THE WHOLE TOWN'S TALKING ABOUT THE MONROE GIRLS

THE CHICAGO LITERARY CLUB

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The Cliff Dwellers, Chicago, IL

The Whole Town's Talk'n about the Monroe Girls
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(*With apologies to the Mills Brothers – 1954*)

Who were those Monroe Girls?

Louise	Harriet	Lucy
Born in 1857 **(***Died: 1913*)	Born in 1860 (*Died: 1936*)	Born in 1865 **(***Died: 1950*)

All three were born in Chicago, the daughters of Henry Stanton Monroe and Martha Mitchell Monroe, each of whom had moved from the East, before they met and married in Chicago, in the early 1850's. Within the Monroe family, Louise was known, informally, as "Weezie" – sometimes as "Dora Louise"; Harriet, as "Hattie" – late in life as "Little Sister" – certainly a reflection of her small physical stature, not of her intellect; and Lucy, as "Lulu".

The three sisters had a younger brother (William Stanton Monroe, known within the family as "Willie", as "Billie", and, later, as "Will"); he was born in 1868. Will was educated, as an engineer, at Cornell University. He became a successful man - in time, the lead partner of the noted, still extant, engineering firm of Sargent & Lundy. Will's life story is only tangential to that of his sisters, but his ultimate home at 64 East Elm Street, Chicago, became a refuge, when required by each of Harriet and Lucy, late in their respective lives. More children, who did not survive their infancy, had been born to the senior Monroes. The last of the three Monroe Girls – Lucy - died in 1950.

This Paper is a form of biography. As I was writing it, I read Edmund de Waal's biographical study of his own family, *The Hare with the Amber Eyes*, in which he wrote:

> "I feel . . . of biography, the sense of living on the edges of other people's lives, without their permission. . . . [An] internal voice says, incessantly, 'Just go home, and let these stories lie.'" [*The Hare with the Golden Eyes: A Family's Century of Art and Loss* (Farrar, Strauss & Geroux, New York, 2010)]

I find that I cannot let lie, the stories of the Monroe Girls; my internal voice says, "These are really interesting women, not only Harriet Monroe, but her two sisters, deserve more attention!

The Fortnightly Society, a women's club, of Chicago was organized in 1873. In 1883, Louise and Harriet were, simultaneously, elected to membership. Lucy was, then, far too young to be eligible, but, immediately after her 1904 marriage, she, too, became a member. The *Centennial History of The Fortnightly* (University of Chicago Press, 1976) which was competently researched and written by Muriel Beadle, the spouse of the then President of The University of Chicago, mentions each Monroe Girl, prominently. I deduce that each delivered papers at meetings at The Fortnightly, but only some of Harriet's and some of Lucy's papers are mentioned by Ms. Beadle. With appropriate celebration, in time, each Monroe Girl became an honorary member of The Fortnightly, a designation that appears to have been a true honor, rather than a function, only, of longevity.

The Genesis of this paper was my having stumbled upon, in the Charles Crane Family Papers archived at Columbia University, the following short letter:

Dear Mr. Crane:

> It is hard to tell you how terribly sorry I have been for the events of the past few weeks and how strongly I feel that the Government and the people have lost a valuable public servant. I do not know when anything has touched me, so deeply, and I cannot, too strongly, express the confidence that [my husband and I] feel in your integrity and ability. I hope that it may soon be our good fortune to see you.
>
> Very sincerely yours, Lucy Calhoun

200 East Erie Street, Chicago
November 3 [1909]

Of "Mr. Crane", I have spoken, to you, twice, in the past. In 1909, he was, still, an important executive of Chicago's Crane [Company] and the most likely successor, as CEO, to his exceedingly autocratic father. The loss, involving Crane, "to the Government and to the people", to which Lucy was referring, was President Taft's October, 1909, rescission of his own appointment, of Crane, as United States Minister to China. Within five weeks of the date of Lucy's letter, President Taft – on December 9 - appointed Lucy's husband to exactly that position. From the removal by Taft of Crane, in favor of Calhoun, I, at first, assumed that Chicago's then Republican political boss, "Blond Bill" Lorimer, had pressured Taft to appoint a political hack, who, because of Crane's Progressive political activities in Chicago, was no friend to Crane. Not so.

Was Lucy aware, when she wrote that letter to Crane, that her husband was, shortly, to be appointed to take Crane's place? As Lucy at age 44, addressed Crane, a man of 51, as "Mr. Crane", she appears not to have been well-acquainted with him; however, he had four younger sisters, two of whom – Kate and Mary – were Lucy's age, and he, by then, owned a house on Michigan Avenue, within a couple of blocks of Lucy's former childhood home. The Monroe and the Crane families are likely to have been acquainted, as they moved in similar social circles. And, until her 1904 marriage, Lucy had been a Chicago journalist whose job, it was to interview the likes of both Calhoun and Crane.

Certainly, Crane and Calhoun had been acquainted with each other, for at least the decade that Calhoun had been practicing law in Chicago.

Both Crane and Calhoun were, from well prior to 1909, members of our Club; and since both men had delivered Papers at regular meetings of our Club – each having delivered the kind of Paper that would have drawn the presence of the other – they are likely to have been, at least, acquainted.

