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Front Cover: Alfred Eichler’s 1942 watercolor painting depicts Sacramento’s Tower Bridge. See article by Bruce Marwick, pp. 2-9.

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Alfred Eichler

The Life of an Exceptional Architect & Watercolor Painter

By Bruce A. Marwick
Alfred W. Eichler (1895–1977) joined the California State Division of Architecture in 1925 as a senior architectural designer. His career spanned thirty-eight years, during which he designed dozens of buildings, bridges, and monuments all over California. Notable examples of his work are Sacramento’s Tower Bridge and the Departments of Employment, Personnel, and Rehabilitation (formerly Education) Buildings on Capitol Mall.

What is less known about Eichler was his passion for watercolor painting. Throughout his life, Eichler traveled the cities and backroads of California looking for vintage buildings to paint. He stated in a Sacramento Bee article in 1959, “I’m most interested in the early architecture of California. I’ve taken my sketch pad all over Sacramento and the Mother Lode country looking for houses that have what I call the ‘spirit of the West.’”

Eichler created dozens of watercolor paintings over his lifetime. Some were displayed in art shows, some were sold, but the majority were held as a collection by Eichler. Towards the end of his architecture career he realized that the painting collection needed to find a home. What follows is the story of Eichler’s remarkable life and how his substantial collection of watercolor paintings were preserved at the California State Library.

Above: Artist Alfred Eichler posed in front of the historic Wells Fargo building at the gold rush town of Columbia. This well-preserved building provided the inspiration for his watercolor painting.

Left: In 1941, Eichler painted the Tower Theatre in Sacramento’s Land Park neighborhood shortly after its construction.

EDITOR’S NOTE
Bruce A. Marwick is the Walking Tour Director and former Vice President for the Sacramento Art Deco Society. He spent many years as a marketing and graphic design professional in Los Angeles and Sacramento. His interest in Alfred Eichler stems from a presentation he created in 2017 titled, “3 Art Deco Artisans of Sacramento, Talibue, Polifka & Eichler.”
THE ROAD TO BECOMING AN ARCHITECT AND AN ARTIST

One must first look at Eichler’s early years to appreciate his remarkable accomplishments. He was born in Missouri in 1895, the oldest son of Dr. Alfred and Laura Eichler. The family moved to San Francisco in 1896 where his father became a surgeon at St. Joseph’s Hospital. Young Alfred excelled as a student who enjoyed doing art. His future was full of potential until age thirteen when he contracted spinal meningitis and became deaf.

Eichler continued his studies at St. Ignatius High School and College in San Francisco. The Jesuit priests of St. Ignatius pushed Eichler in the face of his disability. He learned to read lips, but never learned to use sign language as it was discouraged in the early part of the twentieth century. Eichler’s big break came when he apprenticed with the architectural firm of F.D. & H.A. Boese in San Francisco at age sixteen. He stayed at the firm from 1911 to 1916 learning the necessary skills to become an architect. Eichler secured a position as a civilian architect with the U.S. Navy in Washington D.C. from 1917 to 1918.

While on the East Coast, Eichler attended classes at prestigious art schools, such as the Corcoran School of Fine Arts in Washington D.C. and the Arts Student’s League in New York City. Eichler undoubtedly saw, and was influenced by, the art he saw on the East Coast. The painting style of the period was much looser and freer than the technical drawings he did as an architect. One could imagine that Eichler developed his love for watercolor painting during this period.

RETURNING TO THE GOLDEN STATE

Alfred Eichler returned to California and decided to continue his career in Los Angeles. He worked for several highly regarded architects, including Myron Hunt, the designer of the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles and the Rose Bowl in Pasadena. In 1922, Eichler successfully became a certified licensed architect.

In 1925, the California State Division of Architecture (CSDA) hired Alfred Eichler, where he was to remain for almost four decades. Eichler had found an employer who appreciated his unique talents. He designed buildings in a variety of architectural styles, including Beaux Arts, Arts and Crafts, and Italian Revival. He created exquisite presentation drawings using ink pens, color pencils, chalk, and gouache (opaque watercolor). Eichler was such a talented artist that many of his fellow architects asked him to illustrate their designs.

Eichler became a respected architect in the CSDA during the 1930s and 1940s. He was assigned ever larger projects, such as designing the master plan and build-
ings for the California School for the Deaf in Berkeley. By 1949, Eichler had been promoted to supervisory architect. Yet, the stresses of life began to build up, and he turned to painting as therapy from the daily challenges of his professional life.

THE ALFRED EICHLER PAINTING COLLECTION
Alfred Eichler donated his painting collection to the California State Library in June 1959. There are seventy-five pieces in the collection and they date from the 1930s to the 1950s. Many of the paintings are of buildings which had been lost to urban redevelopment during the 1950s.

