The President’s Corner

Acceding to Carl I. Wheat’s wish to retire as Chairman after two years of devoted service, the Council of the Friends of the Bancroft Library, on May 21, 1956, elected as its new chairman Mrs. Guy Gilchrist of Dutch Flat and San Francisco, a descendant of the Howard family of California pioneers of Punta de los Reyes in Marin County.

Previously, at the annual meeting, Malcolm W. Moss was named to fill the unexpired term of Joseph Henry Jackson; and Joseph Bransten, George P. Hammond, Mrs. Gerald D. Kennedy, and V. Aubrey Neasham were elected as members of the Council for the term ending June 30, 1960.

Mrs. Gilchrist entertained the Council at luncheon on October 18, at which time she announced appointment of three committees to advance the purposes of the Friends.

The Executive Committee, with Mrs. Gilchrist as chairman, has as other members Michael Harrison, Joseph Bransten, Malcolm Moss, George L. Harding, Adele Ogden, and George P. Hammond.

The Membership and Finance Committee, with Joseph Bransten as chairman, has as members Mrs. Harold Boucher, Glen Dawson, Joel Ferris, George L. Harding, Michael Harrison, and Mrs. Lawton Kennedy.

The Publications Committee, of which Michael Harrison is chairman, will otherwise be made up of Francis P. Farquhar and Dale L. Morgan.

Western Authors

One of the newest of Bancroft’s collecting fields has already become a major preoccupation of the Library, the assemblage and preservation of the papers of California writers. The value of primary source materials for the historian has long been recognized, but Bancroft feels that it is just as important to preserve the manuscripts of novelists and poets—not only the notes, drafts, and revisions of works prepared for publication, but correspondence, diaries, and other papers which reflect the personal and social life of the writer, his interaction with and place in the culture of his time.

Valuable collections recently built up, chiefly through the efforts and enthusiasm of Professor James D. Hart, Chairman of the University’s English Department, include the papers of Gertrude Atherton, Frank Norris, Ina Coolbrith, Charles Warren Stoddard, George Sterling, Jack London, and other writers. Just arranged and in process of being catalogued for public use are the papers of Gelett Burgess, including his notebooks and diaries, correspondence, manuscripts, and a few drawings of his famous “Goops.”

Interesting acquisitions this past year, not previously mentioned in Bancroftiana, include a list in Frank Norris’ handwriting of manuscripts he read as a professional reader, 1901-02, a gift from Frank C. Preston, Jr.; a Bret Harte letter, August 31, 1881, concerning his contract with Houghton Mifflin & Company of Boston, a gift from Joseph M. Bransten; additions to her archive of poetry and correspondence from Miss Josephine Miles; George Sterling’s inscribed copy for Mary Austin of his Wine of Wizardry, and his own copy of Keats’s Poems inscribed as a gift to Nora May French, Christmas, 1906; gifts of Miss Nellie Barnes. Miss Barnes also gave us a copy of Mary Austin’s Lovely Lady, inscribed by Mrs. Austin to Catherine
Hittell. Dorothy Baker contributed the manuscript of her novel, *Trio*. Doubleday and Company added a contract of Gelett Burgess and Will Irwin with McClure, Phillips & Co., to some correspondence and contracts of Upton Sinclair, Gertrude Atherton, and Mary Austin with this firm and its predecessors.

The papers of the late Joseph Henry Jackson are being placed in the Library by Mrs. Jackson, including some correspondence and a complete file of his "Bookman" columns in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. The celebrated duo, Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas, are represented with five postcards sent to Lawrence Strauss, given by Mrs. Strauss. In addition, we have acquired several manuscripts (with pictures for illustration) of stories about California, Idaho, and the Klondike gold rush, ca. 1885-1900, written by Alan Owen, an Englishman who sometimes used the pseudonym Robert Campbell.

**Diaz Regime Papers**

Through the medium of microfilm the Bancroft Library has acquired a large part of the correspondence directed to Matías Romero, a Mexican diplomat and financier of exceptional ability who lent his talents to the famous administrations of both Benito Juárez and Porfirio Díaz.

