Ambrose Bierce.

"His Pupils, Friends, and Enemies"

In his new introduction to the 1967 edition of Ambrose Bierce: A Biography, Carey McWilliams wrote at length about his efforts to see a trunk of letters, photographs, papers, books, etc. left by Bierce to his daughter, Helen, before he departed for Mexico in 1913. McWilliams’ efforts were in vain, however, for she always found excuses to put him off. In time he realized she was jealously guarding the trunk and its contents as her one solid financial resource, and he later helped her negotiate its sale, sight unseen, to Mrs. Milton E. Getz of Beverly Hills.

The agreement of sale provided that McWilliams, then at work on the biography, was to have access to the collection, but Mrs. Getz insisted this was to be at her convenience. Her convenience was very inconvenient for McWilliams, who recalled:

I discovered that I was to be given only a limited time to inspect the contents. Going over the material proved to be a nerve-wracking, frustrating, utterly exasperating experience, the more so as by then I had a deadline to meet for delivery of the manuscript . . . The hurried hours I spent looking through the material were for me a nightmare; when I think back upon the experience, even after all these years, I still feel cheated.

And so the treasures contained in the trunk remained virtually unknown, even to McWilliams.

In November, 1936, Mrs. Getz’ library was sold at public auction at the Anderson Galleries in New York. The catalogue published on that occasion revealed publicly, for the first time, the riches contained in the collection, essentially Bierce’s archive. This section of the catalogue is entitled “Ambrose Bierce, the Soul of Honor/His Pupils, Friends, and Enemies” and contains an extensive number of letters addressed to him, file copies of his own letters, some of his manuscripts, and a group of his scrapbooks. Unfortunately, as usually happens at an auction, the material was dispersed, much of it falling into the hands of private collectors where most Bierce scholars could not discover it. Happily, however, a notable portion of this Bierce archive is now in The Bancroft Library, purchased intact from a dealer who got it from one of the private collections which had acquired it from the Getz sale.
New York. Bancroft’s purchase was made possible by The Friends of The Bancroft Library and the Theodore R. Meyer Memorial Fund. The descriptions in the auction catalogue were by no means exaggerated, for even this one segment of the archive presents much needed documentation on many facets of Bierce’s life and personality. Professor M. E. Grenander of the State University of New York at Albany, a leading Bierce scholar who is preparing a collected edition of his letters, believes Bierce was a master of the epistolary form: . . . the engaging warmth and intimacy of many of [the letters] reveal an aspect of his character—that of the kindly friend—which has been almost totally obscured by such sobriquets as “Bitter Bierce,” “The Devil’s Lexicographer,” and “The Wickedest Man in San Francisco.” In addition, his own side of some of the quarrels about which the public has heard much from his antagonists sets them in a very different light from the customary version. Her assessment is well born out by the Bierce and the interchange of letters between the two. The 171 letters begin just prior to his untimely death, soon after she started attending the Institute, caused Bierce great grief, and he mourned her loss as if she were a sister. The descriptions in the auction catalogue are by no means exaggerated, for even this one segment of the archive presents much needed documentation on many facets of Bierce’s life and personality. Professor M. E. Grenander of the State University of New York at Albany, a leading Bierce scholar who is preparing a collected edition of his letters, believes Bierce was a master of the epistolary form: . . . the engaging warmth and intimacy of many of [the letters] reveal an aspect of his character—that of the kindly friend—which has been almost totally obscured by such sobriquets as “Bitter Bierce,” “The Devil’s Lexicographer,” and “The Wickedest Man in San Francisco.” In addition, his own side of some of the quarrels about which the public has heard much from his antagonists sets them in a very different light from the customary version. Her assessment is well born out by the Bierce and the interchange of letters between the two. The 171 letters begin just prior to his untimely death, soon after she started attending the Institute, caused Bierce great grief, and he mourned her loss as if she were a sister. The interchange of letters between the two forceful figures will undoubtedly fascinate and aid the scholars of Hearst as well as those of Bierce. There are also letters from Tom Hood and Harry Sampson, editors of Fun, alluding to Bierce’s journalistic work in the 1870’s for that English magazine; from John Camden Hotten who issued Bierce’s first two books; from Walter Neale, publisher of Bierce’s Collected Works; and from friends and pupils such as Percival Pollard, Dr. C. W. Doyle, and Silas Howes. To quote again from the 1936 auction catalogue: These letters, documents, and scrapbooks are Ambrose Bierce’s beloved Library. Yet they are more than that—they are the autobiographies of many of his pupils, friends, and enemies, giving a clear insight into the personal and public character of many famous persons of the period. This new acquisition magnificently complements and enhances the Library’s holdings. The Bancroft Library by Mr. Kent, with additions from the Central Committee. Born in Chicago in 1906, Roger Kent is the youngest of seven children born to William and Elizabeth Thacher Kent. His father, a prominent Progressive Republican, was elected to Congress from California’s first district, serving from 1911 to 1917, and shortly thereafter was appointed by President Woodrow Wilson to a four-year term on the U.S. Tariff Commission. His mother was an outspoken leader in the women’s suffrage movement. He was educated in Marin County and the Thacher School at Ojai, and briefly in Washington, D.C., while his father was a member of Congress. In 1928 he was graduated from Yale University, and in 1931 from the Yale Law School. Kent’s involvement in Democratic politics began in 1928 when he registered in the party. In 1948 and again in 1950 he ran unsuccessfully for the House of Representatives.
from the same congressional district once held by his father. From December, 1953 until August, 1954 he was northern California chairman of the Richard Graves for Governor Committee and, as a consequence, was elected chairman of the Northern California Division of the Democratic State Central Committee later in 1954. It was because of his astute, liberal leadership that Kent served more than ten years, during which period he was also active in the 1961 Presidential campaign of his long-time friend, Adlai Stevenson, served as state chairman of the 1960 Kennedy-Johnson campaign and as northern California chairman of the 1962 Edmund G. "Pat" Brown gubernatorial campaign. He was also chairman of the Western States Democratic Conference from 1962 to 1965.

