

NOTICIAS

del
PUERTO de MONTEREY

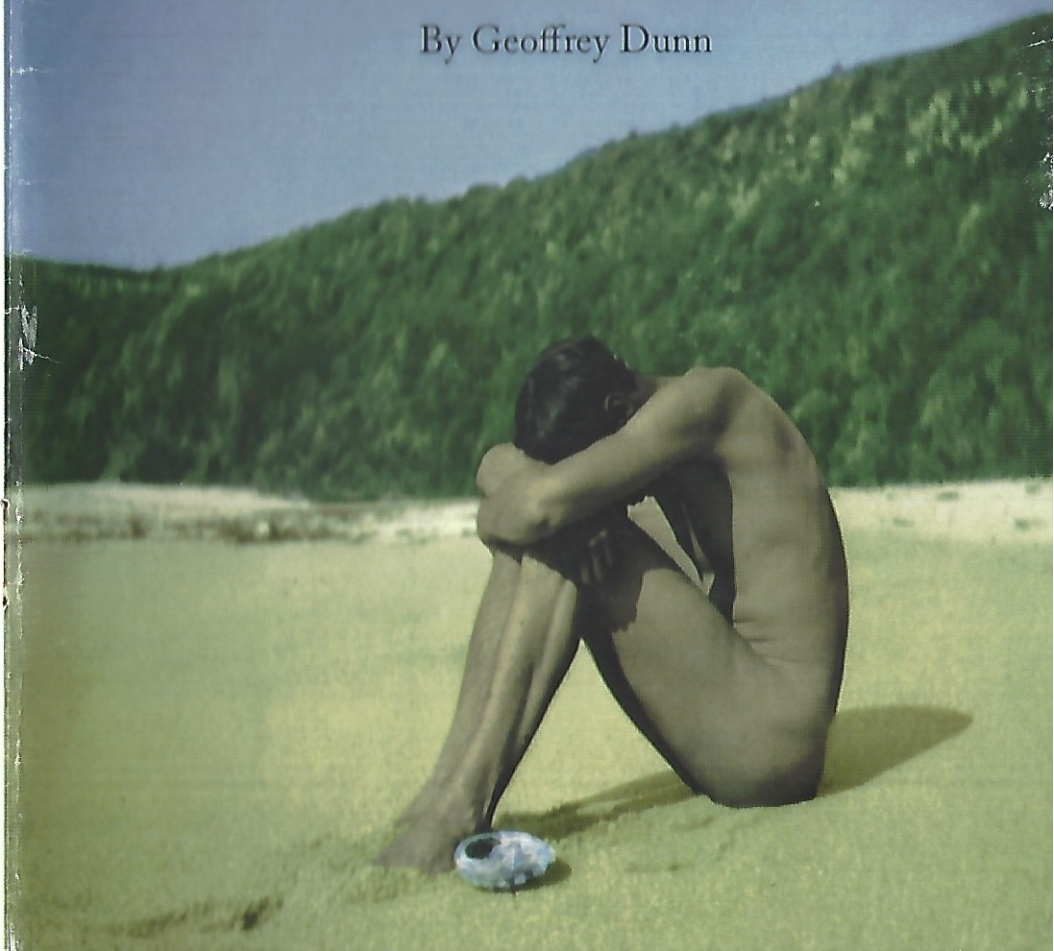
Bulletin of the
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Fall/Winter 2008

Deep-Sea Matrimony: George Sterling and “The Abalone Song”

By Geoffrey Dunn



Oh! some folks boast of quail or trout,
Because they think it's tony;
But I'm content to ome my trout
And live on abalone. George Sterling.

As wanders free beside his sea
Then in his coat is stony;
He flaps his wings & warily sings —
The plaintive abalone. M. B. S. —



Some live on hope, and some on dope
and some on alimony,
But our "Tom Cat," he lives on fat
and tender abalone. ^{Sip} Sterling

Oh some drink rain and champagne
Or Brandy by "The Pond"
But I will stir a little Rye
in my abalone.

Page 6 from the guest book of Café Ernest, recorded August 30, 1913.
Courtesy Pat Sands Collection.

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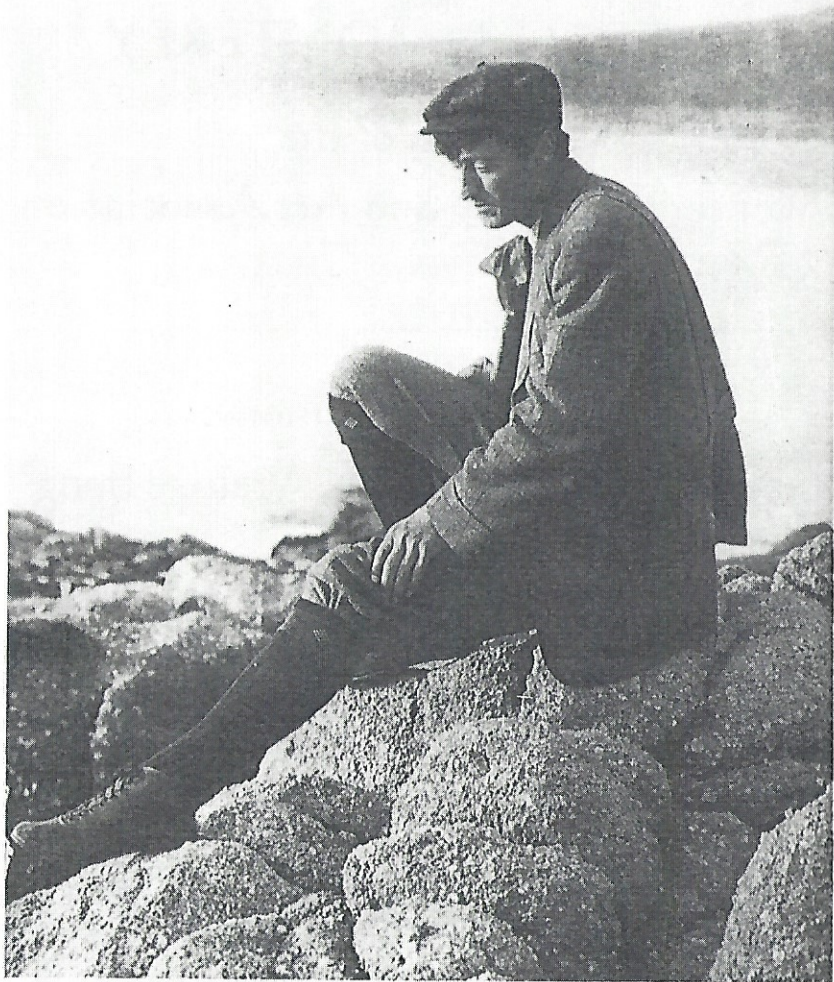
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Portrait of Sterling taken by E.A. Cohen. Courtesy Pat Hathaway Collection, California Views.

Deep-Sea Matrimony: George Sterling and “The Abalone Song”

By Geoffrey Dunn

I. The Guest Book

On a cool, drizzly summer evening in August of 1913, a group of well-known California artists and arts patrons gathered in Carmel-by-the-Sea for a special journey to downtown Monterey. They had made reservations for dinner that evening at Café Ernest, then located on Alvarado Street and operated by the legendary German-born chef, Otto Ernest Doelter, better known simply as “Pop.”

The entourage included the widely celebrated California poet, George Sterling; his wife Caroline “Carrie” Rand Sterling; humorist and author Harry Leon Wilson and his beautiful young wife, the local stage actress, Helen Cooke Wilson; San Francisco violinist Sigmund Beel; writer C.W. Miles; and art patrons Charles and Marie Sutro, they of the wealthy San Francisco investment and real estate family. The ensemble took the long way to Monterey that evening, along the famed 17-Mile Drive, and they drove in the highest of fashion—in the Sutros’ luxurious Alco Model Six Berline Limousine, then the most expensive car manufactured in the United States. The Carmel artists would fancy themselves bohemians, all right, but Sterling, in particular, was never averse to cavorting with wealth.

