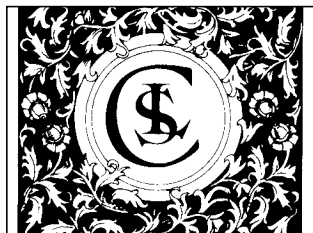


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2014

Bulletin





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2014

Bulletin

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Front Cover: The "Boy Aviator" Art Smith with his hero, Buffalo Bill Cody at the 1915 Panama Pacific International Exposition, San Francisco.

Back Cover: Defendant Caryl Chessman was photographed studiously reading a book in what is likely a courtroom setting. See the lead article starting on page 2.

Illustrations / Photos: Pages 2-9 California History Section; pages 10-11, courtesy of the Edward Bates family; page 12, courtesy of Shahera Hyatt; pages 14-27, California History Section; pages 28-29 Angelica Illueca, Sutro Library.

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The Caryl Chessman/ Rosalie Asher Collection

by Mike Dolgushkin

{ He was never charged with killing anyone.



This is Caryl Chessman at a very early age, riding on his father Serl's shoulders in Glendale, California. No one could have possibly known what lay in store for the happy youngster.

Caryl Chessman was a household name when he died in San Quentin's gas chamber on May 2, 1960 after having lived on Death Row for twelve years. His case served as a lightning rod for a worldwide anti-death penalty movement. He became an acclaimed author for writing four books while behind bars, the text of some of which had to be smuggled out of prison. He became something of a legal expert by representing himself during the course of his original trial and subsequent appeals, and helped his fellow inmates in the preparation of their cases. However, many considered Chessman an arrogant sociopathic deviant who gamed the system to avoid what he so richly deserved. But the fact remains that he was convicted of, and executed for, charges that had nothing to do with killing anyone.

And few people remember him today.

Even though Chessman basically acted as his own attorney, several lawyers advised him during his original trial and subsequent appeal attempts. Among them was Rosalie S. Asher, a Sacramento native, who was the first woman to graduate from the McGeorge School of Law. Asher became involved in Chessman's legal issues in August of 1948, at which time she was the

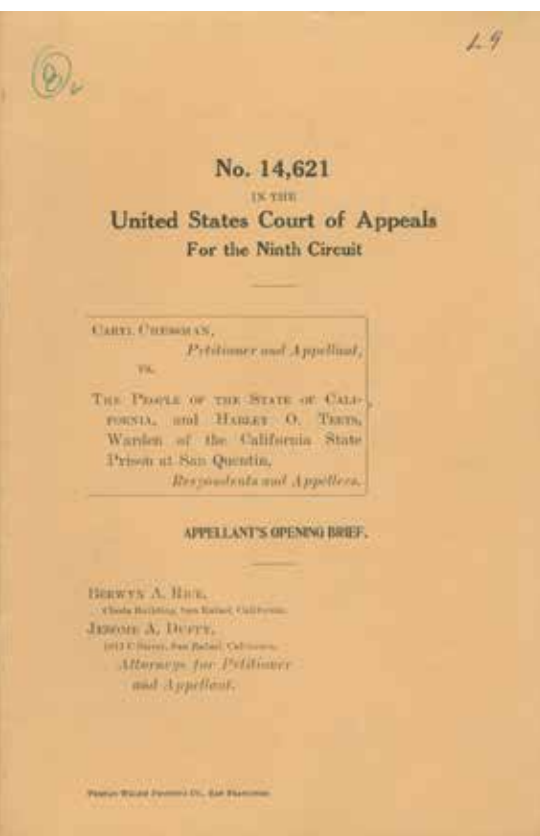
Sacramento County Law Librarian as well as a practicing attorney. She and Chessman became close friends during their twelve year association, and he named her executor of his estate. She received all of his possessions after his execution, which she donated to the California State Library in 1996. This voluminous collection of materials has been formally processed and cataloged, and is now available to researchers wishing to determine the facts and meaning behind one of the most emotionally charged and downright confusing legal cases of the twentieth century.

Carol Whittier Chessman (he changed the spelling of his first name while in grade school) was born in St. Joseph, Michigan, on May 27, 1921. An only child, he and his parents moved to Southern California when Carol was barely a year old. In about 1937, Chessman, while still a teenager, turned to a life of crime. After a stint in reform school, he assembled a group of his fellow graduates and began robbing bordellos and bookies. At that time, the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) was notoriously corrupt, and some of its members received payoffs from many of the operations Chessman and his cronies targeted. He entered San Quentin for the first time in 1941.

Paroled in December 1947, Chessman returned to Los Angeles and resumed his previous ways, which local law enforcement took note of having not forgotten

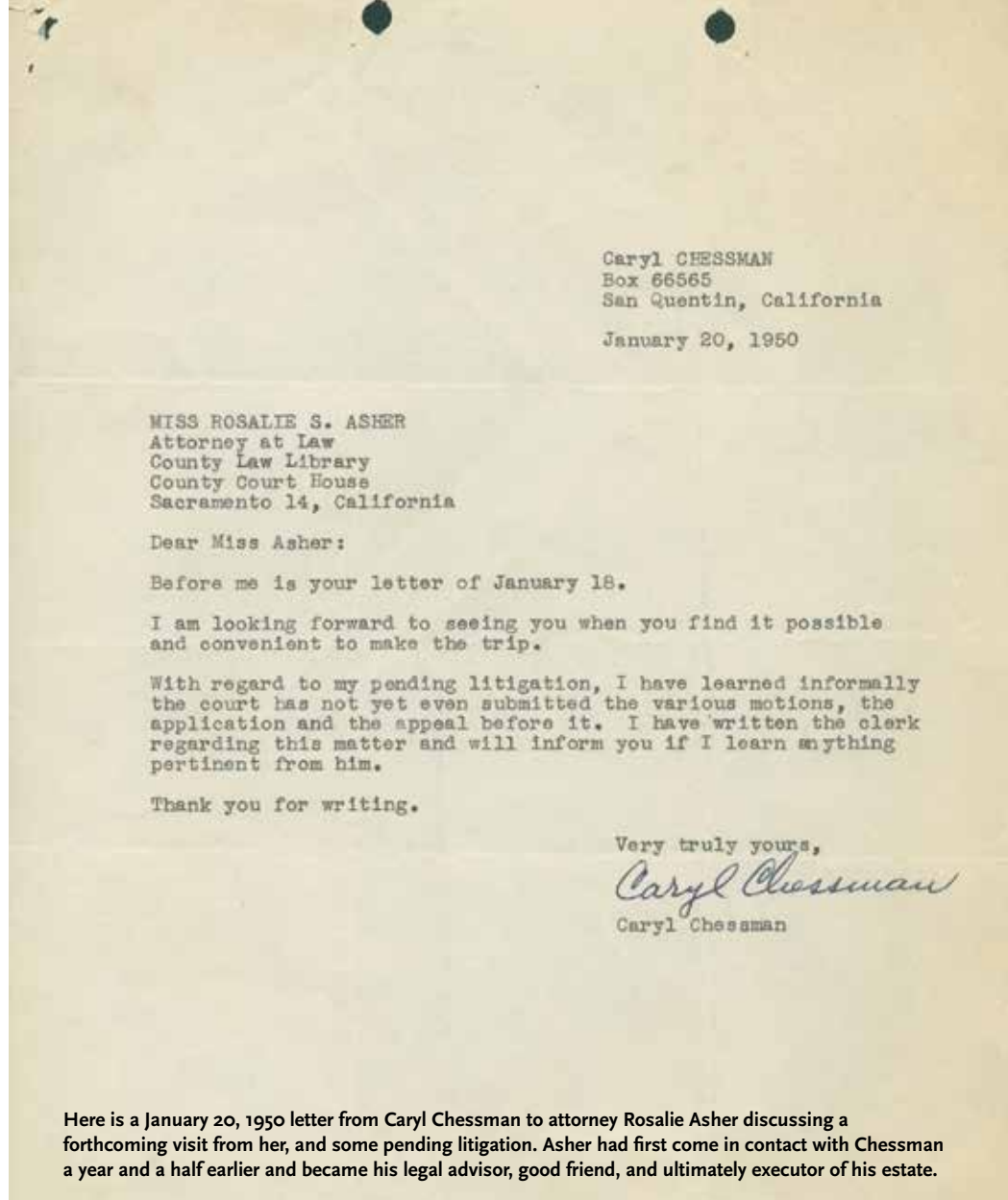
EDITOR'S NOTE

Michael Dolgushkin is curator of manuscripts in the California History Section of the State Library. He is a frequent contributor to the Bulletin and an expert on the history of San Francisco.



As part of the Chessman-Asher collections voluminous amount of legal documents, we see the cover of the Appellant's Opening Brief for *Caryl Chessman vs The People of the State of California, and Harley O. Teets, Warden of the California State Prison at San Quentin*, one of Chessman's numerous attempts at securing a new trial. Dated January 20, 1955, this brief summarizes in detail why the appellant should not have been denied his Petition for a Writ of Habeas Corpus.

his attacks on their sources of income. At the time, a number of sex-related crimes plagued the Los Angeles area, among them several attributed to "The Red Light Bandit," who pulled over or approached individuals with a red light attached to his car, hence masquerading as a police officer. In two of these instances attempted rape occurred. Whether these "red light" crimes were all the work of the same individual is still a matter of speculation, but on January 23, 1948, Chessman and one of his accomplices were arrested after a high-speed car chase. The police held him on the "red light" crimes after the two attempted rape victims identified him as their assailant. Once again, the reliability of these identifications is still the subject



Here is a January 20, 1950 letter from Caryl Chessman to attorney Rosalie Asher discussing a forthcoming visit from her, and some pending litigation. Asher had first come in contact with Chessman a year and a half earlier and became his legal advisor, good friend, and ultimately executor of his estate.

of debate, and at least one crime fitting the "red light" modus operandi occurred *after* Chessman's arrest. But, as one theory goes, the LAPD needed someone to pin a number of unsolved crimes on, and Caryl Chessman was their man.

Chessman's trial, to his misfortune, took place in the courtroom of Charles C. Fricke, a notorious "hanging judge" who had sent more people to San Quentin's gas chamber than any other justice. Chessman's insistence on representing himself did not sit well with Fricke, and only bolstered the defendant's reputation for arrogance. Not surprisingly, he was ultimately convicted on seventeen counts of robbery, kidnapping, and rape. Under Section 209 of the California Penal Code, known as the

"Little Lindbergh Law," the transportation of the two women from one car to another for the purpose of rape qualified as "kidnapping for the purpose of harm," a capital offense, and on May 21, 1948, the jury returned with a death sentence on those counts (as recommended by Fricke).

The Chessman-Asher collection contains the legal papers of the original trial and subsequent appeal attempts. Chessman, who readily admitted being a thief but claimed innocence of the "red light" crimes to his dying day, did not base his appeal attempts on his innocence but rather on improper trial procedure. Not only did he not receive a daily transcript of the proceedings (as decided by Fricke), but the trial's court reporter, Ernest R. Perry, died before com-

To Larry Chessman
 who I think may
 enjoy parts of
 this book, particularly
 pages 337-358 —
 I wish you luck
 Norman Mailer
 March 1960

(Above) Numerous celebrities and world-renowned figures rallied to Chessman's defense. Among them was author Norman Mailer, who made a personal gift to Chessman of his book *Advertisements for Myself* and inscribed it as seen here. The page numbers he refers to are for the chapter titled "The White Negro: Superficial Reflections on the Hipster." While Chessman would not have described himself as a "hipster," those in the flourishing Beat and other bohemian scenes could certainly identify with his status as an outsider.