As an attorney Kent became a partner in the newly-formed San Francisco law firm of Crimmins, Kent, Bradley & Burns in 1946, and has been associated with that firm to the present, with the exception of a leave of absence from March, 1952 until May, 1953 when he was General Counsel for the U.S. Department of Defense and, briefly, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense.

The collection of his correspondence and papers documents Kent's long career of political leadership, and includes candid assessments of and discussions with leading local, state and national figures, as well as political aspirants, from 1947 through early 1974. The Kent Papers nicely complement other recently acquired collections, including those of Edmund G. "Pat" Brown, William E. Knowland, and Thomas Kuchel, and promise to be a rich source of primary material for scholars of twentieth century California politics.

Gastronomy: Colloquium and Exhibition

On Sunday afternoon, September 28th, in Wheeler Auditorium, The Friends of The Bancroft Library will present a panel discussion on gastronomy, prior to the reception in the Library’s Gallery, which will open an exhibition of 115 works from the distinguished collection, created by Dr. Marcus Crahan of Los Angeles, of uncommon early books related to food and drink. Joining Dr. Crahan on the panel will be Mr. Harry A. Levinson, antiquarian bookseller of Beverly Hills, and Mr. R. Gordon Wasson, mycologist from New York.

Writing of his collection, which encompasses a broad range of topics related to the central theme of gastronomy, Dr. Crahan has said:

In the computer world of information retrieval there is a command term—"explode"—calling for all aspects of a subject. So, with our collection: food includes plants, herbs, cooking, poisons, pomology, viticulture, mycology, hallucinogens, perfumes, genius, the origin of agriculture and pastoral societies. Drink includes milk and wine, physiology, manner, custom, ritual, thirst vs. sense of drink, temperance, the arts of fermentation, distillation, brewing; the migration of tea through religion, romance in coffee, cocoa (coca), governmental control and revenue, the laws of the land and sea, excise, smuggling, piracy and trespass.

Among the many volumes which will enlighten and intrigue the Friends are Ciceriastri Comes: or, the New and True Art of Brewing. . . To which is added . . a Care for those that are Sick and Ropy by W. Y-Worth (London, 1662) and Ten Nights in a Bar-Room, and What I Saw There by Timothy Shalvey (Boston, 1854). Many distinguished printers are represented in the exhibition, among them Aldus Manutius and Charles Estienne. Those of the Friends who are unable to attend the opening reception may view this extraordinary collection through Thanksgiving.

The Twelve Bibliophiles

Even a Library as comprehensive in its chosen fields of collection as the Bancroft will find, now and again, that an item has escaped its awareness. One such lacuna came to light recently when a dealer's catalogue brought to our attention The Story of the Limited Editions Group of San Francisco by Charles W. Collier, published in 1955. Due to the dilatory nature of cross-continental post, however, the copy had been sold by the time our order was received. But Fortune came to our rescue, and one of our Friends, Lawton R. Kennedy, a member of the Group, has graciously presented his copy to the Library.

Established in November, 1929, the Group was composed of printers, artists, and collectors who gathered once a month at a dinner meeting to discuss the latest product of George Macy's new Limited Editions Club. Charles W. Collier, along with Charles McIntyre, Haywood Hunt, and nine other members comprised the first membership, limited to twelve at any one time. The meetings were held in the rooftop dining room of the Hotel Cecil on Post Street, later in the Hotel California. Each member contributed his share to the cost of one annual subscription to the Club's publications; at the end of the year a drawing was held and each member selected one volume to keep in his personal library.