According to Sterling’s diary, a portion of the group had spent the afternoon having lunch at the Pebble Beach Lodge, along with Forest Theatre mavens Herbert and Opal Heron, before departing for Monterey. It was a Tuesday evening and likely not all that crowded at Café Ernest, and as the Carmel entourage made their way into the popular establishment, they each signed the restaurant’s guest book with entries from “The Abalone Song,” a fabled chant that had by then become synonymous with the bohemian artist colony in Carmel.

Sterling, the colony’s leading literary figure who is widely acknowledged to be the principal author of the celebrated anthem, took the lead and, in his upright and precise hand, entered what is generally considered to be the opening verse of the song:

*Oh! some folks boast of quail on toast
Because they think it's tony,
But I'm content to owe my rent
And live on abalone.*

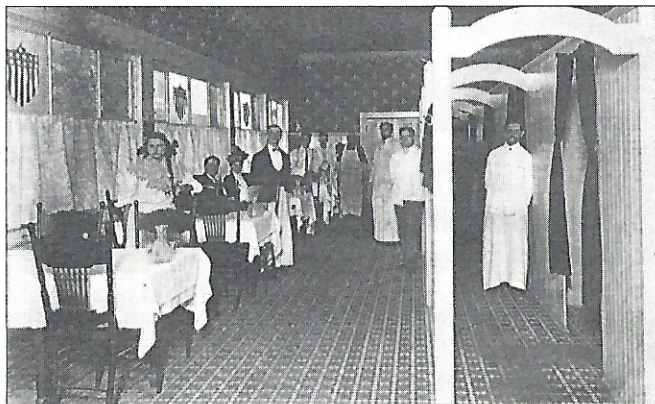
Each of the seven remaining guests also added a four-line verse from the song. Beel even added a drawing of a cat next to his entry:

*Some live on hope, and some on dope
And some on alimony
But our "Tom Cat," he lives on fat
And tender Abalone.*

Sterling's journal from that date makes no mention of the entries in the guest book—nor are there any references to the outing in any of his letters from that period—but he did record that they had an “abalone dinner” that evening, a most fitting and likely choice, not only because of the colony's close identification with the then-plentiful Pacific mollusk, but also because Doelter had become famous throughout the west for turning the red abalone's tough, leathery meat into an “epicurean delight.”

At the bottom of page six of the guestbook, in a rough open hand, a member of the Sterling entourage had scrawled one of the song's more popular verses:

*Oh! some drink rain, and some champagne,
Or brandy by the pony;
But I will try a little rye
With a dash of abalone.*



Interior of Café Ernest, where the Sterling entourage had their abalone feed, August, 1913. Courtesy Monterey Maritime and History Museum.



Abalone feast prepared by "Pop" Ernest Doelter (standing in white hat) in honor of Harry Leon Wilson (seated, far right, at head of table). Other guests include Charles J. Dickman, Ernest Peixotto, Harry Stuart Fonda, and Jimmy Hopper (standing and toasting, next to Wilson). Carmel Highlands, 1910. Courtesy Pat Sands Collection.

The signature on that particular verse was torn out of the guest book long ago, leading some to speculate that it might have been written by Sterling's best friend, Jack London, the world famous author of *The Call of the Wild*, *The Sea Wolf* and *John Barleycorn* (and whose handwriting was similar to the scroll in the book).

Earlier that month, Sterling, London, Wilson and the novelist and short story writer Jimmy Hopper had camped together at the Bohemian Club's annual "High Jinx," in western Marin County. The joys of the summer Jinx, however, had literally gone up in flames, when London's dream home, Wolf House, burned under suspicious circumstances in Glen Ellen on August 22, 1913. In a letter dated August 24, Sterling offered London (whom he always addressed in letters by the nickname "Wolf") his condolences, suggesting, "Better come down here and get away from the scene for a while..." He noted that the Sutros would be in town "for two or three weeks and will have their machine, I suppose."

The night following the excursion to Café Ernest, Sterling wrote London another letter, inquiring again about the extent of the damage to Wolf House and once more urging, "Wish you'uns [London and his wife, Charmian] would come down this way," indicating that he, Miles, Beel, the Sutros and their "machine" were off to yet another dinner, this time with the Wilsons as hosts, at their home in the Carmel Highlands.

The Londons, however, were not to come to Carmel and were not at Café Ernest that evening; a few weeks later they headed off to the California

State Fair in Sacramento, instead. Jack London most certainly never signed the guest book.

As for the mysterious verse with the torn-off signature, it is most likely that of Charles Sutro—an even rarer autograph than London's.

II. Brain Workers of Indoor Employment

More than three decades after that now famous feed at Café Ernest, it would be claimed that “The Abalone Song” was actually composed that evening in the restaurant by Sterling and his entourage. Newspaper writers and historians often sought out Doelter's guest book, believing it to be the song's Rosetta stone. In a letter to the *Monterey Herald* in August of 1949, Pop Ernest's daughter, Vera Doelter Stokes contended that “the ‘Abalone Song’ was not started at Carmel Beach, but originated in the old Café Ernest...in honor of Pop Ernest and his original abalone steak! George Sterling, with a party of friends, composed it there and wrote the first verses in the Record book...”

Oh, that cultural origins were so easy to trace. While Sterling and Company no doubt loved Pop Ernest and reveled in his abalone dishes, the song's origins stretch back to the earliest days of the literary colony in Carmel and grew out of a communal sensibility of culture that imbued the colony's regular celebrations of nature, food, poetry and music.

In the late 1880s, “Carmel City,” as it was then known, was established by a pair of brothers, Santiago and Belisario Duckworth, joining lands with French businessman Honore Escolle, as a Catholic summer resort. By late 1889, they had sold nearly 200 lots. In the following decade, the Carmel City subdivision was managed by the Women's Real Estate Investment Company (an early and innovative feminist commercial enterprise), but the economic depression of the 1890s drove



George Sterling at cottage. Previously unpublished photograph. Courtesy Lilly Library, University of Indiana, Bloomington.



*"Pop" Ernest Doelter on Monterey Wharf with cleaned abalone shells.
Courtesy Pat Sands Collection.*

their dreams, along with those of the Duckworth Brothers, into financial despair.

In 1902, two enterprising visionaries from the San Francisco Bay Area, attorney Frank H. Powers and real estate broker James Franklin Devendorf, formed the Carmel Land Company, and they once again set to marketing lots in what was now known as Carmel-by-the-Sea. Their target markets were "the School Teachers of California and other Brain Workers of Indoor Employment."

One of the first "brain workers" to purchase a lot from the Land Company was Mabel Gray Lachmund, a bright and talented musician from Berkeley, who was later to marry Stanford professor Stewart Young. In the Bay Area, Lachmund, a single mother of two sons who had studied music in Germany and Italy, had been part of a bohemian social circle known simply as the Crowd, centered in Piedmont, that included Jack and Bessie London, George and Carrie Sterling, writer Herman Whitaker, painter Xavier Martinez, and a host of other would-be writers, artists and musicians. Indeed, London would later acknowledge plans to seduce Lachmund during the break-up with his first wife, Bessie, although Charmian Kittredge, soon to be London's second wife, intervened.

George Sterling first visited Carmel as early as 1901. In March of 1905, he wrote his mentor, the misanthropic Hearst columnist Ambrose Bierce, that he was going, with his friend Charles Rollo Peters, to visit the Monterey Peninsula and the region "South of Carmel Bay" where "little rivers run into the sea"—an obvious reference to Big Sur.

Sterling, the colorful scion of a Long Island whaling family who had come west in 1890 to work as a secretary and bookkeeper in his uncle's East Bay business empire, had grown tired of the demands of the business world and wanted to focus his energies on poetry. "I'm not likely to 'prosper mentally and spiritually'...until I get out of this accursed office," he wrote Bierce. "I hate it more and more, day after day, and *never* feel like writing anything."

