

# BANCROFTIANA

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## *Annual Meeting, May 1*

"WHAT IS HAPPENING TO THE CALIFORNIA LANDSCAPE" will be the topic of Mr. Newton B. Drury's address to The Friends of the Bancroft Library at their Annual Meeting on Sunday, May 1. Mr. Drury is a native San Franciscan, graduate of the University of California in the Class of 1912, a leader in the Save-the-Redwoods League, former Director of the National Park Service, Washington, D.C., and more recently Chief of the Division of State Parks in California.

## *"Hush! The Irwin Boys are Riding Tonight!"*

CALIFORNIA claims Wallace Irwin—humorist, author, and journalist—not by virtue of birth but by reason of having begun his career in the Bay Area. He was born in Oneida, New York, March 15, 1875, and when he was five, the family moved to Colorado. In 1895 Wallace left Colorado to enter Stanford University. A parting gift from his neighbors as he entered the portals of university life was a suit of clothes, "tight black trousers and a long frock coat, green and slippery with age," which had been worn by the storekeeper's father, a minister. This was offered in the hope that he would study for the ministry.

Irwin's college career hardly bolstered the hope. When Wallace matriculated, his brother Will (who also became a noted author and journalist) was entering his junior year. The Irwins earned reputations that "savored of brimstone." Will reminisced in later years, "At Stanford we left a trail of ruin behind us.



*The above photo by David Zeitlin shows Bancroft's director, George P. Hammond, and Warren R. Howell, antiquarian bookdealer, gloating over one of the manuscripts in the Howell-Zeitlin Collection of Californiana, described in the last issue of Bancroftiana (No. 22, December, 1959). The Friends helped substantially to buy this marvelous collection, first exhibited at the Bancroft Library's open house on November 14, 1959.*

Why, even now the good mothers up and down the Santa Clara Valley scare their children to sleep by saying, "Hush! The Irwin Boys are riding tonight!" Wallace was elected editor of the *Quad*, the class annual, and, yielding to temptation, devoted most of its comic section to satiric jingles aimed at the Committee on Student Affairs. In a hotly contested election, Wallace also won editorship of the campus literary magazine, *Sequoia*. This post he never filled, however. He was expelled, as was Will previously. The brothers became two of Stanford's best known former students.

Wallace then went to San Francisco in pursuit of a journalistic career. He worked for a time as a reporter for a moribund paper, *The Report*, and sold jingles to the *News Letter*. Then came a job on the *Examiner*, and Irwin frankly confessed the newspaper got the "worst reporter of all time." It was only his knack for jingling rhymes that kept him on the paper a year. He was commanded to write rhymed leads for the more sprightly news items, like the ones about the alderman who let his secretary write his love letters, and the policeman who claimed that hair dye had caused him to lose his memory.

Leaving the *Examiner*, he became editor of the *Overland Monthly* and its literary Siamese twin, the *News Letter*. Acting on a suggestion from Gelett Burgess, Irwin amplified some verse he had written for the *Overland* into a series of sonnets written in tough American slang. *The Love Sonnets of a Hoodlum*, begun as a literary prank, was published by Morgan Shepard and Paul Elder in pamphlet form (sales price, 25 cents), with an introduction by Burgess. It became so popular it went through several editions, and, moreover, reviewers praised it all over the country. Irwin and Burgess then collaborated on another book, *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, Jr.*, Burgess doing the cover design and illustrations.

Like most western authors, Irwin went to New York, and after the usual vicissitudes, joined the staff of *Collier's*. The magazine serialized his famous *Letters of a Japanese Schoolboy*, and so popular did it become that Irwin resigned from the staff in 1909 to syndicate his series and have it published. From then on he was a very successful free-lance writer, contributing articles and stories to various periodicals and producing several novels.

Irwin died in 1959 at his home in Southern Pines, North Carolina. Mrs. Irwin, the former Laetitia McDonald, and a novelist in her own right, has presented to the Bancroft Library a collection of the family's papers and books, a gift which the Library is proud indeed to add to its literary collections.

