2 Under the Sign of the Sagebrush: Idaho Meacham Strobridge and the Southland's Bohemia  
By Nina Schneider

12 San Francisco's 1856 Vigilantes, Theodore Hittell, and Sutro Serendipity  
By Nancy J. Taniguchi

20 Yes, Virginia, There Are Government Published Comics  
By Gary Averill

24 Challenge Accepted: New California State Librarian Greg Lucas Is Featured Speaker at “Night at the State Library”  
By Marta Knight

28 Foundation Notes  
New and Unusual Treasures Added to the Library’s Collections  
Reaching Out Via the Bulletin  
Exhibit Celebrates Yosemite’s 150th Anniversary

32 Recent Contributors

Front Cover: The Domes of the Yosemite by famed artist Albert Bierstadt. This gorgeous chromolithograph is based on his 1867 painting by Albert Bierstadt. The print itself was published in 1870 in Dusseldorf, Germany. See p. 30.

Back Cover: The National Automotive School of Los Angeles published this 1925 catalog in 1925 catalog to attract Spanish speaking students. See p. 28.

Illustrations / Photos: All images are from the collections of the California State Library in Sacramento. Illustrations for pages 2-19 and 28-30 are from the California History Section. Illustrations on pages 20-23 are from the Government Publications Section. The photograph on page 24 was taken by Vincent Beiderbecke.

Design: Angela Tannehill, Tannehill Design

California State Library Foundation  
1225 8th Street, Suite 345, Sacramento, CA 95814  
tel: 916.447.6331 | web: www.cslfdn.org | email: info@cslfdn.org
If you go to the Desert,
and live there, you learn to love it.
If you go away, you will never
forget it for one instant in after life;
it will be with you in memory
forever and forever. And always will
you hear the still voice that
lures one, calling – and calling.¹
—IDAH MEACHAM STROBRIDGE

EDITOR’S NOTE
Nina Schneider is Head Cataloger at the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, University of California, Los Angeles, and currently serves as the president of the Southern California Chapter of the American Printing History Association. She is also an active member of the Rare Books and Manuscript Section of the Association of College and Research Libraries.
Laura Idah Meacham Strobridge was a nineteenth century pioneer. She was a rancher, a miner, a bookbinder, an author, and a society lady. Her story is filled with courage, determination, character, and intelligence, and an understanding that life is more than survival. Familiarly known as Idah, she was born in Moraga Valley, California, in June of 1855, the only daughter of Phebe and George Meacham. As a young man seeking his fortune, George traveled by boat from New York to San Francisco via Panama in the great gold rush of 1849. While he was there, he built a small Baptist Church for Reverend O. C. Wheeler, 

2

creatively, or as a matter of course, using the foresail of an abandoned ship for the roof-ridge. Although he had staked a claim, it must not have paid off since he returned to his native New Jersey and married Phebe Amelia Craiger. They remained together long enough to conceive Idah before George left again to return to San Francisco, leaving behind his wife expectant with their second child. When Phebe received a letter from her husband stating that his claim had been jumped, she immediately departed for California, never to return to the East Coast.

In the mid-1860s the western United States was still a vast and dangerous wilderness, slowly being tamed by the ever-increasing reach of the railroads. Magazines and brochures produced by agents promoting opportunities in the West advertised two methods of relocation. One was by booking a passage on the Pacific Mail Company’s steamer which left New York Harbor and arrived in Panama eight days later. Travelers would then transfer to a train which would take them across the Isthmus in order to board another steamer arriving in San Francisco in thirteen days. Although this may have been the route that George Meacham took when he first set out to California, another, and more popular, choice was to travel by train. Passengers would ride on the Great Overland Railway to Omaha, Nebraska, where they would transfer to the Union Pacific, and later the Central Pacific Railroad to California. 

1

Rails were being laid at a rapid rate. Between 1864 and 1875 the nation’s rail-network doubled in mileage. 

4

The railroads gained importance as they brought emigrants to the West Coast and returned to the East Coast with livestock. In 1868, the population in California was 450,000. 

5

Twelve years later it had nearly doubled to 789,577 and by 1884 it had reached one million. 

6

The Strobridge family did their part to add to this population.

When Idah was ten, the family moved from the Moraga Valley to Humboldt County in northwestern Nevada. George had given up mining and was homesteading ranch-lands instead. The Mexi-
can government was offering land grants “intended for grazing purposes only, and of comparatively little value.” The boundaries of these tracts were never formalized and George was the beneficiary of this informality. Once the Central Pacific Railroad reached the Humboldt River route, George Meacham built a hotel and restaurant, known as Humboldt House, to cater to rail travelers. It was here that Idah grew up in the relative isolation of Nevada ranch-lands while witnessing a vast array of people passing through the area. She saw individuals from all over the world emigrating to the West, spreading from California and moving into Nevada, looking for quick fortunes from gold and silver mines, as well as families traveling through Nevada, not to seek gold but a better life in California. Idah also had contact with Native Americans, Mexican cowboys, and Chinese miners. She would eventually use these characters and these experiences in her writings.

George Meacham must have been successful in running his hotel and ranch because Idah was sent to Alameda County in California to attend college at Mills Seminary. Now known as Mills College in Oakland, the school was founded by Cyrus and Susan Mills in 1852 as a women’s seminary at a time when less than eight percent of the population in California were women and there was no “educational arrangement” for the “young daughters of leading citizens.” The founders “set their minds . . . on establishing a college for women, [as] an institution that should meet a local need, but possess a continental standard of excellence.” They aimed to “give girls a serious education, not to be a finishing school.” And they believed that “in no way can [this] more be accomplished than in rightly educating those who are to become wives, mothers, and teachers, and hence shape the destiny of individuals and nations.”
A glance at a later Mills College catalogue reveals that although tuition was “virtually free,” room and board cost $350 for the academic year and $10 was charged for books and stationery per term. If a student was interested in piano or voice lessons, she would be charged an additional fee. Idah excelled in elocution which would have cost her father an extra $30 per class each term. Idah graduated from Mills in 1883, thirteen years before these prices were current but still relatively expensive for a homesteader from Nevada.

While at Mills Seminary, Idah met Samuel Hooker Strobridge, a construction manager for the Southern Pacific Railroad. They were married after she graduated. She was twenty-eight at the time, eight years his senior. As a wedding gift, George Meacham gave the couple ranchlands adjoining his own in Humboldt County, Nevada. A promising future of ranching and mining failed to materialize and instead turned to tragedy. The tragedy, however, was the impetus for Idah’s self-empowerment. Her first son Earl, born a year after she married Samuel, died the day after he was born. Her second son Gerald, born in 1886, and her third son Kenneth, born in 1887, as well as her husband all died from pneumonia during the bitter winter of 1888–89.

Any person faced with such a loss wouldn’t be blamed for seeking refuge in a quiet life, but five years after losing her husband and children, Idah’s name appears in a number of scientific journals. The search for precious metals and minerals became more common in Nevada once the California lodes were exhausted. Idah assisted surveyors in locating mine claims even though some of these prospects were far-fetched. The following article by an unidentified writer appeared in the June 1895 issue of Scientific American and the July issue of Mining and Scientific Press:

“I have spent the month of June in the Humboldt Mountains, looking over good gold prospects. The main claim is called the “Lost Mine.” It was opened thirty-one years ago, prior to the advent of the railroad. A shaft was sunk on the vein about 25 feet, it averaging about $75 per ton gold. At that time it would not pay, owing to the excessive cost of mining material and labor. During the past four years persistent searches were made for the mine, but each time were abandoned, until this spring when a cultured woman of the new age appeared in the person of Mrs. Idah M. Strobridge . . . . She has also located five claims on the lode, laid out an new camp and named it after her father, “Meacham”; and reorganized the district anew as the “Humboldt”; she has four men to work and is superintending operations herself. She has also located the water and springs flowing over the claims, which are nine miles east of the Central Pacific Railroad, at the Humboldt House . . . .”