In his unpublished biography of Sterling, *Faun on Olympus*, Henry Dumont, a poet and longtime friend of Sterling, speculated that it may have been the talented scholar and photographer Arnold Genthe who encouraged Sterling's relocation to Carmel. Others have identified Peters. It is possible, given their mutual ties to the Crowd in Piedmont, that Mabel Lachmund, who Sterling dubbed "Queen Mab," could have also provided the impetus.

What is certain, however, is that Sterling's uncle, Frank Havens, the East Bay real estate mogul for whom Sterling had worked for the past 15 years, had business connections with Frank Powers (they were both members of the Bohemian Club, as was Sterling). That relationship also played a role in Sterling purchasing an acre of land in the southeast corner of Carmel, near the Carmel Mission, once belonging to Honore Escolle. He completed the land purchase (funded, according to Dumont, by Havens) in early June of 1905. Immediately after, Sterling wrote Bierce:

I realized that it probably means "a meager [sic] living," but that's what we both desire. Our best happiness—almost our only one—has always come from the sense of well-being that accompanies a good digestion and a clear liver....[I]n San Francisco I am beat upon and semi-submerged by temptations to folly and luxury as an outlying reef harassed by the waves. It's actually a severe nervous strain on me, and I cannot entirely avoid it.

At Carmel-by-the-Sea I will be able to live naturally and quietly, asking friends to visit me only as I want them. Already several "literary gents" have signified a desire to come with me; but I wish to be a lone pioneer—to

find out for myself whether or not one can exist on little money and less "society" amid surroundings such as I promise myself.

Carmel has two or three hundred inhabitants, but the nearest neighbors will be a fourth of a mile away, and I don't have to cultivate them unless I so elect.



George Sterling walking on path to his Carmel cottage, 1909. Previously unpublished photograph. Courtesy Lilly Library, University of Indiana, Bloomington.

Sterling leased an additional three acres of meadowlands where he planned to plant a vegetable garden and grow potatoes "for profit." It was on June 30th of 1905, that Sterling arrived in Carmel with his publisher, W.W. Wood, and his childhood friend from Sag Harbor, Gene Fenelon (who would later infuriate Jack London during the voyage of *The Snark* to Hawaii), both of whom were experienced carpenters, and began building his "comfortable" home there, at what would become the south-east corner of Tenth and Torres Streets.

After its completion in September, he again wrote Bierce:

The house is on a knoll at the edge of a large pine-forest, half a mile from the town of Carmel. It affords a really magnificent view of the Carmel Valley and River, and of the wild and desolate mountains beyond them. I'm half a mile from the ocean (Carmel Bay), which is blue as a sapphire, and has usually a great surf; and I'm four miles from Monterey.

Here a soft wind is always in the pines. It sounds like a distant surf, just as the surf sounds like a wind in pine trees. In Carmel, too, the air is always mild. I've never seen hot nor cold weather here, and I've been here "off and on" since last February. One feels comfortable every day, and at all hours I can have more fun there in a day than in a month up here. And here a thousand idiotic conventions keep me raw.

Contrary to general historical perceptions of Sterling being a naive youth when he arrived in Carmel-by-the-Sea, he was by then 36 years old and a popular, well-established Bay Area poet. He had recently published his stunning first collection of poetry, *Testimony of the Suns*, and he was slowly gaining a national reputation as a poet in the romantic style. Although he was not, by any means, as financially successful in the real estate game as his uncle, he had been a steady and loyal employee at his uncle's businesses, first at his insurance company and later at his Realty Syndicate, for a decade-and-a-half, and he continued to work for him periodically even while he was living in Carmel.

Sterling was the first significant literary figure to establish permanent roots in Carmel-by-the-Sea. Shortly thereafter, Genthe followed him to Carmel from San Francisco, and in the ensuing years the Carmel (and Big Sur) arts and intellectual ensemble would come to include (albeit with varying lengths of duration there) Mary Austin, James Hopper, Sinclair Lewis, Xavier Martinez, Nora May French, Upton Sinclair, Alice MacGowan, Harry Leon Wilson, Grace MacGowan Cooke, Harry Laf-ler, Herbert and Opal Heron, Mabel Gray Lachmund, Fred Bechdoldt,



Inside of Sterling's cottage. Photo by E.A. Cohen. Courtesy Pat Hathaway Collection, California Views.

Lucia Chamberlain, Perry Newberry, David Starr Jordan, William Rose Benét, Michael Williams, John Kenneth Turner, Robinson and Una Jeffers (later), and a host of other supporting players.

It was truly an eclectic—and talented—assortment of writers, painters, photographers and academics, but as the Stanford scientist Vernon Kellogg, who also made a summer home at Carmel, would note, Sterling was almost always at the center of things; he was “the proton which attracted the electrons at Carmel parties.”

Sterling's diaries record several large takings of abalone and mussels by the Crowd in the waters of Carmel Bay and off Point Lobos, and later having great feasts on the beaches or along the cliffs or back up at Sterling's home site. Mary Austin would recall that “Sterling's greatest pleasures were those that whetted his incessant appetite for sensation—the sting of the surf against his body, the pull of the undertow off Carmel beaches, gather sea food among the ‘undulant apple-hollows’ of the Mission Cove. . . . Interrupting or terminating our excursions, there would be tea beside driftwood fires, or mussel roasts by moonlight. Or the lot of us would pound abalone for chowder around the open-air grill at Sterling's cabin, and talk, ambrosial, unquotable talk.”

Sterling, who was a fine fisherman and a careful hunter, paid extremely close attention to the tidal charts and was always ready when abalone tides prevailed. “And now I must go forth and trail the pensive abalone,” he wrote Bierce. “We eat meat, but dislike paying for it; and abs come free, like salvation.”

“Battle against the encroaching abalone,” Bierce wrote back acerbically, “should not engage all your powers.” He wanted his dutiful protégé to engage more of his energies on writing.

As historian Franklin Walker noted in his delightful (if not always perfectly reliable) history of the Carmel art colony, *Seacoast of Bohemia*, “Already [by 1905], ‘The Abalone Song’ was being composed as a sort of folk venture, a gay ditty started by Sterling and added to by many visitors.”

III. The Shaken Stars of Midnight

Sterling clearly hoped that his best friend, Jack London, would be among those to join him permanently in Carmel. Theirs was a unique and tender relationship (while certainly homoerotic, never, by any account, homosexual). By 1905, Sterling began addressing London as “Wolf,” with London addressing Sterling as “Greek,” in all matters of correspondence. They had

lived on the same hillside together in Piedmont, and Sterling wanted that relationship to continue in the burgeoning literary colony in Carmel. But London had other ideas. He had fallen in love with the Sonoma countryside and had begun efforts to purchase large tracts of land there. Moreover, Sterling's wife Carrie did not, at that time, like London's second wife Charmian. In private conversations with others, Carrie publicly blamed Charmian for the dissolution of the London marriage.

So it was in early June of 1905, just as Sterling was purchasing his parcel in the Eighty Acre Tract, London wrote his "Dear Greek" a letter of regret, if not outright rejection: "I am afraid that the dream was too bright to last—our being near each other. If you don't understand now, some day sooner or later you may come to understand. It's not through any fault of yours, nor through any fault of mine. The world and people just happen to be so made. As ever, Wolf."

If London did not come to Carmel, Sterling's other close male literary friend, the talented short-story writer and journalist, James Marie ("Jimmy") Hopper did. Hopper, born in France, had actually been raised in the same Oakland neighborhoods as London, and they even attended the same elementary school. Although short in stature, Hopper was a much glorified athlete—in college, he was the star quarterback on the University of California football team—and tough as nails. He was also a top scholar. He graduated from Hastings School of Law, but rather than practice as an attorney, he had coached college football and then went to the Philippines as a teacher and later published several short stories and magazine articles based on his experiences there.

