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# Homemaker in Many Lands

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## 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 Irtish 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.