

MARY STEWART

THE STEWART REST COTTAGE

An anonymous description of early life at the Grove gives us this insight into one of our Founders.

“TRIBUTE SHOULD BE PAID TO MRS. MILTON STEWART A MEMBER OF WESTMINSTER CHURCH WHICH SHE BUILT. HER FINANCIAL HELP, DEVOTION AND LOYALTY MADE MUCH OF MVGH POSSIBLE DURING THOSE EARLY YEARS. A WOMAN OF LARGE MEANS – AN INDIVIDUALIST – SHE BELIEVED IN GETTING VALUE RECEIVED FOR HER DOLLARS AND USUALLY MANAGED TO SEE THAT OTHERS WORKED WITH HER WHEN SOMETHING NEEDED TO BE DONE. SHE BUILT SOME OF THE BUILDINGS AND BECAME AN ACTIVE MEMBER OF THE BOARD AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE. SHE KNEW WHO NEEDED HELP AND GAVE IT! AT THAT TIME VERY FEW WHO APPLIED FOR ADMISSION TO MVGH HAD MUCH TO LIVE ON AFTER RETIREMENT ESPECIALLY NATIONAL MISSIONARIES AND MINISTERS OF SMALL CHURCHES. MUCH OF THEIR OWN MEAGER SALARIES WERE PLOWED BACK INTO THEIR WORK – PENSIONS WERE DISGRACEFULLY LOW AND SEVERAL HAD AS LITTLE AS \$30 A MONTH TO LIVE ON. FEW HAD ANY FURNITURE TO BRING SO MOST OF THE APARTMENTS HAD TO BE FURNISHED. MRS. STEWART NOT ONLY GAVE GRACIOUSLY OF HER OWN BUT WAS CONSTANTLY SOLICITING ANYTHING USABLE FROM OTHERS. AS SALARIES WERE INCREASED – FURNITURE WORE OUT AND STORAGE BECAME A PROBLEM – SO GRADUALLY FURNISHING THE APARTMENTS WAS PHASED OUT. AT HER DEATH MRS. STEWART LEFT A GENEROUS LEGACY, A PART OF WHICH WENT TOWARD THE ENLARGEMENT OF THE REST COTTAGE.”

Mary had been a nurse in a Buffalo, NY. Hospital where Milton Stewart had become her patient. Milton’s wife had died earlier. The relationship between Nurse and patient deepened and Mary then became Mrs. Milton Stewart. The Stewarts moved to California in 1915 where they founded the Union Oil Company. Mary became involved in the founding of MVGH. She built Westminster Presbyterian Church and Geneva Hall at San Francisco Seminary. At her death in 1950 she left a large bequest to Occidental College. Mary Stewart was a woman of great wealth and a woman with a great heart!