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Louise Clappe's Own Copy of The Pioneer

Acquired by the Library
By Marlene Smith-Baranzini

The complete four-volume set of The Pioneer, California's first monthly magazine.

Editor's Note.
When the State Library acquired this remarkable set of The Pioneer, I immediately thought of Marlene Smith-Baranzini to write this article. She graciously accepted my invitation. Marlene is the editor of the The Shirley Letters from the California Mines, 1851–1852 published by the Heyday Press (1998–2001). It includes a superb introduction by her. For many years she was associate editor of California History, the quarterly magazine of the California Historical Society. In addition, she has written several children's books with an historical theme and a guidebook on horse racing in California. She is currently working on a biography of Louise Clappe.

This complete set of The Pioneer came from the distinguished collection of James S. Copley, the publisher of the San Diego Union Tribune. Copley had built an impressive private library of Americana in La Jolla. The collection was sent to Sotheby's for auction in 2010.

The State Library has acquired a significant addition to its collection of early American Californiana: Louise Clappe’s own copy of The Pioneer, California’s first monthly magazine. This little periodical, founded by the talented and ambitious young journalists W. H. Brooks and Ferdinand Ewer, debuted in San Francisco in 1854. Envisioned as the Pacific Coast’s cousin to New York’s Knickerbocker Magazine, The Pioneer was a literary journal promoting California voices. It published fiction, poetry, and travel writing, along with political and social commentary, news, notices of ship arrivals, and more, offering a regional portrait that eclipsed the state’s rough-and-tumble gold scrambling days and reflected an environment that embraced familiar American sensibilities as well as emerging trends and ideas. It regularly included sketches of faraway places, essays on the natural sciences, a sort of social calendar, and much poetry. For all this, The Pioneer can be enjoyed — or studied — as a collection of writing that captures the interests and energies of a city and a region establishing their roots at mid-nineteenth century.

But the element that makes The Pioneer especially sought after today, its one regular feature, is its series “California, in 1851: A Trip into the Mines.” This series of twenty-three “letters” (or perhaps they were essays written in the epistolary style of the period), composed at Indian Bar during 1851 and 1852 and published in The Pioneer, was the literary masterwork of Amherst-born Louise Clappe, who signed them “Shirley.” “Letter First” was dated September 13, 1851. “Letter Twenty-Third,” dated November 21, 1852, coin-
plete set of the magazine, gathered into a four-volume bound edition, is a rarity. The State Library’s acquisition is, unarguably, the rarest of the rare. The volumes it now holds are the set originally owned by the letters’ own author, Louise Clappe. Because they are from Clappe’s own collection, this treasured addition to the Library’s Louise Clappe Manuscript Collection carries an unrivalled provenance. The four volumes were inscribed and given, as each was finished, as a gift from her editor and lifelong friend Ferdinand Ewer. Three of the four volumes — one, two, and four — are uniformly bound in calfskin and cloth, with gilt spines. Volume three, bound at a later time, is of a similar style. Two of the volumes have “Mrs. Louisa Clapp” stamped in gilt on the cover (as she also did for bound volumes of her later lectures). The inscription in volume one reads: “[To] Mrs. Louise A. K. S. Clapp, with the Kind Regards of W. H. Brooks & F. C. Ewer.” Volume two: “Mrs. Louise Clapp; from her sincere friend, F. C. Ewer/ Christmas Eve, 1854.” Volume three is not inscribed; volume four reads, “Mrs. Louise Clapp/from her sincere friend/F. C. Ewer/New Years Day 185[6].”

A useful review of early California publications, including The Pioneer, appeared in 1888 by Charles H. Shinn, then the business manager of the Overland Monthly —
The Louise A. K. S. Clapp[e] Collection

The Clappe Manuscript Collection of the Library’s California History Section, a gift of Carl I. Wheat, September 1933, consists of three boxes: letters written between 1834 and 1850; Clappe’s art and architecture lectures, written circa 1875; and photographs. A two-page finding aid summarizes the collection, and includes a short biography. It names her 28 correspondents and describes how the contents of the three boxes are organized.

Box 151 contains the letters, arranged in chronological order. These are correspondence to Clappe, written between her childhood years and her marriage (1848), including one letter from a male friend addressed to Louise’s younger sister, Isabella, in care of the “Ship Manilla,” which carried the newlywed Clapps and three other family members to San Francisco, docking in January 1850. Correspondence is from the esteemed diplomatic and political figure Alexander Hill Everett, as well as from Clappe’s legal guardian, her at-home younger siblings, an uncle, a cousin, former school mates, and others. Behind each letter stands a larger untold story, of course, but collectively each helps construct the framework—with many details—of Clappe’s life in Amherst, Massachusetts, at boarding schools, and on outings with friends.

Box 152 reveals a little-known side of the “Shirley Letters” author, her lifelong pursuit and sharing of cultural subjects. Here are found several of her own notebooks containing lectures on art, artists, and schools of architecture, from which she drew for “public talks” given in New York City after she retired from teaching in the San Francisco public schools in 1878.

Box 153 contains a rich collection of photographs, like the letters and notebooks, carefully preserved throughout her long life and suggesting a woman who treasured her relationships. Few are identified, though it is fair to assume many are of her family members, students, and San Francisco friends. One is identified as “Mr. Clapp.” Some photographs from the collection were long ago removed to other files, particularly to those of prominent San Francisco photographers. Again, however, rarely is the subject identified. This is true of Louise Clappe herself, yet hope remains that one day her portrait will surface.

Louise Clappe penned a remarkable chronicle of the California Gold Rush and lived an engaged life, making the collection a rich resource for students and scholars in many disciplines. And for the bibliophile and generalist who simply takes pleasure in their associations with historical eras and their authentic objects, time spent perusing the Clappe Collection offers exactly that satisfaction.
another treasury of California literature — where his piece “Early Books, Magazines, and Book-Making” appeared in October of that year. Shinn described The Pioneer as “the best and first,” noting that the sixty-page periodical included no illustrations, but “printed a good deal of Pacific Coast history and description that is worth reading, even now.” Recalling the city’s sweep of fires that destroyed so many early San Francisco books and other paper records, he concluded that “as it happens, only four or five sets of the pioneer magazine are in existence.” Even if his calculation were short by a dozen, it wouldn’t elevate The Pioneer to a “plentiful” status today.

During its fleeting run, The Pioneer’s writers included many young men who moved on to other important roles, and whose names still reverberate among Bulletin subscribers and reporters: Ewer himself, John Hittell, Stephen Massett, John Phoenix, Edward Pollock, Frank Soulé, John Swett, and others. But this was no exclusive male press club. Women too contributed fiction, travel pieces, commentaries, and poetry. They included Mrs. S. A. Downer, a “Mrs. Moodie,” and more. Mrs. E. Parker Walton signed herself “Francesca.” Others, of both genders, signed cryptically, offering only their initials.

