

464 N. Myrtle Avenue

Louis Binggeli Vollmer was born in Lake Elmo, Minnesota on April 16, 1872, the son of Rudolph B. and Katherine Vollmer. He received his education in St. Paul, Minnesota, and in 1893 he entered the business of ornamental iron and bronze manufacture. In 1894 he became a partner in the Flour City Ornamental Iron Company in Minneapolis, one of the largest establishments of its kind in the United States. He held the position of secretary-treasurer.

Louis Vollmer married the former Mathilda Siegmann in Minneapolis on June 20, 1900, and they became the parents of two children, Alvin Binggeli Vollmer, and Viola Adeline Vollmer. In 1906, due to health reasons, Vollmer disposed of his business interests in Minneapolis, and brought his wife and two young children to Monrovia. He built a new house for his family in 1907, purchasing a large lot in the Valle Vista Subdivision, where he was to later build his dream home.

Vollmer became active in real estate in his adopted community, and made that community an interesting offer: if the community would purchase all of the lots he owned in the Loftus-Vollmer Tract in the western part of Monrovia, he would build a first rate hotel on Myrtle Avenue with the proceeds. The community did, and Vollmer did. The historic Leven Oaks Hotel, a local landmark, opened its doors in 1911. Once the hotel was completed, the Vollmer family made it their home. Earlier Vollmer had demonstrated his civic involvement by purchasing Monrovia's first fire engine and leasing it to the City at a time when the City did not have the funds itself for the purchase.

At some point in the early 1920's, Vollmer purchased three and possibly six lots at the northern end of the Valle Vista Subdivision. By 1923, Vollmer was ready to build his dream house. He secured the services of architect Frederick H. Wallis, of the Los Angeles firm of Norton & Wallis, and plans were drawn for a two storey house in the popular Spanish Colonial Revival style. It was to be of reinforced concrete with double walls for insulation and no expense was to be spared. Building permit number 2480 was issued by the City of Monrovia on April 2, 1923. H. Weller was the contractor, and \$12,000.00 was the value of the new construction.

Louis and Mathilda Vollmer, together with their daughter, Viola, moved into their new home later that year. Alvin Vollmer had become the manager of the Leven Oaks Hotel, and he continued to live there. Life was good for the Vollmer family. Louis Vollmer continued his civic involvement, serving on the Monrovia City Council as well as the Monrovia Planning Commission. Alvin and Viola married successfully. Then change inevitably came. Mathilda Vollmer passed away at the young age of 62 on March 14, 1938. Viola separated from her husband and returned to the family home. She and John Gunnerson later divorced, and Viola married a young Monrovia attorney, Wilbur D. Garber.

Left alone after Viola remarried, Louis Vollmer built a smaller house in 1942 directly to the east of his dream house, which he then placed on the market. The house,

very reasonably priced, attracted the attention of Mary Craig Sinclair, wife of famed novelist Upton Sinclair. They had been living in Pasadena since 1916, but Sinclair's notoriety was getting in the way of his privacy. The house in Monrovia was the perfect solution, and they bought it immediately. Sinclair was later to state that in Monrovia he found the perfect peace to write. All of Sinclair's later works were completed during his residency here. Mary Craig Sinclair passed away in 1961, and Sinclair married May Hard. They continued to live in the house until 1966, when the infirmities of age made a move necessary and they left the area. The next residents of the house were Glen W. and Patricia Edwards. They were the residents when the last Monrovia City Directory was compiled in 1971. That same year the house received National Historic Landmark status.

The Sierra Madre Earthquake of June 28, 1991 ushered in an entire new era for the Vollmer House. It became a cause célèbre. The 5.8 magnitude temblor caused the house to shift on its foundation, creating many cracks in the interior walls and ceilings. The then owners of the house considered it unsafe, irreparable, and a candidate for demolition. The local preservation community, the City of Monrovia, and the State Office of Historic Preservation disagreed. One positive outcome of the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake was the passage of legislation designed to halt the demolition of historic landmarks without the approval of the State Office of Historic Preservation. That legislation was invoked, the proposed demolition was halted, and the owners finally agreed to a settlement from their insurance company. A local innovative development team purchased the house, found a way to stabilize it with the injection of epoxy, repaired the earthquake damage, and restored the house to a pristine appearance. The restoration was submitted to the State of California for an award consideration, and it was so honored in 1996. The house has also received recognition by being awarded historic landmark status by the City of Monrovia. The current owner purchased the house in 2012.

Legal Description

Valle Vista Subdivision, Lot 2 and the north 30 feet and the west 110 feet of the south 20 feet of Lot 3.

Originally part of the Banana Addition

Monrovia City Directories

1908-1909	Vollmer, Louis, real estate, res., 115 E. Banana Vollmer, Louis, real estate 605 S. Myrtle
1911	Vollmer, Louis B., e. 115 E. Banana ave.
1913-1914	Vollmer, Louis B., prop 'Leven Oaks Hotel; h same
1916-1917	Vollmer Louis B (Mathilda M) prop 'Leven Oaks Hotel h 108 S Myrtle
1919-1920	Vollmer Alvin B student r Leven Oaks Hotel 108 S Myrtle Vollmer, Louis B (Mathilda M) Prop Leven Oaks Hotel h 108 S Myrtle Vollmer, Viola A Miss student r Leven Oaks Hotel 108 S Myrtle
1922-1923	Vollmer Alvin student r 'Leven Oaks Hotel Vollmer L B (Methilda) (sic) Prop 'Leven Oaks Hotel 108 S Myrtle
1923	Vollmer Alvin B asst mgr Leven Oaks Hotel r 108 S Myrtle av Vollmer Louis B (Matilda) prop Leven Oaks Hotel h 108 S Myrtle av Vollmer Viola A student r 108 S Myrtle av
1924	Vollmer Alvin B asst mgr Leven Oaks Hotel h 108 S Myrtle av Vollmer Louis B (Mathilda) prop Leven Oaks Hotel h 108 S Myrtle av Vollmer Viola A student r 108 S Myrtle av
1925	Vollmer Alvin B (Ivy) mgr Leven Oaks Hotel h 108 S Myrtle av Vollmer Louis B (Mathilda) prop Leven Oaks Hotel h 464 N Myrtle av Vollmer Viola A student r 464 N Myrtle av
1927	Vollmer Alvin B (Ivy) mgr Leven Oaks Hotel h08 S Myrtle av Vollmer Louis B (Mathilda) prop Leven Oaks Hotel h464 N Myrtle av Vollmer Viola A student r464 N Myrtle av
1928	Vollmer Alvin B (Ivy) mgr Leven Oaks Hotel h120 S Myrtle av Vollmer Louis B (Mathilda) (Leven Oaks Hotel) and Member City Board of Trustees, h464 N Myrtle av
1930	Vollmer Alvin B mgr Leven Oaks Hotel h120 S Myrtle av Vollmer Louis B (Mathilda) (Leven Oaks Hotel) h464 N Myrtle av
1931-1932	
1935	
1937	
1939	Vollmer Alvin B (Ivy) (Leven Oaks Hotel) h120 S Myrtle av Vollmer Louis B (Leven Oaks Hotel) pres City Planning Commission h464 N Myrtle av Gunnerson Viola V r464 N Myrtle av Garber Wilbur D lawyer r231 N Primrose av
1944	Vollmer Alvin B (Ivy) (Leven Oaks Hotel) h120 S Myrtle av Vacant (sic)

1948 Vollmer Louis B h465 N Encinitas av
Vollmer Louis B h465 N Encinitas av
Vollmer Alvin B (Ivy A) r907 S Foothill Blvd (D)
Leven Oaks Hotel (Wm W Hunter and Robert L Thompson)

1950
1952
1953-1954
1955
1958
1959
1961
1963
1965
1966 Sinclair Upton B (May H) author h464 N Myrtle av
1967 No return
1968 Edwards Glen W (Patricia) trucking h464 N Myrtle av (o)
1970 Edwards Glen W (Patricia) trucking h464 N Myrtle av (o)
1971 Edwards Glen W (Patricia) trucking h464 N Myrtle av (o)

Los Angeles County Tax Assessor

115 E. Hillcrest Blvd. Year of construction: 1909 (sic)
464 N. Myrtle Avenue. Year of construction: 1923. Recording date: 08/31/2012

California State Death Index

Vollmer: Louis B
Born: 16 Apr 1872
Location: Minnesota
Died: 23 Dec 1948
Location: Los Angeles County

Name: Mathilda M. Vollmar (sic)
Birth Year: abt 1876
Death Date 14 Mar 1938
Age at Death: 62
Location: Los Angeles County

Social Security Applications and Claims Index

Name: Louis Binggeli Vollmer
Birth Date: 16 Apr 1872
Birth Place: Lake Elmo, Minnesota
Father: Rudolph B. Vollmer
Mother: Katherine Unknown

City of Monrovia Permits

Building Permit: #1669
Date: 10/31/1921
Owner: L. B. Vollmer
Contractor: Henry Krier
Value of Permit: \$750.00 (Fountain or Foundation)

Building Permit: #2480
Date: 04/02/1923
Owner: L. B. Vollmer
Contractor: H. Weller
Value of Permit: \$12,000.00

Sewer Permit: #1616
Date:
Owner: L.B. Vollmer

456-460-464 N. Myrtle

“Picturesque Monrovia, 1929”

Frederick Wallis, architect

Minnesota Marriages Index

Louis B. Vollmer married Mathilda Siegmann June 20, 1900 in Minneapolis

Story of purchasing Monrovia’s first fire engine and leasing it to the City until financial arrangements could be made to purchase it.

