

# NO.62 SPRING 2003

## BENE LEGERE

### NEWSLETTER OF THE LIBRARY ASSOCIATES

- [Mark Twain and Genteel Society](#)
- [The Alexander F. Morrison Memorial Library Turns 75](#)
- [Dinner in the Library, December 6, 2002](#)
- [Fair Play: The Bancroft Library and the California Antiquarian Book Fair](#)

#### **The Library Associates**

Join more than 6,000 other friends, book lovers, alumni, and faculty who recognize that the influence of a great research library reaches beyond the university it serves to the many communities of which it is a part.

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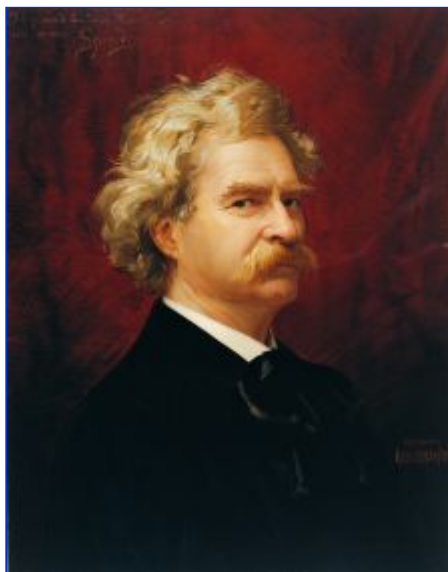
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# Mark Twain and Genteel Society

*by Professor Robert Middlekauff*

Mrs. Aldrich's husband, Thomas, brought Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain) home for dinner unannounced on a cold day in 1872.



Chromolithograph from the 1898 oil portrait by Ignace Spiridon.

The temperature inside the Aldrich house proved to be even frostier than outside, for Mrs. Aldrich, stunned by her visitor's appearance, responded immediately with cold dismay. Mark Twain was always careful in his own way about his dress and that day he wore a sealskin coat, with the fur outwards and a fur cap pulled well down over his ears, red hair peeking out here and there. His waistcoat was gray as was his coat. Mrs. Aldrich could not quite decide on the color of his trousers, calling them yellowish-brown; they did not quite conceal his stockings, which she decided were of "the same tawny-hue." His bow tie was violet in color. He wore black shoes, not the customary boots.

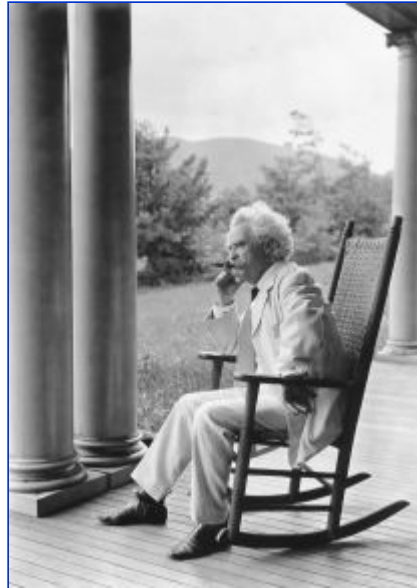
The clothes themselves were enough to shake Mrs. Aldrich's composure, who saw in them evidence of disorder produced by strong drink. The manner by which her guest presented himself seemed even more ominous and confirmed the impression that he was drunk. On entering the house he stood before her swaying slightly from side to side, never, she said, achieving the "perpendicular" and manifesting some "difficulty" in speaking. He did not stammer nor, we may be sure, slur his words, but to the dismay of his hostess got them out slowly and "after each word he placed a period." Seated in the library he talked in a "whimsical" fashion with bursts of laughter punctuating his sentences. His host and friend, Thomas Aldrich, laughed as loudly as he and the two men evidently enjoyed themselves for a time. Mrs. Aldrich did not.

The dinner hour came and went; the frost remained on Mrs. Aldrich's face; Mark Twain gradually lost his spark, and at last, to the relief of his hostess, announced that he would go. Aldrich saw him to the door. With Mark Twain out of earshot, he turned angrily on his wife demanding to know why she had not served their guest dinner. She in turn reproached her husband for bringing home a drunk, for as she said it was obvious that he had "looked upon the cup when it was red," meaning that he had drained his wine glass too many times for his own good. When Aldrich explained that she had turned away Mark Twain and that far from being drunk he was acting as he always did. The dress, speech, and the posture were all part of his characteristic manner—he was after all a humorist. Mrs.