## Membership Card

LAWTON R. KENNEDY, good friend and distinguished printer, has designed and printed a Membership Card for the Friends of the Bancroft Library. With the use of color and a fine type face, he has created an attractive, wallet-sized card. We take this means of thanking him for this gift. Members wishing one may notify the Secretary at the Bancroft Library.

## Reflections from Bancroft's Reference Desk

WE WHO "LIVE" in Bancroft are frequently reminded of the incredible wealth of information that lies on the shelves about us. And we recognize with regret that no one person, or group of persons, will ever really *know* this vast collection in its entirety. Fortunately, we are not required, nor does our specialized public expect us, to be possessors of such encyclopedic knowledge. Catalogs of books, manuscripts, newspapers, maps, pictures and portraits, all separately maintained, are at least guides into the intricacies of the Library's resources, and we also have a species of "corporate memory" in the shape of an Information File, where all sorts of factual odds and ends are recorded on cards. This file, like the learning process by which we ourselves increase our skills and efficiency, owes much to our patrons, for it is from visiting specialists that we often get the clues that provide us with a detailed understanding of one facet or another of the Bancroft collections.

The marine historian, for example, in looking over our pictures of ships and harbors, identifies vessels and masters for us; a visiting ethnologist whose specialty is the Northwest Coast offers us background data which convert a group portrait of Tlingit Indians from simply an interesting photograph to a prime research document.

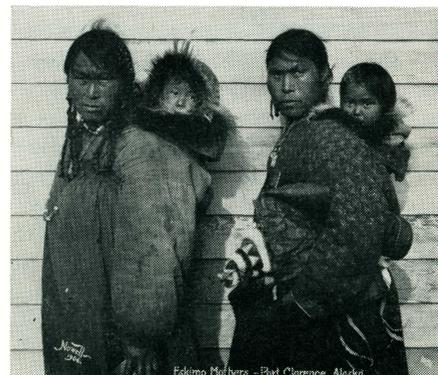
If we learn and grow as a result of the generous aid supplied by the subject experts, they, too, in discussing their problems with

us, frequently glean information helpful to their work. Our knowledge tends to be extensive, rather than intensive; we take some pride in our ability to dig up answers to obscure questions, and with pleasing frequency we find that we are able to suggest fresh leads to our patrons.

Within our areas of competence, we are exposed to a vast array of facts, both important and trivial. It is astonishing how an odd bit of data will float, as it were, back into our consciousness, under the stimulus of discussing the problem of a specialist, turning out to be for all concerned a thing of value. Don't hesitate to consult our Staff, each of whom is pleased to serve you.

## Alaska, the 49th State

A HUNDRED YEARS ago, when Hubert Howe Bancroft began to collect books, manuscripts, and information about western North America, Alaska was still "Russian America"—a remote, forbidding, and mysterious land which produced nothing more than furs and



No Baby-Sitter Problem Here

fish. Then the United States purchased the territory from Russia in 1867 at a cost of about two cents an acre, and there was, as Bancroft points out, ". . . not one in a hundred, even of those who were best informed, [who] believed the territory to be worth the purchase money." Yet, Bancroft's investiga-

tion into the history of the Pacific Coast indicated clearly that the region and her Russian overlords had played an important role in the exploration and exploitation of the Pacific Coast.

Accordingly, when the distinguished French scholar, Alphonse Pinart, who had himself visited Alaska in 1871, returned from a trip to Russia in 1875, he was prevailed upon to lend Bancroft a large mass of source material, both printed and manuscript, which he had obtained in St. Petersburg. This material Bancroft had translated and transcribed, to form the nucleus of the Alaska collection in his library. Bancroft made further additions to the collection in 1878 when one of his assistants, Ivan Petroff, went to Alaska to gather more information and source materials; and later to Washington, D.C., where he compiled abstracts of the portion of the Russian American archives which were in the custody of the U.S. State Department.

