

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### **Nostalgia For Carmel**

Bancroftiana, published occasionally by the Friends of the Bancroft Library, University of California, has an article of interest to all old-timers on the Peninsula. It concerns the late Jimmy Hopper, Fred Bechdolt and George Sterling, all of Carmel.

Among the authors who came to Carmel in 1906 and helped create its fame as a literary and artistic colony was James M. Harper, the popular writer more commonly and familiarly known as Jimmy Hopper. Like many of the other Carmel pioneers, he was a friend of Sterling, Upton Sinclair, Sinclair Lewis, and like them, too, he was a Californian by adoption.

He was born in Paris July 23, 1876 and brought to the United States at the age of 10. He attended public school in Oakland, went to the University of California, winning fame as a quarterback on the football team and as one of the trio that reputedly stole the Stanford Ax in 1898. He later studied at Hastings College of Law and was admitted to the California bar. But, instead of practicing law, he took a job as reporter on the San Francisco Chronicle, then he taught school in the Philippines, where he gathered material for his first book, "Cayblgan" (1906), a collection of short stories.

Finally returning to the United States, Hopper embarked on a writing career, which he pursued seriously and successfully, with several novels, more than 400 stories published in leading popular magazines like Collier's and the Saturday Evening Post, and non-fiction, including his syndicated articles as a foreign correspondent at the front during the first World War. i

The Bancroft Library recently purchased Hopper's papers, thereby enriching its Western Authors' Collection not only in respect to Hooper, but also his many writer friends - George Sterling in particular. These letters, over 50 in number and covering a span of 20 years, present an absorbing picture of the struggling young author and his encounters, with publishers and authors.

One of Hopper's first books was "9009," a novel on prison life, written in collaboration with Frederick S. Bechdolt. The notes in Bancroftiana relate that the book was difficult to market. One interested publisher

wanted some corroborative evidence of the essential truth of the story.

"A cold shiver ran up my spine," Hopper wrote Sterling, "as I thought of it: for I know nothing, come right down to it, of the truth of these things. I got 'em all from Bech. And, say, suppose Bech should be a liar!" The book published by The McClure Co. in 1908, created quite a stir. Hopper's Carmel home, in, later years, came to be known as Cottage 9009.

"While nostalgia for Carmel runs throughout his letters to Sterling, equally strong was his love for his native Paris. He lived for a time in France, and he tried to explain his longings," quotes the notes in Bancroftiana, "but there's a desire for new places and a nostalgia of the old that keeps me forever in a fever of longing. I can't tell you, for instance what a delight to my soul is the delicate aquarelle beauty of France and things French; and yet all the time I am sighing for the golden aridity of Carmel land. When I'll be there, it will vice-versa. But it was to Carmel he returned eventually, and it was there he spent the closing years of his life until his death in 1956.

The California Historical Society has been named by the Division of Beaches and Parks as the official sponsor for the observance of the 150th anniversary of the founding of Fort Ross and its dedication as a registered historical landmark. The society is planning a special chartered bus tour to the fort on Aug. 18 for the dedication ceremony featuring an outstanding speaker on the Russians in California.

National registration is a means by which the federal government extends recognition to significant sites and encourages local folks to continue the fight to preserve them. There are only 24 such landmarks in California, and only three of these have been marked with plaques.

The plaque to be unveiled at Fort Ross will be the fourth.

From June 27 to July 15 San Franciscans will celebrate the 186th birthday of that city. A full and varied program has been prepared by the citizen's committee. Mrs. George Applegarth of San Francisco and Carmel, is the chairman of the San Francisco Founding Day Committee.