In 1859 Juárez sent his loyal adherent, Matías Romero, to Washington as secretary of the Mexican Legation. Although only twenty-two at the time of his appointment, Romero pursued his duties with such zeal and imagination that he was soon promoted to charge d'affaires and remained as the able representative of the Juárez government during its initial trying years and throughout the whole unfortunate era of French intervention in Mexico. In 1868 he returned to Mexico as secretary of finance to assist Juárez in the difficult job of reestablishing the government of a shattered republic. That Juárez was able to avert financial disaster and bring some unity out of the chaos left by the French was in no small measure due to Romero's honest and efficient administration of the treasury.

At Juárez' death in 1872 Romero retired to private life and local politics, but returned during the long administration of Porfirio Díaz to serve at various times as minister of finance and as envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary to Washington. In 1888 he was named Mexican ambassador to the United States but died before he could assume the duties of his post.

Romero diligently preserved his correspondence, leaving in the hands of his descendants an archive rich in materials for the history of the critical period in which he lived. In recent years this collection has become the property of the Banco de México, which has acted as custodian of the papers and now has microfilmed most of them. These are of especial value to scholars because the source materials for this period of Mexican history are both scant and widely scattered. As a consequence, these 72 reels of film of the correspondence and papers of one of Mexico's most distinguished public servants in the late 19th century are a rich source of information.

**Eureka—The Nerve!**

One of the Bancroft Library's newest acquisitions is an extremely rare set of the *Nerve*, a weekly periodical published in Eureka from 1892 to 1895, bound in three volumes.

*Nerve* began on a high note. According to its first editorial, "...to the material interests of the realm in which it circulates, NERVE has come as a vital force to touch the inert masses of mind and matter, and, by the magic of the touch set them throbbing; with the ecstacies of life. Its province is to invigorate and encourage. It seeks not so much to create or to mould—though it may undertake both—but to enliven, to connect, to unify. Such is the ideal which a literal rendering of the title might imply, and may Heaven grant us wisdom, strength, and courage to approach as near the ideal as the nerves of our race will permit."

After such an expression of soaring ambition, almost anything would be an anticlimax. The last number of volume III, March 30, 1895, tells us that Supervisor Moore has recently returned from Paso Robles, where he was completely cured of rheumatism by taking hot mud baths.

**Eleanor Ashby Bancroft 1903-1956**

It is with a great sense of personal as well as professional loss that we record the death, on August 28, 1956, of Eleanor Ashby Bancroft. In the thirty-six years of her life in the Bancroft Library, she came to be regarded by many as the very heart and soul of the institution. Her long experience in bibliographical work on California Towns, from the Original Drawings, and *An Account of a Tour of the California Missions, 1856—The Journal and Drawings of Henry Miller*, both published in San Francisco by the Book Club of California, in 1947 and 1949. She also did a large share of the work on *California Local History, a Centennial Bibliography*, compiled by the California Library Association Committee on Local History and published in 1950. Besides being a scholar herself, she was advisor and guide to countless other scholars. There must be hundreds of published works that acknowledge their authors' indebtedness to Mrs. Bancroft for her assistance.

The essence of her career cannot be better expressed than in her own words, written on her 42nd birthday as introduction to an unfinished paper: "The business of writing about the place in which I was raised and have spent all my adult years is a problem. I began 'my career' at the end of June of 1920, age 16. When I applied for a part time job, Dr. Priestley, Librarian, asked me 'What can you do?' I'm sure my answer was intended to mean 'I am willing to do anything,' but he interpreted it and always quoted me as answering 'I can do anything.' Well, I grew up there. We moved from the first floor of the Library building to the fourth floor in 1922. It was there that I gradually learned about the library; I mean the books and manuscripts, and what was in them and how to find out more."

During her subsequent years in the Library, Mrs. Bancroft did much to add to its store of resources. She was responsible for the work of book selection, a huge task which was
possible only because of her wide and personal knowledge of the Library. This knowledge, and the coincidence of her married name, combined to make her the personification of the Library. It was our good fortune.

In trying to write of the Mrs. Bancroft we all loved, we turned to her friend and collaborator, Miss Coulter, whose words make a fitting conclusion to this tribute: "My acquaintance with Eleanor Bancroft dates back to her student days when she became an assistant in the Bancroft Library, but a much closer association developed during the last ten years. She possessed a remarkably retentive memory of incidents relative to the growth and acquisitions of the Bancroft Library, but more than that she had a friendly interest in the students and scholars who used the collection over the years. But above all these valuable characteristics she had a gracious, animated and blithe personality. Eleanor Bancroft will be long remembered."

