

BANCROFTIANA

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"Dearest Viola"— *Letters of George Moore*

In December of 1952, Roland E. Duncan, a member of the Bancroft staff who was in London to oversee the microfilming of documents in the Public Record Office, crossed the Channel to Paris to conduct an interview with Alice B. Toklas, an interview which would become the first in the Library's Oral History program. During this same week Duncan journeyed on to the village of Lardy in Seine-et-Oise, seeking the villa of the late Viola Rodgers, a California-born journalist who had died in 1944, where he hoped to find her correspondence from Frank Norris and a file of letters written to her by the Anglo-Irish novelist, George Moore. The letters from Norris had disappeared, presumably during the war, but those from Moore had indeed survived the German occupation of the villa; they were not then available to The Bancroft Library. Now, twenty-four years later, it is good to announce that all one hundred and thirty-two letters have come to the Library as the gift of an anonymous donor.

George Moore, perhaps best known for his novels *Esther Waters* and *Evelyn Inness* and for his memoirs including *A Storyteller's Holiday* and *Memoirs of My Dead Life*, studied painting in Paris from 1872 to 1882. While in the French capital he read deeply in current literature and when he returned to England and to a career of fiction he began to utilize the realistic and naturalistic techniques of Flaubert, Zola, and others. With William Butler Yeats and Lady Gregory he collaborated in the planning of the Irish National Theatre, a work which Yeats



Viola Rodgers in France during World War I

said "could not have been done at all without Moore's knowledge of the stage."

Moore first met Viola Rodgers in 1907

when she came from London to Dublin for an interview. In an unpublished memoir, which is also in The Bancroft Library, Miss Rodgers describes this meeting:

I had a telegram from the New York office [of the Hearst newspapers] asking me to arrange for George Moore to write an article on art for the *Cosmopolitan Magazine*. I took the train and boat over to Dublin where he was living in his lovely house in Ely Place, not far from the Shelburne Hotel. . . Mr. Moore was there with his hair and moustache a pinkish shade (not red in any sense of what one calls a "brick top.") The most noticeable thing about him was his beautifully formed white hands, with the long tapering fingers. He was tall and straight and his eyes the bluest of blue eyes—kind, witty, mischievous—and his face pink and white, with his drooping moustache covering a full mouth, sensuous and red.

They fast became friends and remained so until Moore's death early in 1933. The record of their friendship, at least from Moore's point of view, is told in these letters, written over a quarter of a century, primarily from his London home in Ebury Street.

Viola Rodgers was born in Watonsville in 1874, educated at the Irving Institute in San Francisco, and became a reporter on the San Francisco *Examiner*. In 1903 she traveled to China to visit a brother who was in business there, and upon her return she settled in New York where she joined the staff of the New York *American* after her initial assignment for the paper proved a scoop. Following this success she achieved what she later called "the greatest beat of my journalistic career, the first exclusive interview and story of her life with Evelyn Thaw," better known as Evelyn Nesbit, great friend of Stanford White who was murdered by her husband, Harry K. Thaw. After six months in New York her editor sent Miss Rodgers to France, by way of London, to become the Paris correspondent for the *American*.

Moore's letters to "Dearest Viola" are at once affectionate and chatty; he seeks to arrange friendly meetings, either in London or in Paris, or, later, at Fontainebleau, where he often visited the French novelist, Edouard

Dujardin. He mentions other friends in passing, notably Nancy Cunard, whose own memoir of Moore, published in 1956, recounts that all of his letters to her disappeared when her house in Normandy was occupied by German soldiers during the second World War. He announces that Cathleen Nesbitt, who is to play the lead in his play *The Coming of Gabrielle*, is coming to luncheon and says: "I wish it were you."

Moore airs his literary tastes:

Hawthorne the great master of English prose could not mould a tale; and it is a great pity he was no tale teller for he wrote beautifully, far better than any English writer, Pater excepted.