Bancroft's collection of Alaskan materials has proved to be an important one, to judge by the heavy use to which it is still being put, and his *History of Alaska* is one of the best of Bancroft's *Works*; but his preface to this volume is a trifle apologetic, no doubt because of his assessment of the American attitude toward the recent acquisition—that it was impossible for such a land to have had any history at all. Bancroft knew, of course, the error of such a belief, because his own collection on Alaska was already so impressive. Books, letters, accounts of explorations, ships' logs, maps, interviews, and translations and transcripts reflected and gave life to more than a century and a half of the history of Alaska and the Northwest Coast.

## Keepsake

ONE OF THE most novel keepsakes yet distributed to the Friends, James D. Hart's *American Images of Spanish California*, will come off the press soon. Professor Hart, Vice-Chancellor on the Berkeley campus of the University of California and long one of the most active of the Friends in furthering the

interests of the Bancroft Library, has published many books and articles relating to both California literary history and American literature.

In this, the newest of his works, Dr. Hart's theme is California's transition from Spanish and Mexican dominion to that of American authority. This essay delighted his hearers at the annual Charles Mills Gayley lecture at the University of California, and the Friends will find it no less fascinating in print. Look for this handsomely designed volume in April.

## *The Forty-Niners—Again*

CONNOISSEURS of Western history, and especially those interested in records of travel across the continent, tend to regard the year 1849 as the Great Divide. Relatively few pioneers traveled overland to California or Oregon, or for that matter to Utah or New Mexico before the Gold Rush, compared with the numbers who thronged west in 1849 and later years. Correspondingly, there are fewer diaries for those years, and students can name each and every one known to exist.

Imagine, if you can, what a celebration we had at Bancroft when just such a diary was presented to the Library, the gift of Mrs. James H. Wells of El Cajon. The journal has the added attraction that it is the first original manuscript diary of a pre-1849 journey to Oregon in our collections.

The diarist did not remain in Oregon, though he liked the country, so even his name has not figured until now among the records of the 1847 emigrants to the Willamette Valley. Isaac Pettijohn began his journey from Illinois and went by way of St. Joseph, Fort Bridger, and the Barlow Road across the Cascades. When he returned east in 1848, he traveled the Applegate Cutoff, which swung far down into Nevada before coming back to the usual trail in southern Idaho. This eastward journey in 1848 is even more notable than that to Oregon the year before, because 8 or 10 diaries are known, kept on the trail in 1847, whereas until now not a single east-

bound diary of 1848 (except some Mormon diaries between California and Utah) was known to exist.

The unusual character of the Pettijohn diary is evident in the light of these remarks. But besides this, it is also full of human interest, written with humor and vitality, and no mere framework or storehouse of fact. One day, we may be sure, it will be published for all to enjoy.

## *Gun Books*

ONE OF THE popular images of the Winning of the West (or, from a Spanish point of view, the Winning of the North) is that of the handful of intrepid white men passing among hordes of savages, and triumphing over them by superior courage and intelligence. A detail neglected in this picture is that the white men usually carried guns, though historians like Walter Prescott Webb have recognized that no one made any real headway against the Plains Indians without having repeating arms in his arsenal.

The exploration and settlement of the West is so intimately tied up with the evolution of firearms that the Bancroft Library is happy to thank Miss Marguerite Bachrach for the gift of a considerable collection of gun books which belonged to the late James Porter Shaw. An Oakland attorney who as a boy hunted in areas now thickly settled, Shaw formed a fine gun collection and was secretary of the Northern California Arms Collectors Association from its foundation until his death last year. The books he collected reflect the depth of this interest in guns, and extend in time from William Duane's *Military Dictionary*, 1810, to the most modern histories of arms and such arms-makers as Colt, Smith & Wesson, Remington, and Winchester. There are also a number of specialized studies, exemplified by W. Keith Neal's *Spanish Guns and Pistols*, 1955, which includes a translation of a little book by the Madrid gunmaker, Isidro Soler, published in 1795. Other titles range from technical manuals to pictorial

histories, including volumes of infantry arms regulations during and after the Civil War period, and a large group of dealers' catalogs, many of them elaborately illustrated. The guns did not accompany the books, so scholars visiting Bancroft may still pursue their studies as in times past, uninterrupted by the rattle of gunfire.

