Count Waldeck’s Mexican Letters

Eighteen letters written in Mexico between 1825 and 1834 and addressed to his wife by Count Jean Frédéric Maximilien Waldeck, author, artist, engineer, and inventor, have been purchased for the Library with funds provided by the Friends and by the Chancellor’s Opportunity Fund. Written in French, the letters provide a vivid account of his archeological discoveries and adventures during these turbulent years of the young Republic, and are a nice complement to the Library’s extensive Mexican collections.

Born in 1766, either in Vienna or in Prague, Waldeck studied art in Paris under both David and Prud’hon, journeyed to South Africa with the explorer François Le Vaillant, adopted French citizenship, and served as a volunteer in the French army. In 1819 he travelled exten-
sively in Chile and in Guatemala, where he made drawings of antiquities; three years later he was in London, illustrating Dr. Roo's work on the ruins of Palenque. By 1825 he had arrived in the small mining town of Tlapujahua, Michoacán in Mexico, where he was employed as an engineer, probably for the Compañía Inglesa de las Minas de Tlapujahua, to prepare maps and execute drawings. He also collected such local curiosities as a live boa constrictor and a parrot, and was much interested in the plants and trees of the region, notably the cochenel cactus, palm trees, avocados, and agaves. Always restless and discontented with his employers, he seriously contemplated establishing an association to exploit the many rich mines he had discovered in the vicinity, while, at the same time, he was planning a full-scale Mexican encyclopedia based upon his personal research and experiences.

In February, 1826, Waldeck moved to Mexico City; here he lectured on optics, painted portraits, gave drawing lessons, founded a society to exploit "phantasmagoric spectacles," a specially-developed magic lantern show with moving lights and colors, and printed the lithographs for a book, Colección de las Antigüedades Mexicanas que Existe en el Museo Nacional, published in the following year. Ever of an inven­tive nature, he designed a model for a carriage with the village priest in exchange for tutoring in Mayan; he drew portraits of the Indian women, finding in them a striking resemblance to the bas-reliefs at Palenque; and he attended local fandangos.

By November, 1833, Waldeck had reached Frontera in the Tabasco region, in the midst of a raging cholera epidemic and a revolution, there to await the arrival of money in order to continue his journey to Yucatán. Envisioning that he might not survive the epidemic, he carefully listed the effects he wished sent to England, including diaries, manuscripts, and numerous printed works, many of them linguistic in nature. He fretted at his enforced sojourn in the area, and thought of travelling on to Campeche, where at least he could paint miniatures, earning enough money to continue on to Uxmal. And he hoped that perhaps he could find the lost ruins of Mayapan, for he had learned much about the country from the Indians to whom he had given medical care. From Campeche in November, 1834, he planned to send to his wife the manuscript on Palenque, for translation into English. And in this last letter of the group, Waldeck stated that he was soon leaving for Cozumel.

Throughout the letters, Waldeck expressed constant fear that the Mexican government, hostile to foreigners, would confiscate his priceless collection of manuscripts, notes, and drawings. And indeed some of the material was seized, so that the grand plans for his extensive works resulted in but two publications; the one an account of his travels in Yucatán, Voyage Pittoresque et Archéologique dans la Province d’Yucatan, illustrated with his own lithographs, one of which is reproduced here, and published in 1838, and the other consisting of his plates depicting Palenque ruins for Brasseur de Bour­bou’s Monuments Anciens du Mexique, which appeared in 1866.

This extraordinary man returned to France at a later date, exhibiting his paintings of classical and Mexican subjects in the Paris Salon from 1835 to 1870, until he was well over one hundred years old. He died in Paris in May, 1875.

Baskerville Exhibition

"JOHN BASKERVILLE, Printer and Typesetter," an exhibition of the collection of Mr. William P. Barlow, Jr. of Oakland, now serving as Chairman of the Friends’ Council, was opened in the Library’s Gallery with a reception for the Friends on Sunday afternoon, September 5th. Comprising the largest Baskerville collection held privately, the exhibition included the noted printer’s major works along with many of his lesser efforts, a color print of the portrait of Baskerville which hangs in the Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery, and a letter of December 13th, 1773, in which the printer describes his method of printing.

Born near Birmingham in 1706/7, Baskerville made his fortune in the manufacture and decoration of japanned ware. His first production when a printer was the extraordinary quarto volume of Virgil in 1757, a work which might be termed the first modern book, for its accurate, smooth pages gave it a machine-made appearance very different from the handmade book of normal eighteenth-century press work. The volume is also noteworthy in that it introduced wove paper, a then-new printing surface containing none of the chain lines of laid paper. Baskerville may have been involved in the development of this paper, which he used for a little more than half of the edition; evidently he ran out of stock and had to complete the edition with laid paper. Two copies of this 1757 Virgil were shown with pages against the light so that the viewer might easily observe the differences in the two kinds of paper.

