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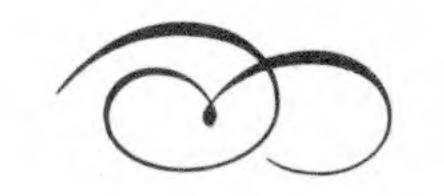
Publication Date 2000-10-01

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THE BANCROFT LIBRARY 1900 - 2000

By Charles B. Faulhaber

The James. D. Hart Director The Bancroft Library



REPRINTED FROM

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

NUMBER 4 • FALL 2000

THE UNIVERSITY AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY: THEN AND NOW

Chronicle of the University of California


Center for Studies in Higher Education University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720-4650

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ISNN 1097-6604

Subscriptions to the Chronicle are thirty-six dollars for two issues. Single copies and back issues if available are twenty dollars apiece (including California state sales tax). Payment should be by check made to "UC Regents" and sent to the address above.

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Hubert Howe Bancroft, about 1900.

The Bancroft Library (POR 12).

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THE BANCROFT LIBRARY, 1900-2000

Charles B. Faulhaber

IN 1900 HUBERT HOWE BANCROFT WAS 68 YEARS OLD.¹ One of San Francisco's most successful businessmen, he could look back on almost fifty years of commercial and liter-

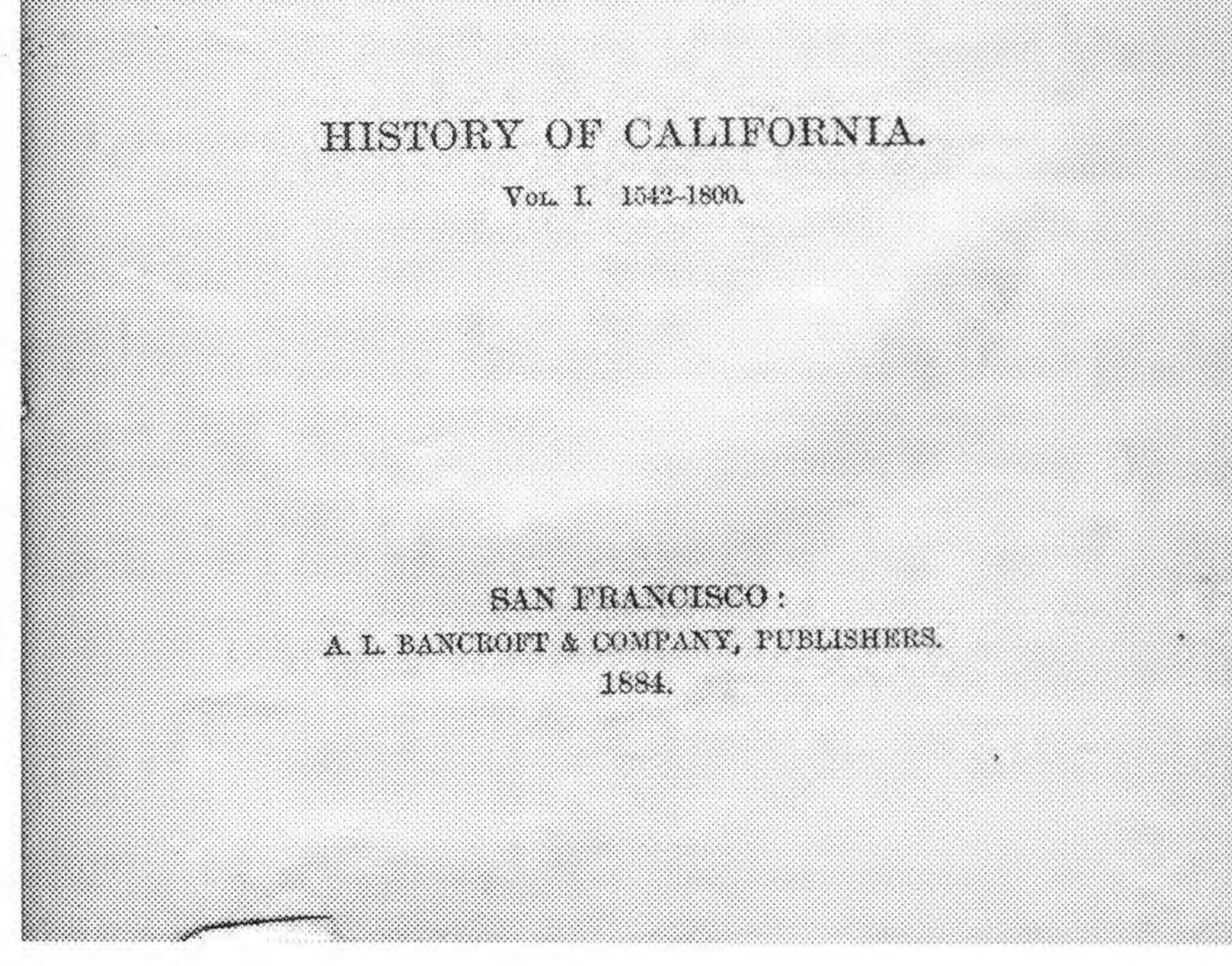
ary activity in California, beginning with his arrival in 1852 as a twenty-year-old salesman of a shipment of books consigned by his brother-in-law. By 1856 Bancroft had established his own bookstore in San Francisco; by 1860 he had already begun to form the collection of Californiana and western Americana that would bring him lasting fame. By 1870, with a not insignificant collection of 15,000 volumes, he had begun to contemplate the possibility of putting the library to some productive use: "On my shelves were tons of unwinnowed material for histories unwritten and sciences undeveloped. In the present shape it was of little use to me or to the world. Facts were too scattered; indeed, mingled and hidden as they were in huge masses of *débris*, the more one had of them the worse one was off."² Finally, in 1871, he conceived the idea of writing a history of California and the West and over the course of the next year devised a system of indexing his library "as one would index a single book" in order to make its contents available to the historian.³ And the rest, so to speak, is history to be more exact, Bancroft's *Works*, thirty-nine volumes of history covering Central America, Mexico, all of the states of the western United States, British Columbia, and Alaska, pub-

lished between 1883 and 1890.⁴

But even before all thirty-nine volumes were published, as early as 1886-1887, Bancroft began to worry about the ultimate fate of the library. He was moved to do so by the disas-

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trous fire of April 30, 1886, that destroyed his Market Street building and with it some 12,000 volumes of his History (an uninsured loss of \$500,000). Since such a loss made it impossible for him to contemplate the gift of the library to some institution, he began to explore the possibility of its sale, putting its value at \$250,000 initially—an average valuation of \$5 a volume for its approximately 50,000 volumes.⁵ Over the next twelve years Bancroft vigorously pursued such a sale; and bills were introduced in the California state senate in 1887 and 1889 and in the House of Representatives in 1892, proposing its purchase by the state of California and the U.S. government respectively.⁶ In 1896 he offered it to the New York Public Library, which thought the asking price, then \$300,000, too high.⁷ No one was interested. Bancroft kept trying. In the summer of 1898 he turned his efforts toward the University of California and found an ally in University Librarian Joseph C. Rowell. The latter prepared an "unofficial" valuation of the library in the form of a printed letter to

