

# BANCROFTIANA

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## *The Honeyman Collection*

"THERE IS NO collection in existence which presents such a priceless pageant of early California . . . as that which Mr. Robert B. Honeyman, Jr., has assembled at his ranch near Mission San Juan Capistrano." So wrote Paul Mills of the Oakland Art Museum when a portion of the Honeyman treasures were shown there some years ago. Within the next year, pending successful completion of fund-raising to purchase the entire collection from Mr. Honeyman, this unique archive of not only Californian but also Western North American pictorial materials will become a significant part of the Bancroft Library.

In the meantime, beginning on the 6th of December and running through the month, a special exhibition of representative oils, watercolors, drawings, lithographs and maps will be held at the Lowie Museum of Anthropology on the Berkeley campus. Friends of the Bancroft Library as well as the interested public will be welcome to view this exhibition.

For more than a decade, Mr. Honeyman and his agents have been finding and buying pictorial Western Americana with knowledge, imagination and sleuthing skill. Almost 2,000 items comprise the collection, including 61 oils, 206 watercolors, 71 early photographs, 329 drawings, 835 lithographs, 176 engravings, 13 etchings, the largest and best collec-



*California Stage Company, incorporated December, 1853; Britton & Co. lithograph*

tion of letter sheets in private hands, and a miscellany of manuscripts, maps, scrapbooks, sheet music, clipper ship cards, advertisements and stock certificates.

It is remarkable that the Honeyman collection contains original watercolors and drawings from nearly every voyage of exploration to California for which pictorial material is known to exist. Four drawings from the Malaspina Expedition of 1791 are among the earliest surviving pictures of *any* scene in California. The British exploration of the Pacific by Captain George Vancouver during his circumnavigation of 1791-1795 is represented by 65 watercolors, almost all hitherto unpublished, more than half of which were executed by the expedition's artist, John Sykes. Among the 37 drawings of the naturalist, Georg Heinrich von Langsdorff, who accompanied the famed Rezanov Expedition in 1806, is one that is believed to be the earliest view of the San Francisco Presidio, along with the earliest known record of painted Indians dancing in the area of Mission San Jose. Louis Choris, represented by three views, created some of his finest watercolors and sketches while a member of the Kotzebue Expedition in 1815-1818. One would have to turn either to the British Admiralty Archives in London or to the Museo Naval in Madrid to find the scope of the Honeyman holdings in the graphic record of early Pacific Coast exploration.

All phases of the American West are touched upon, from the familiar Currier and Ives lithographs of crossing-the-plains incidents to the first drawing of Yosemite Valley by Thomas Ayres, entitled *The Yo-Hamite*. Among the oils are Browere's *Mokelumne Hill*, Edouart's *Blessing of the Enrequia Mine, New Almaden*, William Keith's *Sentinel Rock, Yosemite Valley*, and many others. The best work of such California lithographers as Britton & Rey, the Nahl Brothers, George Baker, and Kuchel & Dresel, along with the work of firms in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, New Orleans, London, Paris and Berlin—even prints of Los Angeles and San Gabriel Mission published in Budapest in 1857—attest the quality of Honeyman's collecting activities.

Acquisition of this major primary resource

by the Bancroft Library would complement the Library's near-unique holdings of manuscripts and printed materials dealing with the history of California and the West. In enabling the Bancroft to gain such a vast body of pictorial material at one time, the University of California would again benefit, as it did in 1905, the year of Hubert Howe Bancroft's original sale-and-gift of his Library.

Recognizing the importance of the Honeyman acquisition, the Regents, at their September meeting, voted to provide \$263,000 from hard-pressed endowment funds toward the purchase price of \$550,000, the rest to be provided by the Friends. The latter have named a special acquisitions committee headed by O. Cort Majors and Allan Sproul as co-chairmen, and Mrs. Richard Y. Dakin as vice-chairman to raise the money necessary to complete the purchase.

## John Francis Neylan

IT WAS JOHN F. NEYLAN'S contention that some people loved him and some hated him but no one within the range of his voice could remain indifferent to him. A rugged individualist and a fighting Irishman, he was a towering figure in California's legal, political, journalistic and educational life for half a century. His long career, which ended with his death in 1960, is well chronicled in his correspondence and papers, which his widow, Mrs. Gertrude Neylan, recently presented to the Bancroft Library.

Born in New York City in 1885, and educated at Seton Hall College in New Jersey, Neylan came West in 1903. His destination was California, but he stopped off in Arizona, working at various times as a teamster, bank teller and newspaper reporter. The urge to continue his career in journalism brought him to San Francisco and a job with the *Bulletin*. In 1910, he covered Hiram W. Johnson's gubernatorial campaign, and so impressed the governor-elect that Johnson appointed him chairman of the newly created State Board of Control. Launching a tremendous drive to clean up the state's finances, Neylan's Board relentlessly exposed graft in state offices, dis-



John Francis Neylan

missed officials in large numbers, installed an accounting system, drew up the state's first budget, and converted the \$2,000,000 deficit, Johnson's inheritance, into an \$8,000,000 surplus. Yet, despite its stringent economy, the new administration carried out a strong and progressive program of social legislation, and Neylan was an important figure in this movement.