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Aldrich claimed that she had not heard the name of the visitor when her husband had introduced him and that she was horrified by what she had done. Mark Twain probably would not have believed this explanation; in any case he never forgave her for this slight.

No such incident seems to have occurred in the houses of Nook Farm when, the year before, he moved his family from Buffalo to Hartford. No embarrassment, perhaps, but the transition had its rough spots, though Sam Clemens and his wife Olivia (Livy), with their baby Langdon soon felt at home.



Mark Twain. One of a suite of seven photographs taken in Dublin, New Hampshire, in August 1906 by Albert Bigelow Paine, Mark Twain's biographer.

The people of Nook Farm made up a genteel community in New England, the oldest section of the country, and still proud of its traditions of piety and respectability. Sam Clemens did not bring piety and decorum with him, though his wife Olivia did. But he was the member of the family who was noticed by people around them. He demanded to be noticed, as Mrs. Aldrich's comments on his clothing suggest. He was well known, a writer and lecturer who had made a name for himself all over the United States. He was also a rather rough article with none of the smooth edges that ease movement into polite society. His family origins were "common," a word that sometimes dropped off New England tongues with quiet disdain.

Common was not a word that anyone ever applied to Thomas Bailey Aldrich or his wife Lilian. He had already made something of a name for himself as a journalist and poet when Mark Twain met him, and a few years later he would succeed William Dean Howells as editor of the Atlantic, one of the great American magazines of post-Civil War America.

How Mark Twain, the wild Westerner out of small-town Missouri, of no background, in appearance sometimes slovenly, and in manner strange even eccentric, broke into the genteel society of New England is one of the questions I have asked in the process of writing a book about him and his century. The question is of more than antiquarian interest because answering it can reveal much about him, and about nineteenth-century American society-its structure and makeup, its varieties of groups and interests, its prejudices and spirit. Happily the sources for most of the answer lie in the rich resources of the Mark Twain Papers on the top floor of the Bancroft Library. And elsewhere in the Bancroft and the next-door Doe Library, there are materials that will allow one to solve almost all the puzzles that might remain.

Evidence of feelings about social status and class does not shout out from these sources. People of good breeding did not talk often of such matters; people of good breeding did not have to. They knew who was in and who was out. Nook Farm, a favored section of up-scale Hartford, did not attract the poor of the city. Yet it did not demand great wealth of its inhabitants, and only a few of the great insurance magnates of Hartford lived there. Samuel Eliot Morison, the great historian from Harvard University, said of Boston society in the next generation

that "The way to get in was to buy a townhouse on Commonwealth Avenue or Beacon Street, and a place on the North Shore, and send your children to private schools in the Back Bay." That and "a certain minimum of breeding and manners was required." In Nook Farm, breeding and manners were more important than sending your children to the right schools, and as for owning a house there, plus a second summer place, Sam and Livy Clemens were accepted even before they built one-they rented until late in 1874. And, in fact, they had a rather easy time finding acceptance. Thus the question of how they broke into genteel New England society takes a form rather different from the one suggested by his experience with Mrs. Aldrich. Hartford was not Boston of course. But it was almost as old and it honored the same genteel standards. The Clemens family found a home there and soon much more than mere acceptance-Sam and Livy soon became one of the most popular couples in the city. That happened in Nook Farm, a part of the city that prided itself on its culture and society-there was nothing common about the place or its residents. But Sam Clemens, who was always himself, a self that rose out of the common, made it in this uncommon atmosphere. How he, and Livy, managed this is one of the intriguing problems his life offers anyone who would understand him.

*Robert Middlekauff* received his Ph.D. from Yale in 1961 and joined Berkeley's History faculty in 1962. His service to the campus and the larger intellectual community is significant. A renowned scholar of American colonial history, he has served the Berkeley campus as provost and dean of the College of Letters and Science during his 40 year tenure, as well as chairing his History Department three separate times. He also was the director of the Huntington Library in San Marino. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In 1983, the campus honored him with the Berkeley Citation. Now an emeritus History professor, Middlekauff is the Preston Hotchkis Professor of American History. An exceptional teacher as well as scholar, he was awarded the UC Berkeley Distinguished Teaching Award in 1996. He says, "Teaching and learning are activities that take a lot of work. They also return much pleasure, indeed, even joy."