In his letter to the Royal Academy of Sciences in Paris written a year before his death, Baskerville proposed the sale of his printing equipment to the Academy and enclosed a type specimen. “You will at a Glance observe, that my Letters are not [one of them] copied from any other; but are wrought from my own ideas only . . . .” In another section of this letter he notes: “All my Presses were made at home under my inspection.” The document is one of only twenty surviving Baskerville letters.

Also included in the exhibition was the Cambridge Bible of 1763, accompanied by two editions of the "Proposals" for printing the Bible. The three title pages reflect many changes the printer had made in format during the four years of the book’s preparation. The portrait from which the color print was made was, until recently, thought to have been lost in the mid-nineteenth century. While traveling in England last year, Mr. Barlow discovered it to be hanging in the Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery, where it had been since 1940.

Diaries of Mrs. Fremont Older

WHEN CORA BAGGERLY OLDER began the first volume of her diaries on January 1st, 1915, she had already been married for more than twenty years to Fremont Older, managing editor of the San Francisco Bulletin. A student at Syracuse University in her home state of New York, she was vacationing in Sacramento in the spring of 1893 when the young San Francisco newspaperman, reporting on the activities of the legislature, met her at the home of mutual friends. Their marriage in San Francisco fol-
And when the news of Harding's death in San Francisco's Palace Hotel is recorded on the page for August 2d, Mrs. Older worries about the White House pet: “I hated to see him go because of Laddie Boy, and because he loved him.”

Fremont Older's death occurred on March 3d, 1935, and into her diary Cora poured her grief: “How can I even write of this day, the most tragic and terrible day of my life for today it all ended, the life that I have loved for nearly forty-two years.” She continued to live at “Woodhills,” remained active in social and civic affairs, entertained visiting celebrities as she had done with her husband, and devoted energy to her writing. In an interview in 1961 she said:

“I write every day from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. except part of Thursday when I go to a mas­seuse in Palo Alto, Saturday, when we clean, and Sunday afternoons when we have people in. I just sit down and do it, that’s all. Con­fined to a convalescent hospital the last three years of her life, she died in Los Gatos on September 26th, 1968.

**Centennial Stein**

**DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS** the Library's House held an exhibition celebrating the centennial of the birth of Gertrude Stein. Along with items from the Bancroft's collection, several presented by Mr. and Mrs. Walter A. Haas, Sr. of San Francisco and Mr. Sheldon Cheney of New Hope, Pennsylvania, were displayed materials loaned for the exhibition by Mr. Paul Padgette of San Francisco, including first editions of her writings and volumes about her as well as a series of perceptive photographs of Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas by their great friend Carl Van Vechten. Among the Bancroft Library manuscripts of Stein's work shown were “Old as Old,” a typescript copy with corrections and title page in the author's hand, and Dr. Faustus Lights the Lights, a carbon typescript with similar hand-written emendations.

The exhibition was designed to acquaint the viewer with two sides of Gertrude Stein: the hostess to authors, artists, actors, and other friends in the house at 27, rue de Fleurus in Paris; and the dedicated writer. Excerpts from Roland Duncan's interview of 1932 with Alice B. Toklas—which, incidentally, was the initial project of what was to become Bancroft's Regional Oral History Office—were included, and there were photocopies of printed letters written by Miss Stein to the Atlantic Monthly in 1919 and shortly thereafter in an attempt to place her writing in that publication. One remarkable letter began:

I am sorry you have not taken the poems for really you ought to. I may say without ex­aggeration that my stuff has genuine literary quality, frankly let us say the only important literature that has come out of America since Henry James.

**Cuneiform Purchased from Meyer Fund**

**AND IT CAME TO PASS,** as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of the Shinar, and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. This land, Shinar, was southern Babylonia, or Sumer, in lower Mesopotamia between the rivers Tigris and Euphrates, just above the Persian Gulf in what is today Iraq. These people, the Book of Genesis goes on to tell us, built the Tower of Babel; but to this day we do not know for sure whence they came, and their agglutinative language has not thus far been related to any other known tongue. Yet from the excavations of their ancient cities we know that the Sumerians, as we call them now, had advanced, some three thousand years before Christ, to such a high degree of culture that they were able to invent, centuries before the Egyptians, a system of writing called cuneiform. This script became the great vehicle of civilization, carrying the lingua franca of diplomacy and trade from Anatolia to Persia, and from the Caspian Sea down to the River Nile.
The writing material used by the Sumerians was the same as that from which they built their towered temples: clay from the river banks, either baked in ovens or simply dried in the sun. With a square-cut reed stylus they pressed marks into the still-damp clay, producing the characteristic arrow-shaped forms which give this script its name—cuneus is the Latin word for wedge. From the early picture symbols, designating concrete particulars, they progressed in time to signs standing for the sounds of the syllables of their language, in which they could express abstract concepts. Since these baked tablets are virtually indestructible they have survived in large numbers in the ruins of the ancient cities of the Middle East, preserving a literature of incredible antiquity and affording solid documentation for the beginnings of recorded history.