In his spare time in Sacramento, he studied law and passed the bar examination in 1916. After Governor Johnson went to Washington as United States Senator, Neylan moved to San Francisco to practice law, and with his ability, his gift of oratory and his aggressiveness, shortly became one of the most important lawyers in the state. Although he generally represented business interests, one of his most famous cases was the defense, on appeal, of Charlotte Anita Whitney, who, because of her outspoken radical opinions, was convicted under the state's criminal syndicalism act. While he had no sympathy with her political views, he felt that the case was "the

most outrageous injustice ever perpetrated in an American courtroom," and he successfully undertook her defense, without compensation.

His talents attracted the attention of William Randolph Hearst, and the year 1919 marked the beginning of what Neylan termed their "sometimes tempestuous, but always interesting relationship." He negotiated Hearst's purchase of the San Francisco *Call* and became its publisher, with crusading Fremont Older as editor. By 1925, Neylan was Hearst's trusted adviser and became general counsel for all his enterprises; he was widely recognized as the publisher's only "no" man. Although the formal lawyer-client relationship ended in 1937, the two remained good friends for the rest of their lives.

Returning to the less grueling portion of his law practice, Neylan devoted an increasing amount of time to his project of encouraging the study of American history in colleges and universities. He had been appointed a Regent of the University of California in 1928, and for many years was an influential member of the Board's Finance Committee. He anonymously donated large sums of money for fellowships and educational projects, and was instrumental in developing the University's atomic research program. A controversial figure, he was also an extraordinary man, and one whom history will not ignore.

## Hammond to Speak in Southern California

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY of Southern California through its president, Anna Marie Hager, has invited Dr. George P. Hammond, Bancroft's director, to speak to its membership on Wednesday evening, January 8, 1964. The meeting will be held in the Los Angeles County Museum.

## Western History

IN MID-OCTOBER, with some 500 others deeply interested in the American West and its history, I attended the Salt Lake City convention of the new Western History Association.

This association has sprung up almost overnight, as it seems. A group of Western enthusiasts got together at Santa Fe in October, 1961, reassembled at Denver a year later, and formally organized under the presidency of Dr. Ray Billington, noted Western historian. With a charter membership of over 1,300, the new association will soon be publishing a quarterly journal, *The American West*, edited by Dr. A. R. Mortensen, director of the University of Utah Press.

While listening to a variety of papers—scholarly, humorous, sometimes merely mediocre (the garden variety)—I reflected on the changing Western scene, a West so radically different even in my own lifetime. The West is strong, virile, and aggressive, growing like the proverbial weed. We see this expansive spirit physically expressed in burgeoning cities, sprawling suburbs, and proliferating chains of concrete which have gone from two lanes to three, four, six, eight . . . there must be limits, but when will we reach them? We see similar aggressive growth in all our schools, from kindergarten to the graduate schools of our most eminent universities, from historical societies to associations of "Westerners." And there are new scholarly journals, often with a popular bent, seeking to come to grips with the West and its history—consider such newcomers to the cultural scene as *Arizona and the West* and *Journal of the West*, to say nothing of new quarterly publications by State historical societies in Idaho and Nevada.

The spontaneous enthusiasm which crackled in the air at Salt Lake City had qualities of youth, but the meeting of the Western History Association, which will be guided during the coming year by Professor Oscar Winther of Indiana University, seemed also to express a coming of age. Academically, there may have been a period of reaction and decline in this field after the deaths of such giants as Frederick Jackson Turner and Herbert Eugene Bolton, but now again, it may be, we will see men determinedly testing the validity of frontier history and its interpretation, reappraising their own positions and their ideas of the past, understanding how desperately necessary it is that we should un-

derstand the Western past to equip ourselves to cope with the Western future. Clearly, much of our national life must be bound up with the further evolution of the West. We need more outlets, more market places and testing laboratories for ideas. All of us wish this new association well.

G. P. H.

## Perc S. Brown

AS THIS ISSUE OF *Bancroftiana* goes to press, we learn sadly of the death of Perc S. Brown, vice-chairman of the Council of the Friends. A well-known figure in Pacific Coast industry, he was an executive of the Nopco Chemical Company for more than 30 years. He was also an enthusiastic collector of Americana, and gave to the Bancroft Library several outstanding pieces from his library. His final illness prevented him from participating in the Friends' latest and most significant activity, the acquisition of the Honeyman Collection; however, he told the Director some months ago that it would be a catastrophe if the University failed to obtain this great collection, as no similar opportunity would ever come again. To his widow, Mrs. Tamara Brown, his sons Bruce and Gordon, and other relatives, we express our sorrow, and our sense of privilege at having shared with them his personal warmth and zest for life.

## Malcom W. Moss

THE MOMENT would come during the Annual Meeting of the Friends when Malcom W. Moss would rise—tall, spare, quiet-voiced, efficient—and report as Treasurer upon our financial condition. This moment, annually repeated for a number of years, will come no more, for on June 3 Malcom died in San Francisco of a heart attack. Malcom was born in Kentucky in 1899, a flyer in World War I and an Air Force colonel in World War II. He had interests in large ranch and farm properties in Texas and Iowa. With his wife Fredonia he had lived for many years in Berkeley. To her and their daughter Phoebe we convey our sympathy and the feeling of loss that so many of the Friends share.