Continuing his research in the Mark Twain Papers of The Bancroft Library in preparation for a new book on Twain, he is inspired by Mark Twain, who "remains irresistible," in part because he was "incapable of writing a dull sentence."

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# The Alexander F. Morrison Memorial Library Turns 75

One of the great treasures of the Berkeley campus, the Morrison Memorial Library celebrates its 75th anniversary this year. Dedicated by UC President William Campbell on February 5, 1928, it opened as a reading room and browsing library for faculty and students, housing a non-circulating collection of some 10,000 volumes, mostly from the personal collection of its namesake, San Francisco attorney Alexander Morrison (1856-1921). The Library was made possible by a significant gift from Morrison's widow, philanthropist May Treat Morrison (1858-1939). Both of the Morrisons graduated in the Cal Class of 1878. The Library now contains a circulating selection of current works of fiction and nonfiction and is open to the public.

In contributing her husband's book collection to the Cal Library, Mrs. Morrison believed that the books that had been the delight and enthusiasm of A.F. Morrison's life could serve no finer purpose than to stimulate a love of reading in the students of his University. Besides the marvelous book collection, furniture from the Morrisons' San Francisco home was also donated to the library and is still in use today. Students often say that the Morrison Library is one of the few quiet spots on campus, where the harmony of color, the views from the windows and the comfort and peace of the place allow them to release the tension from their busy University lives.

On February 7, 2003, Chancellor Robert Berdahl rededicated the Morrison Library during a special public reception. His speech that day as well as the remarks of President Campbell at the original dedication in 1928 are presented here in recognition of the Morrison Library's wonderful history and enduring legacy on the Berkeley campus.

*Morrison Library Rededication Celebration*  
Remarks by Chancellor Robert M. Berdahl  
February 7, 2003

For 75 years this beautiful and elegant room has provided reading and relaxation for generations of Cal students. The library began with the over 10,000 volumes of Mr. Morrison's personal library. The sofas and over-stuffed chairs, although necessarily refurbished, came from the Morrisons' home. The library's wide-ranging collection of poetry, fiction and non-fiction books gives students and others the joy of discovery in a comfortable environment. Over the years a number of librarians have added to the original collection. Periodicals and CDs of music and the spoken word have enriched the offerings. The current maintenance of the old-fashioned grace of this room has been preserved by caring efforts of the present head, Alex Warren.



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The room is more than a refuge of tranquility. It is the site for important literary and scientific lectures. It was the venue for the moving reading of his poetry by Nobel Laureate, Czeslaw Milosz. The popular "Lunch Poems Series," organized by Professor Robert Hass, is a monthly presentation in this place. The Morrison Library has been the unofficial reception salon for the university. The Queen of the Netherlands and the Dalai Lama have been greeted by previous Chancellors in this room.

How this fine place came to be is a story in itself. Alexander F. Morrison and May T. Morrison were graduates of the California Class of 1878. May T. Morrison was one of the first women to graduate from the university. Alexander Morrison subsequently graduated with a law degree from Boalt. He joined a San Francisco law firm in 1881.

Two years later, he partnered with another attorney to found what became a prominent law firm still bearing his name today. The Morrises had a deep attachment to this university and made contributions to their alma mater all their lives. Mr. Morrison was a life-long reader and collector of books from his childhood until his death in 1921. Mrs. Morrison was approached by the University to donate her late husband's large collection to the library. She understandably had a strong sentimental attachment to the books that had been such a large part of his life. She was reluctant to see the personal character of his collection be lost in the much larger university library. When William Wallace Campbell became the tenth president of the university in 1923, he suggested that a special room could be built to house this collection intact and become a memorial to her late husband. Mrs. Morrison was delighted with the idea, donated the collection, and made a generous endowment for the maintenance of the library for years to come. The Morrison Library was dedicated on February 5, 1928. It is the rededication of this happy event that brings us together here today.

The world, the University, and the very nature of academic research have changed greatly since 1928. What is the role of a library geared to non-academic pursuits, in a room apart, in the age of the Internet? There is no doubt of the power and efficacy of the Internet for research of all kinds. It was because of the desire to increase the extension of research sources that drove its creation three decades ago. Yet, for all of us who have used it, its limitations are evident. The very fact of its enormous number of digitized sources often produces an overwhelming number of "hits." Its method of searching by word or phrase matching produces a large number of irrelevant results. Since there is no editor of the Internet, the quality of the facts that result must be given close scrutiny. In fact, many people find that, in the end, its greatest use is to locate a printed book to seriously advance an intellectual inquiry. For the foreseeable future, libraries as repositories of the printed word are secure.