One of the major concerns of the Rare Books Collection, which became an integral part of The Bancroft Library in 1970, is with the history of writing and of printing, and it includes the Hearst Medical Papyri, Egyptian documents dating from circa 2000 B.C. A lack in the collection was any example of writing from Mesopotamia, the cradle of our civilization, now remedied by this first purchase from the Theodore R. Meyer Memorial Fund. It seems particularly appropriate as a tribute to a man who held in reverence the written word, one who loved libraries and could most truly be called a "keeper of the books."

**Pictorial Credits**

During the past several years the use of the Library's extensive pictorial holdings has steadily increased, the number of publications giving credit to the Bancroft being an ever larger one. Many works are now in the production stage, to be forthcoming soon. We list here, for our readers, a few volumes which have recently drawn upon our resources.

Alistair Cooke, *America.* (1973)
George W. Hilton, *The Cable Car in America.* (1971)

David Myrick, *San Francisco's Telegraph Hill.* (1972)
Kevin Starr, *Americans and the California Dream, 1850-1914.* (1973)
T. H. Watkins, *California: An Illustrated History.* (1973)

*Time-Life Old West Series, including The Railroads (1973), The Forty-Niners (1974), and The Pioneers (1974)*

"Affection, Sid."

One of the most vital forces in the American theater during the 1920's and 1930's was Oakland-born Sidney Coe Howard. His plays, more than thirty in a brief life-span of forty-eight years, defy categorization, for he wrote romantic tragedies, comedies, realistic dramas, and psychological problem plays; all were born, to use his own words, "of a powerful impulse to capture living men and women and throw them alive into the theatre." The accomplishments of this remarkable playwright are illuminated by and documented in the large collection of papers presented to The Bancroft Library by his children, Mr. Walter D. Howard of Tyringham, Massachusetts, and Mrs. Jennifer Goldwyn of Los Angeles. They include not only manuscripts of his plays and other writings, but letters written to him by almost every significant dramatist of the period—Eugene O'Neill, Maxwell Anderson, Philip Barry, Elmer Rice, Robert E. Sherwood, and S. N. Behrman, among them—and by other authors, actors, producers, and friends, as well as copies of his own letters, with his distinctive complimentary close, "Affection, Sid."

"I can't remember very well how I first got interested in the theatre," he wrote to his old friend Barrett H. Clark. "I just was, somehow, for no very good reason." As an undergraduate at the University of California, from which he graduated in 1914, he collaborated with Frederick Faust (who later achieved fame under the pseudonym "Max Brand") and whose papers are also in The Bancroft Library) in writing "Jeanette's Way," the junior farce, and "Fiat Lux," the senior extravaganza. For Leonard Bacon's poetry seminar he wrote "Sons of Spain," a blank verse tragedy dealing with the Black Death in Avignon. This was produced in the Forest Theater at Carmel in 1914, but with the locale changed to Monterey, the leading characters becoming an Indian maiden and a young monk!

From Berkeley Sidney Coe Howard went to Harvard to attend Professor George Pierce Baker's famous "47 Workshop" in playwriting. During World War I he volunteered his services as an ambulance driver in France, and after U.S. entry into the war he enlisted in the air service. On his return to the United States he settled in New York City and joined the staff of *Life,* eventually becoming a literary editor, and, as a free-lance reporter, also wrote a number of provocative articles on labor spies, narcotics, the anticommunist movement, and other current issues for *The Survey, Collier's,* and *The New Republic.*

While holding down these jobs he found time to work on plays, the first of which to appear on Broadway was *Swords* (1921), a melodrama in verse, an unsuccessful venture.
but one which had critics and viewers divided. "We have had as wild supporters and as savage attacks as any play produced since 'Hernani' made the welkin of the Theatre Francais ring," he wrote to his sister. For the next two seasons Howard devoted himself to translations and adaptations of foreign plays, and to a collaboration with Edward Sheldon, Bewitched, which won for him increased recognition in the theater world. His first big success came in 1924 when the Theatre Guild produced They Knew What They Wanted which was awarded a Pulitzer Prize. And thereafter, despite his early protestation that "drama's a fifth rate literary form at best," he was definitely committed to a playwriting career. 1926 became his most successful year with two plays, Ned McCobb's Daughter and The Silver Cord, winning popular acclaim; hardly a year followed in which his name did not appear on a play as author or adaptor.

