THOMAS W. NORRIS COLLECTION

Thomas Wayne Norris, the Man and the Collector

LINDLEY BYNUM

Thomas Wayne Norris bought his first book as a collector at the age of nineteen. In 1948, his distinguished collection of books, pamphlets, maps and prints on California and the West, numbering 4,311 items, was sold by the Holmes Book Company from a catalogue printed by the Grabhorn Press. At the time of his death in May 1952, he left the finest collection of California manuscripts in private hands, plus a large collection of Grabhorn Press books and a number of rare tomes not included in the Holmes sale, or acquired since that event. Between the dates 1897 and 1952, while this collection was in progress, he managed to live a successful life in business, and a full life in the service of his family and his community.

Tom Norris was born in Cloverdale, California, January 12, 1878. He attended school in Santa Rosa until the year 1893, when his family moved to Salinas. He graduated from High School in that city and, not long after, was employed by the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, with which he later shipped to the Orient as purser on one of its ships. He married Augusta Merritt in 1906, and in 1908 joined the Coast Manufacturing Company with headquarters at Livermore, to which community they moved in 1913. In 1918 he became President of the company and remained in this position until 1946 when he retired and moved to Carmel. For a part of this period he had also been President of the First National Bank of Livermore, and at the time of his retirement was a Director of the American Trust Company.

His public services were too numerous to record here except in part. He was Trustee and President of the Livermore Elementary School Board for 30 years, headed the Red Cross, was President of the Livermore Rodeo Association and the Livermore Chamber of Commerce. He served as Chairman of the Alameda County Welfare Commission. He was a Director of the Oakland Area Council Boy Scouts for 25 years, President of the Oakland Rotary Club, and a Director of the First Agricultural District. He was active in Masonic work, holding many high offices in that Order, and was awarded the honorary 33d degree for his services.

In spite of the many demands upon him, Tom Norris managed to spend much time in his home at Trevarno, the Company property adjoining Livermore. With his wife, Augusta, and their daughter Catherine, now Mrs. Thomas E. Bacon, he created a tradition of hospitality and warm friendliness. Parties at the Norris home were noteworthy affairs, but no less memorable was the reception given to the chance friend who stopped in to say hello, and stayed to share the congenial atmosphere of the family circle.

The house was a spacious structure with beautiful gardens, the creation of Mrs. Norris. Adjoining it was a tennis court, lighted at night for the use of the neighborhood. The garden furnished Tom, a camera fan, with

(Continued on page 6)
The Friends' Book

An announcement of interest to our members is that of our next publication, and the book itself will be irresistible. One of the most entertaining manuscripts in the library is Ramblings in California by Henry Cerruti, in which that genial gentleman describes, for the benefit of his employer Hubert Howe Bancroft, his adventures in pursuit of the Vallejo Documents. This is now being published for the first time, and will soon be distributed for the edification and delight of the Friends.

Edited with an introduction by Virginia E. Thickens and Margaret Mollins, Ramblings in California is being printed by the Gillick Press. It will be distributed to the Friends in December.

Kinnaird Acting Director

With this issue of Bancroftiana, we welcome Dr. Lawrence Kinnaird as Acting Director of the Bancroft Library. He is well-known to us all, for he has taken a benevolent interest in the Library since his graduate days under Dr. Bolton. As a member of the History Department here since 1937, he has sent many students of his own to the Library, and as Cultural Attaché to the U. S. Embassy in Santiago, Chile from 1942 to 1945, he has spread abroad the word of our collections, mainly in the Archives of the Indies at Seville, giving the story of the conqueror's rule and disgrace. Outlined in Dr. Hammond's lively Foreword are the jealousies, intrigues, explorations, battles, murders, and other deeds of daring and violence of Oñate's expedition.

We are happy that Dr. Hammond's faithful cultivation of the field of Southwestern history has borne such fruit, and happy that it has received suitable honor. Last June the University of New Mexico, where Dr. Hammond had been chairman of the department of history and dean of the graduate school before coming to the Bancroft, conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Laws.

Drobish Papers

The correspondence, papers and published writings of the late Harry E. Drobish, California rancher, agricultural expert, and State Senator 1947-50, have been given to the Bancroft Library by his widow, Mrs. H. E. Drobish of Far View Ranch, Bangor.