* * *

Louise Monroe, the eldest Monroe sister, is not likely to be known to those of you who are not Chicago architecture history buffs. She used her first given name - "Dora" – infrequently and, seemingly, only when formality was called for from her. Louise, initially, was home-schooled, but, in 1874, she was sent by her socially conscious parents to Miss Porter's School in Farmington, CT, the famous "finishing school", noted, today, for alumnae such as Jackie Kennedy, Lee Radziwill, Dina Merrill, Julia Child, Brenda Frazier and Barbara Hutton. Other

than Louise having been among its 1879 graduates, the records of Miss Porter's School contain no mention of her – not through any omission of hers - but nothing remains of the records of Miss Porter's School of the 1870's, except annual lists of its graduates. Immediately after Louise's graduation, she returned to Chicago. Typical of young women "of good family" of those days, she was unemployable. So, Louise busied herself in social activities in and about the Near South Side's upper class Prairie Avenue neighborhood, in which the Monroe family was then living, at 2239 Michigan Avenue.

During the next year, Louise was a bridesmaid in the wedding of her friend, Mary Louise Walker, a daughter of a Chicago businessman of stature – James Monroe Walker (not a William Stanton Monroe relation) to John Wellborn Root. However, after only six weeks of marriage, the first Mrs. Root died, childless, of one of the scourges of those Chicago days – tuberculosis. Less than three years later, at age 25, Louise took the place of the first Mrs. Root.

Root, known to his close contemporaries as "Jack", had been born in 1850 in Lumpkin, GA – Lumpkin, then (and now), being a tiny town, where his father was a cotton broker, near the Alabama state line, to the West of Atlanta. During the War Between the States, when Union Army General Sherman directed his attack towards Atlanta, Root's father arranged for Root and his brothers to be smuggled out of Georgia, to London, in a Confederate privateer. Root went to school in Liverpool until the War Between the States had ended. He, then, returned to the United States, obtaining a degree from NYU in 1869. As his family's circumstances had been adversely affected by the War, he moved in 1871, not back to Georgia, but to Chicago. His famous partnership with Daniel Burnham was started in 1873. Nine years later, in 1882, Root married Louise.

In 1887**,** Root was asked by a James Houghteling to design four common-walled town house units on Chicago's Astor Street for a development suggested to Houghteling by Potter Palmer, as a consequence of Potter and Bertha Honoré Palmer's promotion of the development of what is the still fashionable State/Astor Streets neighborhood. Root, with his growing family of Louise and their three small children, acquired and moved into one of those four units. That unit, originally known as 56 Astor Street, is extant, known, now, because of the renumbering of most Chicago streets, in 1909, as 1310 North Astor Street. The rest of the Monroe Family (Louise's parents, Harriet, Lucy and Will) followed the Roots, from their home near Prairie Avenue, into an address on Scott Street, close to Astor Street.

Both the Root father and his namesake son, who, in the first half of the 20th Century, built his own reputation, as a partner of John Holabird, in Holabird & Root, were members of our Club. The Root father was an active member, from 1878, delivering several papers, until his death, early in 1891, but the son was virtually inactive. (Within a year or two after the son's election to membership, he dropped out.) The titles of Jack Root's Papers for our Club were:

The Art of Abstract Color	March 19, 1883
Idealism and Realism in Art	January 19, 1885
Broad Art Criticism	December 12, 1887

And, while he was working, with his partner Dan Burnham, on The World's Columbian Exposition:

A Great Architectural Problem	February 10, 1890
Conventionality in Architecture	March 6, 1891 [*delivered posthumously*]

As Root frequently spoke at professional and other meetings covered by the Press, and he was a favorite of Robert C. McLean, Editor of *The Inland Architect*, a scholarly biographer for Jack Root probably could reconstruct what the last two of his papers for our Club contained. We can expect that, in 1890-1891, Louis Sullivan would have spoken out against any the Jack Root views on architecture, but, while Sullivan was a member of The Cliff Dwellers, he was never a member of our literary Club.

Historians of Chicago architecture agree that, by dying as early as 1891 - January 15 - when he was but 41 years old, Root died much too soon – and that Root had the capacity and the will, to change the course of the virtually 100% Beaux Arts architectural design of core structures of The World's Columbian Exposition, to something other than the Beaux Arts, of which Sullivan complained, so much.

Louise and Jack Root became the parents of the second John Root (known, early, within his family, as "Wellborn") and two daughters, Margaret (known, early, as "Margot") and Mary Louise (known, throughout her life, as "Polly").

The *Centennial History* of The Fortnightly contains a long Memorial Resolution, honoring Louise, that was adopted by the Governors of The Fortnightly shortly after her 1913 death, includes:

> "The [Root] home was, in the best sense, a salon. In it, not only did the brilliant talker find a congenial atmosphere, but the diffident person was enabled to express his or her best self, and the newcomer to the City found a welcome."

Many years later, Root (Jr.) observed that, during his childhood in his Astor Street home, it was common, for nationally noted poets to be present, as guests of his Aunt Harriet.

Probably, Harriet Monroe, the middle sister, is known, by reputation, to all of you, as she was the promoter, the founding Editor, and the general manager of *POETRY: A Magazine of Verse*. Harriet, first, came to general public notice in Chicago when she created her two famous *Odes* – one, in 1888, for the dedication ceremony of The Auditorium Theater Building, and one, in 1891, for the opening ceremony of The Columbian Exposition. Obtaining approval of the content of the latter Ode was not smooth, as a prominent member of Exposition management (other than Burnham) asked that her substantial references to John Root, included by her, be removed. She refused, and that refusal became a cause célèbre. Her side of her cause was supported by the first Harlow Higinbotham, by then, the CEO of The Exposition. The objection was overruled; the opposition was silenced. Were our Club, then, to have admitted women, as members, we would have been proud to have had Harriet as one of us.

