"When Sara Comes, It's Always a Holiday!"

In one of his all-too-few novels, Mark Schorer wrote:

Memory selects, distorts, organizes, and by these, evaluates; then fixes! This is the artistic process, except for that final step beyond process which makes of the work an object capable of life and meaning outside ourselves, independent.

The reader of Poet and Suffragist, Sara Bard Field’s memoir recorded by the Bancroft’s Regional Oral History Office during a four-year period from 1959 to 1963, is presented with just such an independent work; as her daughter, Katherine Caldwell, writes in an "Afterword," the interview is marked by "clarity and astonishingly remembered detail." Left unfinished because of the memoirist’s fragile health—she was ill during much of the time prior to her death in 1974—the tapes have now been transcribed and bound into a volume of six hundred and sixty-one pages.

Sara Bard Field was born in Cincinnati on September 1st, 1882, and three years later moved with her family to Detroit. Eleven days following her eighteenth birthday she was married to Albert Ehrgott, a Baptist minister more than twice her age, and accompanied him to a missionary post in Rangoon, Burma. In July, 1901 her son, Albert Field, was born under extremely painful conditions which soon made it evident that Sara would have to return to Detroit for crucial surgery. Shortly thereafter the Ehrgotts were called to Wallingford, Connecticut, from which they moved to New Haven, where Sara helped to supplement the family income by teaching English to German immigrants.

She gained permission to audit Professor Robert Lounsbury’s survey of nineteenth century poets at Yale University, and later assisted the ailing scholar by reading to him a few hours each day. It was while they were discussing certain poetic passages, Sara recalled, that he said to her:

“You know, I have an idea you’re a poet. Have you ever tried to find out?”

As busy as her life was at that time, she managed to write “only because of the fact that youth seems to have an eternal inner strength” and, further, “I used to wake up at night sometimes and write after I had had an hour or two of sleep.”
The years from 1903 to 1910 were spent in Cleveland, where the Reverend Ehrgott served a poor parish. His wife opened first a kindergarten and later a soup kitchen, activities which came to the attention of that city's reform mayor, Tom Johnson, through whom she met Eugene Debs. Her friendship with Clarence Darrow also began at this time. The family, now increased to four with the birth of Katherine, moved to Portland, Oregon, where they bought a home "way out in the suburbs." Shortly thereafter, through Darrow, Sara and her husband were introduced to Colonel Charles Erskine Scott Wood, a by-then legendary Indian fighter and sometime poet who had become Portland's leading attorney. He had the most beautiful complexion and the keenest and kindest eagle-blue-gray eyes I think I have ever seen. I think it is an extraordinary combination, where keenness is combined with kindness. Colonel Wood, hearing that Sara had taken a course in poetic criticism, asked her to look over a galley proof of his sonnets and advise as to their worth.

Sara Bard Field’s life might be viewed in terms of a three-movement symphony: the first thirty years of childhood, youthful marriage, and children; the second thirty years comprising Erskine Wood; the last thirty years of loneliness. By 1911 her growing activity in the woman suffrage movement both in Oregon and nationally, together with the realization that she could no longer share her husband’s strongly conservative religious beliefs, made a break inevitable, and her deep devotion, reactivated by him, led to a crisis. Following a short stay in a tuberculosis sanitarium in Pasadena, Sara and her daughter settled in Goldfield, Nevada to look after a galley proof of his sonnets and advise as to their worth.

Her daughter would agree, noting at the conclusion of her gracefully-written "Afterword" to this distinguished memoir: "For Sara Bard Field Wood, although she tried bravely to carry on, her life, in its deepest meaning, ended with her."

John Barr Tompkins, 1907-1980

For many who became Friends of the Bancroft in the 1950’s and 1960’s, visiting the Library meant seeking the assistance of Dr. John Barr Tompkins, who had been appointed its first Head of Public Services. With his staff, which for many years included Helen Harding Bretnor and Robert H. Becker, he set the tone of the then-spaecious Reading Room. When he retired early in 1974 as Curator of Pictorial Collections, he had completed almost a quarter century in Bancroft (Bancroftiana, June 1974).