Owner, city differ on state of Sinclair home

By Shante Morgan
Staff Writer

MONROVIA — Owners of the historic Upton Sinclair home are in conflict with city officials over whether the landmark house should be demolished.

The city maintains that the home is safe. But Steve Hastings, owner of the Myrtle Avenue home, said that engineers hired by his insurance company have determined that the house is uninhabitable after it moved approximately 3 inches off its foundation in last week's 5.8-magnitude earthquake.

The house also has extensive cracks in the ceilings and walls.

Hastings had earthquake insurance with Allstate, and his insurers will pay the full cost of rebuilding the structure if required.

"You just can't push the foundation back in place and glue

Emergency: Wilson approves state aid/A-2

everything together," said Hastings of the home, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. "It's unsafe.

"The only engineer that matters is the insurance engineer," said Hastings. "It has to be torn down and rebuilt."

That is not the way the city views things.

"As far as we are concerned, it's safe," said Paul Sheedy, city building division manager. As of Saturday, city inspectors had determined that two Monrovia homes were uninhabitable, but not the Upton Sinclair house.

He said inspectors base their decision on the degree of damage "just as a judgment call."

Associate planner Vance Pomeroy said the city may have the power to prevent demolition of the home under the terms of Senate Bill 3X, which was passed after the San Francisco earthquake in October 1989.

See SINCLAIR/ Page A-2

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Sinclair

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Although he said city officials are waiting for further legal counsel from the city attorney, "They are going to have to prove to us that it is unsafe."

Monrovia City Attorney Richard Morillo could not be reached for comment.

Hastings, whose home is a 1923 Spanish Colonial Revival Home once occupied by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Upton Sinclair, said it will cost between \$500,000 and \$700,000 to rebuild the edifice.

"I haven't lived (in the house) since the earthquake," said Hastings, who has been staying at a hotel or with relatives since the quake. "You can't live in it."

Joe Garcia, president of the

Monrovia Old House Preservation Group, said that only one historic home of the thousands in Monrovia was declared uninhabitable by the city. He said approximately 30 others received major to minor damage.

"I think there is a lot more damage than originally estimated," Garcia said. "A lot of damage is concealed by wallpaper."

The Old House Preservation Group is assisting owners of historic homes with cleanup and providing advice on contractors.

Meanwhile, Gov. Pete Wilson Friday declared a state of emergency because of the earthquake, clearing the way for victims to receive low-interest loans to repair their damaged property.

For more information on restoration of historic homes, mail requests to the Old House Preservation Group, P.O. Box 734, Monrovia, CA 91017.

Quake clouds future of Sinclair's house

Associated Press

MONROVIA — Friday's earthquake has clouded the future of one of the most historic buildings in the San Gabriel Valley, the former home of writer and political reformer Upton Sinclair.

The Spanish-colonial revival home built in 1923 was knocked 3 inches off its foundation and suffered many cracks in the walls, said Monrovia city historian Steve Baker.

To repair the home would be extremely expensive, he said.

The tan and turquoise house, tucked in the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains, was surrounded Saturday by other homes showing signs of quake damage. Residents swept up debris and surveyed collapsed chimneys caused by the magnitude-6 earthquake.

The Sinclair residence, now privately owned, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, which offers only minimal protection should the owners decide to demolish the home, Baker said.

Old city records show that Sinclair purchased the two-story home in 1941 and owned it through 1962.

This would be the same time period in which he published his Lanny Budd series of 11 novels that reflected the world's concern with communism and fascism.

One of those books, "Dragon's Teeth," won the 1943 Pulitzer Prize for fiction. Baker said records do not show whether Sinclair actually lived in the house all that time.

The earliest city directory listing his name was 1952, but "he could have well left his name out of the directories. There's a possibility Sinclair was concerned about privacy," Baker said.

Sinclair, best known for his 1906 novel "The Jungle" exposing conditions in the meatpacking industry, died in 1968.

The owners of the home are listed as Steve and Debbie Hastings. They were not at home Saturday and there was no directory listing for their telephone number.

Baker said it would be a loss if the house, which had just undergone major renovations, had to be destroyed.

"It would represent quite a loss to the community if the house couldn't be saved," he said.

Historic home damaged in quake

Associated Press

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To repair the home would be extremely expensive, he said.

The owners of the home could not be reached Saturday.

Battle brews over Sinclair house

By Shante Morgan
Staff Writer

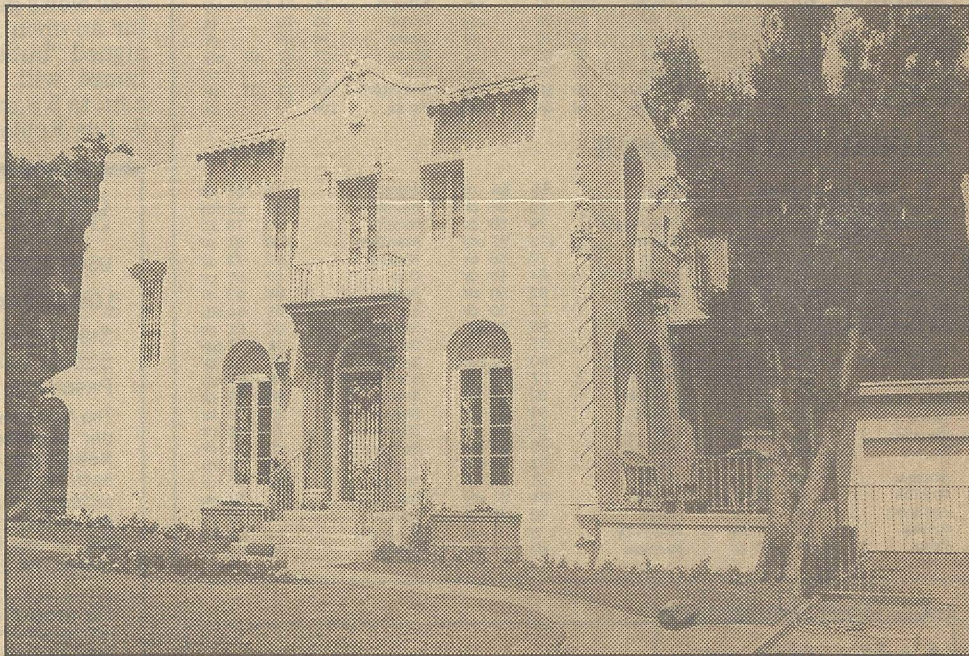
MONROVIA — Owners of the historic Upton Sinclair home are in conflict with city officials over whether the landmark house should be demolished.

The city maintains that the home is safe, but Steve Hastings, owner of the Myrtle Avenue home, said that engineers hired by his insurance company have determined the house is uninhabitable after it moved approximately three inches off its foundation during last week's 5.8-magnitude earthquake.

The house, a 1923 Spanish Colonial Revival structure occupied by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Upton Sinclair from 1941 to 1962, also has extensive cracks in the ceilings and walls.

"You just can't push the foundation back in place and glue everything together," said Hastings of the home, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. "It's unsafe."

"The only engineer that matters is



Alan Duignan / Star-News

See SINCLAIR / Page A-2 Center of storm: Owners, city battle over fate of Sinclair house.

PSN 7/6/91

Sinclair

Continued from Page A-1

the insurance engineer," Hastings added. "It has to be torn down and rebuilt."

City officials view the situation differently.

"As far as we are concerned, it's safe," said Paul Sheedy, city building division manager.

Sheedy said city inspectors had determined that two Monrovia homes were uninhabitable, but not the Upton Sinclair house.

Associate planner Vance Pomeroy said the city may have the power to prevent demolition of the home under the terms of Senate Bill 3X, which was passed after the Loma Prieta earthquake in October 1989.

The bill prohibits demolition of a historic structure unless it presents an imminent threat to the public or if the State Office of Historical Preservation approves.

"If our people say it's not (an imminent threat), then it's not unless a state-certified engineer says so," Pomeroy said.

Although he said city officials are waiting for further legal counsel, he said the owners "are going to have to come to prove to us that it is unsafe."

Monrovia City Attorney Richard Morillo could not be reached for comment.

Hastings said it will cost \$500,000 to \$700,000 to rebuild the house.

"I haven't lived (in the house) since the earthquake," said Hastings. "You can't live in it."