The Prints Room of the Stanley Mosk Library and Courts Building displayed sixty-three of Eichler’s paintings in a one-man-show in November 1959. Eichler had displayed his paintings in the Prints Room before, but this was by far the largest exhi-
Eichler's 1942 Tower Bridge painting shows the influences of the Ashcan movement.
The bridge stands firmly at the western end of Capitol Mall, with the buildings in the foreground casting long dark shadows.
Eichler painted the Tower Theatre in Sacramento’s Land Park neighborhood shortly after its construction. The painting has an abstract quality due to how the white buildings visually merge together. The painting actually contains three Art Deco buildings: the Tower Theatre, a restaurant, and a Texaco gas station. In 1954, Eichler made several paintings showing the construction of new buildings along Capitol Mall. One painting shows the Department of Education Building framed by construction materials. There are also two striking elements in the center of the painting: a slanted telephone pole and a steam-driven pile driver. The telephone pole looks strikingly like a Latin cross. Could it be that Eichler saw the telephone pole as a metaphor for the tearing down of the old neighborhood and the rising of a new one? The irony is that Eichler played a dual role in the story as a painter witnessing the tearing down of an old neighborhood and as an architect designing the new vision for the property.

Finally, the collection includes paintings of historic California state buildings that Eichler helped to restore as the supervising architect in the 1950s. These structures both located in California State Historic Parks include the Wells Fargo Express Building in Columbia and the State Capitol Building (1853–1854) in Benicia. Eichler painted the Wells Fargo Building in vibrant colors, a change from some of his earlier watercolors. The painting...
has another interesting addition, a figure in the lower left hand corner. The figure is wearing a hat and appears to have a sketch pad under his arm. Eichler had subtly painted himself into the scene.

**LIFE AFTER ARCHITECTURE**

In 1963, Alfred Eichler began organizing his architectural sketches and color renderings into a second collection to be archived at the California State Archives. This second collection of architectural artwork could be considered the “fraternal twin” to the Eichler Painting Collection at the California State Library.

On November 8, 1963, Eichler retired from the State Division of Architecture. He looked forward to traveling abroad and spending more time painting. Unfortunately, his plans were sadly impacted when his wife, Virginia, passed away the day after his retirement. Virginia and Alfred Eichler had been married for thirty-eight years.

Eichler continued to participate in art societies and art shows throughout California. His paintings received numerous awards from juried exhibitions held by the Society of Western Artists, the University Club of Sacramento, and the Kingsley-Crocker Art Club.

Watercolor painting remained Alfred Eichler’s inspiration for the final years of his life. He continued to paint historic buildings, particularly those that had the “spirit of the west.” Ultimately, Eichler had achieved his dreams, and left a substantial body of work both as an architect and as watercolor painter. Alfred Eichler died on November 27, 1977 at the age of eighty-two.

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**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

*The author wishes to thank Paul D. Werts and Carl D. Werts, D.D.S, the grandnephews of Alfred W. Eichler, for providing excellent background information about their granduncle. The author also wishes to acknowledge the staff of the California State Library’s California Room, who carefully and patiently retrieved Alfred Eichler’s paintings for reviewing multiple times.*

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**ENDNOTES**


2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

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A Treasure Trove of California Job History

The Michael Bernick Collection

By Jason Bowman

The California History Section of the State Library contains an extensive manuscript collection with many items that have been donated to the Library from state organizations and the families of prominent figures in California history. Typically personal collections are donated to the Library by the family after the death of the owner, but this is not always the case as seen with the Michael Bernick Collection. Mr. Bernick graciously donated his collection to the Library in 1999, and has been actively involved ever since in the creation of it even going so far as to provide funds to help in the process. The collection encompasses Mr. Bernick’s entire career and his involvement in employment and transportation issues in California. As Mr. Bernick has been a prolific writer during his long career, a second collection has

EDITOR’S NOTE

The author of this article, Jason Bowman is a student intern at the State Library. He is currently a graduate student in the Public History program at California State University, Sacramento. Jason has been at the State Library for three years and in addition to his work on the Michael Bernick Collection has done work on the Fred Korematsu Collection, the George Ezra Dane Collection, and the Bill Pronzini Collection. In addition to devoting time to the Bernick Collection, Jason has been volunteering for the Governor’s Office processing the archival collection of Governor Jerry Brown. Jason has been working on the Michael Bernick Collection for almost two years and has been helped by Mr. Bernick in creating the series arrangement, digitizing portions of the collection, and creating the introductory video. Mr. Bowman is in his last semester at Sacramento State, where he is finishing up his thesis project on creating a digital exhibit on the history of Japantowns in Northern California.

