

BANCROFTIANA

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Howell-Zeitlin Collection

THROUGH THE GENEROSITY of a group of Friends, the Bancroft Library is the proud owner of a group of early California and Southwestern documents collected by two enterprising antiquarian bookdealers—Warren Howell of San Francisco and Jake Zeitlin of Los Angeles.

Most significant among the newly acquired documents are three journals of Captain Rivera y Moncada, member of the first expedition to Upper California in 1769 and governor of the colony from 1774 to 1776. The first of these journals, dating from July 10 to August 30, 1774, was written in Rivera's own hand; the others, covering the period from January 1 to October 28, 1775, were corrected and signed by him.

With a detail of local color not hitherto known, these journals give a day-to-day account of life and circumstances at Monterey, the capital, and at the various missions, then in their infancy; the relations of soldiers and priests with the Indians; and the exploration of the newly discovered land. They reveal also for the first time the existence of eight previously unknown letters of Father Junípero Serra, head of the missionaries, copied into his journal by the governor. These letters are an exciting addition to our knowledge of this famous priest and may have a bearing on the canonization proceedings, now in progress.

The founding of Los Angeles, now the largest city in the American west, has always excited the imagination, yet the details of its birth are clouded in a maze of obscurity and lack of documentary sources. It is therefore most gratifying to find a sheaf of papers in

this new collection dealing with the preparations for the founding and settlement not only of Los Angeles but also of Santa Barbara. Here are the instructions to the officer in charge, information about the number of families and soldiers who were to make up the colonizing party, the distribution of troops in California, and the horses and supplies required.

Farther to the southeast, the missions of the Arizona-Sonora border produced a great man, the Jesuit missionary, Father Eusebio Francisco Kino, who in 25 years of service (1687-1711), founded new missions, built churches, taught the Indians the white man's religion and customs, explored the wild Apache country, and opened new trails. Though a man-of-action, he was also a scholar—mathematician, astronomer, geographer, and much more. He made the best map of Pimería Alta before the Mexican War, and his autobiography, *Favores Celestiales*, is in reality a history of this frontier province.

These achievements mark Kino's two let-

Your Contribution

MAY WE REMIND MEMBERS who have not sent in their yearly contribution that this is the season of giving and that the Treasurer is anxious to receive your check. Many members have already responded, and to them we express our thanks. Now, to plan our Annual Keepsake volume, and determine the size of the edition, we need to know how many of you we can count on. Please send your contribution to The Secretary, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley 4, California.

ters in this collection as of major importance. The first, dated at his headquarters of Mission Dolores in Sonora on May 3, 1698, and signed, and the second, dated on February 5, 1703, and written entirely in his own hand, are an outstanding addition to the present resources on Pimeria in the Bancroft Library. Herbert E. Bolton, the great student of Kino in modern times, found no Kino letters for the year 1703, nor did Father E. J. Burrus, in his recent search in the Jesuit archives in Rome.

These are but a few of the significant items in the newly purchased collection, a gift to the Library by the Friends of the Bancroft Library and a group of individual donors. To each of the donors we express our gratitude, a gratitude for which we find words wholly inadequate.

Sacramento Book Club

THE BANCROFT LIBRARY recently received two welcome gifts from our good friends of the Sacramento Book Collectors Club. The first is the editor's manuscript and proof sheets of the club's recent Publication No. 7: *Some Reflections of an Early California Governor . . .*, by Frederick F. Low, governor of California, 1863-67, edited by Robert H. Becker, member of the Bancroft staff. The second gift consists of the proof sheets and galleys of *Alonzo Delano's California Correspondence*, one of the club's outstanding publications, as well as photostatic copies of Delano's letters as they appeared in the Ottawa, Illinois, *Free Trader* and the New Orleans *True Delta*, 1849-1852.

Incorporation

TO THE BUSINESSMEN on the Council we are indebted for the incorporation of the Friends as a philanthropic organization, under appropriate state and federal laws. This arrangement assures the Friends quick and efficient handling of accounts, and regular audits of funds. All gifts will, of course, continue to be deductible for income tax purposes.