We note with sadness his death in Berkeley on July 25th, following a long illness. His widow, Dorothy, has suggested that contributions may be sent to the John Barr Tompkins Fund for Pictorial Collections in the Bancroft Library, so that JBT’s name may continue to be linked with the Library in the form of additions to the collections he helped to develop and control.

Sutter on Stone

From the fund established in memory of Edith M. Coulter, The Bancroft Library has recently purchased a rare lithographic portrait of J. A. Sutter, published in San Francisco by Peirce & Johnson in 1852, and entered for copyright during the same year. Measuring about ten and one-half by eight inches, the portrait was drawn on stone by Joshua H. Peirce, a pioneer of 1849, who arrived in California already skilled in the art of lithography.

The lithograph was printed by Benjamin F. Butler, also a 40'er, in his shop on Broadway, between Kearny and DuPont Streets. Butler had been the first man to establish a lithography plant in San Francisco, and he is particularly noted as an early lithographer of portraits. The final bit of information recorded on this print states that it was copied "from a Portrait by S[tephen] W. Shaw," another art-

The Bancroft’s Bibles

For some years the Rare Books Collection of The Bancroft Library has sought to bring together editions of the Bible as part of its material related to the intellectual and artistic history of western civilization. From the time of Ulfilas (c. 311-381), who created an alphabet for the Germanic languages in order to translate the Scriptures into Gothic, and Jerome’s Latin Vulgate finished in 405, through the music of J. S. Bach and the writings of T. S. Eliot, the scriptural texts have influenced the literature, art, and music of the West.

The Bancroft collections include biblical manuscripts, early editions of western language versions, translations into native American, South Pacific, and Far Eastern languages, and Bibles printed by important typographers.

The Library’s oldest biblical text is a nearly complete Latin manuscript of the Epistles of James, Peter, and John, probably made in France in the first half of the twelfth century. Also from this century in France comes a fine example of a glossed Latin text of Genesis, once owned by the eminent classicist, Michael Wodhull (1740-1816). The earliest complete Bible held by the Bancroft is a small mid-fourteenth century Vulgate, with sixty-four decorated initials and nine marginal illuminations, from the collection of James K. Moffitt, for thirty-six years a University of California Regent. The Wycliffe version of the New Testament is represented by two manuscripts, both in the John Purvey recension. The earlier, from the library of the Tollemache family of Helmingham, Suffolk is one of a very few large illuminated copies made before 1400 (see Bancroftiana, February 1978 for a detailed description); the later one, made sometime between 1400 and 1450, comes from the collection of Isaac Foot, Member of Parliament and writer on Cromwell, whose library was purchased for the University of California in 1961. Finally, from the collection of Hubert Howe Bancroft comes a 1596 manuscript consisting of scriptural readings for weekdays, Sundays, and major Feasts translated into Nahuatl, once owned by Josè Fernando Ramírez, member of the Supreme Court of Mexico, and used in the native missions.

Of course, the first substantial book printed from movable type was the Forty-two line Bible, produced in part under the direction of Johann Gutenberg, c. 1454, from which Bancroft holds a leaf, containing Numbers 20-21; the facsimile of the Forty-two line Bible, printed at Leipzig by the Insel-Verlag (1915-14), is also available at the Library. Bancroft’s earliest complete printed Bible is the Vulgate produced at Venice in 1476 by Franciscus Renner de Heilbronn and Nicolaus de Francfordia. Surprisingly, the Greek New Testament did not appear until 1516, in an edition printed at Basle by Johann Froben, who had commissioned Desiderius Erasmus, the best Greek scholar of his century, to consult only six manuscripts, but his text became the textus receptus. Both this and the second edition of 1519 are held by Bancroft.

Parallel language texts are an important aspect of the study and printing of the Scriptures. The earliest such biblical text was the famous Polyglot Psalter of 1516, printed at Genoa by Petrus Paulus Porruis. In five languages, the text was edited by Agostino Giustiniani, Bishop of Nerbio, whose gloss on the Nineteenth Psalm includes the earliest known account of Christophe Columbus. The Bancroft copy on paper is bound in vellum. In
1614 there appeared the so-called Diglot Psalter, a Latin and Arabic text printed at the press of Savary de Brèves, Ambassador of Louis XIII to Constantinople. The Bancroft copy comes from the library of Jean-Baptiste Colbert, controller-general under Louis XIV.

