

BANCROFTIANA

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Heroism.

Battling with the Snow Storm King.

A Grand Struggle.

Gallant Fight of the Railroad Company.

So read the headlines in the Sacramento *Union* for January 23d, 1890, announcing what was then the worst blizzard in the history of the country. And in the Sierra Nevada, scene of the storm, trains were blockaded by snow drifts up to twenty feet deep and by snow sheds collapsed under the weight of the snow. Meanwhile, rotary snowplows attached to the most "sure-footed" engines experienced derailments in their efforts to clear the snow-laden, ice-clad tracks, and in some places the banks on either side of the "cut" were so high that the rotary could not throw the snow over them, causing it to tumble back on the track, interfering with the progress of the plow. On occasion, the snow, once falling at two inches

per hour, and the gusting wind would subside so that the army of fighters could clear a portion of the track to release trapped freight and passenger trains. These respites were brief, for within less than a day the work of the snow fighters was completely undone.

By the end of February, Henry Yerington, vice-president and general manager of the Virginia and Truckee Railroad, wrote to D. O. Mills:

We have had nothing but a succession of snow-storms which culminated in the C. P. being blockaded day before yesterday, & last night after seeing the passenger train through to Reno the snow plow and 3 engines on returning to Carson became blocked in snow . . . these constant detentions from the blockade on the C. P. and the big one of last month on the V. & T. have been awful rough on the Company and discouraging to the employees.

Fully three weeks passed before a photographer reached the scene and took the picture here reproduced. This is one in an album of thirteen photographs recently purchased for the Library's Pictorial Collections, further to document the accounts of this eventful winter which appear in the Henry Yerington Papers, earlier described in *Bancroftiana* for May, 1953.

“The Problem of Human Folly”

A substantial gathering of nearly one hundred volumes by and about William McFee has been presented by Mrs. Martin S. Mitau of Atherton to The Bancroft Library as a memorial to her husband, an alumnus of the Class of 1921 and a well-known collector of the San Francisco Bay area. The gift contains first editions of about twenty-five novels and collections of essays and short stories written by the Anglo-American author who died in 1966, as well as the manuscript of “The Virgin of Loreto,” and is an important addition to the Rare Books Collection.

“William Morley Punshon McFee [was] born June 15, 1881, at sea in the three-masted squarerigger *Erin's Isle*, of which his father John Henry McFee was designer, builder, owner, and master,” according to an introductory note in a bibliography of McFee's work. Pride and interest in the sea pervades his life and writings. In 1905 he was offered a berth in the engine room of one of his uncle's vessels and for the next twenty years was almost continually at sea, working as engineer on British tramp steamers to South Africa and Japan, in the Mediterranean aboard British Naval ships, and commuting between New York and the Spanish Main on United Fruit Company passenger and banana ships. Finally in 1925 he settled on land, as an American citizen in Westport, Connecticut.

Christopher Morley suggested, in an essay of 1917, that “the next time the Cunard

Company commissions a new liner I wish they would sign on Joseph Conrad as captain, Rudyard Kipling as purser, and William McFee as chief engineer,” proposing this ideal combination because McFee wrote chiefly out of his experiences with people at sea and in foreign ports and would have been in good company with Kipling, whom he admired and about whom he lectured, and with Conrad, by whom he was most influenced. A reviewer of his first novel, *Aliens* (1914, revised 1918), in the *Boston Transcript* commented that “he reveals his discipleship of that master mariner and master novelist [but] is not at all imitative of Conrad.” Novels such as *Casuals of the Sea* (1916), *Captain Macedoine's Daughter* (1920), *Command* (1922), *The Harbourmaster* (1932), and *Ship to Shore* (1944) earned him the sobriquet of “romantic realist.”