Walt Mancini / Star-News

Taking stock: Areias, Russell and Mountjoy discuss quake damage.

Old House Preservation Group, said that only one historic home of the thousands in Monrovia was declared uninhabitable by

nor damage.

"I think there is a lot more damage than originally estimat-

Upton Sinclair Home For Sale By Owner

By Azadouhie Kalaydjian

STAFF WRITER

MONROVIA—When famous American writer and Pulitzer Prize winner Upton Sinclair moved out of his Monrovia house in 1966, legend has it that more than eight tons of paperwork were removed from the “slum-stone storage” he had built where he wrote his memoirs. Sinclair authored “The Dragon’s Teeth” and “The Jungle.”

Now a natural historical landmark on the north end of Myrtle Avenue, the old Sinclair home is up for sale by its current owners Vicki Novell and partner Baxter Williams for \$397,500.

The Mediterranean style two story house with cathedral-like interiors was built in 1923 by L.B. Vollmer. He also built the First Presbyterian Church and the Levin Oaks Hotel in Monrovia.

Upton Sinclair, who died in his 90’s in 1968, lived in the house between 1942 and 1966. The house obtained its historical landmark status in 1971.

Williams said when the wife of Sinclair, Mary-Craig, died in her 50s, he remarried and moved to the east coast where the couple’s son resided.

Mary-Craig, who was also a writer and a poet, wrote “The Southern Belle.”

Much of the information Williams knows about the Sinclairs is from the readings he did when he became aware that the historical landmark belonged to the famous writers when the current owners purchased the house in 1995.

Williams said when the Sinclairs came in to see the house, they said, “Let’s think about it overnight.” The couple came back the next day

and purchased the house in 1942.

The house has been vacant since 1991. Before then, the Hastings, the Edwards and the Rosbers lived there.

“Ironically many people interested to purchase the home have been writers and artists like the Sinclairs,” Williams said.

A niece of Mary-Craig Sinclair Liz Clements said as a retired woman she has no interest in moving into her aunt’s former house since she is already well established in her own South Pasadena home.

Although not a writer herself, Clements speaks well of her aunt describing Mary-Craig as a sweet lady who never let anyone take pictures of her because of her aging beauty.

“She was a Southern Belle indeed,” the niece said.

Novell said people often have concerns about purchasing a historical landmark since laws prohibit adding additional square footage to such properties. There are benefits however.

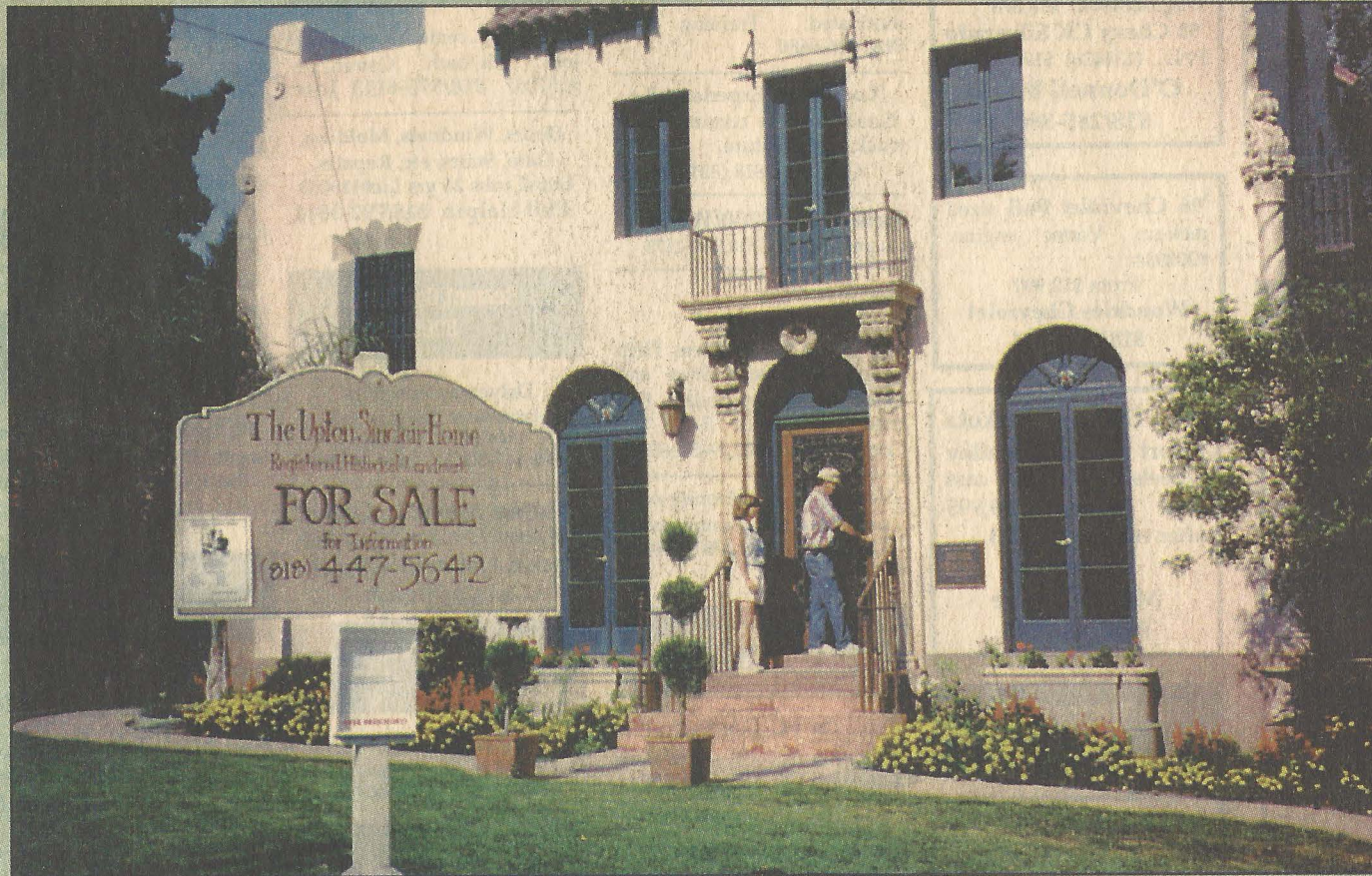
“The benefit for an owner of this house is that the house will always keep the integrity of its design, and the owner will pay less in property taxes,” Williams said.

The Mills Act allows owners of historical landmark properties a property tax deduction of up to 75 percent.

Novell, a general contractor and interior designer who owns her business in design and development buys, sells and restores homes for a living.

“We were passing by and saw this house and fell in love with it and bought it,” her partner said.

The couple purchased the home in a deterioration state and restored several elements in the house such as the kitchen, the heat and air conditioning, and the carpet. Since historical landmark establishments cannot be restructured entirely



HISTORICAL LANDMARK and home of famous writer Upton Sinclair is currently up for sale. Vicki Novell and Baxter Williams are the current owners.

Azadouhie Kalaydjian Photo

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8/9/96

Sinclair

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Williams kept the interior with some of its original design.

Although the couple loves this historical landmark's beauty, they have plans to build a house of their own, one which Novell has already designed.

The couple said once they sell this one, they will begin building their new home in Pasadena. The

couple now reside in Sierra Madre.

Williams said, however, that if the house is not sold by August, he will think about moving in the home with his partner.