EDITOR’S NOTE

Mr. Bernick also contributed a superb article to the Bulletin (Issue 110, 2014), “The Job Plenty of 1950s California--And Its End.” It can be found on the Foundation’s website under “Recent Issues.”
been compiled made up of his publications that continues to be updated with his latest articles. With a career that has so far spanned nearly forty years Michael Bernick has worked for government agencies from being on the Board of Directors for the Bay Area Regional Transit (BART) system to serving as the head of the state Employment Development Department (EDD).

Michael Bernick was born on October 1, 1952 in Los Angeles where he lived and went to school until graduating from Fairfax High School in 1970. After graduation, Bernick went on to earn his bachelor’s degree in political science and government from Harvard University in 1974. Wishing to continue his education Bernick would go on to Oxford University where he did his graduate work on political economy and earned a bachelor of philosophy degree in 1976. After completing his work at Oxford, he went on to earn his law degree from U.C. Berkeley. During his time at Berkeley Bernick published numerous articles on legal and political philosophy and completed a monograph on federal appeals court justice J. Skelly Wright, who had overseen many desegregation cases in the South during the Civil Rights Era.

In 1979, after receiving a doctoral degree in law, Bernick would spend the next thirty years working on issues that he felt passionate about. In 1982, he helped to create the San Francisco Renaissance Center that was started to aid people with job training and finding employment. In 1986, Mr. Bernick left the center to join the newly established law firm of Arnelle & Hastie where he focused on employment law and small business matters alongside the firm’s public finance section. After years of volunteering and involvement with local elections in the Bay Area, Michael decided to run for the BART Board of Directors representing District Nine of San Francisco. In November of 1988, Mr. Bernick was elected to the board and would serve for eight years where he was involved in the expansion of BART to the San Francisco Airport, the provision of benefits for BART domestic partners, the implementation of smart card technology for the BART system, and the development of transit-based villages that sought to mix housing and transportation hubs. While Bernick left the BART board in 1996, he continued to focus on transportation issues and co-authored the book Transit Villages in the 21st Century with U.C. Berkeley Professor Robert Cervero.

In March of 1999, Michael was selected to be the director of the California Employment Development Department by Governor Gray Davis. Throughout his tenure at EDD Bernick oversaw welfare to work programs, the training of tech and health care workers, and updating the EDD computer systems for the twenty-first century.

After running EDD for five years, Mr. Bernick returned to law, this time with the national firm of Sedgwick LLP until its closure last year. Currently Bernick is working for the firm of Duane Morris LLP, based in San Francisco. He has published articles periodically on a wide range of subjects for Forbes and the California business/government site Fox & Hound.

The Michael Bernick Collection consists of documents, correspondence, photos, and film clips from throughout his career starting with the San Francisco Renaissance Center and going up to his time at the Employment Development Department. The collection is a treasure trove of California job history as it provides an inside look at these state agencies and encompasses a wide range of topics from throughout Mr. Bernick’s career as well as providing a look at transportation issues and California local elections. Researchers who are looking for information on California employment history would find the collection of value as it provides a look at numerous job issues from the last forty years. A large portion of the collection has been digitized and is available on the State Library’s website including an introductory video by Mr. Bernick and Library staff on the importance of the collection.
California Homeless Youth Project Awarded New Grant to Support College Students

Shahera Hyatt, CHYP Director

The California Homeless Youth Project (CHYP), a research and policy initiative of the State Library’s California Research Bureau, is the recipient of funding from the Walter S. Johnson foundation for a new two-year project which will focus on supporting the implementation of new legislation that helps enable young people experiencing homelessness to meet their post-secondary education goals.

Research conducted by CHYP staff revealed that the majority of California’s unaccompanied homeless youth ages 18 to 24 have career goals that require college completion, and believe that higher education is a key pathway to exiting homelessness. Despite the passage of new legislation that addresses housing and equity issues among students experiencing housing insecurity, youth still face numerous barri-

EDITOR’S NOTE

Shahera Hyatt is the Director of the California Homeless Youth Project, an initiative of the California Research Bureau focused on educating policymakers on the needs of homeless youth in California. Hyatt has authored several publications on the topic of youth homelessness including policy briefs on LGBTQ youth, as well as the nation’s first state action plan on ending youth homelessness. During the day she works to uplift the voices of marginalized youth, and at night she tells jokes at dive bars and comedy clubs all over Sacramento.
ers including navigating financial aid, and lack of an awareness of supportive programs and people on campus.

The passage of Assembly Bill 1228 (2015) by the California State Legislature requires colleges to create a plan to house homeless foster students throughout the year and during academic breaks, and Assembly Bill 801 (2016) requires California Community Colleges and California State Universities (CSUs) and requests that Universities of California (UCs), have a Homeless Youth Liaison on every campus who knows about supportive services and financial aid for this student community. Nonetheless it has become clear that additional support towards implementing these laws is needed. In CHYP’s recently published research, *Resources Supporting Homeless Students at California’s Public Campuses*, it was determined that only 22% of California State Universities and 6% of California Community Colleges have Foster and Homeless Youth Advisors or Liaisons, despite the 2016 passage of AB 801 requiring all such post-secondary institutions in the state to designate such a staff person.