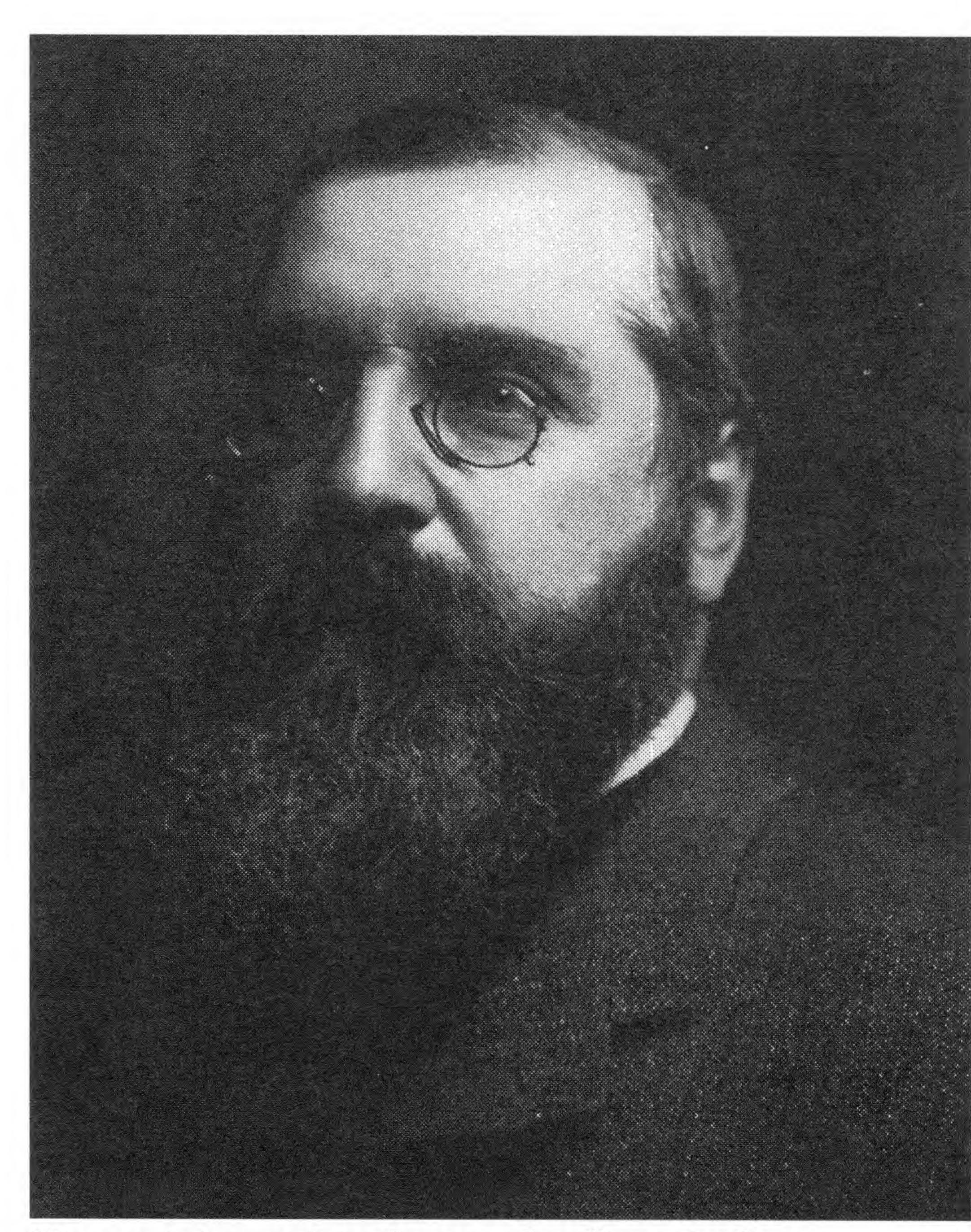


Bancroft's son-in-law, Charles O. Richards, who was evidently serving as an intermediary. Rowell's figure of \$130,000, reduced to \$116,100 because of duplicates of material already owned by the university, was much lower than Bancroft's. Rowell was fully aware of the danger he courted in proposing such a low valuation:

I submit this unofficial report to you as the result of an unprejudiced attempt to arrive at the value of the Bancroft Library, in a commercial sense; and yet, if by an untoward fate the collection should be taken away from California and dissipated to the four ends of the earth, I am not sure that a century or so later some person will not be damning that fool of a librarian who valued the manuscripts at \$81,000 instead of \$150,000. Quien sabe!⁸

Nevertheless, even that price was too rich for the university's blood, despite a vigorous letter-writing campaign orchestrated by Rowell in support of the purchase. Between December 1 and 6, 1898, he elicited enthusiastic letters of support from eleven civic leaders or professorial colleagues, including geologist Joseph LeConte, geographer George Davidson, San Francisco mayor James D. Phelan, historian and political scientist Bernard Moses, and professor of English Charles Mills Gayley, who wrote,

I have no hesitation in saying that the acquisition of the Bancroft Library would be one of the greatest benefits, historical and literary that could accrue to the University. I sincerely trust that the opportunity may come our way, for we have, and shall have for years to come, no greater need than that of materials & sources with which to develop investigation & first-hand scholarship.⁹



The matter lay dormant for seven years. In the interim a new century, and a new day, was dawning for the university. Benjamin Ide Wheeler had arrived from Cornell as the new president in 1899. The Phoebe Apperson Hearst architectural competition to design a master plan for the campus had received international recognition in 1900; and new buildings, designed by John Galen Howard, began to appear on campus. Off campus the history of Spanish and Mexican California was coming to be viewed, increasingly, with a nostalgia for the past that converted it in the historical imagination of the public from mere scholarly antiquarianism into a living symbol of California. The El Camino Real Association, to promote the study and preservation of the chain of California missions and the road that linked them together, had been established ca. 1900. Mary Austin's The Land of Little Rain (1903), with its sketches of traditional California Indian life on the eastern slopes of the Sierra Nevada, and Isidro (1905),

Henry Morse Stephens, the first Sather Professor of History. University Archives (UARC PIC 13:638).

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a romantic tale of old Monterey, responded to this popular mood perfectly.¹⁰

Wheeler's role was perhaps the most important, although indirectly so. He aggressively recruited new faculty members from the East, including his former Cornell colleague Henry Morse Stephens, professor of European history. It seems clear that the newly-arrived Stephens—he took up residence in 1902—was the key figure in moving the university's acquisition of The Bancroft Library. In his reminiscences Charles E. Chapman, a student of Stephens and compiler of one of the great catalogues of source materials for the history of the Southwest,¹¹ takes the latter's influence for granted: "Morse Stephens had for some time been endeavoring to persuade the University authorities to buy the great collection of printed materials and manuscripts that had formed the basis of Hubert Howe Bancroft's monumental work on Pacific Coast history."¹² We do not know when Stephens began actively to pursue the acquisition of Bancroft's library nor the arguments he used to persuade Wheeler and the regents to buy it. We do have some record of Stephens' feelings about the library (as recorded in several addresses written shortly after its acquisition). He is unstinting in his praise:

The mass of material which he has gathered together for the history of the Pacific Coast is absolutely unique. . . Mr. Bancroft's greatest characteristic as a collector was that he had imagination. He swept in with his dragnet all sorts of stuff—business directories, diaries, handbills, account books. He had the imagination even to see the importance of ship's logs and he took these in. He sent a man to Alaska for all the records of the early fur companies. As a result we have more of these than there are at St. Petersburg. . . . One knows not where to begin or end an enumeration. There are five thousand volumes of newspapers, many of them country newspapers at that, many of which exist alone in this collection. There is a magnificent pile of briefs in Spanish land cases; an extraordinary collection of records of the old Missions. We can trace the pious Father Serra, founder of missions, step by step on his journeys. We have also the entire records of the old Presidio in San Francisco; large masses of correspondence of old Spanish families; the actual minutes of the Vigilance Committees, which are under lock and key and not to be opened until all the participants have passed away.¹³