Charles Shinn recalled “a lady...who wrote over the signature of ‘Shirley,’” and who “contributed excellent descriptive articles on ‘California in 1851.’” Although the twenty-three letters carried her nom de plume, Clappe used the formal “Mrs. Louisa Clapp,” in the byline of her essay “Superstition,” published in The Pioneer in December 1855. Another series of her original essays and poetry, published in The Marysville Herald in 1851, was signed “Shirley.” Regarding the perpetual questions of whether her name should appear as “Louisa” (her legal Christian name) or “Louise” (which she also used), and “Clapp” with or without the final “e,” it is only known that she adopted the spelling “Clappe” sometime after she began teaching in the public schools in 1854, and perhaps to distance her name from that of Dr. Fayette Clapp, her husband of nine years, from whom she was quietly divorced in 1857.

Timing can be everything. After leaving her Feather River cabin in the late winter of 1852, presumably with the gold rush letters carefully packed, Louise Clappe returned to San Francisco. Not long afterward, W. H. Brooks and Ferdinand Ewer were selecting content for the premier issue of their magazine. Credit belongs to the perceptive Ewer for recognizing both the entertaining and historic value of Louise Clappe’s modest masterpiece, even if he perhaps must be forgiven for claiming they were “not intended for publication.”

Ewer’s farewell remarks in the The Pioneer’s final issue clearly resonate in this digital age, underscoring why the printed word will always retain its value, and why a bound set of volumes such as this one, printed nearly 160 years ago, remains virtually priceless. The letters, he concluded, “describe life in the mines in 1852, which, without some such record, would ere long be forgotten.”

When catalogued, the complete set of The Pioneer; or, California Monthly Magazine will be available for research in the Library’s California History Room.

— from Letter Fifteenth of the “Shirley Letters,” April 10, 1852

“Gold mining is Nature’s great lottery scheme. A man may work in a claim for many months, and be poorer at the end of the time than when he commenced; or he may ‘take out’ thousands in a few hours. It is a mere matter of chance.”
Tiburcio Vasquez is, next to Joaquin Murrieta, America’s most famous Hispanic bandit. At the end of his life, the Chicago Tribune called him “the most noted desperado of modern times.” The judgment of The New York Times was harsher: “With the single exception of Joaquin Murrieta . . . Vasquez is the most thoroughly hardened ruffian that ever terrified a community in the state.” Nonetheless, to disenfranchised Hispanics, he was a folk hero in his own lifetime. Near Los Angeles, California, Vasquez Rocks Park – a famous film location – and a public high school are both named for him. To many Hispanic Americans, Tiburcio Vasquez remains a powerful symbol of their ongoing struggle for ethnic, social, political, and economic equality.

Tiburcio Vasquez was born in the picturesque seaside village of Monterey, California, on April 10, 1835. His adobe birthplace is still standing, directly behind Colton Hall. The Vasquez family was honest and highly respectable. His ancestors came to California in 1776 with the De Anza expedition and helped found the cities of San Francisco and San Jose. During the California Gold Rush, the world rushed in to the new territory, and Hispanic Californians, known as Californios, became strangers in their own land.

As a result, Monterey was one of the most violent communities in American history. During one three-year period in the mid-1850s, Monterey County saw forty homicides. For a county of only 4,000 people, that calculates to a per capita homicide rate thirty times greater than the modern national rate. Young Vasquez came of age amidst great violence and social upheaval, and during the years after 1849, he socialized with the many ruffians and gunfighters who plagued Monterey. He also began to garner a reputation as a rake and ladies’ man of the first order. Vasquez was handsome, charming, well-read, and loved to sing, dance, play the guitar, and write poetry for his female admirers.

Between stints of gambling and horse racing, Vasquez worked for various ran-
chos as a vaquero in the early 1850s. He disliked the work, but gambling did not keep him fed. One of his employers was the owner of a rancho in Potrero Canyon in what is now Carmel Valley. There seventeen-year-old Tiburcio reportedly fathered a son, Luis, out of wedlock. The child’s mother was Maria Cano, a fifteen-year-old Mexican girl, who gave birth to the boy in August 1852. Maria later married Dolores Tarango, who adopted the youth, known thereafter as Luis Tarango. Luis Tarango became a well-known figure in Carmel Valley, and when he died in Monterey in 1926 the local newspaper called him “an intimate friend of the notorious bandit, Vasquez.” Luis Tarango would not be the last illegitimate child linked to Tiburcio.

Seventeen-year-old Tiburcio opened a combination saloon, dance hall, and gambling parlor in Monterey. He quickly fell under the influence of the great bandit chieftain Anastacio Garcia. Tiburcio wooed Anastacio’s youngest sister, Maria Antonia Garcia. She was seven months older than Tiburcio, and they became engaged to marry. By all accounts Anastacio Garcia was an exceptionally handsome man, and his sister Maria was probably equally good looking. In 1853 and 1854, she was undoubtedly the girl with whom Tiburcio lived in his little adobe dance hall on Abrego Street. With flashing dark eyes and a thick mane of silky black hair cascading over her bare shoulders, she danced, sang, and played guitar to entertain mesmerized customers, both Yankee and Hispanic. She was one of the main attractions of Tiburcio’s dance house and would be the cause of more violent encounters between young Vasquez and newcomers to the pueblo. He later recalled, “When I lived in Monterey County I kept a dance house and sold liquor. The Americans used to come in and beat and abuse me and mistreat my woman.” He would later repeatedly blame his career of banditry on the abuse he suffered from Anglo ruffians. Tiburcio and Maria broke up in 1854, and a year later she married another man. Never again would Vasquez have a serious romantic
relationship; after that, women were mere playthings to him.

In 1854 Tiburcio Vasquez and Anastacio Garcia got mixed up in a fandango house brawl; Constable William Hardmount of Monterey was shot to death. The next year they played leading roles in Monterey’s vicious Roach-Belcher feud, which left fourteen men dead.

In 1857, Vasquez was captured in Los Angeles, convicted of cattle theft, and sent to San Quentin prison. There he helped organize four bloody prison breaks that left twenty convicts dead. Upon his release in 1863, he embarked on more adventures, both larcenous and sexual.

One notable romantic exploit occurred near Mount Diablo in the San Francisco East Bay. While riding through the isolated country, his horse stumbled and threw him violently to the ground, breaking his arm. This was near the hacienda of a wealthy ranchero, who witnessed the accident and helped Tiburcio into his home. There the ranchero and his beautiful young daughter, Anita, cared for the injured stranger. Vasquez told them that his name was Rafael Moreno and said that he had recently come north from Mexico.

