

# The Clarks: an American story of wealth, scandal and mystery

Why have the mansions of one of America's richest women been vacant for decades?

Follow this photo narrative of the reclusive Huguette Clark and her father, William Andrews Clark, the "Paris millionaire senator."

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Slide 1  
Credit: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library

By Bill Dedman  
msnbc.com

Why are the mansions of one of America's wealthiest women sitting vacant?

Huguette Clark's father, the copper king and "Paris millionaire senator," was the second richest American — or first, neck and neck with Rockefeller.

Huguette, now 103, has no children. Where is she? And what will become of her fortune?



Slide 2

Credit: John L. Wiley <http://flickr.com/photos/jw4pix/>

She doesn't live here. The mysterious Clark estate in Santa Barbara, Calif., has been empty since 1963. Named Bellosguardo for its "beautiful view" of the Pacific, it's worth more than \$100 million, a 21,666-square-foot house on 23 acres.

Caretakers have labored at the Clark estate for generations — without meeting Huguette Clark.





Slide 3  
Credit: Barbara Cleary's Realty Guild

She also doesn't live here. In 1952, Huguette Clark bought this home in New Canaan, Conn. She named it Le Beau Château, or "beautiful country house."

And she never spent a night in it.

Now her 12,766-square-foot home, with 52 wooded acres, is for sale for \$24 million, marked down from \$34 million. Taxes are \$161,000 a year.

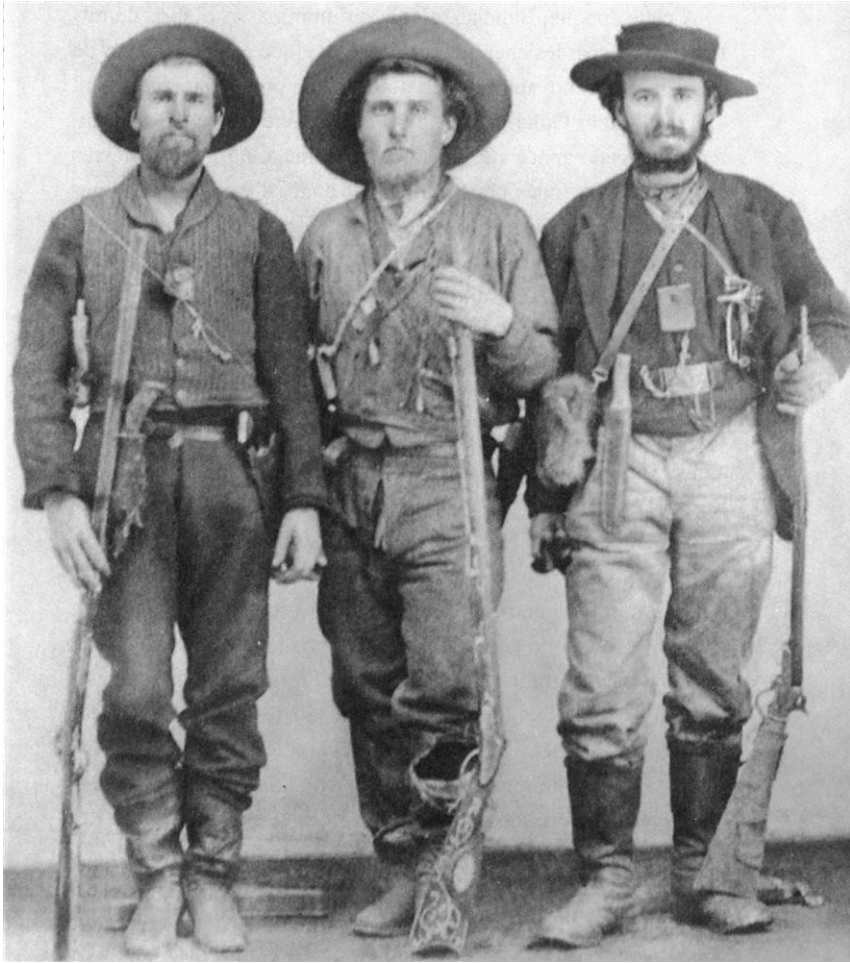




Slide 4  
Credit: Bill Dedman, msnbc.com

And she doesn't seem to live here, though her belongings are here. The largest apartment on New York's Fifth Avenue is her co-op at 72nd Street overlooking Central Park. She has 42 rooms and 15,000 square feet. That's all the 8th floor and half the 12th, worth about \$100 million.

Staff have seen Huguette ("hue-GET") a few times in 30 years.



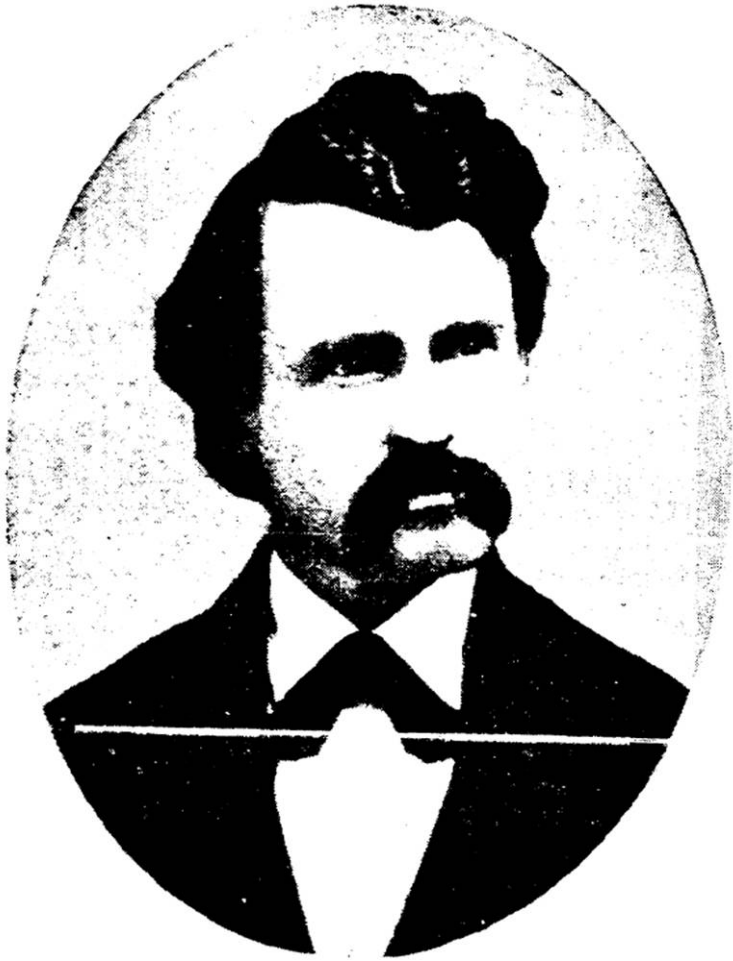
Slide 5

Credit: "Le Sénateur Qui Aimait La France," 2005, André Baeyens

Where did such wealth come from? It started with hard work, ingenuity and unfettered ambition.