While acknowledging Bancroft's genius as a collector, Stephens joined the great French historian Charles V. Langlois in deploring his "machine-made" histories: "M. Langlois, and other critics, are perhaps right in pointing out that Mr. Bancroft was not a great historian, and that his endeavor to make a history by machine has not been a great success."¹⁴ Concerning the library, however, he goes on to say that

the reader of the Bancroft histories has therefrom a very poor idea of the wealth of the Bancroft Library. For Mr. Bancroft's staff, who drew up the histories, were not trained historians; and the real usefulness of the Library will only begin when its documents, its manuscripts, its printed books and newspapers, shall be made available to scholars all over the Pacific Coast. The State University of California understands the enormous value of the H.H. Bancroft Library. The President of the University and Regents are ready now to put the collection in order, which will be a matter of some years, and hope to print such a catalogue as will give some indication to scholars of its importance.¹⁵

Moreover, having the library at Berkeley was a matter of first importance for the university not only for research but also for instruction:

A good collection of secondary books can always be purchased; but all the money in the world cannot get together in a moment a collection of books and manuscripts and newspapers which shall afford to the student examples of every type of historical source-material. All teachers of history away from the great centres of historical collections realize the impossibility of adequately training their students. They can give them books to read; they can even give them source books; they can occasionally show them some original documents; but they can practically never give them the use of such an amount of diversified material as shall illustrate the various sorts of historical material that the student of history should be able to understand.¹⁶

Stephens was careful to give full credit to the regents and Wheeler for their foresight in buying The Bancroft Library: "The genius of Mr. H.H. Bancroft as a collector, supplemented by the generosity of the Regents of the State University, and by the clear perception of its value by President B.I. Wheeler has made it possible at a comparatively early day in its history the foundation at Berkeley of a school of history which should in time take rank with the great schools of history in other universities and other countries; and the name of Mr. Bancroft will be perpetuated rather by his great library than by the volumes of his history."¹⁷ Prescient. In February of 1906, just over three months after the purchase, he told the California Library Association that "all of the credit for the acquisition of the Bancroft Library belongs to the Regents of the University of California and to President Wheeler. The latter said that it ought to be done and it was done. The Regents were very appreciative of the ideas that were advanced regarding the worth of the Library."¹⁸ Stephens carefully avoids mentioning the name of the person who advanced those ideas, but it seems clear that he was intimately involved in the purchase. In the same address he goes on to say that the regents'

hard headed business sense saw at once the great opportunity and found a way to accomplish it. Mr. Bancroft deserves great credit also for placing the library at our disposal on the terms that he did. Mr. Bancroft has been very liberal. He has given the University of California a present of one hundred thousand dollars. More than this, for the library would bring in the open market at least half a million.¹⁹

Along with the support of Wheeler, that of Regent Rudolph J. Taussig was key, although the latter's motivations seem to have been mixed. The tart-tongued and somewhat cynical

Chapman, who by the time he dictated his "Reminiscences" in 1924, had had a complete falling out with Frederick J. Teggart, The Bancroft Library's first curator, attributes Taussig's interest to a desire to help his friend Teggart find a suitable position.²⁰ The truth is undoubtedly more complicated than that, but there is little concrete evidence.

On September 15, 1905, Bancroft gave the regents a 60-day option to purchase his complete library at a price of \$250,000, of which the regents would pay \$150,000 over three years, while Bancroft himself would donate \$100,000 to make up the difference. In the interim, Wheeler commissioned Reuben Gold Thwaites, superintendent of the Wisconsin Historical Society, to provide an independent valuation of the library, which was submitted to the regents on October 14, 1905, and printed on November 14, 1905. Thwaites begins:

I take profound satisfaction in reporting that the collection is found to be astonishingly large and complete, easily first in its own field, and taking high rank among the famous general collections of Americana, such as exist at Harvard University, the Boston Public Library, the Library of Congress, the New York State Library, and the Wisconsin Historical Library.²¹

Thwaites' report valued the library as being worth at least \$315,000, with the manuscript collection alone valued at \$80,000. He sums up: "if, as I am still further informed, Mr. Bancroft now offers to donate to the University the difference between his estimate of value (\$250,000), and his asking price (\$150,000), I am clearly of the opinion that the Bancroft Library is a bargain which, in the interest of Pacific Coast scholarship, should be taken advantage of."²² This was enough to convince Wheeler, who wrote to the regents on November 8, 1905, that

I am convinced that it is the duty of the University, both as an educational institution and as an arm of the State, to purchase the Bancroft Library. I have seen enough of its rich material under the guidance of Mr. Thwaites to be sure beyond any doubt whatsoever that in acquiring that library the present Board will merit and will receive the thanks of all the coming generations of Californians.²³

After outlining a method of paying for the library, he ends: "Upon no subject concerning which I have made recommendation to the Board is my mind clearer than it is in reference to the recommendation I hereby make, that the library should be purchased at once."24 Thus reassured, during a ten-day extension to the option period the regents' Finance Committee delegated to President Wheeler "the completion of the arrangements for the purchase, transfer, and present care of the Bancroft Library"²⁵ and, after Bancroft assured the regents that the History Company never had "any interest or ownership in the Bancroft Library,"²⁶ the agreement between Bancroft and the regents was finalized November 25, 1905.²⁷ A day later, Bancroft wrote to Stephens thanking him for his help in the sale.²⁸ The same day the agreement was consummated, Acting Secretary of the Regents Victor Henderson arranged for \$200,000 insurance to be carried on the library, which was reduced to \$100,000 on July 13, 1906, and then to \$50,000 on October 15, 1906, evidently because the premiums were too high.²⁹ On December 7, 1905, Henderson sent Bancroft two copies of the corrected agreement for his signature.³⁰ A press release was immediately sent out to papers across the country. Thwaites saw it in the New York Times and immediately (December 8, 1905) wrote to Wheeler congratulating him on the purchase as well as on his appointment of Frederick J. Teggart "as custodian of the collection during the stay of the Bancroft library in the city and during its removal. He has a thorough knowledge of the collection and is in strong sympathy with the project of getting it to Berkeley."31 Early on it had become obvious that someone would have to take charge of the dayto-day operations of the library. Stephens had neither the time nor the qualifications. Sometime in the fall of 1905 Wheeler reached an understanding with the thirty-five-year-old Frederick J. Teggart (1870-1946), at the time librarian of the Mechanics Institute in San Francisco, probably through the mediation of Regent Taussig.³² The appointment was purely honorary, however; Teggart received no salary, although he was soon appointed as a lecturer for University of California Extension, which was directed by Stephens. On January 10, 1906, Wheeler invited Teggart to speak at the first University Meeting of the spring term for about

ten minutes "about the Bancroft Library, or anything else that interests you."³³ Since Stephens and Teggart played such key roles in the university's acquisition of The Bancroft Library and its early history on the Berkeley campus, their contemporaries' perceptions of them may be of interest. Stephens was one of the campus's great figures from his arrival until his death in 1919 (while returning from the funeral of Phoebe Apperson Hearst). Jacob N. Bowman (1875-1968), who was appointed as professor of medieval history in the fall of 1906, just as Bancroft was opening its doors for readers, and who would go on to prepare a detailed and still heavily used set of indexes to



Frederick J. Teggart, ca. 1900. University Archives (UARC PIC 13:3892).