He also has definite feelings about how Shakespeare ought to be played:

I have seen Barrymore in Hamlet and was surprised to learn that a man can study Hamlet month after month without discovering that use of the monologue is to communicate the prince's mood to the audience. . . Barrymore's Hamlet is too hateful to be mentioned.

In 1923 Moore is enthusiastic about his new play, *The Apostle*, but writes to Miss Rodgers that it "cannot be acted in England because the law forbids plays in which Jesus and Paul are the chief or among the minor characters." He is, however, hopeful that "there will be no objection to the play being performed in America—a country, inhabited, I believe, mostly by Unitarians."

The letters of the last years chronicle Moore's illnesses; the final communique, dated December 30th, 1932, foretells his approaching death:

I think of you constantly, for you have been a good friend to me. The past was pleasant but I am afraid there is no returning to it. It is very probable that I shall never see you again.

In her memoir, Viola Rodgers notes this letter and concludes her comments on George Moore:

He left this world the following month and his ashes were taken back to his native Ireland where they belonged for his soul never wandered from his native land. No one was more Irish than George Moore. His very resentment of the fact proved it.

30th Annual Meeting

William Saroyan, the internationally famous Fresno-born dramatist and novelist for whose play, *The Time of Your Life*, he was awarded, and declined, the Pulitzer Prize in 1940, will be the principal speaker at the thirtieth Annual Meeting of The Friends of The Bancroft Library on Sunday afternoon, May 8th. A special exhibition of materials drawn from the Library's extensive theater collections will be installed in the Gallery, and the annual Keepsake, to be edited by Professor Travis Bogard, Department of Dramatic Art, will also have a theatrical theme. An announcement and invitation will be sent to members in April.

Central American Rarities

With funds contributed by The Friends of The Bancroft Library, a remarkable collection of Central American books and pamphlets, many of them so rare as not to be listed in the standard bibliographical guides, has recently been purchased. This area of the western world was part of Hubert Howe Bancroft's "literary territory," for volumes six through eight of his histories deal with the peoples and development of Central America, and these sixty-four new items nicely enhance the Library's collection in this field.

Pelaez Francisco Garcia's *Vindicacion del Sistema Federal de Centro-America, escrita en Guatemala* . . . was published in San Salvador in 1825. This essay calls for a Central American Confederation, which, in fact, came briefly into being following the Mexican Revolution. An equally rare title, similarly not listed in the British Museum, is William Perks' *Relacion de la Vida Publica del Coronel Guillermo Perks*, published in Guatemala in 1826. Perks, an English soldier of fortune, had come to Guatemala from the United States and Mexico in 1825, and this autobiographical apology sets forth his political and military qualifications for public life in the newly-established Federal Republic. Another work by Perks, *Manifiesto*, printed in Guatemala two years later, was also received in this collection.

Perhaps the earliest book written entirely on Costa Rica is John Hale's *Six Months Residence and Travels in Central America through the Free States of Nicaragua, and particularly Costa Rica: Giving an Interesting Account of that Beautiful Country . . . with the Peculiar Advantages offered by the Government to Settlers, showing the most Eligible Place for Cutting the Projected Canal, to Unite the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans* . . . published in New York in 1826. Hale is enthusiastic about the possibilities for potential immigrants, and his account is rich in detail concerning the Indians, climate, soil, mines and minerals, incipient industry, and the subsidies provided by the government to settlers.

Grammar of the Miskito Language with exercises and Vocabulary was compiled by H. Berckenhagen, a Moravian missionary, and printed in Saxony, in the English language, in 1894. The Mosquito Coast, whose capital was Bluefields (or, as in Bancroft, Blewfields), occupied a portion of the eastern coast of Nicaragua and Honduras; a German colony, Carlsruhe, was established there in 1844, and the author may have been a descendant of these earlier settlers. In a prefatory note he states: "Though this little grammar is still imperfect, it is hoped however to be a guide into the language for those, who have to acquire it."