The Collier history was written to commemorate the Group's Silver Anniversary in 1954, and later Haywood Hunt printed the volume. Although an afterward forecasts another such history in twenty-five years, the Group disbanded in the mid-1960's.

Elizabethan Sixpence

On June 27th, Mr. Charles Slaymaker of Novato presented to The Bancroft Library an Elizabethan sixpence, minted in 1567, which he had discovered last year while excavating the Indian settlement of Olompali in Marin County. Although there is a temptation to suppose this to be the coin which had been affixed in 1579 to the Drake Plate of Brass, such a claim cannot be justified by any evidence.

In a tape-recorded interview for Bancroft, Mr. Slaymaker, who received his archaelogical training at San Francisco State University, recounted the digging-out of a ceremonial dance floor:

... it was always my habit . . . to hand-trowel down to the floor myself to point out the texture and hardness of the floor so [my assistants] wouldn't go through it. It's extremely critical to find the whole floor. While exploring the floor myself with the hand-trowel and trying to discover exactly where it was, I flipped this coin out.

He noted that he "was extremely skeptical to say the least" when this "sensational" artifact turned up, but during the fifteen months following the discovery, Mr. Slaymaker performed chemical tests of the soil, whose lack of acid helped to preserve the silver, and he forwarded the coin itself to England where its date of minting was authenticated by a staff member of the British Museum.

The coin is now on display in the Library's Gallery where visitors may speculate upon the possible relation of the Plate of Brass to this Elizabethan artifact also discovered in California during the twentieth century.

Shaw, Wells & Galsworthy

Lucile Heming Koshland and Daniel Edward Koshland—Mr. and Mrs. Daniel E. Koshland, Sr. of Hillsborough—recently presented to the Library a considerable collection of the works of George Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, and John Galsworthy. Their gift, 194 items in all, is comprised of
first editions of the writings of these three authors, though also included are biographi-
cal, bibliographical, and critical works per-
taining to them. There are eight manuscript
letters, seven by Shaw and one by Wells, and
many of the volumes bear inscriptions by the
authors and retain their original dust jackets.
This group of volumes is particularly de-
sirable because they strengthen and enhance
the large body of modern British literature
traded from the University Library in 1970 when
the Rare Books Collection became
a part of the Bancroft. To this end there
have been a number of acquisitions by the
Library of the works of such modern English
and Irish writers as Stephen Spender, Sean
O'Faoilain, and William Butler Yeats, re-
ported most recently in Bancroftiana for
February, 1975. Now with the Koshland
gift substantial collections of three other im-
portant literary figures have been added.
The Shaw-Wells-Galsworthy combination
has the added benefit of providing an in-
depth view of an important period in recent
British literary history, roughly spanning
the years between 1860 and 1930. Shaw and
Wells were fellow Fabians, and both of them
brought a sense of realism and political
consciousness to their work. Galsworthy, too,
thought in a more moderate way and without
affiliation to any specific political organiza-
tion, was part of the movement to bring
social comment to literature. His work as a
dramatist and reformer brought him into
contact with Shaw, both at the Royal Court
Theatre and before the Parliamentary Com-
mittee on Censorship. The work of all three
writers reflects a concern with class structure
and economic inequality, the rights of wom-
en, and the engagement of the ordinary citi-
zan in the responsibilities of government.

Besides the first editions of a number of
his plays, such as Back to Methuselah, Man
and Superman, and Saint Joan, all of the
genera in which Shaw worked are represented
in this new acquisition. This includes music
and drama criticism from the early days of
his London career and his influential politi-
cal writing in The Living Wage, A Plan of Campaign
for Labor and The Intelligent Woman's Guide
to Socialism and Capitalism. Cashel Byron's
Profession, referred to in the postcard here
represents the period in the

Shaw's note to John Lane, May 12th, 1894.

is here, as well as the twenty-four parts of the
Outline of History, which are bound
together in four volumes.

Taken together, the three collections which
comprise the Koshland gift provide for the
student of late nineteenth and early twen-
thieth century literary and social history a
remarkable primary resource.

Gentle Photo Identification
In the last issue of Bancroftiana we in-
cluded a marvelous photograph of a San
Francisco street scene at the turn of the cen-
tury, the photographer Arnold Genthe.
Thinking that our readers might like to test
their powers of detection, we withheld the
location, promising revelation in this issue
of our newsletter. One of our Friends, Rich-
ard H. Dillon of the Sutro Library, correctly
 guessed the street: Grant Avenue, running
from Pine Street (at left and out of the
picture) to Bush Street, visible at the far right.
This is, of course, the first street of China-
town, as one approaches from the south.