Until high school, Harriet, too, had been home-schooled, during which years she had the run of her father's excellent home library. Harriet, in her never completed, but published memoirs - *A Poet's Life* (MacMillan, 1938) - relates her own persistent and prolonged illnesses and much harassment of her by Louise. In 1876, the socially conscious Monroes still were in a position to afford a finishing school education for Harriet, and she was sent by them to Georgetown Visitation Convent, operated by an Order of Roman Catholic nuns, which had a practice of admitting a substantial number of Protestant girls "of good family". (A prior alumna of that Convent School had been Bertha Honoré, who had graduated from it in the 1860's.)

There, Harriet had a constructive experience, graduating in 1879 and returning to Chicago, simultaneous with the return of her sister Louise from Miss Porter's School. Harriet's time outside of the stifling atmosphere of the Monroe home appears to have been a truly liberating experience - giving her personal self confidence that she had not had. Facing the prospect of little financial support from her parents and, using her newly acquired self-confidence, she worked her way into successful writing of free-lance feature articles, principally for *The Chicago Tribune*. Harriet came to specialize in reviews of art exhibitions, both in Chicago and on The East Coast. An explanation for her ability to travel probably lies in the financial terms of the contracts that commissioned her newspaper writing.

Harriet produced essays, plays, feature articles and art and architecture reviews for newspapers and magazines. In the title of *A Poet's Life, by* referring to herself only as "a poet", she obscures the vast amount of her literary output. While she was careful with relevant facts in her published essays and feature articles, she took poetic license in both *A Poet's Life* and in her published hagiographic biography of Root, *John Wellborn Root: A Study of His Life and Work* (Houghton, Mifflin, Boston, 1896), which I believe was marred by her inability to be dispassionate about him.

The Harriet Monroe Collection at The Regenstein Library contains an early 1905 letter from Louis Sullivan to Harriet, after she had written an architecture review, praising his views on architectural design:

> "Very little of my recent work would interest you, except an office building for the Crane [Company]. – a type of the severely plain, with just a little touch, that transforms a Building into Architecture."

I recalled having seen, in the unpublished Memoirs of Charles Crane, written during the 1930's, just that phrase, for Sullivan's first (1880's) design for the Crane [Company]: "transforms a Building into Architecture". Sullivan, notwithstanding Harriet's generally known admiration for Jack Root, was, therein, commencing correspondence, asking Harriet to critique his then writings. Regrettably, I, so far, have found none of what he tendered to her, or what she chose to respond to him. In short, if someone, as unskilled at dealing with his contemporaries as Sullivan, turned to Harriet, she had become an extraordinarily adept listener, writer and reporter.

Lucy, the youngest sister, is not likely to be known to any of you. Until high school, Lucy, too, was "home-schooled". By the time of her sisters' return to Chicago from their respective "finishing schools", she was old enough to be attending high school. Her parents were, no longer, able to pay for such a private school education for her. Like Marion Mahony Griffin, whose career I have described to you in the past, Lucy attended the then new, excellent, only high school of Chicago, on its Near West Side. After graduating from that high school in early 1880's, Lucy, too, started as a free-lance feature journalist for Chicago newspapers.

As soon as Lucy was able, perhaps using an introduction from Mrs. H. O. Stone, a member of The Fortnightly, she became employed, in an editorial position with a small publishing firm then known as Stone & Kimball - later known as Herbert Stone Publishing Company – an avant garde publisher that seems not to have had a viable business plan. In

addition, like Harriet, Lucy was commissioned to write feature articles for Chicago newspapers and other publications, but the "competition" of feature writing and art criticism, by the two sisters, was not acceptable to one newspaper, causing a temporary loss by Harriet of some such commissions.

Lucy's first appearance in the Chicago Directories was in 1894, when she was living with her father, her two sisters and Louise's three children at what was then 484 (since 1909, 1320) Dearborn, just to the North of today's shuttered Three Arts Club. In 1899, she was employed by a small firm named "Eaton" and was living at The Plaza hotel, at the Northeast corner of Clark Street and North Avenue (now occupied by a part of The Latin School of Chicago), with her father and Harriet; for social purposes, she still used 484 Dearborn and, later, 56 Astor Street, as her addresses. In 1902-1904, just prior to her marriage, Lucy was working at an address on a small Near North Side Street and was living at 56 Astor Street.

The Monroe Girls' father was a reputable Chicago lawyer, an Episcopalian and a Democrat. He had a moderately successful law practice, at least until The Great Chicago Fire. He, in his then home, with its private library, in Chicago's South Division; slept through that Fire, they were too far to the South, to be at risk. That Fire, however, burned out his office, causing him to lose his law library. While Mr. Monroe never fully recovered from the loss of his office and its library, he continued to practice law, with one partner or another, and towards the end of his career alone, out of one or another office – in time in The Rookery building, which Burnham & Root had designed.