It was during this time that Idah was not only managing her own ranch, but her father’s as well that she discovered bookbinding as a means to guarantee her livelihood. She was introduced to the craft by an unidentified amateur. When she wrote to practicing bookbinders, asking for advice and instruction, they chose not to share their knowledge with someone who would potentially compete for their clients. Finding an envelope with the address of a bookbinding supply store, she ordered basic tools and a nipping press and proceeded to teach herself. Either unable or unwilling to pay for the special furniture and frames required for sewing and covering, George Meacham came to Idah’s rescue and custom built the items she needed to start her business. “The first thing you must have, if you want to learn bookbinding for a living, is a father,” said Mrs. Strobridge.”
It is perhaps a bit curious why a woman in Nevada, in the late nineteenth century, more familiar with locating potentially lucrative mine claims, would be drawn to bookbinding as a career. In cities such as New York a range of skills was required for working in the trade, from artistic hand-binding to repetitive collation. Although the industry was dominated by women by 1900, and the ever-increasing output of publications insured an employed future, wages were still relatively low. Most women bookbinders could expect to earn between $3 and $6 a week, which was similar to women working in other trades. Any incentive Idah may have had to learn bookbinding as a path to a financially comfortable future would have been dispelled in a short amount of time. A more likely scenario was her interest in the revival of fine press production begun by William Morris and continued by T. J. Cobden-Sanderson and the Roycrofters in upstate New York. We don’t know what Idah was reading when she began her new vocation, but it is likely that, as a college-educated woman responsible for managing two ranches and working with surveyors, she was well-read and up to date on current events and likely learned about the efforts of the Kelmscott Press and its disciples. She may have initially sought clients solely for her bindings but after she established herself in Los Angeles she was acknowledged as both an author and bookmaker. Was she drawn to the idea of creating a beautiful artifact or was she simply trying to earn a living? It may have been a combination of both.

As if she wasn’t already busy with the management of the family ranches and the time-consuming practice of hand-bookbinding, Idah began her writing career at the age of forty. Her first pieces appeared under the pseudonym “George Craiger,” a combination of her father’s first name and her mother’s maiden name. Her first story was an account of her father’s trip to the mines of California. Idah quickly reverted to her own name and began to write articles for newspapers and magazines in San Francisco and Los Angeles. She wrote an opinion piece for The Editor: A Journal of Information for Literary Workers in which she advocated the use of a typewriter when submitting drafts to a publisher. Another such article was the short piece entitled “Dealing with Editors,” which appeared in the March 1897 issue of The Writer. If Idah was contributing to magazines that catered to the literary crowd, she must have run across discussion of the art and craft of hand-bookmaking à la Morris.

Other pieces such as “Greater Love Hath No Man: a Story,” which appeared in Arena in 1899 and used the desert as a backdrop for the story, brought her to the attention of Charles Lummis. Lummis is a well-known figure in turn-of-the-century Southern California. Not only was he a prolific writer and crusader of Native American rights, but he was also a newspaper editor for the Los Angeles Daily Times. The intense pressures of this job caused Lummis to suffer a severe nervous breakdown, possibly a mild stroke, and he was forced to give it up. Land of Sunshine and its successor, Out West were his next editorial ventures begun in 1894 and 1902 respectively. These periodicals promoted the good life of Los Angeles and were “envisioned as a recruiting tool to stimulate the growth of business in Southern California.” Although these magazines continued to fill that role, under Lummis’s editorship their content gradually began to include more fiction and poetry, while Lummis wrote a book review column.

It was in an article entitled “A Sage-Brush Oasis,” in which Idah Meacham Strobridge was introduced to the “Blue Book Society” of Los Angeles. This article, written by Lummis in 1901 and published in Land of Sunshine, states, “And as housekeeping and mining and ranching are not enough for a really active spirit, and as writing is only half enough recreation, Mrs. Strobridge has plunged as heartily into book-binding. Not as a fad, nor yet commercially; but, so far as can be seen, for pure love of work worthwhile. And though this sage-brush artisan has been studying out this exigent trade by herself, off there in the wilderness, her work is emphatically worthwhile.” Her writings were perhaps already familiar to some as she had contributed at least four stories to Land of Sunshine before this sketch appeared. All of her stories were set in the desert and used the landscape as a foil in the plot. This would continue to be true for the remainder of her literary career.

“A Neglected Corner,” an article Idah wrote for Land of Sunshine which appeared in January of 1898, provides an interesting glimpse into her psyche. The piece describes San Francisco’s Mission Dolores and its cemetery, pleading that it be left alone as a reminder of the city’s heritage. Written with typical nineteenth century descriptive flourishes, it is accompanied by photographs taken by Idah. In contrast to the prose, the photographs have a restrained composition. They are strikingly modern, reminiscent of Edward Weston and Ansel Adams. This unconventional vision can also be seen in a well-known photograph of Idah that she made herself. She is standing in a doorway wearing an apron with her sleeves rolled up — one arm raised against the frame and the other holding a backing hammer.

Shortly after Lummis’s article appeared, Idah sold her land in Humboldt County for a reported $11,000 and moved with her parents to Los Angeles. Settling in Arroyo Seco, which today is nestled between South Pasadena and Dodger Stadium, in a neighborhood known as Highland Park, she reopened the shop she called the Artesia Bindery. In doing so, she was one of the first people in Southern California to produce her own books as part of a private press. Although she did not operate a printing press in her shop, she did limit each of her three novels to one thousand signed and numbered copies.

The first of these works, In Miners’ Mirage-Land, was published in 1904.
Printed by the Baumgardt Publishing Company of Los Angeles and illustrated by J. Duncan Gleason, it appeared a year after Mary Austin’s contribution to the literature of desert, The Land of Little Rain. The stories that make up In Miners’ Mirage-Land had already appeared as articles Idah wrote for the Los Angeles Times and the San Francisco Chronicle. Six copies were hand bound in full morocco, twenty four in three-quarter morocco and the remaining nine hundred and seventy copies in heavy paper.25

The work was received with favorable reviews. The Dial stated “The stories have a strength and directness of style that make them very real, and the little introductory studies prefaceing the tales help to suggest the charm and mystery of the strange regions dealt with.”26 In the Atlantic Monthly, H. W. Boynton wrote:

Mrs. Strobridge is a less finished writer [than John Muir, John Van Dyke, or Mary Austin], and her work differs in other ways. Intimate as she is with the desert, and much as she loves it for its own sake, it appeals to her most of all as human scene; and she is successfully daring in harking back to the more picturesque aspects of that scene: to the forty-niners and to their immediate successors. This is a book of yarns, a kind of treasury of fables handed down along the camp-fires of half a century. It is, moreover, a book of frank moralizing. ... The essays strike one, perhaps, as a little less happy, a little less spontaneous, than the fables; but the book as a whole is fascinating: it somehow gives one the impression of first-hand contact with a phase of the national experience which we are already half inclined to regard as mythical.27

The success of this collection ensured Idah’s position among the cultural elite of Southern California. Her name appears in the Los Angeles Society Blue Book, where it

Mrs. Strobridge’s power to visualize the beauty and horror of the desert, her direct and strong narrative, and her ability to refrain from anything hysterical, mark the book [The Loom of the Desert] as an unusual contribution to the literature of the West.


Famed Western artist Maynard Dixon illustrated two of Strobridge’s books including this dramatic frontispiece for Loom of the Desert.
are many good tales, here, all touched with the primeval [sic] passion of the mountains and desert. The author has the power of drawing a character in a few strong strokes, and she has the real dramatic quality that is so rare in the ordinary short story.” Reviews in other periodicals were not as favorable. “The Loom of the Desert’ is work of high rank. Although it is uneven in places, and although one unworthy . . . is included, Mrs. Strobridge’s power to visualize the beauty and horror of the desert, her direct and strong narrative, and her ability to refrain from anything hysterical, mark the book as an unusual contribution to the literature of the West.”

Idah was not the first to write about the desert but she was one of the first (after Mary Austin and John Van Dyke) to depict the desert as more than just a barren wasteland and to describe the beauty of it as well. Idah was the first to capitalize the “d” in desert, describing it as “unprejudiced, the voice by and by will make itself heard as it whispers in your ear. And when you lay your head upon its breast, and hear its heart-beats you will know a rest that is absolute and infinite.” Whereas Mary Austin’s view of the desert in Land of Little Rain was much more romanticized and sympathetic, Idah understood the realities of the desert’s harshness.

