



Robert Louis Stevenson Club of Monterey



Celebrating the life and works of RLS since 1994

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No President's Message for this issue but please enjoy the picture and articles for our club events over the past 6 months!



Anniversary Tea at Hudson's Garden

Calendar of Upcoming Events

- Sunday, August 30th -Stevenson House for Trotter Talk
- Sunday, October 11th 2-4 pm Annual Meeting at Black Bear Diner
- Saturday, November 14th 2-4 pm RLS Unbirthday Party at Monterey Library

See page 6 of the Newsletter for more information on Upcoming Events!

Stay tuned via email for updates and postings on RLS Club website

How to communicate with the RLS Club?

Please send an email to rlsclubmonterey@outlook.com

<https://rlsclubmonterey.org/>



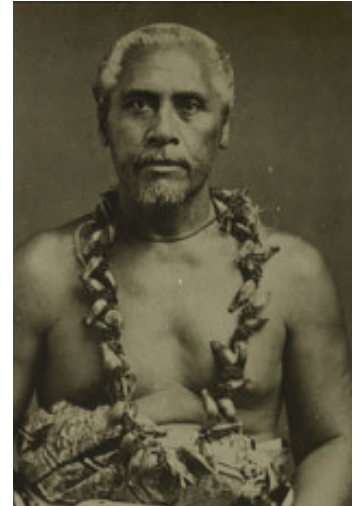
Event Highlights to date- January 2026--June 2025

Zoom Salon - February 21, 2026

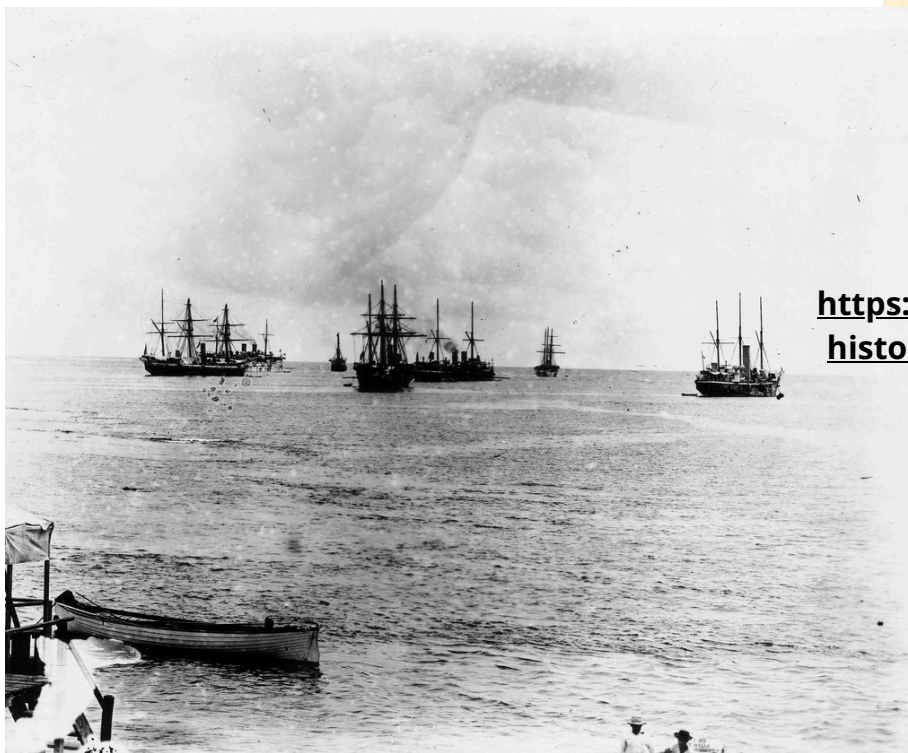
It is always fun to look forward to seeing members from near and far who share our love and interest in RLS. So on February 21st Club President Monica Hudson led a discussion of Robert Louis Stevenson's time in Samoa, focusing on his work "Footnote to History." We gathered to tackle RLS' non-fiction work in which he details the political turmoil and civil unrest in Samoa. RLS became deeply involved in local politics and was advocating for the Samoan people against the colonial interests of Germany, Great Britain and the United States.