A major step in the history of biblical text, the Complutensian Polyglot, in four languages, was produced in six volumes under the patronage of Cardinal Ximénz de Cisneros at Alcalá, Spain, by Arnaldus Guillelmus de Brocal, the New Testament being printed in 1514, the Old in 1517. Because it lacked a papal permit, circulation did not begin until 1522, thus enabling Erasmus to receive credit for the first appearance of the Greek New Testament. The Bancroft is fortunate to have in addition the remaining three great Polyglot Bibles, Plantin’s (Antwerp, 1569–72), Vitré’s (Paris, 1629–45), and Walton’s (London, 1653–57). The latter, edited by Brian Walton, later Bishop of Chester, is one of the earliest publications printed by subscription in Great Britain. Bancroft’s copy includes the original, or “republican,” form of the preface, acknowledging the support of Oliver Cromwell.

The original Hebrew text of the Old Testament and Apocrypha appeared in volumes, beside the Polyglot Bibles. From the Goldyne Hebraica Collection comes a copy of the Pentateuch, Five Scrolls, and Haftaroth, printed at Sabionetta, Italy by Tobia Foa, c. 1554. In 1584 at Antwerp, Christoph Plantin brought out a Hebrew Bible, with the Greek New Testament appended. Included is an interlinear translation of both Old Testament and Apocrypha, the earliest Latin version made in modern times, by the Hebrew scholar Sanctes Pagninus of Lucca, which first appeared in 1528. Both Bancroft copies are bound with Plantin’s 1584 edition of the Greek New Testament.

The history of the printed English Bible begins with William Tyndale’s New Testament brought out secretly at Cologne in 1525. The Bancroft holds the earliest of the illustrated quarto editions of his text, printed at London by Richard Jugge in 1536. Miles Coverdale, a reform advocate and Bishop of Exeter, is represented by his Bible of 1535, printed at either Cambridge or Marburg by Eucharius Cervicornus and Johannes Soter. The Library’s copy, in full morocco by Tuckett, Binder to the Queen, is one of seventy-seven known copies, and comes from the library of Kenneth and Nancy Bechtel (see Bancroftiana, July 1978 for a detailed description). In 1539, Coverdale brought out another version, known from its size as the Great Bible, from which comes the Psalter in the Book of Common Prayer. The Bancroft holds the second edition of 1540, which bears on the title page the words “Apoynted to the use of the churches.” But it was soon replaced in popular favor by the Geneva Bible of 1560, the earliest to provide verse divisions. The Bible of English writers from Shakespeare to Bunyan, the Bancroft copy is bound in polished calf.

Meanwhile at Rheims, Roman Catholics brought out an English translation of the Vulgate New Testament (1582), which exerted considerable influence on the King James version of 1611. The translation of the Vulgate Old Testament into English by Roman Catholics was published at Douai in 1600–10. Cardinal William Allen, who established at Douai a college to train priests for England, assisted with both Testaments, each in the Bancroft collections. Of special note is the Library’s copy of the Baltimore, 1837 edition of the Rheims-Douai Bible, in the revised text of Bishop Richard Challoner of London. This version, made by Oxford and Cambridge scholars under the direction of Lancelot Andrewes, then Dean of Winchester, and others, is one of seventy-seven known copies, and comes from the library of Kenneth and Nancy Bechtel (see Bancroftiana, July 1978 for a detailed description). In 1539, Coverdale brought out another version, known from its size as the Great Bible, from which comes the Psalter in the Book of Common Prayer. The Bancroft holds the second edition of 1540, which bears on the title page the words “Apoynted to the use of the churches.” But it was soon replaced in popular favor by the Geneva Bible of 1560, the earliest to provide verse divisions. The Bible of English writers from Shakespeare to Bunyan, the Bancroft copy is bound in polished calf.