The California farm expert, who died this year, was born in Decatur, Illinois, in 1893, and graduated from the Berkeley campus in 1913. In 1919 and 1928, he served as County Agricultural Agent in Butte County, and spent 10 years in the fields of agricultural marketing and economics, working with the State and U. S. Departments of Agriculture.

As State Director of Rural Rehabilitation during the peak depression years, both under the State Emergency Relief program and the Federal Resettlement Administration, Drobish instituted the federally built and operated migrant labor camps, in which six million dollars were invested in California. He also set up the Federal Farm Debt Adjustment Committees in Utah, Nevada and California.

In recent years, Drobish had been active as a rancher and grower, and processor of olives in the Sacramento Valley. Under the U. S. program of foreign technical assistance (Point IV), he traveled to Jordan to study and advise on the processing of olives. He was prominent in the Council for Social Action of the Congregational Church.

Santa Barbara Gazette

This important newspaper collection of the Bancroft Library has been augmented by a remarkable and valuable addition—the Friends' gift to the library of one of the two known sets of the Santa Barbara Gazette, 1855-1857.

It is the first newspaper to be published in Santa Barbara, and the fourth in Southern California. The file consists of 104 consecutive issues from May 24, 1855 to May 14, 1857, bound in two volumes in a superb state of preservation. Issues through December 26, 1855 are printed both in Spanish and in English; with the issue of December 27, 1855 the Spanish section was dropped. It is not known when the Gazette ceased publication, although there is indication that Santa Barbara and Ventura counties were without a newspaper for a period of about ten years prior to 1868. That the Friends were instrumental in bringing this rarity to the Bancroft Library, is a fact in which each individual member may take justifiable pride.

Want List

Our WANT LIST this time consists of books relating to the Mexican Revolution. We invite the assistance of the Friends in securing the following for the library:

Aguayo Cinta, Rafael Queremos de la Nación. 1924.
Agustín Beltrán, J. El Probleme Mexican. Paris, Sociedad Católica d'Impresión (L. Cadot, directeur), MCMXXX.

New Friends

We are pleased to announce new Friends of the Bancroft Library:

2. Amata, Sherrill Amargosa Memorial Library Brown, Percy S. San Francisco
3. Carden, Miss Rosario Andrade Stockton, Calif.
4. Ditz, George A. Santa Barbara
5. Grover, Mrs. L. Berkeley
6. Hatfield, Mrs. John G. Sacramento
7. Robinson, W. W. Los Angeles

Alessio Robles, Miguel Senderos, México, D. F., 1930.

Discurso pronunciado en la Ciudad de México, el primero de julio de 1929, con motivo de la Ceremonia Conmemorativa del Partido Nacional Anti-Reaccionista, México, [n. p.] (1929).
Amezaga, José Luis Memorias de una campaña. México, Talleres Gráficos de la Nación. 1924.
Artistaín, Darío Notas de un ranchero. Relación y documentos relativos a los acontecimientos ocurridos en una parte de la Costa Chica, de febrero de 1913 a marzo de 1915, México. Imp. Francesa, 1917.
Azcuel, Mariano Andrés Pérez, Maderista. México, Imp. de Blanco y Botas, 1921.

New Friends of the Bancroft Library:

Albright, Horace Morden Amargosa Memorial Library
Barham, Claude S. New Rochelle, N. Y.
Brown, Percy S. San Francisco
Curletti, Miss Rosario Andrade Stockton, Calif.
Ditz, George A. Santa Barbara
Gledhill, W. Edwin Berkeley
Grover, Mrs. L. Honolulu
Halbert, Judge Sherrill Berkeley
Hatfield, Mrs. John G. Sacramento
Robinson, W. W. Los Angeles

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Kathleen Norris Gift

An unpublished Frank Norris manuscript, previously unknown to scholarship, is included in a collection of memorabilia of the Norris family recently presented to the Bancroft Library by the famous California writer, Kathleen Norris.

The newly-discovered manuscript is entitled "News Gathering at Key West," and describes the novelist Stephen Crane as a war correspondent and Norris' own experiences during the Spanish-American War. Twenty-five pages in length and written in pencil in Norris' beautiful hand, the manuscript is of great interest to those trying to round out the picture of Frank Norris as a writer and as a man.