One of these miners in 1863 in Bannack, Mont., would, by the end of the century, own banks, railroads, timber, newspapers, sugar, coffee, oil, gold, silver, copper — seemingly unending veins of copper.

He's on the right, William Andrews Clark, Huguette's father.

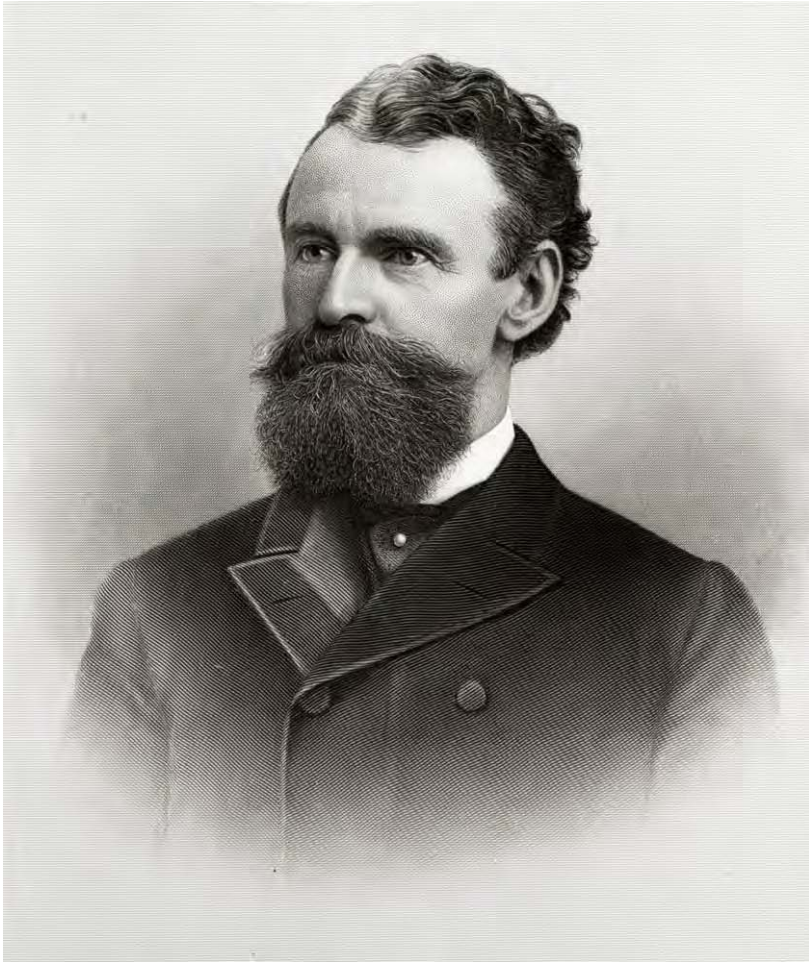


Slide 6

Credit: "The Clarks: An American Phenomenon," William D. Mangam, 1941

Born in a log cabin in Pennsylvania in 1839, of Scotch-Irish and French Huguenot immigrants, Clark stood 5 feet 8½, with fastidiously tended whiskers, unruly red hair, and cold blue eyes.

A contemporary wrote, "There is craft in his stereotyped smile and icicles in his handshake. He is about as magnetic as last year's bird's nest."



Slide 7

Credit: Lewis Pub. Co. / New-York Historical Society

After two years panning for gold, Clark turned to selling goods he hauled by wagon through the Rockies. He bought eggs at 20 cents a dozen, marketing them for \$3 a dozen to miners for a brandy eggnog called Tom and Jerry.

He took a year off to study geology at Columbia University, then returned to Montana, to Butte's "Richest Hill on Earth."



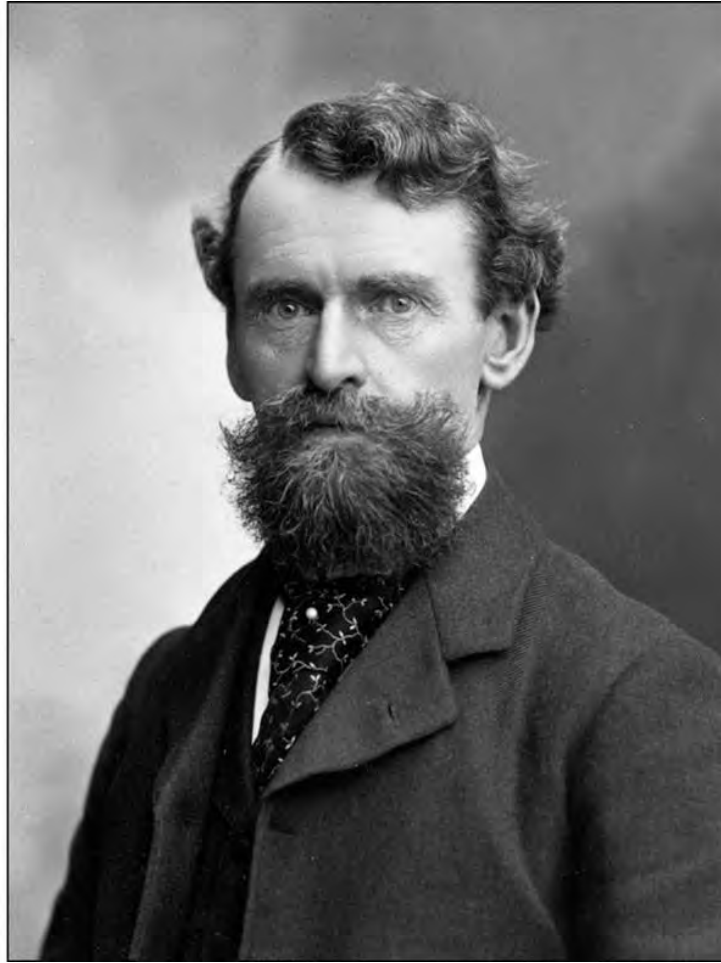
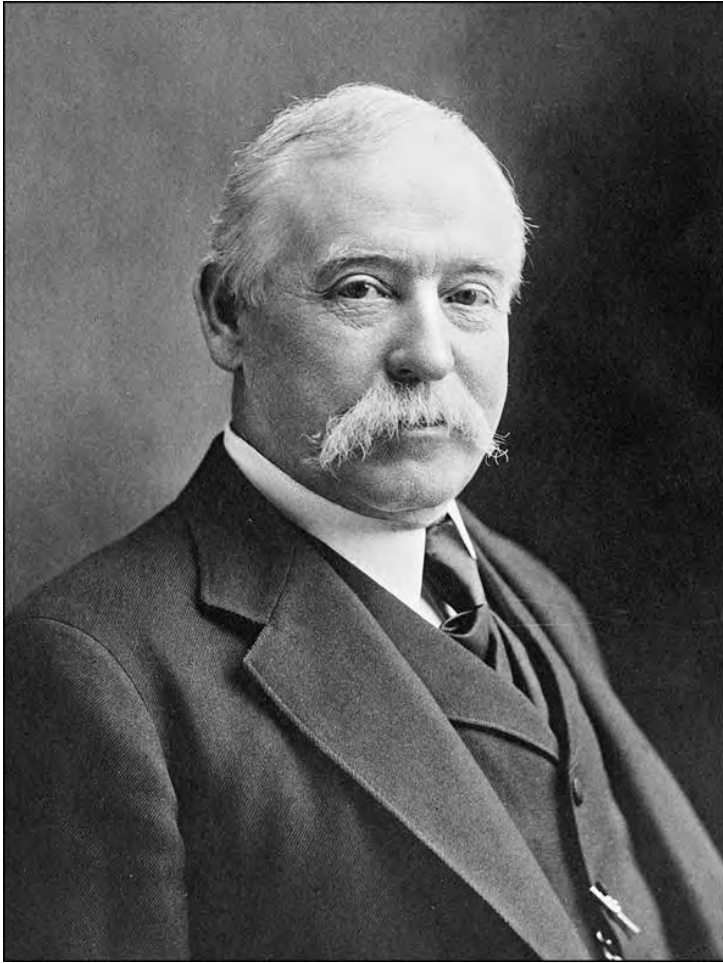