In the aftermath of the San Francisco Earthquake and Fire of April 1906, which left much of the city's Bohemian quarters in ruins, Carmel had even more appeal. In August of that year, Hopper made the decision to join Sterling in Carmel, right about the same time that his first collection of writings, *Caybigan*, was published by the New York publishing house McClure, Phillips and Company.

Also visiting in Carmel that year was the poet and editor Harry Lafler and a tall and beautiful young poetess, Nora May French, known to her close friends as "Phyllis." Sterling would later describe French as "an inscrutable creature, with hair of the brightest gold and a deadly smile," with lips like a "scarlet thread." Said Sterling, "She played with men as with pebbles."

That was not an understatement. She had won Lafler's favors, and apparently Genthe's, too. She was also engaged to a former British aristocrat, Alan Hiley, of Felton (whose wealth has been substantially exaggerated

over the years, but who was most certainly handsome and charming), and there were later rumors (albeit unsubstantiated) of an affair with Hopper. Nora May French was a literary femme fatale.

For the next year or so, French was a regular, if a bit unstable, visitor to Carmel. She was struggling in San Francisco; her affair with Lafler had broken off and she was having difficulty earning her way. In August of 1907, the Sterlings invited the financially broke and emotionally despondent French to join them in the small tent-house next to their cottage. Somehow she and the promiscuous Sterling managed to maintain a platonic relationship. Sterling clearly admired her work and referred to her poetry as “crystalline.”



Nora May French by Arnold Genthe, who may have been one of her lovers as well. Courtesy National Library of Congress.

Although initially reinvigorated by the move to Carmel, with its abalone feasts and moonlit nights of song and revelry, by mid-autumn, French's mood had grown darker. Sterling wrote his friend Blanche Partington: “I would not be surprised if she jumped off a wharf some night.” Hopper tried to pick up her mood with horseback rides along the coast—all to no avail. On the night of November 14, 1907, while George Sterling was up in Oakland and French was alone with Carrie, the 26-year-old poetess went to her bed and took a dose of potassium cyanide. Hopper, who blamed himself, in part, for her death, would later write: “We had the life boat out [for her], but we were only hitting her on the head with our oars.”

In his journal entry of November 22, 1907, Sterling noted: “We cast her ashes into the sea from her favorite cliff at Point Carmel...She was a stormy petrel.”

Those assembled for the scattering of her ashes gathered mussels and abalone that afternoon, swam in the ocean, and had a beach cook-out in



George Sterling, Mary Austin, Jack London and Jimmy Hopper, Carmel Beach. Photograph by Arnold Genthe. Geoffrey Dunn Collection.

her honor. It was the Carmel way. But Nora May French's death cast a dark spell on the Carmel literary colony that lasted through the remainder of autumn and well into winter of the following year.

Sterling was haunted by her death and would reference it for weeks and years to come. He composed several poems and poetic passages in her memory, including one entitled simply "Nora May French," which was included in his collection *A Wine of Wizardry and Other Poems* and which he sent to London during his South Sea journeys.

*I saw the shaken stars of midnight stir,
And winds that sought the morning bore to me
The thunder where the legions of the sea
Are shattered on her stormy sepulcher,
And pondering on bitter things that were,
On cruelties the mindless Fates decree,
I felt some shadow of her mystery—
The loneliness and mystery of her.*

*The waves that break on undiscovered strands,
The winds that die on seas that bear no sail,
Stars that the deaf, eternal skies annul,
Were not so lonely as was she. Our hands
We reach to thee from Time—without avail,
O spirit mighty and inscrutable!*

“Your poem to Nora May French,” London wrote him back from Sydney, Australia, “[is] splendid in its feel.” It was also remarkably prescient; French’s suicide would be the first among many to strike the Carmel literary colony.

IV. The Valley of the Moon

It is one of the great historical myths that Jack London spent considerable time in Carmel-by-the-Sea. In his unpublished master’s thesis on Sterling, Michael Paul Orth claimed that London came to visit Sterling in Carmel “often” and that “Carmel also gave London a chance to escape from the increasing domination Charmian attempted to exercise over his drinking.” Orth would repeat these claims in his 1969 article, “Ideality to Reality: The Founding of Carmel,” for *The California Historical Society Quarterly*—claims that would work their way into both California literary history and popular mythology. In fact, they couldn’t be further from the truth.

Both Sterling’s and Charmian’s journals—along with London’s collection of letters—clearly indicate that London made only three visits to Carmel in his life, always with Charmian: a brief first visit in November of 1906; another short stay in February of 1907; and a third in late February and early March of 1910. In total, he spent little more than three weeks in the Carmel colony.

The Londons last visit in 1910—a sixteen-day working vacation—was, by all accounts, a mostly pleasant and memorable stay. With its mild, late-winter weather, Carmel played dutiful host to the Londons and their personal Japanese valets, Hideo Nakata and Takashi Shimizu. The painter and translator, Ernest Untermann, also joined them, as did the socialist writer Upton Sinclair and a young red-headed would-be novelist, Sinclair “Hal” Lewis. They had beach parties at Point Lobos and lunches at the Pebble Beach Lodge. Jack and George went salmon fishing, and the Sterlings and Londons had tea with Arnold Genthe. London even bought fourteen story plots, at five bucks apiece, from the impoverished Lewis, who followed the established author around in search of guidance and mentoring.

There were moments of tension, too, as there always were when the Crowd got together and excessive alcohol consumption mixed with ego and libidinal energies. Charmian London was never fond of her husband's drinking, and with Sterling as host, the libations flowed freely. The Londons apparently had a mild row amidst the bacchanal and it left a bad taste in Charmian's mouth. When the Londons and their valets left Carmel on March 14, 1910, they were saying good-bye to the Monterey Peninsula for good. Sterling joined them on the train to Oakland.

While Jack London was never to return to Carmel-by-the-Sea, he would nonetheless contribute significantly to the legacy of the Carmel literary colony, in general, and to "The Abalone Song," in particular. Beginning in April of 1913, *The Cosmopolitan* magazine carried serialized installments of London's forthcoming (and quasi-biographical) novel, *The Valley of the Moon*, which was published by The Macmillan Co. in September of that year. The novel's central protagonists, a working class couple, Billy and Saxon Roberts (based loosely on London and his wife Charmian), leave behind the strife of urban life in Oakland and embark on a search for an agrarian utopia in Northern California. In Book III of the novel, they hike south, through both the Santa Clara and Pajaro valleys, and then over the hill beyond Monterey, to Carmel-by-the-Sea.

London's portrayal of the Carmel literary colony in Book III provides a detailed account of cultural and social life there. It also provides some lovely, albeit fictionalized, portraits of his two close friends, Sterling and Hopper.

As they make their way over Carmel Hill, Billy and Saxon first encounter a character named Jim Hazard (based on Hopper) with "a thatch of curly yellow hair, but his body was hugely hewed as a Hercules' in pursuit of mussels in Carmel Bay." Hazard had just begun his efforts to break through the surf line. "Huge and powerful as his body had seemed," London wrote, "it was now white and fragile in the face of that imminent, great-handed buffet of the sea."

But the stranger sprang to meet the blow, and, just when it seemed he must be crushed, he dived into the face of the breaker and disappeared. The mighty mass of water fell in thunder on the beach, but beyond appeared a yellow head, one arm out-reaching, and a portion of a shoulder. Only a few strokes was he able to make ere he was compelled to dive through another breaker. This was the battle—to win seaward against the sweep of the shoreward-hastening sea. Each time he dived and was lost to view Saxon caught her breath and clenched her

hands. Sometimes, after the passage of a breaker, they could not find him, and when they did he would be scores of feet away, flung there like a chip by a smoke-bearded breaker. Often it seemed he must fail and be thrown upon the beach, but at the end of half an hour he was beyond the outer edge of the surf and swimming strong, no longer diving, but topping the waves.

The following day, they meet up with a character based on Sterling (Mark Hall), also gathering mussels in the bay. London described Hall as "naked except for swimming trunks," with "a long mop of dark hair blown by the wind, lean yet muscular, with long and narrow face, with the high cheekbones, high and slender forehead, and nose high, lean, and almost beaked."

