

Biography of Lou G. Hare

By Diane Sterne

Lou G. Hare was born in San Jose, California on May 31, 1866 to Julia and George Hare. His parents were the proprietors of a book shop that sold and bound books. Lou had one younger brother. In 1875, George Hare died of tuberculosis and eventually the family's store was sold. With his mother and brother, the family of three moved to San Francisco and into a room at the YMCA. Julia found work at a book bindery and Lou worked for the Southern Pacific Railroad as a full time clerk when he was only 16 years old. It was a difficult life.

Lou was interested in the California mining camps and began writing poems and short stories. He also enjoyed drawing with pen and ink. His interest in writing resulted with him keeping daily diaries from 1882 to 1894.

In 1882 Lou worked for a survey crew at Monterey for the Pacific Improvement Co. At age 18 (1884) he went to Victoria on his way to the interior of B.C. where he would work on the construction of the CPR. In November of that same year, he joined a survey party. By 1885, Lou decided to join the Granite Creek Gold Rush. Only one year later he skipped town and crossed the border to the United States, eventually returning to Monterey.

When Lou was first in Monterey in 1882, he met Josie Smith at the Washington Hotel. She is mentioned in Lou's Granite Creek diaries. Josie waited four years for Lou's return, all the while exchanging letters with him. Both Josie and Lou's mother hoped for a marriage, however, Lou decided he wanted more to life and continued his journeys.

While working as a surveyor for the Idaho Railroad Company in Coeur d'Alene, Lou reconnected with his Granite Creek friends, Johnny McDonnell and Jack Lucey.

Lou wanted to be an artist, however, he quickly realized it wouldn't pay the bills so he went back to surveying, this time with the United Pacific Railroad in Eastern Oregon. This was followed by work with the Union Pacific Railroad in Southwestern Washington. Lou quickly switched jobs again, and began work as a "transit man" with the Northern Pacific Railroad. This position was a big advancement for him. When the contract ended, Lou went to San Francisco and enrolled in the Academy of Design to refine his drawing skills.

1893 found Lou as a Locating Engineer for the proposed Monterey to Fresno Railroad. He decided to run for the Republican Party for Monterey County for Surveyor and won. Lou held this position for twenty years.

In August, 1895, Lou married Louisa Anna Lee Tyrrell. They had three children: Chester, Evatt and Dorothy. The family settled in Salinas and here Lou developed an interest in photography. Louisa died July 28, 1913 and is buried in the Masonic Cemetery in Sacramento, California. Lou passed away on January 16, 1921 at the age of 55 years and was interred beside his wife.

The Granite Creek Preservation Society has been given an incredible gift - the "Holy Grail" of Granite Creek. John Frost, who lives in the United States, read about our group on the internet and very generously provided us with a copy of a portion of his Grandfather, Lou G. Hare's diary. L. G. Hare lived in Granite Creek in the early years from 1885 to 1886 and he faithfully kept a daily account of life in the town and surrounding area.

Lou's diary names people and places. He talks about shops and businesses, mining adventures, and deaths. One hundred and thirty-three years later the people of Granite Creek are able to come alive through his words. His entries allow us to peek inside the difficult life of the pioneers who lived in the area. Without modern machinery, we feel the physical pain they endured in their search for wealth. We empathize with their boredom and we watch as they embrace gambling and liquor to get through their daily struggles.

We are deeply grateful to John Frost for sharing these treasured papers with us. We hope you enjoy reading these diary entries as they walk you through the boom and bust years of Granite Creek as seen through the eyes of Lou G. Hare.