



Robert Louis Stevenson Club of Monterey



Celebrating the life and works of RLS since 1994

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Calendar of Coming Events

Dates and Time subject to change- updates will be emailed

Saturday, August 31, 1-4 pm.

Picnic/Tour celebrating RLS's 1879 arrival, Carmel Valley Historical Society Museum.

Sunday, October 13, 11:30-2:30.

11:30 Tour; 1:00 pm Annual Meeting; 1:30 Lunch, Point Pinos Lighthouse with business lunch at The Grill

November 16th 2 pm Unbirthday Party at the Monterey Public Library Community Room

December 13 & 14 Christmas in the Adobes, Monterey State Historic Park. Featuring the Stevenson House 5-9 pm

President's Message by Monica Hudson

One thing we can always count on is change. One of the exciting changes in our RLS club life has been the establishment of our very own website just a few years ago. Our current administrator, Bob Fisher, is doing a wonderful job of organizing the topics, sorting them into categories making the research easy and the reading fun. We get a monthly update from which we can see how many "visitors" and "views" the site has experienced. I encourage you all to "stop by" at <https://rlsclubmonterey.org/>. Settle in for a good read and a rediscovery how the Monterey Peninsula is intimately linked to RLS through its places and people. These people, who influenced RLS, take shape in the stories on our website. The time will fly and you come away looking at your everyday surroundings through the eyes of RLS. Bon voyage!

Welcome back to returning member **Katharine Harlow!**



RLS members at the Anniversary Tea; held in Monica Hudson's garden, see page 2

Event Highlights to date in 2024

RLS Club Book Salon

Hostess for our salon discussion of "*Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* " was **Maureen Bianchini**, held on March 16th. We had meaningful dialogues that deepened our comprehension of the story. The tale reflects Stevenson's concept of the duality of human nature and the importance of our choices. Comments were made about Victorian society and the moral contradictions RLS would have observed. The serum concocted by Dr. Jekyll may have reflected the wide use of alcohol and drugs at the time.

Delicious refreshments were served amidst friendly camaraderie. We look forward to future events at Maureen's!

GenTrain Event

On May 15th, singer, guitarist and historian, David Gordon showcased and moved his audience with the rich cultural heritage of Scotland in a colorful program of 18th & 19th century Scottish songs and stories. He gave a special nod to Stevenson with rarely heard lyrics by RLS for several well-known songs of his time. Much like a troubadour, David's performance also featured ballads by Robert Burns (1759-1796), words by Margaret Oliphant (1828-1897) and a tale of *Robert the Bruce* (1274-1329).

The event was part of the free Gentrain Lecture Series at Monterey Peninsula College. The RLS Club Board thanks Gentrain for making David's presentation available to the community and kudos to David for his superb & informative performance!

Visit David's website at: WWW.Spiritsound.com



Anniversary Tea

Our annual Louis and Fanny Wedding Anniversary Tea was held at the enchanting garden of **Monica Hudson** on May 18, 2024. The peach colored tablecloths looked beautiful & displayed a vase with thistles and silver "Happy Anniversary" signs. Each place setting included a container with mints. The cover had flowers and was inscribed, "Louis and Fanny" May 19, 1880.

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Lindy Perez captivated our attention with her presentation about Belle and Joe Strong, and Nellie and Adolfo Sanchez. Where did they meet? When did they marry? Who married them? Lindy apprised us that the 4 of them were of similar ages and were frequent companions as they enjoyed social activities during their time together in Monterey. She quoted from a couple of books available at the Custom House Store, including, *"Barbizon by the Pacific"* by our friend Claudine Chalmers and *"This Life I've Loved"* by Belle (Isobel Field).

Thanks to "Mrs. Edinburgh" Joyce Burnside, for this nice picture of our May 18, 2024 Wedding Anniversary Tea! Shown is keynote speaker Lindy Perez

Keith Decker next took the stage and read entries from his old journal. He elaborated on his first public appearance when impersonating RLS. Also, he has fond memories of the elementary school programs at the Stevenson House. Keith would dress like RLS and speak with a Scottish brogue while reading from *"A Child's Garden of Verses."* The children loved it!

