
Guide to the Bancroft Reference Notes for British Columbia and Alaska, ca. 1870s-1890s

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Collection number: BANC MSS B-C 11

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Collection Summary

Collection Title: Bancroft Reference Notes for British Columbia and Alaska,

Date (inclusive): ca. 1870s-1890s

Collection Number: BANC MSS B-C 11

Extent: Number of containers: 2 cartons Linear feet: 2.5

Repository: The Bancroft Library.
Berkeley, California 94720-6000

Physical Location: For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the Library's online catalog.

Abstract: Consists of bibliographic and research notes pertaining to and used in the preparation of the *History of British Columbia* (volume 32) and the *History of Alaska* (volume 33), part of Hubert Howe Bancroft's 39-volume *History of the Pacific States of North America* published between 1882-1890.

Languages Represented: English

Access

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Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Bancroft reference notes for British Columbia and Alaska, BANC MSS B-C 11, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

Title: Hubert Howe Bancroft: Records of the library and publishing companies,

Identifier/Call Number: BANC MSS B-C 7

Title: Hofmann & Curtis Architects, Specifications ... in the erection of a ... library building for H. H. Bancroft, 1881,

Identifier/Call Number: BANC MSS 73/122 c: [no.] 64

Title: Catalogue of the Bancroft Library of Pacific Coast Books, Maps, and Manuscripts,

Identifier/Call Number: BANC MSS B-C 4

Title: William Henry Knight, Bancroft Library MS Scrapbooks, 1860-64,

Identifier/Call Number: BANC MSS C-E 200

Title: *San Francisco Bulletin* index, 1855-1872,

Identifier/Call Number: BANC MSS B-C 2

Creator/Collector:

Hubert Howe Bancroft,

Title: *In these Latter Days*,

Identifier/Call Number: BANC MSS B-A 1

Creator/Collector:

John S. Hittell,

Title: *A History of the City of San Francisco, 1878*,

Identifier/Call Number: BANC MSS 90/19 c

Creator/Collector:

History Company.

Title: *The History Company periodical index*,

Identifier/Call Number: BANC MSS B-C 3

Title: Hubert Howe Bancroft, Letters and papers from Mexico, 1886-91,

Identifier/Call Number: BANC MSS M-M 384

Title: Porfirio Diaz Collection of Papers, 1881-93,

Identifier/Call Number: BANC MSS M-M 392

Creator/Collector:

Hubert Howe Bancroft,

Title: Authorities quoted in the History of California,

Identifier/Call Number: BANC MSS B-C 1

Creator/Collector:

Thomas Savage,

Title: Report of labors in archives and procuring material for the History of California, 1876-79,

Identifier/Call Number: BANC MSS C-E 191

Creator/Collector:

Hubert Howe Bancroft,

Title: Preliminary notes and plans for the Pioneer Register,

Identifier/Call Number: BANC MSS C-E 170

Creator/Collector:

Hubert Howe Bancroft,

Title: Correspondence relating to the *History of Oregon, 1863-1889*,

Identifier/Call Number: BANC MSS P-A 169

Creator/Collector:

Hubert Howe Bancroft,

Title: Correspondence,

Identifier/Call Number: BANC MSS C-B 362

Title: Bancroft Reference Notes for the Western States, excluding California,

Identifier/Call Number: BANC MSS B-C 8

Title: Bancroft Reference Notes for Central America,

Identifier/Call Number: BANC MSS B-C 9

Title: Bancroft reference notes for Mexico,

Identifier/Call Number: BANC MSS B-C 10

Title: Bancroft Reference Notes for California,

Identifier/Call Number: BANC MSS B-C 12

Title: Bancroft Reference Notes--Bibliography,

Identifier/Call Number: BANC MSS B-C 13

Title: Bancroft Reference Notes on the conquest of Mexico,

Identifier/Call Number: BANC MSS B-M 1

Title: Bancroft Reference Notes,

Identifier/Call Number: BANC MSS 97/31 c

Title: Bancroft Miscellaneous Newspaper Clippings, 1860-1890,

Identifier/Call Number: BANC MSS B-C 14

Title: Henry Cerruti, Sketches of the California Pioneers,

Identifier/Call Number: BANC MSS C-E 65

Title: Ivan Petroff, Journal of Trip to Alaska in Search of Information for the Bancroft Library, 1878,