This is not to say that Idah was the only author to suffer. The more famous Mary Austin had her own tragedies. She was the second of four children, and while still quite young, her father and sister died from illness. Since these were the family members to which she was closest, the loss was devastating. An unexpected move from Illinois to the upper San Joaquin Valley of California only increased her sense of loneliness. An unsuccessful attempt at college, a disastrous marriage, and the birth of a severely mentally-disabled daughter propelled Austin to begin writing. Her works first appeared in periodicals and magazines and her masterpiece
Land of Little Rain was published a year before Idah’s In Miners’ Mirage-Land.

Idah admired Austin and was able to become acquainted with her through Charles Lummis, who gathered around him a group of artists and writers that included such people as Jack London, John Muir, and Ambrose Bierce. Looking at Austin’s life, one senses that she was never happily settled in one place. She was one of the founders of the Carmel Writer’s colony where she would live off and on for twelve years.33

Idah, on the other hand, was a steady and industrious individual. She remained at her home in Los Angeles writing, binding, caring for her parents, and involving herself in such organizations as the Friday Morning Club, The Southern California Press Club, and the League of American Pen Women. In fact she was the hostess of some of these meetings. “During the summer, various members entertained the [Southern California Press] club – one most enjoyable occasion was a day at the ‘Wickiup’ of Mrs. Strobridge, located on the old breakwater at San Pedro. Some of us will never forget the unique little houses that once stretched across the breakwater, overhanging the sea, of which Mrs. Strobridge’s was one of the most charming, and all of which were razed during the construction of the Los Angeles Harbor.”34

The ‘Wickiup’ may have been Idah’s personal and private Carmel colony and a means of escape. In an interview in the Los Angeles Examiner of 1904, Idah describes this retreat. Longing for “an existence wholly away from those conventional things hampered by man. . . . It is the life on the desert wholly apart from everything of pretense. I cannot give it up entirely and so I have furnished in fitting manner the ‘Wickieup’[sic], my substitute for the desert, down on the breakwater at San Pedro. The place is among the huts of the fishermen and it is there that I go every Saturday night . . . and do you wonder that I love that beautiful expanse of water which stretches out before me, that vast sheet of blue relieved by motion, color and animate life?”35
In 1909, Idah’s third and final book was published. *The Land of Purple Shadows* was illustrated once again by Maynard Dixon and followed the familiar layout and typography of her previous works. This production, however, was “printed on the R. Y. McBride Press” instead of by the Baumgardt Company. In a review by *The New York Times*, the characters “are presented here truthfully enough. And the long bits of pure description – in their enthusiasm, pleasant phrasing, and familiar treatment – manage to escape the commonplace. One suspects strongly that the author belongs to one of the ever-growing cults gradually spreading over this country – if not to New Thought itself, then at least to the cousin of New Thought. For, interwoven with the thought building that has seen better days. Perhaps the reason she is not as well known today as Mary Austin or Zane Grey is due to the small editions that she produced using commercial materials, and her modest bibliography. Idah Meacham Strobridge’s contribution to the Western canon has been declared important by her contemporaries. Her life needs to be looked at not only by writers, but also by book artists and historians. Her unique ability to adapt and flourish when faced with a changing and often difficult environment is to be admired. If four careers were already not enough, later in life Idah became involved in genealogical work. Her research and genealogies of Asa Standish and a New England family earned her the honor of being called “an outstanding authority on genealogy” in her obituary. She died at the age of seventy-six in 1932 leaving two cousins as her only living family. She is buried in Oakland’s Mountain View Cemetery next to her parents, husband, and sons. The Artemisia Bindery is gone too. The lovely ranch-style home, with its rose bushes and live oak, featured in promotional literature she distributed, has been torn down. Idah didn’t live long enough to see her front yard transformed into the Pasadena Freeway. Although many historical structures in the area still stand, including El Alisal, the home of Charles Lummis, her house has been replaced with a three-story apartment building that has seen better days. This thoroughly modern woman is not well known today, and some may only be aware of a single career she had during her lifetime. Her fame arrived through her writing, but as tastes changed favoring a fictional West that worshipped outlaws and cowboys, Idah’s idea of the “Desert” was left behind. Her name is not found in such reference works as the *Dictionary of Literary Biography* or other standard texts. No full-length biography has been published and journal articles about her are scarce. What this reviewer calls a “cult” may just be Idah’s sense of longing for that sense of unpretentiousness the desert allowed her to remember. Idah continued to contribute her writing to magazines and newspapers but less successfully than she had previously. She stopped writing when she was fifty-four, but no evidence can be found that she gave up bookbinding at the same time.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY OF IDAH STROBRIDGE’S MAJOR WORKS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher and Location</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>In Miners’ Mirage-Land</em></td>
<td>Los Angeles: Baumgardt Publishing Company</td>
<td>1904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Loom of the Desert</em></td>
<td>Los Angeles: Artemisia Bindery</td>
<td>1907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Land of the Purple Shadows</em></td>
<td>Los Angeles: Artemisia Bindery</td>
<td>1909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sagebrush Trilogy, Idah Meacham Strobridge and Her Works</em></td>
<td>Reno and Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press</td>
<td>1990</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ADDITIONAL SOURCES**


3. [deleted 2005]


6. Pacific states newspaper directory, containing a carefully prepared list of all the newspapers and periodicals published in the Pacific States and territories, &c. (San Francisco: Palmer and Rey, 1884), [n.p.]. Note: The census did not account for the number of women, Native Americans, or Chinese living in California in 1880.


10. Ibid.


15. Dwyer, 6.


17. Ibid, 29.

18. Dwyer, 6.


20. Perhaps because of, or as the cause of, Lummis’s breakdown, his first wife divorced him later to marry E. C. Moore, a University of California administrator.


23. Dwyer, 10.

24. no research has indicated otherwise.


31. Book review from unidentified newspaper clipping adhered to the fly-leaf of *The Loom of the Desert*, UCLA collection. One has to wonder what the “hysteria” was all about.


35. Dwyer, 14.


38. Obituary, 1,16.

39. The few exceptions to this include Dwyer’s *Sagebrush Trilogy*, and three articles appearing forty years apart from each other.

San Francisco’s 1856 Vigilantes, Theodore Hittell, and Sutro Serendipity

By Nancy J. Taniguchi

My discovery could never have happened without a hard-working mechanic (or handyman) who spent most of the summer of 1856 in San Francisco, struggling to earn enough money to pay the steamboat fare back to his home in New Orleans. Atypically for a man of his class, he kept a daily diary, beginning:

June 13th. Friday night 11 O’clock . . . . the city is still quiet, everything dull in the Business department — . . . the Vigilants are still adding to their armament in the shape of Cannon — Grape Shot and Balls. They think tis better to prepare for war in times of peace—. . . I am loafing around and as discontented and miserable a wretch as walks . . . when I think of those I love and feel my utter inability to provide for them I feel monstrous wicked and almost curse society – but I still hope my Brother will send me the requisite means to enable me to leave.¹

When my friend handed me this family diary in 2005, he speculated, “Looks like the Civil War began early in California.” Like so many people, he had not heard of San Francisco’s 1856 Vigilance Committee, the largest in U.S. history. The search for more about the diarist’s life and times eventually led me to the Sutro Library, to the efforts of Theodore Hittell, and to a serendipitous discovery. What started as straightforward historical research developed into a magical mystery tour that has shaped my work for almost a decade.

With the help of a talented student assistant, the hunt for background material on the handyman began. We read through the published and online historical record about San Francisco’s 1856 Vigilance Committee, the direct successor of a much smaller 1851 organization. We looked for information on contemporary New Orleans, and on the water route home. Exhausting all these avenues by the fall of 2006, we agreed that she should consult the New Orleans city directories, most readily available at the Sutro Library. Neither one of us had ever been there. The trip from our Central Valley homes to the library was about 140 miles one-way, so I drove while she navigated. She could complete her part of the research, and I could augment contextual information.