(Right) The Chessman Asher collection contains numerous examples of Chessman's handwritten notes during the preparation of his appeals. This one made sure that everything was worded and spelled correctly, and discussed the motives of prosecutor J. Miller Leavy.

see pp. 111-112 (the governor doesn't want one, disagree with other matters)
 original to court for appeal
 in D. file 2 181-2 43m (read) see 124-125-126 original of judge's notes
 to Walter 136

Preclearing

| | | |
|-------|------|---|
| P 21 | L 16 | typo "retently" should be "recently" |
| P 25 | L 22 | "if" to be added between "and" and "the" |
| P 27 | L 1 | last word should be "prospective" not "respective" |
| P 37 | L 11 | word "same" should be "safe" |
| P 50 | L 24 | word "so" should be "and" |
| P 64 | L 6 | typo "guaged" should be "gauged" |
| P 90 | L 18 | delete last "he" |
| P 122 | L 10 | "Houston" should be "Houston" |
| P 122 | L 11 | "Contenier" should be "Contenier" |
| P 142 | L 1 | "you" should be "you" |
| P 172 | L 12 | "is" should be "it" |
| P 180 | L 26 | "I" should be "it" |
| P 207 | L 15 | typo - "deligently" should be "deligently" |

by cross-examining Young
 being sure he is just trying
 to outwit me 169

Leavy says he doesn't want to tell me who his court-appointed expert on 149-150
 but he will see 151 Leavy said he wanted to be present when
 reporters appeared 157

name wanted
 name composition
 169

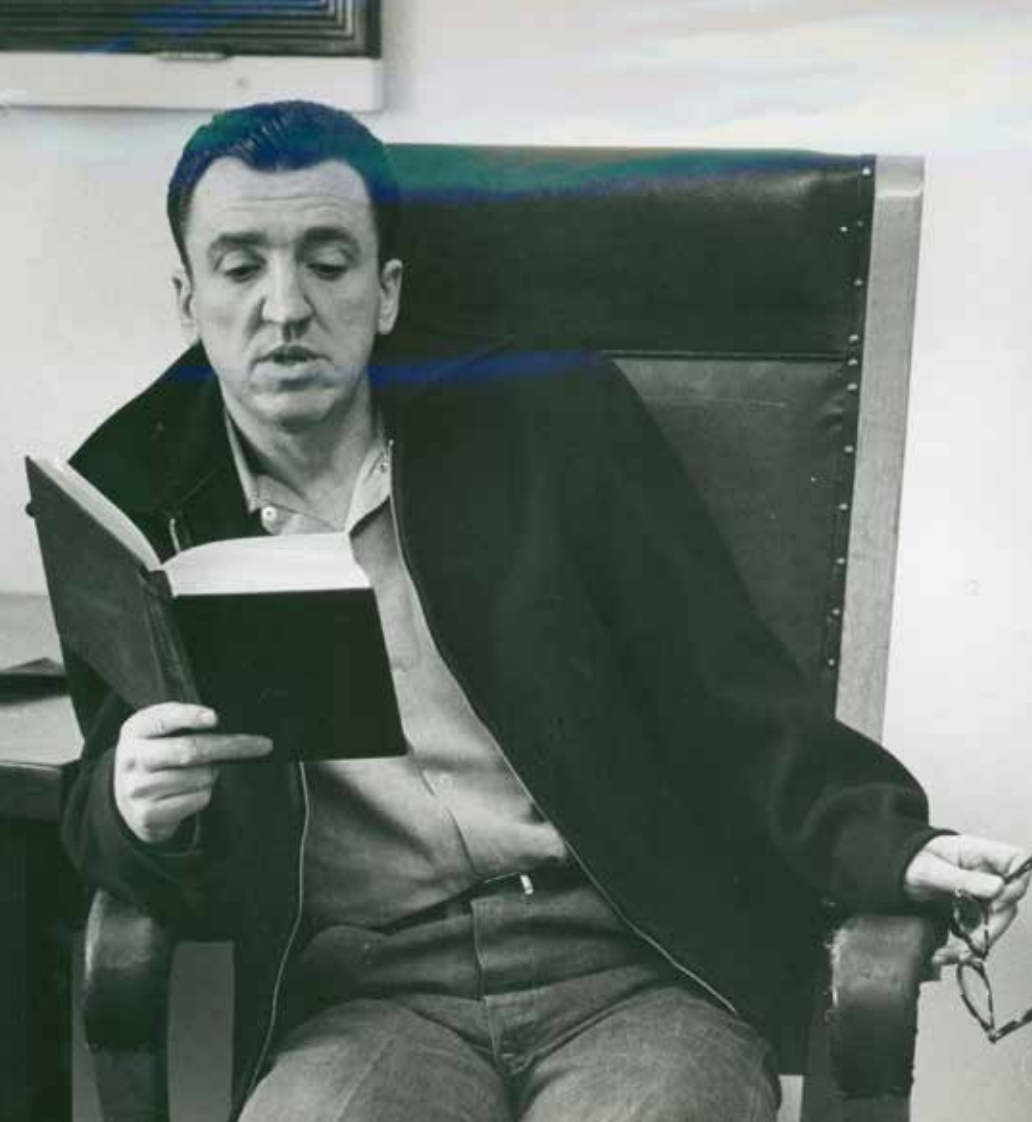
pleting the full transcript. A man named Stanley Fraser was hired to finish the task. Not only was Fraser the undisclosed uncle by marriage of prosecutor J. Miller Leavy but was also a chronic alcoholic who had been arrested numerous times since 1940, which called his ability to transcribe Perry's shorthand notes into question. Chessman thus based his motions for a new trial on the absence of an adequate record of his first trial, which was seen by many as his gaming the system by taking advantage of loopholes in the law. After all, if Chessman was innocent as he claimed, then why was

he basing his appeal on procedural matters rather than the facts of the case? Ultimately, the courts ruled that an adequate record had been made of Chessman's original trial, despite some testimony to the contrary. His conviction was therefore allowed to stand. Another aspect of Chessman's incarceration that attracted worldwide attention was his authoring of four books while on Death Row: the autobiographical *Cell 2455*, *Death Row* (1954) followed by *Trial by Ordeal* (1955), *The Face of Justice* (1957) and *The Kid Was A Killer* (1960). The last named book, a novel, had been confiscated

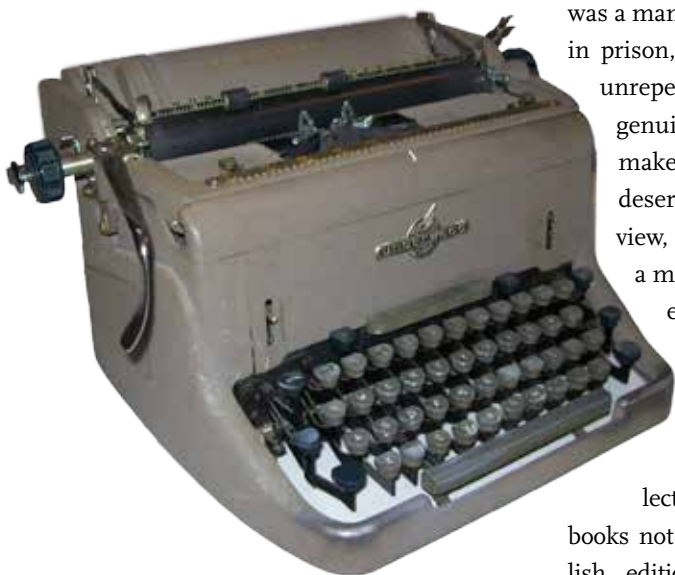
by San Quentin warden Harley O. Teets in 1954 on the basis of its being "prison labor," but was returned to Chessman three years later. Indeed, during his writing ban, Chessman and his fellow prisoners developed some ingenious methods of smuggling his texts out of prison. But most importantly, these books revealed Chessman as an intelligent man, unlike the popular conception of a Death Row inmate, and their subject matter dealt seriously with the topics of incarceration, rehabilitation, and prison reform. These books presented proof to many that here

In this photo Caryl Chessman is seen walking handcuffed down a hallway in a San Francisco courthouse on February 2, 1960 during one of his numerous hearings. One wonders if the man standing by the wall realized who was passing him.





Here, in what is likely a courtroom setting judging by his dress, we see Caryl Chessman studiously reading a book. Whether this was for legal purposes or merely recreational is impossible to say.



Here is the Underwood typewriter on which Caryl Chessman wrote the books that made him famous, along with letters to attorneys, judges, and the Governor of California.

was a man who had indeed changed while in prison, who had gone from being an unrepentant thug to someone who was genuinely concerned with helping to make positive change, and did not deserve to be put to death. In their view, such would be a tragic waste of a mind that had much to offer. Others, of course, felt that Chessman's writing consisted of a scam to, once again, avoid the fate he so richly deserved.

The Chessman-Asher collection includes all of Chessman's books not only published in various English editions, but also translated into numerous other languages. Asher also collected newspaper and magazine articles on the Chessman case from the United States

and all over the world. As mentioned before, Chessman became a cause celebre for a worldwide anti-death penalty movement. The practice had been discontinued in many countries, the residents of which saw its continuing use in the United States as barbaric. The frequency and intensity of these articles increased during early 1960, from the time Chessman received his last stay of execution to when he finally entered the gas chamber. Following his death, Asher remained actively involved in the efforts to eliminate capital punishment, and collected articles and news clippings on the subject for many years after. She was also directly involved in the 1977 TV movie *Kill Me If You Can*, in which Alan Alda portrayed Chessman and Talia Shire played Asher. Material relating to all of this is included in the collection.

Not all of the material in the Chessman-Asher collection relates to the intricacies and emotions of the legal system. Included also is a small photo album containing pictures of Chessman as a little boy, some of them with his father Serl and his mother Hallie. These put a human face on an individual that many considered a monster. Yes, he began life as an adorable child, as did most of the rest of us. But the big prize in this collection is Caryl Chessman's very own Underwood typewriter on which he wrote the books that helped make him world famous.

The Caryl Chessman case and its focus on the death penalty had far reaching effects on California politics. Governor Edmund G. "Pat" Brown's refusal to pardon him or commute his sentence, even though he himself was personally opposed to capital punishment, may have cost him the 1960 Democratic presidential nomination. The ongoing debate on capital punishment spurred by Chessman's execution arguably contributed to the growing left/right dichotomy in California's political landscape, a widening split between moderates and extremists on both sides, and the eventual rise of the New Right in



(Above) Chessman's books became best-sellers and were translated into eighteen languages. Shown here are the covers for two editions of *Cell 2455, Death Row*—one translated into Portuguese, the other to Italian. The attention that these books brought to Chessman's plight and to capital punishment generally cannot be overestimated.

Critics Associated
16 EAST 8TH STREET
NEW YORK 3, N. Y.
GRAMERCY 7-6447

19 June 1954

Mr. Caryl Chessman
Box 66565
San Quentin, California

My dear friend:

It doesn't seem right, not writing to you every other day, but I keep pinching myself and saying that it's the best -- it's the best -- it's the best!

I'm enclosing a review which came in, addressed to you, yesterday, from the National Catholic Weekly Review.

We have received many, many letters from all parts of the country, and countless telephone enquiries about you and your situation. You'll recall that I forwarded one letter and since you were not permitted to receive it -- which I must say one can understand from the authorities point of view, under these circumstances -- I shan't attempt to send more. Just be assured of two things: 1, that we are receiving many, many enquiries and comments, 95% favorable and sympathetic, and 2, that each and every one of them is answered promptly. We tell people, and write when they write, explaining the problems involved in your correspondence and that you are wishing to co-operate to the fullest by putting down on the required paper work; consequently, we thank them for you and I think you realize that we are not stiff and formal in our thanks, but express them sincerely and personally.

There is nothing new as far as the book is concerned. It is selling well and re-orders are quite good. It moved up on the best-seller lists last week.

A few words in the Life In This Pile Of Stones Known As New York department: H-bomb's baby got thoroughly baptized the other day -- and it would appear that as water went on, water came out! Such goings-on! I'm working on a new book, on assignment, for which Rube Goldberg is to do the illustrations. It seems that he has long wanted to do something in the children's field and now wants to do it this summer. His publishers wanted me to do the text. Naturally,

(Left) Another good friend to Caryl Chessman during his twelve years on Death Row was Joseph Longstreth, who became his literary agent and helped make his client known worldwide. In this June 19, 1954 letter to Chessman, Longstreth relates the positive progress of *Cell 2455, Death Row*, and also mentions that he would be writing a children's book illustrated by Rube Goldberg!

June 27, 1956

Library

Will you kindly send up the following legal books:

1. Vol. 160 California Reports
2. Vol. 19 California Appellate Reports, 2d Series

Will you also order the following legal books for me from the State Law Library:

1. Vol. 209 United States Reports
2. Vol. 337 United States Reports
3. Vol. 19 American Law Reports, 2d Series
4. Vol. 123 Federal Reporter, 2d Series
5. Vol. 127 Federal Reporter, 2d Series
6. Vol. 219 Federal Reporter, 2d Series
7. Vol. 221 Federal Reporter, 2d Series

These books are needed urgently in connection with a closing brief on appeal to the U.S. Court of Appeals which I am preparing and which must be filed shortly. Cases appearing in them have been cited by the state's brief, just filed.

Thanks in advance,

Chessman - 66565 (Rev)

Chessman, in preparing his appeals, often borrowed books from the California State Library! Here, on June 29, 1956, he requested seven volumes from what is now the Bernard E. Witkin State Law Library through San Quentin's own library.