## *The Olympics, Grandpa—and You*

THE MAGNIFICENT VIII Winter Olympic Games held at Squaw Valley in the Sierra Nevada concluded on February 28 with the presentation of the last of the gold medals awarded to winners of 27 different events. Russia collared unofficial team honors, and Sweden edged out the United States and Germany for second in what the devotees of another sport (simultaneously being pursued at Santa Anita and elsewhere) know as a photo finish. A few minutes later a familiar phrase was being voiced: The 1960 Winter Olympic Games were "history."

We hear this expression too often to think much about it, mostly in reference to something over and done with. But history is ever moving forward. It is what you and a lot of other people were doing up to just a few minutes ago. And if, to get along to our point, anyone supposes that the Bancroft Library's involvement in history extends only to grandpa's doings, he was never more wrong. Grandpa does get his due here, and should any of his papers be deteriorating in a bank vault, or gathering dust in the back closet, it would be an excellent idea to bring or send them to the Library or tell the librarian about them. But Bancroft does not view history as the exclusive property of founding fathers. It is a name placed upon all the teeming activities of mankind, never more dazzlingly diverse than at present. Our objective is to gather up those records, usually written, but extending to photographs, recordings, and other forms of documentation, which reflect our ever-changing life and culture.

As yet no actual records of the Winter Olympics have been deposited in Bancroft, though the fact of the event will show up very soon, beginning with pictures and printed accounts in various publications. It always takes a while for history to "shake down" a bit, especially when, as in this case, a \$20 million investment is involved. But, by contrast, the papers of the Panama Pacific International Exposition of 1915 and the Golden Gate International Exposition of 1939 fill many shelves at the Library, and room exists or will be made for papers of the Winter Olympics and any future spectacles of California's history.

The Friends are asked to bear in mind their own continuous part in the history of our times, and the value of their own papers as a record of our days. The papers that accumulate simply as a part of the clatter and clutter of daily life are history, too—not all of equal value, but neither are ores from a mine. Bancroft's modern collections, ever more rich, and heightened in value as each new acquisition supplements the others, range over the whole of modern life. Single items, small groups of papers, and large collections deal with such diverse subjects as government and politics; conservation and natural resources; mining, lumbering, agriculture, and general economic development; crime and criminals, the law, civil liberties, minority groups and problems, labor and strikes; the impact and aftermath of two world wars; and development of the arts.

Some of these papers have been directly willed to the Library. Others have been deposited within the lifetimes of the donors, as in the case of former governors George C. Pardee and Culbert L. Olson, author Harvey Fergusson, Sierra Club editor Francis Farquhar, former California Attorney-General Robert W. Kenny, and many others. Heirs and executors of the estates of many persons of note have given still other collections, small or large; in the political field alone we might mention the papers of Chester Rowell, George J. Hatfield, James D. Phelan, and Harry E.

Drobish. All such papers provide research materials for the students who will throng to the University of California in coming years to find meaning in what people were doing in 1960, as in 1769—or 2132.

## *The Wheat Harvest: A Bountiful Third Crop*

PUBLICATION OF CARL I. WHEAT'S *Mapping the Transmississippi West, 1540-1861* has now reached Volume III, after production delays lasting several months. This volume opens with the outbreak of the Mexican War in 1846, extends to 1854, and includes the complicated boundary surveys necessary to interpret and establish the international boundary from Texas to California in accord with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

This is the longest volume of the series to date, consisting of 349 pages with a bibliocartography in which 323 maps are individually described, and with reproductions of no less than 82 maps. In this work, thorough research is backed up by profound insight and seasoned with the wit and zest for life that have always been characteristic of Wheat as a person and as a writer. Any of the Friends who have come in late and are not familiar with this masterpiece should see it at their bookseller's or in the Bancroft Library—where also, as Wheat reminds us, "all the material and the photostats which have been used in preparing the work are now housed." He does not add that these maps, originals and photostats, have come to the Library as his own generous gift.

## *Thousand Year Memorial to Bolton*

THE CALIFORNIA WRITERS CLUB honored the memory of the late Professor Herbert Eugene Bolton by dedicating a redwood tree to him in Joaquin Miller Park on Sunday afternoon, October 18, 1959. Present at the gathering were some forty members of the Bolton clan, from Los Angeles and surround-

ing communities, and from many parts of northern California.