McFee's status as both a seaman and an author, and his interest in sharing both his nautical adventures and his insights into human character, are well expressed in the preface to the revised version of *Aliens*:

I divide authors into two classes—genuine artists, and educated men who wish to earn enough to let them live like country gentlemen. With the latter I have no concern. But the artist knows when his time has come. In the same way I turned with irresistible longing to the sea, whereon I had been wont to earn my living. It is a good life and I love it. I love the men and their ships. I find in them a never-ending panorama which illustrates my theme, the problem of human folly.

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Robert Gordon Sproul (left) and William Wallace Campbell

Robert Gordon Sproul, 1891-1975

When The Friends of The Bancroft Library was being organized shortly after the second World War, one of its first members was Robert Gordon Sproul, President of the University. On August 26th, 1947, the acting secretary, Warren R. Howell, wrote to Sproul:

On behalf of The Friends of The Bancroft Library I am happy to acknowledge receipt of your application and check and to state that you have been enrolled as a Charter Member of this organization.

During the course of the past quarter century and more Dr. and Mrs. Sproul have been warm supporters of the Library and

of the Friends, who now sadly record his death at Berkeley on September 10th.

A native San Franciscan and a graduate of the Berkeley campus in its Class of 1913, Sproul spent almost his entire career with the University, beginning as assistant cashier, becoming Comptroller, Land Agent, Secretary of The Regents, Vice President, and, finally, named to the presidency in 1929. His inauguration took place in the Hearst Greek Theatre on October 22nd, 1930, and he served in office until his retirement in 1958—longer than any of the institution's fourteen chief executives. As President Emeritus he continued a lively though never intrusive interest in the affairs of his beloved University, and took part in the Centennial exercises held in 1968.

We are pleased to be able to reproduce here a newly-discovered view of Robert Gordon Sproul, shown with his predecessor, William Wallace Campbell, at the entrance to California Hall in October, 1928. This is one of a group of campus photographs rescued for the University Archives from the attic of University House, now the Chancellor's residence but formerly the home of the President. The photographer was George E. Stone, a member of the Class of 1916.

At the memorial service held in the Pacific School of Religion on September 28th, Professor Emeritus Joel H. Hildebrand recalled his early associations with Sproul at the Sierra Ski Club at Norden, and recited a limerick about him, written in the mid-1920's:

We boast of a vice president
Whose lungs have a marvellous vent.
The sound of his smile
Can be heard for a mile
And his laugh shakes the whole
firmament.

We are all the richer for having known the smile, the laugh, the man.

“Dear Clemmie”

The Bancroft Library, long renowned for its material on the history of the American West, contains a surprising wealth of Civil War documentation, for the most part included in the papers of army officers such as Henry Morris Naglee and Edward Otho Cresap Ord, reflecting the purely military

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aspects of the great conflict. A recent gift from Mrs. Donald K. Lippincott of Orinda reveals a more personal view in the sixty-five lively letters written by a young soldier from Wisconsin, Seneca R. Flint, to Clementine Norton, a longtime friend who was later to become his fiancée.

Soon after enlisting in the Wisconsin Volunteers in the spring of 1861, Flint was on his way to Washington, and he mentioned the splendid reception of the troops throughout Ohio—at every station the young ladies presented the men water, flowers, and food. In Baltimore, however, the atmosphere was quite different: “We were rec’d with groans & hisses & cheers for Jeff Davis, but the sight of our bristling bayonets kept down any hostile demonstration.” On July 7th when the troops, now in Arlington Heights recently seized from General Lee, were expecting momentarily to engage in a battle upon Fairfax, Virginia, he commented: “Although I do not claim to an over amount of that noble quality in Man, *bravery*, yet I am determined that no cowardly action of mine shall disgrace the cause in which I am engaged.”

Convalescing from a bout of fever in August at Fort Corcoran opposite Washington, he reported:

Our doctors have only about 4 kinds of medicine and they kill or cure with them. I was standing one morning in front of the doctor’s tent waiting for my dose, when two others came up, one with a bullet wound in his heel, the other with a sorethroat, I with the fever. He gave each a blue pill as big as your thumb. It amused me so that I laughed as loud as I could and the doctor said I could not be very sick and returned me to duty.

