

# BANCROFTIANA

PUBLISHED OCCASIONALLY BY THE FRIENDS OF THE BANCROFT LIBRARY  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY 4, CALIFORNIA

Number 21 • OCTOBER 1959

## *The Flag of Hawaii*

THE ADMISSION OF HAWAII as the 50th state has occasioned numerous newspaper stories about the change in the Stars and Stripes, but little mention has been made of Hawaii's own historic flag. With the recent acquisition of the Bowring Collection by the Bancroft Library, it seems appropriate to recount briefly this colorful story.

As early as 1880, Thomas G. Thrum, the principal publisher in Hawaii, confessed he was unable to establish the flag's background with any real certainty. He did ascertain that in 1808 King Kamehameha I was flying the Union Jack from his royal residence. Eight years later J. J. Jarvis noted that the Hawaiian flag combined the "English Union, with seven alternating red, white, and blue stripes," and in 1825 Lord Byron, visiting the Islands, reported seeing this emblem with only red and white stripes.

This flag served until February, 1843, when Hawaii was forced, by threat of British arms, to fly the British colors as evidence of cession to England, and all earlier banners were ordered destroyed. Later the same year, when independence was restored, not a single Hawaiian flag could be found, but a British admiral ordered his own sailmaker to manufacture one. In two days it was ready, and on July 31, 1843, Hawaii's own emblem again flew from the royal palace.

Another account, which may be as apocryphal as it is charming, relates that the design was the outgrowth of Kamehameha's friendship for both the United States and Great Britain during the War of 1812. Legend has it that an American captain chided the King for flying the Union Jack while he professed loyalty to the United States. The monarch hauled down the offending flag and hoisted



Old Glory, only to be again taken to task, this time by the commander of a British man-of-war, for flying the colors of England's enemy. In a quandary, Kamehameha is said to have suggested flying both banners simultaneously, but was dissuaded; and, if the story can be credited, he finally resolved the dilemma by fashioning his own out of those of his good friends, England and the United States. Whatever the truth may be, the flag's design combined the Union Jack and eight red and white stripes, representing the number of Islands.

Though obscure in its origin, this historic pennant recalls Hawaii's remarkable past as Polynesian kingdom, British possession, independent republic, and Territory of the United States.

## *Frankincense and Myrrh*

ONCE AGAIN the generosity of the Friends has secured for the Bancroft Library an outstanding collection—the Hawaiian papers of Sir



John Bowring. The collection consists of more than 1,100 manuscript and printed documents covering a 29-year period, from 1842 to 1870, and provides source material of inestimable value for the study of Hawaiian history in the mid-19th century. Prior to their purchase by the Friends, these materials were in private hands and unavailable for the use of scholars.

Bowring's Papers chronicle in large part the attempts of Robert Crichton Wyllie, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Hawaii, to accomplish what he called his "Great Design"—to guarantee the independence and neutrality of the Hawaiian Kingdom by a treaty with Great Britain, France, and the United States. To effect this plan, Wyllie sought the help of his old friend, Sir John Bowring, renowned British diplomat, who in 1859 retired after having served for several years as the Governor of Hong Kong. The two men had corresponded for years, and when Bowring returned to England, Wyllie wrote him: "I question whether an idle life would not absolutely kill you—and I expect therefore soon to hear of you in some office worthy of your rank, talent and experience."

Wyllie himself, the following year, offered Bowring such a position—Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the Hawaiian Kingdom to the Courts of Europe and to the President of the United States. "My Sovereign believes that of all men in Europe, you are the best qualified to obtain the acquiescence of . . . all civilized and philanthropic governments in the equal, just and uniform policy which He desires to pursue in His Own independent Government."

For many years, Wyllie kept Bowring informed of Hawaiian affairs and sent him manuscript and printed documents relating to the internal affairs of the Islands. These papers from Wyllie, together with drafts of Bowring's replies, drafts of treaties in process of negotiation, and Bowring's correspondence with the Hawaiian consul general in London, constitute a large part of the collection.

As a graphic, detailed account of the intricacies involved in diplomatic negotiation, the collection is superb. Bowring's mission was a difficult one. Hawaii was beset with diplomatic problems, particularly troubles with the consular representatives of France, and there was the omnipresent fear of U. S.

annexation. By March, 1865, Bowring had negotiated treaties of amity and commerce with several European countries, but the grand vision of a uniform treaty among the great maritime powers failed to materialize. In October, 1865, Robert Wyllie died and shortly thereafter the Hawaiian Foreign Office instructed Bowring to discontinue his efforts for the general treaty.