Our beautiful Anniversary cake was chocolate with raspberry filling- so delicious! The decorative lettering said, "HONORING LOUIS AND FANNY, 144 YEARS".

Our heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed to making this a wonderful celebration!

How to communicate with the RLS Club?

Please send an email message to
rlsclubmonterey@outlook.com

The RLS Club website
<https://rlsclubmonterey.org/>



THE LAST VOYAGE OF THE EQUATOR by Mimi Sheridan

I first came across the schooner Equator in 2004, while I was doing a survey of historic resources at the Port of Everett, north of Seattle. I found a dilapidated hull sitting under an open shelter. One sign mentioned its history with Robert Louis Stevenson and the fact that it was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. A nearby sign said “A Plan to Preserve Part of Our Past.”

The Equator was built in 1888 by a renowned shipwright, Matthew Turner, in Benicia, California. The two-masted schooner, less than 80 feet in length, was originally intended for the South Seas copra (coconut) trade. Although she was meant to carry cargo, not passengers, in 1889 Robert Louis Stevenson and his family chartered her in Hawaii to embark on an exploration of the South Pacific, ending up in Samoa.

After Stevenson’s trip, the vessel had an extremely varied history. In the 1890s, with a new steam engine, she worked primarily as a support ship for the Alaska canneries. A Seattle tugboat company purchased her in 1915, chartering her to the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey to survey the Alaskan coastline. In 1923 she ran aground on the Washington coast but was soon rescued and renovated. Her propulsion was updated once again, with a diesel engine, and she served as a tugboat until 1956, when the hull was abandoned on the jetty outside the Everett marina.

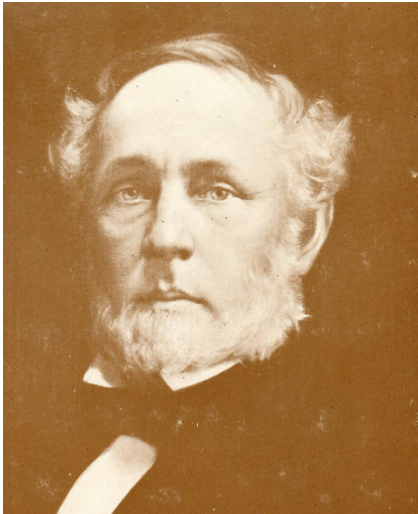
Its history was not unknown. In the 1960s a local dentist organized volunteers to haul the hull out and clean it up. She remained dry-docked at a nearby boatyard while fundraising efforts began. She was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1972. However, various efforts over more than 50 years, failed to secure enough money for restoration. In 2017 her stern collapsed, ending any hope of restoration.

The Port hosted an open house in June 2023 to celebrate the Equator and discuss the comprehensive and innovative plans to recognize the schooner’s legacy. The Port has engaged maritime archaeology and conservation students from Texas A&M University to document the vessel using state-of-the-art tools such as 3D laser scanning technology, high-definition photography, photogrammetry and wood analysis as well as traditional recording methods. Local artist John Grade will use the salvaged wood to make a large-scale sculpture honoring the Equator. A large interpretive exhibit with a model of the vessel, historical photos and a timeline of her voyages will explain and honor the Equator’s workmanship and history. Reaching out to another audience, playground equipment inspired by the schooner will be installed in a nearby children’s playground.

While the Equator was largely forgotten after Stevenson’s brief voyage, its legacy will live on in ways that he could not have imagined.