Flint broke a long silence with a lengthy letter in February, 1863, from Forsyth, Missouri, in which he described the tremendous three-day, one-hundred-twenty mile march undertaken the previous December to assist General Blunt at Cave Hill, Arkansas.

We marched night and day, hardly six hours of sleep during the time. And what was *worse*, very little to eat. And as you are probably aware *I can eat*.

And he had fought in the Battle of Prairie Grove, after which, strongly moved by the sight of the battlefield with its dead and

wounded, he reflected: “There is a great weight of sin resting on the heads of the authors of this strife . . .”

During the summer months of 1863 Flint complained of idleness in the camp at Rolla, Missouri, the Army of the Frontier having been disbanded and most of the troops sent on to Vicksburg. Even the Southern damsels were not to his liking: “You find a young woman dressed in the invariable butternut dress, about a foot and a half too short, big shoes, no stockings.” And even more offensive: “You find them chewing or smoking tobacco, and during your conversation they will manage to get an oath in edgeways.” After leave in October, when he visited Clementine, he returned to Camp Little Piney in Missouri, where he spent Christmas in freezing temperatures, but enjoyed the holiday dinner of oysters, chickens, bread, butter, cheese, coffee, milk, mince pies, and loaf cake. At this time he reenlisted for three years, although he hoped for the end of the war by spring.

The new year, 1864, would bring national elections, and Flint expected that his first vote would be cast in November for General Benjamin Butler, his “ideal of a patriot and soldier,” having no admiration for Abraham Lincoln whose policy he deemed weak and vacillating. In this same letter he expressed his view on the Negro: “I do not love the Negro well enough to have him around as an equal in social or political rights, but I do believe in putting arms in his hands and letting him win his way to freedom, the government guaranteeing to him all the rights and protection due to white soldiers.”

Flint arrived in Vicksburg on October 1st and described the city “with its bold steep bluffs surmounted by frowning batteries, the grim mouthed cannon looking down upon you in sullen defiance,” and went on to say:

It is grand beyond description, it seems as if an earth-quake or some terrible convulsion of nature had upheaved the earth in huge billows. Look out upon Lake Michigan during a violent storm, imagine a dozen huge cannon upon the crest of every wave and you have only a faint idea of the fortifications of Vicksburg.

A week later he was comfortably installed

in his tent and reported on the caves carved into the surrounding hillsides in which people had lived during the siege.

In the last letter of this collection he commented further on the Negro troops:

... better soldiers I never saw, orderly, civil and soldierly—and as for fighting they cannot be beat. A regiment of Negro Cavalry accompanied our battalion on their late raid at Woodville, Miss. 4 companies of them captured a rebel battery of 3 guns, killing 41 men and the other 40 ran to the white troops and begged for protection from the fury of the negro troops. They went in with the cry of “Fort Pillow and no quarter,” and they did not take a single prisoner. It is a terrible retribution, but just.

Shortly afterwards, on October 25th, Flint died of typhoid fever at Vicksburg. He was commended as being of “more than ordinary ability, of generous impulses, foremost in the discharge of his duties.”

Bolton’s Padre

Four years before he published *Rim of Christendom*, a fuller biography of his favorite “Black Robe,” Herbert Eugene Bolton issued a popular and dramatic account of Eusebio Kino, *Padre on Horseback*. The book was handsomely printed in a limited edition by the Sonora Press of San Francisco in 1932. Bolton’s biographer, John Francis Bannon, has written of this shorter volume:

This little work can introduce the reader to a great American historian, as well as to a very American part of the larger American epic. Bolton was a man who before the days of the Good Neighbor Policy and the *Alianza para Progreso* knew that a knowledge of our fellow Americans in their historical development must precede understanding and be basic to fostering those traits which will make us simpáticos. The scholar who already knows and appreciates Bolton will be happy to add this little work to his library.