Speakers of the day were Dr. George P. Hammond, Director of the Bancroft Library, who discussed Bolton under the topic of "From Farm Boy to Historian of the Americas," and Mrs. Irene D. Paden, popular writer on the American frontier, who spoke on "Dr. Bolton as I Knew Him." Responding for the family was Herbert E. Bolton, Jr., and several members of the California Writers Club, representing that organization.

The papers of Professor Bolton make up one of Bancroft's great collections.

## *Smugglers and Historians*

THE POPULAR conception of historiography as an armchair science, involving no physical exercise more violent than the turning of pages or the bending of elbows, and the only physical hazard the danger of getting books off high shelves, is placed in another light by a letter recently given to the Bancroft Library by Professor Vernon D. Tate of the U. S. Naval Academy.

The letter is from SMSgt Virgil Hays of the United States Air Force, long an admirer of that apostle of action, Herbert E. Bolton, and the tale he tells is how Bolton's scholarship once helped the U. S. Immigration Border Patrol solve a tough smuggling case. Mr. Hays writes:

"It was in the El Centro area in 1935. I was inspector in charge of the patrol intelligence unit at the time and was having trouble with an exceedingly slippery alien smuggler. His specialty was Asiatics—Japanese, Chinese and East Indians.

"Most alien smugglers followed a set pattern: aliens were walked over the border at night, then driven up-country on main and secondary roads. Usually a scout car preceded the car hauling the aliens and when a Border Patrol roadblock was encountered the scout car doubled back and warned the smuggler. We could cope with this by stationing officers at strategic spots between the roadblock and the border.

"The smuggler who was giving us the trouble didn't use this method, yet our informants repeatedly told us that he was taking two and three loads a month to Los Angeles and San Francisco.

"Studying the map one day I recalled Anza's statement in a letter to Bucareli to the effect that the route he discovered was passable to 'wheeled vehicles.' Of course Anza had in mind the old Spanish *carretas*, but where one vehicle could go another might.

"My chief and I went over Anza's route in reverse from Clark's Ranch to the border. We were driving a current model Ford and got unbelievably stuck in the mud at Santa Catharina on Coyote Creek. A friendly rancher pulled our car out and told us that he had heard rumors of a car making trips UP the cañon at night.

"The next time our smuggler appeared in Mexicali we wasted no time with roadblocks near the border. Instead we laid an ambush in Coyote Cañon and caught him dead to rights with 6 Hindus.

"He had an old 1923 Buick with 32 inch wheels. In this he easily straddled the rocks and boulders with which the cañon is strewn. When the going got tough he made the aliens get out and push. His route kept him off main roads until he reached Hemet, far behind our line of defense."

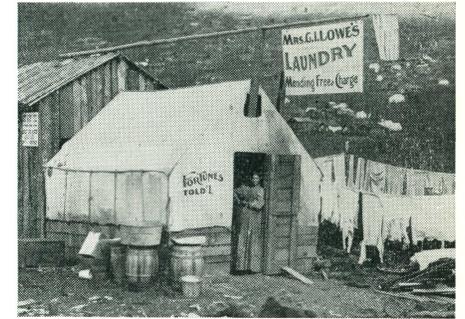
*Bibl.:* Herbert Eugene Bolton, ed., *Anza's California Expeditions* (Berkeley, 1930, 5 vols.), vol. 5, p. 128.

## *"Seward's Folly"*

ALASKA, now the 49th State, potentially rich in oil, uranium, gold, and other interesting minerals, not to speak of its forests, mountains, fisheries, and magnificent scenery, was not always considered a treasure-house. At the time of its purchase from Russia in 1867, it was popular to call it "Seward's Folly," after Secretary of State William H. Seward, who had handled the negotiations. H. H. Bancroft's view, 20 years later, was more judicious, better informed.