While she looked forward to New Orleans research, I had decided to seek more information about his homeward journey. A slim pamphlet inherited from the late John Edwards Caswell, my predecessor as professor of California History at California State University, Stanislaus, provided the key pointer. Professor Caswell, an original subscriber to “Sutro Library Notes,” had saved this issue from Spring 1957, which his daughter had passed on to me. In it, Richard H. Dillon, Sutro Librarian, had reported the receipt of the “T. H. Hittell Papers,” with a brief biography of the historian and the note that when Hittell died in 1918, “his estate deposited forty-one of his manuscripts and typescripts in Sutro Library with the proviso that they be kept confidential for an unspecified time. In 1956 the Hittell family was contacted and permission was

EDITOR’S NOTE

Dr. Nancy J. Taniguchi is History Professor, Emerita at California State University, Stanislaus.
obtained to release all of the papers for the study of qualified researchers.” Among the holdings listed was “the manuscript of his unpublished book on filibuster William Walker.” This document particularly intrigued me, since I knew the handyman would have been negotiating travel across Central America at the time Walker ruled in Nicaragua. Would there be new information here about trans-isthmian travel? In his overview of the Hittell collection, Dillon had invited “Aficionados of California history” to come on down, reminding readers that “this collection has remained closed until this moment (after some thirty-nine years) to all researchers.”

By the time I got interested, it had been almost ninety years. Expectantly, we set off for the Sutro Library, then tucked away on Winston Drive on the north campus of San Francisco State University. To my great relief, after negotiating busy, unfamiliar highways, we found that parking was easy and plentiful. The staff obligingly provided a free parking permit, and my student eagerly went to work on New Orleans business directories.

The librarian, Dr. Martha Whittaker, proved skeptical but helpful when I asked to see the Hittell Collection. A search of the Online Archive of California revealed that it was indeed at the Sutro, but apparently, in recent years, no one had taken up the 1957 invitation issued by Dillon. Seeking the Walker manuscript, she entered the locked, glassed-in room where sensitive materials were kept, and returned with a pile of Hittell’s papers. The unpublished history of Walker was not among them, and has since been determined to be missing. However, the papers she provided proved intriguing. Hittell, a meticulous attorney and published author, had obviously tried to get the best primary information possible for his massive, four-volume History of California, first published in 1897. In the days before photocopy machines, Hittell had conscientiously hand-copied all sorts of background material; accounts of Gold Rush experiences, interviews with Justice Stephen Field, reminiscences of the daughter of a pastor present during the Modoc War, and the like. Leafing through the pile, I eventually turned to a peculiar-looking document, a thick five-by-eight inch sheaf of papers fastened with two brass grommets at the top, through which was threaded a bit of string. As I gently turned its dry, brown pages, I realized that I was holding Hittell’s copy of the “Minutes of the Executive Committee of San Francisco’s 1856 Vigilance Committee.” The original had been considered lost for 150 years.

Along with the rest of his collection, Hittell’s copy of the “Executive Minutes” had been available to researchers since 1957. Who knew this document existed? Had anyone used it? A thorough search of secondary sources revealed that no one else had ever cited this secret record. Suddenly, my entire research focus shifted. I began the laborious task of copying page after page by hand from a document too fragile to photocopy, too faded to photograph, and too valuable to ignore.

The “Minutes” had always been a closely-held secret, vigilantly protected (pun intended) by the leaders of the 1856 Committee. In their meetings, held at least twice daily, these elite leaders (usually merchants) followed strict parliamentary procedure and recorded all their decisions in detail to prove they had risen above a blood-thirsty mob bent on revenge. They insisted on complete secrecy within and without the committee, identifying members only by their numbers. Before admission, each initiate (sponsored by two other members) had to place his hand on a Bible and declare, “I do solemnly swear to act with the Vigilance Committee and second in full all their actions as expressed through their executive Committee.” Then he signed a roll sheet next to a number that would shield his identity.

Even decades later, men hesitated to divulge their numbers. For example, one of the most active Executives, Miers Truett, later recalled that “my number was #72, I think,” despite affixing number 50 to an “Application for Admission” during
the life of the Committee. A few were forced to reveal their allegiance at the time when chosen to serve on a Coroner’s Jury reporting on the demise of the vigilantes’ victims. For example, the Coroner’s report on the death of the last two victims, Phlader Brace and Joseph Hetherington, carried out before a gawking crowd of thousands, found that their demise had come “by hanging, at the hands of one Robert Nixon and a person unknown to us Jurors, aided and abetted by a party of men styling themselves the Committee of Vigilance of San Francisco.” Only seven of the nine men convened were willing to affix their signatures to this verdict.

In sharp contrast to this enforced secrecy, the “Minutes” as copied by Hittell identified all the Executives by name and revealed their specific actions. For example, during the “trial” that led to Brace’s execution, the secretary recorded:

**Sunday Morning 10 1/2 oclock**

**July 27, 1856.**

31 members present.

Jules David excused from serving as prosecuting attorney against Brace and C. J. Dempster appointed.

H. J. Fisher, Hagen Kimball no. 3256, Mr. Mitchell, Christian Wanderhold no. 1962, allowed to withdraw from the Committee of Vigilance on account of threats of dismissal from U.S. Mint by officers in charge if they sentenced murderers . . . .

Farwell Chairman of Com[mittee]. on L. Bossange matters reported that Mr. Bossange did not communicate the vote of the Executive Committee and that he thought Jones was a member of the Board of Delegates.

By David – That Mr. L. Bossange be severely censured by the Chairman of the Executive Committee.

The Executives, who served as attorneys, judges, and jury, were particularly indictable for kidnapping and murder. Furthermore, the courts were far more active in 1856 than after the 1851 Committee, and the vigilantes’ victims much better versed in their use. Consequently, the Executives passed the “Minutes” from hand to hand for self-protection as demands later arose in one court after another.

Only twice did the Executives allow outsiders to view their most sensitive document, than only after decades of pressure. Hubert Howe Bancroft, a sympathetic historian eager to sell copies of his works to thousands of subscribers, first began probing for Executive Committee secrets in 1875 for a volume of his famous “Works,” many of them authored by others. He later revealed his actions in his self-promoting Literary Industries, the last of his thirty-nine volume series. Bancroft had sent his

**“Shipment of the Prisoners.” As shown in this pictorial letter sheet, these prisoners of the 1856 Vigilance Committee were thrown out of San Francisco on June 5, 1856.**

Charles P. Duane, Martin Gallagher, Billy Mulligan, Wm. Carr, Edward Bulger and Woolly Kearny, sent from the country, by the “Vigilance Committee of San Francisco,” at two o’clock. A.M., June 5th, 1856.
agent without result to speak to some of the 1856 Executives, whom he characterized as “hard-headed, cold-blooded Yankees.” “One of them when spoken to... drew his finger across his throat significantly saying ‘that would be to pay if I told all.’” Bancroft next went himself, pleading that “History belongs to society...[and] should be done fully, truthfully, [rather] than with only half the evidence before the writer.” But the Executives “did not want to talk about it, to think about it. It was a horrid night-mare in their memory, and they would rather their children should never know anything about it.” An Executive later explained, “When the question of giving the committee papers to Mr. Bancroft first came up, a lawsuit was pending in New York, brought by some man against [committee president] Mr. Coleman as an outcome of those times, and he did not care to have these things come out.”

But Bancroft persisted. “Little by little,” he reported, “I gathered from one and another information which it had not been hitherto deemed proper to reveal.” Playing members against each other, Bancroft finally persuaded Isaac Bluxome, Jr., the secretary of both Committees, to let him have the books and papers of the 1851 organization. “But even this did not satisfy me,” admitted Bancroft. “I wanted the records and all material extant on the subject...spread out before me while I was writing.” According to Bancroft, as he wrote at length about the 1851 Committee, members of the 1856 Committee became jealous that their story might not be as well told. At least a dozen of the 1856 leaders agreed to an interview in 1877, and another half dozen a year later.

