

Griffing Bancroft library donated to UCSD

March 11, 1971

The library of the late Griffing Bancroft, a fine collection representing both California and Baja California interests, has been given to the University of California, San Diego as a gift from Mrs. Griffing Bancroft, the collector's widow.

Mr. Bancroft, author of "The Flight of the Least Petrel," was a naturalist and Baja California enthusiast, and this interest is shown in the many volumes dealing with these areas in the collection. There is a fine section on the natural history of the West, including California and Baja California. One of the best of these is William Leon Dawson's "The Birds of California," published in San Diego in 1923.

Among other titles of interest are the 39 volumes of the "Works" of Hubert Howe Bancroft, Griffing Bancroft's distinguished father. This edition is beautifully bound in tree calf. In addition, there are other miscellaneous Hubert Howe Bancroft materials, as well as his "Chronicles of the Builders of the Commonwealth," a very rare eight-volume edition with the index.

One of the most interesting and unusual items in the collection is the "Book of the Fair," by Hubert Howe Bancroft and published by The Bancroft Company of Chicago in the Fin de Siecle edition. This consists of 10 sections of engravings of the Chicago World's Fair of 1892, officially known as the World's Columbian Exposition.

Other rare items in the collection include "The Libraries of California," by Flora Haines Apponyi and published by A. L. Bancroft & Company of San Francisco in 1878; Richard Pourade's "History of San Diego," published by the Copley Press in the deluxe, signed edition; and the works of several local authors with autographs, particularly Max Miller and Lee Shippey.

Besides the collection, Mrs. Bancroft also presented the UCSD Library with two chairs, a table, and a high-backed chest bench, all elegantly hand carved. The set was shipped by the Bancroft family from Germany in the 1880's. It is now housed in a seminar room in the Special Collections Department of the Central University Library where the book collection is currently on display.

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