But what of places like the Morrison Library? No claim for the value of this collection for the single-minded pursuit of an intellectual proposition on the edge of human inquiries is made. Quite the contrary, every attempt is made to make this a place apart. A place to escape into the worlds of ideas and the contemplative realm of the more personal plane of poetry and fiction. Here the point is to free the mind to explore beyond the confines of the known and familiar. It is a place of serendipity and entertainment. Its air of quiet is an important, and increasingly scarce, quality in this hectic and noisy urban environment. In an often-secular world, places like this are some of the few

refuges left to entertain one's own thoughts without interruption. Whether the thought is of the highest philosophical nature or the value of a clue in a fictional mystery, they are welcome and nurtured in this place. Nor is there any current replacement for the much greater comfort of reading from a book in any posture one chooses. The feel and smell of a book while cozily enveloped in an over-stuffed chair is one of the underrated human pleasures.

In short, the value of a wonderful place like the Morrison Library cannot be doubted. As long as we desire a comfortable and peaceful place for individual entertainment and relaxation, there will always be a need for this room. There is still no such thing as "virtual" relaxation. Therefore, I join with you in rededicating the Morrison Library to the continuance of its service to the students and community of Berkeley for the generations present and future.

*Dedication of Alexander F. Morrison Memorial Library*

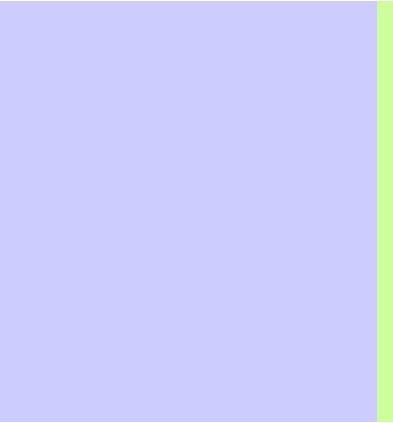
Remarks by President W.W. Campbell

Sunday Afternoon, February 5, 1928

The great numbers of students found today in essentially all American institutions of higher education, effectively prevent the direct contact of the students with the bookshelves of their libraries. In consequence of this regrettable fact, there has developed in our universities and colleges a strong and definite desire for special libraries, in special rooms, where students may freely go and see the best books on all important subjects, take the books off the shelves and leaf them through; where they may carry the books to comfortable chairs, in beautiful surrounds, and, at their leisure and in tranquility of spirit, commune with the master minds of the past. In recent years Harvard University and Minnesota University, and possibly one or two lesser colleges, have come into possession of such libraries, but they are on a scale small in comparison with the special library which you are assisting us to dedicate today.

Throughout the busy years of his regrettably short life, a noted graduate of this University, member of the Class of 1878, Mr. Alexander F. Morrison of San Francisco, devoted much of his leisure time to the personal selection of books which have lived, and to the reading and the consideration of their contents, until at the time of his lamented death he had fifteen thousand volumes near and dear to his heart. They represented the philosophy, the literature, the science, the history, the religions, the civilization of the centuries-the treasured wisdom of the ages.

And now, Mrs. Morrison, an Alumna of the University-a classmate of Mr. Morrison's-out of the goodness of her heart, in gratitude to their combined Alma Mater, in behalf of the students and faculty of the University, not only of this day and generation but of subsequent generations, and especially in loving memory of her husband, has most graciously and generously presented this splendid collection of books, these carefully selected volumes to the University of California. Mrs. Morrison has also borne the total cost of making ready to receive them and their readers the room which the University gladly assigned to the good cause; still more has she contributed by giving constant time, strength, and thought to having not only the general features of the library room, but every detail of the room and its furnishing exactly right. As a result of Mrs. Morrison's generosity, of her thoughtful planning, of Mr. Morrison's reverence for good books, of Architect Ratcliff's interest and the unselfish devotion of this



time and ability, we have in the Alexander F. Morrison Memorial Library, today formally presented to the University by Mrs. Morrison, a treasure, an influence for great good which the students, the faculty, the University community, and ever a wider constituency will always hold in high esteem.

In testimony to the University's appreciation of this gift, and in recognition of the eternal values represented therein, we have organized a program of exercises suitable to the occasion.

