

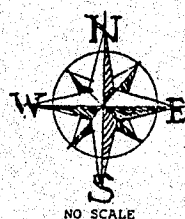
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MONTEREY PENINSULA

SHOWING SITES VISITED BY
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON
IN 1879

In late August of 1879, RLS came to Monterey following Fanny Osbourne, a married woman with children and ten years his senior. Fanny had separated from her husband and was staying with her sister in Monterey. RLS had met and wooed Fanny in France three years earlier. In spite of lingering illnesses and the opposition of his family in Edinburgh, he crossed half the world in most unaccustomed, humble accommodations to rejoin the love of his life. While here, RLS toured its many beautiful places and engaged the friendship of the cosmopolitan and colorful Montereyans of those days. In late December, RLS left for San Francisco, where he and Fanny were married. The Tour Map above indicates many of the associated sites.

MAP LEGEND and RELATED QUOTATIONS

Quotations are taken from various Robert Louis Stevenson Letters and *The Old Pacific Capitol*, an RLS essay first published in 1880.

Sites are all located in Monterey, except as otherwise noted.

1. **STEVENSON HOUSE**, 520 Houston Street. This Spanish era adobe building was known as Girardin's French Hotel at the time of RLS' stay here in the fall of 1879. Today it is operated as an RLS museum by California State Parks. Much Stevenson family furniture and memorabilia is contained there. Daily tours are available.

"Then home to my great airy rooms with five windows opening on a balcony; I sleep on the floor in my camp blankets, you install yourself abed; in the morning coffee with the little doctor and his little wife;"

Although often ill "with pleurisy" and other ailments, RLS continued his writing.

"At times I get terribly frightened about my work which seems to advance too slowly."

In fact while in Monterey, RLS wrote the greater part of his cross-America story, *The Amateur Immigrant*; a novel, *A Vendetta in the West*; a complete smaller work, *Pavilion in the Links*; numerous magazine articles and even contributions to the local "rag", the *Monterey Californian*. And of course, his stay in Monterey inspired his 1880 essay about the visit, *The Old Pacific Capitol*.

"I have done towers of work since I have been here"

2. **SIMONEAU PLAZA**. This triangular site is located at the intersection of Munras, Pearl and Tyler Streets. It is the former location of Jules Simoneau's restaurant, where RLS took most of his meals and spent many hours in conversation with Simoneau.

"I take one of my meals in the little French restaurant.... Jules Simoneau is a most pleasant old boy with whom I discuss the universe and play chess..."

"...Simoneau's little white-washed back room, around a dirty table cloth, with Francois the baker, perhaps an Italian fisherman, perhaps Augustin Dutra, and Simoneau himself."

3. **ALVARADO STREET**. As in 1879, this street is remains Monterey's "Main Street". It extends a short distance from the historic Spanish era Custom House and Pacific adobe buildings, near today's Fishermans Wharf, up the street to the recently restored Cooper-Molera adobe complex.

"The town was a place of two or three streets, economically paved with sea sand,... and two or three water courses in the rainy season."

"Thence we walk up Alvarado Street....you are now floundering in the sand, now merrily stomping on the wooden sidewalks... The town then was essentially..Mexican"...doing all things with grace and decorum...In dress they ran to colour and bright sashes."

"You would scarcely ever see the main street without a horse or two tied to posts....in and around the saloons..people sat almost all day long playing cards...Night after night serenaders would be going about the street."

4. **MONTEREY BEACHES**, on Monterey Bay. Although the sandy beaches RLS walked have been in part covered with wharfs and other structures in this century, much still remains at the eastern approach to downtown Monterey.

"These long beaches are enticing to the idle man.... the bones of whales or sometimes a whole whale's carcass, lie scattered here and there... The waves come in slowly, vast and green, curve their translucent necks, and burst with surprising uproar, up and down the long keyboard of the beach."

5. **LAKE EL ESTERO**. At the time of RLS' stay in Monterey, this tidal-fresh water basin fed by streams from the hills around had a third arm extending towards Alvarado Street. North of the lake, in those times, stretched only wide sandy beaches. This lake had serviced the water needs of nearby Royal Presidio of Monterey since its founding in 1770.

"Here and there a lagoon attracts the birds and hunters... The croaching, hardy live-oaks flourish singly or in thickets....skirts of the forest extend downward from the hills with.. long aisles of pine trees."

6. **SAN CARLOS CHURCH**, on Church Street off Abrego and Fremont Streets. This stone chapel, built in 1794 as part of the Royal Presidio of Monterey is one of the earliest and most important buildings in the Far West. It has been continuously used as Monterey's Catholic church since its construction.

RLS prepared, with help from his cronies at Simoneau's place, 200 "Padre Dos Reales" posters which they tacked up all over town (including the church door) during the night hours. The poster protested an unexpected lack of generosity by the church Pastor for a fellow Italian immigrant in need. "Almost all the posters were destroyed by morning"

7. **NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL**, off Del Monte Avenue. This U.S. Navy university is on the site of the elegant, old Del Monte Hotel, built by pioneer railroad tycoons just prior to RLS' time in Monterey. Some of the original structures are still in existence.

"A huge hotel has sprung up in the desert by the railway. Three sets of diners sit down successively to table....Monterey is advertised in the newspapers... as a resort for wealth and fashion.... Alas for the little town! It is not strong enough to resist the influence of...the millionaire vulgarians of the Big Bonanza."

8. **SKYLINE FOREST**, traversed by Highway 68. The Monterey Pine forest which covered much of the peninsula during RLS stay is diminished today, invaded by residential neighborhoods. The skyline hills that RLS walked are best walked today along city pathways and parks. Certain points on the crestline still afford sweeping views of Monterey Bay and the Pacific Ocean.