Through firsthand accounts and keen observations, Stevenson exposed the rivalries between the colonial powers, and the devastating consequences for the Samoans. He had grown to love the Samoan people and had decided to make his home in Samoa. Compelled to help them he used his pen as his primary weapon in a series of letters to The Times of London to expose colonial intrigues and mismanagement. This photo below illustrates how the western powers were still very much dominating the scene 5 years after RLS time. Here is a link to the zoom discussion.

https://rlsclubmonterey.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/gmt20260221-180921_recording_640x360.mp4



Samoa King Mataafa supported by RLS



German, British and American warships in Apia harbor, 1899, Samoa
By Alfred John Tattersall (1861-1951) - National Library of New Zealand, Public Domain

FOOTNOTE TO HISTORY
EIGHT YEARS OF TROUBLE
IN SAMOA

Read the book at

<https://archive.org/details/footnoteto-histor00stevrich/page/n7/mode/2up>

February 21, 2026 Monterey Library Friends and Foundation's Chocolate and Wine Event

Ruth Krotzer, as the RLS Club board representative, enjoyed a time of decadent sweets, wine, music, and camaraderie during the Chocolate and Wine Fundraiser in February! RLS was well represented by several Club members including **Harish Joshi** the "Master Of the Chocolate Fountain!" and **Mimi Sheridan**, an "Honorary Wine Sommelier."

May 17, 2026- Anniversary Tea at Monica's Garden

RLS club members gathered in the garden of **Monica Hudson** to celebrate the wedding anniversary of RLS and Fanny. We feasted on finger sandwiches, cheese and fruit, and a delicious cake. A number of members were treated to the "extra" books from the club library and viewed the various biographies available for checkout from **Ruth Krotzer**. An informative history of the Stevenson House and its various occupants was presented by **Mimi Sheridan**; her article is on page 4 following pictures of the anniversary tea.



From French Hotel to Stevenson House by Mimi Sheridan

May was Preservation Month, bringing to mind the work that California State Parks has done in Monterey over the past 120 years. One notable example is Stevenson House—once a run-down lodging house threatened with demolition, turned over to State Parks in 1941 for preservation.

The Stevenson House has a complex history of owners and uses. Jose Gonzales built it in 1841, primarily as a home for his large family. A Swiss immigrant, Juan Girardin, purchased the building in 1856, using it as a residence, lodging house and a wide variety of commercial activities, including a general store, a carpentry shop, a restaurant, a saloon and more. In the 1870s, the prominent artist Jules Tavernier opened a studio here. Girardin died in July 1879, shortly before Robert Louis Stevenson arrived, but his heirs owned the property until 1918, running it as a lodging house. At some point, it came to be called the French Hotel, but by about 1906 it was known as the Stevenson House.

Sidney Ruthven, a contractor and stonemason, owned the building briefly, operating a lodging house primarily for fishermen. In 1922, he sold it to Frederick Randall, a Montecito attorney. An amateur artist, Randall hosted parties and exhibitions and encouraged artists such as August Gay and C.S. Price to use the lodgings and studios. It was the golden age of Monterey art, and the Stevenson House became a lively center for the city's cultural life.



Image: wood block print "The Party," 1925,
Helen Bruton

However, when Randall expressed an interest in selling the property, it was feared that an unsympathetic buyer would raze it. In 1927, local artists, including Francis McComas, persuaded Cecelia Tobin Clark and Edith Van Antwerp to purchase the Stevenson House. Cecelia Tobin Clark (1874-1965) was the youngest child of Richard Tobin, an immigrant from County Cork and a founder of San Francisco's Hibernia Savings and Loan Association. She married (and divorced) Charles W. Clark, the son of William Andrews Clark, one of the notorious "Copper Kings" of Butte, Montana. Edith Van Antwerp (1881-1949) was the wife of William Clarkson Van Antwerp, a prominent stockbroker and author of financial books.

The primary tenant during this period was interior designer Frances Adler Elkins, who had her studio, workshop and showrooms there. She hired many local artists and artisans to design and make furniture and decorative items for her clients.

Continued from p.4

In the 1930s, the concept of a “shrine” or museum to Stevenson began developing. One of the first signs was the installation, in 1932, of a plaque by the Literary Anniversary Club of San Francisco. In 1937, Mrs. Isobel Field, Stevenson’s stepdaughter, and her son, Austin Strong, offered to donate their very extensive collection of items related to Stevenson. With this in mind, Mrs. Clark and Mrs. Van Antwerp donated the house to the California Division of Beaches and Parks in 1941. They enlisted the aid of Colonel Roger Fitch, president of the Monterey History and Art Association to negotiate the donation. The agreement had several special provisions. The building was to be maintained and preserved as a State Historical Monument, with a full-time custodian and public access provided at no charge. An “Old Monterey Garden” was also to be established and maintained. A fireproof vault was to be constructed to store the Stevenson documents and other historic materials.