Slide 8

Credit: University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Libraries, Special Collections

Clark made his greatest fortune in the Southwest. His United Verde copper mine, in Jerome, Ariz., yielded a profit of \$400,000 a month, or in today's dollars, \$10 million a month.

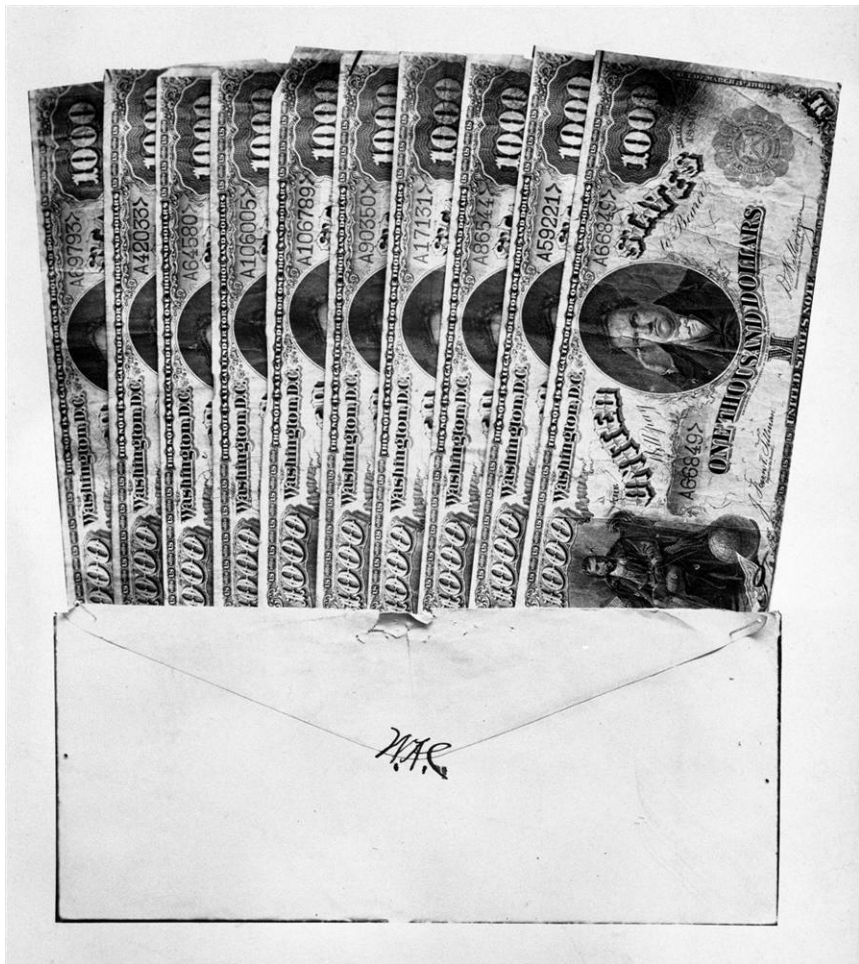
The trading post of Las Vegas was a stop on his rail line to the United Verde. Here he speaks to a crowd in Las Vegas from his Pullman car in 1905. Las Vegas today is in Clark County, named for him.



Slide 9  
Credit: Montana Historical Society Research Center

Clark's desire was a title: Senator Clark. Montana denied him time after time, a battle known as the War of the Copper Kings. Who knows how a feud flared between two Democrats: Marcus Daly, left, a Catholic who loved racehorses, and Clark, a Presbyterian who loved art.

Legislators selected senators. Newspapers made legislators. All could be bought.