"Gosh!" Billy whispered to Saxon. "Everybody down here seems to go in for physical culture."

Later on, the trio gathers mussels and even the highly coveted abalone, while the character based on Sterling "initiated them into the mysteries of pounding and preparing the abalone meat for cooking."

"Now, listen; I'm going to teach you something," Hall commanded, a large round rock poised in his hand above the abalone meat. "You must never, never pound abalone without singing this song. Nor must you sing this song at any other time. It would be the rankest sacrilege. Abalone is the food of the gods. Its preparation is a religious function. Now listen, and follow, and remember that it is a very solemn occasion."

The stone came down with a thump on the white meat, and thereafter arose and fell in a sort of tom-tom accompaniment to the poet's song...

*Oh! Mission Point's a friendly joint
Where every crab's a crony,
And true and kind, you'll ever find
The clinging abalone....*

He paused with his mouth open and stone upraised. There was a rattle of wheels and a voice calling from above where the sacks of mussels had been carried. He brought the stone down with a final thump and stood up.

“There’s a thousand more verses like those,” he said. “Sorry I hadn’t time to teach you them.” He held out his hand, palm downward. “And now, children, bless you, you are now members of the clan of Abalone Eaters, and I solemnly enjoin you, never, no matter what the circumstances, pound abalone meat without chanting the sacred words I have revealed unto you.”

On the following Sunday in the novel, the “Tribe of Abalone Eaters” descended upon Carmel Beach to initiate Billy and Saxon in the rites of an abalone feast. London described them assembling in “two rigs and on a number of horses,” with “half a score of men and almost as many women.

All were young, between the ages of twenty-five and forty, and all seemed good friends.” It was a spirited scene that London painted, and no doubt fairly accurate, too, with Hawaiian music and ukuleles and hula dancing in the sand. “None of the men got drunk,” London asserted, “although there were cocktails in vacuum bottles and red wine in a huge demijohn.”

London proclaimed Sterling-cum-Hall as the “high priest” of the tribe who oversaw the singing of “The Abalone Song” verses. At the end of the feast, London portrayed “a black-haired, black-eyed man with the roguish face of a satyr, . . . an artist who sold his paintings at five hundred apiece” (an obvious reference to London’s and Sterling’s close friend, the accomplished painter Xavier Martinez), who brought on himself “universal execration and acclamation” by singing:



The Crowd at Carmel Beach, circa 1907. Previously unpublished. From left, George Sterling, Charmian London, Carrie Sterling, Jimmy Hopper, Hopper’s children, unidentified woman and Jack London. Courtesy Henry E. Huntington Library.

*The more we take, the more they make
In deep sea matrimony;
Race suicide cannot betide
The fertile abalone.*

Martinez did, in fact, live in Carmel at various times with his wife Elsie and painted there as well. But there have been those who have speculated that this verse, with the ironic reference to “race suicide,” was written by London, a theme of particular concern to the author and which he wrote about often.

Such speculations aside, *The Valley of the Moon* would mark the first time that “The Abalone Song” found its way into print. It forever linked the song to Sterling and the Crowd and Carmel-by-the-Sea. And it also linked London forever to the region—in a manner that misrepresented his physical presence.

But he clearly knew several of “The Abalone Song” verses by heart. London’s hand-written initial draft of *The Valley of the Moon*, located in the archives of The Huntington Library, indicate that he wrote the verses from memory, with only minor correction. And he scrawled that initial draft several months before the Sterling entourage made its way to Café Ernest in August of 1913. He was not, however, the author of the song; indeed there is no substantial proof that he even authored a single verse.



Sterling and unidentified lady friends in Carmel, circa 1910. Previously unpublished photograph. Courtesy Lilly Library, University of Indiana, Bloomington.

V. Chiseled in Adamant

Cultural artifacts, as we all know, tend to have lives of their own, and their rightful heritage is difficult to pinpoint. One recently published book on Jack London's poetry, for instance, identifies London as the sole author of "The Abalone Song," while another assigns that distinction solely to Sterling. The song's true lineage, not surprisingly, is far more complicated.

The second place in which the "Abalone Song" appeared in print was in Carl Sandburg's seminal history, *The American Songbag*, published in 1927. Sandburg published seven verses of the song, along with sheet music, and declared it "chiefly the bequest of George Sterling of San Francisco...Beach-fire singers have flung it with laughter at goblins of the half moon, the rising full moon, and the waning silver crescent."

The song was featured at the 1939 World's Fair on San Francisco Bay and was included in the souvenir publication, *Songs of San Francisco*, compiled by Sterling Sherwin. In an introductory essay to the song book, historian and biographer Evelyn Wells declared:

From the blood of pioneers came men who sang lustily and drank deep—the secondary pioneers, the Bohemians of San Francisco. They clashed thick glasses of California wine...., they lived richly and bravely, and told good stories. And—they sang.

Princeling of all the Bohemian-born epics is "The Abalone Song," that classic doggerel with defiant, galloping rhythm. To have heard it sung as it was ordained to be sung—as it will never be heard again in the world—was to have heard it chanted by those unforgettable great ones who wrote it, verse by verse, contributing their genius to its absurdities. Among its inspired authors were George Sterling, Mary Austin, Ambrose Bierce, Jack London and Gelett Burgess...

Sterling's friend and fellow bohemian, Idwal Jones, also contributed to the lore of "The Abalone Song" in a delightful article entitled "Ode to the Monterey Gastropod," originally published in the *San Francisco Chronicle* and later in *Westways* magazine, and portions of which appeared in his book *The Ark of Empire*, published in 1951. "I don't know when I first encountered 'The Abalone Song,'" Jones recalled. "It is one of those things that, in San Francisco, you learn in youth."

As to its authorship, Jones declared, "Everyone in that town [meaning San Francisco] had a hand in the making of a verse for it. Ambrose Bierce wrote one verse; Jack London and Gelett Burgess, two or three... But on the whole, the poem is George Sterling's. It is as much Sterling's by informing genius as the *Iliad* is Homer's."

Jones recounted a series of events in which Sterling, who did not type, asked Jones to type-up ten copies of the song for him from a "manuscript in pencil," which included eleven verses to the song. Jones cited the date for this original request coming on December 12, 1919. The following week, according to Jones, Sterling requested a dozen more copies, which he presented as gifts to friends. "The edition was a success," Jones recalled, "and he had been cleaned out of his stock."

Note that the geographical origins of the song in all three of these later renditions have been shifted from Carmel-by-the-Sea to San Francisco, where Sterling was to move later in life. All of the alleged "authors" of the song in these iterations had San Francisco connections; Carmel's claim to the song had been culturally hijacked.

In her history of the Monterey Peninsula, *A Tribute to Yesterday*, published in 1980, Sharron Lee Hale assigned authorship of several of the specific verses to Sterling, and others to Sinclair Lewis, Michael Williams and Opal Heron Search. As it turns out, those attributions of authorship can be traced to statements made by Search to Jimmy Hopper's widow, Elayne Chanslor, in the 1950s, and which later appeared in the *Carmel Pine Cone* and, eventually, the *Monterey Herald*. This genealogical rendition of the song brought its roots back to where it belonged—to Carmel-by-the-Sea.

Opal Heron Search, a talented musician in her own right and an actress in the early productions of Carmel's Forest Theatre, was a contemporary of Sterling's and must be viewed a more reliable source than Sandburg or Jones regarding the song's roots. Moreover, even Jones asserts that Sterling attributed the first verse (*Oh! Some folks boast...*) to "Opal Heron," who, in the early days of the Carmel art colony, was married to Herbert Heron, a founder of the Forest Theatre and later Carmel's mayor. (She also had an ill-fated affair with Sterling.) A typed manuscript of "The Abalone Song," with her specific attributions to each verse, is located in the Harrison Library in Carmel.



Opal Heron Search in an early production of Carmel's Forest Theatre. Courtesy Pat Hathaway Collection, California Views.