Through the generosity of the late Professor Bolton’s son-in-law, Mr. Paul C. Johnson, and grandson, Mr. Robert W. Brower, both of El Cerrito, the Library has received four

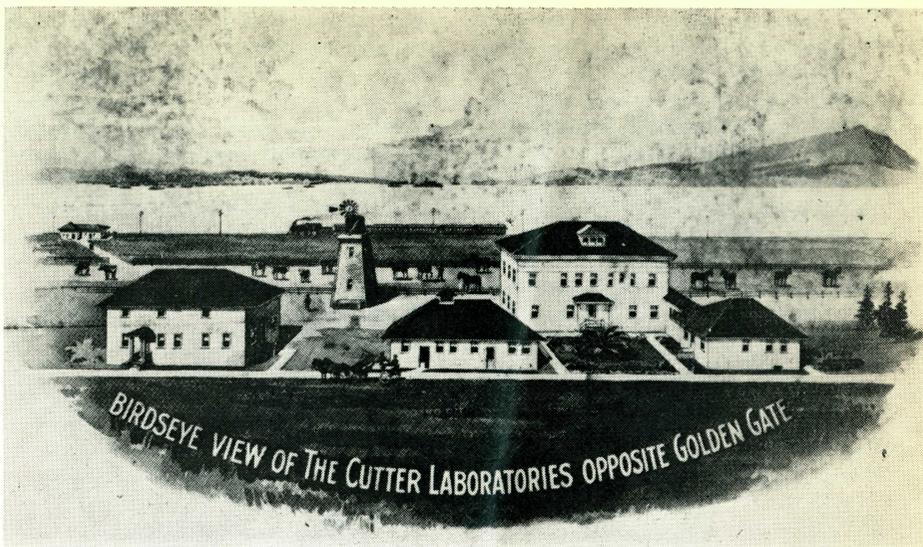
hundred unbound copies of the original edition; to each of these volumes has been added a new paper cover, designed and printed by Lawton and Alfred Kennedy. Copies are available for purchase at \$5 each. Orders, accompanied by checks payable to The Friends of The Bancroft Library, including sales tax for California residents, may be sent to the Secretary.



Dr. Marcus Craban (left) and Mr. R. Gordon Wasson in the Library’s Gallery during the reception on September 28th which opened the exhibition of uncommon books on food and drink from Dr. Craban’s distinguished collection. Prior to the reception the two had been joined by Mr. Harry Levinson in a panel discussion on the subject of gastronomical writings.

Typography Workshop

The Library’s Press Room, described in the issue of *Bancroftiana* for October, 1973, housed an active workshop in typography and letterpress printing during the fall quarter. Six students, three from the College of Environmental Design and three from the Department of English, worked under the supervision of Frances Butler, Associate Professor of Design at the University’s Davis campus. Each student completed three individual projects: a broadside of text printed on the Library’s Albion Press; an illustrated broadside, using a metal engraving, printed on both the Albion and Vandercook presses; and a portion of a booklet, *Typography as Communication and Form*, by Emil Rucler.



Cutter Laboratories

Following the San Francisco earthquake and fire in April 1906, which destroyed the business offices of Cutter Laboratories, all that remained of the pioneering pharmaceutical firm was its Berkeley plant, pictured in the above contemporary lithograph. The small manufacturing pharmacy was founded in Fresno in 1897 by Edward A. Cutter, Sr., who moved it to Berkeley in order to preclude the spoiling of vaccine cultures by the heat of the San Joaquin Valley.

The story of how the firm grew to become one of the nation's important corporations has been told by his son, Robert K. Cutter, or Dr. Bob as he was known throughout the company until his death in 1973, in an anecdotal interview with Gabrielle Morris of the Bancroft's Regional Oral History Office. His interview forms the first of a two-volume company history, *Cutter Laboratories, 1897-1972: A Dual Trust*; the second volume includes supporting interviews with his brother E. A. Cutter, Jr. (Ted) who served as vice president; his son, David, now in charge of operations; and other leaders of the firm.