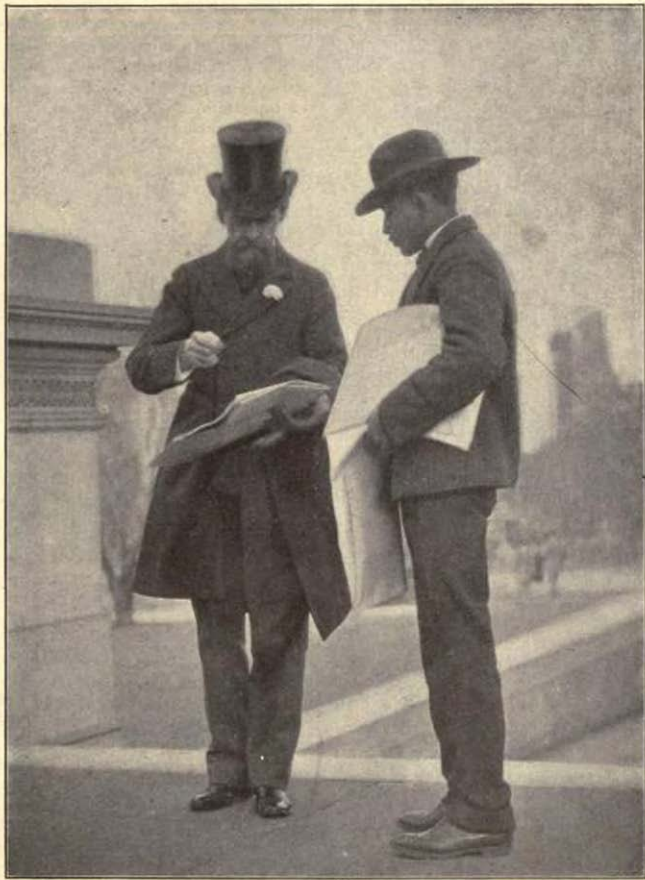
Slide 10

Credit: Montana Historical Society Research Center

An aide said, "We'll put the old man in the Senate, or the poorhouse." Clark was elected in 1899, but \$1,000 bills turned up in an envelope with his initials. He had to resign.

Clark said publicly, "I propose to leave to my children a legacy, worth more than gold, that of an unblemished name." Privately he said, "I never bought a man who wasn't for sale."





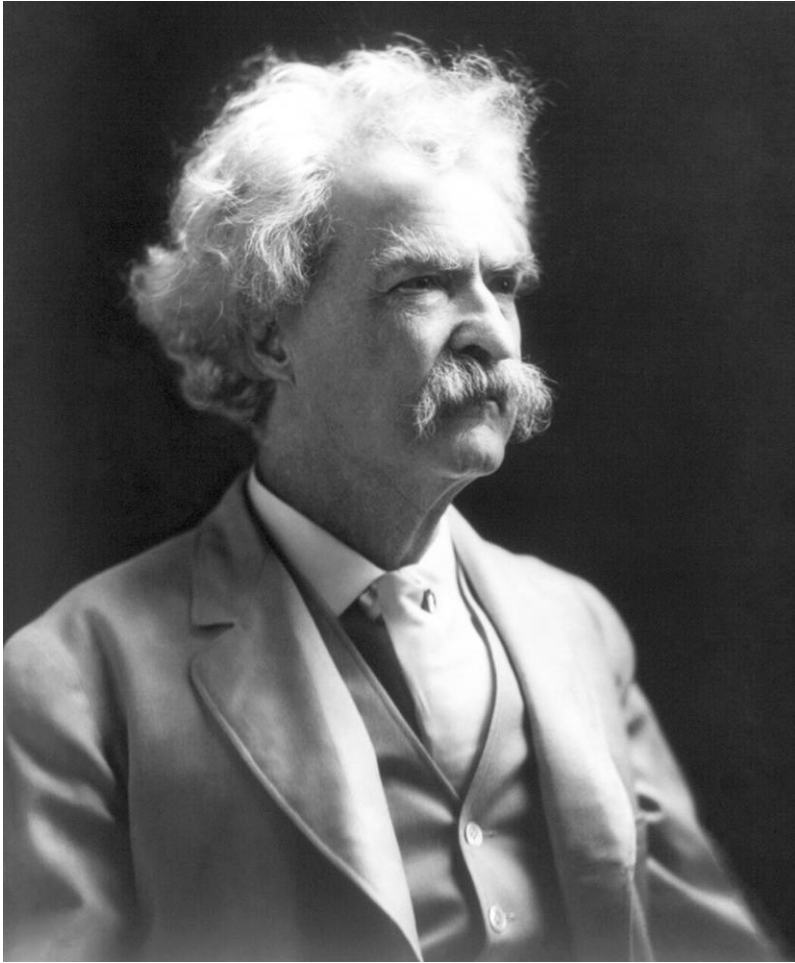
SENATOR CLARK, THE MONTANA COPPER CROESUS, BUYS A MORNING PAPER

Slide 11

Credit: Clinedinst / The National Magazine, 1905

Clark's men tried one more audacity: On the day he resigned, they tricked the governor into traveling outside Montana. His lieutenant filled the vacancy — with Clark! When the governor returned, again Clark was out.

Finally, he was elected in 1901. Though he retired after one term, for the rest of his life he insisted on being "Senator Clark."



Slide 12  
Credit: Library of Congress

Mark Twain had a few other names for Senator Clark. "He is as rotten a human being as can be found anywhere under the flag; he is a shame to the American nation, and no one has helped to send him to the Senate who did not know that his proper place was the penitentiary, with a chain and ball on his legs."







Slide 14  
Credit: The Butte Miner

His new wife, Anna Eugenia La Chapelle, had been Clark's ward. She came to him as a teenager for support. Clark sent her from Butte to boarding school, then to Paris, where she studied the harp. He visited by steamship.

They had two daughters: Andrée, born in 1902 in Spain, and Huguette in 1906 in Paris, where they lived with Anna.