On the morning of May 2, 1960, in what attorney George Davis described as "the cliffhanger of all cliffhangers," he and Rosalie Asher went to the U. S. District Court after the California Supreme Court rejected their petition for a Writ of Habeas Corpus on behalf of Caryl Chessman. At literally the last minute they convinced Judge Louis E. Goodman to issue an hour stay of execution so that another appeal could be filed. Goodman instructed his secretary to call Warden Dickson at San Quentin. She misdialed and asked for the number again, but by the time she got through the execution had already begun. This photo shows Asher and Davis leaving the judge's chambers immediately afterward. Note that the clock on the wall reads 10:05—about two minutes after cyanide pellets were dropped into a bucket of sulfuric acid under the chair in which Caryl Chessman sat.



Illustrating the worldwide attention the Chessman case received is the front page, once again in Portuguese, of the Rio De Janeiro newspaper *Diário de Noite* published on April 30, 1960, just two days before Chessman's execution



Closer to home, dramatic headlines of the May 2, 1960 *Los Angeles Evening Mirror-News* evoke the harrowing, nail-biting events of Chessman's final hours, and the associated worldwide outrage. Apparently this edition was issued *before* Chessman's morning execution despite its designation as an evening newspaper.



Name: Caryl Chessman
Box 66565, San Quentin, Calif.
Date: February 26, 1960

The Hon. Edmund G. Brown
Governor of the State of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, California

Dear Governor Brown:

As you know, at approximately 4:45 p.m., on Thursday, February 18, 1960, I was removed from the Death Row Unit located on the fifth floor of the North Block here at San Quentin and locked in the small holding cell, just a few feet from the State's lethal gas chamber, where California's condemned spend their last night on earth. The death watch began. So far as I knew, I would be put to death at ten o'clock in the morning.

I was permitted to see an early edition of a Friday newspaper. Its headlines were large and black: CHESMAN MUST DIE, BROWN SAYS. Again, only an hour earlier, the members of the California Supreme Court had voted 4 to 3 against a recommendation to you for clemency. Thus, by a single vote, you were foreclosed from exercising your commutation powers. The court had made its order "final forthwith." I had been notified of that action a few hours before being taken downstairs to the holding cell. In anticipation of it, I had put my affairs in order and executed a new will.

My attorneys had been requested not to return to the courts. I had asked Attorney Rosalie S. Asher to see you, if possible, on my flat and positive claim I was not the Red Light Bandit. I had written you a letter which I wanted her to deliver to you on this matter. The day before, and prior to the State Supreme Court's first 4-3 rejection of a clemency recommendation, I had wired: "I ask you to do whatever your conscience dictates you should. Mine tells me that I again must affirm the fact that I am not the Red Light Bandit, even if the price for that affirmation must be death.

And death appeared inevitable. I held out no feverish, desperate hope for a life-saving miracle. On the contrary, what sustained me, what made it possible for me to await the morning and oblivion with a detached, almost clinical calm was hope of an entirely different sort: the burning hope that my execution would lead to an objective reappraisal of the social validity or invalidity of capital punishment, and that such a re-examination would lead, in turn, to an awareness on the part of all Californians that Death Rows, and death chambers and executioners were unworthy of our society, that the former, in fact, were gross obscenities, solving nothing but rather confounding solution.

The minutes passed, the hours. The prison's Catholic Chaplain, Father Edward Dingborg, visited me. Associate Wardens Walter D. Achuff and Louis S. Nelson saw me for a few minutes. Dr. David G. Schmidt, San Quentin's chief psychiatrist, came in. Attorney George Davis conferred with me hurriedly, intending to return later. Warden Fred R. Dickson dropped by for a talk.

-1-

(Left) Edmund G. "Pat" Brown, elected Governor of California in 1958, found himself in a no-win situation as far as Caryl Chessman was concerned. While personally opposed to the death penalty, he displayed an antagonistic attitude toward Chessman and, for what appeared to some as political expediency, refused to pardon him or commute his sentence. Yet he did so for other Death Row inmates for perhaps less comprehensible reasons. Chessman corresponded with the governor on February 26, 1960 thanking him for a recent stay of execution (which Brown granted so that President Eisenhower would not have to deal with angry throngs during his trip to Latin America) while taking him to task for not properly reviewing the facts of his case.

Rosalie S. Asher May 2, 1960
Attorney at Law

Dear Rosalie:

I hope you were able to get a little rest for those grueling hours ahead. It's now nearly seven a.m. and, since you're left, I've spent the remainder of the night writing letters.

I'm doing something for Mary Crawford and I'll give it to the Warden, along with the letter to Will Stevens and a personal note for Pony.

Accompanying these letters are notes which I'll appreciate if you'll deliver to (or mail to) Bernice, Ted & Dorothy, and Shirley and Jim Machinist.

I've also written and will ask the Warden to mail notes to George Davis and Torrance, Mrs. Nora Hull (a friend in Indiana), Phil Daniel, Danny Alvarado, Dr. Zifferstein, Bill Lindhart (asking him to turn over the files and other property of mine he has except the Royal), and Phyllis Nicks.

There were several others I would have written but I simply ran out of time. Kindly, as time permits, make it a point to thank those I was unable to, including Frank Olson, now in prison.

the political landscape of what had been generally considered a moderate to liberal state. As for Chessman himself, he deserved to be incarcerated but probably not to be executed. That he finally went to the gas chamber had more to do with his being a thorn in the side of California's powers-that-be than any other factor. Or so one theory goes. ■

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This is a letter handwritten by Caryl Chessman to Rosalie Asher on the morning of May 2, 1960. On the second page, with less than an hour left of his life, he thanked her for everything she had done for him. Shortly after, he wrote about receiving word that the California Supreme Court had denied his latest application, and closed the letter with "And so I must say goodbye, Rosalie."

A Reunion with a Twist

The Edward Bates Family Letters

By Debbie Hollingsworth

Everyone loves a reunion story. Whether it is a child reunited with a parent returning from war, or siblings separated since birth, we all love stories with happy endings. This article is also about a reunion, but with a twist. It reunites a daughter with her father; a nephew with his uncle; grandchildren with their grandfather; and great-grandchildren with their great-grandfather. The twist, however, is that this father/uncle/grandfather/great-grandfather passed away decades ago. Despite this not-so-minor detail, this family

was nevertheless reunited with him. They met a young man in his early twenties they could never have known except for the letters he wrote to his parents and brothers in 1917 and 1918. Happily, this family found these letters because of an article published in the *Bulletin* last year.

I wrote the article, "World War I as Seen Through the Eyes of a California Doughboy: The Letters of Lt. Edward Bates," in volume 105 of the *Bulletin*. In this article, I described the collection of Bates family letters archived at the California State Library. I had found them while researching a World War I exhibit I was curating at the California State Capitol Museum. This remarkable collection included hundreds of letters between Edward and his family. The article caught the attention of Shirley Bates. Lieutenant Charles "Edward" Harold Bates was Shirley's father, and she was unaware

of the letters' existence until she opened that issue of the *Bulletin*. She contacted the *Bulletin's* editors and asked to meet me.

Having "lived" with the Bates family during my months of research for the exhibit, I was most anxious to meet Shirley and learn more about her father's life after he returned home from the War. Shirley and I had an enjoyable visit during which I learned of her own world travels and her passion for racing yachts. She obviously inherited her father's sense of adventure.

Talking about her family was an unusual experience for both Shirley and me. I knew things about her family of which she had no knowledge. "You know more about my family than I do," she told me at one point. To an extent, that was true. I needed no introduction to family members because I knew them all. The letters they wrote were intimate, affectionate, and descriptive.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Debbie Hollingsworth is an interpretive specialist at the Center for Sacramento History. She is writing a new book, *Old Sacramento: A History and Guide*, which will be published in August 2014.



Dr. Bates in his mature years, circa 1960s
(Photo courtesy Shirley Bates)



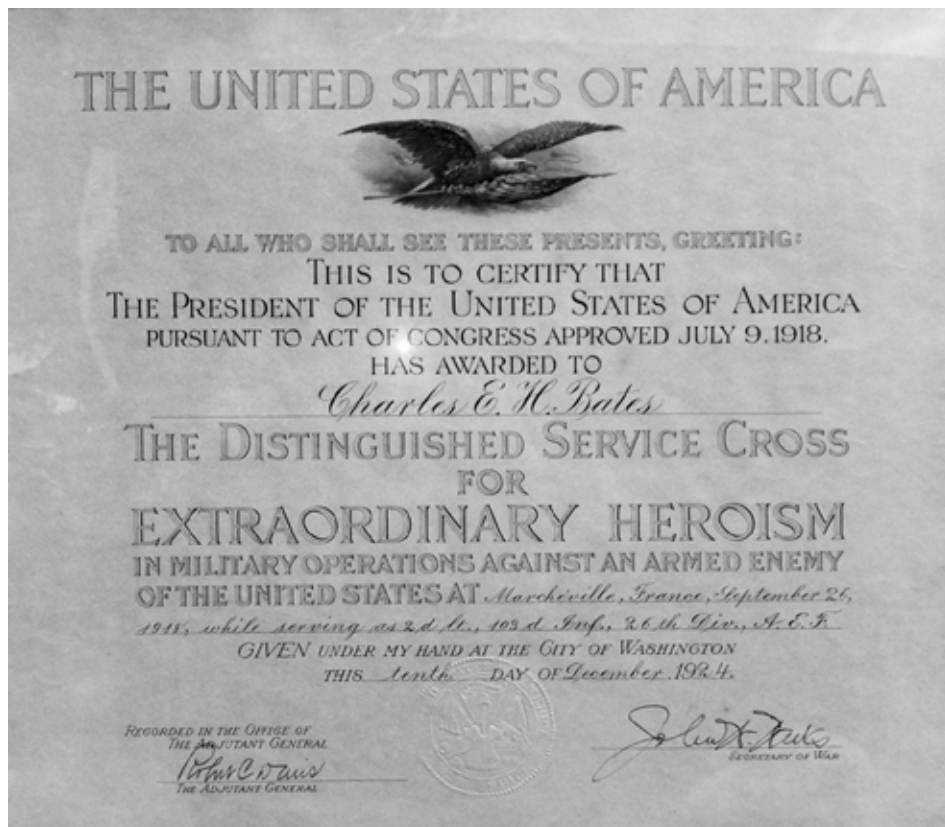
The five Bates brothers in their youth.
Edward second from the right.
(Photo courtesy Shirley Bates)

I learned from Shirley that her father married Elizabeth Marston on October 6, 1923. They had three children: A daughter, Barbara; a son, Charles; and another daughter, Shirley. Shirley is the only surviving member of her siblings. She showed me a few photographs, and I learned that Edward was not only a respected doctor, but also a good father, husband, and member of the community.

Shirley's sister, Barbara, had two children, Margot and Harold. Margot also contacted me when she learned of the *Bulletin's* article, and I responded by sending her transcripts of the letters. After reading them, she emailed me and reported that she abandoned everything the afternoon she received them to sit down and read every single word. "It was really, really wonderful," she wrote. "I felt like I was right there on the front lines in France or 'somewhere in a trench' in France." She added that she was off to make copies for her daughters and her brother. "Seldom do we really get to see what the lives of our grandparents were like," Margot told me.

Shirley also shared the transcripts with her cousin, Bob Bates. The *Bulletin's* article helped reunite three generations with the letters of a family member long deceased. The letters allowed them to travel back in time and meet their family's patriarch when he was simply a son and brother, fighting and surviving a war in which millions had died.

One mystery remained for all these family members. How did the letters end up at the California State Library? Although none of us could definitively answer the question, we deduced that either Edward or his parents saved all the correspondence between them. When Edward passed away, he left the letters to his son,



(Above) Certificate that accompanied the Distinguished Service Cross medal earned by Edward during WWI. (Photo courtesy Margot Woodward)

(Below) The Bates family proudly displayed this service flag signifying they had four sons serving in the armed forces. (Photo courtesy Margot Woodward)

Charles. At some point, Charles sold the letters to a collector. This collector sold the letters at an auction in New Jersey, where the Library's Director of Special Collections Gary Kurutz purchased them.

To researchers and historians, like myself, the value of letters such as these is priceless. They allow us to view the world through the eyes of average, everyday people. Very often, history is written from the perspective of the wealthy, powerful, and influential because they have the means to record their life's achievements. Unfortunately, many families do not recognize the historical importance of family correspondence and throw away such items when loved ones pass on. If anyone has questions concerning personal items of deceased family members, they should contact staff at local historical societies, archives, and of course, the California State Library for guidance regarding these matters.

