

Mexicana In The Bancroft Library

UC MEXUS NEWS, Number 6 Summer 1983

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The Bancroft Library, a branch of the UC Berkeley Library, has a rich collection of Mexicana begun by Hubert Howe Bancroft (1832-1918) and continued by its directors and staff during the succeeding eight decades.

Bancroft began his collection of manuscripts, books, pamphlets, maps, periodicals, and newspapers as research material for his proposed encyclopedia of the Pacific Coast. He used these sources for his works *The Native Races*, *History of Central America*, *History of Mexico*, *Northern Mexican States and Texas*, and *History of California*. Many of the printed items in the collection are now unique and are utilized by scholars and students of Mexican history from all over the world. The Archives of California constitute a valuable part of the collection. They contain extracts made by Bancroft's workers of original Spanish California documents that were destroyed in the fire of 1906.

Under the directorship of Herbert Eugene Bolton, the Mexican collection was augmented by the same classes of materials as well as by photographic and typed-transcript copies of manuscripts from Mexican, Spanish, Italian, and other European archives and libraries. These were documents primarily used in his own research and writings, yet are valuable supplements to Bancroft's collection.

The foresight of former Director **George P. Hammond** is responsible for the microfilm collection which has continued and expanded the work started by Bolton. Hammond's aim was to microfilm manuscripts which were in foreign archives and libraries and therefore not readily available to American scholars and students.

Whereas Bolton was interested primarily in the exploration and development of the American Southwest, Hammond was interested in all of Mexico. For example, he acquired through negotiations by **James W. Wilkie** the important Cristero archives relating to the religious war in Mexico, 1926-1929.

Hammond saw also the value of documents in the British Foreign Office and U.S. Department of State files and began microfilming programs in those repositories. He and his staff also continued to acquire manuscripts, when available, as well as books, periodicals, and newspapers.

Current Director **James D. Hart** and his staff are continuing the work of former directors in building the Mexicana collection.

Since new manuscripts are not readily available for acquisition, the main collecting emphasis is on printed materials. The microfilming program has continued under Hart's directorship, even expanding to include archives in Baja California Sur. The Bancroft Library is currently a member of a consortium for filming twentieth-century

British Foreign Office Mexican files. These records are now available through 1949 Manuscripts and microfilm of manuscripts in the Bancroft Library relating to Mexico range from the fifteenth into the twentieth century. They cover all regions of the country and topics ranging from church history to politics to agriculture *A Guide to Manuscript Collections of the Bancroft Library*, volume II, edited by George P. Hammond (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1972) is an excellent source of information of this collection.

The book collection is very strong in eighteenth- through twentieth-century publications. There is a vigorous current acquisitions program for contemporary publications as well as for retrospective items Maps and periodicals are collected regularly and in recent years, pictorial representations and sound recordings have been added. The newspaper collection ends with 1905, the date of the sale of the Bancroft Library to the University of California. The Newspaper Room of UC Berkeley's General Library has responsibility for Mexican newspapers from 1906 to the present.

The Library is located on the east side of the Main Library building in the center of the Berkeley campus. The regular hours of service when classes are in session are Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; and Saturday, 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Materials may be used only in the Heller Reading Room of the Library. For more information on the Bancroft Library, contact: Reference Department, Bancroft Library, UC Berkeley, Berkeley, CA 94720 (415) 642-6481.