In the end, Bancroft got all that he wanted. His self-authored *Popular Tribunals II* was issued in October 1887, dealing almost exclusively with the 1856 Commit-
As he worked, Theodore H. Hittell somehow also acquired the “Minutes”, citing them by date throughout his Volume III. He also secretly made a copy, meticulously recording the original page numbers as he crammed 545 pages into 104 five-by-eight-inch pages in his spidery script. Hittell occasionally added indications that some material had been skipped, noting, for example, “[Impersonal motions not so frequent this day as before].” What they were, we will never know. He skipped pages, too, but, as he got deeper into the work, went back to pick up omitted material, sometimes scrabbling it in crabbed, tiny writing on both sides of 35 inch paper also fastened to the stack. Even he must have found his shrunken, spiky writing hard to decipher, for he next resorted to copying some pages out of order, but including the correct page numbers. When someone fastened all of Hittell’s copy with those two grommets at the top, some of his writing was effectively obscured.

Making a true copy of Hittell’s transcript proved a lengthy challenge. To visit the Sutro, I had to drive more than 250 miles round-trip, when I could spare the time from my workload of six or seven classes each year. Luckily, California State University, Stanislaus (my employer) graciously provided a research grant to pay for some of my gas and occasional overnight stays in the Ocean Park district so I could work two days in a row on copying the “Minutes”. My eyes could take no more. Just reading Hittell’s script was a daunting task, particularly the personal names, of which there were hundreds. Hittell casually scrawled those he must have known well, requiring constant rechecking. Sometimes a capital “W” looked like an “M” or vice versa; the same with capital “S” and “G.” Repeated visits went on for years, and the Sutro staff got to know me. After a while, when I deposited my belongings in a locker and picked up a parking pass to put on my car, my reentry to the building was greeted by the appearance of the same, familiar document at the same table, even before I put on my archival gloves.

During all my years of research, the work of the Sutro swirled about me. Most of my fellow researchers seemed to be genealogists, and the microform readers stayed occupied, while the sturdy wooden tables remained almost empty. Many patrons checked out non-rare materials, or arrived to return them. They took advantage of the D.A.R. Lineage Books, the microfilm census, and diverse periodicals published by historical societies, genealogical societies, and family associations. Patrons who wished to conduct more in-depth California research were advised to visit the California History Room at the California State Library in Sacramento.

Given the Sutro Library’s strong emphasis on non-California sources, the location of Hittell’s papers in this repository seems unusual. Some historians even speculate that this collection should have been in the Bancroft Library. But, as Richard Dillon noted in that first, seminal pamphlet that sparked my interest, “Second only in renown to H. H. Bancroft as a California historian is Theodore Henry Hittell.” That subordinate status must have rankled. Since Bancroft outlived Hittell by some thirteen months, why would Hittell’s heirs donate his papers to their ancestor’s greatest rival?

If not the Bancroft Library, where? Hittell’s heirs had good reason to favor the library of a man greatly admired by their ancestor. As the historian wrote, “[T]he most noteworthy in many respects of all the men connected with the Comstock lode was Adolph Sutro.” After outlining the tremendous work that went into the Sutro tunnel, Hittell added, Sutro “then returned to San Francisco with his millions . . . [and became] one of the most public-spirited and widely-known men in California.” A brief description of local improvements followed, ending with “an immense library, now amounting to upwards of two hundred thousand volumes . . . [to be] devoted to public use.”

Sutro, Hittell concluded, was “one of the comparatively few Californians who have accumulated immense wealth — with a strict regard to business principles indeed but in such a way that he has nothing to blush for — that is using it in a manner for which the people of the state ought to be and doubtless will be duly grateful.” Perhaps timing also played a part in the decision by Hittell’s heirs. Although Sutro had died in 1898, legal wrangling among his heirs continued until 1913, when it was announced that his library would be donated to the California State Library but had to remain in San Francisco and had to be available for public use no later than January 1, 1917. Thus, Sutro’s library became available to the public about a year before Hittell died. In addition, the Califor-
A membership certificate of the Vigilance Committee was signed by the organization’s officers including President William T. Coleman. Noted artist Charles Nahl designed this handsome lithograph.
nia State Library, recipient of this fabulous collection, was in the throes of modernization. Widespread public access through newly-established county free libraries under trained librarians had just been initiated, and the State Library led the nation in providing “cameragraphs” or copies of pages “reproduced on sensitized paper, . . . [which] after being dried can be loaned to the inquirer.” The Pacific Rural Press extolled Sutro’s heirs for recognizing “the great work of the State Libraries when they presented to it the valuable Sutro Library.”

Under these circumstances, Hittell’s heirs may have wanted to join in this support.

The gift of Hittell’s papers to the Sutro Library seems appropriate for another reason. Hittell was a great admirer of California’s pioneer spirit. In concluding his massive, four-volume history of almost 3,500 pages, Hittell praised the “genuine Californian character . . . of men who . . . face danger with intrepidity;” who experience great shifts in fortune “with equanimity;” who possess “worth and strength” and patience and “recognize their own rights, and . . . insist upon and maintain them.” Such a man was Adolph Sutro. Hittell continued that the first indicator of this “extraordinary character, was the vigilance committees and particularly that most remarkable and significant one that may be, and generally is, called the great one of 1856.” Sutro was a member. He adopted number 236, and was one of two men who refused to sign the Coroner’s report of the vigilantes’ second hanging. Where better to place Hittell’s papers, particularly his secret copy of the Executive “Minutes” of San Francisco’s 1856 Vigilance Committee, than in the library founded by Adolph Sutro?

ENDNOTES

3. “San Francisco Committee of Vigilance of 1856 roster,” San Francisco Committee of Vigilance Collection, C-A 181, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. Hereafter BL.
6. “San Francisco Vigilance Committee of 1856, Executive Minutes,” 27 July 1856. Hereafter Minutes. They have been annotated and are currently being considered for publication.
7. A full analysis of vigilante activities under the title “Untwisting History: Secrets of San Francisco’s 1856 Vigilance Committee” is now being considered for publication.
13. All located in the Bancroft Library and available on microfilm.
17. Minutes, 19 May 1856.
18. [Dillon], 2.
24. [certificate payment notes], SF CV, Box 1, Fd 3, HEH; “Verdict of the Coroner’s Jury.”
Being a federal and state depository for government publications, the California State Library has one of the largest collections of government publications west of the Mississippi River. Yes, many are wordy and boring documents, but hidden within these studies and reports are some gems called comic books. In the 1930s, researchers realized that the most popular pages of a newspaper were the comics. Pictures are much easier to grasp and tell a story so much quicker. When the government needs to reach out to all walks of life, one of the ways it does this is through comic books. I will start by talking about what all government comics have in common. Then I will share a bit of the history of these U.S. published comics.

The government uses comics for only two reasons: either to educate or to serve as propaganda. Sometimes, it will do both in a single comic such as *The Life of Franklin D Roosevelt, 32nd President of the United States of America* which educates the readers about the president’s life. It is also propaganda, because this biography is focused on assuring Americans that the vitality and passion for America that has guided the president’s whole life will get the United States through World War II.

The government will at times use famous artists to create government com-

---

**EDITOR’S NOTE**

Mr. Averill is a library technical assistant in the State Library’s Government Publications Section and has been a freelance library researcher working with graduate students for ten years.
ics. Walt Disney and his team penned the comic *Winter Draws On* which used cartoon figures called Spandules to explain the dangers of ice and flying. Spandules are much like another World War II inspired mischievous cartoon character—the Gremlin. Instead of causing havoc to the plane’s engines as the Gremlins did, Spandules liked to create havoc to the plane’s wings by making ice. Al Capp included his Li’l Abner characters for naval recruitment in *Li’l Abner Joins the Navy*. He also created Mr. Civil Defense which was used in a couple of government comic books. Charles Schulz allowed the government to republish his comic strips about Sally’s adventure with a lazy eye in “Security is an Eye Patch.” Hank Ketchum uses his character Dennis the Menace to talk about the hazards of poisons in *Dennis the Menace Takes a Poke at Poison*. Well-known comic book characters such as Super Girl and Captain America have been used to reach out to children and young adults.

Government comic books are also indicative of the times in which they were published. An example would be *Rex Morgan, M.D.*, which talked about your unborn child. This 1980 comic instructs mothers that alcohol is harmful to their unborn babies, but yet depicts the mother in the comic smoking. In the 1950s most of the characters depicted in military comic books were white and had chiseled bodies. In 2000, when the army did a comic on the views of the military towards homosexuals, all ethnic groups were represented as well as both genders. The main character did not have an athletic physique but that of a middle-aged man.