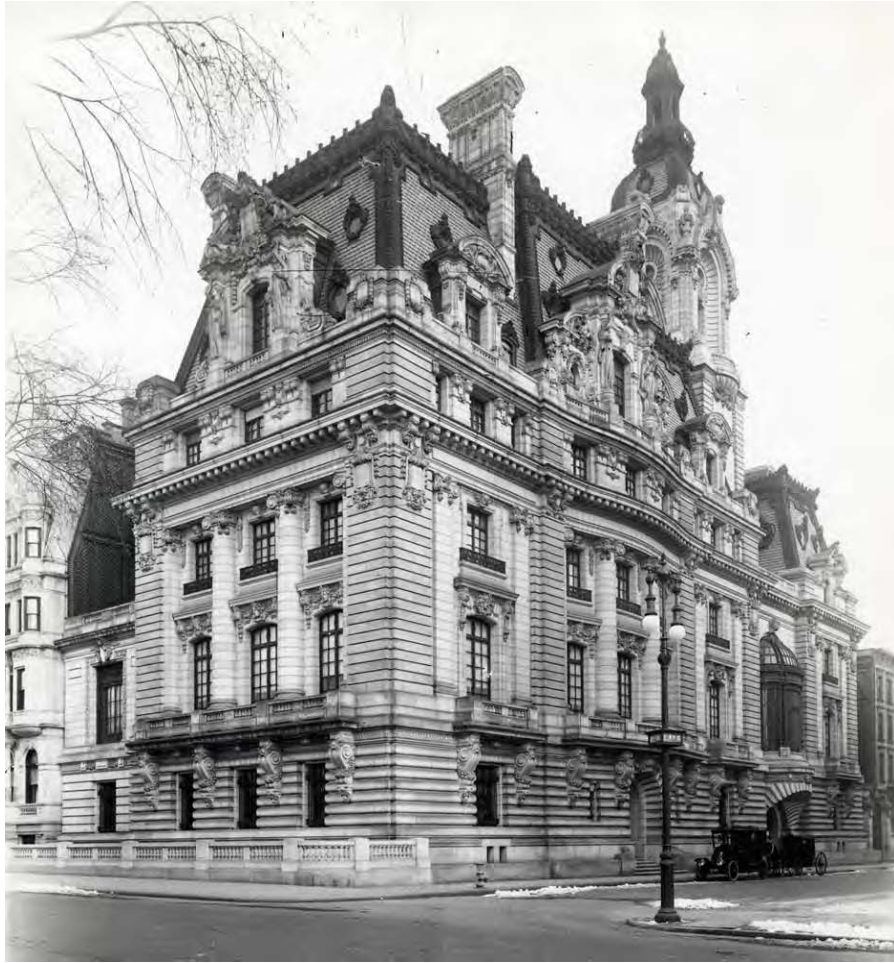
PRINCIPALS IN THE WEDDING WHOSE ANNOUNCEMENT SURPRISED BUTTE YESTERDAY



Slide 15  
Credit: The Anaconda Standard

"THEY'RE MARRIED AND HAVE A BABY," thundered Daly's opposition paper.

All this was news to Clark's children from his first marriage, who were older than his young wife. One older daughter wrote that, while she was "greatly grieved and dreadfully disappointed, we must all stand by our dear father."



Slide 16  
Credit: George P. Hall & Son / New-York Historical Society

After leaving the Senate in 1907, Clark moved his young wife and daughters into this Beaux-Arts house he built at Fifth Avenue and 77th Street in New York. It had 121 rooms, four art galleries, Turkish baths, a vaulted rotunda 36 feet high, and its own railroad line to bring in coal.

All for a family of four.

It was known as "Clark's Folly."





Slide 17  
Credit: Salon Doré, on view at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington

Clark spent as much as \$7 million on the house, about three times what it would cost to build Yankee Stadium a decade later.

Its treasures included this Louis XVI salon, a marble statue of Eve by Rodin, oak ceilings from Sherwood Forest, and the grandest American collection of European paintings, lace and tapestries.



Slide 18

Credit: Edgar Degas, "The Dance Class," 1873, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington

Clark hosted organ recitals, so his neighbors on Millionaire's Row could see his paintings by Degas, Rubens, Rembrandt, Titian, van Dyck, Gainsborough, Cazin, Rousseau.

Once his chosen artworks were installed in the house, Clark bought few more. If he acquired any more paintings, he wrote, he would have to remove something.





Slide 19

Credit: George P. Hall & Son / New-York Historical Society

Writer Wallace Irwin set it all to verse:

"Senator Copper of Tonopah Ditch made a clean billion in minin' and sich. Hiked for New York, where his money he blew, bildin' a palace on Fift' Avenoo.

'How,' says the Senator, 'kin I look proudest? Build me a house that'll holler the loudest. None of your slab-sided, plain mossyleums! Gimme the treasures of art 'an museums! ...



Slide 20

Credit: One of the four galleries in the Clark mansion, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington

... Build it new-fangled, scalloped and angled, fine like a weddin' cake garnished with pills. Gents, do your duty, trot out your beauty. Gimme my money's worth, I'll pay the bills.'

Pillars Ionic, eaves Babylonian, doors cut in scallops resemblin' a shell. Roof was Egyptian, gables caniptian. Whole grand effect when completed was — hell."

— Wallace Irwin, 1912



Slide 21  
Credit: The New York Times

Clark's wife was rarely seen in public. He wrote of Anna, "Mrs. Clark did not care for social distinction, nor the obligations that would entail upon my public life."

In 1912, former Senator Clark, 73, and Anna, 34, walked in the Easter Parade on Fifth Avenue with Andrée, 9. Huguette, not pictured, was just 5, starting her collection of dolls from France.





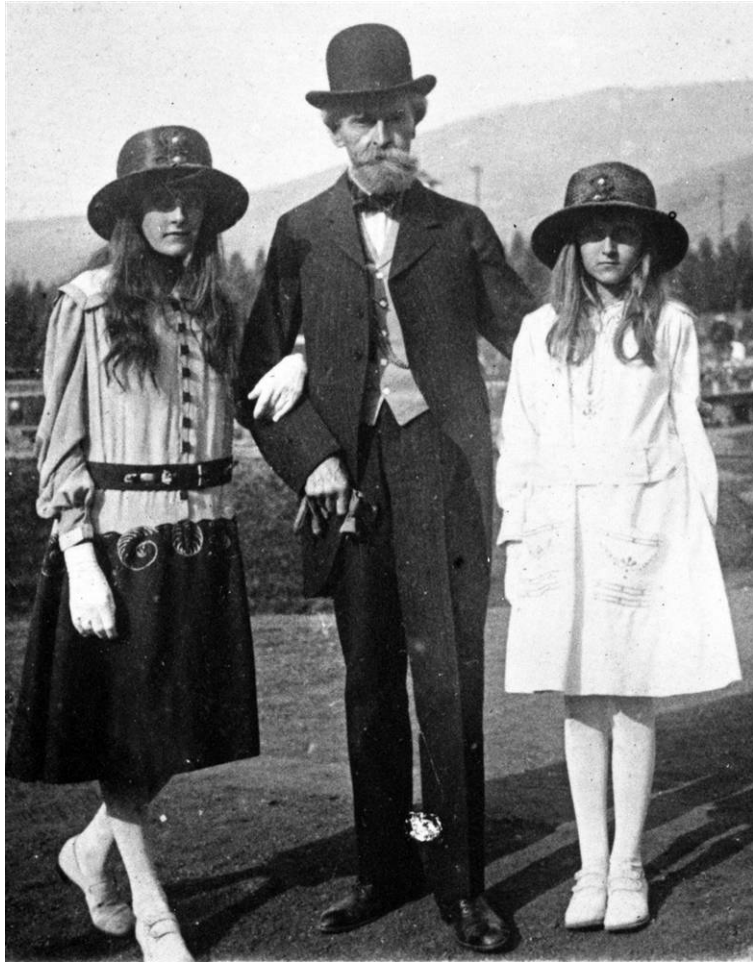
Clark	William Andrew	75	8/17	17	Connellsville Pa.	8 <sup>th</sup> Jan. 1839
do	Anna E.	36	3/17	17	Calumet Mich.	10 <sup>th</sup> March 1878
do	Andrée	12	8/17	17	San Luc. Spain	13 <sup>th</sup> Aug. 1902
do	Huguette	8	6/17	17	Paris - France	9 <sup>th</sup> June 1906

Slide 22

Credit: Ship's registry from the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation

The Clark family traveled often to Paris. A ship's registry from 1914 sets birthdates for the family: William Andrews Clark, age 75, Connellsville, Pa., Jan. 8, 1839; Anna E., 36, Calumet, Mich., March 10, 1878; Andrée, 12, Spain, Aug. 13, 1902; and Huguette, 8, Paris, June 9, 1906.