It took several weeks for Vasquez to regain his normal strength and health. By this time Anita had become infatuated with the charming young vaquero, whose courtly ways and love of music and poetry drew her to him. Eugene Sawyer, one of Tiburcio’s early biographers, described Anita thus: “The girl was innocence personified; she had always lived at the ranch and knew scarcely anything of human nature, much less the caution of experience. It can scarcely be wondered that the bandit succeeded in winning her affections and overcoming her most virtuous scruples.” One morning Anita and Tiburcio were missing. Her father was no fool and immediately suspected Vasquez. Mounting his fleetest horse, he started in pursuit and soon caught up with the lovers in the Livermore Valley, south of Mount Diablo. They were resting beneath a tree by the roadside. Vasquez leaped to his feet, but did not draw his pistol. Anita shrieked to her father, “If you kill him you must also kill me!”

Eugene Sawyer penned several versions of this encounter. In one, he wrote, “After some consideration the ranch owner said if Anita would return home her lover might go free. The girl consented and Vasquez shrugged his shoulders as father and daughter rode away.” But in a much earlier account Sawyer said that the ranchero “shot Vasquez in the arm, causing the bandit to drop the girl and take safety in flight.” If true, this would account for one of the numerous gunshot wounds Tiburcio carried on his body. Boyd Henderson, an early journalist who wrote extensively about Vasquez, also recorded this incident, and agreed that Anita’s father had shot Tiburcio in the arm. But Henderson claimed that Vasquez had raped the girl: “Failing, with a pleasing address and the warmth of a reciprocal passion, to ruin her, he accomplished his evil design by brute force.” But Tiburcio seduced women — he didn’t rape them—

The cravat that Vasquez wore on the day of his execution. It had to be removed to accommodate the noose.
so the charge of rape was probably false.

By 1870, Vasquez made his headquarters in the historic adobe village of San Juan Bautista, east of Monterey. In San Juan, Tiburcio found that one of his San Quentin compadres, Abelardo Salazar, had settled down, opened a cantina on the main street, and tried to go straight. Salazar ran the saloon with a partner named Gonzales. Vasquez often stayed with Salazar, who became engaged to marry a very pretty young Californio girl, Maria Garcia, nicknamed “Pepita.” She was but fifteen, wild and promiscuous, and her parents undoubtedly thought that marriage to Salazar would settle her down. On April 17, 1871, they celebrated the wedding at the Mission San Juan Bautista. Although it is unknown whether any of Salazar’s outlaw compadres attended the wedding, what is clear is that Tiburcio Vasquez and two of his bandit partners, Francisco Barcenas and Procopio Bustamante, all lusted after Pepita.

Vasquez later claimed that Francisco Barcenas, not he, was infatuated with the newly married Pepita Salazar. Barcenas, a thirty-one-year-old Californio, was short, stout, and wore fancy brocaded vests and expensive suits. One day in mid-June 1871, Vasquez, Barcenas, and Procopio were visiting Abelardo Salazar’s house. Tiburcio recalled:

Barcenas seemed to like the wife of Salazar, and after we left he told me he was going to get her away. I told him all right, it was none of my business. A few days afterwards, one night, I started for Salazar’s house, and when within a few rods, I met Barcenas, who had come in from another direction. He went in the house and got the wife into the stable, then came and told me he wanted me to get her away for him. I consented, the woman wanted to go and so I took her away. We first went to the saloon of Salazar’s partner, one Gonzales, where Barcenas got the woman’s clothes, by telling Gonzales some lie. Barcenas took the woman to Natividad. I had nothing to do with her. . . . Some enemies of mine in San Juan went to him and told him that I was the one who had taken his wife away. He threatened to kill me on sight, and one night while walking in San Juan with one of my friends, we came upon Salazar. He stopped and said, “Vasquez, I want to speak to you.” I said, “All right,” for I had done nothing. He asked me if I took his wife away. I laughed in his face and told him no; that I would bring Gonzales as a witness to that effect. Without saying a word — I was within two feet of him at the time — he drew a pistol and fired at me. The bullet struck me in the neck on the right side and came out below the shoulder. I was blinded by the powder, but ducked my head and fired at him several times, he returning the shots. I don’t think I hit him.

Pepita Salazar’s romantic dalliance with the Vasquez gang was brief, for she soon died in their hideout at the nearby Pedro Regalado ranch. The circumstances of her death are not clear. In 1874, newspaper reporter Boyd Henderson wrote that Vasquez tired of the girl: “After a few months dalliance he presented her to Pancho Bacinos [Barcenas], one of his adherents, under whose brutal treatment she died.” In 1917, old-timers in San Juan recalled that Pepita had been in poor health and had died of a vague and undescribed illness. However, the most reliable account comes from Isabel Meadows, sister-in-law of gang member Manuel Lopez. She said that at Pedro Regalado’s ranch the girl died from a botched abortion. It was hardly a romantic ending to an amorous affair with an outlaw.

Tiburcio’s dalliance with Pepita was foolish in the extreme. Even more so was his most infamous love affair, with Rosario Leiva, the twenty-four-year-old wife of a fellow gang member. Rosario was high-spirited, graceful, and a noted dancer. With sparkling brown eyes and a lustrous shock of raven hair, she loved men. Rosario had cast her lot in life with a poor laboring man, Abdon Leiva. They had been married for seven years and had a six-year-old boy and two small daughters. A Chileno, aged twenty-seven, Abdon Leiva ran a few head of cattle, grew some crops, and worked off and on at the New Idria Mine to support his family. They lived in poverty in a small adobe in Vallecitos Valley, high in the Coast Range and a few miles north of New Idria. To make ends meet, Leiva sold his produce crop at New Idria and may have rustled livestock from time to time. On January 8, 1873, Tiburcio rode up to the Leiva place. The bandido received a warm welcome, especially from Rosario. Youthful, vivacious, and sensual, she would change his life forever.

Rosario saw Tiburcio Vasquez as their savior from a life of poverty, and she convinced her reluctant husband to join the gang. As Leiva recalled, “I never would have gone with Vasquez but for her importunities. She kept urging me and was very mad when I twice backed out.” Said Leiva, “In May, Vasquez came back to my house. He made several trips to the San Joaquin, looking out for a good opening, always returning to my house. My wife seemed to like him very much, but I suspected nothing wrong.” Like many women before her, Rosario Leiva was fascinated with her husband’s charming compadre. She found him totally unlike the rough, uneducated miners and vaqueros who lived in the mountains. Before long they were engaged in a secret, passionate affair, and Rosario became pregnant.