Despite improvements in state and federal policy, barriers to equity for homeless college students persist. Extensive documentation requests by financial aid administrators continue to prevent homeless students from accessing financial aid. Less than half of all applicants for federal financial aid who indicated homelessness on the FAFSA (free Application for Federal Student Aid) were able to provide the required verification. Burdensome program rules hinder a student’s ability to access student support services and other federal resources. Few campuses have supports in place to address these barriers. Furthermore, students are often not aware that their housing instability qualifies them for federal financial aid, so they miss out on the financial support they are entitled to. This is why the California Homeless Youth Project intends to create a multimedia campaign including short videos, infographics, and a podcast to educate college students on the definition of homelessness and provide guidance on the FAFSA.

Additional goals of this project, which is made possible by the generous funding of the Walter S. Johnson Foundation, include developing toolkits on housing and financial aid for homeless students at each of the college systems to encourage cross-system and statewide implementation. CHYP research should also be replicated to evaluate progress over time. Another goal is to author a publication on the “school-to-prison pipeline.” This phenomenon of students being funneled out of schools and into the juvenile and criminal justice systems significantly impacts homeless students. Finally, CHYP seeks to provide evidence-based alternatives that could allow more students to graduate high school and enroll in college.

To learn more, the California Homeless Youth Project invites you to get connected on:

- Tumblr: cahomelessyouth.tumblr.com
- Twitter: @cahomelessyouth
- Facebook: CAHomelessYouth
- Homeless Youth Project Newsletter: cahomelessyouth.library.ca.gov/newsletter

Happy beneficiaries of the Homeless Youth Project.
The Channel Islands form a chain of eight islands off the coast of Southern California, and five of them form the Channel Island National Park. Certainly the best known is Catalina Island, that Channel Island of romance twenty-six miles across the sea from Los Angeles County. It has been a tourist magnet for generations. The Library’s California History Section naturally has a vast collection of promotional booklets, brochures, and photographs documenting this insular paradise.

Less publicized, however, are the islands north of Catalina. From Michael Dawson, a long-time friend and antiquarian bookseller in Los Angeles, the History Section happily acquired a three-volume set of original photographs with a focus on these more secluded islands. The set, covering the years 1903–1905 was originally assembled by Charles B. Parker, a resident of Catalina and a taxidermist. Living in Avalon, the island’s principal town, Parker promoted a pleasure trip to an even more inviting destination, Santa Cruz Island.
According to author Charles F. Holder, “Santa Cruz was the Mecca for many parties from Santa Barbara and Santa Catalina.” During those years, Parker with his wife led tourist trips to the island, and their first excursion left Avalon on September 15, 1903. The group took the yacht Avalon commanded by Captain J. E. Matthewson and landed at Scorpion Bay. The first album has a newspaper article pasted in the front inside cover describing this adventure. Parker also took them across the channel to the town of Santa Barbara. The article, dated September 23, 1903, most likely appeared in the Los Angeles Times, and in its enthusiasm, touted the superiority of Santa Cruz over Catalina.

The fine two-masted power steamer Avalon arrived at this point at 10 o’clock a.m. today from Santa Cruz Island in command of Captain J. E. Matthewson. The passenger list of this trim little craft includes a number of the most prominent businessmen of the southern island town, accompanied by their wives and other women relatives and friends the party numbering twenty-four. They have been camping for a week on Santa Cruz Island, and they will return to their camp tonight for another week’s stay on that charming spot.

The Catalina visitors are enthusiastic over the fascination of Santa Cruz and do not hesitate to acknowledge it greatly superior in natural charms to their own widely famous island, that through judicious advertising and enterprising management has grown into a very popular resort. Catalina, it is well known, is little...
more than a dreary rock waste, whereas Santa Cruz is rich with beautiful hills covered with a natural growth of various kinds of timber, grass-covered slopes and valleys, picturesque cañons, marine gardens, innumerable caves and other features that make the landscape and waterside attractions that never pall.

The three oblong photo albums total 158 pages and contain approximately 450 images, and each page is embellished with decorative borders and paintings of flowers and plants. The albums provide a good example of how well-to-do tourists of that era enjoyed themselves. It is quite a contrast to today’s out-of-doors beach culture.