Hammond's Trip to Europe

In order to reactivate our microfilm program in England and Holland, I visited both of these countries in the summer of 1956, accompanied by Mrs. Hammond. On July 8th, after visiting bookstores and libraries in New York, we took wing for London, where we arrived on the morning of the 9th.

The flaming sunrise that morning over the North Atlantic was most spectacular, and was for many weeks. As we came over England and Ireland the clear sky gave way to fog, mist, and smoke, and throughout our stay the British Isles huddled, cold and miserable, through one of the wettest summers in the last hundred years. Only rarely during our two months in London did the temperature reach 60°, and one English friend quipped that if it ever reached 70° all activities would cease because of the heat wave. Our hearts went out to the British farmers, whose crops were not only retarded but irreparably damaged.

We were soon settled in a London hotel, studying maps of subways and bus lines, London's magnificent system of public transportation. We made the usual calls—the American Embassy, the British Museum, the Public Record Office (the official government depository, corresponding to our own National Archives), and other libraries and museums. We gazed at St. Paul's Cathedral, visited the Parliament Buildings, watched the changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace, walked along the Victoria embankment of the Thames, and wandered among the Courts of Inn, where the English lawyers have their offices.

We were soon reminded to call them solicitors and barristers, and we observed that they alone, apparently, wore the little black derbies as a mark of their profession. On the long summer evenings and the quiet weekend, when all of London seemed to have closed up shop and left town, we "hoofed" it from monument to monument, from church to cathedral, from palace to museum and gallery, taking in the sights and getting thoroughly wet.

My chief purpose in England was to investigate, in the Public Record Office, the British documentary sources relating to Mexico during the nineteenth century. Great Britain was one of the first nations to recognize the independence of Mexico, in 1825, and always had a poet's sympathy to represent His Britannic Majesty. A consulate general was established in the City of Mexico, and vice-consulates in several coastal towns. This was the period of great English commercial expansion. There was enormous interest in British mines, in developing British trade, in British migration to these new parts of the world. And since the British had centuries of experience in keeping elaborate records, it followed that there was extensive correspondence between the British officials in Mexico and the mother country, as well as between the British vice-consuls and the consulate general in Mexico City. Virtually all of this vast accumulation of correspondence, extending to the end of the nineteenth century, was later transferred to the government archives in London, and there it remains. Since these records throw light on a multitude of subjects in Mexican history, many are being microfilmed for the Bancroft Library, where they will soon be available to scholars who may wish to consult them.

The search for documents took me also to the British Museum, which corresponds in some measure to our own Library of Congress. Both a library and a museum, this ancient institution has a rich and magnificent accumulation of maps, manuscripts, and museum objects, gathered from all parts of the world. Here, too, British officials extended their courtesy to facilitate my search for documents and maps of interest to scholars of the Pacific Coast.

Since the University of California for many years has been gathering material on colonial Latin American history, I spent a week in the Dutch Royal archives at The Hague, investigating records relating to Dutch activities in the Caribbean area. During my first visit to these archives, in 1949, when the Dutch lacked both equipment and dollars, we had supplied them with a top-quality American Recordak camera, in exchange for thousands of rolls of microfilm which we had selected for our use. This happy arrangement greatly pleased the Dutch officials, and the camera bears a brass plate, acknowledging their gratefulness to the University of California.

My second visit to these archives was as agreeable as the first. On my return to The Hague this summer I was given free access to the stacks and the assistance of a young archivist. Such advantages enabled me to make a survey of materials of major interest to American scholars in the Latin American field, and to make plans for microfilming them whenever possible.

Although the summer of 1956 in northern Europe was bleakly cold and wet, our welcome abroad was a warm one. Our trip was a rare opportunity, not only to learn more about the resources of archives and libraries, but to cement old friendships and form new ones on the other side of the Atlantic. G.P.H.