The so-called Port Royal translation of Isaac Louis Le Maitre is represented by the New Testament (1668) and numerous individual books of the Old Testament, including Ecclesiasticus (1684), Deuteronomy (1685), and Song of Songs (1694). Because of its Jansenist origin, this version, despite its popularity, never won the approval of the Roman Catholic Church. Supported by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel as well as the British and Foreign Bible Society, Joseph Dacre Carlyle and Henry Ford’s The Holy Bible in the Arabic Language (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1811), is typical of Bancroft’s wide range of holdings in non-Western languages. There is, for example, the so-called Gipsy Bible of George Borrow (1857), the linguist produced this version of the Gospel of Luke in Gitano (or Romany) but attempts at distribution led to his imprisonment.

The earliest biblical text to be printed on the North American continent, and the first in any native American language, was John Eliot’s translation of the New Testament into Massachusset (Cambridge, 1661). He had previously prepared the text of the first book printed in the American colonies, the Bay Psalm Book (1640). The Bancroft’s copy of the second edition of Eliot’s complete Bible (Cambridge, 1663) comes from the library of Kenneth and Nancy Bechtel. This earliest known Protestant missionary translation is also represented at the Bancroft by an edition of his Psalter in Massachusetts, printed with the Gospel of John (Boston, 1709). Nez Percé can be seen in the second edition of the American Bible Society’s Gospel of Matthew (New York, 1871) and in the Gospel and Epistles of John translated by the Presbyterian missionary George Auldine (Philadelphia, 1876). Western Cree is typified in William Mason’s translation of the whole Bible for the British and Foreign Bible Society (London, 1861–62). William Thomas Smith and Stephen Return Riggs translated the Scriptures into Dakota for the American Bible Society (New York, 1879), the first volume of which is in The Bancroft Library; their Psalms were used in the 1875 Dakota Book of Common Prayer, also in the Library’s collections. Náhuatl is represented in the Gospel of Luke (London, 1833).

Scripture translation, in fact, reflects the wide range of Christian missionary activity. The Hawaiian Missionary Society brought out a series of translations in Hawaiian, each book being separately printed and several bound together at a later date (see Bancroftiana, July 1978 for a detailed description). From the library of Thomas W. Streeter comes a Tahitian version of selected Epistles, dated 1829 in the colophon, as well as a Tahitian Psalter made by the London Missionary Society (1832). James Calvert and E. Hazlewood, linguists and Wesleyan missionaries, produced a complete Bible in Fijian (London, 1864–67). The Bancroft also holds texts in two languages from the Loyalty Islands: S. Ella and his wife, of the London Missionary Society, were responsible for the Psalms and Gospel of Matthew in Uvea (1867) and the Gospel of Mark by John Coleridge Parsons, later missionary Bishop of Melanesia, is the first complete biblical book in Lifi (Auckland, 1859).

Bancroft also holds many editions of the Scriptures which are significant as specimens.
of fine printing and the typographic arts. Known both for his editing of classical texts and for the excellent press work done under his supervision, Robert Estienne produced a series of biblical texts. Especially noteworthy is his Latin Bible of 1538-40, the Bancroft copy being from the library of John Henry Nash. His third folio edition, it includes illustrations by Franciscus Vatablus, Regius Professor of Hebrew at Paris, and prints the Prayer of Manasses in both Greek and Latin for the first time.

John Baskerville, typefounder and printer of Birmingham, is represented in the Library by his magnus opus, a 1763 edition of the Authorized Version, also from the Nash collection. The Doves Press, founded in 1906 by Thomas James Cobden-Sanderson and Sir Emery Walker, is similarly represented by its most important publication, the Doves Bible (London, 1903-05). From William Randolph Hearst’s library at San Simeon comes the Golden Cockerel Press’s The Song of Songs (Waltham St. Lawrence, 1925), notable for its wood engravings by Eric Gill. In 1925–27, the Martin Luther’s German Bible is represented by an edition published at Munich by the Bremer Presse (1926-28), known for its work in integrating scholarship and book design. Black-letter type was especially cut for this edition, and for the excellent press work done under his supervision, Robert Estienne produced a

The rich and varied cultural contributions of Afro-American writers in the Far West have become the focus of a new collecting venture for The Bancroft Library. In building an archive of these writers, Bancroft will be complementing the work being done over the past fifteen years by the General Library which has not attempted to gather authors’ manuscripts or letters since the collecting of such papers is Bancroft’s special responsibility.