Parker’s party camped out on Santa Cruz Island at the beautiful beach of Cueva Valdez, roughing it in the most luxurious style possible. Probably taken with easy-to-use Kodaks, a good number of the photographs show their well-appointed and decorated tents and dining facilities. Parker led them to the island’s natural wonders including those mentioned in the newspaper article. Of course, several of the party members went fishing and hunting. Parker’s albums show that having fun also meant taking humorous photographs of these well-clad tourists with appropriately humorous captions. Typical of that time, women in coats and ankle-length dresses are shown relaxing directly on the beach sand. Men are photographed displaying the fish they caught wearing vests and neckerchiefs. Other pictures show both genders cavort-
“At the Winery. They Hate to Leave the Winery.” The Caire Winery, Santa Cruz Island.

“Some Got Bread. 3 Loaves. 120 lbs.”

“Some Got Wine.” Santa Cruz Island.
ing in the caves, climbing over mammoth rocks and boulders, sliding down sand dunes, waving from the deck and mast of an abandoned ship, and even climbing trees without ropes or ladders. Delighting in its natural wonders, they also went after wild boars, gathered starfish, and admired the bird life that graced the island. On the prosaic side, some photographs show the tourists preparing meals, washing clothes, and loading up their baggage.

A highlight included a visit to a winery established by Justinian Caire, a native of France and San Francisco pioneer. With several associates Caire purchased the island and founded a French-Italian colony on it. With his business partners, they established the Santa Cruz Island Company. Using local rocks and bricks made from island clay, Caire built an elegant and massive winery building as well as several other structures including a chapel with stained glass windows, bakery, blacksmith shop, and a well-appointed residence. Caire and his family also employed Italian-born laborers to work in the vineyards and orchards, and tend to the cows, goats, and pigs that the company imported. By the time the Parker-led tourists visited, Santa Cruz Island had a population of approximately 100. Judging by the photographs, the vacationers evidently enjoyed their visit. One image shows a man carrying a small wine barrel over his head, and another captures a man leisurely sprawled out on the floor next to a huge wine barrel in the vineyard’s storage facility. No doubt, the local wines were eagerly consumed at meal time. As one photo caption stated, “They hate to leave the winery.” The winery won many awards but prohibition, unfortunately, caused its demise in the late 1920s.

The party also enjoyed a quick visit to the City of Santa Barbara to take in its beautiful setting and its many adobes and the famous mission that made the Spanish pueblo so enchanting. In addition, they sailed to several of the other smaller islands and then returned for another week’s rest and frolic at the “Island of the Holy Cross.”

Parker’s other two albums cover trips taken in 1904 and 1905 to the same islands. The 1905 album includes a photograph of Frederick Caire and family mounted into the front pastedown of the cover. Caire was the son of Justinian, and in 1897, became president of the Santa Cruz Island Company. He may have owned the album or, perhaps, gave Parker his family picture. It does, however, add an interesting connection between the prominent family and Parker.

No doubt these excursions left Parker’s tour groups exhausted but thrilled by the sublime natural beauty they enjoyed. However, as they settled back into their homes in Avalon, it is doubtful if they still considered their island “a dreary rock waste.”

**FOR FURTHER READING**


Overhanging Rock may be the most nerve-jangling 100 square feet in the world. A sliver of granite fourteen feet long and seven feet wide, Overhanging Rock projects from Glacier Point over the yawning Yosemite Valley below – a frightening 3,200 feet straight down.

The Overhanging Rock has also been the location for one of the most astonishing photograph collections extant. Since the nineteenth century, courageous subjects have daringly crept onto the rock while fearless photographers have snapped images from dangerous observation points nearby. Yosemite officials strongly discouraged this activity, even erecting a sign at the spot that stood for many years. The stark warning read:

It is 3,000 feet to the Bottom
And no undertaker to meet you
TAKE NO CHANCES
There is a difference
Between bravery and just plain
ORDINARY FOOLISHNESS

Oftentimes, the images are presented without many details as the vision of breathtaking daring-do was considered enough explanation. On March 24, 1901, however, the *Los Angeles Herald* offered a fascinating account of photographer Julius Boysen and his extraordinary picture of Kittie Tatsch kicking up her heels on Overhanging Rock.

The article by reporter Mabel Clare Croft noted that for Boysen the “day was not the most favorable in the world for the purpose, as it was windy and blowing in gusts.” Nonetheless, as Croft reported, “Miss Kittie Tatsch, head waitress of the Sentinel hotel, a young woman with a cool head and, apparently, entirely destitute of nerves in the ordinary sense, did a high kick on this perilous perch and took the pose so calmly and so accurately that not even a tremor occurred to disturb the photograph.” For Miss Tatsch, sauntering onto the slender splinter of granite dangling from the edge of a cliff where “she pointed one toe heavenward from the tip of the rock,” was not a problem. Reporter Croft observed that Tatsch “makes light of her courageous and athletic feats, and says that she feels no more fear, kicking on the overhanging rock, than she would have pirouetting on a table top. She says that if she were squeamish about it she would not do it.”
The adventure of photographer Julius Boysen was equally astounding. To take the picture, Croft wrote, Boysen found “it was necessary . . . to go down [a nearby] ledge some 500 feet below the rock. In places the ledge slopes at an angle of 45 degrees and is as slick as glass from the water that pours over it at certain seasons. The photographer clung to the rock with stocking feet and bare hands, his plates in cases strapped to his back and the tripod folded and strapped together in his hand, using the pointed end to assist him in keeping from slipping . . . This second overhanging rock projects over a cliff and is of a slant so great as to compel a person to clean out the crumbled granite from a couple of notches which arc just large enough for the ball of the foot to catch sufficient hold to permit standing while setting up the camera and focusing.” Mabel Clare Croft related that “Miss Tatsch watched the photographer as he slid over the slippery rock below her, knowing that if he made a misstep he would go plunging 1,200 feet into space. She says that he went along as surefooted as a deer, and with apparent ease.”