From these conversations one derives the sense that these men worked very hard at things they enjoyed doing, and that they succeeded very well. As Dr. Bob recalls, he began his business experience by carrying shipments of company products to the post

office on his bicycle, while brother Ted worked in the laboratory after school and during vacations. During this period, into the 1920's, there were no more than one hundred employees, and Mrs. Cutter and her sisters often pitched in when there was urgent need. One sister, Norah Sattin, kept the books, cajoling suppliers when payments were delayed, deciding who would get how much of their paychecks when times were bad, and keeping a careful account of the gradually increasing cash flow maintained through a cordial working agreement with the First National Bank of Berkeley.

In 1938 intravenous solutions were introduced into medical practice, and the technology was so new that Dr. Bob, trained as a physician, had to spend a good deal of time in the shop, whittling plugs, adjusting tubing, and developing designs for flasks that resulted in the patented Saffitflask. During this period when his father became unable to manage the daily operations because of increasing illness, Dr. Bob taught himself the whole range of management skills. One of his earliest major decisions was to institute an employee pension plan in 1934, prior to the enactment of federal Social Security legislation, and to work toward a medical care program.

Close professional relations were maintained with the University of California faculty, so that, for example, the Laboratories

offered research support and production arrangements for Professor William Boynton's work on hog cholera vaccine. At the onset of World War II, Cutter assisted Dr. Karl F. Meyer, the noted bacteriologist, to set up a production unit at the San Francisco Medical Center's Hooper Foundation. Also during the war, Cutter had a priority rating second only to the Manhattan Project, enabling it to secure supplies and equipment for the production of blood plasma and penicillin.

The third generation of Cutters took over the corporate management in 1969 when David became president. His comments on his own experience and training serve as a casebook on the making of a modern technical manager; at the same time they reveal the same strong sense of family responsibility and concern for personnel that marked his father's leadership. Shortly after the completion of these interviews Cutter Laboratories became a division of Rhinechem, a leading German firm, thus beginning a new chapter in a lively history.

The Librarian as Detective

Recently a Bancroft staff member, preparing an article for *Bancroftiana* (September, 1975) about our acquisition of letters by Ambrose Bierce, observed that in his biography of Bierce published in 1929 Carey McWilliams provided a "List of Books that are in the Bierce section of the University of California Library at Berkeley." Records in the University Archives were consulted and in the *Annual Report of the President of the University* for 1920-21 a valuable description was found indicating that "By the will of the late Ambrose Bierce . . . volumes from his personal library were left to [the University Library]." That description went on to list some of the more prominent authors, including Gertrude Atherton, Elbert Hubbard, Jack London, H. L. Mencken, and George Sterling, and indicated that the books were all inscribed by their authors to Bierce.

But where were the books after more than fifty years? Comparison of the McWilliams list with that in the President's Report made clear that neither was complete. By checking the card catalogue of the University Library it was possible to determine that the books had been treated as a collection and shelved

together, and that they had been assigned sequential numbers following the alphabetical listing of their authors. It was still not possible to determine exactly which books comprised the entire collection, but a further check revealed that they had, in fact, become part of the Rare Books and Special Collections Department when it was created in the 1950's. Since that Department in turn became an integral part of the Bancroft in 1969 it seemed likely that the Bierce library was already here.