At home, they had 10 servants and a French chef.



Slide 23

Credit: Montana Historical Society Research Center

Clark and daughters visit Columbia Gardens, which he built in Butte. It was about 1917. Andrée (left) would be about 15, and Huguette 11. Clark was 78.

In 1919, a week before her 17th birthday, Andrée died of meningitis. "When her sister died, it left a hole in her life," said Huguette's great-half-nephew through the first marriage, Ian Devine.



Slide 24  
Credit: The New York Times

Through the '20s, society pages chronicled the debutante. "Miss Huguette Clark, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Andrews Clark of 962 Fifth Avenue, entertained a party of girl friends yesterday at Sherry's."

At Miss Spence's School for Girls, she learned politics; Isadora Duncan taught interpretive dance. Skirts had to be 3 inches below the knee.

# **EX-SENATOR CLARK, PIONEER IN COPPER, DIES OF PNEUMONIA**

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**Taken With a Cold a Few Days  
Ago, He Succumbs Sud-  
denly Here at 86.**

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## **FAMILY AT HIS BEDSIDE**

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**He Had Been Actively Directing  
His Business Affairs Until  
He Became Ill.**

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## **HIS CAREER PICTURESQUE**

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**Went to Montana With Ox Team  
and Acquired One of Biggest  
Fortunes in America.**

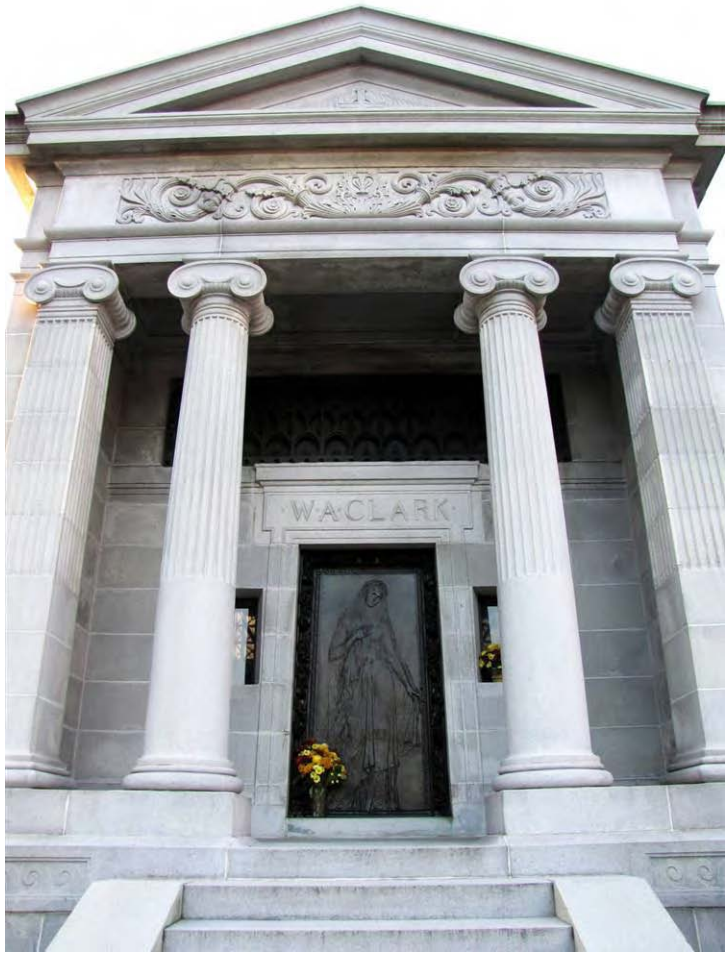
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Slide 25

Credit: The New York Times

William Andrews Clark died in his house on Fifth Avenue on March 2, 1925, at age 86, with his wife and children by his side. He lay in honor in his own gallery, as his paintings looked down. President Coolidge sent flowers.

Clark's will called for a "decent and Christian burial in accordance with my condition in life, without undue pomp or ceremony."



Slide 26  
Credit: Bill Dedman, msnbc.com

He was entombed, along with his first wife and Andrée, in this mausoleum at Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx. His neighbors now are Woolworth, Macy, Pulitzer — all better remembered.

Clark left \$350,000 to a Clark orphans home; \$100,000 each to Clark kindergarten and Clarkdale, Ariz.; \$25,000 to Clark women's home; \$2,500 to his butler.





Slide 27

Credit: George P. Hall & Son / New-York Historical Society

Clark had promised his daughters from his first marriage that Anna would not inherit the New York City mansion. It was sold in 1927 for less than half what it cost to build, and was torn down for apartments.

Many other houses on Millionaire's Row fell, including the Astor and Vanderbilt palaces. The Gilded Age had passed.



Slide 28

Credit: Bill Dedman, msnbc.com

Anna got the mansion in Santa Barbara and \$2.5 million.

The rest of Clark's estate — as much as \$300 million, or \$3.6 billion today — went to Huguette and the four older children, who soon cashed out all his businesses. Huguette, 18, also received an allowance for three years: up to \$90,000 a year, equal to \$1 million today.





Slide 29

Credit: Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot, "*Repose*," 1860, reworked 1865-1870, oil on canvas, Corcoran Gallery of Art

To the art, Clark attached conditions. The Metropolitan Museum could have it, if it kept it all in a separate Clark gallery forever. The Met declined.

The art went to his second choice, the Corcoran in D.C. His wife and daughters paid for a Clark wing to hold it. The museum found that some of the paintings were misattributed; this Corot was authentic.



Slide 30

Credit: Woodlawn Cemetery by Bill Dedman / msnbc.com

Clark bequeathed this advice as well: "The most essential elements of success in life are a purpose, increasing industry, temperate habits, scrupulous regard for one's word ... courteous manners, a generous regard for the rights of others, and, above all, integrity which admits of no qualification or variation."





Slide 31  
Credit: William Merritt Chase, 1915, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington

Clark's descendants say he should be remembered as a Horatio Alger hero, a boy from a log cabin who conquered the worlds of finance, politics and art.