Sterling, of course, viewed himself as the keeper of "The Abalone Song" flame. According to Jones, on June 21, 1920, Sterling wrote him again, asking for another copy of the song with a slight variation, this time for Sterling's friend, the famed magazine editor and cultural critic H.L. Mencken, who was making his first visit to San Francisco. Jones again complied.

"That was the master's last change," Jones asserted, "and the song has remained immutable ever since, as if chiseled in adamant. There may be some spurious version going the rounds, but this is the true Falerian, and the final laud on the Gastropod of Monterey."

VI. The Torch of the Ocean Wind

Let us return again to August of 1913, when George Sterling and his entourage made their pilgrimage for abalone to Café Ernest and inscribed those immortal verses of "The Abalone Song" into history. All of the festive activities that fateful summer had taken a toll. "I feel rather tired," Sterling wrote a few days later to the poet and playwright Zoe Akins, with whom he was attempting an epistolary seduction ["lovmaking by letter is safe enough," he declared]. "Too much festivity of late, due to the appearance of S.F. friends in an Alco. We were at Harry Leon Wilson's last night, and I went to sleep on the lounge while a man was playing the piano!"

Sterling was also in communication with another female correspondent in late August of 1913, Mary Craig Kimbrough Sinclair, the wife of his friend Upton Sinclair and with whom Sterling had fallen madly in love two years earlier during a visit to New York. A long letter of his dated August 28 to "Craig," two nights before the abalone feed at Café Ernest, revealed another side of Sterling. Still smitten with Craig, he was battling a life-long addiction to alcohol that summer and his marriage to Carrie was nearing its end.

Now I am "home" once more, heart-sick and a little weary, but glad to be back in this pure sapphire land, where a hundred influences unite to soothe, cleanse and inspire the profaned soul and the flesh. The sight of the dark-blue sea, the torch of the ocean wind, the reproachful pine-murmur—all sum the revelation to sense of something that for years I have sought for blindly, and now begin to approach.

It has long been alleged that Sterling's affair with Vera Connolly, a 23-year-old friend of Elsie Martinez and who had apparently become pregnant by Sterling and suffered a "miscarriage," marked the last straw for Carrie. But that is probably more myth than fact. The Vera Connolly episode took place in 1910, and the Sterlings had weathered the storm. The more likely source of Carrie's outrage was the arrival of a 19-year-old dancer that summer in Carmel, Estelle "Stella" Tuttle, with whom Sterling would carry on a romantic liaison for much of the next decade. She is first mentioned in Sterling's *Journal* on the Fourth of July, 1913, and then again the following day as attending a barbeque at Point Lobos. Whomever the cause, Carrie Sterling, who had tolerated several affairs on the part of her husband, had finally had enough. By December, she filed for divorce. (Only two months later, a *San Francisco Examiner* story declared that Sterling was engaged to Tuttle, and the paper published a quartet of Sterling poems dedicated to her.)

So it was that George Sterling's artistic interlude in Carmel, which had not lasted quite a decade, came to an abrupt and ignoble end. He sold his home to Jimmy Hopper and moved to New York, where he hoped to pursue a more commercially successful literary career, but his efforts proved futile. Sterling's commitment to the metered and rhythmic confines of nineteenth-century Romantic poetry placed him starkly at odds with the emerging free-verse and subjective inclinations of the modern poetry movement in Europe and the U.S. There was not a livelihood to be had from composing iambic verse. He was soon forced to move back to a small room in the Bohemian Club in San Francisco, where he lived off the largesse of wealthy patrons the remainder of his life. His engagement to Tuttle was called off because of his inability to support her. He was never to marry again.

His best friend, Jack London, also found his own mental and physical health turning for the worse during this era. London would die in November of 1916, at the age of 40, of causes that are still clouded in controversy. His death certificate identified the cause of death as "uremia," but others have wondered what role he played in his own demise. Sterling believed it to be a suicide. London drank heavily for much of his life, and had taken to self-injections of pain-killers—strontium sulphate, strychnine, and morphine, among others—to curb the physical anguish from a variety of ailments that plagued him in his latter years. He more than likely died from a multiplicity of factors.

Two years later, in August of 1918, Carrie Sterling, never fully recovering from the bitterness and melancholy stemming from her divorce, went to bed in her Piedmont cottage, where she had moved after leaving Carmel, placed Chopin's *Funeral March* on a record player, and, as did Nora May French, consumed a lethal dose of potassium cyanide. She left but a simple note: "I am unhappy."

For a while, George Sterling turned his career around. He published several more collections of poetry, wrote a number of plays and verse, became a regular columnist for the *Overland Monthly*, and even dabbled in the movies as a writer. But he could never beat his own long and troubling battle with alcohol. Growing despondent over a series of events in the autumn of 1926, he, too, committed suicide, at the age of 56, also with potassium cyanide.

Sterling left behind a collected *oeuvre* that would come to include more than a dozen volumes of poetry and verse dramas, and more than 750 published poems. "One sees that whatever place he will finally take in American literature," Mary Austin wrote in a memorial, "if not the highest, it will certainly not be a low one. Sterling himself will become a myth there, a figure of man noble, inconsequent, but never utterly denied his desire to identify himself with truth and beauty."

To honor his life, Sterling's close friend and patron Albert Bender published a tribute to the departed poet—a lovely hand-printed broadside of the "The Abalone Song"—which reminded Sterling's friends and admirers of his happier and more joyous days in Carmel. All of the eight verses written into the Café Ernest guestbook many years earlier were included in the Bender broadside.

Carmel-by-the-Sea has also endured great change; once a Bohemian community of artists and intellectuals, it has emerged in recent decades as one of the wealthiest enclaves in the world, and one in which a substantial percentage of its inhabitants lives there only part-time. Long gone are the evening cookouts on the beach and the singing and pounding of abalone around pine-pitch campfires. George Sterling and Company would not be welcomed there today.

As for the red abalone itself—*Haliotis rufescens*—the revelers in Carmel a century ago and elsewhere were certainly deluding themselves. Extensive harvesting of abalone has decimated the once plentiful mollusk, making it a restaurant rarity in the New Millennium. Today, the abalone is a protected species, and it cannot be harvested south of San Francisco Bay on the California coast. Carmel Bay and the waters off Point Lobos where the Carmel arts colony once harvested "the plaintive abalone" a century ago are now included in the Monterey Bay Sanctuary. The abalone was not quite as "fertile" as the Carmel songsters imagined; its celebrated "deep-sea matrimony" did not a sustainable resource make.



The Abalone Song

By George Sterling (and others)

Oh! some folks boast of quail and toast,
Because they think it's tony;
But I'm content to owe my rent
And live on abalone.

Oh! Mission Point's a friendly joint,
Where every crab's a crony;
And true and kind you'll ever find
The clinging abalone.

He wanders free beside the sea
Where'er the coast is stony;
He flaps his wings and madly sings —
The plaintive abalone.

By Carmel Bay, the people say
We feed the lazzaroni;
On Boston beans and fresh sardines
And toothsome abalone.

Some live on hope, some live on dope,
And some on alimony;
But my tom-cat, he lives on fat
And tender abalone.

Oh! some drink rain, and some champagne,
Or brandy by the pony;
But I will try a little rye
With a dash of abalone.

Oh! some like jam, and some like ham,
And some like macaroni;
But bring to me a pail of gin
And a tub of abalone.

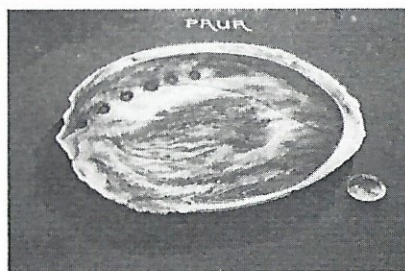
He hides in caves beneath the waves,
His ancient patrimony;
And so 'tis shown that faith alone
Reveals the abalone.