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## Dinner in the Library, December 6, 2002

University Librarian Tom Leonard welcomed Library donors and friends to the annual dinner saying, with a great sense of pride:



University Librarian Emeritus Joe Rosenthal and current University Librarian Tom Leonard.

"Welcome to the Library's many friends-and many Cal alumni-who support the finest public university library in North America, according to the Association of Research Libraries." And so the 2003 annual Dinner in the Library began.

Chancellor Robert Berdahl (who chairs the Library Advisory Board) followed Tom and talked about the Library's national distinction and leadership among university libraries, as well as its continued importance to students, faculty, and scholars.

The main attention of the gathering, however, was directed with great anticipation to the honored guests and speakers, husband and wife authors Ayelet Waldman and Michael Chabon, who was awarded the 2001 Pulitzer Prize for fiction for *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay*.

Ayelet, a graduate of the Harvard Law School and former Federal Public Defender in Los Angeles, serves as an adjunct professor at Boalt Hall while continuing her mystery writing with a recently published third novel, *Playdate with Death* and the anticipated publication of her fourth, *Daughter's Keeper*, in September.

Michael, who published his first book (that also was his masters thesis from UC Irvine), *The Mysteries of Pittsburgh*, in 1988, went on to publish *Wonder Boys* and *A Model World*, before the publication of *Kavalier & Clay* in 2000.

A recent quote from Michael in an October 1, 2002 Pittsburgh Tribune-Review article noted, "I am so lucky. I can't believe it... I just keep saying I can't believe I get to do this." The guests at the dinner that evening probably felt much the same when hearing the wonderful and witty program of conversation between these two distinguished authors.

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Another exceptional success for our  
Dinner in the Library!

Ayelet Waldman and Michael Chabon  
charmed and delighted Dinner attendees  
by discussing their own list of Frequently  
Asked Questions-with very enlightening  
answers.

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# **Fair Play: The Bancroft Library and the California Antiquarian Book Fair**

The Thirty-sixth Annual California Antiquarian Book Fair was held from February 7-9 at the Exhibition Concourse in downtown San Francisco. During the Book Fair, The Bancroft Library acquired a fascinating array of rare books, photographs, and unique materials, as staff renewed relationships with book and manuscript dealers from across the nation and around the globe. In addition, Bancroft staff and the Friends of The Bancroft Library welcomed a large community of book and manuscript enthusiasts to the Bay Area including a great many colleagues from special collections libraries in California and around the country.

Preparations for the Book Fair began far in advance of the Friday afternoon opening. In the days and weeks preceding the Book Fair, Bancroft curators and staff balanced an ever increasing number of telephone calls, emails, and personal visits from dealers who brought many rare and special items for consideration. Work schedules were adjusted so that staff had as much time as possible to visit many of the more than 250 antiquarian dealers and exhibits in an intensive search for unique research materials to add to Bancroft collections. The advent of cell phones and wireless personal computers lent a modern touch to this decades-old tradition, as staff proceeded methodically from one dealer's booth to another, traversing the seeming endless aisles of bookcases and glass cabinets. Bancroft staff politely but firmly negotiated acceptable prices and payment schedules, and slowly began the accumulation of a new reservoir of letters, diaries, photographs, books, pamphlets, architectural plans, and other materials.

The Bancroft Library also staffed an information booth at the Book Fair, alongside tables representing a wide range of academic libraries and book collecting organizations from California and beyond. Bancroft staff and members of the Friends distributed brochures and flyers, answered questions about collections and the use of Bancroft materials, and promoted the latest publications, programs, and services. Hundreds of people stopped by the booth, including many Cal alumni, attracted by the large banner that boldly announced Bancroft's presence.

With thousands of book lovers attending the fair, there was always the opportunity to encounter old friends of the Bancroft.

Bill Brown, Associate Director of Public Services, greeted members of the Espero Family, including a woman with her adult granddaughter. The elderly woman had donated a small but important collection of Espero family papers some forty years ago. Following a quick review by staff of online records for these papers, the descendants happily planned a visit to Bancroft (after promising to check their closets for more papers). Steven Black of Bancroft's Acquisitions Unit and James Eason of the Pictorial Unit met a San Francisco photographer who was very interested to know that Bancroft collects

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contemporary San Francisco images, and that we maintain a "Sexual Orientation and Social Conflict Collection." This freelance photographer is often published in the Bay Area Reporter, a weekly gay newspaper and is now discussing placing his work in Bancroft. Bill Brown also connected with a private collector of books who was interested in exploring an estate planning program that will benefit both Bancroft and his family.