There have at times been controversies over these government comic books. There was an international controversy with Bosnia over the land mine comics that the U.S. created. Bosnian officials felt that children would think they would be saved by Superman just like in the comic, a message that would give them false hope.

*Preventive Maintenance* magazine did a parody of Harry Potter to which the lawyers of Harry Potter’s creator J. K. Rowling objected, because the characters where too much like those in the books and movies. The army agreed to never do a parody of Harry Potter again.

Congress got involved in another controversy when the Government Publications Office on its anniversary put out a comic book called *Squeaks Discovers Type*. It was about the history of printing, costing around $30,000 to print. Although when this publication made Senator Tom Coburn’s Wastebook Report’s list in 2010, the report stated the cost to be closer to $60,000.

The history of comics started in earnest with World War II. This was the golden age of government comic books. During the war a comic book educated soldiers about malaria by featuring the character “Malaria Moe”. A comic book was used to teach civilians how to spot saboteurs in the action comic book *Under-Cover War*. Comic books were also used as a means of propaganda as in the *United States Marines #3: A Leatherneck Flamethrower*.
El Gato, Spanish for cat, uses up 8 of his lives so as to show children the dangers of common household fire hazards. The cat also has a protector, little bird, who tries to keep him from getting hurt.

In this comic, seat belts can even save the fragile Humpty Dumpty. This is collaboration between the U.S. Department of Transportation Safety Belt Campaign and DC comics published in 1984.

depicting the emperor of Japan as a dangerous octopus. Though this comic was produced by the U.S Marine Corps, it was commercially distributed by Magazine Enterprises giving it a much larger audience.

In the 1950s, comics were a major propaganda weapon for the war on communism. Some of these comics were distributed by making them inserts for newspapers which meant a large population was reached. Fox Hole on Your Front Yard showed that if we did not buy war bonds to equip our military, we may be fighting the battle against the communists on our front lawns. The comic Only the Dead Are Free depicted the evilness of the North Koreans. These booklets were also used for recruitment and training for the military. Preventive Maintenance, which is still being published, started during the Korean War (its forerunner during World War II was Army Motors). Its purpose is to educate soldiers how to maintain army equipment from side arms to helicopters.

In the late 1950s, the government started to use comic books to both topple and strengthen governments. In Cuba, it attempted unsuccessfully to get college students to revolt against Castro by distributing comics about the ideals of democracy. In the 1960s, the Social Security Administration published multiple comics to reach out to migrants and others about the benefits of paying into Social Security and the benefits one received from Social Security (i.e., Three Who Came Back). In the 1970s, these comics were used to reach children and young adults about career choices and the Say No to Drugs campaign. It was also the birth of Woodsy the Owl and the importance of conservation. The 1980s saw the birth of “McGruff” the crime dog and more social issues were addressed. An example is the collaboration between Marvel Comics and the National Committee There were social issues that were addressed. One example is the collaboration was between Marvel Comics and the National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse. In an installment of Spider-Man, the reader finds out Peter Parker was molested as a child.

In the 1990s, federal comics started to fade away. NASA and the military were still putting out comics. NASA issued teaching tools such as the comic Science of Life: Physiology Research in Action. The military continued to publish Preventive Maintenance. There were fewer federal comics printed at the beginning of the twenty-first century, but by 2010 the government started to create digital comics. The navy put out the large comic book called The Docs. The purpose of this comic was to help navy corpsman prepare for the conditions in Iraq and then what it would be like when they came back home. The Environmental Protection Agency digitized the Adventures of the Garbage Gremlin. The Center for Disease Control put out its blockbuster Zombie Apocalypse which cost the agency only $87.00 to pay for a stock photo.

Government comics are still being created today: most are digital and online. Digitization of comic books is the only avenue available to publish in this genre in these times of government cutbacks. The digital comics are edgier and more artistic in nature since they are not constrained by printing costs. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration has created photo novellas. NASA has put out some very stunning comics such as the Astrobiology series and the new series CINDI. The army has an ongoing series of adventure comics called America’s Army to get young adults interested in the army. A Manga comic book in Japanese was just put out by the military to commemorate fifty years of cooperation between Japan and the United States.

As for California, it has published a few
The message of this comic was war isn't pretty. It was published by the Navy in 2010. This is available online but you must be over 18 to download.

Hanna Barbera characters show how to be prepared for an earthquake. This comic was published several times and distributed to schools throughout the California. This version was published in 1994.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Astrobiology: A History of Exobiology and Astrobiology at NASA:
http://astrobiology.nasa.gov/media/medialibrary/2013/12/Issue4-25MB.pdf

CINDI in Space:
http://cindispace.utdallas.edu/education/Cindi_comic_English_color508.pdf

The Docs:
http://issuu.com/navymedicine/docs/the_docs_full_compressed?e=1996426/2654960

University of Nebraska Government Comics curated by Richard Graham:
http://contentdm.unl.edu/cdm/search/collection/comics

Comic Book Psyop by SGM Herb Friedman (Ret.):
http://www psywarrior.com/PsyopComics.html

Comics with Problems: http://www.ep.t/0/roblems/
How many of us can say we landed our “better than a dream job”? Recently appointed California State Librarian Greg Lucas proclaimed just that at the June 11, 2014 “Night at the State Library” event, where he shared observations from his first six weeks in the position.

Lucas, selected by Governor Jerry Brown on March 25, now finds himself in the inner sanctum of one of the West’s oldest libraries. His career in journalism makes him by default a dedicated library and archives end-user. He holds advanced degrees from Stanford and the University of Southern California and has pounded the keyboard for over twenty-five years, soaking up information about subjects as diverse as politics and “prune burgers in school cafeterias.” His resume includes senior editor at Capitol Weekly, Sacramento bureau chief of the San Francisco Chronicle, capitol correspondent for the Los Angeles Daily Journal, and as blogger-in-chief for his California’s Capitol website. He is also a Board member of the Friends of the California State Archives.

During the intimate, casual gathering of library advocates, Lucas shared his passion for libraries in general and outlined his plans for the California State Library (CSL) in particular. He is clearly still in information-gathering mode. In the mere two months he has held the position, Lucas has already logged close to 5,000 travel miles surveying libraries around the state and listening to their needs. He is intent on performing diligent research into the inner workings of the agency over which he now presides, and wisely lobbied to have former Acting State Librarian Gerry Maginnity appointed as his deputy state librarian. He thanked the CSL staff for being “welcoming and patient” in his first few weeks in office.

While he recognized his lack of library technical training (currently being remedied by courses through San Jose State University’s professional program), his manner and remarks indicated a fresh administrative approach as he leads the Library further into the digital age.

Affable, witty, and earnest, Lucas’s passion for libraries is immediately apparent, and although he is considered an “outsider” from a technical standpoint, his “insider” connections to policymakers, cultivated through his journalism career, could serve the Library well. Beginning with the subject of public libraries, an interest he and Governor Jerry Brown share, Lucas said a primary goal during his tenure is to make sure public libraries are “part of the [funding] decision-making process” at state and local levels. He believes CSL can play a pivotal role in achieving that end.

The biggest challenge facing CSL and public libraries, Lucas said, is getting them “on the radar” of those who hold California’s purse strings. This will involve “changes in how libraries communicate their value and needs to the public.” He noted that in his many conversations with policymakers he has observed a universal nostalgia for their childhood experiences in libraries, but when the subject of public funding comes up, he has already faced some pushback. He pointed out that governments and local councils tend to frame the resistance to funding libraries in a familiar polemic: “it’s either public safety, or it’s the libraries.” Lucas suggested that if libraries can “articulate what’s at the heart of a library then some issues around funding begin to dissipate.”