Chiefly responsible for managing the legal details of incorporation were Malcolm Moss, Treasurer; George L. Harding, Joseph Brantzen, and Perc S. Brown.

A Hundred Years

THIS YEAR, 1959, marks a full century since Hubert Howe Bancroft, an Ohio farm boy who had gone into business in San Francisco in December, 1856, began to collect the sources of California history. John W. Coughy, California historian and prominent UCLA professor, summed up the story in a single paragraph in his *California* which we are pleased to quote:

Hubert Howe Bancroft . . . came into the profession by what would now be termed the commercial entrance. Having one day in 1859 ranged on a shelf some fifty or seventy-five works on California that happened to be in his stock, he got into the habit of adding other volumes to this collection. The habit grew, and from sporadic forays in other book shops in San Francisco he soon went on to systematic purchases in the East. . . . On the cogent theory that completeness of the collection was the greatest desideratum . . . he made it his policy to buy every book or pamphlet that had any material whatsoever on the history of this area. . . . At first the fifty volumes had seemed a creditable showing. Within three years the total reached 1,000 titles, shortly thereafter 5,000, and by 1868, 10,000.

By 1905, when the University of California purchased the Library, it contained more than 40,000 volumes and thousands of manuscripts.

The Plath Sale

BANCROFT'S representatives at New York book auctions have over the years purchased many notable items for our collections. At the recent Parke-Bernet auction of the Plath library, Bancroft acquired, among other things, a complete file of "The California Youths' Companion," published in San Francisco from December 3, 1864, to May 13, 1865. In the opinion of Dr. Henry W. Plath and Harold Holmes, noted antiquarian bookmen of Oakland, this exceedingly scarce California newspaper was one of the finest items offered at the sale.

Annual Report

THE BANCROFT LIBRARY'S annual report for 1958-59, just completed, will soon be mailed to all members.

James D. Phelan



THE DISTINGUISHED CAREER of James Duval Phelan (1861-1930) is reflected in an extensive collection of his personal papers recently presented to the Bancroft Library by Professor Benjamin H. Lehman. The thousands of letters written and received by Phelan during the years 1906-1930 (earlier correspondence was destroyed in the Fire), the 26 albums of photographs, and many other personal papers, make the Phelan Collection a major source of California and San Francisco history.

James Duval Phelan was born in San Francisco in 1861. His father, James Phelan, an immigrant from Ireland, came to California in the gold rush and rapidly became a man of affairs, a landowner and banker, and most of all a builder of San Francisco—among others, the White House, the Phelan, and the Roos buildings. The son inherited not only one-third of a great fortune, but also a sense of civic pride and community responsibility.

During the early 1890's, San Francisco was one of the most boss-ridden and corruptly governed cities in the country. Without pre-

vious political experience, Phelan was elected mayor in 1896 and twice re-elected. He placed San Francisco in the forefront of well-governed cities. Among his most enduring achievements was his leadership in the drafting and adoption of a new city charter, carried through despite the opposition of both old party machines.

In the earthquake and fire of April, 1906, Phelan lost much, but gave unstintingly of his time and means to aid the suffering and rebuild the city. To him personally, as president of the commission that administered relief and Red Cross funds, rather than to the untrustworthy city government, President Theodore Roosevelt sent a national relief fund of \$10,000,000.

Among his many public services, Phelan served as a regent of the University of California from 1898 to 1914. In 1915 he was elected United States Senator, serving until 1921. For the last decade of his life he was a patron of good causes, a sort of official host for Northern California, and a generous helper of artists and writers.

Phelan's hospitality was often extended at the Bohemian Club and its famous Grove. More often there were small luncheons in the penthouse of the Phelan Building or great dinners in the house on Washington Street which he shared with his sister, Mary Louise. But it was at his Villa Montalvo, in the hills at Saratoga, that Phelan's hospitality really shone. Weekday parties of twenty expanded to one hundred on Saturday, when artists, writers, athletes, university and college teachers, as well as men of business, arrived for luncheon at tables set up on the vast terraces. The genial, witty, still plainly Irish gentleman greeted his guests with such obvious pleasure that a lively informality pervaded every occasion.