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Bancroft's "land cases," describes Stephens thus:

He was slightly under average height, slightly over weight, wore a full beard and mustache, had a very pleasant voice and a very pleasant and engaging manner. Paul, his valet [how times have changed!], said that he had to tell Stephens when to buy a new suit or pair of shoes. . . . Stephens' marked ability seems to have been his great ability to make friends—his affability, friendliness, and , readiness to talk informally or formally to indi-

conversational interests, readiness to talk informally or formally to individuals and groups. He was called on very frequently for addresses and lectures and he had the ability to adjust his talks to the audience. Once he told me that he had been asked to address the Berkeley Elks Club and he did so by reading to them the poems of Kipling.³⁴ [Stephens] himself went out of his way to court popularity with the students; on walking down the campus he would stop frequently to greet various students whom he knew with a few pertinent remarks. His standing as a scholar, speaker, head of a department, and widely and popularily [sic] known on and off the campus, made such greetings very appealing to the students. . . . Stephens' populari[t]y was not only with the individual students but also with them collectively. At their request he gave "pep" talks at their game rallies in the Greek Theater, standing on a raised platform with a student holding his hand for steadiness on the narrow platform. These talks were well received and illustrated his ability to adapt his remarks to his hearers. All this popularity with the students individually and collectively resulted in hi[s] name being given to the student building, Stephens Hall.³⁵

Chapman was even more effusive. Stephens

was a marvel of marvels, but I must confess that it is easier to describe a villain [i.e., F. J. Teggart] than it is a good man. Morse Stephens was utterly unselfish so far as he himself was concerned. He had no ambition to win high place or accumulate money. He lived only for his friends. He once remarked that his only estate was his friendships: "My friends will pay my debts and bury me when I die."³⁶

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Bowman mentions that when he came down to Berkeley in the summer of 1906 to discuss his appointment in the Department of History, Wheeler took him to the Faculty Club and arranged for him to be a guest of the university. "He stated that I was the second guest of the University, that the first was [Reuben Gold] Thwaites who had just completed his survey and inventory of the newly purchased Bancroft Library from the owner."³⁷ During that same visit he met with Stephens, who also had a room in the club ("an upper room on the south side above the pool room"),³⁸ which, in fact, he had had built at his own expense. He goes on to describe the arrangements of the history department and administrative offices in California Hall and notes that The Bancroft Library was housed in the attic and that "at the time of my arrival it was in good order and arrangement and was in actual use, under the direction of F. L. Torgert and an activate "³⁹ Of T.

der the direction of F. J. Teggart and an assistant."³⁹ Of Teggart Bowman says:

F. J. Teggart was a Stanford man and had been long the secretary or librarian of the Mechanics Institute in S.F. before becoming the director of the Bancroft Library when it was acquired, and as director he attended the "fortnightlies" [see below]. He was tall, well built, smooth shaven and in some regards very Irish; he had his likes and dislikes and for some things had very decided views based on emotions, as illustrated by his remark about Thwaites who had just completed the survey and inventory of the Bancroft collection—that Thwaites had no ab[i]lity for the job which was poorly done. He was scholarly and critical in his collection of data for any subject he was interested in, but with a slightly narrow view of the whole of which an item was a part. Returning to Teggart—he attended the "fortnightlies" as director of the Bancroft but later became a member of the department. After I left in 1912 it seems that he had his troubles with Stephens and the department. Just what was the question at issue I never learned even though [Bancroft Director Herbert E.] Bolton told me many of the episodes in the matter.⁴⁰

Chapman's opinion of Teggart was thoroughly negative, undoubtedly colored by a later falling-out:

I remember the first time I saw him. I was working away at a table in the Bancroft Library when in came a stout, red-faced individual whom I took to be some tradesman or minor employe [sic]. I was a little surprised when I found that he was the distinguished Curator. I soon learned that he did indeed have intellect, even if he did have a red face that was redder even than my own. . . . Teggart was born in the north of Ireland. As Irish as anyone could be, he was nevertheless a rabid Protestant. According to him his family was a very famous one in Ireland, producing a number of Anglican bishops and other personages of high estate. Teggart himself went to the University of Dublin, where he received the A.B. degree. For some reason that is not quite clear, he then came to the United States, and has never gone back. He once told me that he was sent to California for his health. Personally I incline to the view that he was a "remittance man",—that is to say, a "black sheep" who was given an allowance provided he should leave home and stay away. Certainly, Teggart always had the habits of a first-class remittance man, including a fondness for conviviality that was far greater than his capacity to "carry the load." He told me many details of his early experiences in California, but they are hardly worth

recording, as they were probably all lies. But there was one quality he possessed that helped him to get ahead; he was a wonderful dinner-companion, being a most attractive conversationalist on such occasions, especially if there were a glass of beer or two to serve as an open sesame. Perhaps on this account he eventually got a place as Assistant Librarian at Stanford University. Right away he began plotting to get the Librarian's job. The matter came to a head, and President Jordan "fired" Teggart, later saying that he hoped he would never come on the campus again. Through his friendship with Mr. Rudolph Taussig, a wealthy man who was also a trustee of the Mechanics Mercantile Library of San Francisco, Teggart now became Librarian at the Mechanics Mercantile Library. Now for a time he was at the head of something, but apparently could not stand the prosperity. He got the finances of that institution in disorder, and was dropped. Taussig, who was also Regent of the University of California, continued to be Teggart's friend, and now found a fresh opportunity to help him. Morse Stephens had for some time been endeavoring to persuade the University authorities to buy the great collection of printed materials and manuscripts that had formed the basis of Hubert Howe Bancroft's monumental work on Pacific Coast history. Taussig now came to Morse Stephens, and offered to help him put the thing over with the Regents if Stephens would appoint Teggart as Curator. Willing to do anything to get the collection, Stephens readily consented. The collection was bought and Teggart installed as Curator.41

The person who was actually responsible for the day-to-day running of the library from its inception until 1912 was the San Francisco author, printer, and artist Porter Garnett (1871-1951). Of him Chapman says: "Teggart was insanely jealous of his perfectly harmless Assistant Curator, Porter Garnett. There was no reason why he should have feared Garnett, as the gentle Porter never showed the slightest inclination to do any work."42 Almost immediately after the announcement that the university had bought Bancroft's library, scholars began to inquire as to its availability for research. Thus at the end of January 1906, University Librarian Rowell received a letter from a Samuel E. Parker of Shelter Island, New York, requesting permission to examine manuscripts relating to Spanish missions between 1769 and 1783.43 Before it could be opened to scholars, however, the library first had to be brought to Berkeley. Bancroft had generously given the university permission to use the Valencia Street building in San Francisco for nine months from the date of purchase in order to allow time to make its new quarters in Berkeley available.⁴⁴ In the interim, the third floor of California Hall, the campus's newest building, had to be made ready to serve as the library's first home on the Berkeley campus.⁴⁵ At the time, the campus itself was composed of just six major (fifteen total) buildings: North and South Halls, the Bacon Library and Art Gallery (later renamed Bacon Hall), California Hall, Harmon Gymnasium, and Hearst Hall (the women's gymnasium), along with Stiles Hall, just off campus, the Faculty Club, and a few smaller wooden frame buildings, some still used as faculty housing.⁴⁶ In March the regents' Committee on Library and Museum reviewed the arrangements and consulted with Stephens on shelving. The latter replied that it would be preferable to build wooden shelves for the manuscripts rather than wait for steel shelves from the East.⁴⁷ University staff began to plan the move:

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The transfer of the Library cannot be made too soon, but the greatest pains should be taken to have the books thoroughly cleaned before they are brought over. As soon as the book cases are in place in (south end) the process of moving should begin. . . . For the actual work of removal it is recommended that covered furniture vans be secured by contract. A large number of rough wooden boxes—2½ x 1 x 1—will be required.⁴⁸