Identifier/Call Number: BANC MSS P-K 62

Title: Harry Bishop Hambly, Information for the Bancroft Library, 1936,

Identifier/Call Number: BANC MSS C-D 5081

Title: Henry Lebbeus Oak, Correspondence and papers,

Identifier/Call Number: BANC MSS C-B 387

Title: Henry Lebbeus Oak, Letters from H.H. Bancroft and diary, 1874-87,

Identifier/Call Number: BANC MSS 67/153

Title: Frances Fuller Victor, Correspondence and notes relating to the History of Oregon<, 1865-[ca. 1886],

Identifier/Call Number: BANC MSS P-A 170

Title: A.L. Bancroft & Co., Account of stock, Jan. 1, 1879,

Identifier/Call Number: BANC MSS C-E 195

Title: A.L. Bancroft & Co., Resolutions for the year 1890,

Identifier/Call Number: BANC MSS C-E 196

Creator/Collector:

Albert Little Bancroft,

Title: *My Brother Hubert Howe Bancroft, 1907,*

Identifier/Call Number: BANC MSS 73/122 c:109

Title: Hubert Howe Bancroft family papers,

Identifier/Call Number: BANC MSS 73/64 c

Title: Bancroft family, Family genealogical data, 1886-1907,

Identifier/Call Number: BANC MSS 89/91 c

Title: Hubert Howe Bancroft letters to his family, 1882-1918,

Identifier/Call Number: BANC MSS 77/169 c

Acquisition Information

The Bancroft Reference Notes for British Columbia and Alaska were part of the Bancroft Collection, purchased by the University of California in 1905.

Biography

Hubert Howe Bancroft was born in Granville, Ohio on May 5, 1832. After working for some time in the Buffalo, N. Y. book store owned by his brother-in-law, George H. Derby, Bancroft came to California in 1852 to establish a West Coast outlet for the shop. In 1855, after selling the initial stock, he went east and returned with sufficient books and stationery to open a San Francisco store the following year. Within two years, his firm on Montgomery Street began to grow into a publishing house, issuing such items as law books and legal stationery, texts and maps for schools, and music and piano sales.

In 1860, as an outgrowth of assembling research materials for publication of a Pacific Coast handbook, Bancroft began to collect regional writings: this was the beginning of his unparalleled collection of books and manuscripts on the West. Within a decade he had 16,000 volumes, encompassing not only California and the Pacific Coast as the central focus, but also British Columbia and Alaska to the north, the Rocky Mountains to the east, and Mexico and Central American to the south, extending back in time from the native Indian cultures of all these regions and the subsequent era of Spanish control. The collection continued to grow as a result of collecting trips to the east and Europe, as well as through extensive purchases at a number of major auctions. Eventually it included not only books and manuscripts, but pamphlets, maps, newspapers and other periodicals, and transcriptions of manuscripts made by his corps of copyists from originals still in private hands or in government and church archives. Bancroft and his staff also created original materials by interviewing pioneers whose recollections might not otherwise have been preserved, resulting in hundreds of early oral histories termed "dictations."

By 1868, a move became necessary to relieve overcrowding in Bancroft's expanding and prosperous Montgomery Street headquarters. He bought property on Market Street near Third, and began to build in 1869. In April 1870, the completed five-story building boasted a modernized steam engine in the basement to provide power for the printing presses. The first four floors accommodated nine departments, including wholesale and retail books, and stationary, music, law, and education sales; a subscription department; and a printing, bindery, and blank book production division. The fifth floor of the new Bancroft Building was a literary workshop, completely divorced from the business, where Bancroft's collections could be put to use. He engaged Librarian, Henry Lebbeus Oak, to catalog the works he had acquired.

Bancroft continued to collect materials as he planned a vast publication project of a series of histories of western North American, which in the end numbered 39 volumes: the *History of the Pacific States of North America*, also known as Bancroft's *Works*. First were five volumes on The Native Races (1874-1875), then three volumes on the History of Central America and six more on the History of Mexico, followed by two volumes on the Northern Mexican States and Texas, and one treating Arizona and New Mexico. All of these preceded his central topic, a seven-volume History of California (1886-1890), which were followed by nine more volumes on other parts of the west, and a number of more informal works, including *Literary Industries*, the author's biography.

Bancroft's ten year marriage to his beloved wife, Emily Ketchum Bancroft, ended upon her death in 1869. Left alone to raise their daughter, Kate, born in 1860, Bancroft devoted his energies to family and literary productions. He placed the full responsibility of managing the business interests of the firm with his younger brother, A. L. (Albert Little) Bancroft, creating a new partnership in 1860 under the title, A. L. Bancroft and Company. The business expanded and prospered under A. L. Bancroft's direction until a fire destroyed the Bancroft Building and its contents in 1886. Old resentments and quarrels erupted following the traumatic event which eventually severed the brothers personal and professional relationships.