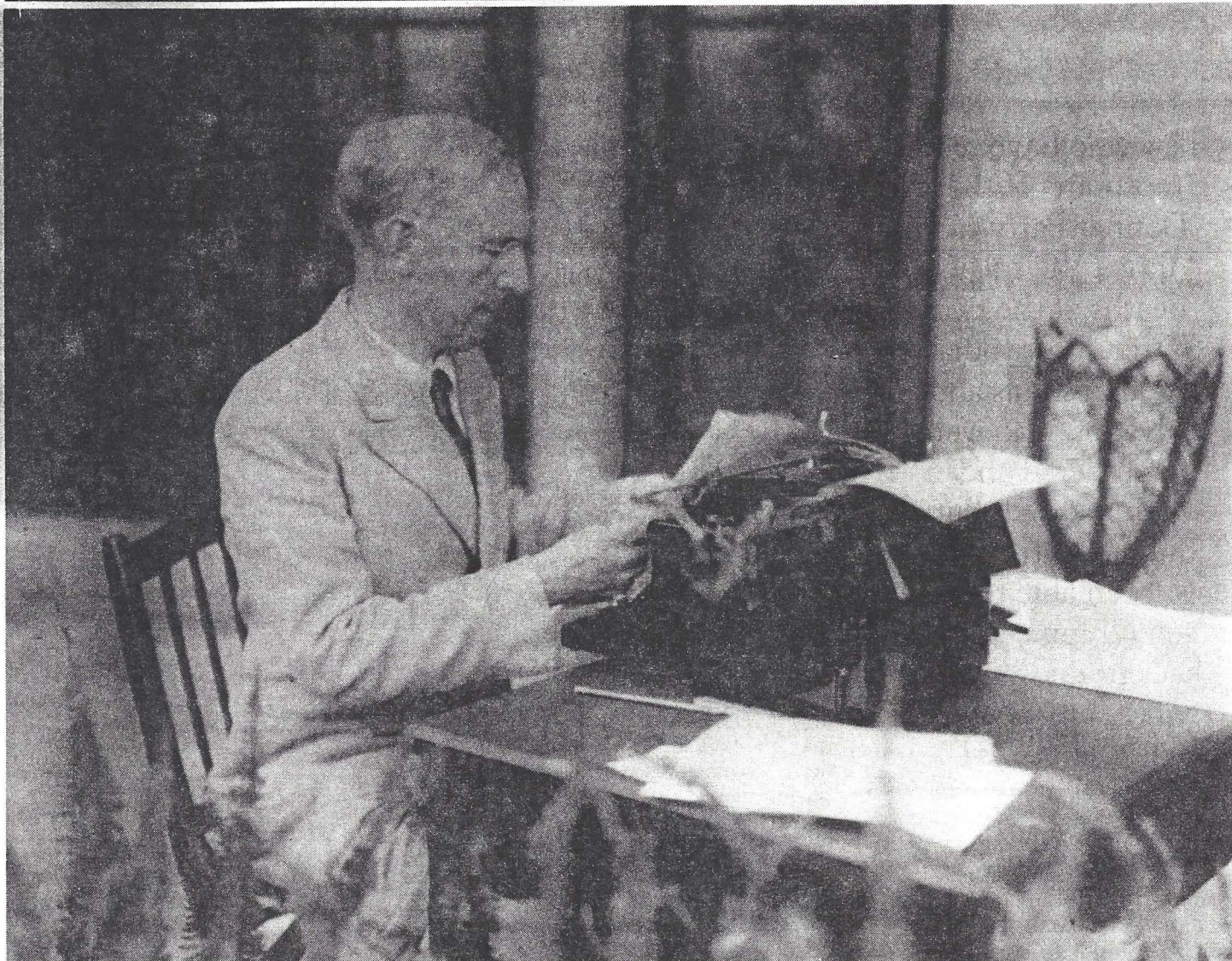
"It is a solid, nice looking house with good appeal," Williams said. "You can see Catalina Island on a clear day," he said, looking out the balcony.

"The city of Monrovia has been more than helpful with us as far as maintaining and making improvements of this historical

landmark," Novell said.

The move-in-condition home is built on an 18-inch concrete foundation, has concrete nine feet walls, a two car garage, a studio, a basement, a storage room and a garden all of which surround the 2,400-square-foot residence.

Open house of the old Sinclair home is scheduled on Sundays from 1 to 4 p.m. at 464 N. Myrtle Avenue. Interested persons can contact Vicki Novell at (818) 447-5647.



Sinclair at work during his 1934 gubernatorial campaign, which had three quarters of California's political establishment in a panic. His empathy for the economically hard-pressed may have sprung partly from being raised by a string of unloving relatives.

Upton Sinclair: Gadfly With Portfolio

“Utopias are often only premature truths.” — Lamartine

By Dr. Nicholas C. Polos

Utopias are “never” lands, as in Erewhon, Samuel Butler’s anagram of “nowhere.” Most Utopians do not attempt to keep closely in touch with the scientific facts of political institutions and human behavior. Historically, they’ve chosen instead to hold up, as examples, types of societies that aim at achieving as nearly as possible a human perfection. Jo-

hann Valentin Andrea, the court chaplain of the Landgrave of Hesse and a 17th-century humanist, wrote in his *Christianopolis*, that the teachers in his mythical community “are not men of the dregs of human society nor such as are useless for other occupations, but the choice of all the citizens.” Even the incomparable John Locke spoke of “man being born ... with a title to perfect freedom.” Sadly, perfection is difficult to attain, and the Shangri-la almost out of human reach. Oscar Wilde, in his book *The Soul of Man Under Socialism*,

tweaked the tail of his society by announcing that “A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at, for it leaves out the one country at which humanity is always landing.” (One cannot afford to take Oscar Wilde too seriously, a man who, as one of his Majesty’s prisoners standing out in the rain in front of the Old Bailey, mumbled: “If this is the way his Majesty treats his prisoners he doesn’t deserve to have any!”)

The history of Utopian schemers stretches as far back as John the Evangelist



Sinclair's successful socialist appeal to the depression-ridden California electorate terrified the business world into a massive counter-attack that mobilized PR and ad firms and broadcast, motion picture and print media. This cartoon is from the *Sacramento Bee*.

describing the millennium (Revelation, 21:1-2). In Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, the Duchess keeps insisting that: "... 'tis love, 'tis love that makes the world go round!" But pragmatic young Alice whispers that "it's done by everybody minding their own business." Utopian schemers are not generally those who make it a practice to mind their own business, because they are, at heart, reformers.

California historian Walton Bean defines reformers as "those who believe that cer-

tain prevailing conditions of politics and society must be drastically improved." Obviously, reformers could and did have a field day in a place like California even though many argue California is not a place at all but, as California historian Doyce Nunis once wrote, "a state of mind." Rapid revolutionary change, for better or worse, is the normal pace of California history. The poet Hildegard Flanner wrote of California that "Here is a centering of human energy and desire. ... It may be that the quality of life has here more of future and hope and

excitement as well as more uncertainty, than in some countries long settled and not rapidly changing." Sometimes these changes came in a "boom or bust" framework, giving the whole state an atmosphere of a gambling parlor. Writing in the early 20th century, George E. Mowry observed that despite California's grandeur and excitement in 1900, many of her sons and daughters were unhappy about the development of their commonwealth. By 1933, Californians had many reasons to be more than troubled by the conditions in "El Do-

rado." By that time Californians were feeling the Great Depression, which had been spreading its paralysis across America from 1929 on. Whereas in earlier panics — 1857, 1873, 1893 — there had been only a delayed reaction in California, by 1929 California agriculture was an integral part of America's economic structure, and felt the reverberations of the Wall Street crash very quickly. By 1934 California entered what Ralph J. Roske called "The dark era of the Great Depression," thus smashing the state's myth of "Euphoria Unlimited."

The Great Depression brought to California economic and emotional suffering. Unemployment was only one source of major unrest: among the employed, labor strife raged. In Southern California there had been large-scale strikes in the early part of 1934 for better conditions and higher wages, while in San Francisco, a general maritime strike forced Governor Frank F. Merriam to call out the National Guard. By the end of 1932 California's annual agricultural income had dropped to \$371,965,000, from a high in 1929 of \$623,103,000. Farmers, canners, manufacturers, lumbermen, banking, the fishing, industrial and agricultural pursuits, had been severely depressed. While it is impossible to recreate the dismal and pessimistic atmosphere brought on by the Great Depression we need to examine several other factors that created a most favorable climate for the utopian schemers in California.

California utopias: lunacy or desperation? Obviously, many of the state's utopian schemes resulted from the distress of the Depression, contrary to the facile explanations of many observers, as political scientist Gladwin Hill reports of one tongue-in-cheek wag:

One observer suggested that the heady perfume of the orange blossoms, emanating from thousand of orchards, might in some way be responsible for California's chronic political eccentricities.

Nearly every other observer down the years has been impelled to grope for some reason: climate, geography, sunspots, public pixilation — why the state has earned such sobriquets as "The Great Exception," and the "Un-Commonwealth."

The insinuation of a "climate of lunacy" does not do California justice. One of the important factors that brought many citizens to the brink of desperation was the widespread foreclosure of mortgages and tax sales which, by 1934, had reached (on homes and ranches in the southern part of the state) gigantic proportions. By 1934 almost half-a-million people in Los Ange-

les County alone were on relief. Many of these individuals were elderly people who had come to California, attracted by the myths of the "Golden State" and the boosterism of the various chambers of commerce, to work and retire in what many Americans thought was the "Hedonist's Heaven." Most of these people were politically and economically conservative, many of them were from the Midwest and many of them found solace mainly in the antics of religious evangelists such as Sister Aimee Semple McPherson, who preached the "Four Square Gospel" in her Angelus Temple.

As the Depression deepened, Californians became desperate: even the State's finances were in a most deplorable condition. In 1934 there was a state deficit of \$65,000,000, a far cry from the day that Governor "Sunny Jim" Rolph had taken office in 1931, when there was a surplus of \$24,000,000 in the State treasury!

This prolonged period of economic and social collapse shook the faith of many Californians, and caused them to take a different view toward government. Many now began to accept the view that government should be responsible for the welfare of their citizens, and control man-made disasters by the power of regulation. The abandonment of the basic American acceptance of the *laissez-faire* concept was one of the outcomes of the Great Depression. Another outcome, described by Carey McWilliams in his book *California: The Great Exception*, was the willingness to search for an Avatar with a plan, a kind of "knight errant to set America right," who would provide a short-cut to heaven. At this point, conditions were so bad that Californians could only concede the truth of Lord Bryce's comment that "Californians are impatient with the slow 'approach to the millennium,' and always eager 'to try instant, even if perilous remedies for present evils'."