Undoubtedly the timetable for moving the collection was accelerated by the San Francisco earthquake of April 18, 1906, and the subsequent fire that ravaged the city. Fortunately, The Bancroft Library lay outside the fire zone; in fact, it was the only major library in San Francisco that was not destroyed by the fire.⁴⁹ On May 2, 1906, Wheeler formally placed the removal of the library in Teggart's hands: "This will certify that Mr. F. J. Teggart, Librarian of the Mechanics Institute Library of San Francisco, is hereby appointed by me as custodian of the Bancroft Library now located at Valencia and Army Streets, San Francisco, and has full charge of its removal to the University of California."50 Bekins Van won the bid to move the library, and the process was well under way on May 9 when Wheeler wrote to Bancroft that "three great vans full consisting of over three tons have already arrived. . . . but it occupies five hours for a wagon to come from Valencia Street to Berkeley."51 On May 10 Teggart reported "that the moving of the Bancroft Library is proceeding as satisfactorily as can be expected under present circumstances. It has been necessary to have a man at the library to supervise the packing & one at California Hall to arrange the books on the shelves in addition to Ellsworth who travels with the wagon."52 By May 14, Acting Secretary of the Regents Victor Henderson was writing to the Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds for "a desk that we could put in the Bancroft Library for temporary use, together with a desk chair, and a few straight chairs."53 After the transfer was finished (by the end of May), Rowell decided that the University Library's collection of Californiana should be incorporated into the Bancroft Library.⁵⁴ During the summer of 1906 work continued on California Hall. Stephens wrote to Henderson (July 23, 1906) with drawings and specifications for the manuscript cases: "I do not know where the money is to come from . . . but we must have a proper case for the manuscripts before we can let students use the library."55 A month later



Henderson reported to Regent Taussig that fifteen metal bookcases for the library (each nine feet long with seven shelves) cost \$1820.56

Joseph Cummings Rowell, University Librarian, 1875-1919. University Archives (UARC PIC 13:3482).

Just as the work of preparing the library's physical space went forward, so too were measures taken for its organization and administration. On August 22, 1906, Henderson wrote to Stephens that at the regents' meeting the previous day "a commission consisting of yourself, Librarian Rowell, and Mr. R. J. Taussig as chairman, was requested to report to the Board plans for the future organization, regulation, and maintenance of the Bancroft Library."57 Less than a month later (September 20, 1906) the commission reported back to the board with a detailed plan, later reprinted in toto in the University of California Chronicle,

with the imprimatur of Wheeler, who had also had himself appointed to the commission. The report is an extraordinary document. Perhaps its most interesting aspect was the recommendation, presumably at the instigation of Stephens, to create "an Academy of Pacific Coast History, the council of which should maintain the collection, should report annually to the Regents as to its growth, and should make recommendations as to its regulation and management."⁵⁸

The commission also considered the relationship of Bancroft to the University Library, suggesting that, "as the work of cataloguing the Bancroft collection proceeds, copies of the catalogue cards should be incorporated in the catalogue of the University Library."⁵⁹ More importantly, the commission "proposed at once to organize the Council of the Academy of Pacific Coast History to consist of persons sufficiently interested in the building up of a great library and school of research to be willing to subscribe \$500 a year each for a period, not to exceed three years."60 The commission estimated that Bancroft would need at least \$10,000 for operating expenses but recoiled at the thought that the regents should provide that sum: "It is neither possible nor desirable that the regents of the State University should appropriate so large a sum."⁶¹ The regents in fact destined only \$75 per month for the maintenance of the library—\$900 per year—of which \$60 per month was for the salary of Assistant Custodian Porter Garnett, while \$15 per month covered janitorial service and cleaning.⁶² No funds were appropriated at all for new acquisitions. Garnett was to be on duty from 9:00 a.m. to noon and from 1:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. every weekday; and the library was to be open to students, readers, and visitors during those hours. Graduate students were allowed to use the library with the permission of University Librarian Joseph C. Rowell and the secretary of the commission then in charge of the library, Stephens. The academy's council boasted fifteen members originally, all leading figures in San Francisco society and business, including William B. Bourn, president of the Spring Valley Water Company, William H. Crocker, Phoebe Apperson Hearst, James K. Moffitt, Sigmund Stern, and Benjamin Ide Wheeler, ex officio. Stephens served as secretary. During the first two years of the council's operations, it raised over \$8300 for Bancroft and projected an ambitious program to publish seven volumes of materials from the collections, including the official account of the Portolá expedition of 1769-70 and Portolá's own diary (in volume 1), the first volume of the Archives of California, covering the years 1768-69 (volume 5), and the letters of Father Junípero Serra (volume 7). Of these volumes, however, only the first four were ever issued. A year's membership in the Academy cost \$10; a life membership, \$100. Stephens and University Librarian Joseph C. Rowell were authorized to issue "general readers' tickets to persons who have given evidence of their desire to read regularly in the Bancroft Library, and of their possession of qualifications entitling them to this privilege."63 From November 3, 1906, to February 5, 1908, nineteen persons were admitted as general readers. The first was Mrs. Charles A. Kofoid (November 3, 1906), whose husband

was professor of zoology; the third was Professor Jacob Bowman (November 7, 1906); the fifth was Professor Alfred L. Kroeber (November 14, 1906).⁶⁴

Perhaps more importantly, student readers were also admitted by permission of Rowell and Stephens. In one of his early descriptions of the importance and use of the collection, Stephens had pointed out its pedagogical value: "Historical research must be regarded as the prime result encouraged by the throwing open to scholars of the H.H. Bancroft Library: but not less important is its acquisition to the cause of historical teaching."⁶⁵ Stephens ran Bancroft, and the Department of History, from his rooms in the Faculty Club:

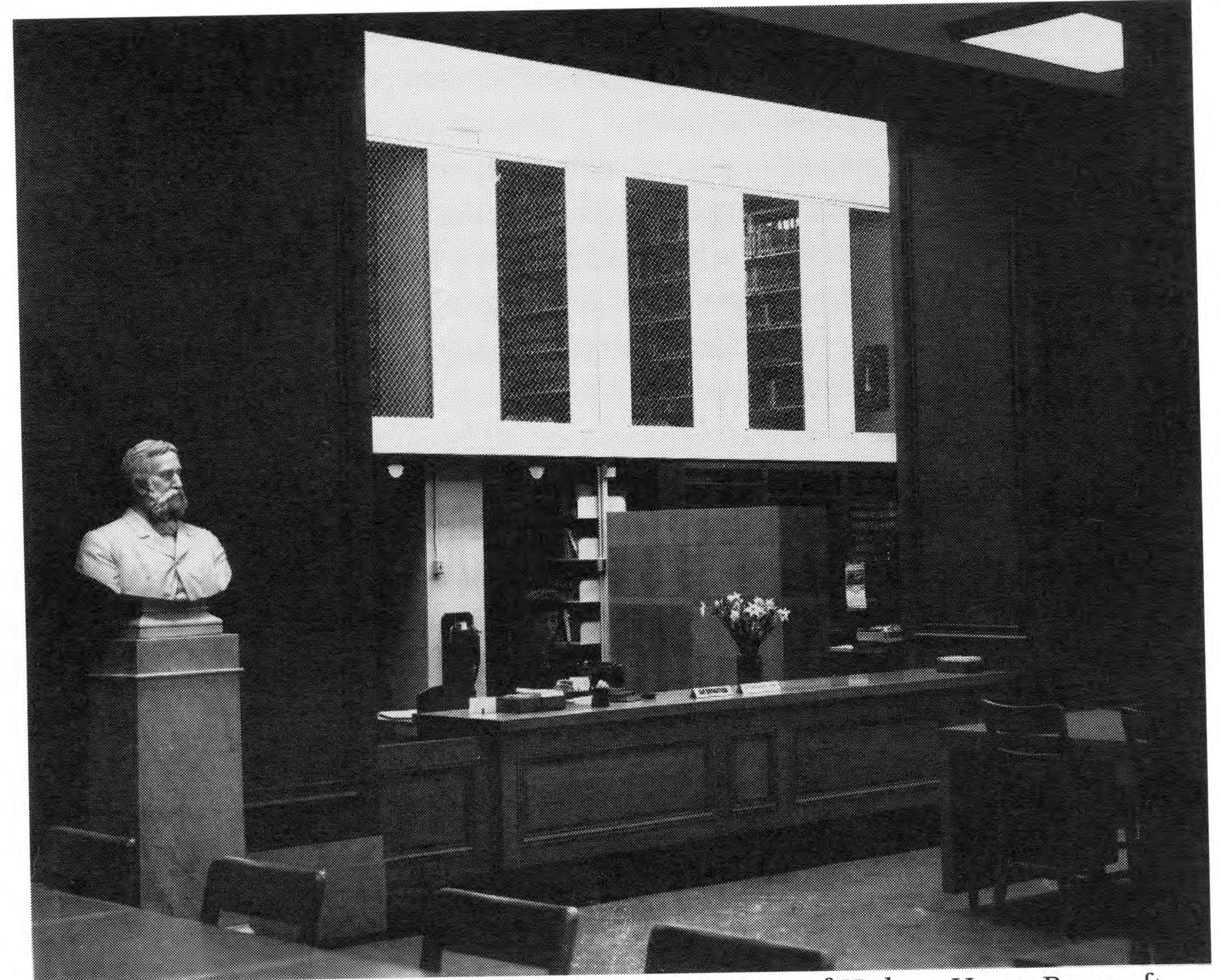
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Stephens held "fortnightly meetings" [of the Department of History] in his room at the Faculty Club. . . . In the room was part of his library and the meeting room for visitors. In it were a number of chairs and the big black rocker in need of repair so that no one ever used it except Stephens who knew the method of balancing himself in it. On the table was the usual box of 100 Owl cigars, open to all who would try one but never a second. Stephens said he liked them and refused to accept cigars from anyone as he did not want to spoil his taste for Owls, which he bought in larger quantitie[s]. At the "fortnightlies" were Stephens, McCormac, Teggart as director of the Bancroft, Don Smith and myself.⁶⁶

During its first years, Bancroft was financed primarily from the largesse of its council members, although such funding was precarious. On August 3, 1908, Secretary of the Regents Henderson wrote to Stephens to inform him that the Academy of Pacific Coast History account held only \$843.75 as of June 30, 1908, and that the payroll ran \$355 per month. He inquired anxiously, "Are you expecting the receipt of further funds during August or September?"⁶⁷ Gradually, however, the university began to accept the obligation of providing support for Bancroft. Just over a month later Henderson reported to Stephens that Wheeler had directed that the university pay Bancroft's monthly telephone bill of \$7.50.⁶⁸ In the meantime the Bancroft family continued to keep a proprietary eye on the library. Bancroft's sons commissioned a portrait bust of their father from New York sculptor Johannes S. Gelert (1852-1923). It was duly delivered in July of 1908 and the Bancroft brothers reimbursed the university for all shipping charges.⁶⁹



The Bancroft Library, just inside the main entrance of the newly opened Doe Library, 1911. *University Archives (UARC PIC 9C:2).*



The Bancroft Library, Doe Library Annex, 1950. Bust of Hubert Howe Bancroft, gift of his sons in 1908, at left. University Archives (UARC PIC 9C:6a).

Albert H. Allen, compiler of the "University Record" in the University of California Chronicle, the university's official journal, mentions The Bancroft Library frequently in the next few years. Thus in 1907 he records the gift from the government of Mexico of "a rich collection of volumes bearing upon the history of our sister Republic" and notes the discovery of the papers of the last Spanish governor of Louisiana, Baron Carondelet.⁷⁰ In 1908 he lists the names of the graduate students who were engaged in "classifying and segregating the manuscripts, printed books and newspapers, and in making calendars, or analyses of the contents of important manuscript collections" as well as the gift of 117 volumes of Oakland newspapers from the president of the Oakland Enquirer Publishing Co.⁷¹ Similarly, the annual or biennial reports of Wheeler to the governor on the state of the university usually devoted a section to the Academy of Pacific Coast History and Bancroft. The report from F. J. Teggart for the 1909-10 academic year is typical. It lists the staff (Teggart as honorary curator, Porter Garnett as assistant curator, and three student assistants who worked 75 hours per month); the condition of the library with respect primarily to processing, cataloguing, and conservation of the collections; additions to the collections, generally in the form of gifts, but also transcriptions of original documents such as those Stephens had prepared in Spain at the Archivo General de las Indias in Seville, and transfers from the University Library; use of the library, with a list of significant individual readers, of faculty members, of university departments whose students used the library, and of doctoral dissertations prepared there (six during 1909-10, including one done at Harvard and a second at Nebraska); publications, essentially the volumes of the academy's publications.⁷² The acquisition of The Bancroft Library was a significant step for the university. At a stroke it converted its library into one of the country's major research collections and the tiny town on the east side of San Francisco Bay (Berkeley had only 13,214 inhabitants in

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1900)⁷³ and the small institution at the edge of the continent (2,839 students on the Berkeley campus in 1906)⁷⁴ into major centers of scholarly research.

The comparison of The Bancroft Library at the turn of the twentieth century and the turn of the twenty-first is instructive. There are both similarities and differences. The latter are perhaps the more obvious. The scale of everything is larger, by at least an order of magnitude. The initial Bancroft collection of 50,000 volumes has grown to over 400,000 printed books, 35,000 linear feet of manuscript and archival collections, some three million pictorial items, and 21,000 maps. The budget has increased from \$11,000 per year to \$5.34 million.⁷⁵ The two staff members and three students who tackled the Herculean job of putting the library in order in 1906 have grown to eighty career and temporary (grant-supported) staff members aided by a corps of forty student assistants. The growth in the collections and staff has been accompanied by a growth in the size of the facilities housing The Bancroft Library, from the attic of California Hall in 1906 to Doe Library in 1911 to the Doe Library Annex in 1950, supplemented almost from the beginning with off-site storage, initially under the bleachers at Edwards Field on campus, later in the old Ford assembly plant in Richmond, and, since 1982, in the Northern Regional Library Facility in Richmond. Today approximately two-thirds of the collection is stored off campus. The scope of The Bancroft Library's collections has increased, dramatically. In 1963 the University Archives came to Bancroft; in 1965, the Regional Oral History Office (ROHO); in 1970 the University Library's Special Collections and the Mark Twain Papers and Project; finally, in 1973 the History of Science and Technology Program was created.⁷⁶ It can be argued that the University Archives, ROHO, and the History of Science and Technology Program are logical extensions of Bancroft's original mission of documenting the history of California and the American West; but the addition of the Special Collections fundamentally changed Bancroft from a specialized subject library into one of the great primary source libraries in the country, with superb collections ranging from Greco-Roman antiquity—the Tebtunis Papyri—to medieval manuscripts, incunabula, rare books and fine printing of the sixteenth through twentieth centuries, and modern literary manuscripts. The similarities between 1906 and 2000 are just as striking if not so obvious. In 1906 the regents were only willing to fund 10 percent of Bancroft's budget, placing the burden of funding the rest into the hands of private supporters in the form of the Academy of Pacific Coast History. The regents' share of Bancroft's budget is larger today, just over 32 percent; but Bancroft still depends on private giving in the form of endowment income and gifts for almost 46 percent of its budget.⁷⁷ Just as in 1906 the current staff is inadequate to do the job at hand, particularly with regard to processing and making available the large backlog in excess of 10,000 linear feet—of unarranged manuscript and archival collections. In 1906 the attic of California Hall was less than ideal storage space;⁷⁸ and the Doe Library quarters were not much better.⁷⁹ Today Bancroft occupies most of the Doe Library Annex, yet the space is still inadequate, even taking into account off-site storage. It is far too small to serve the

needs of Bancroft's patrons and staff; even worse, it is at serious risk in the event of a major earthquake.