The final title to be noted here is *Regulations For The Better Government of His Majesty's Subjects in the Bay of Honduras, Presented to them by the Honourable Sir William Burnaby, Knight* . . . , printed in London in 1809. By terms of the Treaty of Paris in 1763, the British demolished their fortifications around the Bay of Honduras but were permitted to continue cutting wood in this area. Sir William Burnaby was sent to Belize to establish the limits within which the wood-cutting was to be confined and to draw up a code of laws for the regulation of the colony. The Burnaby Code, as it came to be known, was for many years the only written body of law by which Belize was governed.

Because of political instability, natural disasters, and problems of climate, Central American publications of the early nineteenth century are extremely scarce, and

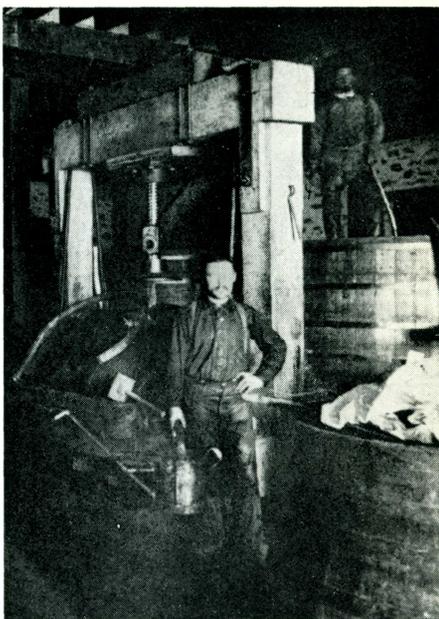
to have come across such a large group at one time has been a fortunate happening for the Library.

California's Wine Industry

A series of interviews, begun in 1969 by the Library's Regional Oral History Office, with twenty-five Californians prominently connected with the manufacture of wine has provided documentation for a sparsely-recorded period in one of the state's major businesses. Many years before the onset of national Prohibition following the first World War, the wine industry appears to have become disheartened; a decline of morale began in the early 1890's when, for a variety of reasons, the prideful optimism that had earlier kept winegrowers in the limelight, in the public press and in state documents, fell away. Thus, there have come down better records of the state's wineries in the decade of the 'eighties than for any decade thereafter until the 1940's.

Two of the interviewees, Ernest A. Wentz and Edmund A. Rossi, contributed recollections dating back to the 'nineties and extending forward through Prohibition to the boom years of the 1960's. Accounts which begin early in the present century include those of Louis M. Martini, Horace O. Lanza, and Antonio Perelli-Minetti, all of whom were active in the wine industry during the 1920's when manufacturing continued under the supervision of the Prohibition Department. An indirect benefit of the interview series was the discovery of records of this latter department, long thought destroyed, which have been donated to the University's Davis campus where several of the interviewees — Maynard Amerine, William V. Cruess, Harold P. Olmo, Albert J. Winkler — have conducted the bulk of the state's research in both viticulture and oenology.

Between the inception of this series and the present time the wine industry, volatile throughout its history, has moved from prosperity to retrenchment. It is interesting to note that some of the men interviewed, drawing upon their experience of the past, predicted just such problems as have now occurred. Perhaps these difficulties might have been avoided, but certain trends, not-



Cellar at Mont La Salle, c1910.

ably the overplanting of popular grape varieties, were irreversible. Together with the technical advances which have been made by the University's scientists, these lessons of history will serve the wine industry in the future.

The interviews, conducted by Ruth Teiser and funded by the Wine Advisory Board, have now been transcribed into nineteen volumes and are available for research in the Library's Heller Reading Room.