Julius Boysen was a prolific photographer and promoter of his product. In 1903, Boysen captured “M. Rieder” of Los Angeles bravely doing a handstand on the rock. Boysen copyrighted the image with the title “A Tumbler of Marvelous Nerve on Overhanging Rock.” Ten years later, the photo was widely disseminated as a photo postcard.

Another photographer who frequently depicted Overhanging Rock was A. C. (Arthur Clarence) Pillsbury, proprietor of an Oakland, California, photo studio that specialized in scenic views called “Pillsbury’s Pictures.” Pillsbury often visited Yosemite Valley, usually accompanied by his family. As did others, Pillsbury created popular photo postcards. A. C.’s faithful assistant on his photographic excursions was a small donkey named “Winky,” who patiently served double duty carrying both Pillsbury’s equipment and little children. On one visit to Glacier Point, A. C. Pillsbury somehow managed to coax the animal onto Overhanging Rock to snap “Winky at Glacier Point.”

In September 1916, A.C. Pillsbury drove a brand-spanking new Studebaker Six to Glacier Point and vowed to immortalize it with a photo at Overhanging Rock. To maneuver the automobile onto the ledge, it was determined that a temporary trestle was necessary to avoid boulders that blocked the path. With the help of Glacier Point Hotel carpenters, a wooden ramp was constructed to the rock. The Studebaker Six was gingerly pushed into position about a foot from the edge, fourteen people in various degrees of enthusiasm climbed aboard, and the photo was taken. A. C. Pillsbury was up front, straddling the Studebaker.

In July 1916, a remarkable image on Overhanging Rock was published. Attributed to Harold C. Wurts, the photo is of a man executing what was cleverly described as a “Three Thousand Foot Tango.” The photograph quickly became well known, and on September 10, 1922, the San Francisco Chronicle issued an article that prominently featured the Wurts image along with others highlighting daredev-
ils, including airplane “wing walkers” and rock climbers ascending sheer cliffs using very primitive equipment. The article was aptly titled “Playing with Death.”

While many, if not most, of the Overhanging Rock photographs were taken with the camera pointed east towards Half Dome, there were numerous images created looking west toward Yosemite Falls. For the photographers, the vantage point looking west was safer but did not show the precipitous nature of the cliff as dramatically. The images were striking nonetheless. Quite commonly, these photographs were stereographic images, which provided a 3-D effect when viewed with a hand-held stereoscopic viewer.

In 1902, the firm of Underwood and Underwood, a pioneering producer and distributor of stereoscopic views based in New York City, took a romantic photograph of a nonchalant young woman, hand on hip, atop windswept Overhanging Rock, gazing at Yosemite Falls and contemplating the alarming drop to the valley below.

A similar, and intriguing, stereograph was published in 1900. Located throughout the California State Library are twenty-four individually scanned and cataloged stereographic images that collectively are referred to as “Journey of John Muir.” One of the prints is entitled “Hanging Rock – Glacier Point [Yosemite Falls],” featuring a bearded man seated on Overhanging Rock. With a jaunty hat, the correct style of clothing, and a walking stick resting on his lap, all the indications are that the figure is John Muir.

For the final word on Overhanging Rock, we return to reporter Mabel Clare Croft’s 1901 Los Angeles Herald article on Julius Boysen and Kittie Tatsch. Croft speaks for the vast majority of us when she concludes: “Occasionally a climber, bolder than most, ventures out on the rock on hands and knees to pose for a photograph, but, for the most part, the summit of the precipice is good enough even for the most hardy.”
The Foundation has recently acquired a lovely new piece for the California State Library's California History Section. This acquisition is a signed first edition of Charmian K. London's *The Log of the Snark*, which was published in October of 1915 by The MacMillan Company. Charmian K. London was the wife of famous California author Jack London. During their marriage, the two embarked on many wild adventures together. One of these wild adventures was a sailing voyage on the Londons' newly commissioned boat the *Snark* from San Francisco, California, to the Cannibal Islands (Solomon Islands) in the South Seas. It was a journey that lasted over two years and not only brought the accompanying group of friends many trials and tribulations but also many wonderful experiences and memories.