"Mount the hill among pine trees.... you are on top of Monterey Peninsula..."
"I can hear the seas breaking all around over the ten miles of coast from near Carmel on my left, out to Point Pinos in front, and away to the right along the sand of Monterey to Castroville and the mouth of the Salinas (River)."

9. **CENTRAL AVENUE**, Pacific Grove. This pleasant street bordered by many, charming late Victorian-period residences and churches, remains as in 1879, the main connecting road between Monterey and Pacific Grove.

"Facing down the main thoroughfare... I saw an open-air temple, with benches... I have never been in any place that seemed so dream-like."

10. **HOPKINS MARINE LAB**, on Ocean View Avenue, Pacific Grove. These university research buildings are on Cabrillo Point, also called China Point to commemorate the site of the Peninsula's 19th century "Chinatown". This large shantytown of Chinese immigrants mysteriously burned to the ground in 1906.

"... you will come upon a space of open down, a hamlet, a haven among the rocks.... and if you walk into the hamlet, you will behold costumes and faces and hear a tongue that are unfamiliar...The joss-stick burns...and a man writes home the news of Monterey to the Celestial Empire."

11. **LOVERS POINT**, on Ocean View Avenue, Pacific Grove. Originally, this rocky point protruding into Monterey Bay, was called "Lovers of Jesus Point" by the early Methodists who had subdivided and built a large religious encampment in Pacific Grove.

"One day...without leaving the woods, I found myself among trim houses. I walked through street after street, paved with sward and dotted with trees.... The houses were all tightly shuttered... no smoke, no sound but the waves..."

12. **PT. PINOS LIGHTHOUSE**, on Asilomar Boulevard, Pacific Grove. This lighthouse was built in 1855 on the edge of Point Pinos, to help reduce the frequent and tragic shipwrecks on its rough and rocky shores. The lighthouse is no longer occupied by a keeper but its beacon continues to protect mariners. The building is operated as a museum today with tours available.

"Westward is Point Pinos, with lighthouse in a wilderness of sand, where you will find the lightkeeper playing the piano.. and other elegant pursuits and interests... to surprise his brave, old-country rivals."

13. **MISSION SAN CARLOS**, on Rio Road, Carmel. Built circa 1797 in stone by the same mason who built the Presidio Chapel in Monterey. This restored and partly rebuilt building is part of a large mission complex built by Franciscan friars, in Carmel near the mouth of the Carmel River to take advantage of the nearby fertile fields and ample water. Some say that another reason was to move the native inhabitants away from the soldiers at the Presidio in Monterey.

"...a ruined mission on a hill, ..the eye embraces a great field of ocean.... there is no one left to care for the converted savage. The church is roofless..as an antiquity in this new land. Only one day in the year... the padre drives over the hill from Monterey; and there (in) the little sacristy, which is the only covered part...you may hear God served."

14. **PT. LOBOS**, off Highway 1. This magnificent peninsula about 1-2 miles south of Carmel is a beautiful massing of rocks, beaches, trees and ocean shore. Today it is operated as a State Parks preserve and is open for tours. In the last century, it was well known and visited for its remarkable beauty. One might easily assume that RLS visited here during his wanderings in the Carmel area. Some speculate that this peninsula's shape and general appearance influenced RLS' concept of his imaginary "Treasure Island".

Of the general area RLS said: *"This is a lovely place, which I am growing to love. The Pacific licks all other oceans out of hand; there is no place but the Pacific Coast to hear eternal roaring surf."*

15. **CARMEL VALLEY**, accessed by Carmel Valley Road off Highway 1. This narrow valley extends from the sandy shores of the Pacific for over 30 miles, following a rather creeklike "river" past old ranch sites and an increasing number of residential developments. The verdant tranquility of this lovely valley contained between high hills on both sides, somehow still survives, and probably looks much as it did when RLS rode his horse up its trails in 1879.

"The valley drained by the river so named is a true Californian valley, bare, dotted with chaparral, overlooked by quaint, unfinished hills. The Carmel runs past many pleasant farms, a clear and shallow river, loved by wading kine..."

16. **GOAT RANCHE**, Carmel Valley. Site of Jonathon Wright's cabin high up in a hidden pocket of Carmel Valley. Accessible by special arrangement with the Rancho San Carlos Corporation. The cabin stood intact, if dilapidated, into the early 1990s when a severe storm brought it down. Today, only the stone fireplace and chimney stands. Adjacent, several living fruit trees that probably date to when RLS convalesced here, still stand.

"I am living at an angora goat ranche,...eighteen miles from Monterey. I was camping out, but got so sick that two rancheros took me in and tended me. One..an old bear hunter, seventy-two years old,..is my physician....the other a pilgrim and one who was out with the bear flag and under Fremont when California was taken by the States..both true froniersmen, and most kind and pleasant.... I still suffer nearly as much distress as ever. I work at my notes of the voyage...I teach the ranche children reading in the morning..."

17. **SIMONEAU HOUSE**, at 456 Van Buren Street. This slightly remodeled cottage is now used by a local university. Jules Simoneau lived here with his wife. The residence was often called the "Fuschia House", reflecting Simoneau's love and extensive use of fuschia plantings around the house. Simoneau frequently hosted RLS here as well as at his restaurant nearby.

18. **RAILROAD TRACKS**, near Del Monte Avenue. The current walking trail lies on the abandoned track bed that once held the narrow gauge railroad that brought RLS to Monterey from Salinas, some 15 miles to the east.

"Through this quaint desert the railway cars drew near to Monterey from the junction at Salinas City...and it was from here that you got a first view of the old township lying in the sands.... and the first fogs of evening drawing drearily around it from the sea."