The American Woman's Home

A Treatise on Domestic Economy, issued by Harper & Brothers in 1842, was the first household book to recognize the fact that the American woman had to learn the do-it-yourself approach to frontier society. "At the present time," wrote the author, Catherine Beecher, "America is the only country where there is a class of women who may be described as ladies who do their own housework." Her book was reprinted almost every year for more than two decades, and republished in 1869 as *The American Woman's Home*, with contributions by her sister, Har-

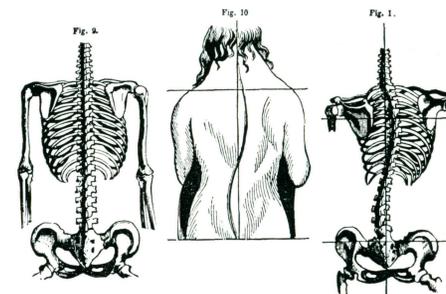
riet Beecher Stowe. Both titles are represented in the collection of early household and etiquette books formed by Professor Emeritus George R. Stewart and donated by him to The Bancroft Library.

Until the middle of the nineteenth century, American women relied heavily on the advice of British publications concerning domestic duties and the skills of home management. English cookbooks, volumes on etiquette, and moral exhortations on the education of children were reprinted in the United States along with the popular novels of Richardson and Scott. These directed aspiring ladies and gentlemen of the American Republic toward the aristocratic life style of the British gentry. From the outset, however, it was difficult for the American housewife to live up to the advice from England because she was unable to depend upon an established servant class. If she did have servants, she had to train them, and if she herself did the work she had to design her house and her activities to save labor and energy.

Miss Beecher's book was the first to deal realistically with the American woman's many problems, ranging from lack of servants to rapid economic change in the family, from poor health to poor education. The latter, said the author, a founder of the American Woman's Education Association, was the source of all other troubles. If women were as carefully trained for their profession as homemakers as men were trained as lawyers and doctors (all male domains in 1842), family labor would no longer be "poorly done, poorly paid, and regarded as menial and disgraceful." In opposition to her contemporaries in the suffrage movement, Catherine Beecher believed that woman's stronghold was in the home where she might be "chief minister of the family estate—the center of the Nation." Although her opinion is still shared by many Americans today, it was then a more progressive thought in the Victorian era when a woman's home confined her intellect as her crinoline confined her movement.

For the student of American literature, *The American Woman's Home* exposes the crude realities behind the Victorian domestic scene; it is Catherine's and Harriet's refuta-

tion of the prevalent notion that women are fragile playthings or ignorant drudges and that weakness is an expression of femininity. Their cult of domesticity went beyond the recipes for cooking and cleaning and the sententious generalities about moral obligations which had filled earlier guides. Added here were floor plans for the middle-class home and instructions for the building of storage closets. At a time when stimulus of the brain was considered harmful to the female nervous system, Catherine assembled as much scientific information as possible to introduce women to the basic medical and physiological facts about their bodies. Her alarm over the tortures suffered from displacement of the uterus, from misformed spines, from want of air and exercise, compelled her to write with unusual frankness about topics which other writers considered unmentionable.



Illustrating the misformed spine.

Her warnings against the corset were not heeded until well into the next century, and her practical designs for raised kitchen sinks and sanitary plumbing were fifty years in advance of the home economics and efficiency movement. As a solution for sanitary waste disposal she advocated the use of the earth closet which would restore human excrement to the soil instead of passing it into the sewers. Not many Victorian ladies would have cared, or dared, to write that "30,000,000 bushels of corn contain, among other minerals, nearly 7,000 tons of phosphoric acid, and this amount is annually lost in the wasted night-soil of New York City."

As members of the "Saints, Sinners and Beechers" clan, Catherine and Harriet were

irrepressible reformers. At a time when teaching was a male profession, Catherine established her female academy at Hartford, where Harriet was both pupil and teacher. Women are better teachers because of their natural affinity for children, Catherine said in her fund-raising campaigns. Besides, women teachers need smaller salaries because their careers serve only as stepping-stones toward marriage. Her arguments won male support, and through her initiative some five hundred New England women teachers went to the frontier settlements where they more than lived up to their mentor's expectations by marrying before their programs got off the ground.