Especially notable in the Bowring Collection are the printed broadsides, most of which are extremely rare and several may be unique. Included in these documents are royal proclamations of neutrality issued during the Crimean War and the American Civil War; a broadside containing Abraham Lincoln's letter of condolence on the death of King Kamehameha IV; proofs of an early draft of the Hawaiian Constitution of 1864; and many curious broadsides printed solely for Wyllie's use prior to their publication in the official newspaper.

### From "Bitter Bierce" to "Lady Chatterley"

THE POSTMARK on the card reads "Laredo, Tex., Nov. 10, 1913," and the message, written in bold strokes: "I'm still in the land o' the living, just over against the land of the dying. Don't write. A.B." Thus, just before slipping forever from sight across the Mexican border, Ambrose Bierce bade farewell to his Oakland friend, Amy Wells. This intriguing manuscript is but one of many items selected from the Bancroft Library's literary collections for exhibit in the General Library's showing of "Special Collections of English and American Authors."

Frank Norris' "Petition for Honorable Dismissal" from the University of California recalls the campus of 1894 upon which the fledgling novelist turned his back to concentrate on the writing of fiction. A page from the final manuscript of *McTeague* is exhibited, along with a roughly sketched map used in plotting the action of *The Octopus*. An amusing reproduction of Gelett Burgess' famed "Purple Cow" bears the inscription: "To Charlie Stoddard from his conceited friend Gelett Burgess."

Another item from Bancroft offers an in-

sight into Jack London's method of composition. In a 1905 letter he wrote—"How much time do I devote to writing a book?—anywhere from one month to six months. I wrote 'The Call of the Wild' in one month." A page from the Log of the "Snark" is displayed, as well as an early manuscript entitled "One More Unfortunate," which is interesting, too, for its having been typed on an antiquated machine.

In the Mark Twain exhibit the pièce de résistance is Clemens' own penciled comment on the back of a many-leaved Bret Harte letter: "I have read two pages of this ineffable idiotcy [*sic*]—it is all I can stand of it." An especially interesting item, in the light of current publishing battles, came from the Rare Books Department—a watercolor of the Villa Mirenda in Florence, supposedly painted by its tenant, D. H. Lawrence. It was in the garden of this home that Lady Chatterley began her long, as yet unended literary journey.

### Centennial of the Pony Express

PONY EXPRESS—HEROIC BEGINNING, TRAGIC END, is the title of an attractive, illustrated booklet published as a contribution to the centennial celebrations sponsored by the National Pony Express Centennial Association. Colonel Waddell F. Smith, President of the California Chapter of the Association, has kindly made 150 copies available to interested Friends, and you may obtain a complimentary copy by writing to the publisher: Pony Express History and Art Gallery, 75 Margarita Drive, San Rafael, California. In writing for a copy, please indicate that you are a Friend of the Bancroft Library.

### Stockton Day

APPROXIMATELY two hundred Friends and guests gathered under the majestic trees of "Helen's Oaks" on Sunday afternoon, October 4, to honor the memory of Captain Charles M. Weber, founder of Stockton. The Friends were the guests of Mrs. Helen Weber Kennedy, granddaughter of Captain Weber and a member of the Council of the Friends.

The day—it was shirt-sleeve weather—was perfect and the arrangements equally so. The rains of two weeks ago had brightened the foliage of trees and shrubs, and the newly painted house, almost hidden among the plantings, provided an ideal setting, with its wide veranda and surrounding lawn. Old wagons and surreys, the kind "with a fringe on top," formed a backdrop at the farther side of the grounds. In the midst of these surroundings, the Friends gathered in groups as they enjoyed the box lunch served by Mrs. Kennedy in the gardens.

Mrs. Adeline Gilchrist, chairman of the Friends, presided at the program, introducing our hostess, Mrs. Kennedy, her four daughters and their husbands, and twelve grandchildren, each of whom had helped with the arrangements.