Abdon Leiva took part in the infamous Tres Pinos Tragedy of August 26, 1873, which saw three innocent people murdered in a bandit raid led by Tiburcio. The Vasquez gang fled to Southern California with a posse in hot pursuit. While camped in Little Rock Creek Canyon, Vasquez sent Leiva away on an errand so
he could be alone with Rosario. Abdon, suspicious, returned to camp early and caught Tiburcio under the blankets with his wife. Leiva fled camp and promptly surrendered to lawmen. Vasquez, Rosario, and gang member Clodoveo Chavez rode into the San Gabriel Mountains. Rosario later detailed their flight from the officers:

We hid in the brush all day and dared not go out, as they knew that the officers were looking for them. We had nothing to eat that day, and not until the following day, when Vasquez found a young calf and killed it. He brought part of the meat into camp, which we ate without even salt to put on it. All the time I was with them the only bed we had consisted of one pair of blankets and his saddle blankets.

One night while we were in the mountains, Vasquez thought he heard the officers whistling to each other, and started up, saying, “That’s the officers exchanging signals.” The sound came closer and he seized his rifle. Presently, out of the brush, only a short distance from where they were lying, sprang a large California lion. It was a bright moonlight night, and he could be plainly seen. Vasquez fired quickly, and the lion fell dead with a bullet through his heart. The sound which had been taken for a whistle was made by this animal. I think that we were about eight days on the mountain, during which time we had nothing but meat to eat. I was crying a great deal of the time, and Vasquez used to get very angry with me for it. My health was also getting very bad on account of the exposure and bad treatment. Vasquez then took me to another mountain on the other side of the valley. I had been pregnant for three or four months before this time, and was therefore unable to undergo such hardship and ill treatment. On the 22nd of September I was prostrated with a miscarriage. Late in the afternoon of that day, Vasquez and Chavez rode off and left me, sick, helpless, and alone, in these mountains. Vasquez said, “You can get out of here the best way you can with God’s help.”

Rosario claimed that she had been cared for by a local Mexican and stayed with his family for more than six weeks until she was well enough to travel, when he bought her a train ticket so she could return to her parent’s home near San Jose. This portion of Rosario’s story was untrue. There was then no railroad from Southern California, and she was neither ill-treated nor abandoned by Tiburcio. She later admitted, under oath, that she had stayed with Vasquez for two months, until November 1873. As Tiburcio recalled, “I provided for all her wants while she was with me.” He arranged for friends to give her shelter and care, as he was busy dodging manhunters.

Between ducking posses in Los Angeles County, Tiburcio had even more affairs. He seduced his own niece, Felicita Vasquez, an innocent seventeen-year-old girl who had no idea he was her uncle. Her father, Francisco “Chico” Vasquez, had kept Tiburcio’s identity secret so his children would not gossip. Felicita bore Tiburcio’s child, Francisco, who was raised by Tiburcio’s brother, Chico, and his wife. Francisco always believed he was Tiburcio’s nephew, never knowing he was actually the bandido’s son. Relatives of Chico’s wife, the large and prominent Lopez family, were outraged at Tiburcio’s treachery.

Meanwhile Vasquez was seeing his favorite prostitute in Sonoratown in Los...
Angeles. Her name was La Coneja, The Rabbit. He was also hiding out at the adobe of Greek George, located on what is now Melrose Place in West Hollywood. (And yes, that is the same street after which the popular television show was named.) There Tiburcio seduced Greek George’s sister-in-law, the comely Modesta Lopez. When newspapers reported that Vasquez was sneaking into Los Angeles to visit La Coneja, Modesta was angry and jealous. When she found out that Tiburcio had gotten her young cousin, Tiburcio’s niece, pregnant, she was outraged. She and Greek George turned Vasquez in to the sheriff of Los Angeles.

The sheriff’s posse shot and captured Tiburcio at Greek George’s adobe on May 14, 1874. The arrest made national news. Fashionable women flocked to see him and decorated his jail cell with flowers. Newspaper editors railed against that, but the same thing happened when he was moved to jails in San Francisco, then to Salinas, and finally, San Jose. Women, both Anglo and Hispanic, were fascinated by him, and Tiburcio, in turn, never failed to charm his visitors.

Vasquez was tried for one of the Tres Pinos murders. The main witness against him was, of course, Rosario’s cuckold husband, Abdon Leiva. Tiburcio was sentenced to death and hanged in San Jose in 1875. After testifying against Vasquez, Abdon Leiva was released from jail. He divorced Rosario, moved to Sacramento with their three children, and began a new life. Remarrying, Leiva started a new family and lived honestly. After the divorce, Rosario Leiva moved to the Guadalupe and Almaden mines where, in 1885, she married Jose Martinez, who was thirteen years her junior. Rosario Leiva reportedly spent her final days working in a rag shop in San Jose. She died of pulmonary gangrene, a severe lung infection, at the Guadalupe Mine on September 17, 1900, and is buried in the Mission Santa Clara Cemetery, not far from the grave of her infamous lover.

Tiburcio’s literate intellect, romantic nature, and rakish reputation were a magnet for the opposite sex. That was offset by his lifelong inability to commit himself to any one of them. For Vasquez, females were playthings, and once he became bored, he moved on to another conquest.

Tiburcio’s profligate personality was best explained by one of his cousins: “We talked over all his troubles and I persuaded him to promise me he would not go on the road again. Then he borrowed twenty dollars from me. He confessed to me all his misdeeds and I believe he told me everything. Vasquez was that way. He would repent, make a clean breast of everything and make all kinds of resolutions; but the first fat-looking purse, or good-looking senorita he saw would break them all.”

Mr. Boessenecker’s article is adapted from his Bandido: The Life and Times of Tiburcio Vasquez (University of Oklahoma Press, 2010). The book has won numerous awards: Outstanding Book on Wild West History from the Wild West History Association; International Latino Book Awards, Best Biography; Spur Award Finalist, Best Western Nonfiction Biography, from Western Writers of America; and Best Nonfiction Book, second place, from Westerners International. John Boessenecker was also named Best Nonfiction Writer of 2011 by True West magazine.
S. I. Hayakawa:

A Remembrance of an Enigmatic Life

By Dr. Gerald Haslam

Hayakawa, age 2, 1908.

Hayakawa family photograph, 1923. The future college president and U.S. senator is standing, second to the left.

EDITOR’S NOTE:

Gerry Haslam and his wife, Janice, have recently written In Thought and Action: The Enigmatic Life of S. I. Hayakawa, published by the University of Nebraska Press. Born in Bakersfield and raised in Oildale, Professor Haslam taught for many years at Sonoma State University. He is the recipient of numerous awards and is widely recognized as one of California’s foremost cultural historians and writers. He is the author of such key books as The Great Central Valley: California’s Heartland; Workin’ Man Blues: Country Music in California; Okies: Selected Stories; Condor Dreams & Other Fictions, and Many Californias: Literature from the Golden State.
I met the famous professor in 1963. I was a first-semester graduate student seeking admission to his seminar on general semantics, so I stammered something and he, in a surprisingly soft voice, asked if I was a major. I said yes, then he signed my class-add slip. The professor listened intently to students, then his comments revealed an extraordinarily broad base of knowledge.