In scope and content *The American Woman's Home* is a striking document of Victorian concern for a better quality of life under feminine leadership. While clinging to the values of the past, the authors try to point the way to a more liberated future. At the threshold of change from the prevailing perceptions of women and children as social entities with a specific place and a rigid function within the family, this remarkable volume reflects an awakening consciousness of personal happiness and a new understanding of individual growth.

The Bancroft Fellows

The competition among graduate students from all the University's campuses for the Bancroft Fellowships for 1976-1977 has resulted in awards to José Cuello and Michael Dennis Griffith, both of the Berkeley campus, and to Anita Abascal of UCLA. Each of these doctoral candidates is engaged in research on subjects whose source materials are in The Bancroft Library.

Ms. Abascal, a graduate of the University of Southern California, where she received both Bachelor's and Master's degrees, is writing a thesis on colonial society in California, covering all levels from Indian day laborer to Catalan governor, and "asking some new questions of old sources." Among these old sources, long among the treasures of The Bancroft Library, are the *Provincial State Papers*.

A graduate of the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle from which he received

his Bachelor's degree in 1969, Mr. Cuello earned his Master's at Berkeley the following year. The subject of his dissertation is a study of the agricultural-commercial village of Saltillo, Coahuila during the period 1760 to 1821. In addition to extensive research accomplished in Mexico, Mr. Cuello will be utilizing the Library's microfilm copies of Mexican municipal archives.

Mr. Griffith holds his A.B. from the University of Michigan and has been a student at Berkeley since 1970 in the Department of History. His dissertation is entitled "Urban Order in the Far West: Oakland, 1850-1914" and he hopes to make use of the Bancroft's preeminent collection of newspapers, city directories, county and local histories, and photographs dealing with the Oakland area.

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

Hesse Centennial

The Library's current exhibition, which was opened with a reception in the Gallery on Wednesday evening, January 19th, celebrates the centenary of the birth of Hermann Hesse, German novelist and poet who was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1946. With the assistance of Professor Joseph Mileck, a renowned Hesse scholar and member of the Department of German, the Bancroft has brought together a rich sampling from the voluminous Horst Kliemann-Hermann Hesse Collection which came to the University in 1959 and which has been substantially augmented since that time.

Hesse was born on July 2nd, 1877 at Calw in Wurttemberg, and spent much of his boyhood in Basel; he later worked there in the book trade before devoting full time to writing. His first volume of poems, *Romantische Lieder*, appeared in 1899, and during the ensuing decades he published a good many novels, stories, and works of non-fiction, including *Siddhartha* (1922), a poetic expression of Indian philosophy. *Der Steppenwolf* was issued in 1927 and met with considerable public acclaim; in English translation it became a popular book in the 1960's.



Hermann Hesse, c1935.

Hesse settled permanently in 1919 in Switzerland at Montagnola, where he died in 1962.

Horst Kliemann was also a native of Calw and as a young man became interested in the work of the German writer. Beginning in 1913 and continuing for a period of forty years he brought together a vast body of Hesse's output. During the second World War the collection was buried in his garden at Munich and thus escaped damage. In 1947 Kliemann co-authored the major Hesse bibliography, based upon his own library.

Bancroft's holdings now include a large number of first editions, manuscripts, letters, water colors, photographs, and a sizable file of newspaper clippings. The exhibition will remain on view through March 12th.

Institutional Members

Institutional Members of The Friends of The Bancroft Library provide extraordinary support in augmenting our funds to acquire and preserve books, manuscripts, and pictures. We are pleased to include the roll of this special category in this issue of *Ban-*

croftiana as an expression of our appreciation.