"He lived exactly as he had planned," said André Baeyens, a great-grandson and diplomat, who wrote a book in French about the family. "He had a ferocious will to 'better my condition in life.'"

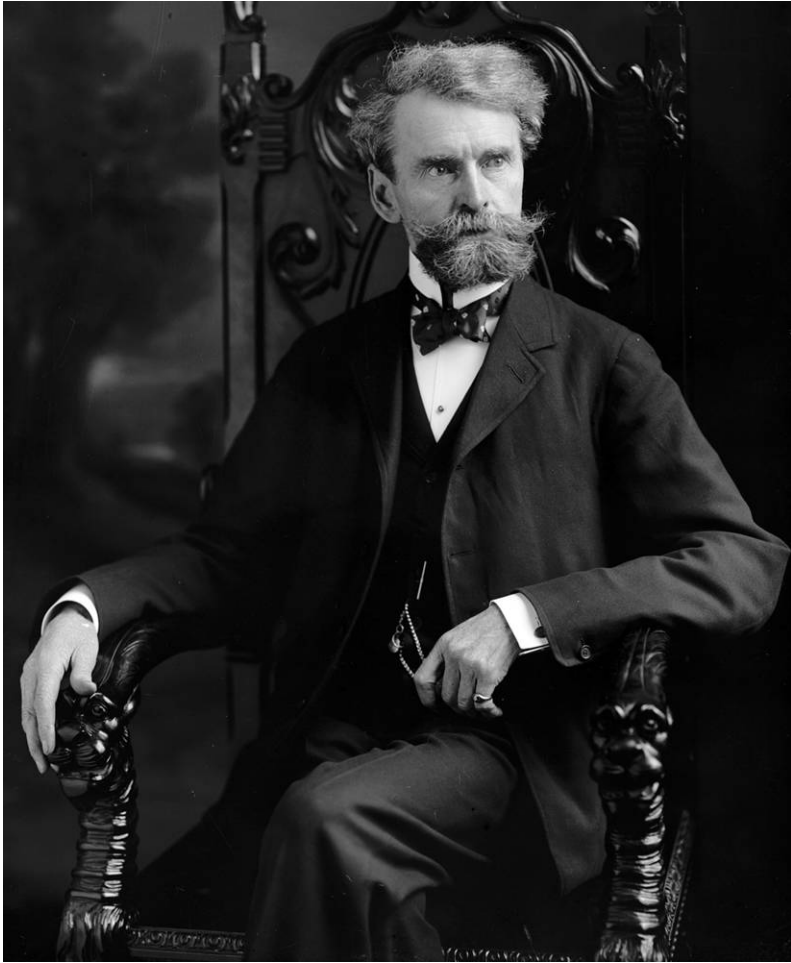




Slide 32  
Credit: B.L. Singley, Butte, Mont., 1904 / Library of Congress

Bettering the condition of others wasn't his concern. Clark cut timber on federal land, and he benefitted from Arizona's "deportations" of union men who were kidnapped and driven out of state.

Criticized for the sulfurous smoke and denuded landscape from his mines, he said, "Those who succeed us can well take care of themselves."



Slide 33  
Credit: Harris & Ewing / Library of Congress

"Robber barons," some historians call the tycoons of that era. Others prefer "industrial statesmen." Unlike Carnegie or Rockefeller, Clark left little charity, only corruption and extravagance.

"Life was good to William A. Clark," wrote historian Michael Malone, "but due to his own excesses, history has been unkind."



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**MISS HUGUETTE  
M. CLARK,  
Daughter of Mrs.  
William Andrews  
Clark and the Late Sen-  
ator Clark, Whose En-  
gagement to William Mac-  
donald Gower Was An-  
nounced Recently.  
(New York Times Studios.)**

Slide 34

Credit: The New York Times

After her father's death, Huguette Clark practiced music and art; seven paintings she created were shown at the Corcoran.

In 1928, she became engaged to William Gower, a law student whose father had worked for Clark.

"No married couple ever started married life under more brilliant auspices," The New York Herald said.



Slide 35  
Credit: Pictometry International

They were wed at Bellosguardo, the Clark home in Santa Barbara, on Aug. 18, 1928. The groom was 23, the bride 22.

That year, Huguette donated \$50,000 to the city to restore a salt pond behind the estate (top), called the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge.

The couple moved into the elegant apartment on Fifth Avenue, with her mother in the same building.



[A. P. photo]

Mrs. Huguette Gower

## **RENO AGOG OVER CLARK KIN'S MOVE**

*Wife and Daughter of  
Late Senator Take Floor  
of Hotel for Summer*

Slide 36

Credit: The Los Angeles Times

It lasted two years. To establish Nevada residency for a divorce in 1930, she moved to Reno for the summer with her mother and six servants. With the papers signed, mother and daughter took a cruise to Hawaii, then returned to the apartment in New York.





Slide 37

Credit: Associated Press

This is the last known photograph of Huguette, cornered by a photographer on the day of her divorce in August 1930. In 1931, an Irish nobleman denied reports that he would marry Huguette, then 24. She dropped her seat at the opera, and soon slipped from the society pages.



Slide 38

Credit: John L. Wiley, <http://flickr.com/photos/jw4pix/>

After her mother died in 1963, Huguette stopped visiting Bellosguardo. Vintage cars remained in the garage. Paintings stayed on the walls, depicting her sister, Andrée, living well past her death at age 16, on into middle age.

A caretaker's daughter, Joan Pollard, recalls, "It was immaculate, as if someone had just left for the weekend."



Slide 39  
Credit: "In the Roses," Pierre-Auguste Renoir, 1882

In 1964, Huguette gave 215 acres near Santa Barbara for Boy Scout camps. "These camps serve 4,000 kids a year," said Ron Walsh, a Scout executive. "She did a lot of people a lot of good through the years."

In 2003, she sold this Renoir for \$23.5 million.

In 2007, the IRS placed a lien on her houses for \$1 million in back taxes; it was paid quickly.





Slide 40  
Credit: Barbara Cleary's Realty Guild

Huguette is trying to sell Le Beau Château, in wealthy New Canaan, Conn., an hour from New York City. She bought it in 1952, and added the wing at top right. It has 22 rooms, nine bedrooms, nine baths, 11 fireplaces, a wine cellar, trunk room, elevator, and walk-in vault.

It has sat empty for 57 years, so the kitchens need updating.





Slide 41  
Credit: Barbara Cleary's Realty Guild

The only residents on 52 acres are the caretaker and his son, in twin cottages, and wild turkeys and deer. The property is silent except for a waterfall.