Fortunately, the library (referred to as both the Bancroft Library and the Pacific Library) was spared. In 1881, it had been moved from the fifth floor of the Market Street location to a specially constructed fire-proofed brick building on Valencia Street. Following the fire and dissolution of his partnership with A. L. Bancroft in 1886, Hubert Howe Bancroft formed two new companies: The History Company, and the Bancroft Company. In August 1887, under these new imprints, the production, publication, and marketing of Bancroft's *Works* resumed in the rebuilt quarters at 723 Market Street, known thereafter as the History Building.

Throughout the West, Bancroft's numerous sales agents continued to sell subscriptions to his *Works* and the seven-volume *Chronicles of the Builders*. Following a successful marketing campaign which secured orders for more than 6,000 sets of volumes during the 1870's and 80's, the canvassing effort was abandoned in 1892. In the late 1880's, Bancroft's methods for writing and marketing his works came under attack by literary critics and several of his former employees, including Mr. Henry Oak and Mrs. Francis Fuller Victor. Oak and Victor claimed authorship for major portions of the *Works* that were credited solely to Bancroft, calling the historian's methods and reputation into question. The retail book and stationary store finally closed its doors in 1894, after a long and bitter price war had made the business unprofitable.

In 1905, Bancroft's accomplishments as an historian and collector were recognized by the University of California. The institution purchased the book and manuscript collections of the eminent historian, numbering over sixty-thousand items, for \$250,000. Although the collector contributed \$100,000 of the purchase price, the contents of the library had been

appraised at twice the net cost to the University. *The History of the Pacific States* won recognition as an indispensable work for students of western history. The collection as a whole remains a distinguished primary source of unique books, maps, pamphlets, and documents on the early history of the West, from Alaska to Central America.

In his later years, Bancroft wrote several volumes (*Retrospection, The New Pacific, In These Latter Days*) expressing his political, moral, economic, and social concerns for a modernizing world. On March 3, 1918, at the age of 86, Hubert Howe Bancroft died at his home, having been struck by a street car several days earlier. He was survived by his daughter, Kate, and his four children (Paul, Philip, Griffing, and Lucy Bancroft) by his second wife, Matilida Griffing Bancroft. They were married in 1876 and she predeceased him in 1910.

Sources:

Harry Clark, *A Venture in History: The Production, Publication, and Sale of the Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft*. University of California Press, 1973.

John Walton Caughey, *Hubert Howe Bancroft, Historian of the West*. University of California Press, 1946.

Library, University of California, *The Bancroft Collection*. <http://library.berkeley.edu/BANC/banccoll/>, June 4, 1998.

Scope and Content

The Bancroft reference notes for British Columbia and Alaska consists of bibliographic and research notes pertaining to and used in the preparation of the *History of British Columbia* (volume 32) and the *History of Alaska* (volume 33), part of Hubert Howe Bancroft's 39-volume *History of the Pacific States of North America* published between 1882-1890. The bibliographic notes for the *History of British Columbia* are citations of works by title, author, and subject, many of which include abstracts or quotations. The notes, each on individual slips or sheets of paper, cover the period between 1588-1887, tracing early voyages and expeditions to the area, establishment of forts and trading posts, the Hudson's Bay Company, the San Juan Island question, and the settlement of Vancouver Island. Other topics of research include the native inhabitants and relations with villages and tribes, natural resources, industries, communication, immigration, transportation, and political and economic development of the area. One folder of research notes, more in depth summaries, pertain mainly to Russian settlements and forts.

The bibliographic and research notes for the *History of Alaska* contain similar research topics covering the period from 1648-1885. They remain in their original order in a chronological arrangement. Subjects of note include early voyages, Russian fur trade, the United States acquisition of the Alaska Territory, whaling, and Nookta relations with settlers.

The notes as a whole originate from primary sources such as diaries, company logs, oral histories, and documents in the Sitka archives. The citations were also abstracted from more abundant print materials such as books, newspapers, pamphlets, maps, and previously published histories.

The material also provides information about H.H. Bancroft's methods of compiling notes and references in preparation for writing chapter drafts for the *Works* volumes. The distinctive handwriting of many of Bancroft's assistants is revealed. The majority of bibliographic citations and notes were taken from manuscripts and books which were part of Bancroft's Pacific Library collection during the years 1870-1890. The notes and strips were often pasted or pinned to larger sheets to construct draft outlines and text footnotes as well as being compiled into authority lists.