Photos of the **Equator**



REVEREND SCOTT AND THE STEVENSONS by Lindy Perez

Rev. William A. Scott

Dr. William Anderson Scott was the Presbyterian minister who married Robert Louis Stevenson and Fanny Osbourne on May 19, 1880 in San Francisco. I came across his name in a biography of another writer and was surprised that this man, out of all the ministers in the city, with his history, was the one chosen to marry them. Did they know, for example, that Dr. Scott stayed loyal to the South throughout the Civil War? that he was southern by birth and culture and had owned slaves, which he freed just before moving to San Francisco in 1854? Had they heard that he was notorious for his views in pre-war San Francisco and eventually burned in effigy and driven out of the city in 1861 because he would not criticize the Confederate states for seceding or for slavery?

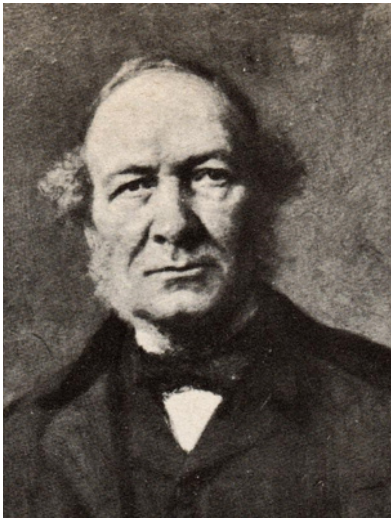
Fanny's father, we remember, was a friend of the abolitionist Henry Ward Beecher, and her first husband had served in the Union Army. Louis embraced freedom, abhorred hypocrisy, and championed the underdog all his life. In *The Amateur Emigrant*, he recorded his first encounter with American Negroes and how impressed he was by the railroad porter who was strikingly different from the portrayal by Harriet Beecher Stowe, sister of Henry.

To satisfy my curiosity about "why this minister?", I turned to a biography written in 1967 by Clifford Merrill Drury titled *William Anderson Scott "No Ordinary Man."* My reading of the life of this complicated individual left me conflicted and saddened – why would someone with extraordinary abilities, virtues, and goals refuse to be on the right side of history? Like others at the time, he was blind to the immorality of slavery.

Rev. Scott returned to San Francisco after ten years in exile, was welcomed back by parishioners, and avoided controversy from then on. The war had ended 15 years prior, so perhaps neither Fanny nor Louis knew or cared about his background. It was Louis who chose Dr. Scott, presumably because he was a Presbyterian with Scottish lineage whose church stood in a familiar neighborhood. He may have heard that Rev. Scott was considered the most eminent minister in San Francisco at the time, an Old School Presbyterian, a conservative disciple of the Church of Scotland, much like Thomas Stevenson, father of Louis. As a university student, the younger Stevenson had rebelled passionately against his father's religious orthodoxy. However, having suffered months of estrangement from his parents, personal uncertainty, and severe illness, Louis had finally received a cable from his father which promised a regular allowance and support for his marriage to Fanny. The eager bridegroom was in a forgiving and grateful frame of mind!

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Thomas Stevenson

No doubt, Louis was strongly attracted to the elderly Rev. Scott, who was warm and genial, intelligent, well-traveled and highly educated. The two exchanged theological books at their first meeting: Scott gifted one of his own and Louis gave Scott his personal copy of Thomas Stevenson's work "Defense of Christianity," which he had carried throughout his travels. The senior Stevenson was a devout Calvinist and amateur theologian, aside from his engineering expertise.

It is more than likely that William A. Scott reminded Louis of his father. They were about the same age, had a similar broad build, and were popular personalities in their respective circles. Both harbored self-doubt and melancholy. Jules Simoneau in Monterey may have been the father-figure Louis wanted, while Rev. Scott was the father-figure he had.

Memorable Quotes from RLS's writings

- *Our business in life is not to succeed, but to continue to fail in good spirits*
- *To travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive.*
- *We are all travelers in the wilderness of this world, and the best we can find in our travels is an honest friend.*
- *There is no duty we so much underrate as the duty of being happy. By being happy we sow anonymous benefits upon the world.*