In *A Poet's Life*, Harriet reports that her father's last big case was *Sturges* vs. *Farwell*. Newspaper descriptions of that decade-long Chicago litigation of the late 1880's and early 1890's are available on the Internet. One such article – in an 1894 issue of *The New York Times* - contained this argument made by Mr. Monroe:

> ". . . For 30 years, or more, John V. Farwell has posed before this community, as the embodiment of all the Christian virtues. The testimony in this case has stripped him of the habiliments under which he has clothed his chicanery. He is, not only, not a good man, but he stands forth as an un-Christian man, the basest kind of hypocrite. The moral wreck of John V. Farwell is more disgraceful to the business community of Chicago and of this State and of more consequence than is the mere physical wreck of my client." [*The New York Times*, May 30, 1894]

This successful argument by Mr. Monroe would have adversely affected his wife's social aspirations, but she had died in 1892. A trial judge's award to the widow of Mr. Monroe's client of $75,000 (worth some $1,500,000, in 2012), after dogged delaying tactics and multiple unsuccessful appeals by Farwell, became final, and the Sturges widow was paid in full.

This success soon was followed by an award, won by Mr. Monroe for his daughter Harriet, of $5,000 (worth some $100,000 in 2012), from another New York newspaper, for its unauthorized publication of her Columbian Ode. Louise had asked her father to get Harriet to drop her suit, but he and Harriet had refused. As a result of this award, for the first time in her life, Harriet had some funds of her own. During that litigation, however, her health had again collapsed. After her recovery, she used a fraction of her award winnings, to travel about Europe; after which she returned to free-lance writing in Chicago.

While, in *A Poet's Life,* Harriet refers to her father as "not having been a dependable provider" - a passing remark that has been given unnecessary prominence in the Finding Aid for the Harriet Monroe Papers at The Regenstein Library - he had been able to finance finishing school educations for his two elder daughters and a professional education at Cornell University for his son. In fact, Mr. Monroe had married a somewhat younger (by ten years) extravagant wife, whose social pretensions could not be met by his professional earnings. In *A Poet's Life,* Harriet mentions her mother's extravagance, but she attached no blame to it for the family discord that was a result - discord from which each of the Monroe Girls sought to escape – Louise to a "finishing school"; Harriet into her father's home library and, then, to a convent school; and Lucy into a wide circle of friends.

The life of each Monroe Girl changed greatly after the deaths of Root (1891) and of Mrs. Monroe (1892). *A Poet's Life* refers to Louise's circumstances, after Jack's death, as having to raise four children, with "a much narrowed income". Louise appears to have confined herself to the affairs of her immediate family, with her involvement in the affairs of The Fortnightly becoming her only local social or civic outlet, serving from time to time as one of its officers. While The Fortnightly's Memorial Resolution states that she wrote "many papers" for presentation there, its *Centennial History* provides no subject for, let alone a summary of, any of them.

During the Summer of 1892, Louise rented a home in historic Deerfield, MA, where Lucy visited her, after having been a guest at the John Glessners' home, "The Rocks", in Upper New Hampshire. Why Deerfield? I suggest, paraphrasing Edmund de Wall,

> ". . . [W]hen finances became intolerable, [Louise] took [her children] off to a farmhouse in [Deerfield], a beautiful village in the [Pocumtuck] Mountains. . . . It was beautiful, and the air was marvelous for the children's complexions, but, above all, it was very, very cheap, with none of the expenses of a [Chicago] lifestyle. . . ." [*The Hare with the Golden Eyes:* …, at p. 231]

While Lucy was there, Louise became ill, as she was becoming prone to be – "dyspepsia" is mentioned in family letters. Lucy was enlisted to care for the Root children for the rest of that Summer.

After that Deerfield Summer, Louise's Astor Street residence was converted into a successful rental property, with its occupants listed in Chicago's Society Directories of those days. The reverse address Social Directories of Chicago reflect that the Root house was occupied by a Mr. and Mrs. Sheridan (1891-1892) and by a Mr. and Mrs. Bates (1895-1896).

After his wife's death and The Columbian Exposition had ended in October, 1893, Mr. Monroe lived in The Virginia apartment hotel, at a corner of Ohio, Erie and Rush Streets - one of the good-quality Chicago hotels constructed for The Columbian Exposition, but, because of the then national Depression, underused. Louise took her own family into less fashionable living circumstances than her Astor Street house – the rental, at 484 Dearborn, a mere two blocks to the West. Harriet and Lucy joined Louise there, until, per the Fortnightly's Memorial Resolution:

> "In 1896, [Mrs. Root] took [her three children] to Europe, for the advantages of travel and of study, remaining away for three years [until early 1900]. . . ."

Per a Harriet letter, during the Winter of 1898-1899, Will Monroe and John Root's brother Walter, who was then starting an architect's practice in Kansas City, MO, advised Louise to continue renting out her Astor Street home and, when she moved back to Chicago, to move into a hotel that operated on The American Plan as, thereby, she need not have to pay for household help and routine interior and exterior maintenance. On the Roots' return from Europe, they moved back into 56 Astor Street, retaking control of the Root house. Mr. Monroe, having closed his Rookery office and ceased practicing law, and his other three children moved in with her, until he died in 1903. By 1907, leaving Harriet and Polly living in her Astor Street house, ,

Louise moved to Winnetka, to live with her daughter, Margaret, who had married a man named Fechheimer (soon changed, a result of the pervasive growing hostility towards Germans, as American involvement in The Great War became imminent) to Fetcher).

> ". . . In 1909, [Louise], again, went abroad, to be with her son, who entered the Beaux Arts, [training, to be an architect] in Paris."