California, and especially Southern California, was the ultimate destination of migrants who came with their own intellectual baggage so that to a great extent California's history is full of contradictions. Because California was *terra incognita* to most of the newcomers, a place where custom had not yet been frozen into tradition, they welcomed the opportunity to experiment in all areas of human activity, from economics to religion. The obvious message was that "the future lies all over the place!" Here, one could tackle the impossible, gamble on anything; who needed to worry in such a sunny climate?

Ranging from Helena Modjeska's utopian community at Anaheim (1876) to the quasi-economic solutions offered by Willis

and Andrew Lawrence in the 1938 visionaries' plan promising "Thirty-Dollars Every Thursday" or "Ham and Eggs," California seemed to be a hot-bed of utopian planning. Interestingly, though the stimuli for the various plans and schemes varied depending upon the economic conditions of the state at the time, each one was invariably identified with some strong personality. Also, every little movement had a message all of its own. Carey McWilliams once quoted Jennifer Cross, writing on "America's Laboratory for Social Change":

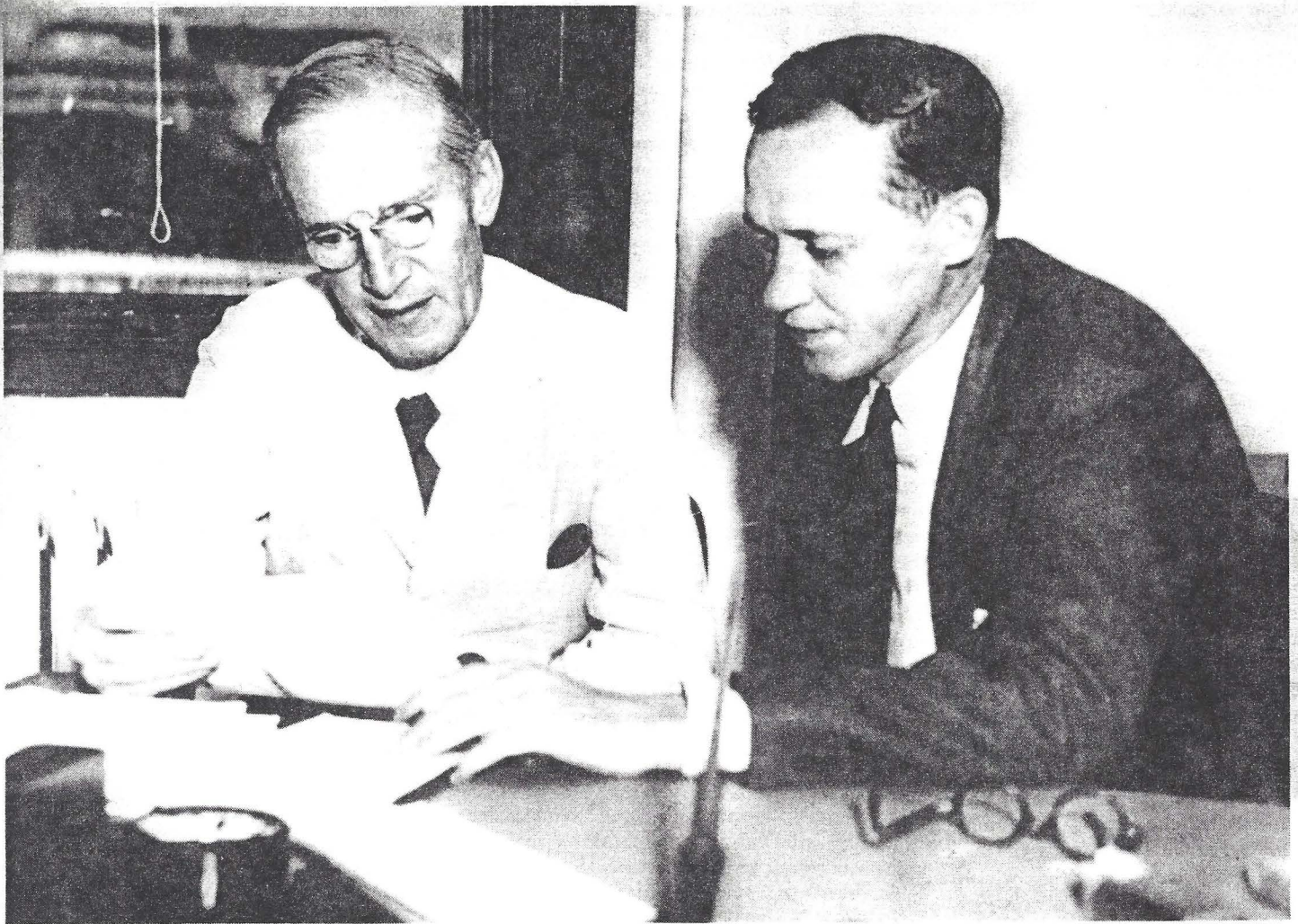
Fortunately, California has always shown a remarkable ability to cope with her problems, displaying a social inventiveness which has been the pattern for other states.

This inventiveness, what historian John Caughey called "fantastic schemes of economic sleight of hand," could be found in such unique plans as Henry George's "Single Tax," community utopians such as Llano, Delhi and Kaweah and Howard Scott's Technocracy (founded at Columbia University, but imported to California by Mr. Scott), which appeared to have the blessings of modern science. There were many other schemes, such as the 1933 Utopian Society, whose basic doctrine was that the profit system and private ownership were the cause of all the economic ills, and, last but surely by no means least, Dr. Francis E. Townsend's Townsend Plan guaranteeing all Americans over 60 \$200 a month that they had to spend within 30 days. (This was to be financed by a federal sales tax.)

By 1934 the stage had been set for the "epic" drama that was to take place that year. As Carey McWilliams interpreted it,

By the 1930s Kearneyism found its almost exact counterpart in Mr. Upton Sinclair's amazing campaign to end poverty in California.

This author finds Williams' assessment a bit unfair since some consider Denis Kearney of the Workingmen's Party a type of demagogue, whereas Upton Sinclair, the designer of EPIC (End Poverty In California) and precipitator of one of the strangest political confrontations that California had ever seen, was, again in this author's opinion, if nothing else, a true humanitarian. While it was true that he was a "utopian schemer," this was not meant in a Machiavellian sense, but simply as descriptive ideology. It is impossible to understand either the campaign of 1934 for governor in the state of California or the meaning and intent of the EPIC Program without understanding something about Upton Sinclair, both the man and his philosophy. Upton Sinclair was not a politi-



Sinclair amazed and horrified state Democratic party officials by winning the party's nomination for governor. Buoyed by this triumph, he headed East to seek Roosevelt's endorsement. Roosevelt met with him (here Sinclair is shown with FDR "brain truster" Harry Hopkins) but refused to issue a public declaration of support — which may have cost Sinclair the election.

cian: all he wanted was a way to put his socialistic philosophy into practice.

The making of a gad-fly with portfolio. Upton Sinclair was born in Baltimore in 1878, and educated at City College of New York and Columbia University. In his youth he had been a first-rate tennis player, always a teetotaler and a vegetarian. Throughout his life he would be surrounded by an aura of controversy, yet his demeanor was gracious, courteous and almost homespun.

Because Upton Sinclair's father had been an alcoholic, Upton was brought up by relatives. This marked him for life; he later declared that one of the strongest influences that turned him toward socialism was "the psychology of a poor relation." Rejected and shunted from place to place, without love and security, Sinclair quickly acquired an empathy for the poor and oppressed people of the world, and a deep understanding for human suffering. As the author of more than 48 novels, political

tracts and pamphlets (*The Jungle*, *Oil*, *King Coal*, *The Brass Check*, and many others), Sinclair spent a large part of his life trying to improve the prevailing system inside its existing legal framework. Walton Bean sheds some light on this:

The troubled relations between reform and radicalism are well exemplified in the relations between Upton Sinclair and Jack London and in their careers and ideas. To Sinclair, socialism was merely modern democracy, and he was perennially and incurably optimistic about the possibilities of achieving it. ... Jack London's socialist ideas were much less optimistic and much more radical than Sinclair's. Both were major figures in the popularization of socialist thought.

Sinclair came to California for his health in 1915 at the age of 37, living in Pasadena, and later Beverly Hills, until his death at 90 years of age. Though it seems strange that this socialistically inclined man chose to live in the two Los Angeles neighborhoods most closely identified with society's

privileged, elite and monied, his supporters never doubted then or now that Upton Sinclair was the "ultimate muckrake," a kind of original missionary of the modern socialistic spirit in America, which he was as the solution to the problems of modern capitalism. Writing to the editor of the *American Mercury*, H.L. Mencken, Sinclair vehemently stated "... that I am not mad — only as always grieved by the spectacle of the blindness and bigotry of men." Sinclair had an optimism about man and the human condition that led him, from his early days, to believe that man was worth saving. When Sinclair wrote Albert Einstein explaining his activities, political theories and philosophy, the humble scientist replied by cautioning Sinclair. In his letter of January 29, 1934, written from Princeton, New Jersey, Einstein wisely pointed out to Sinclair that, "You know indeed much better than I that nothing annoys people more than if one tries honestly to help them."