A New Overland Diary

A new manuscript journal to enhance Bancroft's famous collection of overland narratives is the penciled diary of Timothy Judge, acquired earlier this year. The record begins with Judge's departure from Great Salt Lake City on September 6, 1849, and describes his further journey to California by way of the Salt Lake Cutoff, north of Great Salt Lake, and the Carson River route to Weaverville, where he arrived October 15. Later entries in the diary describe mining experiences near Weaverville, Georgetown, Big Bar, Volcano Bar, and other diggings to January 26, 1850.

The diary is unusual in that Judge traveled the Humboldt route so late in the year, for by September Forty-niners still as far east as Utah were beginning to look to the southern route to California. Judge and his companions on the trail had much more trouble with the Indians in Nevada than had earlier travelers—perhaps being called upon to pay for the well-known sins of the more reckless members of the Golden Army. Another feature of the diary is a list of men who died along the trail at various times, from July 21 to October 3—sometimes with a record of where the unfortunate ones came from.

The State of Deseret

For the second successive year, the Friends have given to the Bancroft Library an outstanding Mormon rarity, the Constitution of the State of Deseret, an important record—both historically and bibliographically. Last year the Friends presented the Book of Commandments (1833), the first publication in book form of the revelations of Joseph Smith, the Mormon prophet, which may be regarded as the doctrinal foundation of the Mormon church, a precursor of the Doctrine and Covenants under which the church still functions today.

A fitting companion-piece is the Constitution of the State of Deseret, published by Orson Hyde at Kanesville, Iowa, in 1849, a copy of which was purchased by the Friends at a New York auction last spring for presentation to the Library. Rarer even than the Book of Commandments—only seven copies are known to exist—this Constitution reflects the initial political organization of the commonwealth that has become Utah.

The "Provisional State of Deseret" was founded by the Mormons in 1849, with claimed boundaries that included not only present Utah but parts of all neighboring states and as much of California as lies east
of the Sierra and south of 11° 31', including most of the Southern California seacoast. The Territory of Utah, created in place of Deseret at the time California came into being as a state, on September 9, 1850, was, however, much reduced in size, and the frank Mormon effort to gain an outlet to the sea at California’s expense was abortive.

Though Congress did not recognize the State of Deseret, the Mormon people were governed by it from 1849 to 1851, and the laws passed by its legislature, readopted by the first Territorial legislature, became the basis of written law in Utah. "Deseret," a Book of Mormon word declared to mean "honey bee" and implying industry, was preferred by the Mormons to "Utah," and various constitutional conventions, as late as 1872, sought statehood under that name.

The Constitution of the State of Deseret was sent east to be published at Kansasville because there was no press in Deseret at the time. The manuscript was entrusted to Almon W. Babbitt, whom the Mormons had elected Delegate, and in December, 1849, he presented to Congress both his credentials and printed copies of the Constitution. The collected Babbitt's Mormon collection, the Library has three copies of most of these are known to exist.

Examples of anti-Mormon tracts provoked by such publications are Adrian Orr's Mormonism Dissected (Bethania, Pa., 1841), Samuel Haining's Mormonism Weighed in the Balances of the Sanctuary, and Found Wanting (Douglas, Isle of Man, 1840), John Simons' A Few More Facts Relating to the Self-Styled "Latter-Day Saints" (Clitheroe, 1846), and Walter B. Mant's Mormonism, a Heresy (Belfast, 1840). The first of which may have been published at Nauvoo as early as 1841; the other is an English edition of 1848.

California's lumbering industry, a natural resource even more important than its gold, has for the most part escaped the attention of the historian and collector, a most deplorable situation, for now most of the early records have disappeared. To remedy this lack, Emanuel Fritz, professor of forestry for many years at the University of California and a man who knows the industry as no one else, is focusing his interest on gathering such source materials as can still be found. The most recent cache he has discovered are 74 volumes of the records of the Elk River Mill and Lumber Company at Falk, Humboldt County, which have been given to the Bancroft Library through the generosity of Winfield Wrigley, the Company's representative at Eureka. The gift is especially significant because this lumber mill was one of the first in California, founded in the 1860's, and because the records are so complete. It includes letterbooks, timebooks kept both in the woods and at the mill, accounts of employees at the company store, journals, ledgers, price lists, and other records of economic significance.

"On the Trail to California . . ."