Louise died in Chicago in 1913, at age 56, while John (Jr.) still was in Paris. Suffering from the persistent "dyspepsia" mentioned in her sisters' letters, Louise, at least twice, had sought relief at European spas. I suspect a stomach ulcer that became cancerous.

Will Monroe had married Anna Hamill Clark in 1899 and returned with her, initially, to 56 Astor Street. By 1911, Will and his family had moved out, first to 1256 North State Street and then to 64 East Elm Street. Lucy and her husband, having just returned from China, took possession of the Root house.

Lucy appears to have lived in the shadows of her sisters until her own quiet marriage in December, 1904, at age 39, to a widower, William James - "Cal" - Calhoun. Thereafter, Lucy's name, alone, appears in no Chicago Directory. Cal had become a quite successful Chicago lawyer, after having acquired a reputation in Danville, IL, for a high level of professional competence. She moved with "Cal" into his new home at 297 Erie Street. Cal's entry in the 1911 *Book of Chicagoans* (the then *Who's Who of Chicago*) reflects that, since 1904, he had become a member of several Chicago area social clubs, of which he had not been a member prior to his marriage to Lucy. Thus, by his marriage to Lucy, Cal added social standing in Chicago to his excellent local and national professional reputation. Within two years after his marriage, Cal became a member of several Chicago area clubs, including our Club. To our Club, he delivered several papers, two before his service as United States Minister to China and three after:

In Venezuela	April 1, 1907
The Development of Our National Life	April 13, 1908
China in Transition	March 30, 1914
The European War	October 19, 1914
The Monroe Doctrine	April 3, 1916

The substance of these papers, none of which are in the archives of our Club, probably, can be identified in publications of organizations, other than of our Club, as Calhoun was a popular speaker before local and national business, law and Republican groups. The published versions

of his speeches are scholarly, sophisticated discussions of the most significant economic issues of their day having political ramifications. The latter three papers for our Club – those on China, on Europe and on The Monroe Doctrine - were opposed to policies of the Wilson Administration.

Calhoun had had substantially more international negotiating experience than the Progressive Press, supportive of Crane, had, in 1909, acknowledged, as both President McKinley had sent Calhoun to Cuba, and TR, as President, had sent Calhoun to Ecuador, trouble-shooting. In between, at McKinley's request, Calhoun had spent some years, as an Interstate Commerce Commissioner, when that new Commission was trying to figure out what it should do, as The Congress was, belatedly, giving it some real authority. Neither Cal, nor Lucy, however, had previously been to any part of China, or to any other country in what we call The Far East.

In April, 1910, Calhoun presented his credentials as United States Minister to the Imperial Chinese Court. The international community of Peking was then well aware of the impact of The Boxer Rebellion of 1900 on the Legation Quarter, in which the Calhouns were to live, and measures protective of foreigners were in place that promoted much social contact among the Legations, but little contact with native Chinese other than household servants.

In May, 1910, Harriet started a 'round-the-world, steamship and rail trip, with her youngest niece, Polly. They went by ship across the Atlantic, to London and by train to St. Petersburg, where they visited the then Minister to Russia, William Rockhill, who had, recently, been reassigned from Imperial China. From St. Petersburg, the new Imperial Russian Railroad took Harriet and Polly, in trains using brake systems manufactured by a joint venture of the Crane Co. and Westinghouse that had been organized by Charles Crane, across Siberia. From there, they proceeded by other rail service into Manchuria and on to Peking in Imperial China where they, arriving in the early Fall, stayed in the American Legation with the Calhouns. Harriet's diary of that trip is among her papers in the archives of the Regenstein Library of The University of Chicago. By late November, Harriet and Polly were out of China and in Japan. By January 11, 1911, Harriet was back at work at *The Tribune*. Peking's impact on both women was indelible, best evidenced by each returning years later (but to far different Chinas).

Harriet's diary relates that Charles L. Freer (later the founder of The Freer Gallery of The Smithsonian Institution) then was in China, paying high prices for Chinese art and art objects. He conversed with Harriet and, fatefully, with Lucy, who learned much from Freer.

While Harriet and Polly were in Peking, in the background of their partying, Calhoun was much involved in the exceedingly difficult negotiations relating to a proposed "Five-Power" loan, of which the British, the Germans, the French, the Japanese and, for the first time, the Americans, were involved. Taft's Department of State still was controlled by Charles Crane's State Department nemeses of the Taft/Crane imbroglio of 1909. A scholarly article describing the then effects of the machinations of the American investment bankers, states:

> "The U. S. Minister to China had never been comfortable with the loan operations, . . . Calhoun, was greatly embarrassed by instructions [from the Department of State] that he demand that the Chinese conclude the negotiations. He argued that it was undignified, 'unworthy of civilized powers,' to force a loan on an unwilling government. But Calhoun's protests were brushed aside [by the Department of State], and the U.S. government joined in the pressures, to which the Chinese succumbed in May, 1911. As the Peking government had anticipated, conclusion of the . . . loan led to increased violence in the provinces and, ultimately, to revolution." [*Encyclopedia of the New American Nation* – Consortia – the First China Consortium.]