It was an honor for me to read the Bates Family letters, know the family, and build a museum exhibit around the experi-



ence of this family from Alameda during World War I. The California State Capitol Museum receives approximately one million visitors per year. Thanks to the Bates Family letters, one million more people also experienced World War I through the eyes of a California Doughboy. 🇺🇸

The California Homeless Youth Project { A Research Initiative to End Youth Homelessness

By Shahera Hyatt

The California Homeless Youth Project (CHYP) is a grant-funded research initiative of the California Research Bureau, the public policy research wing of the California State Library. The Foundation proudly acts as fiscal agent for this particular grant. Funding is provided by the California Wellness Foundation. The project is committed to bringing youth to the policy table and to informing policymakers, opinion leaders, and other stakeholders about the needs of unaccompanied homeless youth.



Project Director Shahera Hyatt addresses an attentive audience at a rally in front of the California State Capitol.

WHAT THE CHYP DOES

The goal at the California Homeless Youth Project is to educate policymakers on the needs of the state's homeless youth in a variety of ways. The first is by producing short policy briefs on various issues facing homeless youth in California and highlighting unique subpopulations among homeless youth (such as youth of color, LGBT youth, and youth who are sexually exploited). In these briefs, an effort is made to speak and write in ways that are easily digestible for busy readers and people who are often unfamiliar with the subject.

The second is by engaging policymakers in dialogue with service providers, researchers, and young people experiencing homelessness in order to discuss these issues and come up with real policy solutions that are timely, relevant, and actionable. CHYP staff host events at the state Capitol, provide refreshments, and facilitate candid discussion on ways to move forward as a state in addressing youth homelessness, particularly important in a state as large as California with such a sizable homeless population. In fact, California residents make up over twenty percent of the homeless population, though they make up just twelve percent of the nation's population.

Through this work, I have found that elected officials really value their interactions with young people. Meeting a currently or formerly homeless young person to help

put a face and a story to a complex challenge has frequently inspired policymakers to act. When policymakers talk directly with these youth, they not only remember them, but also share their stories with colleagues and community members.

Finally, CHYP also offers policymakers well-vetted policy recommendations based on nonpartisan research to inform their decisions. This is the approach that has been used, for example, in the recently-released state action plan to end youth homelessness, *More Than a Roof: How California Can End Youth Homelessness*.

STATE ACTION PLAN TO END YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

The CHYP's state action plan, commissioned by state Senator Carol Liu (D-Glen-dale), is a collection of the most actionable recommendations in the literature on the topic of ending youth homelessness, with a focus on what's most relevant for California. The plan is aimed to align California with *Opening Doors*, the federal strategic plan to end homelessness, and created under the direction of an advisory council which includes service providers, executive branch staff, legislators, and advocates from across the state, as well as national partners from the United States Inter-agency Council on Homelessness, and the National Alliance to End Homelessness.

After about a year and a half of ground-

work, CHYP released the Plan in January 2013, at the start of a new two-year legislative session with a number of newly elected officials in office. The timing of the release was both strategic and effective, as state legislators reached out to the project for research and technical support on bill ideas related to homeless youth. As a result, this legislative session has seen an unprecedented level of interest in a population that is often overlooked; the number of bills passed this session aimed at improving the lives of some of California's most vulnerable youth is the highest in our state's history.

MOVING FORWARD

While I know there is still a tremendous amount of work to do in order to end youth homelessness in our state, CHYP has assumed a unique role as a public-private partnership focused exclusively on this topic and my staff and I look forward to continuing our work in the coming years.

Moving forward, we continue to build upon the relationships we have forged at every level to keep the issue of youth homelessness in the spotlight. If the trajectory of success we've seen in the years since starting the CHYP continues, California will go from being known as one of the states with the largest homeless populations, to being known as the state leading the nation in ending youth homelessness. ■



EDITOR'S NOTE

Shahera Hyatt is the Director of the California Homeless Youth Project, a research and policy initiative of the California Research Bureau focusing on educating policymakers on the needs of homeless youth in California. Hyatt also serves as the Local Coordinator for the National Association for Educating Homeless Children and Youth's Homeless Youth Task.



Art Smith

{ the Boy Aviator and
} Skywriting Pioneer

By Gary F. Kurutz

Blessed with an infectious smile, the “Boy Aviator” posed for this photograph at the controls of his biplane. Dobbin, *Album of San Francisco*, Volume 2.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Gary F. Kurutz is executive director of the California State Library Foundation and curator emeritus of special collections at the Library.

One can only imagine the astonishment of San Franciscans as they watched a flaming flying machine spiral to the earth in the night sky above the shimmering towers and domes of the 1915 Panama Pacific International Exposition. It must have seemed like a comet streaking across the sky. At the controls of the errant, twisting biplane



was the barnstorming aviator Art Smith. Fortunately, this aerial stuntman survived and lived to tell the tale of his harrowing descent from the heavens.

Through the largesse of the Foundation, the State Library acquired a stunning night photograph documenting one of Smith's illuminated death-defying flights. Because of the flames shooting out from his aero-

plane's wings, the photograph records a corkscrew-like flight path. This new acquisition nicely complements other photographs in the collection of the celebrity aviator performing at the exposition. What were the circumstances that led to this amazing aerial show above the exposition grounds in San Francisco's Marina District as it celebrated the completion of the Panama Canal and the rebirth of the City following the 1906 Earthquake and Fire?

Arthur Roy Smith, already famous for his aerial acrobatics in the Midwest, came to San Francisco following the tragic death on March 14, 1915, of famed aviation pioneer Lincoln Beachey. A native of San Francisco, Beachey crashed into the water between the Fort Mason wharves while performing a stunt in his sleek new monoplane. Although horrified by his demise, exposition organizers realized that attendees were captivated by these heroes of the air and asked Smith to replace Beachey. It had only been twelve years since the Wright Brothers historic flight at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, and the world was awestruck by the possibilities of aerial navigation. Beachey, Smith, Glenn Curtiss, Blanche Scott, and other pilots were only too willing to thrill audiences with their heart-stopping stunts.

A native of Fort Wayne, Indiana, and known as "the boy aviator" or "boy comet," the diminutive Art Smith (he stood 5' 3") was a natural showman. Precocious and fearless, he had begun flying at the age of fifteen. Possessed with an infectious smile, he knew how to please a crowd. In addition to his natural showmanship, Smith was remarkably inventive. Before coming to San Francisco, Smith had regaled national audiences with his aerial daring. With financial support from his parents, he built his own flying machines and became devoted to what some called "fancy flying." Infused with the zeal of a missionary, Smith stated that "it is the fancy flyers who are demonstrating that aviation is practical. I am proving every time I fly ...

that nothing—nothing—can happen to a sound aeroplane." This was his calling. He admired pilots like Lincoln Beachey who could do loop-the-loops and other heart-stopping maneuvers. Always looking for ways to prove the feasibility of flight and to win support for aviation, Smith came up with an amazing innovation, illuminated flying. While in Indiana, he made several night flights with his flying machine outlined in lights. Then he came up with an even bolder idea: adding fireworks to his wings. In so doing, it would create a spectacular trail across the night sky. Eagerly, Smith worked with a Chicago firm to produce fireworks that could be safely ignited while traveling at high speeds hundreds of feet up in the air. Not surprisingly, this innovation wowed midwestern audiences. The boy aviator had become the pyrotechnician of the night sky. At one point, he more realistically termed "fancy flying" as "aerial insanity."

When Smith came to the San Francisco world's fair, he was well aware of the specter of Beachey's horrific death. He knew that the nascent aviation business would be set back if he too crashed and worse yet, died. The responsibility of proving the safety of his craft while putting it through its strenuous paces weighed heavily on him. Exposition officials arranged for his first flight to take place on Saturday April 3, 1915, during the day and a night flight on Sunday. Much to his surprise, Smith learned that the schedule had been changed and that he would have to make his first flight late on Saturday night. He did not want to disappoint officials by refusing to go aloft. After all, he hoped to land a lucrative contract to make many more flights at the exposition. However, his special aeronautical fireworks had not yet arrived, so he and his manager Billy Bastar scoured San Francisco. They found what they thought were the right kind of pyrotechnics on the grounds of the exposition and hastily wired them to his craft. While others readied his biplane, Smith



Aviator Smith with his hero, Buffalo Bill Cody. During the P. P. I. E., Cody presented him with a medal. Dobbin *Album of San Francisco*, Volume 2.



studied weather conditions noting the wind driven clouds.

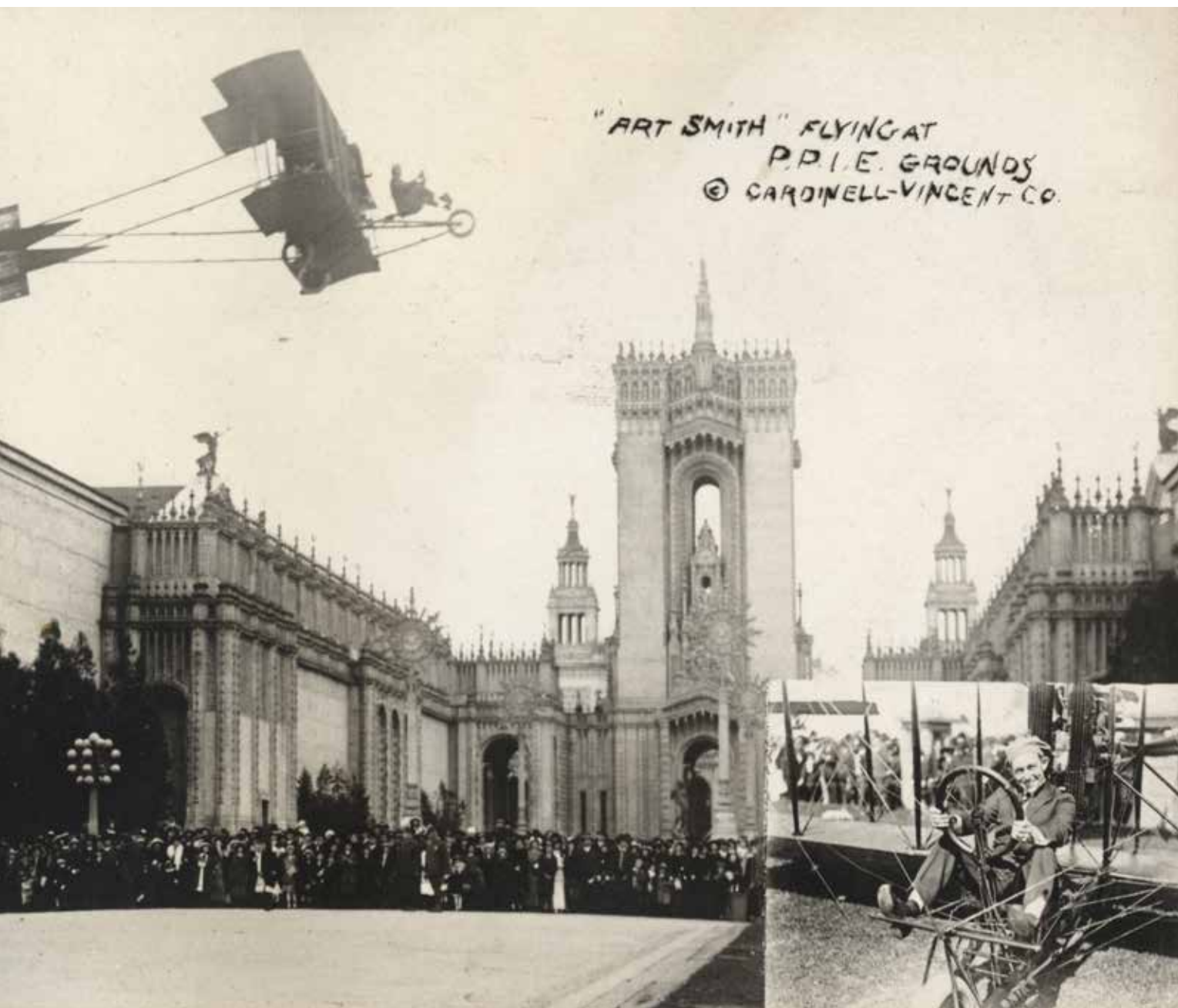
At 11:30 on Saturday night, Smith sped down the exposition's Aviation Field and took off into the evening firmament. A stiff wind was blowing. The young pilot recalled for the *San Francisco Bulletin* one of the most memorable and improbable flights ever to take place in Bay Area aviation history. Here is what happened in the words of this aerial acrobat:

"I had passed twenty-five hundred feet; neared three thousand. The time had come for the loops. I pressed the button which starts the white glare of the magnesium lights. They responded instantly, with the flare of the flashlight powder, and I dropped the machine into a vertical dip.