*The Log of the Snark* is Charmian's journal that she kept during the long, exciting, and at times treacherous journey. In fact, all letter writing was forbidden due to Jack's dislike of the practice. However, once Charmian completed the journal in 1915, she delivered it to friends and family as a substitute for correspondence about the amazing trip. The signature on the inside of this beautiful acquisition reads:

Dear Jessie,
Well, here's the old “log,” between covers at last!

Affectionately Yours,
Charmian
Glen Ellen,
November 23, 1915

It isn't known who Jessie is, but they must have been close to Mrs. London to receive such a special gift.
Our special acquisition also comes with an original photograph that is pasted into the inside front cover opposite the signature page. This picture capturing Jack, Charmian, and their newly adopted dog was taken in Pendruffyn, Guadalcanal, sometime during their stay there. The adopted dog, Peggy, ended up accompanying them through the rest of their voyage. The book is illustrated with various other pictures taken by both Jack and Charmian while aboard the Snark and while discovering the many different islands they visited. Images within the book show insights of the trip, ranging from the Snark being built in the San Francisco Bay, to its last moments in the Londons’ hands when it was careened for repairs and left for salvage at the end of its journey in Meringue.

This offers an inside look into the lives of one of California’s most celebrated and famed writers, Jack London. It is a personal and behind the scenes view of London and his passionate desire for adventure, and his tenacity for braving the unknown. The inscription page of Charmian’s tribute to the trip is lovingly dedicated to Jack:

To
MY HUSBAND
who made possible these happiest and most wonderful pages of my life.

For after all, it was Jack’s idea to embark on this journey, and his disdain for letter writing that inspired the diligent journaling of Charmian that we now know as The Log of the Snark.  

EDITOR’S NOTE
Brittney Cook is the Foundation’s administrator and has a keen interest in the life of Jack London.
Foundation Receives a Generous Grant to Organize the Business Records of Gladding, McBean

By Gary F. Kurutz

One of the most prized collections in the State Library’s special collection is the archive of the famous terra cotta works of Gladding, McBean in Lincoln, California. The collection consists of close to ten thousand glass negatives, architectural job order files, and the company’s business archive. This massive collection resulted in the publication of a highly acclaimed book, *The Architectural Terra Cotta of Gladding, McBean* by Gary Kurutz and Mary Swisher. It was published by the Wingate Press in 1989.

Over the years, the diligent staff of the Library’s California History Section has worked on processing the architectural files and cataloging and digitizing selected photographs. A large portion of the archive consists of the company’s business records covering the years 1880 to the late 1960s. The business archive, as distinguished from the architectural collection, is approximately 100 linear feet in size. It consists of letters, invoices, bills, equipment orders, kiln records, check books, and documents concerning roofing tile, garden pottery and sewer pipe. A sub-collection consists of the correspondence of John F. Perry, a plant manager in Lincoln.

Through the generosity of David Luchetti, president of Pacific Coast Building Products, Inc., the Foundation received a donation to contract with public historian Elsa Ericson to continue organizing the company’s archive. She has worked in the California History Section under the direction of manuscript curator Michael Dolgushkin. Previously, Ericson volunteered with the Placer County Museums. This is the second cash contribution by Pacific Coast Building Products, the owner of Gladding, McBean and Company, making possible the processing of this rich but complex business archive.

Spotlight on New Acquisitions from the Foundation

By Gary F. Kurutz

EARLY THEODORE JUDAH RAILROAD PAMPHLET DONATED

Mead B. Kibbey, an expert on the building of the transcontinental railroad and author of the highly acclaimed book *The Railroad Photographs of A. A. Hart,* generously provided the Foundation with the funds to purchase *A Practical Plan for Building the Pacific Railroad* by Theodore Judah. The title page of the 18,000-word pamphlet states: “By T. D. Judah, Civil Engineer, San Francisco, January 1, 1857.” Pasted on the top right corner of the title page is a tiny slip of paper with the following: “With the respects of T. D. Judah.”

This engineer is recognized as one of the great visionaries in nineteenth century California history for his advocacy of linking the West Coast with the eastern U.S. by railroad. Judah wrote the pamphlet in 1856 to gain support in Congress for this project. He had it printed in Washington, D.C. In this pamphlet, he outlined his ideas and arguments for building the railroad. However, sectional divisions hindered any progress, and it was not until the Civil War broke out that a northern route was decided upon by Congress. Judah, as brilliant as he was, was sometimes referred to as “Crazy Judah.” In reading his pamphlet, the reader may understand why he received this insulting moniker. In his *A Practical Plan,* he proposed building a giant locomotive capable of going 100 miles per hour. To achieve that then fantastic speed, he described a ninety-ton engine that was three times larger than a conventional locomotive. He proposed that it be equipped with a driving wheel of fourteen feet in diameter. Because of its enormous size and weight, Judah’s locomotive would require four railroad tracks instead of two. This “double track road,” he stated, would require a gauge of six feet between rails and the outside rails would be sixteen feet apart as opposed to the conventional four feet, eight inches. Judah proposed a train consisting of two of his mammoth locomotives pulling thirty cars and it would take only forty hours to traverse 2,000 miles.

