

STORIES of New Jersey

Stevenson's spirits rose in these innocent adventures, each of which, by contrast with his usual forced inactivity, took on, or was endowed by him, with some spice of romance. One afternoon we landed on an island a little way up the river, whose shore on one side was protected by a bulkhead. As the island was nameless, we proceeded to repair the oversight and christened it Treasure Island, after which we fell to with our pocket-knives to carve the name upon the bulkhead, together with our initials and the date. This inscription was there some years after, and if the winter tempests have spared it, I am pleased to signal it for someone in quest of a Stevenson autograph, as it might figure as an unique specimen in almost any collection.

One bright day Saint Gaudens the sculptor, accompanied by his young son, came from New York to make casts of Stevenson's hands. These models were used in making the medallion which now hangs in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.

It was during the Manasquan period that Stevenson wrote a note to Sidney Colvin, a fellow author, which illustrates how his own charm penetrated everything he wrote. Even in the wooden houses of the eighties he was able to see glamour where others saw only drabness.

Union House,
Manasquan,
May, 1888.

My dear Colvin:

We are here at a delightful country inn, like a country French place, the only people in the house, a catboat at our disposal, the sea always audible on the outer beach, the lagoon as smooth as glass, all the queer many colored villas standing shuttered and empty; in front of ours across the lagoon, two long wooded bridges; one for rail, one for the road, sounding intermittent traffic. It is highly pleasant and a delightful change from Saranac.

Yours ever,

R. L. S.

The Union House burned in 1904. For some time afterward, however, many who were unaware that it no longer existed came to visit the one-time abode of their favorite author.

Stevenson was born to Margaret and Thomas Stevenson in Edinburgh, on November 13, 1850. He was an only child, and inherited from his mother a weak chest and susceptibility to colds which later developed into tuberculosis. He also inherited her gaiety and her disposition to look on the best side of every situation, enabling him to endure with grace the misfortune of ill-health. From his father who was a distinguished lighthouse engineer, he inherited his romantic and artistic nature.