Two hundred feet below I pushed the controls over into the first loop, and touched the button for the trailing "comet trail." The aeroplane went end-over-end

in a perfect circle, curving up through the propeller draft with a great jolt. I dropped again into the vertical dip and touched the second fireworks button.

Just as the machine fell forward into the second loop, and the engine stopped for the fraction of a second before picking up again, I heard a terrific explosion. The machine quivered with it. A piece of the framework hurtling through the air barely missed my cheek.



During the day, the aviator dazzled thousands at the San Francisco exposition with his death-defying stunts over the Marina District and San Francisco Bay.

I threw all my strength on the controls. The machine responded. It swung around and up again. Just before it came right side up there was another explosion. I heard it above the roar of my engine. The fireworks were wrecking the aeroplane.

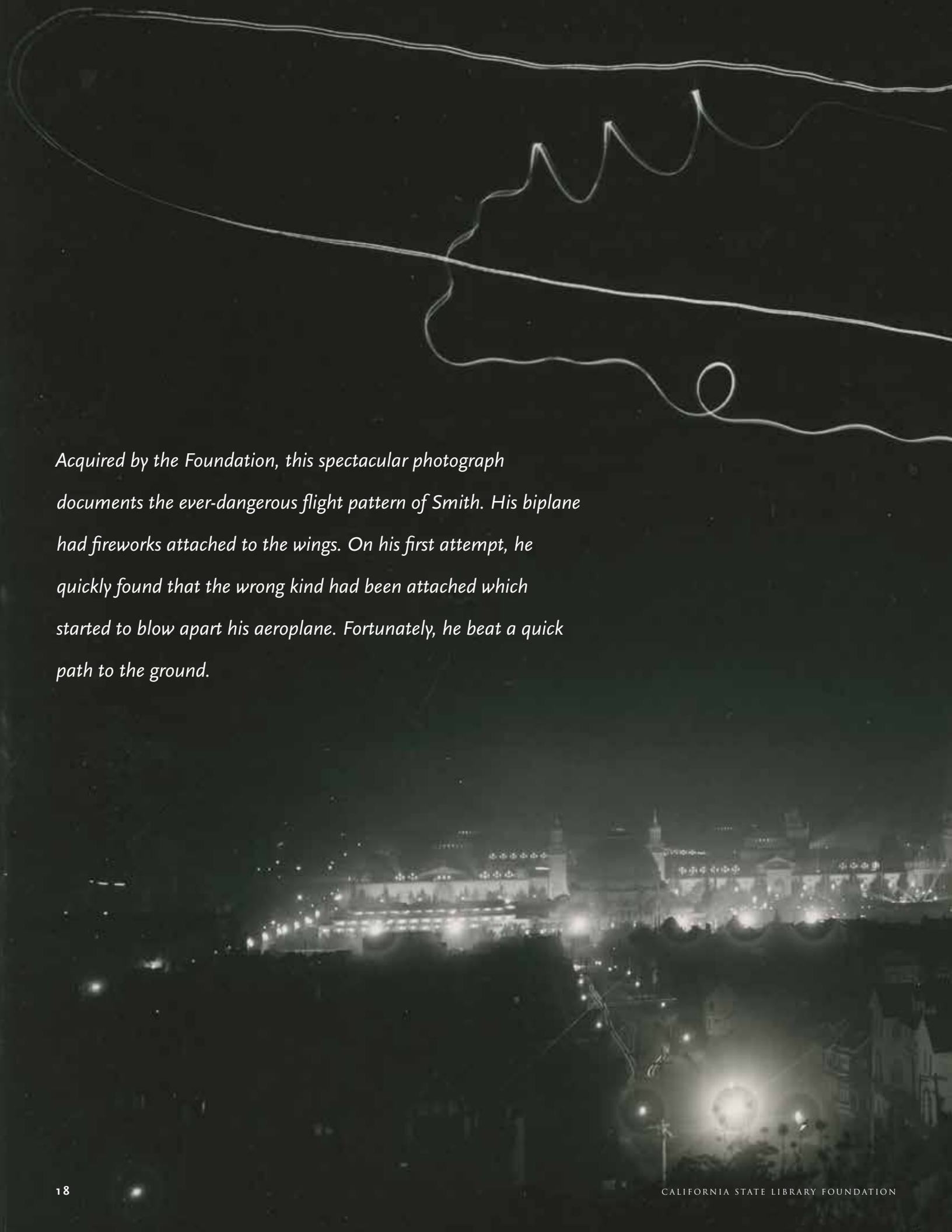
I nosed the machine steady and came roaring down. I was wearing goggles; they protected my eyes from the fire. I held my breath. Ten feet from the Marina there was another explosion on the lower plane. The

machine shook. I held it steady, and landed.

Billy Bastar came running, tearing off his overcoat. He flung it over the blazing machine and smothered the flames. I beat the fire from my clothes with my hands."

Exhibiting amazing calm, Smith's first concern was not for his safety but fear that exposition officials would withdraw his flying contract. Billy yelled to Smith, "Quick, hide the machine! Don't let the papers get hold of this!" They pushed the damaged

aeroplane off the Marina landing strip and hid it under a canvas tarp. Rather than wait to be interviewed by the press, who no doubt marveled at what they witnessed in the night sky, Smith slinked home in embarrassment. He realized that he had been negligent by not testing the fireworks himself and had relied on another. Smith then related what happened with the fireworks: "Instead of the Roman-candle type which I use they were giant cannon-crack-



Acquired by the Foundation, this spectacular photograph documents the ever-dangerous flight pattern of Smith. His biplane had fireworks attached to the wings. On his first attempt, he quickly found that the wrong kind had been attached which started to blow apart his aeroplane. Fortunately, he beat a quick path to the ground.



H. O. H. Shelley, in this amazing photograph, captured the illuminated midnight flight of Smith at the close of the great exposition on December 4, 1915.



A natural showman, Smith amused audiences on the land as well as in the air with his "Baby Auto". Dobbin, *Album of San Francisco*, Volume 1.

ers, twelve inches long. Wired tight to the frame of the machine, they had exploded like bombs." Continuing to beat himself up, Smith lamented the potential consequences had he not survived, "They said I had made a spectacular flight. I knew I had made a criminal mistake, and an aviator should never make mistakes. All aviation has been made possible by the ability of each flyer to be sure of himself and his machine. An error means more than the individual wreck, it mean an injury to aviation."

Despite this close call, Smith then signed a contract to entertain exposition attendees with his aerial circus. He called his biplane the "Honeybug." Having learned a stern lesson, before each flight he thoroughly inspected his craft and did not rely on others. No bombs exploded on his wingtips. The boyish looking pilot proceeded to thrill thousands of spectators with dozens of loop-the-loops, side twisters, and death spirals in the day, and by night, dazzled spectators with amazing evolutions outlined in flames ignited by safe, Roman-candle fireworks. At the exposition, Smith added another unique feature: skywriting. A true pioneer, he ended his night performances by writing in the sky "Good Night." Another time, Smith had to leave the City to barnstorm the southern U.S., and as a farewell, he wrote "Good-By" [sic]. One can only imagine the effect on his audience as they craned their necks skyward. That night seventy thousand people came to see him fly. Happily for exposition goers, Smith did return.

Barnstorming, however, still had its risks. During the fair, his mother, Mrs. James Smith, came out to visit him, and the two decided to go aloft together. What a brave woman she must have been. Photographs of early biplanes show the pilot without any protection save goggles and a leather helmet. Cockpits would come later. Their body seemingly protruded precariously at the front of the plane. With his dear mother seated slightly behind him, they sped down the Aviation Field and

The boyish looking pilot proceeded to thrill thousands of spectators with dozens of loop-the-loops, side twisters, and death spirals in the day, and by night, dazzled spectators with amazing evolutions outlined in flames ignited by safe, Roman-candle fireworks.

At the exposition Smith added another unique feature: skywriting.

powered into the air. Upon reaching an altitude of two thousand feet, the engine suddenly died, and Smith struggled to control the craft. It turned out that having a passenger added too much weight and upset the equilibrium of the flimsy craft. They both faced annihilation. Winged Mercury must have smiled on them as they somehow made it back to terra firma. Upon landing, the plane struck a bench and fence, but mother and son survived without any serious injury. The *San Francisco Chronicle* reported: "Mrs. Smith jumped from the plane, seized her son and kissed him. Smith just grinned and said he knew he would be all right all the time." No doubt, he was truly scared for his mother. Thereafter, he decided against taking passengers.

On the ground, adoring crowds frequently swarmed over Smith sometimes carrying him on their shoulders. The papers proclaimed him "King of the Air." A born entertainer, he further wowed audiences by speeding along in his tiny racecar called the "Baby Flyer". During the great fair, he met his boyhood idol, Buffalo Bill Cody. Buffalo Bill, in turn, pinned a medal on the lapel of the beaming aviator after witnessing one of his flights. To add a further bit of romance to the whole affair, Smith brought his new bride Aimee Coeur with him. Aimee had witnessed many of Smith's midwestern flights, cheered him on, and even flew with him. As related by Smith, they had earlier planned to elope in the Midwest, leaving her family home via his flying machine but they crashed. Shaken and injured, they crawled out of the aeroplane and were rescued. Not deterred and ever determined, the cou-

ple got married while in bed recovering from the accident. Clearly, Art Smith had become the darling of the great San Francisco world's fair. Not everything, however, was a fairytale. Soon thereafter, the celebrity couple divorced.

The wondrous exposition, attended by millions, finally came to a close on December 4, 1915. On the afternoon, a crowd of 200,000 gathered on the Marina Green to witness the boy comet's last daytime flight in his fire chariot, the "Honeybug." He did not disappoint wowing everyone with a series of thrilling stunts. However, Art Smith had one last trick. On the final night when the last beam of light had been extinguished at the exposition, Smith, according to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, "wrote with his machine in letters of fire the farewell message of the Exposition against the sky." On a background of "black velvet sky" the idol of the exposition wrote "Farewell P. P. I. E."

Ever mindful of publicity opportunities, Smith also told his life story to the *San Francisco Bulletin*. Edited by Rose Wilder Lane, the serialized autobiography was later published that same year as a soft cover book of ninety-four pages. Not surprisingly, *Art Smith's Story, The Autobiography of the Boy Aviator* did a brisk sale.

From San Francisco, the aviator barnstormed the world giving breathtaking demonstrations of the marvels of controlled flight. When World War I broke out, Smith volunteered and became a test pilot and instructor. Apparently his short stature kept him out of combat. Smith in 1923 became a pilot for the newly instituted U.S. Airmail Service and he quickly emerged as a star in the organization. In 1926, the airmail service started



Prominently shown in this night flight photograph is the Tower of Jewels, the signature building of the great 1915 exposition.

a New York to Chicago overnight mail run. Smith, with his considerable experience in the night air, was a natural to make nocturnal deliveries. It proved to be a dangerous occupation as one pilot had already crashed and died. On the evening of February 12, 1926, Smith took off from Chicago at 8:35, and about two hours later, went off course in difficult weather, struck a tree near Montpelier, Ohio, and crashed

and burned to death. Art Smith, the boy aviator, was just short of reaching the age of thirty-two. In reporting this sad news, the *Chronicle* for February 13 reported: "The Associated Press dispatches brought the news shortly before midnight that the man loved by thousands in San Francisco during the great exposition met his fate as he had lived for years, flying." He was the Achilles of the air. 🗨️

SOURCES

Art Smith's Story, The Autobiography of the Boy Aviator Which Appeared as a Serial in The Bulletin, Edited by Rose Wilder Lane. San Francisco: The Bulletin, 1915.

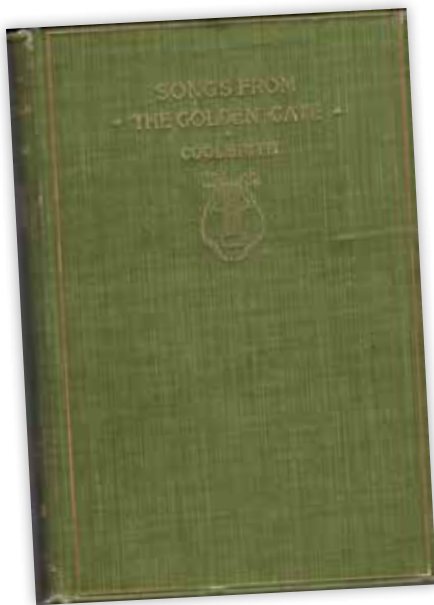
Biographical File, California History Section, California State Library.

