

Jeffers and Carmel: The Early Years
Robinson Jeffers Association 22nd Annual Meeting and Conference
February 19-21, 2016
Carmel Women's Club, Carmel, CA

Years after his arrival in 1914, poet Robinson Jeffers called the village of Carmel his “inevitable place,” identifying himself with the town and linking its destiny with his own. In 2016, the centennial year of the incorporation of Carmel-by-the-Sea, the Robinson Jeffers Association celebrates the relationship between Jeffers and Carmel, with particular focus on the year 1916, a year not only significant for the village of Carmel-by-the-Sea, but personally significant to Jeffers. Tor House, now an historical landmark that draws literary and architectural pilgrims to the area, was not yet built, and Robin and Una were living in a primitive cabin in town. The twins, Garth and Donnan, were born in November 1916, completing the family unit that would become the center of the Jeffers' universe. Friends and neighbors such as Teddie Kuster and Lincoln Steffans, who would become such an important part of their lives, had not yet arrived, but the legacy of the village's early bohemians, including George Sterling, Mary Austin, Jack London, and Arnold Genthe, was still fresh in the minds and hearts of locals.

The year 1916 was also pivotal for Jeffers as a poet because it marks the centennial of *Californians*, Jeffers' second book of poems, but the first to provide a glimpse of the poet he was to become: the poems in this collection are deeply rooted in local history and geography, emotionally and psychologically invested in the expression and voice of everyday people, yet simultaneously raise issues and concerns with grander, timeless themes. The year 1916 was, of course, a year of great turbulence across the world as well: the Great War continued to rage, though the U.S. was not formally involved yet; revolution was in the air, not only in Russia (whose government would topple in 1917) but already in Mexico, where many Californians' attention was focused; and an international backlash against some of the most radical political and social groups of the Progressive Age, including anarchists, trade-unionists, and communitarians, was underway. Jeffers and Carmel were affected by all of these.

The 22nd Annual Meeting and Conference of the Robinson Jeffers Association seeks papers on these early transitional years, Jeffers' life in Carmel, and its impact on Jeffers and his work. Papers that address topics outside of this area are also welcome. Paper proposals of 200-250 words and an abbreviated C.V. may be emailed to RJA Executive Director Dale Ann Stieber at robinsonjeffersassociation@gmail.com no later than October 31, 2015. Presentations should not exceed twenty minutes.