This was The Double Ten Revolution of October 10, 1911 - the fall of the Imperial Government of the Manchus (the Qing Dynasty), and China was on its way into decades of internal disputes and civil war. By The Double Ten Revolution, Harriet and Polly were back in Chicago, but Cal and Lucy remained in Peking, with Cal assisting American investment banking efforts to arrange, or to participate with other major Powers in, the loans necessary to support any form of government for the new Republic of China.

During the financial disasters suffered by the Manchu wealthy of Imperial China, caused the Fall of the Qing Dynasty, Lucy, due to her position as the honored spouse of the American Minister, was offered a vast amount of Chinese art and art objects, for prices far lower than Freer had been paying. Lucy was a member of The Antiquarians, a ladies' support affiliate of The Art Institute of Chicago. In February, 1912, Lucy communicated, from Peking, to The Antiquarians, recommending that they take an interest in the availability of Chinese art and art objects at truly "fire-sale prices":

> "I am not conscious that the Manchu princes are selling their treasures, but I have been getting some lovely paintings, of late. A most beguiling and eloquent dealer brings them to the house, and he has very good ones. Some of them are way beyond [my means], of course, but others, I have gathered in. If The Antiquarians should send me a commission, I would use it on some things that I saw yesterday, . . ."

The commissions to Lucy from The Antiquarians that followed were crucial to the creation of the Chinese art collection of The Art Institute.

In March, 1912, Lucy wrote to Harriet:

> "We were dressing for dinner, when 'the thunderbolt fell' – a violent mutiny by Yuan Shih-kai's Republican troops, followed by such riots, arson and looting in the streets of Peking, that brought other Americans to refuge in our home."

Both Calhouns were much involved in the leadership of the efforts to stabilize the situation until order in Peking was restored. Order throughout China was never completely restored. The delusion of those Americans who believed that the then China could have a stable nationalist government is illustrated by these words of the master of ceremonies - a General Thomas Hubbard – at a Republican luncheon, honoring Calhoun, shortly after his return to the continental United States:

> ". . . [W]e, hardly, appreciate the wonderful, the almost miraculous change of an Empire, centuries old, to a Republic."

Cal, after his return from his three-year tour of Chinese duty, reflecting on an experience that had inflicted great strain upon him, wrote:

> "There is a strange thing about foreigners, who have lived very long in China: they never seem to be contented, anywhere else. They are, apparently, bitten by some kind of bug, which inserts a virus into their blood and makes life in that country the only thing endurable."

While Cal had not been bitten by that bug, Lucy was.

A Poet's Life casts no light on when Harriet made her decision to create and publish *POETRY* magazine, but in 1911, within weeks after she had returned from her 1910 visit to Lucy in China, she was soliciting support for her *POETRY* venture. Harriet gives credit to Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Aldis and to Mr. and Mrs. Hobart Chatfield-Taylor of Lake Forest for the leadership of her fund-raising from "Guarantors", each of whom had provided five-year financial contribution commitments. Harriet writes of such support, as well, from Charles Crane, from his youngest brother (Richard Teller Crane, Jr.), from Martin A. Ryerson, from Mary Hawes Wilmarth (who was, twice, President of The Fortnightly) and from others among Crane's Chicago and Lake Geneva friends whom I have mentioned in my past Papers for our Club. In Harriet's mention of Charles Crane there was no indication of any hard feelings between him and

Lucy's husband – only Harriet's gratitude for the generosity of and attention from such a peripatetic person.

The first issue of *POETRY, A Magazine of Verse,* came out in October, 1912. A 1913 story related in Mrs. Beadle's *Centennial History of The Fortnightly* illustrates Harriet's fund-raising success. There were more than 100 such "Guarantors", some, such as members of The Fortnightly, The Friday Club and The Chicago Women's Club, achieving that status by banding together. The names of a number of members of The Chicago Literary Club appear on the list of Guarantors, but I discern no banding together thereof; I do recognize names of the members of our Club most active in other Chicago civic organizations and who had means.

Early the next year [1913], Harriet went to New York City to review the famous "Armory Show", which featured Marcel Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase*. Harriet's feature article thereon written by her as if she were interviewing herself, for *The Chicago Tribune* included,

> "There was a 'gaping and laughing crowd'. And no wonder, for, if these . . . theorists have other significance, than to increase the gayety of nations, your correspondent confesses herself to be unaware of it. . . . [Duchamp's *Nude*] . . . looks like a pack of brown cards, in a nightmare. As for Matisse, his pictures are 'hideous monstrosities'. Miss Monroe prophesied that the vogue for 'these twisted and distorted human figures, these would-be childish decorations', would be of short duration."
>
> "By the time that the [Armory] show got to Chicago, however, . . . Miss Monroe had had time to reflect. A woman who was seeking alternatives to traditional patterns in poetry could not, completely, damn a comparable moment in art. Her review of the Chicago show, therefore, called the paintings 'interesting'. They may be the dim gropings toward an art of pure color, which may delight the 21st Century, as symphonic music delights us. This possibility should make us hesitate, to deny them place and space and a due degree of respectful consideration.'"

In the Fall of that year, the celebration of the first Anniversary of the founding of *POETRY* magazine took place in the then quarters of The Cliff Dwellers. The locale of that dinner, which honored Harriet – a woman of the arts – and the presence of Charles Hutchinson (who had organized The Cliff Dwellers less than ten years before), his wife, the William Monroes, the Fetchers and the two other children of Louise is noteworthy, as The Cliff Dwellers accept no women, then, as members, and did not until some 50 years later.