These problems seem to be endemic to libraries. Where one can report success rivaling the accomplishments of Hubert Howe Bancroft himself, however, is in the continued acquisition of significant materials for the study of western history and the use of technology to facilitate easier access to those materials. Just as Bancroft documented the California of his day, with the reminiscences of figures like General Mariano Vallejo, so too do Bancroft's curators today document contemporary California, with the archives of organizations like the Sierra Club or political figures like Governor Edmund G. "Pat" Brown, and the oral histories of winemen (and women), educators, and mining engineers.

In terms of access to those collections, perhaps the salient point is that Bancroft, Stephens, and their modern epigones have had precisely the same purpose and have followed exactly the same strategy: In order to make The Bancroft Library better known and more easily accessible, they and we have turned to the latest information technology. In Bancroft's case it was the steam-powered printing press combined with impressive Yankee entrepreneurship that scattered thousands of copies of what is in essence the catalogue raisonée of his library the length and breadth of California and the West in the form of Bancroft's Works. In so doing it set in cold type the canonical interpretation of the history of California, an interpretation which even today casts its spell, especially among the lay public. When the library came to Berkeley, Stephens, Teggart, and Rowell began to document it with the latest in information technology—the library card file. In The Bancroft Library at the turn of the twenty-first century we have similarly begun systematically to take advantage of the latest advances in information technology to make our and his collections better known and accessible from any point on the globe at any time of day or night. The first step in this process was the retrospective conversion of the card file, the lineal descendant of the catalog prepared by Stephens and Teggart, into an online catalog. The second step was the conversion of the finding aids for archival and manuscript collections into machine-readable form using the Encoded Archival Description format originally developed at Berkeley and now adopted as a national standard by the Library of Congress. The third step is the digitization of the collections themselves and their dissemination over the internet, which corresponds precisely to the original publication program of the Academy of Pacific Coast History.⁸⁰ In all of these efforts of collecting and disseminating, we continue to carry out the work that Bancroft started, giving back to the general public, as well as to professional scholars, the wealth of information originally gathered from that public and interpreted by those

scholars.

And one more similarity: the Bancroft family continues to keep a proprietary eye on the library. In 1999 the family of Paul Bancroft III, Hubert Howe Bancroft's great-grandson, donated Bancroft's original roll-top desk to the library; and it now stands proudly in the director's office, right next to the bookshelf containing Bancroft's *Works*.

ENDNOTES

- 1 This summary of Bancroft's life is drawn from John Walton Caughey, Hubert Howe Bancroft. Historian of the West (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1946).
- 2 Hubert Howe Bancroft, Literary Industries. Vol. 39 of The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft (San
 - Francisco: The History Company, 1890), 231.
- 3 [Hubert Howe Bancroft], Evolution of a Library (New York: The Bancroft Company of New York, after 1898), 15.
- 4 Hubert Howe Bancroft, Works, 39 vols. (San Francisco: The History Company, 1883-1890).
- 5 Cf. [Henry L. Oak?], Analysis and Valuation of the Bancroft Library. (N.d., n.p. [San Francisco? 1886-87?]).
- 6 The Bancroft Library, *Building Bancroft: The Evolution of a Library*. A Checklist of the Exhibition Documenting the History of The Bancroft Library. [Berkeley: The Bancroft Library, 1995], 13-14. Exhibition curated by Bonnie Hardwick.

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- 7 The Bancroft Library, Building Bancroft, 14. Several years later Samuel P. Avery remembered the discussions with bemusement: "I regret that I cannot give you anything definite regarding value—or what was the 'asking' price of the Bancroft library. The literature issued in connection of trying to sell that library, would make a small one! As one of the trustees of our N. Y. Public library, I was favored & all the board with letters, written and type written, pamphlets, volumes, 'interviews' until the matter became a night mare. The price varied according to time or the agent—I really forget the details (sorry I did not keep some of the matter for your study) but I think the prices never got as low as 100,000 dollars—at any rate the figures loomed so high in the beginning that the proposition never was seriously considered by our board, or other institutions which we approached on the subject." S. P. Avery to J. C. Rowell, July 23, 1898. Bancroft Library records, CU-12.1, box 1:8, University Archives, University of California, Berkeley.
- 8 Joseph C. Rowell to Charles O. Richards, September 19, 1898. Bancroft Library records, CU-12.1, box 2:28, 2.
- 9 Charles Mills Gayley to J. C. Rowell, MS copy of undated letter (ca. December 1, 1898). Bancroft Library records, CU-12.1, box 1:2.
- 10 Mary Austin, *The Land of Little Rain* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1903); *Isidro* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1905).
- 11 Charles E. Chapman, Catalogue of Materials in the Archivo General de Indias for the History of the Pacific Coast and the American Southwest (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1919).
- 12 Charles E. Chapman, "Reminiscences," 1924. Charles E. Chapman Papers, BANC MSS 83/153c, box 1, The Bancroft Library.
- 13 Henry Morse Stephens, "The Bancroft Library. Remarks by Prof. H. Morse Stephens Before the California Library Association. Feb. 27, 1906." Typescript. Henry M. Stephens Papers, BANC MSS C-B 926, carton 2, folder: "Address before the California Library Association: The Bancroft Library," 2-3. The Bancroft Library.
- 14 Henry Morse Stephens, "The H.H. Bancroft Library." Typescript, n.d. Henry M. Stephens Papers, BANC MSS C-B 926, carton 1, folder: "Academy of Pacific Coast History," 3. The Bancroft Library.
- 15 Ibid., 5.

- 16 Ibid., 2.
- 17 Ibid., 6.
- Stephens, "The Bancroft Library. Remarks," 1. Stephens goes out of his way to praise Wheeler's initiative and the regents' response: "When the President of the state University brought before them [the regents] the proposition that the State University should own the unique collection of sources of Spanish-American, Californian and Alaskan history that had been collected as the lifework of years by Mr. H.H. Bancroft, the Regents rose to the occasion...." "The H.H. Bancroft Library," Henry M. Stephens Papers, BANC MSS C-B 926, carton 1, folder: "Academy of Pacific Coast History."
- 19 Stephens, "The Bancroft Library. Remarks," 1.
- 20 Chapman, "Reminiscences," 13-14.
- 21 Reuben Gold Thwaites, The Bancroft Library. A Report Submitted to the President and Regents of the University of California upon the Bancroft Library. Berkeley, November 14, 1905, 2. Reprinted in University [of California] Chronicle, 8 (1905), 120-43.
- 22 Ibid., 16-17.
- 23 Benjamin Ide Wheeler to the Board of Regents, November 8, 1905. Regents' records, CU-1, box 63:12, University Archives, University of California, Berkeley.
- 24 Ibid.