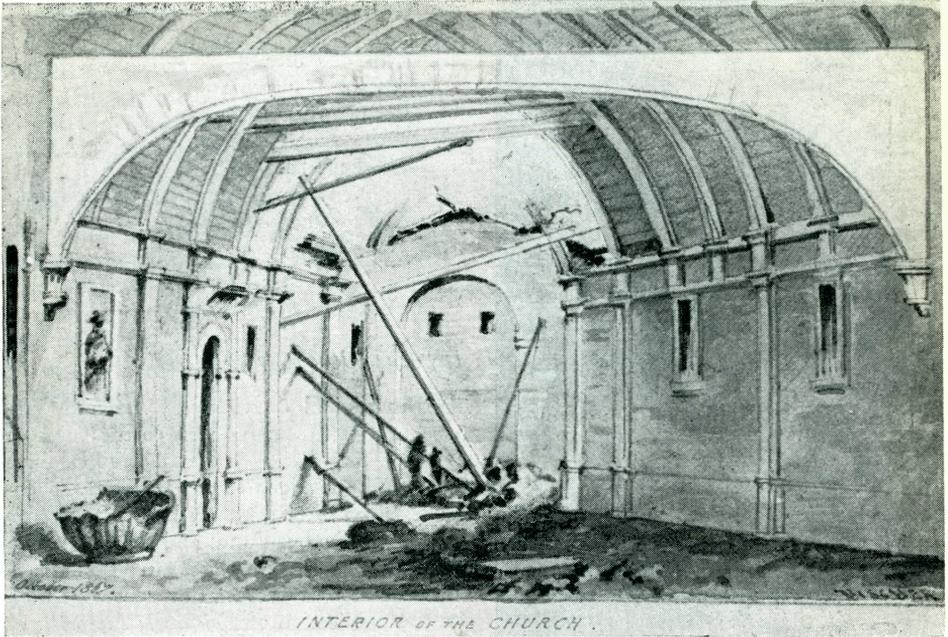
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"New" Drawings by Edward Vischer

Two original drawings by Edward Vischer, documenting his visit to the ruins of Mission San Carlos in October 1867, have recently been added to the Pictorial Collections. They were purchased with Bancroft's Edith M. Coulter Fund, and reflect the late Miss Coulter's life-long concern with illustrations of the Far West, an interest which led to the publication of *California Pictorial: A History in Contemporary Pictures, 1786-1859*, and similar volumes.

Executed in graphite pencil on yellow tracing paper with delicate washes of gray and blue, the two drawings give a lively impression both of the interior (here shown) and exterior appearance of the Mission at Carmel after thirty years of ruin and neglect. These pictures complement three others by Vischer already owned by the Bancroft — two of the Mission ruins, sketched in 1861, and a rear view executed in October 1867, doubtless at the same time our "new" pictures were finished.

Vischer, born in Bavaria on April 6th, 1809, emigrated to Mexico at the age of nineteen and continued to live in Acapulco for fourteen years, being employed by the trading company of Heinrich Virmond. In 1842 he made his first visit to Alta California, stopping at Monterey, Yerba Buena, Santa Barbara, and Los Angeles, and in 1849 he returned to settle permanently. He became a merchant in San Francisco, sketched in his spare time, and gradually developed a reputation as a painter and local historian. He was also an excellent photographer. From rapid notes and photographs made on the spot he would create finished pictures which



were then lithographed, the lithographs being later photographed for wider distribution.

Following a trip in 1861 to Calaveras Big Trees, Vischer lithographed and published *The Mammoth Tree Grove* (1862). At the same time he published *Sketches of the Washoe Mining Region*, for which he also supplied the text. These were followed by *Pictorial of California* (1870) and *Missions of Upper California* (1872), both of which are illustrated with photographic prints of Vischer's original drawings.

Edward Vischer died in 1879, leaving to his son a collection of over fifty original drawings, handsomely boxed and inscribed "The Mission Era." These drawings, later deposited in The Bancroft Library, document all twenty-one missions in Vischer's

personal style, and we are pleased now to be able to augment the collection with two more examples of his art.

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Contributors to this issue: Lawrence Dinnean, Annetreg Ogden, Ruth Teiser.