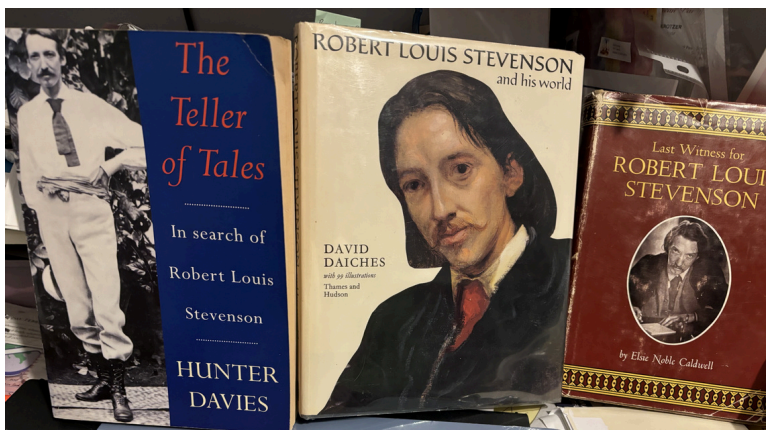
Alterations and repairs had been haphazard over the previous century, and extensive work was needed before the building was safe for public use. Work was delayed for several years due to World War II but finally began in 1947. Frances Elkins remained as a tenant though the war but was evicted in 1947 following a fire marshal’s inspection that revealed that her upholstery workroom was filled with fabric and feathers, along with electric heaters—a disaster waiting to happen!

The museum opened to the public in late 1948, with a formal dedication held on November 13, 1949. The Field/Strong donation of artifacts, photos, scrapbooks, manuscripts and correspondence formed the bulk of the collection, but several other enthusiasts gave items as well. Many of these are on display in the Stevenson House museum today, while other materials are stored the vault to be used for research.

A Treasure-Trove of RLS Lore- Our own RLS Club Library

The Robert Louis Stevenson Club of Monterey has a substantial book collection on “All Things RLS” which has been assembled into a lending library. Besides the complete works by RLS himself, we have a long list of RLS biographies as well as biographies of Fanny and her daughter Isobel. Works are focusing on RLS while living in Britain, France, Switzerland, California, Hawaii and from Samoa to Australia. There are reminiscences by people who knew him and imaginative novels based on his life. If you are doing research and need RLS’ personal letters as a reference, the club has the complete 8 volume set edited by Booth and Mehew. We have a treasure trove just waiting for you delve into, including the newer books- *The Storyteller The Life of Robert Louis Stevenson* by Leo Damrosch, 2025, and *A Wilder Shore: The Romantic Odyssey of Fanny and Robert Louis Stevenson* by Camille Peri.

Our library list is posted on the “Library” page on our website, <https://rlsclubmonterey.org/library>. Please contact Ruth at rkrotzercolts@gmail.com to borrow a volume. Happy reading! If you missed the “extra” book giveaway/donation at the anniversary tea, contact Ruth to see what might still be available.



3 RLS biographies available for check out through the Club library! There are more of interest! Contact Ruth for information at :

rkrotzercolts@gmail.com

Upcoming Events

On August 30th we gather at the Stevenson House! Here is a glimpse:

Our South Pacific theme this year is highlighted by club member Terry Trotter who will be sharing some of his wonderful RLS related treasures and stories of how he found them. We are also hoping that State Parks will be able to display a couple of South Pacific treasures from their vault for the occasion. Let us look forward to some wonderful surprises!

October 11- Annual Meeting – Tentative location- Black Bear Diner

You love surprises? Come and find out!

Have you wondered how and why the Rev. Dr. Hyde, Mr. Stevenson and Father Damien are connected? If so, join us, share your insights, and maybe come away with a new perspective on the subject as not everything turns out to be what it seems.

November 14- Unbirthday Party- Monterey Public Library

Join us for our annual celebration of RLS's unbirthday, pictures of the birthday girl bequeathed a new birthday, and CAKE!



Summer Sun by RLS

Great is the sun, and wide he goes
 Through empty heaven without repose;
 And in the blue and glowing days
 More thick than rain he showers his rays.
 Though closer still the blinds we pull
 To keep the shady parlour cool,
 Yet he will find a chink or two
 To slip his golden fingers through.
 The dusty attic spider-clad,
 He, through the keyhole, maketh glad;
 And through the broken edge of tiles,
 Into the laddered hay-loft smiles.
 Meantime his golden face around
 He bares to all the garden ground,
 And sheds a warm and glittering look
 Among the ivy's inmost nook.
 Above the hills, along the blue,
 Round the bright air with footing true,
 To please the child, to paint the rose,
 The gardener of the World, he goes.