Forty years before Barack Obama became president of the United States, a confirmed liberal named S. I. “Don” Hayakawa observed, “Prejudice—racial, religious, what have you—is just another form of misinterpretation, of mistaking the stereotype for the man. Think what a difference it would make, for instance, if we changed the expression ‘part-Negro’ to ‘part-white.’ Same idea, only a different word. And if we did that, there’d be a lot fewer Negroes in this world.”

Ironically, a few years later one of my ex-San Francisco State classmates told me that Hayakawa hadn’t been interned during World War II because he’d darkened his skin to pass for black. Toward the end of his life, scurrilous stories like that one about him proliferated; in fact, the professor had been a Canadian citizen residing in Chicago then, where he and his wife had helped relocate some Japanese-American families from the West Coast. Hayakawa and his talented wife, Margedant Peters, were prominent on the Windy City’s cultural scene during the 1940s: he a best-selling author, editor at Poetry magazine, a reviewer for the Chicago Sun, as well as the mother of three young children. They seemed rooted.

By the 1950s, though, all was not well. Hayakawa had left his tenured position at Illinois Institute of Technology and was unhappy teaching only part-time for the University of Chicago. Then his wife discovered that he was involved romantically with one of her associates at Poetry. Since he had a standing offer of a professorship at San Francisco State, and with his marriage on the line, Hayakawa and family relocated to California in 1955, not long after he became a citizen of the USA.
I met the famous professor in 1963. I was a first-semester graduate student seeking admission to his seminar on general semantics, so I stammered something and he, in a surprisingly soft voice, asked if I was a major. I said yes, then he signed my class-add slip. The course was based upon a reading of Alfred Korzybski’s daunting Science and Sanity, which we then discussed in detail. The professor listened intently to students, then his comments revealed an extraordinarily broad base of knowledge.

By 1967 I was teaching at nearby Sonoma State College and was part of a small group of faculty and students urging the college president to develop an ethnic studies program before one was demanded. A pragmatist, the president agreed and told us to start planning and that he’d find funding. I consulted with Professor Hayakawa then and he offered considerable encouragement and advice on the course I was developing.

That’s why I was shocked in 1968 when Hayakawa was accused of opposing ethnic studies. When I asked him about that, he said no, he still much favored its development, but he opposed the confrontational style of some students, and he also thought others were trying to destroy higher education so they could rebuild it according to their own misguided visions.

During the SF State strike of 1968–69, after he had become president of the college, “What’s happened to Don?” was a question I often heard from mutual friends. Sadly, in the face of the public’s overwhelming support of Hayakawa’s efforts, I never heard any striker or strike sympathizer ask the corollary, “What’s happened to us?” Both questions, it seemed to me, needed consideration.

When the strike finally ended, the immediate winner was Hayakawa, who would ride his popularity into the United States Senate. But the tide of history was on the side of the young; eventually they would be the establishment and many of their best ideas would be implemented while they outgrew their worst ones.

During Hayakawa’s senate run in 1976,
however, he produced a discordant note after James D. and Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston’s classic recounting of the WWII Japanese-American internment, *Farewell to Manzanar*, was produced as a film for television. In a *TV Guide* review, Hayakawa wrote that “through the adventure of relocation, almost all Nisei and many Issei were thrown out of their ghettoized Japan-town existence into the mainstream of American life.” That was a frequently repeated opinion by a man who hadn’t been interned, and his use of the word “adventure” grated many. The Houstons were my good friends, so I challenged Don on that opinion, and he responded that the internment was a tragedy, “but a tragedy from which some good came.” He survived the damage caused by that controversy to win the senate seat, despite a political sea-change that saw him morph from left to right rather opportunistically.

I had once seen him fall asleep mid-conversation at a party, and during his stint in Washington, an unacknowledged sleep disorder and a decision made by his staff, undid Hayakawa’s image. Johnny Carson, whose *Tonight Show* dominated late-night television, began joking about Don—“What would S. I. Hayakawa’s personalized auto license plate be? ‘ZZZZZZZ’”—but Carson also offered an opportunity for the senator to appear on his show. Hayakawa’s aides “thought it would not be appropriate for [Hayakawa] to be going on ‘The Tonight Show’ as a guest,” so they didn’t tell him. Don was a charming public speaker, so that lost opportunity may have been the most telling error his staff ever made.

When Hayakawa’s senate term ended, he acknowledged that it was not considered successful. Asked what he’d be remembered for, he told a *Los Angeles Times* reporter, “Sleeping, I guess.” That abject concession suggests the news media’s ability to cast a limiting light on an otherwise varied, even distinguished, career. Hayakawa’s post-senate activity as spokesperson for U. S. English and its campaign to declare English the national language resonated with a segment of the public, while his more important work as special advisor on Southeast Asian and Pacific Basin matters for Secretary of State George Schultz went largely unnoticed.

In 1991 I was reading from a new collection of my stories at the Depot Bookstore & Cafe in Mill Valley when I noticed the Hayakawas slip into the back of the room, Don pulling a small oxygen tank. Following the festivities, and with two of my old SFSC professors—Thurston Womack and John Dennis—both of whom had been strikers at San Francisco State, I greeted Don and Marge. That led to an invitation to their house, which we three accepted.

Once there, Womack was startled when Don, who was clearly failing, looked up and asked, “Who are you, again?” Thurston, once a close friend of Hayakawa’s, identified himself, then Don said, “Thurston, do you know I wasted six years of my life in the United States Senate?”

That was the last time we ever saw him.
Through the generosity of the Foundation, the California History Section of the Library has obtained two beautiful orotone photographs of Yosemite. This represents a significant addition to the section’s growing collection of these rare, sparkling, luminous images dating from the Arts and Crafts period of the early twentieth century.

Also known as the “goldtone,” the orotone is made by printing a glass plate positive on a sensitized sheet of glass. To bring out the image, the photographer backs the glass with a sticky or viscous mixture of powdered gold pigment and banana oil. An alternative technique is to apply 23-carat gold leaf to the back of the plate. The result is an amazing iridescent quality not achieved by the standard printing of a negative on sensitized paper. When enjoyed by the viewer, the glass positive orotone has a distinctive brownish luminosity that gives it a magical, holographic sheen. Because the image is on a fragile glass plate, the photographer then places it in a protective frame and seals its back with paper. Since they are framed glass images, they are, by their very nature, rare.