Her attorney put it on the market in 2005 at \$34 million, now \$24 million.

Neighbors in this corner of town include Harry Connick Jr., Paul Simon, Glenn Beck and Brian Williams.



Slide 42  
Credit: Barbara Cleary's Realty Guild

Why would someone buy such a retreat, and never use it, but hold on to it for half a century?

Huguette's great-half-nephew, André Baeyens, said he was told by his mother that Huguette bought Le Beau Château as a sort of bomb shelter during the Cold War. "She wanted a place where she could get away from the horrors."



Slide 43

Credit: Le Beau Château by Barbara Cleary's Realty Guild

"Huguette has always led a sort of reclusive life," said nephew Devine. "I think everybody's respected that. She wasn't just sitting in a room herself all her life. She had a small group of friends, confidants and assistants, very small, probably fewer than five people. Her world was always very small; when Anna died, it just became smaller."





Slide 44

Credit: Le Beau Château by Barbara Cleary's Realty Guild

Now 103, she may be in a nursing home or hospital. Relatives say they don't know, and fear that flowers and letters are discarded before they reach her. Her attorney, Wallace Bock, won't say.

Devine said, "I think various family members have asked Mr. Bock for information, and he's always very respectful of his client and doesn't wish to reveal anything."





Slide 45  
Credit: Bill Dedman / msnbc.com

Facing Central Park with curtains drawn, her Fifth Avenue apartments contain her mother's harp and Huguette's French dollhouses.

Only a few times in decades has the building's staff seen her, a thin woman retreating into the shadows. They say she's not there now.

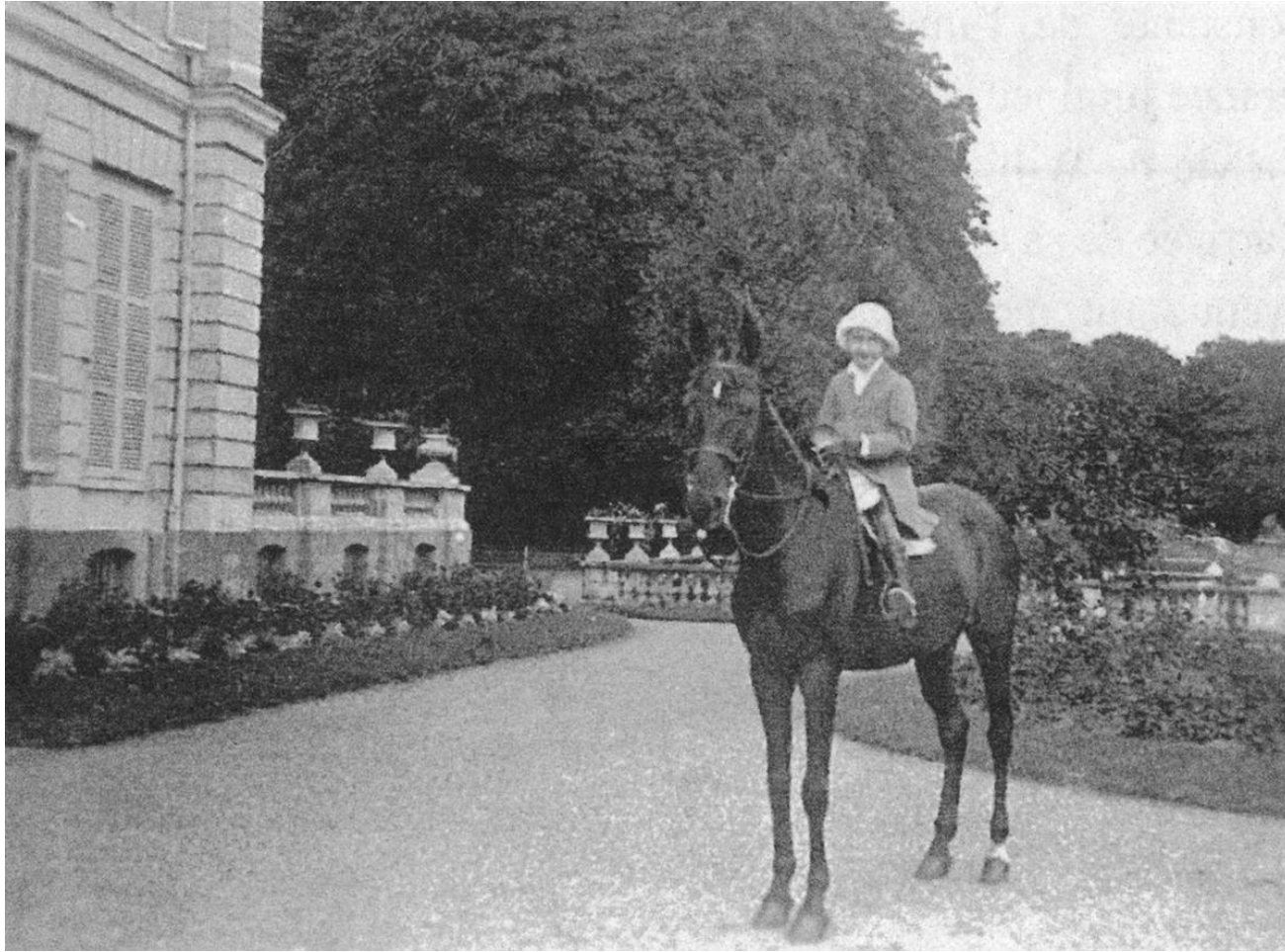
André Baeyens said of his aunt, "She's withdrawn from this world."



Slide 46  
 Credit: From "Apartments for the Affluent," 1975, by Andrew Alpern

Her eighth-floor apartments contain two galleries, seven bedrooms, rooms for nine servants.

And her fortune? Where will it go? "The rest of the family would respect her decision," said nephew Devine. "But if she leaves it all to some sketchy cause that she has no close connection to, that would be of some concern."



Slide 47

Credit: Huguette Clark in France, "Le Sénateur Qui Aimait La France," 2005, André Baeyens

Her attorney, Bock, said her hearing and eyesight have diminished with age — after all, she'll be 104 in June — but her mind is clear, and he receives instructions from her frequently by phone.

He said he would not pass along a request for an interview. "She's a very private person. She doesn't care about publicity or reputation."



Slide 48

Credit: The Copper King Mansion

Tracing the lives of William Andrews Clark and his Huguette, we are left with mysteries.

What does she remember of "Papa"? Is she well cared for? What will she leave to the world?

"It's hard to find out what the real story was," said nephew Devine. "No one is alive — except for Huguette."