leaders who want to destroy our standards."

One public activity from which Lou Hoover did not wish to retire was the Girl Scout movement. In the fall of 1935, the former First Lady politely declined her first invitation to the White House since she left it in 1933. Lou explained that it would be impossible for her to go to Washington because of her responsibilities at the long-planned Girl Scout National Convention in San Francisco. She wrote: "I feel that the spirit of effective mobilization demands me to be at my post of duty here."

She entered into planning for the San Francisco meeting with enthusiasm. When the convention of 1,000 executives and leaders of the nationwide Scout movement swung into action on October 2, 1935, she was unanimously elected president of the National Girl Scout Council.

In her acceptance remarks, Lou Hoover conceded:

The modern Girl Scout may have learned new bits of slang, but fundamental principles have not changed. The



Girl Scout of today has a new uniform, but the same courageous heart beats beneath it. She has learned many new mannerisms, but the same character looks out.

After the convention, Lou Hoover visited the National Scout Headquarters in New York and went to see her husband's new office, which he had just opened. After the holiday festivities that year, Lou turned to her Girl Scout interests again. Having served in every capacity within the Scout movement, she fulfilled the relentless demands upon her as president with gracious ease. In Duluth for the Hiawatha Regional convention in May, 1936, she was described by a newcomer:

To me as I watched her work with the leaders and the scouts at the conference, it seemed she was sweet without being sugary; competent and able without being arrogant, dominant or aggressive. She was that rare combination of simplicity and friendliness and quiet dignity that keeps familiarity away. I liked her tremendously.

The new president of the Girl Scouts wore her neat green Girl Scout uniform with pride right through the convention, including the banquet when most of the women were quite dressed up. This was always her policy in order to give the feeling of all-rightness to women who brought no dinner dresses along.

At the banquet, Lou said:

Girl Scouts are progressive. The fundamentals of honor, trust, loyalty and friendship cannot be changed but our uniforms, methods of approach and program are constant-



ly changing to keep up the interest. We do not try to teach or preach. It is the quality of fellowship, of leader and scout working together that makes Girl Scouting.

Lou was inwardly distressed by the continuing barrage of assaults upon her husband's character but in talking it over with her son, Herbert, she said:

Your father does not try to defend himself against the poison propaganda, but is trying to explain in magazine articles and speeches the philosophy of life which he has been forced by events to symbolize. It is the issue of human liberty and individual initiative versus government controls of both.

With excited and pleasurable anticipation, Lou and her husband drove to Los Angeles to attend Allan's wedding on March 17, 1937. Miss Margaret Coberly was a family favorite and all had looked forward to her adding the name of Hoover. Herbert, Jr., was his brother's best man and Peggy Ann was a flower girl. Herbert's other children, Peter and Joan, watched the proceedings with their mother. The Rev. Dr. D. Charles Gardner, Chaplain Emeritus of Stanford University, performed the afternoon ceremony at the home of the bride's parents, Mr. and Mrs. William B. Coberly, while Lou beamed happily at her new daughter.

The newlyweds flew to Nassau in the Bahamas for their honeymoon and the senior Hoovers went to New York. When the honeymooners returned



on April 16, the two couples met again in Des Moines, Iowa, and drove to West Branch where they talked about the plan to restore the Hoover birthplace cottage.

Back home in California, Lou Hoover remained very active with the local Girl Scouts. She helped to launch the annual Girl Scout financial drive in Palo Alto in the spring of 1937. The climax of the program was her talk on "What Scouting Means to a Girl."

Soon she was off to Savannah, Georgia, for the Silver Jubilee convention of the Girl Scouts convened in the city where the organization had its birth. The National President expressed her own pleasure in meeting within a stone's throw of the first meeting place of the charter members with Juliette Gordon Low, founder of the organization. She also recalled presiding at the Savannah meeting of 1922:

Our girls, out of all proportion to their age, their experience, or their numbers, are exerting their influence on our country. The old order changes. The whole world has been changing its ways as it does during every quarter century. We hope we have been keeping pace with it in ways that are good. We hope we have seen some of its more general mistakes and have avoided them.

At the 1937 convention, Lou unveiled a bronze memorial tablet dedicated to Juliette Gordon Low, in the Girl Scout headquarters building. This building, which was the converted stable of the



Low home, had been given by the founder to the Girl Scouts. In her remarks, Lou said: "This building has housed Girl Scout activities for a full quarter of a century, during which the organization has grown from the original group of twelve to a nationwide movement with a membership of 400,000."

She was an interested and amused spectator when twelve girls representing the original Girl Scouts, re-enacted the first meeting in 1912. They all wore the dark shirtwaists, bloomers and large hair ribbons of the 1912 period, did dumbbell exercises and played games that were the vogue when the movement began.