Consistently noting a subject heading in the left margin, the notes range from one-inch wide strips of papers citing bibliographic references to longer texts copied or summarized from sources. The notes usually include title, author, volume, and page citations; many notes are simple 1- to 4 line summaries of a specific topic with a date noted in the left hand margin. Research notes of one to ten pages are transcriptions or summaries of historical events or persons compiled from primary and secondary sources.

Carton 1; Carton
2, folders 1-5

Series 1: Bibliographic and Research Notes, *History of British Columbia*, 1500-1887.

Scope and Content Note

Arrangement

Arranged alphabetically by subject, and then chronologically.

Major topics of the bibliographic notes include: early voyages and expeditions; biographies of explorers and settlers of British Columbia between 1588-1887; commerce, trade, and industry; forts and posts; Hudson Bay Company; mining; San Juan Islands question; shipping and navigation; and the settlement of Vancouver Island. One folder of research notes is primarily about Russian settlements and forts.

Ctn. 1, folder 1
folder 2-4

Agriculture, 1792-1887

Biographies, 1792-1887

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| folder 5 | British America, 1792-1887 |
| folder 6 | Chinese immigrants, 1792-1887 |
| folder 7 | Coal, 1792-1887 |
| folder 8 | Commerce, trade, exports, labor, prices, wages, 1792-1887 |
| folder 9 | Currency, mints, banks, 1792-1887 |
| folder 10 | Early voyages and expeditions, 1588-1887 |
| folder 11 | Education, 1792-1887 |
| folder 12 | Fisheries, lumber industry, 1792-1887 |
| folder 13-15 | Forts and military posts, 1789-1887 |
| folder 16 | Frazer river, 1792-1887 |
| folder 17 | Fur trade, 1792-1887 |
| folder 18 | Government and politics, 1789-1887 |
| folder 19 | Hudson's Bay Company, 1792-1887 |
| folder 20 | Immigration and naturalization, 1792-1887 |
| folder 21 | Indians, 1792-1887 |
| folder 22 | Land, 1792-1887 |
| folder 23 | Mail and telegraph, 1792-1887 |
| folder 24-25 | Mining, 1792-1887 |
| folder 26 | Naval and military matters, 1792-1887 |
| folder 27 | New Westminster, 1792-1887 |
| folder 28 | Newspapers, literature, theater, society, 1792-1887 |
| folder 29 | Northwest coast voyages, 1500-1806 |
| folder 30 | Police, crime, justice, law, 1792-1887 |
| folder 31 | Public works, waterworks, lighthouses, graving docks, 1792-1887 |
| folder 32 | Railways, 1792-1887 |
| folder 33 | Religion, 1792-1887 |
| folder 34 | Revenue, taxation, tariffs, free ports, 1792-1887 |
| folder 35 | Roads, 1792-1887 |
| folder 36 | San Juan Island question, 1792-1887 |
| folder 37 | Sanitation, disease, hospitals, 1792-1887 |
| folder 38 | Ships, shipping, shipbuilding, shipwrecks, navigation, 1792-1887 |
| Ctn. 2, folder 1 | Topography, 1792-1887 |
| folder 2 | Vancouver Island, 1792-1887 |
| folder 3 | Victoria, 1792-1887 |
| folder 4 | Miscellaneous, 1792-1887 |
| folder 5 | Research notes, 1786-1839 |
| Carton 2, folders 6-24 | Series 2: Bibliographic and Research Notes, <i>History of Alaska</i>, 1648-1885. |
| | Scope and Content Note |
| | Arrangement |
| | Arranged chronologically. |
| | Major topics include: early voyages and expeditions; Russian fur trade; native populations and relations; forts and settlements; the United States acquisition of the Alaska Territory in 1864; and whaling. |
| Ctn. 2, folder 6-7 | 1648-1780 |
| folder 8-9 | 1781-1800 |
| folder 10 | 1801-1810 |
| folder 11 | 1811-1820 |
| folder 12 | 1821-1830 |
| folder 13 | 1831-1840 |
| folder 14 | 1841-1850 |
| folder 15 | 1851-1860 |
| folder 16-17 | 1861-1867 |
| folder 18-20 | 1868-1870 |
| folder 21-23 | 1871-1885 |
| folder 24 | Miscellaneous |