San Francisco Chronicle (various articles from 1915).

The Ina Coolbrith Circle Collection in the California State Library

By Stan Morner

“For California is a Poem!
The land of romance, of mystery,
of worship, of beauty and of Song.”



Ina Donna Coolbrith, California's first poet laureate and “literary mother” of Jack London.

The beautiful cloth cover of Coolbrith's California poems, *Songs from the Golden Gate*. It was published in 1895 and illustrated by William Keith.



When one enters the Rotunda of the California State Library Building on N Street, those words by Ina Coolbrith are one of the first things the visitor will see. They are inscribed along the circular border on a level with the second floor. One of the collections preserved in this protective space is The Ina Coolbrith Circle Collection, presently consisting of 295 books and 282 bound volumes of the President's Newsletters from 1970 to 2010. Both books and President's Newsletters continue to expand as the Ina Coolbrith Circle moves into a new decade.

The purpose of this article is threefold: first, to introduce the Ina Coolbrith Circle (I.C.C.), second to describe the collection and its origin; and finally, to join with you, the reader, in discussing what might be the justification of and uses for such a collection. The stories and lore concerning Ina Donna Coolbrith contain a treasure of California history and literature. The classic biography, *Ina Coolbrith Librarian and Laureate of California* by Josephine De Witt Rhodehamel and Raymond Francis Wood is one of the 295

EDITOR'S NOTE

Stan Morner has for many years been active with the Ina Coolbrith Circle. He generously transports the latest poetry publications by members of the Circle to the State Library from his home in the East Bay.

books in the collection. Journalist Aleta George is writing a new biography about Ina Coolbrith that will be out within a few years.

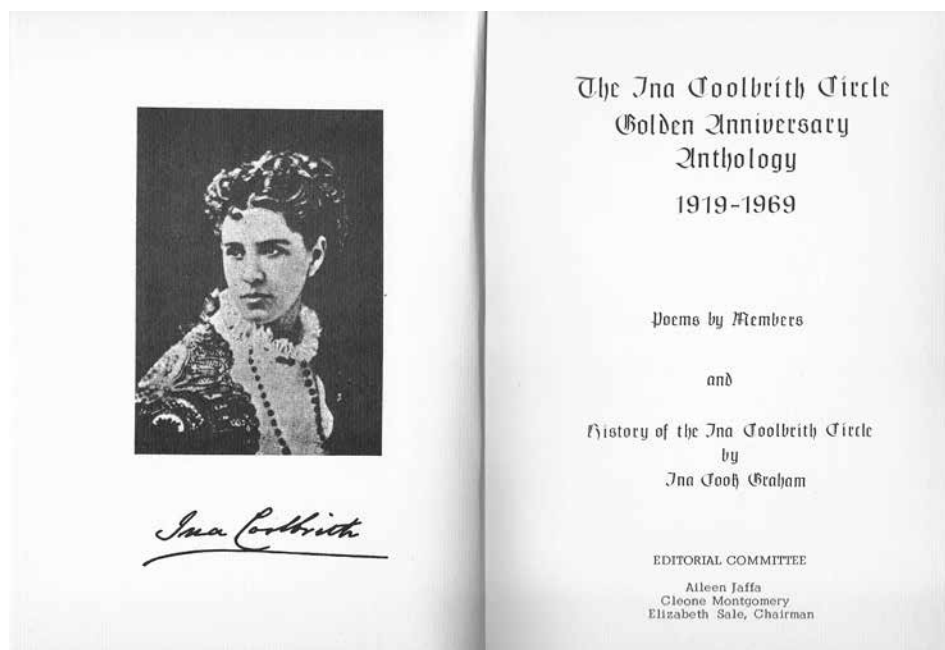
Here is the story of Ina Coolbrith's entrance into California in a wagon train in the autumn of 1851 as depicted in the pages of *The Life and Poetry of Ina Coolbrith* by David Alpaugh and Clifford Wolfe:

"Jim Beckwourth, their guide, invited a ten year old girl to ride with him on his horse as their wagon train approached the California boundary and the mountain pass that bears his name. She would be first of her party to view her destination. At the boundry they stopped momentarily and Beckwourth pointed ahead and said, 'Here is California, little girl, and here is your kingdom.'

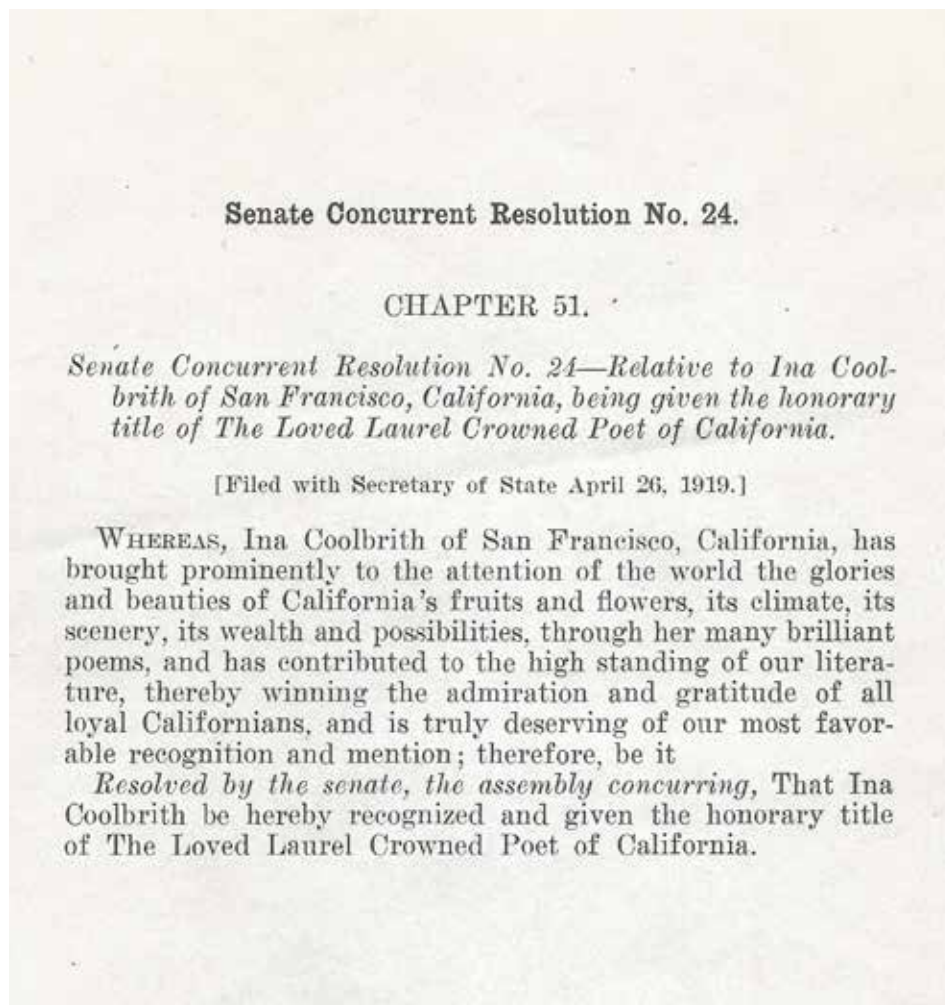
That little girl became known as Ina Donna Coolbrith, and in a sense, California did become her kingdom. She became Oakland's first library director and a leader in her field. She was named California's first Poet Laureate, the first woman to be so honored in our nation; she was a mentor to other distinguished California writers, including Jack London, Joaquin Miller, Mary Austin, Ambrose Bierce, Mark Twain, John Muir, Charles Stoddard, Bret Harte, and Isadora Duncan.¹

For more than half a century the home of Ina Coolbrith was a place where literary and artist friends gathered. With Ina gone to New York, they met at the St. Francis Hotel. There on September 28, 1919, they formed a new organization named in her honor, 'The Ina Coolbrith Circle,' devoted to the promotion of the art of poetry, the study of the history of the Golden State, and the discussion and preservation of the works of its writers.

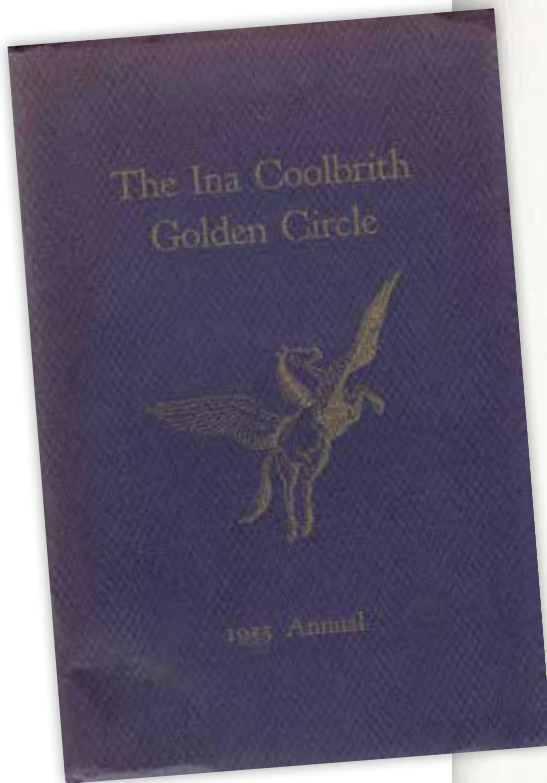
That literary society continues to this day, carrying on the traditions Ina Coolbrith established.²



The Golden Anniversary Anthology, published in 1969, also includes a fine history of the Ina Coolbrith Circle by Ina Cook Graham.



The California Senate Concurrent Resolution naming Coolbrith, "The Loved Laurel Crowned Poet of California," April 26, 1919.



The 1955 *Annual* is the first collection of poems published by the Ina Coolbrith Circle.

The Ina Coolbrith Golden Circle

1955

Poems written by members of the circle.



First Laureate Of California

To some are given heart and voice for song
The gift of metered words and flowing rhyme
That they may chant earth's praises clear and strong
In verse that will endure for clockless time.
Just as the flint is struck to spark a fire
And kindle twigs to orange plumes of flame,
She stirred mind-quickenning leaven to inspire
The bread of genius till the loaves became
Sustaining food for beauty hungered minds.
With spider music on the harp of night,
Soft-pedaled by a spinner that rewinds
Lace moonstrands from a filigree of light,
She captured beauty with a living art
And shared with all her understanding heart.

RUTH MURRAY JONES

The Archer, First prize
Great American Women contest, National.
Arrows in the Air, 1955.



EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Sarah Hammond Kelly
Ruth Murray Jones
Minnie Faegre Knox

PRODUCTION MANAGER

Arthur J. Oliver

HOW DOES THE INA COOLBRITH CIRCLE HONOR ITS FOUNDER'S DREAMS?

The Circle meets nine months each year, September through June. Each meeting presents a program devoted to the history of California and to the writing of poetry in the Golden State. One part of the Coolbrith

Collection is devoted to bound collections of the President's Newsletters from 1970 to 2010. These present a brief description of all the programs in recent years. One of the interesting aspects of this record is a quite consistent relationship between historical matters and current writing. I sub-

mit this consistency as an example of the fidelity of the Circle to its founder's vision. The meetings also offer time for open microphone poetry readings.

I quote from the first letter Ina Coolbrith wrote to her Circle on March 12, 1920 from New York:

I shall watch the I.C.C. jealously, zealously, because to it is committed the charge to keep green the memory of that Golden Past—to help build upon its sure foundation; to hold it as a living, vital force, a beacon and a steady light to those who are and those who are to come.”³

A study of the President’s Newsletters presents insights into California’s literary history as it unfolds. For instance, I believe all the State’s Poets Laureate since Ina Coolbrith have either appeared personally or have been the subject of a program at one of the meetings. The list of prominent poets and writers who have been visiting guests is impressive. Most important are the numbers of lesser known and unknown poets and writers who have contributed their best work. Their stories are the underground well that sustains not just the present Circle’s growth but also the living history to which it is devoted.