GOING TO CALIFORNIA in 1850, described in many overland journals and letters, is vividly brought to life in the letters of Finley McDiarmid to his wife written on the trail between St. Joseph, Missouri, and California. Early on the trip, in May, he wrote to his wife: "It is too much labour for two of us to take proper care of the horses and get anything to eat in any proper season after we camp at night. As an average I have not slept more than three hours in twenty-four since I have left home . . . The Indians are numerous here—we have to watch them during the day as well as the night . . . if I were to go to California every month I would never take this route again . . ."

McDiarmid was the maternal grandfather of Mrs. Barnie Sargent Reynolds, who has given these letters to the Bancroft Library, where they were received with more than the usual jubilation. The reason? Miraculously, these precious century-old records escaped the devastating flood waters in Santa Cruz in December, 1954. And no one concerned wants to take another chance on their being lost.
New Friends

Bruce, Robert W.  Sacramento
Christie, James B.  Altadena
Coblentz, Edmond D.  Sonoma
Crawfurd, Stephen  Oakland
Fatou, Paul  Lafayette, Ind.
Fleming, Sandford  Morgan Hill
Gruening, Mary L.  Berkeley
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Johnston, Marjorie Catherine  Healdsburg
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Olmsted, Duncan H.  San Leandro
Price, Francis  Petaluma
Putnam, F. B.  Los Angeles
Sacramento County Free Library  Sacramento
San Leandro Free Public Library  San Leandro
Simpson, John L.  Berkeley
Stern, Carl W.  San Francisco
Swingle, John  Oakland

Maps of the Overland

IRENE D. PADEN, so well known to students and enthusiasts of Western history for her numerous lively books about Western trails and trail-finding, and currently completing a project for which last year she was granted a Guggenheim fellowship, has given the Library an important collection of maps pertaining to the Overland Trails formed by her husband, the late William Guy Paden. Dr. Paden had tracings made of several hundred original township maps in the General Land Office cartographical archive in the Department of the Interior at Washington, D. C.—such township plats being in many instances the first local maps ever drawn. On these maps Dr. Paden plotted the routes of early trails and wagon roads, after which blueprint copies were made. It is these blueprint maps that have now been given to Bancroft.

Mrs. Paden’s work-in-progress, which we have been happy to see shaping up in Bancroft’s reading rooms, will in itself be a valuable reference tool, for she is preparing a bibliography of the major narratives of Overland Travel to Oregon and California, printed and in manuscript, located in the principal American libraries, with specific reference to the amount and kind of information provided by the writers on various segments of the Overland Trail.

The Mendocino Coast

in Pictures

IN THE SPRING OF 1956 Mr. Eugene Compston, an associate of Professor J. W. Johnson of the Division of Mechanical Engineering, made a surprising discovery of a portfolio of pictures which at his suggestion the owner gave to the Bancroft Library. The pictures are the work of one of the most noted photographers in the United States in the period after the Gold Rush, Carleton Emmons Watkins, who in 1868 won the first prize at the Paris International Exposition awarded to the United States by the Committee on Photographic Landscapes.

The 53 photographs cover the very earliest lumbering activities on the Mendocino Coast, in which Mr. J. B. Ford, the grandfather of the donor, Mrs. Lewis Pierce, was an outstanding pioneer. Watkins’ photographs, which measure approximately 16” x 20” in size, are magnificent specimens of the photographer’s art. This portfolio, which is in almost mint condition, pictures the sites where the first lumber mills were erected, the rocky seacoast, Indian villages, and other early views of historic value. The picture of Little River before a mill was constructed there is of particular interest, because the cycle of this spot is now complete, from primitive forest through mill and mill pond, thriving lumbering community with wharf and shipping point, to the creation of the excellent and widely known Van Damme State Park, which preserves this as a forested area. Little evidence of this historic chain of events now remains except through the medium of photographs.

J. B. Ford, in partnership with Meiggs and Williams, built the first mill at Mendocino City in 1852 to furnish lumber for San Francisco, which was then expanding very rapidly, and thereby became the founder of Mendocino County’s lumber industry, which has thrived for more than a hundred years. This portfolio of pictures is from a personal collection of Ford, to whose granddaughter, Mrs. Pierce, the Library expresses its appreciation for this gift, which makes the collection of Watkins photographs outstanding.