Gathering war clouds took Herbert Hoover back to New York to direct the National Finnish Relief Fund. Lou Henry took on a familiar role in overseeing the preparation of clothing and supplies for homeless refugees. She maintained an apartment at Waldorf Astoria Towers and aided her husband in his collection of documentary materials on the causes of World War II. Her days were full of relief work but she maintained her active interest in scouting. Clad in the simple green uniform of the Girl Scouts, Lou Henry as honorary Vice President of the National organization, summed up her many years of scouting activity with a lesson drawn from the new war in Europe:

With all the national and international evils loose in the



world, homemakers are the real peacemakers. As we look across the ocean and see the turmoil in other lands and realize what we have to do with our citizenship to preserve our ideals, the full value of the Girl Scout movement is brought home to us.

She discussed the peacetime program of the Scouts at a Northwest Regional conference in Seattle early in May, 1941:

It is just as necessary in peace time to build a good strong country as it is to stop and protect it against the threat of war. The emphasis in scouting is always on the need for good homes and good communities and the part that Girl Scouts can play in helping to build them.

Reporters wanted her to discuss American neutrality and asked her if she thought American youth, through such organizations as the Girl Scouts, could do anything to keep the United States at peace. "The Girl Scouts can do exactly what any other group of citizens can do," she replied. "That is, teach restraint and tolerance and interest its members in the discovery of truth and in remaining emotionally balanced. The Girl Scout program grows increasingly important through the years."

In the spring of 1941, Lou Hoover enjoyed a few weeks at her Stanford Campus home and was especially fascinated by watching the installation of the Belgian carillon in the tower of the Hoover War Library, preceding the dedication of this new building which was built to house her husband's extensive collection of war documents.



For the fiftieth Stanford Commencement that June, Lou Hoover was one of the speakers in the Laurence Frost Amphitheater. At the conclusion of her talk she was awarded an Honorary Fellowship degree from her *alma mater*. "It gives me a warm feeling around my heart," she replied, "to receive this recognition from the school that I have loved for so many years."

Back in New York more and more of Lou Hoover's time was spent in relief work as the war demands became very heavy. An insidious physical and mental fatigue began to take its toll although she thought herself to be in good health. She died suddenly and peacefully of a heart attack in the Waldorf Towers apartment on January 7, 1944.

The Girl Scouts, complying with the request that no flowers be sent, established a national fund in memory of their devoted and tireless leader. Meanwhile, hundreds of editorials from all over the country eulogized Lou Henry Hoover at the time of her death. According to the *San Francisco Chronicle*:

In her unobtrusive way, Mrs. Herbert Hoover was all her life a force for human betterment. The one instance in which she came into public prominence she never sought, her leadership of the Girl Scouts of America, is slight measure of her widespread but unpublicized activity in all manner of works for young people. She is mourned by a multitude of friends who had reason to love her.



Chancellor Ray Lyman Wilbur of Stanford University characterized Lou Hoover as "a fine friendly American woman who will be remembered as a successful wife and mother."

Chancellor Wilbur continued:

Complimentary things are usually said about noted people when they die. It is significant that all these things were said of Mrs. Hoover while she lived. She was recognized during her lifetime as a uniquely intelligent woman, who refused to let official formalities interfere with her deep and friendly interest in people. The place where the Hoover family lived, whether in California or China or the White House, was never a house or a mansion. It was, because of Mrs. Hoover, a home.

Writing in the Girl Scout magazine, *The American Girl*, Will Irwin declared:

She kept up her scholarly interests all her life. When she broke into the conversation, whether it was on the mining business or American politics or Chinese history, she knew what she was talking about. Tolerant of human frailties, she did not tolerate them in herself. She was almost too kind. The people whom she helped over the hard places with money, with sympathy, and with counsel must have run into the thousands. Never, even in the darkest days of the depression which hung over the White House like a cloud, did she give any sign of waning courage. She died the youngest woman of her years I have ever known.

The tribute of the *Palo Alto Times*, was equally penetrating:

"As long as Americans cherish honest work,



neighborliness, truth, integrity, courage and democracy, Lou Henry Hoover's essential spirit will live. She has not said goodbye."

Lou and Herbert Hoover lie under marble ledger stones on the crest of a hill overlooking the little town of West Branch—where Herbert was born in 1874.

HELEN B. PRYOR



## THE HOOVERS RELAX AT CAMP RAPIDAN



Lou Henry and Herbert enjoy the peaceful woodland atmosphere.



Lou Henry's secretaries and other guests enjoy the homelike comfort of the President's Cabin. Many notables were entertained at Camp Rapidan.





Lou Henry Hoover receives Honorary Degree *Magistri in Artibus* from Tufts College June 13, 1932. Other Honorary Degrees:

Mills College May 14, 1923  
Whittier College August 17, 1927  
Swarthmore College June 3, 1929  
Elmira College June 9, 1930  
Goucher College April 24, 1931  
College of Wooster May 14, 1931  
Tufts College June 13, 1932  
Stanford University June 20, 1932

Lou Henry Hoover lays YWCA cornerstone at Atlantic City on May 14, 1928. Note that many honors came before Lou Henry Hoover became the "First Lady" of the land—a real tribute to her own ability and reputation.