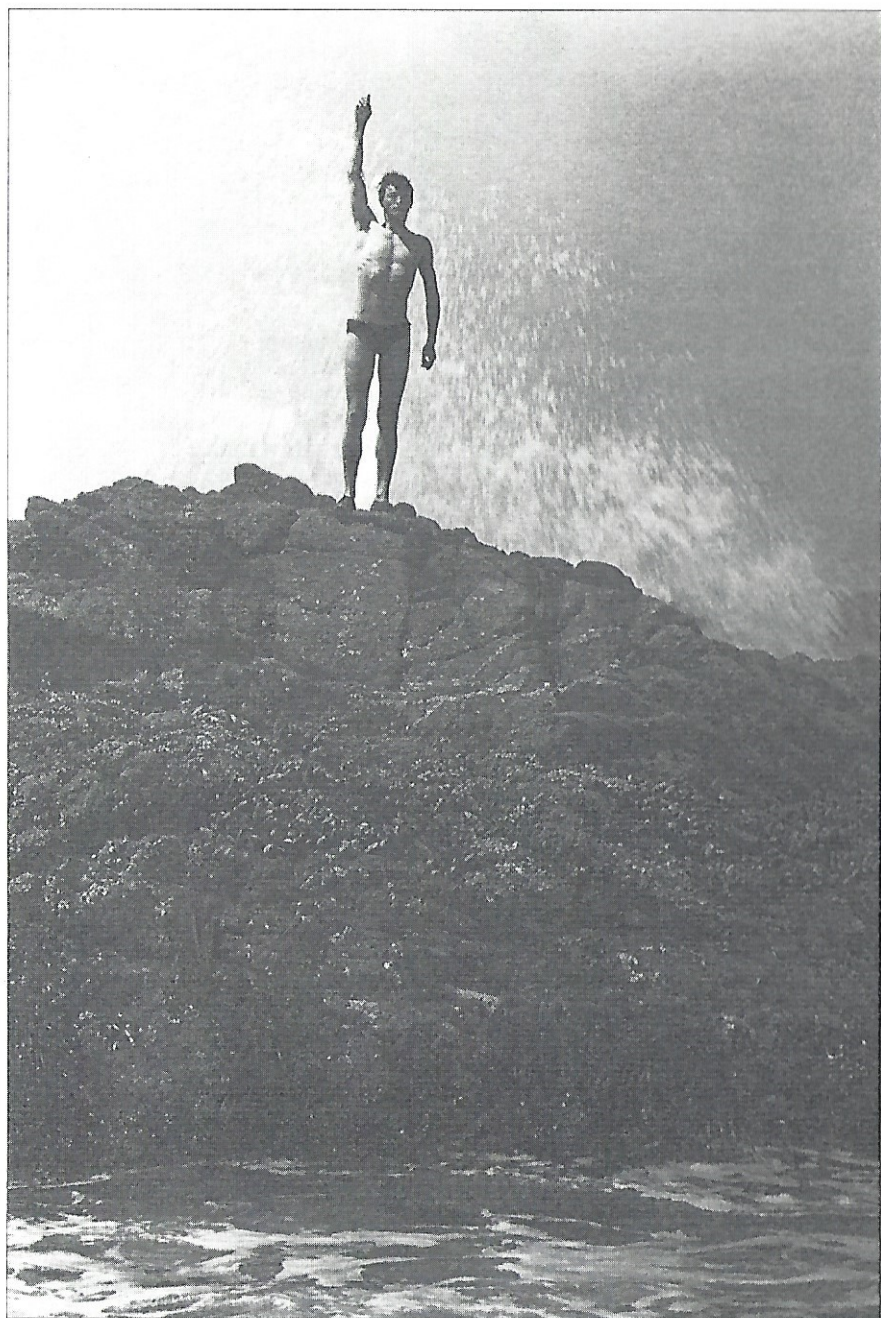
The more we take, the more they make
In deep sea matrimony;
Race suicide cannot betide
The fertile abalone.

I telegraph my better half
By Morse or by Marconi;
But if the need arise for speed,
I send an Abalone.

Oh, some folks think the Lord is fat,
Some think that He is bony;
But as for me, I think that He
Is like an abalone.

*This is the final version of the song written out and "approved" by
George Sterling and typed by Idwal Jones, December 12, 1919.*





Sterling in search of abalone. Photo by E.A. Cohen. Courtesy Pat Hathaway Collection, California Views.

Researching George Sterling: Bibliographic Essay and Acknowledgments

As a fourth-generation member of an Italian fishing family on Monterey Bay, I first discovered the bohemian literary traditions of Carmel as a young boy through my great-uncle, Malio Stagnaro. A friend of both Jimmy Hopper and “Pop” Ernest Doelter, Malio used to enjoy singing some of the verses of “The Abalone Song” whenever the delectable mollusk was cleaned, sliced and pounded in our family’s fish market on the Santa Cruz Municipal Wharf. He was also an inveterate and delightful story teller.

It wasn’t until my first years of college, however, when I read Franklin Walker’s classic *Seacoast of Bohemia* (1966), a book recommended to me by my dear friends Davia Nelson and Nikki Silva (better known today as NPR’s Kitchen Sisters), that I fully grasped the nature of Carmel’s literary colony and the central role of George Sterling in its founding. I followed that up with a reading of Jack London’s classic California novel, *Valley of the Moon* (1914), and a love affair with the history of bohemian Carmel was consummated.

Cut to three decades later. I had kept files on the Carmel literary colony since the 1970s and continued to read books and articles on the subject whenever they appeared, but it wasn’t until the summer of 2007 that my friend Tim Thomas of the Monterey Maritime and History Museum showed me a weathered copy of “Pop” Ernest’s original guestbook, with inscriptions of “The Abalone Song” by several of the Carmel bohemians, including Sterling, that I was inspired to find out all I could about the song and the larger community from which it sprang.

A circle of accomplished Monterey historians with whom Tim meets on Sunday mornings—my friends Kent Seavey, Kurt Loesch and Dennis Copeland—also provided me with initial encouragement and research ideas. The four of them will never know quite how grateful I am, but this project was born of their support, and my gratitude is eternal.

Shortly thereafter, another good friend, Royal Calkins, editorial page editor at the *Monterey Herald*, accepted a short historical piece of mine on “The Abalone Song,” in which I published some of my initial findings (October 28, 2007). Royal also provided me with access to the *Herald’s* files on old Carmel, marking my first foray into the many archives from which this story emerged.

My longtime friend and colleague, Pat Hathaway of California Views in Monterey (www.caviews.com) also provided me access to his astonishing photo archive of bohemian Carmel and has made several of his images available for this edition of *Noticias*. He is a living treasure. We have worked together for a quarter-century and I hope we can work together for a quarter-century more.



*Portrait of "Pop" Ernest Doelter.
Courtesy Pat Sands Collection*

My seminal reading of George Sterling's "Carmel Diaries" took place at the Harrison Memorial Library in Carmel, where Rose McLendon kindly provided me access to much of the library's Sterling archives. There is more to be gleaned there, I am sure. Dennis Copeland provided me with materials from the Monterey Public Library's files on Sterling. At the Henry E. Huntington Library in San Marino, Natalie Russell has been of immeasurable help in going into the archives on my behalf. My lifelong friend Suzanne Keller Sadoff provided invaluable research assistance in Washington, D.C., at the Library of Congress. Cinthia Alireti, a graduate student at the University of Indiana, Bloomington, answered an ad and conducted amazing research in the Mary Craig Sinclair archives at the Lilly Library. Lois Jermyn of the *San Francisco Chronicle* tracked down several important articles, including the first published account of "The Abalone Song" by Idwal Jones. Several other institutions have provided me with full access to their Sterling materials, including the: Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA; John Jermain Library in Sag Harbor, New York; Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley; Mills College Library; San Francisco Public Library; Stanford University Library; Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas; Utah State University Library; and Rare Books and Manuscripts Division, New York Public Library.