From Friday afternoon to Sunday evening, curators carefully checked packages of books and materials through Bancroft's remote online catalog to determine what could benefit the collections. This same computer also allowed staff to answer research questions from visitors and showcase the digital resources now available through Bancroft's web site ([bancroft.berkeley.edu](http://bancroft.berkeley.edu)). At the end of the day new acquisitions were whisked across the Bay to their new home in Bancroft.

By the close of business on Sunday evening, the exhibit hall contained a weary yet excited group of book sellers, and many collectors, proudly clutching their latest acquisitions or sadly bemoaning the steep price that placed an item outside of their grasp. Unsold items were careful re-packed for transport to the next book fair or for return to the dealers' stores. Tables were folded up, banners rolled up, and Bancroft staff began thinking about next year's fair.

Some selected treasures acquired from the 2003 Book Fair:

Mexico. Sketchbook Of Scenes In Mexico, ca. 1827, with 42 pencil and pen and ink drawings (some with color wash).

A charming album of sketches composed on a tour throughout the Mexican countryside by an unknown artist, at a time when Mexico had just become open to travel by non-Spanish travelers. Judging from the annotations in English, and a note that the sketchbook was bought "in Great Portland St." the images were composed during a tour by a British traveler.

Daniel Leach. Manuscript Diary Of Three Train Trips To California (including Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco, and Yosemite), 1884-90.

Seven personal notebooks about the travels and experiences of Daniel Leach during train trips from Boston to the West Coast. He arrived initially in California in December, 1884. He includes passages on the still relatively new cable cars in San Francisco, on the Cliff House, and his impression of the beach community of Santa Cruz. Other highlights were an extended trip to Yosemite before it was designated a national park.



A.L. Baker. Manuscript Diary Kept By Forty-Niner A.L. Baker Of His Experiences During The California Gold Rush From September 16, 1849-June, 1850.

A.L. Baker's journal provides a detailed and intelligent description of California economics, politics, and law of the time, and observations on the natural history of the gold region, and insights into social customs and race relations. Baker, a well-educated Englishman, made the twenty-thousand-mile journey from New York around Cape Horn to San Francisco in 1849, and then on to gold diggings on the Tuolumne River. He includes many stories of tremendous fortunes

Manuscript Diary Kept by  
Forty-Niner A.L. Baker, The  
Bancroft Library, UC  
Berkeley.

being made (at one point, describing seeing a  
twenty-three-pound gold nugget), and of the  
lawlessness of the regions and the danger posed  
by Indians.

John Michell. *Conjectures Concerning the Cause,  
and Observations Upon the Phenomena of Earthquakes: Particularly of That  
Great Earthquake of the First of November 1755, Which Proved So Fatal to the  
City of Lisbon and Whose Effects Were Felt as Far as Africa, and More or Less  
Throughout Almost All Europe.* London: 1760. 71pp.

The Rev. John Michell, Professor of Mineralogy at Cambridge, presented the  
world with an astounding new viewpoint as to the causes of planetary  
earthquakes. He was the first to conjecture that the energy displaced during a  
seismic event travels outward in diminishing concentric waves from the  
epicenter.

Carleton  
Watkins.  
Group Of 8  
Stereoviews,  
A Panorama  
Of San  
Francisco  
Taken From  
The Grounds  
Of Leland  
Stanford's  
Home,  
Including A  
View Of The  
Stanford  
Home. San  
Francisco,  
ca.1875.



A view of San Francisco from the grounds of Leland Stanford's  
home, ca. 1875, by Carleton Watkins, The Bancroft Library, UC  
Berkeley.

An excellent group of stereoview images from Watkins' New Series forming a  
panoramic view of the city with views of the Palace Hotel, Jewish Synagogue,  
Trinity Cathedral, and City Hall. These were taken from the home of former  
Governor Leland Stanford on California Street.

Group Of 4 Stereoviews, A Panorama Of San Francisco Taken From The  
Orphan Asylum. San Francisco, ca. 1875.

A superb group of images from Watkins' New Series forming a panoramic view  
of California Street, Market Street, Rincon Hill, and Long Bridge as taken from  
the Orphan Asylum (located on Haight between Buchanan and Laguna).