This collection will relate closely to the holdings of other manuscript records in Bancroft such as the papers of the Western Office of the NAACP for the years 1946 to 1970 and C. L. Dellius’ assemblage of the papers of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, both valuable for the study of the Afro-American experience in the West. The new literary collection will also extend Bancroft’s purely literary materials for its collections of publications by regional writers naturally include some that have been created by significant authors who happen to be black.

Subject specialists in the General Library and Bancroft, aided by some black writers themselves, have compiled lists of the authors whose works are to be collected. Some will be collected in depth so that not only will their published writings in first and other significant editions be represented, but an effort will also be made to collect their papers, including letters and original manuscripts. A second group

of authors will be represented only by first and other significant editions, and a third group will be more selectively represented only by first editions of their major printed works. Papers are sought by both gift and purchase, and following established practice the Library will not purchase papers of faculty and staff of the University of California.

Black writers some of whose books are already represented in The Bancroft Library include Maya Angelou, Gwendolyn Brooks, Langston Hughes, Leroi Jones, Bob Kaufman, Ishmael Reed, and Al Young. In keeping with the general regional focus of Bancroft several additional writers have been listed because they have worked for a substantial part of their careers in the Bay area. These include George Barlow, Ernest J. Gaines, Ted Joans, Cleo Overstreet, Eugene B. Redmond, Clyde R. Taylor, and Joyce Carol Thomas. The Library also seeks to acquire the records of black theatrical companies of the West, such as original playscripts of first performances, correspondence, publicity, and related materials, which would augment the Bancroft’s extensive theater collections.

The development of this new Afro-American Writers Collection is an exciting enterprise not only because the field is relatively undeveloped but because it will extend the Library’s association with contemporary creative writers. From time to time Bancroft’s records will describe major acquisitions in order to keep the Friends aware of the Collection’s growth.

When is a Knight a Labrick?

"As a rule," Hank Morgan says to the reader in chapter thirty of Mark Twain’s Connecticut Yankee, “a knight is a lummox, and sometimes even a labrick." But as the author himself might say, “that cat wouldn’t fight;” it was a definition based on the problem the editors began with.

Then, in the tradition of Mark Twain’s so-called “mental telegraphy,” came an unsolicited letter from Margaret R. Leavy of New Haven who explained that her grandfather, Benjamin E. Smith, had been managing editor of the Century Dictionary and Cyclopedi a in its first edition (1891) and had, by 1906, become editor-in-chief in charge of an extensive revision and expansion of the work. Mr. Smith was apparently as interested in the meaning of “labrick” as we had been, and he did what we
were unable to do: he asked Mark Twain what it meant. His granddaughter had, fortunately—
that the term labrick was in constant use by P.S. But I think you are serious about this. If scoundrel & son of a bitch.

In thinking of the Middle Ground, it is a matter of strength the middle ground between a very definite meaning & occupied in the
all grown men except certain of the clergy in

Project in time to supply the deficiency in

Bancroftiana.

were noted in the last issue of

Yankee's explanatory notes. The answer speaks
for the personal and professional needs of
friends to doctoral candidates whose research de­
ticularly impressed by the annual awards made

scholars.

tribute in diverse ways to the well-being of our

versity fees; the additional funding will con­

found his [Micheltorena's] report to the gov­

of the governorship of Manuel Micheltorena,

sition on a waterless island near the port pending

Micheltorena decided to forge ahead to Ma­

with one vessel making two trips. Once

again the promised funds were not forthcom­

ing, and only by dint of many negotiations, some in the form of personal loans, did the
general manage to scrape together a few pesos
to equip the ships and to continue his journey. He
soon noticed that no brandy, coffee or tea
had been stocked for the officers, an oversight
to be immediately remedied in quantities suf­

ficient for a voyage of at least forty-five days.