During his long lifetime, Sinclair had many friends such as H.L. Mencken (with

whom he seldom agreed), Jack London, Teddy Roosevelt, H.G. Wells, Henry James and George Santayana, to mention only a few. His correspondence over his long lifetime ran to more than 250,000 letters and overflowed more than 250 cardboard cartons. He valued these friendships, and people who knew Sinclair liked this "slight, bespectacled wispy man of exceptional gentleness and good will." While he may not have been the Renaissance Man for all seasons, neither was he the crack-pot, anarchistic, Bolshevik free-love advocate and wild-eyed dreamer he was made out to be by the press, the Hollywood film interests and the lobby pamphleteers of the special interest groups.

Surprisingly, Sinclair never developed the thick-skinned armor of the professional politician; he was always most sensitive about the false rumors circulated about him. And despite his optimism about the possible perfectibility of man, all his life he remained suspicious of the foibles of human nature and very resentful of man's intolerance, bigotry and vulnerability to rumors. The fact that he himself was a walking bundle of contradictions did not seem to bother Upton Sinclair as he went blithely on his way, probably because he lived by his own dictionary, or, as Thoreau would describe it, marched to his own drummer.

Like Norman Thomas, his socialist counterpart, Sinclair constantly saw American capitalism and American society through his own socialistic morose-coloured glasses. For example, in his *Autobiography*, Sinclair gives his own definition of a depression:

There had come one of those periods in American history known as a "slump" or more elegantly a "depression." The cause of this calamity is obvious — the mass of the people do not get sufficient money to purchase what modern machinery is able to produce.

Sinclair's definitions were lucid, simple, and often logical; they were a clarion call to all to rise up and indict the American system of capitalism. The particular economic panacea, the cure-all plan, was really not important; in Sinclair's eyes; what mattered was the basic socialistic philosophy. But later, in 1934, when Sinclair tried to use New Deal democracy as a vehicle for his socialistic ideas, he found out that America, despite her hard times, was not yet ready for his brand of social experiment. Americans, nevertheless, were apparently ready to read what he had to say: Sinclair made more than a million dollars from his 40-odd books. But, historian Judson Grenier notes in his excellent article "Upton Sinclair: the Road to California" (*Southern California Quarterly*, Winter 1974), "When

Upton Sinclair died, he had earned over one million dollars, and gave most of it away. Sinclair insisted that if anyone examined his heart they would find two words there — Social Justice."

When Sinclair came to California in 1915 he continued his politically active schedule, campaigning on the Socialist ticket, and writing muckraking novels such as *Oil*. He ran several times for the Tenth Congressional seat (the first time in 1920), for the U.S. Senate, and even for the gubernatorial post. But he never campaigned very hard. He was more or less, like Norman Thomas, keeping the socialist flag flying. In his excellent analysis of California politics, historian Clarence F. McIntosh wrote that

A believer in socialism, which he [Sinclair] defined as the social ownership and democratic control of the means of production, and a Socialist Party member of long standing, Sinclair remained a propagandist rather than a party worker since his conversion to the cause in 1904. His experience in propaganda and its techniques was his major asset in the campaign which he began in earnest late in November 1933.

Sinclair was not considered a serious threat by California's huge agribusiness, industrial and commercial interests. They viewed him as a gad-fly without portfolio. The only time he got into any legal difficulty was when once, in pursuit of supporting liberal causes, he was arrested during the 1923 maritime strike in San Diego. Why he was arrested for reading the Constitution of the United States to the strikers is not clear, but it was an excellent example of the post-war anxiety and fear of any socialistic fiery rhetoric. One must remember that this was the time of troubles, of the Palmer raids and the Red Scare in America, brought on by the rise of Communist Russia after World War I. In any case, after his 1923 arrest, Sinclair promoted the founding of the Southern California branch of the American Civil Liberties Union. Throughout his years in California Sinclair lost no time in trying to sell his style of socialism, which Bean characterized as of "the romantic, Americanized sort that had produced the 19th century utopian colonies." The Great Depression, naturally, provided fertile ground for Upton Sinclair's great personal campaign and his offensive against capitalism. Now there were very many angry citizens more than willing to listen to angry voices!

"I sting, I buzz!" When the Great Depression began, California was a solid Re-

publican state, and so in 1930 the California voters gave their support to James Rolph Jr., but by 1934 the entire political picture had changed. Hard times, the lack of sound Republican leadership in California (neither Rolph nor Merriam were effective governors) and the charisma of Franklin D. Roosevelt combined to produce a resurgence of Democratic strength. One of the ironies of California political history is that at this vital point the state's Democratic Party was leaderless, and according to the way Sinclair told the story, Gilbert Stevenson, chairman of the Santa Monica-based Democratic County central committee suggested that Sinclair "save the state" by registering as a Democrat, and running for the governorship of California. At first Sinclair was reluctant to re-enter politics again, but the Depression's economic chaos convinced him that his "cluster of socialistic solutions" could really save California.

In his *Autobiography*, Sinclair wrote that "I come now to one of the great adventures of my life: the EPIC campaign." One suspects that Upton Sinclair was rather gleeful over leaping into the political fray, seeing it as an opportunity to put his socialistic ideas into practice. The EPIC Plan (End Poverty In California) was, in reality, rather simple. Sinclair could not resist the temptation to outline his program in a 64-page booklet titled *I, Governor of California and How I Ended Poverty: A True Story of the Future* (Los Angeles, 1933). Thousands of copies were sold, and Sinclair, prolific writer that he was, quickly followed this with other powerful booklets during the campaign: *Epic Answers*, *The Lie Factory Starts and Immediate Epic*.

Sinclair's formula to put the one million unemployed Californians to work was based on the simple remedy of "production for use." His slogan for the campaign was "End Poverty in California." Robert Wagner, editor of the *Hollywood Script*, drew an emblem, a bee with widespread wings under which was the legend, "I produce, I defend" — which emblem then shortly appeared on stickers all over the countryside. As one writer observed, "Cynics later commented that it should have been a wasp with the motto, 'I sting, I buzz.'" To all such sallies Sinclair coolly replied that "I like the bee; she not only works hard but has the means to defend herself and is willing to use them on behalf of the young." Sinclair himself resembled the busy bee. In addition to his booklets, he and his co-workers put out an eight-page weekly paper called the *EPIC News*, for which he wrote the weekly editorial. The weekly news staff bragged that it had a circulation of more than 1.4 million copies.

NEW

MASSES

NOVEMBER, 1928

15 CENTS



drawn by Hugo Gellert

Upton Sinclair's 50th Year Anniversary Number

Contributors: Henry George Weiss, Martin Russak, Herman Spector, Dr. B. Liber, Art Young, Roger Baldwin, John Haynes Holmes, Norman Macleod, William Gropper, Robert Wolf, Scott Nearing and others.

11th Year! Soviet Russia

First Eyewitness
Account of Noble
Rescue by Soviet
Flyers

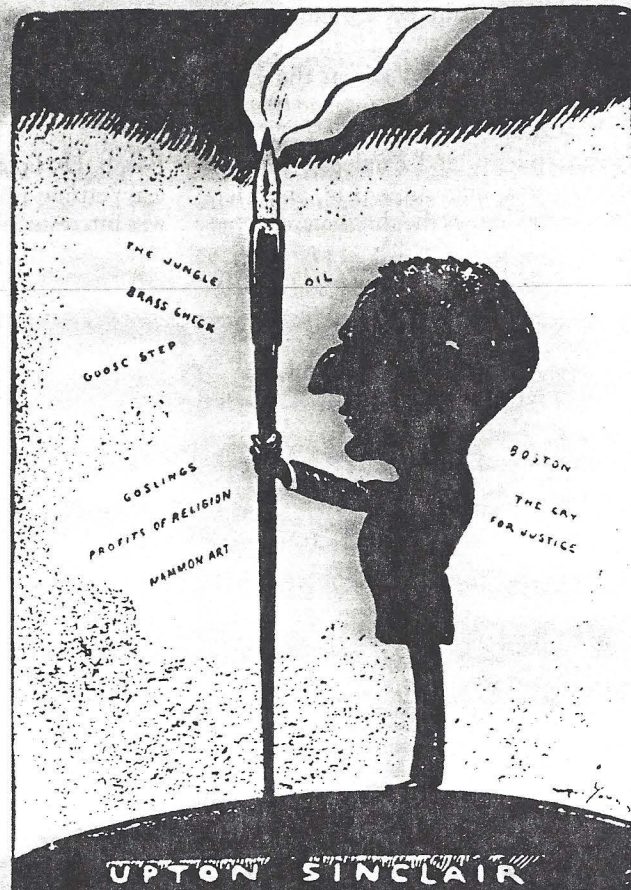
My Secrets
by Upton Sinclair

Upton Sinclair in
America
by Floyd Dell

The Presidential
Elections
by Theodore Dreiser

Impressions of
Soviet Russia
by H. W. L. Dana
Clarina Michelson
Marguerite Tucker

Are Californians
Sane?
by Michael Gold



The Torch!