This manuscript is but the most prominent single item in the recent gift of fifty-one groups of manuscript, clippings, photographs and other memorabilia relating to the literary Norris trio—Frank; his late brother, Charles Gilman, who died in 1945; and Kathleen, widow of Charles Gilman and long one of the most popular American women writers. All three, incidentally, were students at the University of California.

Hatfield Papers

Correspondence and papers of one of California's most prominent political figures of recent times, the late Senator George J. Hatfield, have been given to the Bancroft Library.

The Hatfield collection, one of the largest in the important series of collections documenting to the Bancroft Library marks one of the most fortunate acquisitions of many years. This outstanding group of documents consists of more than 146,000 pages of manuscripts, chiefly in the form of transcripts and photostats, brought together from sixty-odd archives and repositories in Western Europe, Mexico, Canada, and the United States during a lifetime of distinguished scholarship and research.

In describing his materials, Professor Bolton wrote:

The story of assembling them is a chapter in the record of my activities over a long period of time, and is also a chapter in the historiography of the Southwest and the Pacific Slope of North America, and in the development of the concept of a synthetic history of the Western Hemisphere. To differentiate my gathering of unpublished materials from that of Bancroft, it might be said that he assembled his magnificent collection chiefly from within California and on the market, and not to a major extent from archives outside of the Pacific Coast. This is not to minimize his tremendous achievement, but to indicate that he did not acquire much material from the great archives of the Western Hemisphere and Europe, of which our history is a part. My gathering, which has greatly supplemented that of Bancroft, has been done largely in the archives of Mexico and Europe, where a vast quantity of the early records of events on the Pacific Coast and the Southwest accumulated in the process of frontier expansion and administration.

Professor Bolton did not confine his collecting to the major archives of Mexico and Spain, the Archivo General y Pública de la Nación in Mexico City and the Archivo General de Indias in Seville, although as might be expected, these are heavily drawn upon. The list of repositories includes many state and local archives in Mexico, and public and private collections throughout the world, such as the records at the St. Francis Orphanage at Watsonville, California, the Biblioteca Nacional Vittore Emanuele in Rome, the Bavarian Hauptstaatsarchiv in Munich, and the Archives of Montreal.

Just as the research value of the Bancroft Library has increased, although at one time it was thought to have been "mined out" with the production of Bancroft's histories, so the documents in the Bolton Collection will continue their usefulness indefinitely, despite the fact that they were the basis for Bolton's enormous output of works.

Alexander Journal

The wide-ranging interests in the West which were Hubert B. Bancroft's when he was assembling his great library are fully shared today by the staff and friends of the Bancroft Library, and it is always with high satisfaction that we acquire a document exemplifying the far reach of the original Bancroft historical empire. One of the newest acquisitions of the kind is a manuscript diary of Eveline M. Alexander, April 30, 1866—January 17, 1867, comprising a spirited account of her journey from her home in New York to join her cavalry officer husband, Col. A. J. Alexander, at Fort Smith, Arkansas, and her subsequent experiences with him during active duty in New Mexico and Southern Colorado.

Mrs. Alexander's narrative of her journey across the plains with a military train is fresh and alive, illustrating the power with which the West has always appealed to the imagination, and she is a good reporter on various
posts, including Fort Bacorn, Fort Union, Fort Barclay, Fort Stevens, and Fort Garland. While on a visit to Taos, she and her husband were guests of one (William?) le Blanc, who with two companions had rescued the survivors of Frémont's disastrous expedition of 1848, and was full of interesting conversation on the subject. The diary has sidelights on General W. T. Sherman, Kit Carson, and other military figures of the period, and accounts of skirmishes with various Indian tribes.

New Book Manuscript

The manuscript of Alonso Delano's California Correspondence, recent publication of the Sacramento Book Collectors Club, has been presented to the library by the club. Letters from "Old Block" to the Ottawa (Illinois) Free Trader and the New Orleans True Delta, 1849-1852, hitherto uncollected, and illustrative maps by Stewart Mitchel are contained in this attractive book.

Evans Diary

Ever interesting to Bancroftians is word of a new overland journey to California, and we are gratified to report the gift of one of the most readable manuscript diaries yet acquired by the library, that of James W. Evans, detailing his journey to California in 1850.