In *A Poet's Life*, Harriet wrote little of Lucy until she brought up the subject of Lucy's marriage to Cal, saying,

> "[Lucy] was a solvent of all troubles. . . . [Her marriage] gave an able diplomat his match in diplomatic delicacies, and [Lucy] the complete development of her powers. . . ."

Evidence of Lucy's diplomacy exists in her August, 1913, letter, after the return of the Calhouns from China and a Summer in one of the still extant guest houses on the grounds of The Chicago Golf Club in Wheaton:

> "The situation created by John [Jr.'s] forthcoming marriage causes concern. The solution that [Cal and I] have adopted leaves you out, Little Sister. It breaks my heart, that we cannot offer you a haven. . . . Few combinations are wise, as Mother always used to warn us. I think that we can, really, stick closer together, if we live separately."
>
> "Cal must be my first thought, especially as so much of his life has been spent unhappily. I want him to have exactly the kind of house that he wants – as far as that is in my power – and Polly will be a great help, to that end. Being of a different generation, she fits in, and I see that Cal loves her, like a daughter. Now, do not think, for a minute, that he does not love you. He does, and he admires you, tremendously, . . . but you know, yourself, that your life, and your tastes are very different from his, and I hope that you will agree that this decision is right."
>
> "If you kept the apartment [within the Root house on Astor Street], until Spring, it would be only begging the question and postponing the decision six months. It is needless to say that I feel like a pig and that I hope that you will let us help you, [financially]. . . ."

Lucy and Cal moved into the Root house on Astor Street, taking Polly Root in with them; Harriet was left to fend for lodging for herself.

In 1915, Polly elected to join the Red Cross, and she went off to France to serve in an officer's rest facility, well behind the front battle lines. In 1916, Cal died in the Root house. In 1918, Lucy joined Polly in France. In 1919, Lucy returned to Chicago, and Polly and her new husband followed. John (Jr.) and his wife, whom he had married in 1914 shortly after his return from the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, were living in the Root house in 1921, when Lucy briefly returned to that address in Chicago. When Lucy chose to return to China, in the 1920's the Root house was sold out of the Monroe Family.

In 1920, for the last year of Wilson's failing Presidency, he (or Colonel House) had persuaded Crane to be United States Minister to China to replace Calhoun's successor, who had resigned. While I have not yet found the motive that led Lucy back to China in or about 1922, she could have seen the favorable press reports of Crane's 1920-1921 activities, as U.S. Minister. Those press reports could have contributed to her decision to return. I expect that, in those days of extremely depressed economic conditions and inflation in China, Lucy, with a reasonable inheritance from Cal, could live very well in Peking. Lucy may have hoped that Crane would welcome her presence, as an old friend, but he had left Peking in March, 1921, on his remarkable trip across newly Soviet Siberia. I have never found a mention of an actual meeting of Lucy and Crane. Yet, during his life, Crane made friends of many attractive, intelligent and well-turned out women, of whom I have mentioned to you in the past: Halide Edib and Eleanor Belmont.

Lucy reentered China in 1922 – probably in the early Fall. During 1920's and 1930's, Lucy's social standing as the widow - a "merry widow" of a prior U.S. Minister - permitted her to become the grande dame of the international community of Peking. Julia Boyd, the wife of a former British Ambassador to China, in her Memoir of her own experiences in *Peking, Dance with a Dragon: The Vanished World of Peking's Foreign Colony*., referred to Lucy as "Aunt Lucy". For the international community in Peking, who could obtain and use gold coinage, the years of 1920-1929 were, because of the deterioration of the value of the Chinese currency, halcyon years. The Great Depression of 1929-1932 would have impaired the value of Lucy's assets in the United States. The United States' going off the Gold Standard in 1933 would have reduced the purchasing power in China of Lucy's United States sourced income. At least until 1933, Lucy's return to China had been a success, both for her and for the many Americans who visited her in Peking of whom Harriet and Polly were but two.

Through The Great War (World War I), the 1920's and into the 1930's *POETRY* magazine's reputation and influence grew. Harriet, with a friend of prior travels, chose to visit Lucy in China again, going directly this time by boat from Vancouver, rather than by train across much-changed Asia. Harriet arrived in Peking in November, 1934, and stayed with Lucy in Lucy's elaborate palace-like Chinese home in an old hutong. She found Lucy in an insolvent state. After a conversation on financial matters, recorded in Harriet's diary, Harriet persuaded Lucy to terminate the employment of Lucy's "Number One Boy" – Ma – for having grossly over-charged Lucy for years. Harriet left Peking in December, having found that, "The splendor

of the old Forbidden City was intact." Later events would prove that view to have been an illusion.

Before Harriet's 1934 trip to Peking, she had much reduced her involvement in the affairs of *POETRY* magazine. Apparently she was still able to obtain contracts for feature articles for one or another Chicago newspaper, and she set out, in 1936, to a meeting in Buenos Aires, of PEN – The International Association of Poets, Essayists and Novelists. After the conclusion of that meeting, Harriet, contrary to her doctor's advice to avoid high altitudes, set off on a trip to Machu Picchu, in the high Andes of Peru, from which she never returned. Her cremated remains are in a columbarium near Macchu Pichu.

In one of her last letters to Lucy, written on ship-board during that last trip, Harriet observed that she had virtually finished her own autobiographical memoirs, leaving only a philosophical closing chapter to be written; Harriet congratulated Lucy on having finished hers.