Sinclair was a self-described "dyed-in-the-wool" socialist; his analysis of the Depression was that "the mass of the people do not get sufficient money to purchase what modern machinery is able to produce." Although the Communists were to proscribe him as a social fascist when he ran as a Democrat, in 1928 he was still the Party's darling.

Also, in the place of a machine party organization, EPIC clubs sprang up — nearly 2,200 of them — and these clubs gave Sinclair and his candidate for lieutenant governor, Sheridan Downey (the two were tagged "Uppie and Downie"), strong support during the campaign.

But Sinclair's program was not taken very seriously at the beginning of the campaign. As he explained in his first tract (*I, Governor of California*), his unique condemnation of the free-enterprise system proposed

... that we establish land colonies for the unemployed. These colonies will be run by the state under expert supervision. ... It will guarantee a living at the outset. ... Every colony will become a cultural center. ... If I am Governor of California, every man, woman and child will have opportunities of self-development, not merely physical but intellectual, moral and aesthetic.

Other unemployed would be put to work in Depression-idled factories, and paid in scrip (not an unusual practice during the Great Depression) exchangeable for goods

and services. A new type of barter system would be put into effect, foreclosures on ranches and homes would be canceled, and restoration made to the original owners. Naturally, there would be state support for those unable to work, and widows, the physically handicapped and the aged would be eligible for a state pension of \$50 per month. The state-supported benefits portion of this plan, the most modern of all of Sinclair's proposals, was considered revolutionary at the time. Sinclair also proposed to abolish the sales tax, enact a state income tax (something Californians now accept, however grudgingly), tax unused land at the rate of 10% and impose new taxes on all sources of natural wealth, bringing to mind Henry George's single-tax theory of the 19th century. Naturally, Sinclair proposed that the fiscal foundation for his programs was to be the state sale of bonds. Sophisticated political observers considered Sinclair's program weird and fantastic, but to people crying for salvation he did not appear as a Socialist intruder.

Sinclair campaigned energetically in a broken-down automobile that often barely made it from town to town — he appar-

ently understood the importance of image over reality, and had no problem referring to himself as a "dyed-in-the-wool socialist" while living very well, but realized he had to look the part in public. In any case, many people bought what he was selling for in a short time more than 800 Sinclair Clubs were formed in his wake along with thousands of pamphlets. Carey McWilliams sagely observed that

So swiftly had the Depression engulfed thousands upon thousands of middle-class elements in California that people thought nothing of enlisting in the campaign of an internationally famous Socialist, selling his pamphlets and books, and preaching the doctrines of "production for use."

Even Upton Sinclair was amazed at the huge receptions that met him on the campaign trail.

In the California primary of August, 1934, Sinclair stunned Democratic party politicians by receiving 436,000 votes, a majority of the total votes cast for the half-dozen candidates. In the Republican primary the very conservative Governor

Frank Merriam won by a plurality over three fairly progressive candidates. George Creel (defeated by Sinclair in the Democratic primary) bitterly remarked that the voters of California were left with a "choice between epilepsy and catalepsy; Sinclair had a fantastic impossible plan, and Merriam is as modern as the dinosaur age."

liberal Democrat, with very little support from the press. Sinclair also had a rare talent for making quick enemies by his abrupt manner. He had refused, for example, to support the good doctor from Long Beach, Dr. Francis Townsend, and his old age pension plan. Sinclair argued that he was interested in production, and that pro-

organized special committees to help defeat him.

With the Democratic nomination securely behind him Sinclair rushed to the East for a conference with President Franklin D. Roosevelt, not realizing that the national Democratic administration regarded his candidacy as most embarrassing



*Upton Sinclair, Candidate for Governor of California -
Addresses Inglewood Audience
of Centinella Bowl
July 11, 1934*

Sinclair at a stump speech at Inglewood in 1934. That year statewide farm income was down by 40%, half a million Angelenos alone were on relief, the governor called out the National Guard to put down a maritime strike, and Sinclair won the Democratic primary with 436,000 votes.

The Democrats, however, had no candidate of their own to prevent the Socialist pamphleteer from capturing their party. They had not developed political leadership in the recent past, and when the Republican party made such a poor showing in California's political scene the Democrats were caught unprepared. When Sinclair registered as a Democrat he was repudiated by the Socialist party, denounced as a "social fascist" by the Communist party, and ended up playing the role of a left-wing

duction came before distribution. Sinclair also lost a great deal of support from the traditional citizens groups because they saw his "land colony" concept as threatening and because of the hostility garnered when members of the clergy took to their various pulpits their strong objections to his book *Profits of Religion*. On top of this, Sinclair was plagued with internal party strife over a misunderstanding in interpreting the party platform. Democrat George Creel not only broke with Sinclair but also actively

and unwelcome. Repudiated by both the Democratic and Socialist parties, Sinclair stopped in Detroit on what only can be explained as a desperate fishing expedition to visit with Father Coughlin, the notorious political priest, who promised to endorse Sinclair's programs. Later, however, Father Coughlin denied that he had given his approval, and publicly excoriated Sinclair's basic ideas. Sinclair, for his part, never openly supported Coughlin's fascist concepts. Slowly, Sinclair was learning

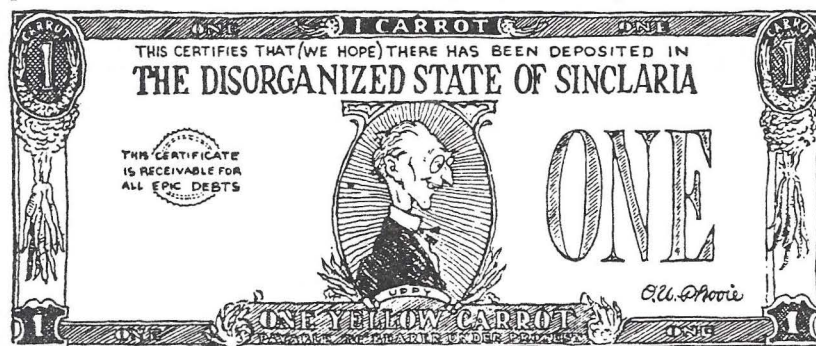
about the treacherous swamps and quicksand that were part of the terrain in political fields. A variation of the Coughlin experience awaited Sinclair in Hyde Park, New York, where he visited Franklin D. Roosevelt, whom he admiringly called "that keen man." Roosevelt told Sinclair that he was coming out in favor of production for use, but later remained silent and did not support Sinclair. Many political observers have argued that if Sinclair could have won Roosevelt's support he might have won the election. All that is certain, however, is that the President's silence hurt Sinclair's campaign; it is difficult to determine how much.

"California, here we come, every beggar every bum ..." The campaign for governor was a bitter one. By this time the California Republicans were now thoroughly frightened, and the California economic establishment almost terrified on contemplating the idea of Upton Sinclair in charge in Sacramento. To these people, the economic implication of Sinclair's EPIC program was that chaos had come to California. The 1934 campaign for governor of California was a vicious one — and a classic case in American politics. Sinclair's opposition mobilized the resources of public relations firms, advertising firms, and the radio and movie industry. Their main objective was a personal and vicious attack on Upton Sinclair, and they spent almost ten million dollars doing it — an astronomical sum in those days. Sinclair was painted as the devil incarnate: "They pinned horns and a tail on me," complained Sinclair. He was variously accused of being "an agent of Moscow," "a fascist," of carrying on "amatory monkey-shines," and "a fly-by-night, will-o'-the-wisp utopian campaign." In one of Gladwin Hill's Dancing Bear chapters, "Utopia Limited: The Sinclair Uprising," he gives a blow-by-blow comic analysis of the extent to which Sinclair's opposition went to defeat him. It does confirm the old adage that truth is indeed stranger than fiction, because Hill's description defies belief. Hill describes how certain high-salaried employees in the movie industry were "pressured" into contributing one day's pay to an anti-Sinclair fund that exceeded \$500,000. Another howler is Hill's description of the series of newsreels that depict trainloads of elderly indigents and Bolsheviks pouring into California. The press, of

course, had to get into the act and a fiction serial entitled "Thunder Over California" described a picture of oppression under a Sinclair administration, and one exposé actually had a photograph of a tramp-laden boxcar (labeled "California Special"), along with this verse in the article:

California, here we come!
Every beggar, every bum
We'll soon be with you, you can bet
When your Sinclair plan is set.
Hail to thee, our Soviet!
California, here we come!