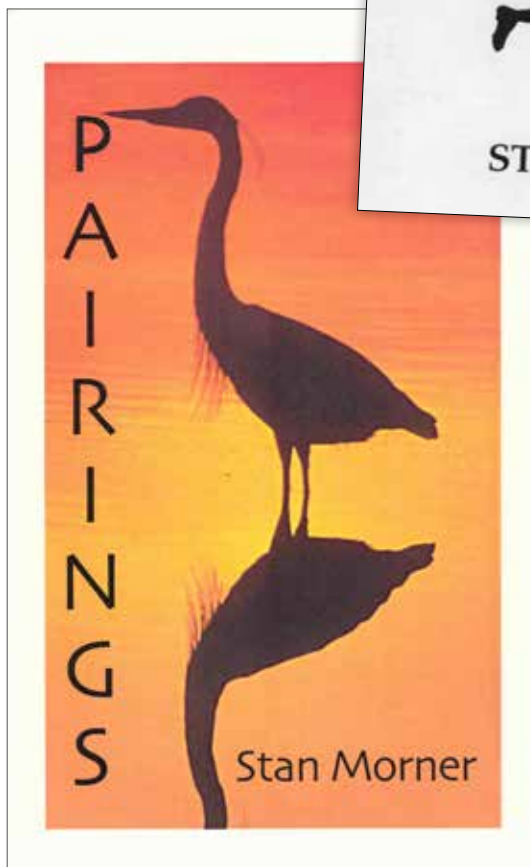
This record is not just a matter of history in the abstract. It has been said: “It is unwise to mock the poet.” Will Landis, a twenty- year member of the Ina Coolbrith Circle, puts it this way. “The poet, or rather poetry, lives at the edges of a culture, in shadow. But we see him as a warrior in the battle for mores, against violence, sustaining creativity, maintaining a degree of perspective when others have lost their way.”⁴

Poetry contests are one way the Ina Coolbrith Circle has recognized poets of the people since its beginnings. We produced the 93rd Annual Ina Coolbrith Circle Poetry contest on November 10, 2012! Each contest has eight categories of poetry. Prizes are awarded to the first three places, with the awards extending to four honorable mentions. This means that fifty-six poems are being recognized at each banquet. It is worth mentioning that the poets who attend or receive awards are not limited to the San Francisco Bay Area. Many who have no other connection to the Circle are drawn by these contests. One must feel that Ina Coolbrith might have felt her



In 1997 the Small Poetry Press published Stan Morner’s *Heartball and Other Sketches*. Mr. Morner has been generous in support of the Library’s California poetry collection.

Pairings by Stan Morner was published in 2002.



ON TRAILS OF NAMING



CLAIRE J. BAKER

On Trails of Naming by Claire J. Baker was dedicated to her Native American ancestors. Baker has been an active member of the Circle and a generous donor to the State Library.

dream had been nurtured had she been able to attend one of these contest banquets.

THE INA COOLBRITH CIRCLE COLLECTION

As we contemplate the Ina Coolbrith Circle's collection, consisting at present of 268 books and 282 President's Newsletters and growing in both respects, we also need to reflect on questions concerning poetry. Is poetry important? Is contemporary poetry defined and limited by the poetry that is produced in academic institutions? How and why does this collection of poetry and various literary works have any value? These questions are far beyond the limits of this article, but it seems to me necessary to say something.

Let's circle the Ina Coolbrith's Collection as one might circle a wagon train at night to gain a gentle perspective on a labor of love.

In the 1960s and 1970s, there was a cultural movement in the United States, call it what you will. San Francisco was the center of a literary explosion. A center of gravity shifted to the West. How did this influence the poems of the man or woman in the streets, so to speak, the poets of the Ina Coolbrith Circle? After all, not all poetry books were published by City Lights. This period is when some of the earliest books in the I.C.C. Collection originate. Might it be of interest to revisit this period through other eyes than the more familiar visions that exist in our libraries?

During the last decades of the twentieth century and continuing into the twenty-first, the impact of confessional poetry was impossible to ignore. Some of the poetry in the I.C.C. Collection participates in the whirl of the movement in which people share special segments of their personal histories. Since confessional poetry cannot exist without stories, and stories often condense ideas and trends into a compact space, it might be worth a person's time to delve into some of these stories written, perhaps, by a woman living on a farm in Modesto or a man from Ventura living on

his own, or a couple living outside Sacramento. Or what of the young woman, an excellent poet, living in Oregon? I suggest such stories are not just literary history but the essence of history itself. Ina Coolbrith's poetry is a perfect example.


As we circle the wagons of the Coolbrith Collection, there are a multitude of stopping places, unmarked scenic view areas. I will mention just one more of these viewpoints. There exists a kind of literary snobbery that works in two directions. Each side suspects the other, and that uneasiness can lead to disrespect. The divide of which I speak is that between so-called "academic poetry" and, for lack of a better name, "poetry of the people." Without trying to develop this quarrel or to ignore it, I will make a simple declarative exclamation: one of the refreshing aspects of the Ina Coolbrith Circle Collection is that both sides have their say in books hard pressed together on the same shelves.

THE JUSTIFICATION AND USES FOR SUCH A COLLECTION

Our circle of the Ina Coolbrith Circle's Collection is complete with the mention of Gary F. Kurutz, the man who made the I.C.C. Collection possible. As the Ina Coolbrith Circle approaches its centennial year in 2019, the dedication to creating, nurturing, and preserving California's heritage in letters has remained constant. Coolbrith's life shows us that she welcomed those who were considered mavericks in their own time. Never mind that some of the same became classics with the passing of time.

Claire J. Baker, a member who has contributed not only to this collection but was also the person most responsible for promoting Ina Coolbrith memorials, puts it this way: "This now sizeable book collection honors its founder Ina Donna Coolbrith, and is a treasure: poets are able to open themselves to an unbelievable spectrum of observations and experiences both real and imagined, to write splendid poems, works of art, even some masterpieces."⁵

The President's Newsletters record of monthly meetings serve as a concise history of the Ina Coolbrith Circle's activities between 1970 and 2010. They also can be seen as a reference key to the books in the Ina Coolbrith Circle's Collection. This is because so many members whose books are in the Collection served in various capacities in the life of the Circle. Looking through the President's Newsletters would be an excellent way to learn about the rich literary treasures preserved in the State Library's California History Section.

My fondest hope in writing this for the CSLF *Bulletin* is that simply knowing such a collection exists will motivate some to use it for their own work. 

CONCLUSION

We know California as a unique state and see it in as many ways as there are Californians. Ina Coolbrith said, "California is a poem." How many of the ways we see California are reflected in its changing poetry?



ENDNOTES

1. David Alpaugh and Clifford Wolfe, *The Life and Poetry of Ina Coolbrith*, (The Ina Coolbrith Circle: Richmond Heights, California, 2002) p. 3.
2. Ibid., p. 9.
3. Letter from Ina Coolbrith to the Ina Coolbrith Circle sent from New York, March 12, 1920. Aleta George found this letter at The Society of California Pioneers Library and it is used with the permission of that organization.
4. William Landis to Stan Morner, Feb 26, 2013.
5. Claire J. Baker to Stan Morner, March 21, 2013.

INA COOLBRITH

A big-eyed "princess"

Deeply touched by the

Rugged beauty of the West

She trudged

On... On... On...

Through sunsets and sunrises

Through rain

And snow.

At last

She accepted a ride

In front of the saddle

Of a mountain man.

And suddenly

There it lay

At her feet...

The beautiful

Blue

Pacific !

—LUCILE BOGUE

Braille and Talking Book Library News

By Sandra Swafford

There are a couple of new developments at the Braille and Talking Book Library (BTBL) that were initiated in September 2013. The first new development, which provided me a pleasurable afternoon hour when I explored it, is BTBL's recently initiated Facebook page — "BTBL Sacramento." Director Mike Marlin told me that BTBL posts twice weekly. Monday's posts deal with pertinent news and items of special interest to patrons, while Friday's posts are meant to entertain. For example, there is a photograph of Mike and his guide dog Vivaldi costumed for Halloween. Mike appears as a witch with orange hair and Vivaldi a devil in a shiny reddish-orange coat with horns over his ears and a devil's tail atop his own rather plain model. A second Halloween photo shows a pumpkin with black ballpoint pens inserted into it, spelling "Happy Halloween" in braille. In addition, there are a few cartoons described for screen reader users, the reproduction of a poster that says "Reading 1 book is like eating 1 potato chip," and a video with descriptive narration showing Steve Mahan, who is blind, getting into the driver's seat of a car. Google kindly loaned one of their driverless vehicles for the video in which Mr. Mahan comfortably drives — no-hands, no-feet — to pick up his dry cleaning as well as a burrito at Taco Bell!

More businesslike posts have included a notice that the Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) site would be offline for a short time for servicing, information about holiday office closures, and a notice that select weekend performances at California Musical Theatre would offer descriptive narration. An additional post alerts students about thirty scholarships being offered by the National Federation for the Blind (NFB) in amounts ranging

from \$3,000 - \$12,000. A link is provided to access a TouchGraphics article about tactile maps, including plans to make new map-reading products available for use on personal electronic devices. Another link takes the reader to an interview with Karen Keninger, director of the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) who talks about the importance of assistive devices in her own life, when, as a young child, she looked forward eagerly to her next shipment of braille books through the mail. Even though BARD downloads are quicker, less expensive, and more portable than playback equipment and physical copies of books provided to NLS patrons, she would very much like — when and if budget allows — to expand braille usage on computers. Audio is good, she remarks, but it is no substitute for reading literacy through braille.

The second development at BTBL provides a truly important step in accessibility for BTBL patrons and is the outgrowth of cooperation between Apple and NLS to devise a smart phone app. The app is called BARD Mobile and it allows a BARD subscriber to download books, magazines, and music scores in both audio and electronic braille formats directly to his/her iPhone, iPod Touch, or iPad. The app is available free via the online Apple store. Its use makes reading portable which Karen Keninger describes as having "a library in your pocket." A similar app for android devices is in progress and expected to be ready sometime within the next year.



EDITOR'S NOTE

Sandra Swafford is a devoted volunteer in the Braille and Talking Book Library of the State Library and serves on the board of the State Library Foundation.

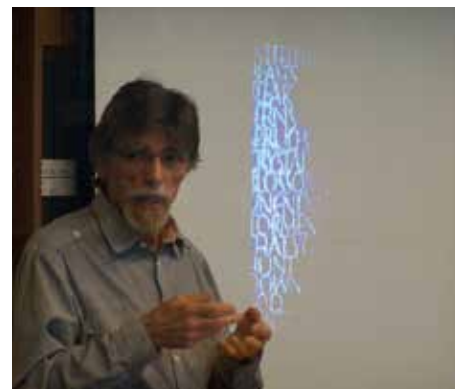
SUTRO LIBRARY NOTES

"THE ILLUMINATED LIBRARY"

Last October 3, the Sutro Library with support from the Foundation hosted a captivating public program featuring noted antiquarian bookseller John Windle and celebrated illuminator Thomas Ingmire. The presentations were given in conjunction with the exhibition "The Illuminated Library" that was on display at the Sutro Library and the Fine Arts Gallery of San Francisco State University. An overflow audience of collectors, Sutro Library researchers, library staff, and university students came to the program. Sutro Library supervising librarian Haleh Motiey hosted the event. Mr. Windle of San



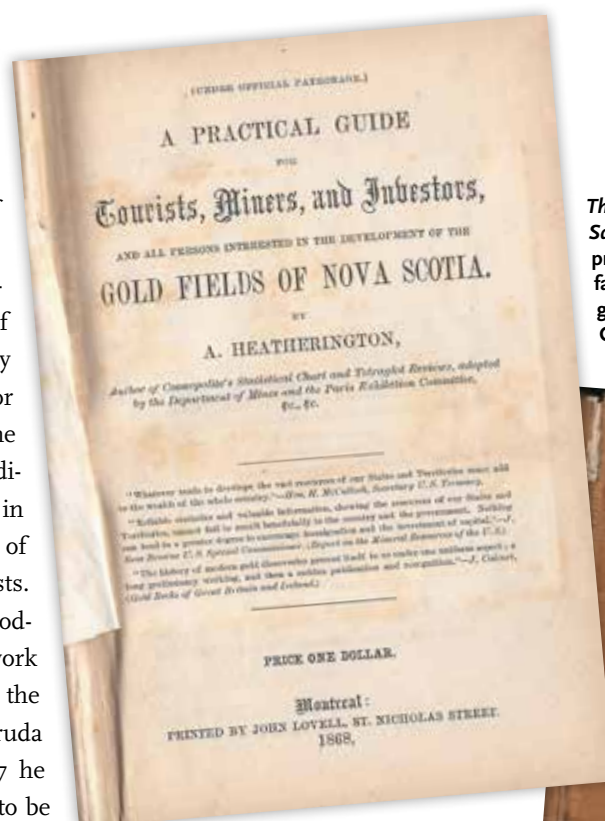
A rapt audience at the Sutro Library listens to the stellar presentations by antiquarian bookseller John Windle and illuminator Thomas Ingmire.