He was as adept with original scripts, such as Alien Corn (1933) and the innovative Yellow Jack (1934), which documented the conquest of yellow fever, as he was with adaptations of foreign plays, the best of which undoubtedly was The Late Christopher Bean (1932), based on Rene Fauchois' Prenez Garde a la Peinture. Another notable success was his creative adaptation of Dodsworth from Sinclair Lewis' sprawling novel. But even in the "distinguished failures" such as Lucky Sam McCarver and Paths of Glory, the latter based on Humphrey Cobb's war novel, the critics noted the unfailing qualities of vigor, honesty, and dignity.

The spring of 1929 found Howard in a new role as a screen writer, having signed a contract with Samuel Goldwyn, and from then until his death he divided his time between the stage and the screen. Although he had little love for the movie industry and did not consider screenwriting as serious writing, his list of screen credits includes such successes as Bulldog Drummond, Arrowsmith, which won an Academy Award in 1931, Dodsworth, and Gone With The Wind, for which he was posthumously given an Academy Award in 1940.

A realistic practitioner of his art and a strong spokesman for the profession, he was elected president of the Dramatists' Guild of the Authors' League of America in 1935, serving during the crucial years when a new basic agreement was hammered out between playwrights and producers. And it was largely Howard's enthusiasm, organizational ability, and commitment to freedom of expression that led to the formation of the Playwrights' Company, in which he and Maxwell Anderson, S. N. Behrman, Elmer Rice, and Robert E. Sherwood pooled their dramatic and financial resources to produce their own plays independently.

His life was cut short in 1939 by a tragic accident when a tractor crushed him against the side of a barn on his farm in Tyringham. He was only forty-eight, his career plainly in full stride. The very morning of his death he had been working on a play based on Carl Van Doren's Benjamin Franklin. Brooks Atkinson spoke for many when he wrote in The New York Times: "The theater was lucky to have had so much of him for so many years and the theater is better for the thrust, drive and keenness of his work."

Thomas Heywood's Gunaikeion

GENEROSUS READER, I have exposed to thy most judicial view a Discourse of Women: wherein expect not, that I should either enviously carpe at the particular manners or actions of any living, nor injuriously detract from the Sepulchers of the dead. ... I only present thee with a Collection of Histories, which touch the generalitie of Women, such as have either beene illustrated for their Vertues, and Noble Actions, or contrarily branded for their Vices, and baser Conditions.

Thus begins the prefatory note "To the Reader" in Thomas Heywood's Gunaikeion: or Nine Books of Various History Concerning Women; Inscribed by the names of the Nine Muses, printed by Adam Islip in London in 1624. The volume, a landmark in the literature dealing with women, whose title page is here repro-
Heywood, who was born in Lincolnshire sometime between July, 1573 and 1575, was called by Charles Lamb the “prose Shakespeare.” Known now primarily as a dramatist, his most famous play being *A Woman Killed With Kindness* (1662), Heywood wrote prolifically in several literary forms and pursued, as well, an acting career. In 1633 he noted that he had “either an entire hand or at the least a main finger” in two hundred and twenty dramas. His own plays succeeded on the stage, but few have survived because, as he himself wrote, “it hath been no custom in me of all religious . . . who lift their thoughts upward, to entertain of Women every way learned;” “entreating of Women every way learned;” “on the contrary, much of whose matter comes from the work of Herodotus. The work itself must be understood, was purchased for the Rare Books Collection of his personal archives, including over two thousand scientific manuscripts, some of which are still unpublished. The Boscovich Papers were acquired in 1962 and are now a part of the extensive and growing collections in the History of Science and Technology. Each of the newly acquired items is significant for different reasons. The article on the divisibility of matter is the forerunner of two rare printed items to fill out its unique collection of materials on the polymath Jesuit scientist Roger Boscovich. The first is an article of one hundred and twenty-eight pages taken from the *Memorie sopra la fisica e istoria naturale di diversi valentuomini* (Lucca, 1757) entitled “De Materiae Divisibilitate et Principiis Corporum,” originally prepared as an inaugural lecture for the Collegium Romanum in 1748. The other is the first lengthy biography of Boscovich prepared by Abbot Francesco Ricca under the title, *Elogio Storico dell’Abate Ruggiero Giuseppe Boscovich* (Milano, 1789).