Billboards, form letters, payroll slips and public posters were used, even a disgraceful attempt to disqualify 24,000 Democratic voters on the false grounds of invalid registration. It is difficult to imagine how large was the spectre of fear that loomed over the fair skies of the Golden Bear State in the fall of 1934. One of history's most difficult tasks is trying to capture the true spirit of the climate of opinion that prevailed at one particular time in history. A good example



Anti-Sinclair "funny money." Sinclair countered with the booklet *The Lie Factory Starts*.

of this is trying to capture the feeling of the events that made up the Great Depression. As Talleyrand once remarked in another context: "Only those who had lived in the 'ancien regime' can truly capture the flavor of this day!"

The fear that Sinclair might be elected spawned anti-Sinclair committees — the California League Against Sinclairism, the Nonpartisan Merriam for Governor Club, United for California League and the League Against Religious Intolerance to name only a few. The abortive attempt of national party leaders to get Sinclair to withdraw from the race in favor of Raymond Haight only revealed how desperate Sinclair's opposition was at that time.

Voters turned out in record numbers on November 6, 1934, to defeat the EPIC movement and Upton Sinclair's political ambitions. Thirty years later Sinclair told Gladwin Hill that "I felt utterly unqualified to be governor. I didn't go into the campaign to win. My main purpose was educa-

tion and propoganda." This is difficult to believe; at one time after the primary Sinclair did express the thought that winning the governorship was now within reach, and many's the also-ran who claims he or she only did it to publicize their issues. Actually, considering his handicaps, Sinclair did remarkably well. Some observers of the 1934 political scene would have argued that almost any Democrat could have defeated Merriam, and that choosing a man with Sinclair's background and ideology galvanized the California voters into a confrontation that resulted in the election of a poor governor. Others, like historian Walton Bean, would condemn Sinclair for running for governor:

Upton Sinclair was a completely well-meaning and in many ways an admirable man, but the damage he did to the Democratic Party and to the New Deal liberalism in California was enormous and its after effects were apparent for decades. One result was the long era of Republicans Earl Warren and Goodwin J. Knight, and their success in winning the votes of Democrats with a revival of the Hiram Johnson tradition of so-called "non-partisan-ship."

California was and still is a Brobdingnagian giant, turning restlessly as always from waves of self-confidence to moods of self-doubt. California had reason

to fall into a mood of despair in the 1930s, and people like Sinclair offered hope, a faith in the future and, true, even a panacea called EPIC that might have been a passport to Utopia. The quest for security is not un-American, and, as Mahatma Gandhi once said, "To believe what has not occurred in history will not occur at all is to argue disbelief in the dignity of man."

When Upton Sinclair died at the age of 90 he had made more than a million dollars and had given most of it away. He candidly admitted that all of his life the only thing he really cared about was social justice. His death left America and California with a legacy: he held up the mirror to American society, causing the nation to reflect on the image of itself. At the time his actions caused quite a stir and may have seemed heretical to many, but today graduated income and inheritance taxes, state income taxes, public works projects and even old age pensions are accepted as integral parts of our civic and economic lives. The Great

Depression provided an opportunity to experiment with the American economic system, and California was then, as it is now, in the forefront, a huge testing laboratory for the American experience. Though Sinclair and his EPIC program may have lost at the ballot box, it would be a mistake to write off the entire experiment as madness. Sinclair's movement helped to strengthen the Democratic Party in California notwithstanding Bean's above-cited observation, because prior to EPIC it had been a minority party (in terms of registration) whereas in the years that followed EPIC it became the majority party. Men like Jerry Voorhis, Sheridan Downey and Culbert Olson had been active in EPIC and went on to party leadership posts, changing the political face of the Democratic party. The EPIC crusade put pressure on the New Deal, and had some impact on federal legislation.

Sinclair and the EPIC crusade provided a vehicle for many Americans, acting within the American democratic tradition, to protest and to be heard. Sinclair's basic philosophy survived in diverse forms in later years. If his philosophy was ahead of its time, his motivation was honest and genuine. Maeterlinck, in his *Wisdom and Destiny*, wrote, "Let us hope that one day all mankind will be happy and wise, and through this day never should dawn, to have hoped for it can not be wrong." Thirty-eight per cent of the California voters in 1934 were willing to give Upton Sinclair a chance to "end poverty in California." He was undeniably a man to be taken seriously, as is evident in the verse of a Washington Post columnist who concisely captured President Franklin D. Roosevelt's dilemma:

This is the question that's
Thinning my hair
What'll I do about
Upton Sinclair?



From author to reader: Two highly reliable sources on Upton Sinclair are

1) The Lilly Library of Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, 47405-301 where Sue Presnell, research co-ordinator, can guide you to a fine collection of Upton Sinclair photographs as well as most of his papers, also in that collection. To use any of the materials on Upton Sinclair one must obtain publication permission from Sinclair's literary agent, Bertha Klausner (71 Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016). Also, there are some materials in the Special Collections of the Honnold Library, of the Associated Colleges, Claremont, Calif. 91711.

2) Upton Sinclair's own books and novels are an excellent source of his ideas. On his

ideas and theories on American education (he was a harsh critic) see my article "Upton Sinclair: A Harsh Critic of American Education," *Review Journal of Philosophy and Social Science*, XVIII, Nos 1 & 2 (1993), 39-67. Most standard texts on California, such as those by Walton Bean, Andrew Rolle, John Caughey and R.J. Roske, carry a section on Upton Sinclair's work.

The following sources also might be of some value:

- A unique tract is Upton Sinclair's, *We, People of America and How We Ended Poverty* (Pasadena, Calif., National Epic League, 1935).

- For a solid overview of Sinclair's activities see John Caughey's *California: A History of a Remarkable State* (Englewood

"Upton Sinclair was in many ways an admirable man, but the damage he did to the Democratic Party and New Deal liberalism in California was enormous. One result was the long era of Republicans ... with a revival of Hiram Johnson's so-called 'non-partisanship'."

— Walton Bean

Cliffs, N.J., 1982), Chap. 24, titled "The Great Depression."

- A fine review is Leon Harris's *Upton Sinclair: American Rebel* (New York, N.Y., 1975); and Upton Sinclair, ed., *The Cry for Justice* (New York, N.Y., 1963), an anthology of the literature of social justice and protest brought on by the awesome conditions of the Great Depression in America (1929-1939).

- Other good sources are William A. Bloodworth, Jr.'s *Upton Sinclair* (Boston, 1977), Chapter IX, on "The Thirties," Upton Sinclair's *The Way Out: What Lies Ahead For America* (Pasadena, Cal., 1933), and Charles E. Larson's "The EPIC Campaign of 1934," *Pacific Historical Review*, (1958). All the Carey McWilliams pieces such as *California: The Great Exception*, explain Sinclairism and its impact on California.

- An unusual piece on Sinclair is Harvey Swados' "The World of Upton Sinclair," *Atlantic Monthly* (December 1961), 96-

102, and C. Hartley Grattan's "The Autobiography of an Idealist," *Nation*, (13 April 1932). See also Upton Sinclair's pamphlet, *I, Governor of California, And How I Ended Poverty: A True Story of the Future* (Los Angeles, 1933).

Regarding Sinclair's character see David A. Remley's "Upton Sinclair and H.L. Mencken in Correspondence: 'An Illustration on How Not To Agree,'" *Southern California Quarterly* (Winter, 1974), and Jan Yoder's *Upton Sinclair* (New York, N.Y., 1975).

See also Upton Sinclair's "What Life Means to Me," *Cosmopolitan* (October, 1906); Judson A. Grenier's "Upton Sinclair: A Remembrance," *California Historical Society Quarterly* (June 1969); and Charles P. Silet's "The Upton Sinclair Archives," *Southern California Quarterly*, (Winter, 1974).

A very good source is Judson Grenier's "Upton Sinclair: The Road to California," *Southern California Quarterly* (Winter, 1974).

A good source is Upton Sinclair's *My Lifetime in Letters* (Columbia, Mo., 1960), and his *American Outpost: A Book of Reminiscences* (New York, N.Y., 1932). For an almost-good listing of Sinclair's work see Ronald Gottesman's *Upton Sinclair: An Annotated Check-list* (Oberlin, Ohio, 1973).

Most of the newspapers were not kind to Upton Sinclair, and treated him like some kind of a crackpot. On this see *The Los Angeles Times*, Nov. 5, 1934, Sept. 27, 1934, and the *Los Angeles Daily News*, July 10, 1934, and July 16, 1934. Only Manchester's *Illustrated Daily News* supported Sinclair's EPIC; while the *San Francisco News* did not support Sinclair, at least it confined its views to the editorial pages.

See also Upton Sinclair's *The Way Out — What Lies Ahead For America?* (New York, N.Y. 1934), and *The Epic News* (for a series of articles by Upton Sinclair which shed light on his ideas); March 3, 1934, "Building the New Society," and 11 June 1934, "EPIC is Workingman's Way Out," and "The Lie Factory Starts," 23 July 1934.

Program Lecture NCP

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