Micheltorena also purchased bugles, drums and
flutes, deemed essential for a well-run army.

Although he initially had obtained all he
needed in the way of weapons and ammu­
nition, just prior to his departure General

by the government, accompanied by fifty ill­

half of them capable of taking up arms, some

were about fifteen hundred persons, less than

as well as a large number of native stan­

nition and other cargo, and the two hundred

and other cargo, and the two hundred

twenty-nine soldiers left after many had de­
serted along the way, protesting their deten­
tion on a waterless island near the port pending

last arrangements. Thus, in four vessels there
were about fifteen hundred persons, less than
half of them capable of taking up arms, some of
them criminals from presidios and prisons, one of them a known murderer of fifteen peo­
ple, others ignorant, untrained farmers drafted
by the government, accompanied by fifty ill­
equipped soldiers from San Blas, requisitioned
at the last moment to escort the colonists,

are the problems of training raw
cruits in the rudiments of handling rifles
and marching, the disciplinary problems oc­
casioned by the thefts and pillages committed
by these same recruits, and the paucity of revenues
for paying the salaries of the government offi­
cials and soldiers. He further stated that to no
avail he repeatedly requested assistance from
the distant Mexican government, and sought
permission to return the worst offenders. The
governor somewhat glosses over his own offi­
cial duties from 1842 to 1844, except to indi­
cate that his conduct was exemplary, that he
established and maintained good relationships
with such key figures as José Castro and Juan
B. Alvarado, that under his regime govern­
ment became more complex and effective, and
that he never tampered with public funds and
that, indeed, he had even advanced his own
money on occasion.

Micheltorena goes on to record the events
of November, 1844, asserting that this earlier
revolution was not directed against him or his
administration, but rather against the criminal
elements he had been forced to bring as mem­
ers of the expedition. He comments on his
alliance with Sutter, and describes the long
journey south during the wet winter of 1845
in pursuit of the revolutionaries headed by Castro and Alvarado, whose ranks had been considerably augmented by southern Californios. The general reported with great indignation that he arrived in Santa Barbara to discover that Pio Pico had illegally convoked the assembly (a power belonging solely to the governor) and had even usurped the governorship. Micheltorena continued his march, finally almost catching up with the elusive revolutionaries near the San Buenaventura Mission in a narrow place where the road was flooded, but the enemy successfully retreated beyond the mission. By this time his men, many without shoes and ill-fed on unsalted meat, were footsore and weary after travelling for twenty-six days in the rain.

Then ensued the battle of San Fernando, in which Micheltorena’s troops captured enemy artillery during the first day without the loss of a drop of blood. The rebels soon fled to Los Angeles, taking Sutter with them as prisoner. Sutter, knowing the rebels were in a position to cut off all food supplies from troops already decimated and suffering from hunger, entreated Micheltorena to surrender. In the meanwhile information received from the north indicated the brewing of other potential revolutionary forces, so that the general at this point reluctantly agreed to capitulate, the Treaty of Cahuenga was formulated and signed on March 26th, 1845, Micheltorena departing for Mexico shortly thereafter.

An appendix, consisting of copies of forty-five justificatory documents and one printed decree, contains statements concerning financial matters and accounts prior to leaving Mexico, along with unsolicited testimonials from various government officials and missionaries in California, praising Micheltorena’s efficiency as governor. Also included are copies of correspondence with Sutter, Alvarado, Castro, and Mariano G. Vallejo, leading up to or concerned with the revolutions of 1844 and 1845, and a copy of the Treaty of Cahuenga.

This informative report is a most welcome addition to the Library since it complements the substantial holdings of manuscripts relating to or emanating from Micheltorena threaded throughout many of the original Bancroft collections, and it reveals hitherto unknown data concerning the California expedition—namely financial details, numbers and categories of people on the expedition, and the sea voyage itself. Here, too, we have Micheltorena’s own version of the California uprisings, biased though it may be, as well as his extensive account of the physical hardships of the march southward and of the battle scenes, narrated from a military point of view, all of which contrast with and complete existing descriptions given by many other individuals in their portrayal of both sides of the revolution.

M.B.

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