Presented by a grand-son, William Evans Searle of San Francisco, the journal describes the experiences of a 28-year-old Mis-sourian who had gone to Arkansas in 1846. He set out for the mines from Fort Smith in March, 1850, going north by way of Fort Scott to strike the Oregon-California trail near the old Uniontown crossing of the Kansas River. Thence his was a usual route to California, via the Sublette and Hudspeth cutoffs and the Truckee River. The journal ends personal arrival at Nevada City, California, on August 18, 1850. Evans had an eye for the quirkies of human nature, including his own (as when he was finally converted to the uses of buffalo chips), and his is a lively narrative. A feature of special interest is that Evans on June 16, 1850, near Fort Laramie, encamped with Kit Carson, who gave him a waybill of the route to California; another is that Evans remarked on the remains of the Donner encampment at Donner Lake.

New Ph. D.

With special pride we note the achievement of one of our staff, Doris Marion Wright, who recently completed the work for her doctoral dissertation at Claremont College. Dr. Wright has written her dissertation about Abel Stearns, one of the earliest New England settlers in California, and his life here during the Mexican period.

Norris Collection

(Continued from page 1)

many color "stills" and a background for movies of his grandchildren. In Carmel, August made an even more resplendent garden, and Tom, although he had supposedly gone there to retire, was made a Director of the Monterey History and Art Association, Monterey Chairman for the Society of California Pioneers, member of the Monterey Museum Board and, at the time of his death, President of the Peninsula Hospital Board. At the changed address, friends were always sure to find the same warm welcome, and collecting went on with the same enthusiasm.

He began collecting early. As a boy it was Indian arrowheads found in places near Santa Rosa and Salinas. These were housed in the basement rumpus room of the Livermore home, along with a fine collection of Indian baskets and artifacts, old guns, and a remarkable lot of California branding irons. The walls were covered with old maps and prints. Upstairs, the walls were hung with paintings and there were cabinets filled with ruby thumb-print glass, Mrs. Norris' hobby. On moving, many of these collections were sold, but the baskets, paintings and some of the branding irons went along, as did, of course, the books and manuscripts.

That Tom Norris was a successful collector of books the record gives ample evidence, but his manuscripts became his most absorbing interest. Evenings, Saturday aftemoons and Sundays usually found him in his library. There he would plan one of the many volumes into which he segregated his material. A letter from him written January 1939 reveals his method of procedure:

"... What I would like to have are pictures of Juan Temple and his bride, the Temple adobe if there was one and of Father Boscana. I think I have enough stuff on the marriage of Juan Temple to fix up a book and with the pictures it would make quite a showing."

The process of selection often necessitated the use of many techniques, at which he became expert. These might be delicate jobs of patching, or the more forthright operation described in a letter of March 22, 1940:

"On my return to the office this morning, I found the four Frémont documents which I was most delighted to receive. These are going to be quite an addition to my American Occupation of California scrapbook. With the aid of a flat iron, I will have the documents looking almost as good as new."

When he had finally selected a manuscript he would encase it in cellophane, each page separately so that it might be read, and place it in one of the familiar folio volumes, three-quarter morocco and monk's cloth boards which he had made for this purpose. The hours spent in the completion of these volumes were his chief pleasure for many years.

It was with the purpose of sharing his enjoyment that, in 1936, he chose the rare Jackson's Map of California with Appendix and had it reproduced at the Grabhorn Press as a Christmas gift for his friends. Thereafter, each Christmas through 1951, his last, he selected a manuscript from his collection and had the Grabhorns print it in facsimile with accompanying text, an event awaited eagerly by his friends, and later by numerous libraries and collectors as well.

In the foregoing I have tried to record some of the achievements and quality of this remarkable man. He possessed an abundance of those traits which our race has found praiseworthy, but perhaps he might best be characterized by a phrase of the late Susan Myra Gregory of Monterey. He was a "right California."

Spanish Language Manuscripts

The approximately 1,000 Spanish language items in the Thomas W. Norris collection in the Bancroft Library well illustrate his interest in California. These documents cover the period between 1769 and 1888 and are concerned exclusively with Alta and Baja California. The overwhelming bulk of the material is related to the history of Alta California in the first half of the nineteenth century. Approximately two-thirds of the Spanish documents are located in eleven volumes of assembled California county materials, five volumes on prominent personages, and several miscellaneous volumes. The other one-third is in loose manuscript form.