The Director of the Bancroft Library, Dr. George P. Hammond, spoke about Weber's days in California history. He recalled how Weber, a German youth who had arrived in the United States in 1836, came overland with the Bidwell-Bartleson party in 1841. After a year with Sutter at Sacramento, and several more in business in San Jose, he settled, in 1847, on his land grant, El Campo de los Franceses, and started a colony only a few months before the Gold Rush. First called Tuleberg and later Stockton, the place became a city overnight, rivalling Sacramento as a supply base for the mines.

Continuing the theme of "Stockton Day," Mrs. Clotilde Grunsky Taylor, editor of the Friend's book *Stockton Boyhood*, whose grandfather—another German youth—came to Stockton in 1849 to seek a fortune in gold but who settled down to become the founder of one of its prominent families, spoke of his contributions to the city's life. "There can never be too many Grunskys in Stockton," the local newspaper said on one occasion. There were then 76 living descendants of the family.

Concluding the program, Professor William W. Wurster, Dean of the School of Architecture of the University of California (and a native of Stockton), told of the history of the Kennedy home—part of which had been shipped around the Horn—and of its present restoration. Some of the original home, which had been built near the point



of Channel Street between Fremont and Stockton Channels, was moved to the present site, a few miles north of town, on the banks of the Calaveras River.

The guests then visited various rooms of the house, examining the historic furnishings, pictures, maps, books, and other mementos.

To our gracious hostess Mrs. Kennedy and her family, a heartfelt Thank You for the many courtesies extended. "Stockton Day" was a charming event.

## Bowman's "Index"

FOR MANY YEARS, Dr. Jacob N. Bowman, recently retired historian of the State Archives, has generously given to the Bancroft Library the results of his researches. His latest gift, and one of his most important, is a copy of his unpublished "Index of the Spanish-Mexican Private Land Grant Records and Cases of California." Since all these cases were settled many years ago, these records are no longer of primary legal significance, but, as Dr. Bowman points out, they are of great historical value. Not only do they show in detail the legal procedures by which the grants were made and later transferred from one owner to another, but they also offer a remarkable amount of information on the social and economic life of Hispano- and early Anglo-California. We learn, for example, that James Berry, one-time colonel in the Mexican Army, lived on his 13,000-acre rancho in a house "about large enough to hold his bed and a half barrel of dried meal..."

Over the years these land grant records have been widely scattered. The original documents (official Spanish and Mexican government records pertaining to land matters) in large part survived the San Francisco fire of 1906 and are now in the National Archives in Washington, D. C. An 1871 set of certified copies and translations is to be found in the State Archives in Sacramento, while the records and documents relating to the U. S. court cases, as well as transcripts of testimony, are in the custody of the Clerk of the U. S. District Court in San Francisco.

Until Dr. Bowman completed his "Index," the most widely used guide to these many documents has been the Appendix to Judge

Ogden Hoffman's well-known *Reports of Land Cases* . . . , San Francisco, 1862. But this work was intended primarily as an index to the court cases themselves. With the presentation to the Bancroft Library of his massive work, Dr. Bowman has now made it possible for scholars to gain immediate knowledge of the existence and location of all the papers in public custody relating to each land case. The main index, containing pertinent data for each case, is accompanied by no less than ten cross-indices! This work, the product of a lifetime of research, is an outstanding contribution to California history.

## From Our Files

A GREAT LIBRARY is much more than a collection of books, manuscripts, maps, and pictures, a thought that is summed up in an appreciation written to Bancroft's Director by the head of one of California's prominent college libraries, and which for its eloquence is now quoted to the Friends, who have themselves discovered something more in Bancroft than its books and manuscripts.

"The Bancroft, it has seemed to me, has succeeded uniquely as a library. Scattered all over California, and even America, are men (and of these I am one) who have had their first interests in history kindled, have had their first awareness of the fascination of books and manuscripts aroused, in the Bancroft Library, so that all their lives they look back on the days in the Bancroft with affection and joy. If the ultimate object of a library is to inspire a love of books and learning, then, I say, your library has succeeded uniquely and beyond the dreams of your librarian colleagues."

## Wanted

THE FRIENDS' GENEROUS RESPONSE to previous "want ads" published in these columns encourages us to ask whether our members may wish to offer any of the following as gifts: A file of *Pacific Discovery*, volumes 1-12 (1948-1959), published by the California Academy of Sciences, and the 1957 and 1958 Keepsake Series of The Book Club of California, entitled *Resorts of California* and *Gold Rush Steamers*.