Father Boscovich, born in Ragusa (now Dubrovnik) in 1711, was one of those few natural philosophers of the eighteenth century, brought up in southern Europe, who contributed seminal new concepts to the physical sciences. He was the first to expound cogently the notion of dimensionless point-centers of force that led to the establishment of the electromagnetic field theory in the following century. He also pioneered in the mathematics of error theory, the determination of cometary orbits, the theory of optical magnification, and geodesy. As if that were not enough, he advised local rulers on diverse matters, including flood control and repairs of architectural structures, among them St. Peter’s Duomo. Boscovich fancied himself a poet as well, charming many a gathering in Roman, Milanese, Parisian, and London circles during his career.

The Bancroft’s interest in Boscovich, apart from its intrinsic merits, stems from the presence in the Rare Books Collection of his personal archives, including over two thousand pieces of correspondence and two hundred scientific manuscripts, some of which are still unpublished. The Boscovich Papers were acquired in 1962 and are now a part of the extensive and growing collections in the History of Science and Technology.

Each of the newly acquired items is significant for different reasons. The article on the divisibility of matter is the forerunner of two unpublished articles now among the Boscovich...
Papers, forming one of the pillars of his novel theory of matter, space, and time. The other item contains the here-reproduced rare portrait of the Ragusan scientist, depicted in profile as on a medallion. Both of these items constitute important additions to the holdings of the Library as rare materials valuable for research.

**Bancroft Fellows**

Mr. John Alan Lawrence has had to resign the fellowship for 1974–1975 which was reported in the last issue of *Bancroftiana*. We are pleased to announce that Mr. Richard Harold Smith, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Geography at UCLA, has been awarded this stipend, and look forward to welcoming him to the Heller Reading Room where he will conduct his research into aspects of regional development in the San Joaquin Valley during the latter half of the nineteenth century.

**William Everson Papers**

Critical acclaim for his poetry first came to William Everson in the years just before the second World War. Critical acclaim for his fine printing came in the years following his first serious interest in the craft at the war-time conscientious objectors' camp at Waldport, Oregon. His creative talents in both endeavors are well documented in the large collection of his personal papers which was recently purchased by the Library, partially with aid from the Chancellor's Opportunity Fund. Now being processed by the Manuscripts Division, the collection adds immeasurably to the wealth of the Bancroft’s material dealing with the literary output and the fine printing of the San Francisco Bay area.

Born in Sacramento in 1912, young Everson grew up in the San Joaquin Valley. His interest in poetry began in high school, but, as he indicated in an interview conducted by the Bancroft’s Regional Oral History Office in 1966, it was not until 1934 when he encountered the work of Robinson Jeffers that the writing of poetry began to “open up” for him. Between that year and 1943, when he was drafted and as a conscientious objector entered the camp at Waldport, Everson wrote and saw three volumes of poems published.

Following the war he came to the San Francisco area and became a prominent member of the “San Francisco Renaissance” group. He printed on a handpress, continued to write poetry, worked as a janitor first in the University of California’s Library and later at its Press. In 1948 a selection of his poetry was published under the title *The Residual Years*; the volume received national attention, and in the following year Everson was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship.

Converted to Catholicism in 1948, three years later Everson entered the Dominican Order under the name Brother Antoninus. He took with him the handpress and at the Order’s House of Studies in Oakland he printed the pages of the *Novum Psalterium Pii XII*. In 1966 he left the Order and resumed his former name, under which his poetry continues to be published.

On January 19th the Library will sponsor a reading of his poetry by Mr. Everson, to be followed by a reception marking the opening of a special exhibition of portions of the collection in the Gallery. Invitations will be sent to the Friends in due course.

---

**Council of The Friends**

William P. Barlow, Jr.,
*Chairman*

Kenneth K. Bechtel
Henry Miller Bowles
Mrs. John E. Cahill
E. Morris Cox
Charles de Bretteville
Mrs. Vernon L. Goodin
Mrs. Gerald H. Hagar
James D. Hart
Mrs. Edward H. Heller

Preston Hotchkis
Warren R. Howell
John R. May
Joseph A. Moore, Jr.
Warren Olney III
Atherton M. Phleger
Harold G. Schutt
Norman H. Strouse
Mrs. Calvin K. Townsend
George P. Hammond,
*Honorary*

Editor, *Bancroftiana*: J. R. K. Kantor

Contributors to this issue: Marie Byrne, Leslie S. Clarke, Suzanne H. Gallup, Elisabeth K. Gudde, Roger Hahn, Lorraine Mills, Irene Moran, Estelle Rebec, Ruth Teiser.