

S.F. Examiner, Harding

January 5th,
1 9 2 1

Mr. W. R. Hearst,
137 Riverside Drive,
New York City, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Hearst:

Mr. Fairchild has given me a copy of a portion of your letter to Mr. Bogart dated December 24th which has reference to the progress on the buildings at San Simeon and we have gone over this matter rather thoroughly today and give below a rather detailed report of various matters in connection with the houses:

HOUSE "B".

When I was at San Simeon December 18th, the painters had finished the ceilings and friezes of the two smaller bedrooms and were working on the larger bedroom. Vanderloo had all his work out for the main room and was working on one of the large bedroom window decorations.

All the doors for this house are made.

For those doors between the lobby and the other rooms, Vanderloo has finished very successfully panels, but the carved panels for the lobby side are not done and doors will have to be held here until they are.

The mantle arrived in your last shipment and is at San Simeon, but the condition of the roads has been such that they have not been able to take it up the hill. It will be set as soon as we have a few days of good weather.

The tile for the panel in the court is being burned and will be shipped up this month.

The forms for the work at the end of the court have all been up for a month or more.

The road and pavement connecting "B" house with "C" house are all graded and boxed for the concrete under-pavement.

HOUSE "C".

The painters have not touched this house.

Vanderloo has all his work out for the bedrooms in fine shape. The doors are done and hung.

The new semi-circular over-doors to take the place of the Della Robias are made and being carved in San Francisco.

The forms are in for the lower wall at the foot of the grand staircase.

The lower level is within easy view of the window of the sitting room, and is going to look very well.

No work has been done on the walls of the main room in House "C". Sample tiles are being burned for the floor and wall. The Berkeley tile people could not get the desired iridescence, and finally found a new kiln in San Jose where they were willing to make the effort and expect to know the results within the next week.

The forms for the ^{path}pave connecting House "C" and House "A" and the retaining walls in front of House "C" under the Oak are in and the connection made nicely with the lower entrance to House "A".

HOUSE "A".

All the cast work for the frieze, windows, doors, etc. for the main room of House "A" are complete and ready to go in, also the ornamental parts of the bedroom ceilings, also all the dressing closet fittings, etc., and the entrance door has been finished on its unfinished side. As everything in the main room depends on the depth of the ceiling, until we know this, as explained to you before you left, this work cannot go ahead without risk of having to take it all out again.

The chimney flues have been deflected around the fireplace successfully and the temporary linings of the fireplace have been adjusted so that we are sure of a fine draft. Handy is putting in the permanent linings now.

All the forms for the reconstructed terrace and steps have been in for at least six weeks but they are not filled for reasons given below under the head of "General"

The underpavement for the front court floor and the court wall and steps are completed and stripped.

Your letter asking me to make the walls of the baths of ivory colored marble instead of light tile you previously ordered has kept us busy hunting suitable marble. It is not to be had on the Coast and I do not believe it would be safe to try staining white marble for bath room work as any steam or cleaning would be apt to spot it. Would you consider sending the marble for the bath rooms of "A" house from New York or do you wish to substitute something else.

After many difficulties, the marble for the floor of the main room of House "A" is understood to be on its way. We finally had to *altogether* buy the marble and make our own arrangements for the sawing. It will not cost more than I quoted you. This marble, when it arrives, will have to be sawed in Oakland before being sent to San Simeon.

We will need the columns from the Hacienda for the main room before finishing up, but on account of not actually needing them as yet we have not sent them down.

All the doors are made up, but the lobby doors to match the Mexican carved ones are still at San Francisco awaiting the carving. The other doors are made and on the hill.

GENERAL.

The buildings could look much more complete than they do if I had sent the plasterers up, each time we had something for them to do, but it has seemed much more economical to not send them until we had plenty of work ahead for them to set as the painters are so far behind Vanderloo and Vanderloo behind the plasters who have only to set his work. With a very small crew, Vanderloo has done a very fine creditable amount of work since you left as while it soundssimple to reproduce antiques; in reality it is a long job as the design as to be reversed for

for each opening and ^{has} our designs follow with the filling where the antique is left to the imagination. He has probably a month's more work here and there on interior details.

Washburn's carpenters have been working on the interiors or putting up forms according to the weather, but the forms are not filled because the road to the rock crusher has been almost continuously out of commission because the time between rains is not sufficient to dry out the roadbed. I do not think that very much time has been wasted by anyone unless it is the laborers on account of weather conditions. It has been necessary to replace the tents with shacks again as the men would not stay on the hill in tents, and we could not keep the tents up on the hill during severe storms. In building these shacks, they have been so placed as to be out of the way of future construction. This has taken quite a bit of rough lumber and material which will later go into concrete forms.

It might seem as though some of the work like the doors should be ready, but there is absolutely no stock of anything than the absolute ordinary in California. For instance, there was no walnut to be had of sufficient size or thickness to make the panels for the lobby doors of either Houses "B" or "A". It had to be sent for and when it arrived it was not seasoned. It took six weeks of drying to get it into shape before it could be taken into the milling machine. The war took practically all our better workmen in wood carving. There are only two or three carvers here who could do your work and they can only turn out just so much, but it will be good when it is done.

The same condition as to tile exists as you know.

The friezes are complete at last and all other tile on its way, but we cannot get it in quantities but have to take it as the little kilns can deliver it.

One of the unexpected conditions due to weather conditions is the Steamer Admiral Nicholson. Several times they have had to carry a small amount of freight we had for them to San Pedro and back to San Francisco before delivering on account of weather conditions being so bad they could not get into San Simeon. The weather has been so bad most of the early winter that they have not been able to take lime or cement in their cargoes on account of the heavy seas spoiling it. We have fortunately had enough cement on hand to last through to now, but by the time the front of House "A" is poured the cement will be used up. The road via Los Ossos valley is entirely impassible for hauling. The steamer is expected to be put into dry dock and not be in commission again before the first of February so this will preclude our getting any cement in by boat until that time.

Yours very truly,

P.S. This report is rather long, but Mr. Fairchild was of the opinion you should be fully informed as to the various obstacles which we have had to contend with this winter which did not come up heretofore.