Lucas shares the vision of many public library advocates who believe libraries should be more “creative and active” in taking advantage of their role as a “trusted institution” rather than a place to just “check out books and split.” He cited several innovative programs in California that tout libraries as an important community shared space. In this “third space,” as he called it, libraries are using innovations in physical design and implementing programs targeted to a variety of patrons in ways to redefine libraries as agents of change. Adult literacy is one of Lucas’s...
particular passions. “In the most awesome state in the richest country in the world [millions] of adults can’t read to their kids. That’s seriously wrong.” He also observed how libraries are the first place immigrants and new residents interact in a positive way with a government institution. This fostering of good will between communities and local governments could be a selling point when looking for additional funding. What is CSL’s role in all of this? “California State Library gives out $12–$15 million in federal funds through grants,” he said, suggesting that these grants are a perfect vehicle for “incubating ideas.”

As for communicating the State Library’s functions as a working library in itself, Lucas recognized the underlying, chronic disconnect between the Library and the Capitol as a reflection of the public’s misunderstanding of what the Library actually offers. “When I applied for this job and met with Jerry Brown, he said, [looking at a sheet of paper], ‘hmmm, State Library—books for the blind.’ That’s not what I thought of the State Library. I thought of it mainly as the California Room. But I learned that the Braille and Talking Book Library is where the State Library touches the most real, live Californians.” Of course, the California State Library offers much more, and Lucas believes better communication and marketing will fill in that incomplete picture.

A guarded audience which included current and former staff, many of whom had been through four different State Librarians in ten years, asked Lucas about his plans for well-established divisions such as the California History Room, California Research Bureau, Braille and Talking Book Library, and the Sutro Library. He replied his job would be simply to make “improvements in promoting what the Library already does well.” This includes using technology as a tool, not an end. Upon his appointment, Lucas quietly began visiting the Library’s various departments, observing interaction between staff and patrons, taking stock of each department’s mission and needs, and mulling over ways to promote them. “What can we do about raising the State Library’s profile?” he asked. “The Library will have to get out from behind the information desk and tell people what’s happening. We are already ahead with a terrific website,” he said, citing the IT department’s efforts to put CSL on the social media map. Another strategy could involve taking some of the Library’s historical assets on the road. “Even though we haven’t mapped out the logistics of it, hundreds of museums would be eager to have an exhibit from the State Library.”

Back from his first visit to the vault at Sutro Library, Lucas had “a pang, because it belongs to the people of California, and there should be thousands of school kids seeing this! Part of a way to achieve that is through digitization, or things like YouTube or the Internet Archive, or maybe [by using] travelling facsimiles of the most delicate items. Perhaps someone brings a book or facsimile of Sutro or California History treasures and presents them to schools. We can use different strategies to reach different people. It’s not a smart policy to digitize everything. But doing some is a way to heighten the profile of what happens at the State Library.”

Lucas cautiously tempered his enthusiasm with a healthy dose of reality. He recognized the disruptive impact of heavy cuts to the Library’s workforce in the last several years, and acknowledged how that has impeded previous promotional efforts. Daunting as the logistical and funding issues are, the new State Librarian’s enthusiasm is, so far, undaunted. “The good news is,” he said, “there isn’t a lot that I have to do. I mean, I don’t really have to do very much except sell what’s already here.”

A few days after Lucas’ presentation I had a chance to ask him some more pointed questions about his knowledge of the Library and its relationship with the Foundation.
NEW AND UNUSUAL TREASURES ADDED TO THE LIBRARY’S COLLECTIONS

By Gary F. Kurutz

Through the generosity of the Foundation, its members, and the bequest of the Richard Larson Trust, rare and unusual items are continually added to the State Library’s California History Section and the Sutro Library in San Francisco. I am pleased to describe for our readers five of these new arivals.

SAN JOSE AVIATION MEET

California and the world by 1910 had gone aviation mad. Everyone seemed smitten with the idea of conquering the air with controlled flight. Thrill seekers relished flying as the ultimate sports challenge akin to today’s X Games. Just the year before, the intrepid pioneer Glenn Martin made the first heavier-than-air flight in California. In January 1910, Los Angeles hosted the world’s first international aviation meet at Dominguez Hills. Thousands turned out. It started with a grand parade titled “From Oxcart to Aeroplane.” Not to be outdone, San Jose announced that it would host an aviation meet at its Luna Park from May 7 to 8. Documenting this historic but little-known event is an eye-catching poster featuring a sleek-looking monoplane with fabric wings resting on a grass field. Below the photograph, the poster brashly claimed that the San Jose show would outdo Los Angeles. It advertised that it would be the “Most complete exhibition of aircraft ever exhibited in the United States. Aeroplanes, Airships, Balloon and Gliders.” Not all went according to plan, however. A newspaper search indicates that the meet was delayed and occurred five days later with events being held at that city’s Driving Park. Nonetheless, the poster is a wonderful document in California’s storied aviation history.
BOUND IN COPPER FROM THE CAPITOL DOME
A book about the California State Capitol Building in a most unusual binding arrived in the mail earlier this year. Somehow it escaped the attention of the Library when it first appeared in 1982. The Developmental Disabilities Service Organization, Inc. of Sacramento published the book *To California with Love*, to celebrate the restoration of the State Capitol. What makes this attractive volume so startling is that it is bound in two heavy dark sheets of copper salvaged from the original 1870 dome. During the 1976–1982 restoration project, the State of California replaced the old copper sheathing and recycled the weather-beaten metal giving them to groups like the Disabilities Organization. Holding the heavy copper tome almost distracts from its beautiful text. Designed and printed in a limited edition of 100 copies by Arlis Scott and Margaret Gorman, the sixteen-page work provides a short history of the Capital in its various locations in Northern California. The title page is hand-colored, and its heavy paper is of the finest quality. To hold the pages together, the Scott and his team ingeniously used copper wire rings, also extracted from the historic building. As an added embellishment, decorative Florentine endpapers protect the text leaves from the metal binding. Glued onto the inside back cover is a silver metallic decal of the Handicrafters, persons with developmental disabilities. As stated in the acknowledgements, the disabled learned new skills working with the copper cover and ring bindings. They were proud to be part of the restoration project. The Library has copy number twenty-six of this wonderful and ingenious publication. It originally sold for $100 a copy.

BOUND IN COPPER FROM PLUMAS COUNTY
Amazingly, around the same time, the Foundation acquired another California publication also bound in copper. Aptly called *California Copper* this example differs, however, in that the binding consists of a single thin reflective sheet of metal wrapped around the text leaves. Unlike the hefty Capitol publication, the leaves are held in place by ordinary staples. Because of the thinness of the copper sheet, by simply holding or opening the pamphlet, the reader hears a distinctive crackling metallic sound. It also provides a sensory experience by feeling the smooth, polished surface. Appropriately, it was published by the Anaconda Wire & Cable Company of California in 1930 and the front cover is stamped in black with the title. The cover is further enhanced by a line drawing of three power line towers stretching across the desert. Presumably, the power lines consist of copper. With this slender but attractive pamphlet Anaconda promoted its Walker Copper Mines east of the Feather River in Plumas County. Sufficient copper had been found to make California the sixth largest copper producer in the country. More than likely, the company published a limited number of these pamphlets, but what an imaginative way to stimulate interest in its products.
The Los Angeles automobile school published this attractive catalog in 1925 to attract Spanish-speaking students. It proudly proclaimed itself to be the best in the Americas.