For those who may wonder how identifi-
cation was made by the library, we call
attention to these clues: house numbers 434
(first house at left) and 432 (just below) indicate
that the numbers ascend with the
hill, thus eliminating, in this number area,
all but Grant Avenue and Stockton Street;
the partially-revealed sign on the shop be-

Shaw and Wells coin the Superman.

ond Street, later renamed Grant Avenue.

The Bancroft Fellows
Once again the University-wide competi-
tion for the Bancroft Fellowships has resulted
in three awards for the coming academic
year to doctoral candidates engaged in re-
search on subjects whose source materials are
in the Library. Chosen this time are Linda
Ann E. Morris and Brent M. Cohen, both
of the Berkeley campus, and Stanleigh D.
Bry, of the Santa Barbara campus.

Ms. Morris is a graduate of Grinnell Col-
ge and holds a Master's degree from the
University of Washington. A student in the
Department of English, she plans a disserta-
tion dealing with democratic values in nine-
teenth century American humor and will
make intensive use of the Bancroft's Koun-
dakjian Collection.

The Rare Books Collection, and particu-
larly its Elizabethan editions of Chaucer and its
sixteenth century dictionaries, will be
utilized by Mr. Cohen in the writing of his
dissertation on Shakespeare's Troilus and
Cressida. Also a student in the Department
of English, he holds his undergraduate de-
gree from the State University of New York at
Stony Brook.

Mr. Bry is in the Department of History
at Santa Barbara, from which campus he
received his Bachelor's degree. The topic for
his dissertation is "New England Merchants
in Mexican California" and he cites the im-
portant collections gathered by Hubert Howe
Bancroft, among them the Bandini, Fitch,
Larkin, and Vallejo Papers, as primary re-
source for his research.

We welcome them to the Library where
we expect to see them often in the Heller
Reading Room.

Baja Documents on Film
Among the most exciting discoveries of
Californiana in recent years has been that of
the Archivo Histórico de Baja California Sur
Pablo L. Martínez in La Paz. Heretofore
untouched, the archive contains approxi-
mately one million pages of manuscript and
printed material from the area from 1744
through 1828, all of it now being micro-
filmed for The Bancroft Library under the
direction of Professor W. Michael Mathes
of the University of San Francisco.

Recovered from the annex to the La Paz
public jail in 1969 through the efforts of
Dr. Miguel León-Portilla and Professors Ar-
mando Trasvina Taylor and Jesús Castro
Agüíndez of Mexico, the archive has been
established in the Casa de la Cultura of that
city. Extensive documentation in religious,
military, and civil matters prior to 1828 re-
lates to both Baja and Alta Californias, and
more recent materials, while dealing princi-
ally with peninsula California, also contains
references to the history of the state of Cali-
fornia.
Filming in La Paz.

The Library began filming the archive in May, 1973, as a result of cooperation between the Government of Baja California Sur, through the then-Director General of Acción Social, Professor Eligio Moisés Coronado, and the Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, under the direction of Dr. León-Portilla. Work has been completed through 1873 and 145 rolls of film are now available for scholarly research in the Library.

Philip Bancroft, Sr.

1881-1975

Philip Bancroft, the sole surviving son of Hubert Howe Bancroft, the Library's founder, died at his Walnut Creek farm on August 11th. One of the earliest members of the Friends, Mr. Bancroft had supported its activities for a good many years and in 1962 he anonymously presented stock certificates which were sold by the Library and the money realized was "transformed into papers of a very different kind that could not otherwise have been bought for the Bancroft Collections." (Bancroftiana, April, 1962.)

Born in San Francisco on June 30th, 1881, Philip was the younger brother of Paul and Griffing, and was followed by a sister, Lucy. As a young man he spent his vacations on the family farm at Walnut Creek, where his own three children were to grow up several decades later. He attended Harvard University, from which he was graduated in its Class of 1903, and received his law degree from Hastings College of the Law. In 1905 he began his law career in San Francisco, also becoming involved in local politics, and in 1908 he was elected as one of two delegates from his Assembly district to the Republican National Convention. Four years later he was again a delegate to this Convention, and shortly thereafter was elected a delegate to the Bull Moose Convention which nominated Theodore Roosevelt and Hiram Johnson.

Following service in the first World War, Philip Bancroft settled permanently on the family farm, which he and his brother Paul had inherited from their father, and became a practicing farmer. In 1938 he campaigned successfully for the Republican nomination for the U.S. Senate, but was defeated in the general election by Sheridan Downey. During that campaign his daughter Anne took charge of the headquarters at the farm, exhibiting organizational abilities which she later applied to her membership on the Friends' Council.

Philip Bancroft's loyalty and generosity will be missed and we extend to the Bancroft family the sympathy of an old friend.

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Editor, Bancroftiana: J. R. K. Kantor

Contributors to this issue: Stephen Drew, Timothy Hoyer, W. Michael Mathes, Irene Moran, Estelle Rebec.

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