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## Jack London collection

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Sonoma State University Library

Special Collections

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## **Descriptive Summary**

**Title:** Jack London collection

**Dates:** 1897-2005

**Collection Number:** Consult repository.

**Creator/Collector:** Bernatovech, Carl J. Jones, Waring.

**Extent:** 100 linear feet; 15 flat file drawers; 15 card file drawers.

**Repository:** Sonoma State University Library

Rohnert Park, California 94928

**Abstract:** The story of this collection begins with its creator, Carl J. Bernatovech, who was born in Buffalo, New York on September 8, 1943. Shortly after returning from the Vietnam War, Mr. Bernatovech read *The Call of the Wild*. He became enthralled with the writings and life of Jack London and began collecting material both by and about him. Mr. Bernatovech, in addition to his vocation as a heavy machine operator, was a longtime member of the Jack London Foundation. He often traveled from his home in Pennsylvania to Glen Ellen for the annual Jack London Birthday Dinner. Despite health problems later in life, he continued to attend book fairs and to meet with other collectors. Due to his intense interest in Jack London and his dedication as a collector, Mr. Bernatovech amassed one of the finest private collections of Jack London material. Sometime after Carl J. Bernatovech's death on Aug. 12, 1997, Waring Jones, a longtime Jack London fan and an acquaintance of Mr. Bernatovech, contacted his family to find out if the collection was available for purchase. Discovering that it was indeed available, Mr. Jones set out to find a home for the collection, and decided to donate it, along with collected materials of his own, to the Sonoma State University library. Factors leading to his decision included the proximity of the university to Jack London's Beauty Ranch in Glen Ellen (now the Jack London State Historical Park), and his desire that the materials be available not only to Jack London scholars, but to undergraduate students and the general public. Mr. Jones' generosity did not end with the donation of the Jack London Collection. He also donated funds to aid in the preservation and organization of the materials and to build the Waring Jones Reading Room, a space designed to house the works of Jack London and other regional authors. The collection arrived at the Sonoma State University Library in the spring of 2000 in fifty boxes. In 2001, the library moved from its former location in Salazar Hall to the campus' new Jean and Charles Schulz Information Center, where the collection was inventoried, cataloged and installed. The official dedication and opening of the Waring Jones Reading Room was on December 6, 2001. Since then, the collection has expanded with additional donations from other Jack London enthusiasts.

**Language of Material:** English

### **Access**

Collection is open for research by appointment.

### **Publication Rights**

The library can only claim physical ownership of the collection. Users are responsible for satisfying any claimants of literary property.

### **Preferred Citation**

Jack London collection . Sonoma State University Library

### **Acquisition Information**

The collection was donated by Waring Jones in 2000.

### **Biography/Administrative History**

Jack London (born Jan. 12, 1876, died Nov. 22, 1916) is best known for his books *The Call of the Wild*, *White Fang*, and *The Sea-Wolf*, and a few short stories, such as "To Build a Fire" and "The White Silence." In fact, he was a prolific writer whose fiction explored several regions and their cultures: the Yukon, California, Hawaii, and the Solomon Islands. He experimented with many literary forms, from conventional love stories and dystopias to science fantasy. His noted journalism included war correspondence, boxing stories, and the life of Molokai lepers. A committed socialist, he insisted against editorial pressures to write political essays and insert social criticism in his fiction. He was among the most influential figures of his day, who understood how to create a public persona and use the media to market his self-created image of poor-boy-turned-success. London's great passion was agriculture, and he was well on the way of creating a new model for ranching through his Beauty Ranch when he died of kidney disease at age 40. He left over fifty books of novels, stories, journalism, and essays, many of which have been translated and continue to be read around the world.

### **Scope and Content of Collection**

The Jack London Collection could be termed the Carl J. Bernatovech Collection as it strongly reflects the collector's particular interests and feelings regarding Jack London. The collection contains first editions of Jack London's novels,

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correspondence written either by or to Jack or Charmian London, writings by both Jack and Charmian London published in magazines (including many first appearances), movie memorabilia, photographs, artifacts, ephemera, and materials about London. The breadth of the collection demonstrates Carl Bernatovech's passion as a collector, as well as Jack London's popularity in American popular culture. The collection is 100 linear feet; comprised of 15 flat file drawers; 15 card file drawers.

**Indexing Terms**

American literature.

Authors, American -- 20th century.

Novelists, American -- 20th century.

Adventure and adventurers -- United States.

London, Jack, 1876-1916.

London, Charmian, 1870-1955.

Shepard, Eliza, 1877-1939.

London family.

Sonoma County, (Calif.).

[Jack London Collection Inventory](#)

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