"With the limits of the continent at the

extreme northwest, the limit of the history of western North America is reached. But it may be asked, what a land is this of which to write a history? Bleak, swampy, fog-begirt, and almost untenanted except by savages—can a country without a people furnish material for a history? Intercourse with the aborigines does not constitute all of history and few except savages have ever made their abiding-place in the wintry solitudes of Alaska; few vessels save bidarkas have ever threaded her myriad isles; few scientists have studied her geology, or catalogued her fauna and flora; few surveyors have measured her



*Alaska Laundromat  
1898 Style*

snow-turbaned hills; few miners have dug for coal and iron, or prospected her mountains and streams for precious metals. Except on the islands, and at some of the more accessible points on the mainland, the natives are still unsubdued. Of settlements, there are scarce a dozen worthy of the name; of the interior, little is known; and of any correct map, at least four-fifths must remain, today, absolutely blank, without names or lines except those of latitude and longitude. We may sail along the border, or be drawn by sledge-dogs over the frozen streams, until we arrive at the coldest, farthest west, separated from the rudest, farthest east by a narrow span of ocean, bridged in winter by thick-ribbed ice. What then can be said of this region—this Ultima Thule of the known world, whose

northern point is but three or four degrees south of the highest latitude yet reached by man?"

Bancroft himself answered the last question by producing nearly 750 pages of historical lore on the subject, for he did not accept the judgment of his contemporaries; his writings may not have been responsible for bringing about the impressive changes that have taken place in Alaska during the past 75 years, yet in this case, his crystal ball was certainly unclouded when he predicted:

"Though it must be admitted that the greater portion of Alaska is practically worthless and uninhabitable, yet my labor has been in vain if I have not made it appear that Alaska lacks not resources, but development."

## *Overland with Morgan*

DURING THE PAST one hundred years, and especially since 1948 and the centennial celebrations of the discovery of gold, so much has been published about the California Gold Rush that it is a subject considered by many to have been exhausted. But no subject can fail to yield a rich reward to diligent, imaginative research and a sense of what makes the past live. A striking example of this truth is found in Dale L. Morgan's latest book, *The Overland Diary of James A. Pritchard from Kentucky to California, 1849*.

Dale Morgan, a member of the Bancroft staff since 1954, was joined in the creation of this book by two men equally devoted to the history of the West—Fred Rosenstock of Denver, the publisher; and Lawton Kennedy, the San Francisco printer. The result of this alliance is an important and lovely book, designed to meet the special needs of the editor and printed with care and beauty.

## *San Francisco Wave*

WE INVITE YOU and your friends to join our hunt for a file of the San Francisco *Wave*, 1887-1901. Started in Del Monte as a magazine to promote the newly opened Del Monte Hotel, it moved to San Francisco in 1890, and

in a few years became a political and literary magazine of importance. With John O'Hara Cosgrave as editor and Frank Norris as editorial assistant, the *Wave* printed writings of such authors as Ambrose Bierce, Arthur McEwen, Gelett Burgess, Ernest Peixotto, Will Irwin, and Jack London. Strange as it may seem, there appears to be no complete file in any library, including Bancroft. Surely someone must have saved copies of this once flourishing magazine, and with your help we hope to find them. If you live in a house with an attic, won't you take a look, and ask your friends to join in this search. If you find any issues, write and tell the Secretary of the Friends of your discovery.

## *Your Membership*

THE KEEPSAKE VOLUME for 1960 will be distributed soon to all members for 1959-60. If your membership contribution has been delayed, you may send your check to The Secretary, Friends of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley 4.

## *New Photocopy Service*

WE ARE PLEASED to announce that the Bancroft Library is now able to provide almost instantaneous copies of microfilmed materials. This new service is made possible by the recent purchase of two ultra-modern reproducing devices.

One machine, known as a Reader-Printer, operates much like any microfilm reader, but in addition it has a mechanism that will in a few seconds produce an 8 by 11 inch print of any desired frame of film. The other machine, called a Unitizer, produces either negative or positive microfilm strips, five frames in length. These strips can be projected through a home slide-projector, or used on a microfilm reader. The charge for this service is nominal. Readers who need only a few pages of copy will find it inexpensive and efficient. Larger orders for film or prints will be serviced as in the past by the University's Library Photographic Service.