While Franklin Walker's *Seacoast of Bohemia* is a cultural icon on the subject, it was limited by Walker's lack of access to a wealth of research materials currently available and, on the whole, must be taken with a grain or two of salt. Walker significantly overemphasized the roles of Jack London and Mary Austin in the Carmel literary scene and underestimated, I believe, the literary accomplishments of Sterling, Hopper and

others. Unfortunately, much of what Walker wrote was set in historical stone, and it will take more than a few swings with the proverbial pick-axe to fashion a corrective.

While there has yet to be a full-fledged biography published on Sterling, Thomas Benediktsson's literary assessment, *George Sterling* (1980), provides an important introduction to his life and work. An unpublished doctoral dissertation by Dalton Harvey Gross, *The Letters of George Sterling* (1968), also provides critical biographical information. *George Sterling: A Centenary Memoir-Anthology*, (1969), edited and with a forward by Charles Angoff, made Sterling's work available to a new generation of readers.

But the real keeper of Sterling's flame is S.T. Joshi, who has edited an anthology of Sterling's poems, *The Thirst of Satan: Poems of Fantasy and Terror* (2003); and Joshi also edited two collections of Sterling's letters: *The Shadow of the Unattained: The Letters of George Sterling and Clark Ashton Smith* (2005), with David Schultz; and *From Baltimore to Bohemia: The Letters of H. L. Mencken and George Sterling* (2001). He is also at work on a multi-volume publication of Sterling's collected poetry. I thank him for all his support with the writing of this essay and for making several critical documents available.

In the case of Jack London, there have been many biographies, but there has yet to be one that approaches what would be called a "definitive" work. Not even close. The volume that best captures, I think, the spirit of London's life remains Clarice Stasz's *American Dreamers* (1988), though her biographical sketch of Sterling, in particular, and Carmel, in general, is skewed and incomplete. There is a major biography of London reportedly on its way by London literary theorist Earle Labor, though the verdict is out yet on how much of a corrective Labor's work will provide to the Carmel story.

Several books recently published by Arcadia Press provide superb background to Monterey Peninsula history, among them: *A Monterey Album: Life by the Bay* (2003), by Dennis Copeland and Jeanne McCombs; *Monterey's Waterfront* (2006), by Copeland and Tim Thomas; *Carmel: A History in Architecture* (2007), by Kent Seavey; and *Carmel-By-The-Sea* (2006), by Monica Hudson. I have also consulted Sharron Lee Hale's general history of the Monterey Peninsula, *A Tribute to Yesterday* (1980), but for the most part, I have relied as much as possible on primary sources—journals, letters, notebooks, photographs, oral histories, contemporary newspaper accounts and first-person memoirs.

Early on in this process, Jeff Norman, one of the great chroniclers of human and natural history in Monterey County and the author of Arcadia's *Big Sur* (2004), passed away from a heart condition that sprang from a 30-year battle with cancer. Jeff and I had many conversations about Big Sur and Monterey Peninsula history over the years, and, indeed, our final discussion was about George Sterling. His passing leaves a huge void, but his passion for the region and its cultural history inspires this work, and I'm sure it will continue to inspire others as well.

Linda Lachmund Smith, who still resides at the original cottage in Carmel built for her grandmother, Mabel Lachmund ("Queen Mab"), opened up her remarkable cottage to me and showed me the spirit of old Carmel. It was a memorable and invigorating experience. Linda also introduced me to a trio of delightful essays about Sterling by Ethel Duffy Turner at the Bancroft. My friend Stanley D. Stevens, librarian emeritus at the University of California, Santa Cruz, provided me with critical information about Alan Hiley. Sterling aficionado Kim Turner in Seattle helped me to locate relevant material in private collections. So, too, has George K. Fox, Vice President of the PBA Galleries in San Francisco. Craig Tweney allowed me access to the legendary Sterling collection of his late father, George Tweney. My friend Lee Quarnstrom, a Robinson Jeffers fan, has also lent his guidance and support. To all of them, my gratitude.

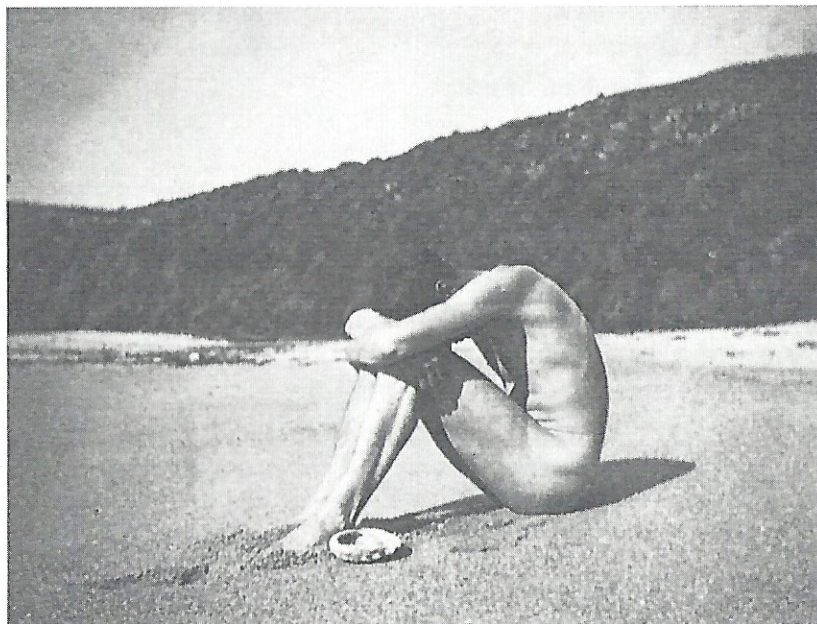
During the course of my research this past year, I met a pair of talented and dutiful writers, Joanne W. Lafler and Pamela Herr, working on biographies of Henry Anderson Lafler and Nora May French, respectively. They are amazing reservoirs of information, and not only do I eagerly look forward to their completed works, I also anticipate their critical readings of my own. It's a rather lovely thought that a century after the subjects of our research made their respective marks on Northern California's literary legacy, we are getting together to discuss their lives.

Finally, it must be noted that there was a good deal of familial discord in literary Carmel, and, indeed, that is part of its tragedy. But I have been blessed with the most supportive of families during this research and writing: my wife, Siri; my children Tess and Dylan; and my mother, Lindy. I am sure that they have tired of me singing various verses of "The Abalone Song," but their unconditional love has fueled and fostered this work.

*Santa Cruz, California
September 2008*

Author's Biography

Geoffrey Dunn is an award-winning journalist, filmmaker and historian. Raised in the Santa Cruz-Italian fishing colony, much of his intellectual work has sprung from his love of the central California coast and its cultural traditions. He is the author of *Santa Cruz Is in the Heart*, and he edited *Chinatown Dreams: The Life and Photographs of George Lee*. He has produced and directed more than a dozen documentary films, including *Dollar a Day, 10¢ a Dance: A Historic Portrait of Filipino Farm Workers in America*; *Chinese Gold: The Chinese of the Monterey Bay Region*; *Mi Vida: The Three Worlds of Maria Gutierrez*; *Miss...or Myth?*; and the recently completed *Calypso Dreams*. He also wrote the original screenplay for the feature film *Maddalena Z*. The winner of a 2002 Gail Rich Award for artistic contributions in Northern California, Dunn was also a Rhodes Scholar nominee. He has served as a Lecturer in both the Community Studies and Film & Digital Media departments at the University of California, Santa Cruz, where he was the winner of an Excellence in Teaching award. He is currently at work on two books—a biography of George Sterling and a volume for Gibbs Smith Publishers entitled *Bohemian Coast: The Literary Traditions of the Monterey Peninsula, Carmel and Big Sur*.



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The path from George Sterling's house in Carmel. Photo by E.A. Cohen. Hand-colored by E.A. Cohen. Courtesy Pat Hathaway Collection, California Views.

Back cover: George Sterling, circa 1909. Photo by E.A. Cohen. Courtesy Pat Hathaway Collection, California Views.

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