A LOS ANGELES SCHOOL FOR AUTOMOTORES
The Library’s California History Section has an extensive collection of educational catalogs issued by private schools and colleges (catalogs issued by government institutions are in the Government Publications Section). We spotted in a dealer’s online listing a most unusual catalog: Escuela Nacional de Automotores issued by the National Automotive School of Los Angeles in 1925. The school was founded in 1905 by Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Rosenkranz on South Figueroa Street. Los Angeles has had a long love-hate relationship with the automobile, but there has always been a need for well-trained mechanics as the number of vehicles in the area exploded. With Los Angeles’s large Spanish-speaking population, it seemed logical that a trade school would offer automobile repair classes in Spanish. The Rosenkranz’s also recruited students south of the border and the beginning of the catalog featured an illustrated tour of Latin America. The Library’s copy bears the blind-stamp of the Consulate of Nicaragua of Los Angeles on the front cover. In addition, the publication is beautifully illustrated with photographs of the school, various commercial vehicles, and instructors and students working on an assortment of cars and trucks. The catalog also features facsimiles of Spanish language materials provided to students at the school and portraits and profiles of graduates. The escuela enjoyed an annual enrollment of about 3,000 students, and by 1937, the founders magnanimously made available 100 complete scholarships and even offered correspondence classes for beginning students. This catalog can be classified as a rarity as no other copy is located in the international database, Worldcat.
THE CALIFORNIA INVASION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Through the Richard Larson Trust, the Sutro Library obtained a remarkable 1859 publication entitled *Papers Relative to the Affairs of British Columbia* concerning the Fraser River gold rush. The late Mr. Larson had a particular interest in Canadian history. As demonstrated by this folio-size rarity, surprising relationships between our state and our northern neighbor are revealed. The Canadian government was deeply concerned about the sudden influx of Californians into their sparsely settled territory as the result of the discovery of the precious metal on the river that threaded through the heart of western Canada. Governor James Douglas sent a despatch to Lord Stanley dated May 19, 1858. Douglas opened with the following statement: “Since I had the honour of addressing you on the 8th instant, on the subject of the Couteau Gold Mines, it was currently reported that boats and other small craft from the American shore were continually entering Fraser’s River with passengers and goods, especially spirits, arms, ammunition, and other prohibited and noxious articles and those acts are in direct violation of the Customs’ Laws, as extended to the British Possession in America.” Further on in this document, Douglas wrote that 10,573 persons have arrived from San Francisco with the intention of heading to the diggings on the Fraser River and many more were on their way. In other words, Californians were invading their country and removing their gold and something had to be done. These gold seekers would also cause harm to the Native American tribes as they swarmed over the rugged territory and intruded on the workings of Canada’s Hudson’s Bay Company. Douglas recommended that miner’s licenses be issued and that new arrivals had to pay a fee for any supplies they imported. Page after page of this document consists of the Canadian response. Also included in the publication is a handsome map showing “Routes of Communication with the Gold Region on Fraser River” and a *Hand Book to the Gold Regions of Fraser’s and Thompson’s Rivers*. While the situation caused much anxiety, Douglas instituted common sense regulations. Conversely, many in California worried that this latest stampede was draining the new state of its population. However, the Fraser River excitement turned out to be, as gold rush historian Rodman Paul so beautifully put it, “10 per cent truth and 90 percent humbug.” Some forty years later, Canada would face a similar challenge when an obscure native of California, George Washington Carmack, discovered gold on a tributary of the Klondike River in present day Yukon Territory.

REACHING OUT VIA THE BULLETIN

The Foundation office continues to receive praise for the *Bulletin*. Letters from pleased Foundation members continue to arrive. Members enjoy the articles and love the *Bulletin’s* comely design. Importantly, too, it provides an important outreach tool making our readers aware of the State Library’s phenomenal collections and services. As a result of posting a PDF of each issue on the Foundation’s website, scholars and other researchers become aware of the Library through Internet searching and have actually traveled from out of state to see collections described in the *Bulletin*.

In addition, through the efforts of Don Buck of the Oregon and California Trails Association (OCTA), we have gained new members interested in supporting the Library’s Western Overland Trails Collections. Through their donations, the Foundation is able to purchase new books on westward expansion for the California History Section. So generous have been these donations that a separate stack unit of over 900 books is devoted to documenting those pioneers who trekked across the continent on their way to California and Oregon.

In a similar way, Stan Morner of the Ina Coolbrith Circle has gained not only new members for the Foundation but has also attracted splendid donations of beautifully presented poetry publications to the Library. Mr. Morner wrote a superb article about the Circle for the last issue of the *Bulletin*. Ina Coolbrith was not only California’s first poet laureate but also a librarian. Morner’s efforts and those of his associates in the poetry group have significantly enhanced our literary collections.
EXHIBIT CELEBRATES YOSEMITE’S 150TH ANNIVERSARY

In recognition of the sesquicentennial of the setting aside of the Yosemite Valley and the neighboring Mariposa Big Tree Grove in 1864, the Library’s special collections staff created a commemorative exhibit in the Mead B. Kibbey Gallery of the Library & Courts II Building. The display features nineteenth century rare books and pamphlets, manuscripts, promotional brochures, and an array of prints, posters and maps. The most important treasure in the exhibit is a magnificent charcoal drawing by Thomas A. Ayres entitled “Upper Falls of the Middle Fork, 1856.” The gift of the Ayres drawing in 2012 was featured in Bulletin Issue 103. Located near the entrance to the California History Room is a spectacular 1870 chromolithograph, *The Domes of the Yosemite* based on an 1867 painting by Albert Bierstadt (see front cover). A special highlight is the mammoth plate photographs of the great valley by pioneer photographers C. E. Watkins and Eadweard J. Muybridge. Watkins’s stunning images helped persuade President Abraham Lincoln to sign the Yosemite Grant on June 30, 1864. This act not only preserved the valley in perpetuity but also led to the creation of the National Park system.

The Yosemite exhibit continues on the first floor with a selection of twentieth century photographic treasures. Included are several examples by Ansel Adams drawn from two of his portfolios; a recently acquired portfolio of black and white photographs by Bob Kolbrener (see Bulletin Issue 105), and a brand new gift of framed, large format color photographs by noted landscape photographer Earl Payne. In addition, Muriel Payne donated to the State Library a series of striking black and white Yosemite photographs taken by her late husband in 1950.

The exhibit will remain open for viewing until the end of October.

*The Domes of the Yosemite.* This 21 1/2 x 32 1/2 inch chromolithograph is based on an 1867 painting by Albert Bierstadt. The print was published in Dusseldorf, Germany by Briendenbach & Company in 1870.
ASSOCIATE
EBSCO, Birmingham, AL
Lynne Kataoka, Sacramento
Ms. M. Kay Mowery, Clio, MI
Mr. Jan Stevens, Loomis

CONTRIBUTOR
Dr. Gerald E. Benston, Rancho Mirage
Mr. Forrest E. Boomer, Carmichael
Ms. Tedi Dunn, San Rafael
Mary Jane Jagodzinski, Encinitas
Michael R. Smith, Elk Grove
Mrs. Phyllis M. Smith, Granite Bay
Nancy J. Tanaguchi, Merced
United Way California Capital Region, Sacramento
In Honor of Mary Jane Jagodzinski
Mr. Forrest E. Boomer, Carmichael

SPONSOR
Mimi & Burnett Miller, Sacramento

PATRON
United Way California Capital Region, Sacramento

BRAILLE & TALKING BOOK LIBRARY
Mrs. Treva Bakken, Anderson
Betty & George Caria, Redding
June Davis, Eureka
Judge Bill L. Dozier, Stockton
Friends of Bellflower Library, Bellflower
Ms. Margaret L. Jawad, Alameda
The Jones-Cortez Irrevocable Trust, North Highlands
The Karklyn Family Trust, Hayward
Mr. Robert D. Livingston, Sacramento
Leona L. Schmitt, Sacramento
Mr. & Mrs. Eugene M. Scott, Fair Oaks
Robert L. Sideroff, San Rafael
In Memory of Edward Haynes
Mrs. Edward H. Haynes, Grass Valley
In Memory of Ruth Champagne
Ms. Bonnie Gratch-Lindauer
In Honor of Ronnie Sanders
Ima J. Salie, Gardnerville, NV

CALIFORNIA HISTORY
Mr. David Ballard, Carmichael
Mr. William J. Coffill, Sonora
Ms. Anne Curran, Oakland
Ken Cusenza & Ruth Craft, Sacramento
Ella Cross-Busfield, Sacramento
Mr. Lloyd de Llamas, Covina
Michael Dolgushkin, Carmichael
Ms. Marlynn R. Dystra, Oakland
JoAnn Fujikawa, Montara
Ms. Margaret Furbush, Placerville
Rodi A. Lee, El Dorado Hills
Ms. Charlotte Harris, Danville
Mr. David Von Aspern, Sacramento

SUTRO LIBRARY
Moria P. Gardner, Santa Rosa
In Memory of Frank Glover
Michael D. Kirley, Los Angeles
Martha E. Whittaker, Concord