The collection covers a rather wide range of historical material, most of which is official in nature—Mexican, California provincial and local government decrees and correspondence, land documents, etc. There is, however, some personal correspondence. Disregarding the arrangement of the material into volumes, it may be broken down under a number of topical titles: papers of the mission friars and the father presidents, California civil government documents, military orders and reports, legal and land title papers, papers of prominent individuals and miscellaneous papers.

The papers of the friars and the mission presidents are found in three volumes titled Correspondence of the Friars, 1776-1842 containing 12 letters, Original Fages-Serra Letters, containing a single manuscript, and are also scattered Early Documents and Letters, in the county volumes and miscellaneous documents. Many of these are routine papers such as diligencias matrimoniales and birth records, some with the signatures of such prominent Franciscans as Serra, Durán, Lasaun and Crespi.

One item in this category seems worthy of special mention. The Fages-Serra correspondence of October, 1772, is an excellent illustration of the tense situation existing between the two leading figures in California at the time. Another document of interest is an or-
order of Fr. Francisco Palou written October 9, 1773, while he was temporary president of the missions, in which he mentions the transfer of the Baja California missions, which he had just completed. In the Early Documents and Letters there are also a number of lists of articles for the missions, inventories and reports.

The California civil government documents consist principally of papers assembled in the volumes titled Official Papers of the Governors of Alta California, and Early Documents and Letters; but there are also some scattered in the county volumes and miscellaneous papers. The latter volume of the two mentioned contains government papers largely from the colonial period, while the former volume consists of 18 documents, fifteen of which date from the period of Mexican independence. The county volumes contain mostly local government papers although a number of documents by both Spanish and Mexican governors are included as well.

Since the governor of California was also head of the Spanish military forces, the papers coming under the heading of military orders and reports are widely scattered in the volumes Official Papers of the Alta California and Early Documents and Letters and in the county volumes. Routine documents, such as requests by the soldiers for permission to marry, are fairly numerous. Of wider interest are such documents as the order of Don José Antonio de la Guerra y Noriega, comandante at Monterey, dated December 28, 1804, in which he forbids civilians to continue the wearing of military insignia because it has made the uniform not only less respected but even laughable. A number of claims by (original?) California citizens for property seized or destroyed by United States troops in the Mexican War, assembled in the volume, Frémont, 1847-1851, might also be included in this category.

Among the land papers, which are located largely in the county volumes and loose papers, three items merit special attention. One is the will of Don José de la Puente, Marques de Villa Puente and one of the chief founders of the Pious Fund, dated Mexico, 1738, in which is specified the portion of land bequeathed to the Franciscan Order in Mexico. The income of this land was to be used in the foundation of missions in (Baja) California. The Marques also bequeathed property to missions in Nayarit, Sonora, Sinaloa and the Philippine Islands. Of greater local interest are the papers, chiefly photocopies, relating to the José Joaquin Estudillo–Luis Peralta controversy over the Los Temescales portion of Rancho San Antonio in Alameda County. These papers date from 1818 to 1907. The third item is the complete papers on the confirmation of the patent to Fulgencio Higuera for Rancho del Agua Caliente in Santa Clara County, with the California Surveyor General’s map of the rancho.

In the papers of prominent California individuals the correspondence of Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo is outstanding. The approximately 300 items in this group are loose manuscripts. In this unit are the correspondence and papers of Vallejo’s wife and children and several items concerning Edward Vischer, prominent early California artist. Another group is in a volume titled Naturalization Papers, Miguel Pryor, and a second, untitled, contains the marriage papers of John Temple. These two volumes give a complete picture of the process undergone by the early immigrants in obtaining the hands of California’s daughters.

Among the miscellaneous papers there are three groups of interest. One is a manuscript history of the Masonic lodge, Fieles Obreros de la Baja California No. 30, containing not only information on the foundation and growth of the organization, but also lists of officers and members and their occupations, and a financial report. A second group consists of the papers referring to the construction of the jail and city hall at Monterey. This includes the examination, recommendations and authorization, together with the plans by Agustín Vicente Zamorano. The last group is contained in the volume, Early Printing in California. This is a collection of stamped paper used in Alta California, including some early examples of printing done there, notably examples of the work of California’s first printer, Agustín Vicente Zamorano.

[Concluded in next issue]