{ Foundation Notes }

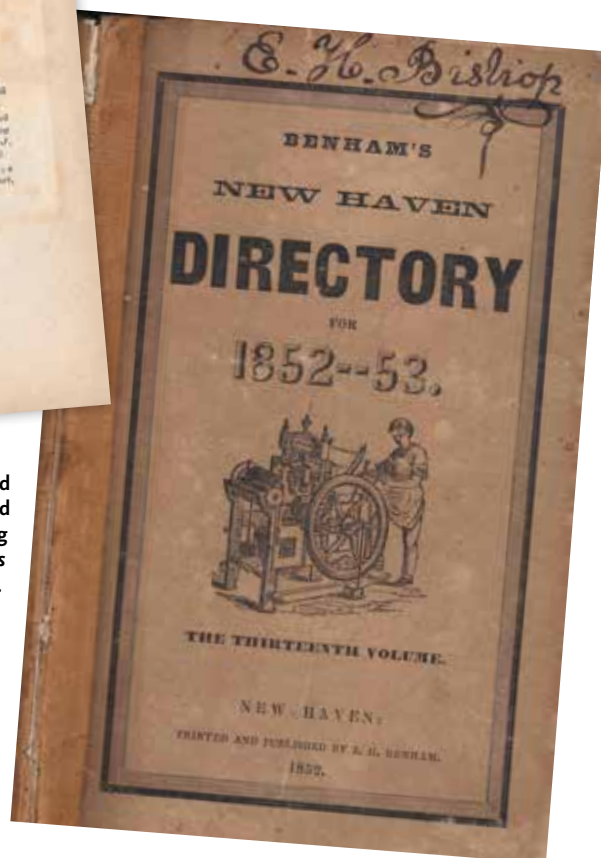
Francisco is recognized as one of the world's foremost authorities on antiquarian books and illuminated manuscripts and has been of enormous help to the Sutro Library in appraising the collection prior to its move in 2012. His longtime friend, Mr. Ingmire regaled the audience concerning his experiences in illuminating books in the tradition of the Medieval and Renaissance artists. He beautifully explained his methodology and told of his amazing work on such projects as illuminating the St. John's Bible and the Pablo Neruda series with Manuel Neri. In 1977 he became the first foreign member to be elected fellow of the Society of Scribes and Illuminators in London. Libraries and museums alike prize his work. Living and working in San Francisco, Ingmire also conducts classes and workshops on this dazzling art form. Following his formal remarks, Ingmire generously spent time with the audience by showing actual examples of his work.

The accompanying display curated by librarian Diana Kohnke of the Sutro Library featured examples of illumination from both the collections of the Sutro Library and the General Rare Book Collection of the State Library. Spectacular examples from the Renaissance and Victorian periods created a visual feast for visitors. Included in the display were examples by Ingmire including single leaves for the poetry of William Blake and for the Arion Press illuminated bicentennial edition of the *Constitution of the United States* (1987).



The Gold Fields of Nova Scotia published in 1868 presents a rare and fascinating account of golden finds in this Canadian province.

Through the generosity of Richard Larson, the Sutro Library has added many rare city directories including this splendid example, *Benham's New Haven Directory for 1852-53*.



LARSON BEQUEST BOLSTERS GENEALOGY COLLECTION

Through the bequest of Richard F. Larson, the Sutro Library continues to build upon its famous genealogy and local history collection. Since new acquisitions were highlighted in the Notes section of the last issue of the *Bulletin*, the Foundation has purchased on behalf of the Sutro Library many rare late nineteenth century county atlases, city directories, and long out of print city and county histories primarily from the eastern United States and Midwest. In addition, the Foundation obtained a massive collection of microfiche of U.S. local histories. Once fully cataloged, these valuable resources will be made available for public research. Mr. Larson had a particular interest in Nova Scotian roots. With that in mind, an effort has been made to purchase titles documenting that beautiful Canadian province.

SACRAMENTO NOTES

SPECIAL ARCHITECTURAL ISSUE OF THE *BULLETIN* RECEIVES KUDOS

The last issue of the *Bulletin* that was devoted to the restoration of the Library and Courts Building has received much positive comment from Library staff, Foundation members, and the staff of the Third District Court of Appeal. The appellate court is a co-tenant in the Library and Courts Building. The justices, once they saw the magazine, immediately ordered copies to give to visiting dignitaries. Of course it is available on the Foundation's website as a PDF but the actual physical magazine is a keepsake for the ages. The photographs by Vincent Beiderbecke and Matthew Bartok are simply breathtaking. Both photographers have continued to document the building and have completed an incredible project to record in detail every square inch of sixty-nine foot long Maynard Dixon mural in Gillis Hall on the third floor.



MEMORIAL FOR LIZ GIBSON

Former State Library employee Elizabeth “Liz” Gibson passed away unexpectedly October 14. She retired from the Library Development Services Bureau in 2003 and left a rich legacy both here and throughout the California library community. The Foundation is working with Ms. Gibson’s family in exploring ways to honor her memory, through either a permanent memorial at the Library, or by enhancing Library services. Ms Gibson and her longtime friend, Sheila Thornton, have been generous donors to the Foundation.

If you wish to contribute to her memorial, there are two ways to donate: (1) Checks may be made out to the Foundation (designate for the Elizabeth Gibson Memorial) or, (2) donate online using a credit card by going to the Foundation’s website and clicking on http://www.cslibdn.org/whats_new.html. This will direct the reader to the appropriate location for the memorial.

CELEBRATING THE REOPENING OF THE LIBRARY AND COURTS BUILDING

In support of the Library’s move back into the Library and Courts Building, the Foundation Board of Directors agreed to financially assist with the reopening ceremony that will be held on February 11. Foundation members will be invited. State agencies do not have the wherewithal to fund special events. Acting State Librarian of California Gerry Maginnity will host this exciting celebration. Four of the most recent State Librarians have agreed to attend. They are Gary E. Strong, Kevin Starr, Susan Hildreth, and Stacey Aldrich. The ribbon cutting on the 11th will be followed by a weeklong series of events highlighting not only the magnificence of the building but also the marvelous collections and services of the State Library. In effect, it will be a weeklong open house. In addition, the Foundation is purchasing street banners to promote the State Library and its magnificent quarters.

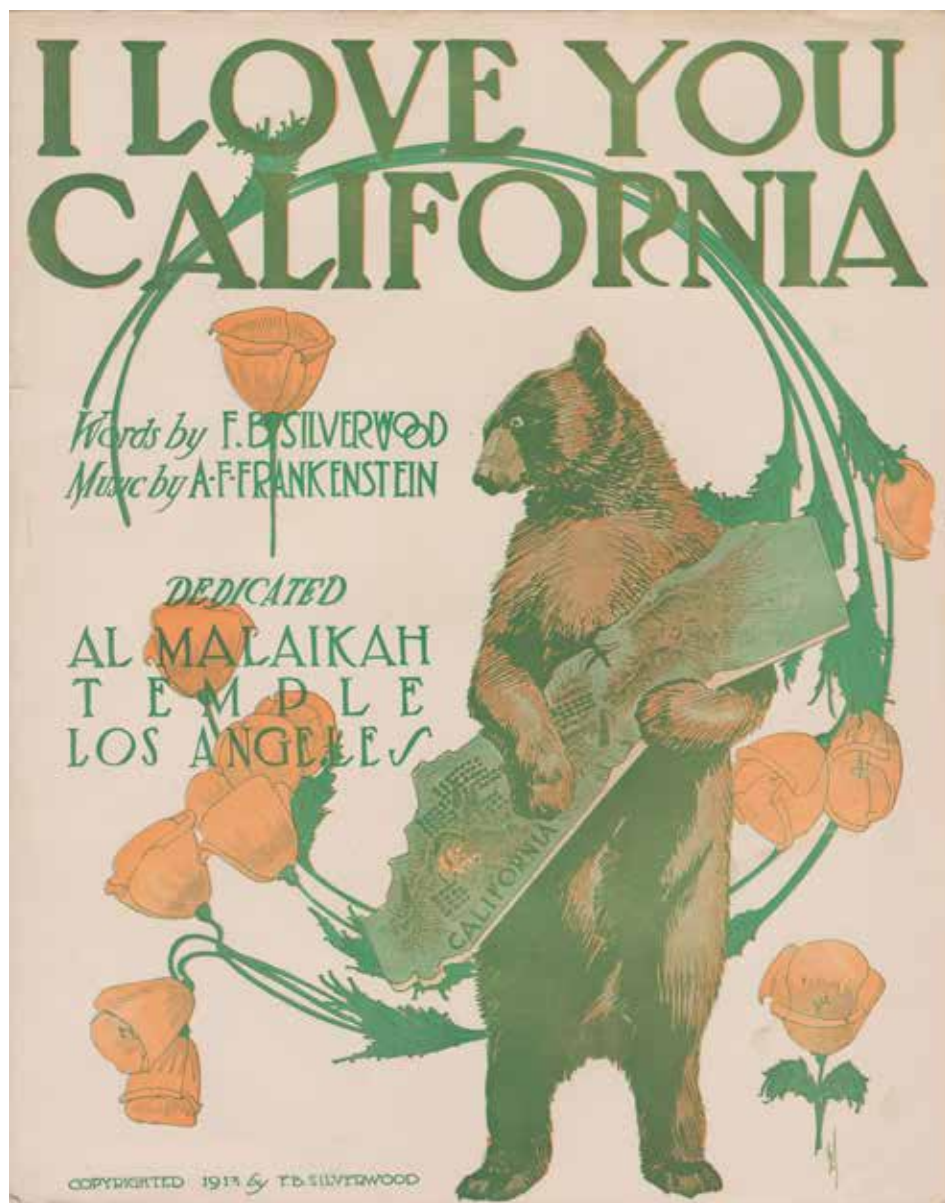
In conjunction with the reopening, the Library is creating a docent program devoted to the historic building. A booklet is currently in production and an interactive touch-screen program is also in the works. Both will point out and explain the amazing architectural features of this architectural jewel. Although located just across the street from the State Capitol Building, the general public often passes by not realizing that they are welcome to enter, enjoy the building’s sublime features, and learn about the State Library.

MAYNARD DIXON DRAWING ACQUIRED

Speaking of the Dixon mural, the Foundation board of directors agreed to purchase for the Library in celebration of the building’s restoration a gorgeous original pen and ink sketch by Dixon made in preparation for painting the mural in Gillis Hall. The subject is of an attractive Californio or Hispanic woman wearing a long dress and shawl. Her comely face carries a glare that would stop any caballero in his tracks with thoughts of approaching her. Measuring 14 ³/₄ x 9 ³/₄ inches, the famed California artist initialed and dated the sketch June 1928 on its verso or rear. According to Dixon biographer Don Hagerty, only three preliminary drawings for this immense mural are known to exist. The next issue of the *Bulletin* will include an article by Hagerty on this new Dixon treasure and its fascinating provenance.

HOSTING THE THIRD ANNUAL ARCHIVES CRAWL

On Saturday October 5, the California History Section hosted its third annual Archives Crawl. Close to five hundred came to this open house to learn more about the Section's resources. The Foundation, through its California fund, helped sponsor the crawl. The California State Archives, Sacramento Public Library and Center for Sacramento History also serve as co-hosts for the annual event. Each host makes space for neighboring institutions such as UC Davis, California Department of Parks, Sacramento State University, and Placer County Historical Society. In the California History Room section staff created imaginative mini displays drawn from the collections highlighting California music, historic preservation in Old Town Sacramento, the California missions and the 300th anniversary of Padre Junipero Serra's birth. State Library treasures such as the famed Audubon double elephant folio of *The Birds of American*, the 1493 *Nuremberg Chronicle*, and James Marshall's hand-drawn map of the gold discovery at Coloma were also on display. These exhibits were supplemented by a special show entitled "Weird and Wonderful" which consisted of oddities in the collection such as a lock of outlaw Tiburcio Vasquez's hair, a pen used by Pablo de La Guerra to sign the 1849 state constitution, two whiskey bottles found during the restoration of the Library and Courts Building, Black Bart reward poster, and a plastic shower head in the shape of Richard Nixon's head. On the first floor, visitors also enjoyed seeing a display of early sheet music in commemoration of the centen-



nal of the state's official song, *I Love You California*. Section staff, not surprisingly, answered numerous questions concerning the Library's resources and services. "Crawlers," when visiting the Library had their passports stamped and had the opportunity to pick up California History Section brochures and other handouts. Visitors were encouraged to visit all four host institutions and have their passports stamped making them eligible for prizes.

The Archives Crawl included an exhibit of sheet music to celebrate the centennial of the official state song, *I Love You California*.

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