- Victor H. Henderson to A. W. Foster, November 17, 1905. Regents' records, CU-1, box 37:22. 25 Hubert Howe Bancroft to Charles Snook, Attorney for the Regents, November 25, 1905.
- 26 Regents' records, CU-1, box 37:22.
- 27 The Bancroft Library, Building Bancroft, 17.
- Ibid., 18. 28
- Union Assurance Society. Statement for \$200,000 in insurance to cover The Bancroft Library, November 25, 1905; Victor H. Henderson to Mason-McDuffie Co., July 13, 1906; Henderson to 29 Mason-McDuffie Co., October 15, 1906. Regents' records, CU-1, box 63:12.

- 30 Victor H. Henderson to H. H. Bancroft, December 7, 1905. Regents' records, CU-1, box 37:22.
 - Reuben Gold Thwaites to Benjamin Ide Wheeler, December 8, 1905. President's records, CU-5, 31 box 36:65. University Archives, University of California, Berkeley.
- 32 Chapman, "Reminiscences," 13-14.
- 33 Benjamin Ide Wheeler to F. J. Teggart, January 10, 1906. President's records, CU-5, box 36:58.
- 34 J. N. [Jacob Neibert] Bowman. "Reminiscences of the University of California, 1906-1912." Typescript. BANC MSS C-D 5195, 9-10. The Bancroft Library.
- 35 Ibid., 11, 12.
- 36 Chapman, "Reminiscences."
- 37 Bowman, "Reminiscences," 2.
- Ibid. 38
- Ibid., 5. 39
- Ibid., 15. 40
- 41 Chapman, "Reminiscences."
- 42 Ibid.

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- Samuel E. Parker to J. C. Rowell, January 30, 1906. Bancroft Library records, CU-12.1, 43 box 2:33.
- 44 Hubert Howe Bancroft to Regents, November 28, 1905. Regents' records, CU-1, box 37:22.
- California Hall was originally "to accommodate all the regular administrative officers, the University Press, and the Extension Division, and to furnish several faculty offices and seminar 45 rooms, several large lecture halls, a room for meetings of the faculty, a paleontology storeroom, and space for a botany museum" (Caughey, Hubert Howe Bancroft, 392).
- Bowman, "Reminiscences," 28-30. (The other buildings were: Civil Engineering, Mechanics, 46 Chemistry, Conservatory, Observatory, Agriculture, Botany, East, Philosophy.)
- Regents of the University of California. Committee on Library and Museum. Minutes of the meeting of March 7, 1906. Regents' records, CU-1, box 63:13. Henry Morse Stephens to 47 V. H. Henderson, March 14, 1906. Regents' records, CU-1, box 37:22.
- "Suggestions Relative to the Housing of The Bancroft Library," [undated (but ca. January-March 1906) and unsigned memo giving recommendations for removal and housing of the Bancroft 48 Library in California Hall]. Regents' records, CU-1, box 63:12.
- Caughey, Hubert Howe Bancroft, 393. 49
- 50 Benjamin Ide Wheeler "To Whom It May Concern," May 2, 1906. President's records, CU-5, box 36:58.

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- 51 The Bancroft Library, Building Bancroft, 18.
- 52 On July 10, 1906 Teggart informed Wheeler that the removal was finished and praised Ellsworth for his part in the process: "The service rendered by Mr F. A. Ellsworth during the transfer was of so exceptional a kind and was characterized by so much devotion that I would feel gratified if you would send him a note expressing approval of his work. The hardship of travelling over inside the closed van with each load was added to by the condition of the streets in San Francisco. In addition to this it was necessary on one occasion for Mr Ellsworth to remain in the van all night, on another occasion the driver and his helper having been arrested Mr Ellsworth brought the load to Berkeley alone." Frederick J. Teggart to B. I. Wheeler, July 10, 1906. President's records, CU-5, box 36:58.
- Victor H. Henderson to E. A. Hugill, May 14, 1906. Regents' records, CU-1, box 37:22. 53
- 54 Joseph C. Rowell to H. M. Stephens, June 25, 1906. Bancroft Library records, CU-12.1, box 2:48.
- 55 Henry Morse Stephens to V. H. Henderson, July 23, 1906. Regents' records, CU-1, box 37:22.
- Victor H. Henderson to R. J. Taussig, August 27, 1906. Regents' records, CU-1, box 37:22. 56
- Victor H. Henderson to H. M. Stephens, August 22, 1906. Regents' records, CU-1, box 37:22. 57
- Benjamin Ide Wheeler, Rudolph Taussig, Joseph C. Rowell, and H. Morse Stephens, "Report of the 58 Commission on the Organization, Maintenance, and Regulation of the Bancroft Library," University of California Chronicle, 9 (1907), 48-53.
- Ibid., 49. 59
- Ibid., 50. 60
- Ibid. 61
- Regents of the University of California. Committee on Library and Museum. Minutes of the 62
- meeting of June 6, 1906. Regents' records, CU-1, box 63:13.
- Wheeler et al., "Report," 51. 63
- "General Reader's Tickets-Bancroft Library." Henry M. Stephens Papers, carton 1, folder: 64 "Academy of Pacific Coast History." [Covers period from November 3, 1906 to February 5, 1908.]
- 65 Stephens, "H. H. Bancroft Library," 4.
- 66 Bowman, "Reminiscences," 7.
- Victor H. Henderson to H. M. Stephens, August 3, 1908. Regents' records, CU-1, box 47:31. 67
- Victor H. Henderson to H. M. Stephens, September 28, 1908. Regents' records, CU-1, box 47:31. 68
- Paul Bancroft to V. H. Henderson, July 15, 1908; Henderson to Paul Bancroft, August 3, 1908; 69 Philip Bancroft to Henderson, August 14, 1908; Henderson to Philip Bancroft, August 19, 1908. Regents' records, CU-1, box 63:12.

- Albert H. Allen, "University Record," University of California Chronicle, 9 (1907), 66-89, 180-96, 70 262-73, 360-85 ("Gifts to the University: Mexican Documents," 71-73; "Registration Statistics," 78-79; "The Carondelet Papers," 372-73).
- Albert H. Allen, "University Record," University of California Chronicle, 10 (1908), 70-85, 71195-207, 347-60, 493-505 ("Work in the Bancroft Collection," 78; "Files added to the Bancroft Collection," 352).
- Frederick J. Teggart, "Academy of Pacific Coast History (Hubert Howe Bancroft Collection)" 72 Berkeley, 1910. Reprinted from the President's Biennial Report to the Governor of California, 104 - 110.

Bowman, "Reminiscences," 26. 73

- 74 Allen, "University Record," 9 (1907), 78.
- 75 The Bancroft Library, "Annual Report 1998-1999," 4.
- 76 The Bancroft Library, Building Bancroft, 25, 27-29.
- 77 The Bancroft Library, "Annual Report 1998-1999," 4.
- 78 Associate University Librarian [Harold L.] Leupp later recalled that 'in those days you could have poached an egg on the skylight which formed part of the attic floor. Valuable newspaper files, in bundles, remained exposed to that intense heat, because the Bancroft Library had no budget, and no other funds with which to operate" (The Bancroft Library, Building Bancroft, 21). 79 "The new Director, George Hammond, found it in 1946 'wedged under the eaves in cramped quarters which not only provided improper housing for the Library's fine and rare materials, but hampered scholars in their research because of lack of facilities" (The Bancroft Library, Building Bancroft, 22). 80 See, e.g., the California Heritage Digital Image Finding Aids in the Online Archive of California (URL: http://www.oac.cdlib.org/dynaweb/ead/calher), with, among much else, the complete digitized facsimiles of the Patrick Breen diary of the Donner Party (BANC MSS C-E 176) and the Robert B. Honeyman, Jr. Collection of Early Californian and Western American Pictorial Material (BANC PIC 1963.002:0001-1886).