The generosity inherent in his hospitality and public service burst upon the world when, in 1930, Phelan's will was made public. Scores of friends received bequests—small and large—and San Francisco a \$1,000,000 Nursing Foundation. Colleges and the University of California received bequests for support of the arts, and a fund was set up for grants to artists by a committee of trustees. Villa Montalvo was left as a refuge for

writers, painters, and musicians, with an endowment of \$250,000 to maintain the grounds. Phelan's fortune had grown with California, and he generously remembered the people of the State in his bequests.

Merry Christmas

"MERRY CHRISTMAS!" The greeting rings down the centuries in many tongues, but with a universal message of peace and good will. Yet different times and places leave distinctive Yuletide records while echoing the same message, and the Bancroft Library abounds in materials from which we may reconstruct the unique story of Christmas in the Far West.

Oldest in spirit are the *Pastores* and *Pastorelas*, of which the Bancroft Library has four, depicting in dramatic form the Adoration of the Shepherds. These plays reflect the venerable tradition of the Mysteries and partially preserve the texts in which it was embodied by the earliest missionaries for the edification of colonists and Indians. Together with related articles, they vividly depict the Christmas revels which culminated in music and pageantry wherever Hispanic culture prevailed.

Several Spanish diaries covering Anza's 1775-76 expedition from Horcasitas, Mexico, to San Francisco Bay are available to English readers in Herbert E. Bolton's monumental work, *Anza's California Expeditions*. These journals contain entries commemorating a secular mother and child: Gertrudis Linares and her son, Salvador Ignacio, "California's first Christmas baby," born on Christmas Eve of 1775 in Coyote Canyon (on the Tubac-San Gabriel trail, near Borrego Valley), amid drunken merriment and tempestuous rain. Following a sermon by Father Font, reminding the homesick colonists and soldiers that Christ was born in exile, the baby Salvador received the sacrament of baptism, and then his mother gallantly resumed the march that was to result in the founding of San Francisco.

There are gringo diaries and articles, too, sometimes describing Yule festivities more bibulous than those of Anza's soldiers, and featuring in one case a Christmas Day bear fight. We learn from Henry Bigler, on the

other hand, that the Mormon Battalion soberly celebrated Christmas, 1846, with watermelon. We are awed by the blotted, yellowing journal of Patrick Breen, a member of the party snowbound in Donner Pass, describing their celebration of Christmas the same year. Starvation was thinning the ranks of the emigrants who had audaciously taken the new "short" route over the Sierra to California's Promised Land. Fuel supplies were dwindling, yet they were essential not only for warmth but also for boiling the hides which now constituted the main source of nourishment. The ailing Patrick, his wife, and seven children were isolated from their fellow sufferers by the snow piled eight or nine feet deep around the Breen cabin. Despite their fears and sufferings, the family proceeded sturdily with the special Catholic Thirty Days' Prayer inaugurated on December 23 by Patrick, whose entries for the 24th and 25th proclaim his trust in God and his hope that the Breens will celebrate Christmas as they "ought considering circumstances."

Although portions of Bancroft's Christmas records have been published, the story as a coherent whole remains to be told: the saga of patrician caballeros and plebeian gringos, Iberian missionaries and Indian neophytes, soldiers, miners, mothers, children, all following the pioneer gleam and pausing yearly to recognize in it the Star of Bethlehem.

Joel E. Ferris

ILLNESS is no fun, and if there is instruction in it, the learning seems not worth the price. So we speak for all the Friends in saying to Joel Ferris, long-time Council member from Spokane, who in recent months has had a real siege of it: Get well, please!

New Keepsake Volume

AS WE GO to press, the Publication Committee announces the selection of Dr. James D. Hart's *American Images of Spanish California* as the Keepsake volume for 1959-60. Dr. Hart is a former chairman of the University's English Department and presently Vice Chancellor on the Berkeley Campus. Further details will be announced soon.