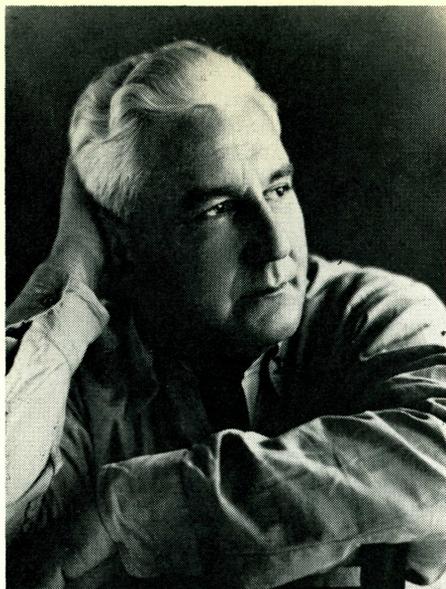
It is good to report that altogether forty-one volumes have been identified and that the books are indeed in The Bancroft Library. The volumes are of value not only as signed first editions but as indications of Ambrose Bierce's connection with prominent authors of his era. Eventually the Bierce library will be represented in a special provenance file being developed as an aid to public service in the Bancroft's Heller Reading Room.

Bibliographic sleuthing is an ongoing task undertaken by various members of the Library's staff, and important volumes, already in the University's collections, are added to the Bancroft's holdings. The satisfaction of a successful hunt is indeed one of the pleasures enjoyed by the librarian as detective.

Leonard Loeb Papers

Modern atomic physics made rapid strides following the first World War, and the Department of Physics at Berkeley grew in like manner. In 1918 there was a well-equipped and staffed spectroscopy laboratory, and in 1923 a promising young man, Leonard Benedict Loeb, joined the faculty. The son of the noted physiologist, Jacques Loeb, who had been called to the University of California in 1903, Leonard Loeb taught at Berkeley for almost four decades, retiring in 1959 to continue his work at both his Berkeley and Pacific Grove homes. Now his personal papers, recently presented to The Bancroft Library, have been catalogued and are available for scholarly research.

Born in Zurich on September 16th, 1891 to the German scientist and his wife, Anne Leonard, a descendant of a colonial American family, Loeb's early education was alternately spurred by the intellectual atmosphere at home and disrupted by the frequent moves



Professor Leonard Loeb

made necessary by his father's career. In 1913, however, impressed by the clarity of the lectures delivered by Robert A. Millikan he found his own career in physics, and in 1916 received his Ph.D. under Millikan at the University of Chicago. His thesis on measuring the mobility of gaseous ions in high electrical fields, marked the beginning of his study of gaseous electronics.

After a short term with the U. S. Bureau of Standards, and participation in the American Expeditionary Forces in France during the first World War, Loeb accepted an assistant professorship in physics at Berkeley. His enthusiasm underwrote his efforts to make the department the equal of that in older, Eastern institutions, though he didn't find this an altogether easy task. On January 25th, 1928, he wrote to his friend and fellow physicist Edward U. Condon of his hopes for the department and its problems: "I tell you, Ed, this business of putting one's dreams across and trying to build the department as a wee underdog (and I have grown lots wee-er since I am no longer secretary of the department) requires infinite patience and perse-

verance, and it must all seem to come out of the brains of the chiefs, which does not help my patience any at times."

An indefatigable worker, he not only strove to better the department and to recruit faculty, including Ernest Orlando Lawrence, but he also was involved in student counseling and served as an active member of the U. S. Naval Reserve. At the same time he pursued his own research, publishing numerous articles and books; he described his own intensity and its sometimes adverse effects in a letter of February 12th, 1930 to Karl T. Compton, then at Princeton:

I am naturally pretty aggressive and a pretty hard driver on anything in which I am interested. The idea of competition makes me work distinctly harder and this driving has resulted in the last year in a rather serious breakdown.

But the hard work paid off and in 1936 his research led to the discovery of the concept of streamers—fine ionizing discharges, exciting the common electrical spark (the streamer spark mechanism)—and started him on an intense study of coronas.

The Loeb Papers, consisting of twenty-three boxes of correspondence and related documents, cover the years 1916 through 1970, and are a significant addition to the Library's collections in the History of Science and Technology.

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