Edward S. Curtis, celebrated for his monumental photographic study, *The North American Indian*, created dozens of orotones, mainly of Native American subjects. He is recognized as the most famous practitioner of this exotic process and advertised them as “Curt-Tones” in one of his sales catalogs. Curtis, in this catalog, provided an eloquent statement concerning the advantage of this form of photography:

> The ordinary photographic print, however good, lacks depth and transparency, or more strictly speaking, translucency. We all know how beautiful are the stones and pebbles in the limpid brook of the forest where the water absorbs the blue of the sky and the green of the foliage, yet when we take the same irides-

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*Kurutz is the Bulletin’s editor and serves as the voluntary executive director of the Foundation.*

cent pebbles from the water and dry them they are dull and lifeless, so it is with the ordinary photographic print, but in the Curt-Tones all the transparency is retained and they are as full of life and sparkle as an opal.

The orotone won favor with California photographers as well. Both of the new orotones are attributed to Farciot Edouart (1895–1980), best known for his pioneering work for special effects in the film industry and developing the technique of rear projection. Early on in his illustrious career, he experimented with a variety of photographic media. Both of his 5 x 7 inch orotones show gorgeous scenes on the tree-lined “Yosemite [Merced] River” and are framed in typical, but attractive, Arts and Crafts style frames. Their striking quality easily transports the viewer into the great valley.

In addition to the Edouart acquisition, the Library has now obtained eight other examples of this unusual form of photography. All were created by Arthur Clarence Pillsbury (1870–1946) who operated the “Studio of the Three Arrows” in Yosemite from 1906 to 1927. Pillsbury, following the devastating 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and Fire, set up his studio in Yosemite and sold thousands of postcards and photographic prints to eager visitors. But he also experimented with less conventional media such as motion picture technology, panoramic photography, and the orotone. His orotones range in size from 13 1/2 x 16 1/2 to 7 1/2 x 9 3/4 inches and feature the monumentality of the wondrous valley with clear views of El Capitan, Half Dome, and Bridal Veil Falls. Two entitled “The Gates” are panoramic views highlighted by cloud scenes that dramatically capture the power of nature. In addition to these single images, the collection includes a Pillsbury triptych of three orotones in a single frame called “Gates and Falls of Yosemite,” measuring 8 1/4 x 22 1/2 inches. Several of Pillsbury’s orotones have his photographer’s logotype.
on the back on the frame. Full color reproductions of several of these framed glass images may be seen with the PDF version of Issue 102 of the Bulletin on the Foundation’s web site at www.cslfdn.org.

However, not all of his golden subject matter centered on the popular Yosemite Valley as demonstrated by his “A Misty Afternoon.” Using the soft focus technique of “pictorialism,” it is a comely, brown-toned landscape of eucalyptus trees and rolling hills probably somewhere in the San Francisco Bay Area. This bucolic, misty scene contrasts with his clear, sharp Yosemite views and shows his willingness to experiment.

Even more remarkable and rare is a Pillsbury silvertone called “Snow and Rocks.” The silvertone uses the same process as the goldtone except that it substitutes silver as the backing. This 11 x 14 inch glass image beautifully renders the Yosemite Valley blanketed in snow. The use of silver rather than the golden hue of the orotone, successfully highlights the brilliant white of the fresh snow. Such an effect would have been virtually impossible with a conventional photographic print from that era.

Together, these attractive framed glass images form a splendid addition to the Library’s collection of specimen examples illustrating the history of photography ranging from daguerreotypes of the Gold Rush to twenty-first century platinum prints. The orotone and silvertone further demonstrate that photography was an art form and not merely a simple record of reality.

The following were helpful sources of information in writing this article:


The result [of a framed orotone] is an amazing iridescent quality not achieved by the standard printing of a negative on sensitized paper. When enjoyed by the viewer, the glass positive orotone has a distinctive brownish luminosity that gives it a magical, holographic sheen.

"Yosemite [Merced] River." The two orotones attributed to Farciot Edouart.

"El Capitan," Yosemite Valley. Large format orotone by A. C. Pillsbury.

The orotone and silvertone demonstrate that photography was an art form and not merely a simple record of reality.
Robert M. Dickover, Foundation board member since 2002 and longtime supporter of the California State Library, passed away on February 19, 2012. He was a talented letterpress printer and expert on California fine presses. Over the years, Mr. Dickover contributed many articles to the Foundation Bulletin on rare books, printing history, and new additions to the Library’s fine press collections. He spent many happy hours in the Library’s Preservation Office or carefully inspecting the layout and typography of a Kelmscott Press book in the Rare Book Reading Room. In addition to his work with the Library, Mr. Dickover was active with the Sacramento Book Collectors Club and the Book Club of California. Out of his Citrus Height garage, he printed scores of attractive keepsakes and announcements with his venerable iron press. In 2005, the Book Club of California published his outstanding California Bookplates as its 2005 annual keepsake. His wisdom and enthusiasm for typography and fine books will be sorely missed.

*(We received this sad news just as this issue of the Bulletin was sent to press).*

CURRENT DOINGS AT THE BRAILLE & TALKING BOOK LIBRARY

By Sandra Swafford

THANK YOU LUNCHEON HELD

BTBL staff hosted an appreciation luncheon on January 12 for California State Library volunteers. Those in attendance included BTBL book inspectors, BTBL narration volunteers, and Library Development Services (LDS) Facebook page designer. State Librarian Stacey Aldrich, BTBL Program Manager Mike Marlin, and State Library Services Bureau Chief David Cismowski thanked all volunteers for their service and contributions over the preceding year. BTBL’s Circulation Supervisor Marian Broom presented gift cards to all attendees as a small token of the library’s thanks. Volunteers enjoyed an excellent lunch and conversations with California State Library staff and each other.

TWO NEW STAFF MEMBERS JOIN READER ADVISORY DEPARTMENT

As a library technician in the Government Publication Section of Information Services last year, most of Donna Scales’ days were spent assisting patrons on the telephone and at the front desk of Library and Courts II. However, she admitted, “I’ve always been up for a challenge.” In January she became the supervisor of the Reader Advisory Department in BTBL. The department is staffed by seven Reader Advisors (RAs). Each Reader Advisor (RA) is assigned a group of patrons with whom they are in frequent contact and keeps a list of book requests for each patron and helps them solve any problems they may have with equipment, delivery of books, etc. In this position Scales is responsible for a variety of tasks. In addition to supervising the work of Reader Advisors, she will act as supply coordinator for BTBL, co-administer of the Automated Call Distribution (ACD) system, co-administer of the Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) site, and act as official institutional liaison for nearly 550 northern California institutional clients of BTBL’s services.