For Lucy, still in China, after Harriet's 1934 visit to her, the relative calm of the five years prior to 1937 began to fade. In July of that year, fighting between the Nationalist Chinese and the Japanese commenced in Shanghai, and thousands of Japanese troops poured into Northern China, quickly occupying Peking and Tientsin, meaning that the ability of the Americans then in Peking to leave China was impaired. Lucy remained, into September, 1941, when she abandoned her Peking home and what was left of its contents, leaving China within only a few weeks prior the attack by the Japanese on Pearl Harbor. Had Lucy been in Peking on December 7, 1941, she certainly would have been interned, as were many Americans, for the duration of the War, during which most internees died from the deprivations and slave labor practices imposed by the Japanese military occupation force.

Lucy returned to Chicago, where she lived for the remainder of her life at 64 East Elm Street with her brother Will and, so long as she lived, his wife. In 1945, according to Will, his wife having died, he and Lucy wished to return to Peking, as she believed that she could reclaim ownership of her house and property there, but, as matters within China remained quite unsettled, they gave that project. Lucy lost all that she had left in China. Her completed memoir, for which Harriet had congratulated her, may be in the possession of a member of the Monroe family.

In January, 1939, Lucy suffered a disabling stroke; she died in 1950, having maintained her close relationships with both with her brother and her niece, Polly, who, by then, was living

in the 500 block of West Belden Avenue and was an exceedingly popular administrative employee of Chicago's Francis W. Parker School.

Louise Root and Lucy Calhoun are interred, with their respective husbands, in Chicago's Graceland Cemetery, in adjacent equal-sized plots. The Calhouns' plot had been that acquired by Daniel Burnham, himself, shortly after John Root's death, but Burnham's ashes – he was cremated, after he died during a 1912 trip to Germany – instead, were interred on the island in Graceland Cemetery's remaining lake - Lake Willowmere. When Calhoun died in 1916, Lucy secured quit-claim deeds from all of the Burnham heirs and all of Root heirs, which permitted Cal to be interred in the Burnham half of the Burnham/Root plot; she commissioned the large stone and the bronze plaque that it bears; and she saw to their installation. Her remains joined those of her husband in 1950 – with her interment arranged by Polly.

Architectural history tours of Graceland Cemetery commonly pay calls on the interment sites of each of Dan Burnham and John Root. The several women, who are trained Chicago Architectural Foundation Tour Guides for Graceland Cemetery, tend to mention that John Root's wife was a sister of Harriet Monroe. No Graceland Cemetery Tour Guide, known to me, mentions Lucy Calhoun.

In closing, in her Will, Lucy thanked her brother, profusely, and provided for all of her nieces and nephews, for the children of "Cal" Calhoun and for her closest friends. Lucy opens that Will with the following:

> "In looking back over a long life, I see many mistakes, but I realize that, if I should live it again and correct those mistakes, the whole current of my destiny would be changed. It has been such a wonderful life, that I cannot wish to change it. I thank the dear Lord that He gave me, for a time, a perfect companion, that He has taken me to the heights of happiness and of grief, widening the horizon and giving me tranquility and variety and rich experience. I regret that I have not made more abundant use of the opportunities offered; that I have not shared them, in larger measure, with the world around me. Even with the limits of my nature, my life has been so rich in friends, that it is tinged with gold, as I look back upon it. I shall hold that golden light in my heart, as I take flight towards the unknown."

With those words of Lucy, not from me, I conclude. Thank you.

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John K. Notz, Jr. - April 22, 2014

The Monroe Girls – CREDITS

Those members of the greater Monroe Family – descendants of Dora Louise Root and William S. Monroe, Jr, who commented on a draft of this Paper. (They bear no responsibility for any errors made herein, or for any misinterpretations of mine of the meaning of the many letters that survive, available to the general public, in the archives described hereinafter.)

Elinor Pearlstein, Associate Curator of Chinese Art of the Department of Asian Art of The Art Institute of Chicago, whose article on Lucy Calhoun in the newsletter of the Asian Arts Council has been the first recent mention of the largely unpublicized role of Lucy Calhoun in the origins of the collections of Chinese Art of The Art Institute.

The Newberry Library, Chicago IL:

1. Lucy Monroe Calhoun Papers;

2. William Stanton Monroe Family Papers;

3. The Fortnightly of Chicago – both the contents of Muriel Beadle's *Centennial History of The Fortnightly*, referred to within the attached Paper and those of its historic records that have become The Fortnightly Collection of The Newberry Library.

The records of the operations of The Newberry Library itself, during the years prior to the receipt by The Poetry Foundation of the Foundation's Lillie bequest, while the offices of *POETRY* magazine were maintained within The Newberry Library.

Historic alphabetical Chicago Directories.

The Regenstein Library of The University of Chicago, Chicago, IL:

1. The Harriet Monroe Papers

2. Those of the records of *POETRY* magazine that have been contributed to it, both by Harriet Monroe and by The Poetry Foundation. (The Poetry Foundation has made an effort to see that all records relating to *POETRY* magazine generated prior to its occupancy of its own building at 61 West Superior Street, Chicago, IL, have been added to the *POETRY* magazine Collection that had been contributed by Harriet Monroe to it in the 1930's.)

The Chicago History Museum – Its collection of the social directories of Chicago, such as *The Chicago Blue Book*, *Chicago's Elite* and *The Social Register*.

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