Ironically, Judah’s last sentence in his pamphlet predicted the general response to his plan which resulted in the future Big Four taking over the building of the railroad. It reads as follows: “There are numerous points in the proposed plan, which will, no doubt, appear to many as bold, startling, and apparently, impracticable.”
LINKING THE WEST COAST AND CHINA BY AIR

Another “treasure” added to the Library’s California History Section collection is a photographically illustrated broadside or poster giving the air mail schedule of the famed China Clipper airplane that delivered mail from San Francisco to Hong Kong in seven days. Printed on the bottom of this announcement is the following: “S.F.P.O. 10—12—37—200.” More than likely 200 copies were printed for the San Francisco Post Office on October 12, 1937. One side of the broadside is in English and the other in Chinese. The plane left San Francisco every Wednesday and stopped at Honolulu, Guam, Manila, Macao, and Hong Kong. It cost seventy cents per half ounce to deliver the mail from one Pacific shore to another.

Built for Pan American Airlines, the China Clipper made its inaugural flight on November 1935. It took off from Alameda Island and landed in Manila on November 29, delivering 110,000 pieces of mail. The China Clipper was one of three four-engine airplanes manufactured by the Glenn L. Martin Company of Baltimore, Maryland. It was one of the largest aircraft ever created at the time. Most importantly, it inaugurated mail and commercial air service across the vast Pacific Ocean, realizing the centuries-long dream of connecting California with the Orient.

Bi-lingual poster advertising the China Clipper.
RARE PROSPECTUS FOR THE NORTH AMERICAN INDIAN

Next to John James Audubon’s monumental *Birds of America,* Edward S. Curtis’s *The North American Indian* ranks as the most beautiful and complex publishing project by an American author. In December 2017, the Foundation obtained for the State Library an original prospectus for this grand undertaking. The story behind the creation of this iconic work is one of high drama and sadness for the author.

Curtis, a Seattle area photographer, became entranced by Native Americans and saw that their cultures were in danger of vanishing. Inspired by making a portrait of Angeline, the granddaughter of Chief Seattle, and working as the official photographer of Harriman Alaska Expedition of 1899, he resolved to visit as many tribes as possible and to record native ceremonies, not only with his camera but also with wax cylinders. His prospectus outlined the project stating that he would publish twenty text volumes illustrated with 1,500 full-page copper plate photogravures. Each quarto-size volume would be sumptuously bound in three-quarter Levant leather with a gold gilded top or head. In addition, he planned to supplement the text volumes with a series of twenty portfolios containing 722 12 x 16-inch photogravures on 18 x 22-inch sheets of paper each with thirty-six or more illustrations.

As an independent photographer and self-taught ethnologist, Curtis needed serious monetary support for his project. As noted in the prospectus, Curtis attracted the support of the financial giant J. Pierpont Morgan of New York and President Theodore Roosevelt wrote the foreword. The esteemed ethnologist Frederick Webb Hodge edited Curtis’ text.

Knowing that it would take time to produce, Curtis sold the publication by subscription as outlined in the 1907 prospectus. He estimated that it would take five or six years to complete. Traveling thousands of miles visiting various tribes and soliciting subscribers for the project, in reality, took twenty-three years to complete at a cost of $1,200,000.

Wishing to build its general collection, the California State Library was one of the original subscribers. On May 9, 1910, State Librarian James L. Gillis signed a subscription agreement. The Library agreed to pay for the volumes in installments as they were published at a price of $160 per volume or a total cost of $3,200. The Library was the sixty-ninth subscriber out of a total of 222 sets actually published. Curtis hoped to garner many more subscribers, but not surprisingly, many would-be buyers were either skeptical or cancelled their subscriptions because of the length of time in production. Fortunately, the State Library patiently waited the twenty years for volume twenty to be issued. Anyone seeing his dramatic images would have to agree that the wait was well worth it.

*The State Library does have the original Audubon double-elephant folio.*

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The prospectus included the title page for the first volume. It was published in 1907 and the 20th and last volume was published in 1930.
"The Oath-Apsaroke" by E. S. Curtis served to illustrate the prospectus for his monumental work, The North American Indian. The image is an example of the magnificent photogravures that illustrated his 20-volume publication. It is dated 1908.
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