The other new BTBL staff member is Sarah Connelly. Ms Connelly graduated from Sacramento City College’s Library and Information Technology program, worked at California State Archives as an on-call page, and joined BTBL in November as the newest Reader Advisor. She has already formed warm relationships with many of the people assigned to her and, smiling, she says, “I love this job. The patrons are awesome.” According to Mike Marlin, she has an impressive knowledge of Web design and layout skills and will be tapped for special projects as well.
NEW TREASURES ADDED THROUGH THE GENEROSITY OF THE FOUNDATION

In addition to the acquisition of the Yosemite orotone views described in the article “Yosemite on Glass” earlier in this issue of the Bulletin, the Foundation has obtained in the last several months a fascinating array of rare books and documents for the Library’s special collections. These items are purchased with funds raised through the generous donations of its membership and by fees generated by the publication of California State Library historical images. From time to time, the Bulletin will include a short segment like this one profiling new and fascinating additions.

GARY E. STRONG AND WARD RITCHIE

Former State Librarian of California Gary E. Strong continues his support of the Library Foundation with a generous annual cash donation. This is in addition to the spectacular collection of California mystery novels he donated that was highlighted in Issue 99 of the Bulletin. Mr. Strong, now the University Librarian at the University of California, Los Angeles, is an expert on California fine presses. With this in mind, his donation was used to purchase early imprints from the noted Southern California printer Ward Ritchie (1905–1996). All were produced in the late 1920s and 1930s during the beginnings of this illustrious printer’s career. Titles include Valley Quail printed by Ritchie in 1929 in an edition of eighty copies; Sonnets for Helen printed in 1932, one of 100 copies; and The Youth of Hamlet, one of twenty-five copies printed in 1932. When Strong served as state librarian, he hosted an exhibit and reception honoring Ritchie, and in 1984 the Foundation published an attractive booklet on Ritchie titles entitled The Mystique of Printing.

WILLIAM J. K. POLK AND CALIFORNIA GOLD

Perhaps the most important speech associated with California’s transition to statehood was the Message of the President to Both Houses of Congress, dated December 5, 1848. Given by President James K. Polk, this message announced to the nation and the world that gold had been discovered in California in great quantity. His announcement touched off the 1849 Gold Rush, making possible California’s speedy admission into the Union as the thirty-first state. In addition, the text gives considerable attention to the war with Mexico. The Foundation obtained for the Library a rare separate printing of this electrifying speech. It was printed by the Weekly Union of Washington, D.C. and consists of sixteen pages printed in double columns. The words of Polk’s speech are readily available bound with other government documents but this is a scarce printing not recorded in the standard presidential bibliographies.

VICTORIAN GOTHIC BINDINGS

The State Library possesses an excellent collection of Victorian illustrated books and bindings in its General Rare Book Collection and Sutro Library. One of the fascinating aspects of the Victorian era is the admiration of medieval bookbindings. Rather than create the covers out of carved wood, the English ingeniously created facsimile bindings out of papier-mâché secured by a metal frame. From one mold, the publisher would typically make a thousand copies. A recent addition is Henry Southgate’s Many Thoughts of Many Minds: Being a Treasury of Reference published in London in 1864 by Charles Griffin and Company. The thick, 700-page Victorian Gothic volume is embellished in the “Black Prince” style of molded binding with raised borders, bosses, stars, banners, and a red-colored show though underneath the papier-mâché. The middle consists of a highly ornamented shield carrying the book’s title. The black leather spine is gold-stamped with heavy ornamentation and with the title and author’s name. The back cover is a duplicate of the front. To date, the Library possesses seven examples of this curious binding style. The earliest is an 1847 Holy Bible. When shown on Library tours, the audience is invariably impressed by the heft and intricacy of the papier-mâché binding and astonished to learn that it is not made of carved wood.

The beautiful ornate covers for Henry Southgate’s Many Thoughts of Many Minds (1864) was made of paper mâché and designed to mimic a Medieval binding.
California’s love affair with the automobile continues to be a fascinating collecting field. The Library has an outstanding collection of early automobile road guides providing pointers on how to get around the Golden State when paved roads were a luxury, automobile-worthy bridges were not to be taken for granted, and gas stations were few and far between. A new addition is the 5th edition of *Hamilton’s Illustrated Auto Road Map and California Tour Book*. Published in Los Angeles in 1914 and selling for $2.00, the tall, canvas-covered volume is illustrated with thumbnail size “photos of the location of turns, forks, crossroads, landmarks, hotels, resorts, inns, garages and points of interest, with much supplementary information to motorist and tourist.” The front and rear inside covers include folding maps, and the inside features 202 compact detailed maps illustrated with photographs and advertisements for handy restaurants, garages, and gas stations. The folding map in the front is entitled “How to Get Out of Town,” meaning from Los Angeles; the rear folding map features San Francisco and all roads within a fifty mile radius. A final section is devoted to “Suggestions for Auto Trips.”

The front cover of *Hamilton’s Illustrated Auto Road Map and California Tour Book* (1914) was illustrated with a view of Mission San Gabriel.

**DON HAGERTY DONATES THREE TREASURES**

Foundation Secretary and Board of Directors Member Donald J. Hagerty continues his loyal support of the Library through ongoing gifts. To close out 2011, this great scholar of Maynard Dixon and Western art presented the Library with three new treasures. The first is a rare cabinet size (6 1/2 x 4 1/2 inch) albumen photograph of Theodore Judah by Carleton E. Watkins. Judah (1826–1863) was the famed chief engineer for the Central Pacific Railroad. It is not known exactly when Judah posed for this portrait. Although best known for his genius as a landscape photographer, Watkins did market portrait photographs in his San Francisco studio. Hagerty’s second gift is a handsome sepia-toned photograph of the celebrated Western artist Charles M. Russell by H. C. Eklund. Made around 1922, the portrait is still in its original studio mat and frame and is signed “Charles M. Russell, The Cowboy Artist, His Last Studio Portrait, H.C. Eklund.” In addition to the portraits, Hagerty donated an attractive hand colored *County and Township Map of Oregon*. In beautiful condition and protected by its original cloth case, J. K. Gill and Company of Portland, Oregon, published the map in 1882. According to WorldCat, only Joe Nardone who is a Pony Express master historian has spent literally hundreds of hours researching newspapers and other documents in the Library’s California History Section. His love of this incredible but short chapter in the nation’s transportation and communication history has led to his turning up many new facts and dispelling picturesque myths about those intrepid mail carriers. In appreciation of the section’s service, he has made a donation of $5,000 to the Foundation. His gift will be used by the Foundation to enrich the collection. In recognition of this gift, one of the exhibit cases in the Mead B. Kibbey Gallery will be designated in Nardone’s honor. Mr. Nardone’s fascinating research was superbly profiled by Pat Morris in issue 87 of the *Bulletin*.

