

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

September 20, 1950

### **More of Stoddard**

On July 27, 1905, Charles Warren Stoddard reported in his diary, written in Monterey, that he bought a bottle of good French claret and for the second time called upon Jules Simoneau, the friend of artists and writers.

"As I entered his house," he recalls, "his wife met me and welcomed me. Jules was in the little dining room back of the front room; with him was Pete Serrano, who kept a livery stable in the old days and who drove Tavernier, Joe Strong, Fred Somers, Willie Woodworth and the rest of us to Cypress Point in 1875, where we camped and had a glorious time. Baron Carl von Perbandt was also with us – then an impoverished artist, now come into his own and more the happier.

"I presented my claret to Jules, who called 'Charlie.' I was a little late, for Jules had his own bottle open and was happy over it. He wanted to know where I was staying. It seems Peter Serrano is running the Alta Vista, on the street below and had rooms for rent. (The Alta Vista was the adobe building which stood where the Pacific Telephone building now is).

"I copied the inscriptions in the books which Stevenson sent to Simoneau. Some are well worth preserving in print. He has a copy of the author's private edition of 'An Open Letter to Dr. Hyde,' but not inscribed. I read two of R.L.S.'s letters to Simoneau – he had had others but they have disappeared – he knows not where. They are kindly letters, written from a warm heart – a heart that has warmed itself at the fires of a heart that is still aglow at 85.

"I said to Jules, 'I believe that Louis in those days must have been often hungry – but for you!' He said: 'But for me Louis would not have written the books he afterward wrote.' And there was no boasting in it."

On his way back to Casa Verde Stoddard wrote that his very heart leaped up at the sight of a full-rigged ship anchored in the harbor. She was evidently to spend the night – her sails unfurled. He could see her iron hull – dull red or black, with the white point of the cabin above.

The next day Stoddard relates that he had received a phone call from Charles Rollo Peters and wanted him to call. He "footed it there." He tried to follow Harry Greene's instructions, but alas! The way was long,

sandy, dusty, up-hilly and seemed to him most unattractive, he relates. He got into the grounds of the wrong house, then cut across lots and was almost in despair when a maiden rode up on horseback and showed him into the kitchen garden of the Peters' studio. (The studio is now occupied by Mrs. Jane Todd and is on Grove street in Monterey).

Stoddard reports on the visit: "He gave me a hearty welcome. Seems not to have changed much in the four and 20 years since I last saw him. He was a natty sort of Latin-quarter boy in those days, singing French songs in the back of his throat with quite the French effect – they all sing without voices; he was one of the joys of Charlie Fosters' Hacienda while Harry Gillig, Frank Ungers, Julian Rix, Teddy Holden, George Negle and their like were all so gay and happy. Charles Peters' house is thoroughly artistic, filled with pretty and artistic things. An antique Madonna, wooden, gilt, under a carved canopy – from Spain, greatly pleased me. Two models of ships – one full rigged, hull and rigging of bone – were my delight.

"Over the wooden mantel, or, rather burned into it, is this legend: 'Don't Worry – the philosophy of Daniel O'Connell.' Dan didn't worry much. His philosophy has been the religion of all philosophers since the world began." (Daniel O'Connell wrote the verses "In the Mantle of Old Tradition' on the monument in front of Colton Hall).

"C.P. likes best the view of the hills that are close at hand. I should choose the sea above all other miracles of nature; he is on the very edge of the woods; has an abundance of flowers and vegetables. I am to dine with him when he gets a cook; and drive with him when his horse gets over its lameness." Charles Rollo Peters was one of the best-known artists of Monterey in those days and his painting are still treasured possessions.

Stoddard writes on July 29: "Harry Greene presented me to Mr. Johnson, the mayor of Monterey, who lives in the old Thos. O. Larkin house – where Joe Strong, Willie Woodworth and I used to room seven and 20 years ago. He is half Spanish – his wife and the house wholly that and their life is the life of old Spanish Monterey.