**THE BENEVOLENCE OF MASTER HISTORIAN JOE NARDONE**
MEAD KIBBEY AND DAUGHTER DONATE COLLECTION OF STEREOSCOPHIS.

Mead B. Kibbey, the Library’s most generous donor, has always been fascinated by stereographs. He routinely carries a modern stereo camera and delights in making three-dimensional views. In 1987, the Foundation published his invaluable book on A. A. Hart’s stereo views of the building of the Central Pacific Railroad in the late 1860s. As a historian, he has collected widely. Late in 2011, with his daughter Liz Gosnell, he donated an amazing collection of boxed stereo sets created by the famous Keystone-Mast Company entitled *A Tour of the World*. Published in the early 1900s, the series is noted not only for the breadth of subject matter but also for the sharpness of each image. Mounted on gray curved cards, each comes with a detailed explanatory text printed on the back of the card. Their gift will be highlighted in a future issue of the *Bulletin*.

QUENTIN L. KOPP PAPERS AND CLARK-BURR FAMILY ARCHIVES PROJECTS COMPLETED

Box after box of important collections of private papers and business records have been organized for use as the result of Foundation support. Former California state senator and superior court judge Quentin L. Kopp donated his papers to the Library many years ago. Through generous contributions by Kopp and by the California Fund of the Foundation, the Foundation contracted with Carson Hendricks to process his papers. Hendricks organized 158 cubic feet for use. Kopp was first elected to public office in 1971 as a member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. In 1986, he was elected to the California State Senate as an Independent representing District 8. He left the senate in 1998 due to term limits. He was then appointed to a judgeship with the California Superior Court of San Mateo County, retiring from that position in 2004. An online finding aid to the Kopp Collection is now available via the Library’s online catalog.

JoAnn Fujikawa and Sarah Boone in December of 2011 completed the processing of the equally impressive Clark-Burr Family Archives representing five generations of the cattle and dairy industry in the Hanford area of Kings County. Their work was funded by generous donations from Willard (Bill) Clark of Hanford and Robin Burr Briscoe of Torrance. The collection includes personal papers of Wesley and Mary Clark of Cal-Clark dairy; Clark Family photographs; personal family ephemera; farm photographs and dairy working papers and records of specific prize-winning cattle; history and papers on the creation of World-Wide Sires; Willard (Bill) Clark’s travels, speeches, and awards associated with his involvement in World-Wide Sires and the breeding industry. In addition to the online finding aid, Fujikawa and Boone created a 375-page collection inventory.

Having completed this project, Fujikawa and Boone are now working on organizing the papers of noted Haiku poet Elizabeth Searle Lamb. Lamb’s daughter, Carolyn Lamb of Santa Fé, New Mexico, recently delivered to the Library several more boxes of her mother’s papers and made a generous donation to fund the processing of this important collection.
PRESIDIO SOLDIERS. THE WINDGATE PRESS PUBLISHES NEW PHOTOGRAPHY BOOK BASED ON THE COLLECTIONS OF THE SUTRO LIBRARY

Our friends at the Windgate Press, Linda and Wayne Bonnett, have published a spectacular new book based on the C. Tucker Beckett Collection of the Sutro Library Branch of the State Library entitled Presidio Soldiers, San Francisco and Beyond: The Photography of C. Tucker Beckett 1912–1917. Historian Wayne Bonnett wrote the well-researched text. Sutro Library Senior Librarian Martha Whittaker (recently retired) provided generous assistance to the Sausalito press in producing this beautifully designed and written illustrated volume. The press has provided the Foundation with copies for sale. Proceeds will benefit the Sutro Library in San Francisco. The following is a summary of this handsome book taken from the dust jacket:

From the Presidio of San Francisco to remote Alaskan outposts, to Northern Mexico in search of Pancho Villa, Tucker Beckett photographed the lives of ordinary soldiers in extraordinary circumstances. Over the span of seven years he made over 60,000 photographs with a hand-held Kodak. Presidio Soldiers, San Francisco and Beyond is a remarkable documentary of transition in American military life.

With permission from the Windgate Press, a portion of the introduction is excerpted to give our readers a flavor of this important contribution to the history of California, the military, and the use of photography in the army:

The Presidio [of San Francisco] has a hidden history as well that resides in memory, individual and collective experiences of those who passed through it. They fought wars, experienced good times and bad, endured long journeys of hope and despair to distant places. Some never returned. Some are buried there. Presidio soldiers left other markers too, their experiences voiced through diaries, journals, snapshots, and letters.

One of those voices is that of Tucker Beckett, infantryman, one of thousands who knew the Presidio. For Beckett, the Presidio of San Francisco would weave in and out of his military career from 1910 over the following decade, and his photographs presented here reflect that. They also show the transforming role of Presidio soldiers from guards at a nineteenth-century outpost to mechanized, modern, twentieth-century combat troops.

Beckett’s portraits of individual soldiers, at rest and in the field, stand out as some of his best work. His subjects unintentionally reveal private feelings to his camera, carrying his portraits beyond the realm of ordinary documentary photography. His images of camp interiors are classic documentary photography—the viewer is free to examine in sharp detail the soldiers’ surroundings and accoutrements of their profession.

Beckett in the field showed an innate ability to recognize good compositions and get difficult shots quickly. He took pains to show visible changes in Army life occurring around him. Traditional blue uniforms and infantry weapons such as the single-shot rifle, little changed since the Civil War, were fading away. The new Army consisted of men in olive-drab and khaki with repeating rifles and machine guns. Airplanes and state-of-the-art wireless radio transmitters were extending the soldier’s reach. Beckett photographed the legendary horse cavalry in its last combat campaign and the 1st Aero Squadron in its first. He pictured mule-drawn wagon trains as well as their ultimate replacement, motorized truck trains. Beckett wanted to make a vivid, concise record of an event, a finished story at the moment the event itself was complete. His philosophy was simple: “The mental attitude of the photographer determines the sort of pictures he will take; if he has no purpose, his pictures will
reflect none and visa versa.”

Part of Beckett’s purpose was accurate information. His captions to each photo include name and rank, company and regiment of subjects, date, and often time of day and aperture settings. His notes reveal his almost obsessive, sometimes humorous, need to find a high vantage point to capture a broad field of view in his lens. Apparently there wasn’t a desk top, fence post, tree, telegraph pole, or tower he didn’t climb to get a better shot. The results prove his dedication and resourcefulness and give us a truthful, remarkable glimpse into his world and a seldom seen part of ours.

The photographs in this book are offered as a testament to Tucker Beckett’s insight, determination, and skill with a Kodak.

Fort Gibbon, Alaska telephone exchange. September 10, 1912.

One method used by the Army to search for lost persons was cannon fire from the old 13-pounder museum pieces at Fort Gibbon. In the Alaskan tundra, temperatures fell well below zero and soldier could get lost in the blinding snow.

Corporal Tucker Beckett with his new Graflex camera outside his photo studio in the 16th Infantry camp outside of El Paso, November 3, 1915.
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