

Announcing the retirement of Theresa Salazar

Description

I am writing with the bittersweet news that Theresa Salazar, Curator of The Bancroft Collection of Western Americana, will be retiring from the library at the end of June, after 25 illustrious years at the Bancroft. As curator, Theresa has built extraordinary collections, curated exhibitions, provided countless hours of reference and instruction, and formed deep and meaningful relationships with donors. She has added immeasurably to the strength, complexity, and diversity of the Western Americana collection, acquiring materials focused on politics, environmentalism, Bay Area communities, social justice, and people and groups historically underrepresented in the archives.

Theresa's efforts to document the political, social, and cultural landscape of California and the West means that scholars and the public, now and in future generations, will have access to a wealth of source material to better understand both the past and modern-day California and the West. Among the collections related to politics she has acquired are the papers of Senator Barbara Boxer, and Representatives Robert Matsui, George Miller, and Tom Lantos. Theresa also significantly added to collections related to the environmental movement, including building on collections related to the Sierra Club and its members, Save San Francisco Bay, International Rivers Network, and others. She has also consistently built on the older strengths of the Bancroft including its pre-1920s holdings, adding material related to the Gold Rush, agriculture, the lumber industry, as well as many other areas that tell the history of California and the American West.

Theresa also meaningfully enhanced the representation in the archives of community organizations, activists, and historically marginalized and underrepresented people and communities. Among the collections she is most proud to have acquired and preserved are records from the nonprofit arts and media organization Acción Latina; materials documenting the history of the YMCA of San Francisco, Chinatown Branch, founded in 1911; records from the San Francisco Chinese Chamber of Commerce, founded in 1917; the American Indian Community History Center records; archives of René Yañez, noted gallerist and leader in the Chicano arts movement; the collection of artist and noted muralist Juana Alicia; papers from Reverend Hamilton T. Boswell, activist and minister of Jones Memorial Methodist Church in San Francisco; this all in addition to scores of other personal and family papers from people and neighborhoods in the Bay Area and throughout Northern California. She also actively collected materials related to the Disability Rights and Independent Living Movement, including adding to the Center for Independent Living and the World Institute for Disabilities Records and collecting the records of Axis Dance and artists Frank Moore and Neil Marcus.

In addition to overseeing the Western Americana collection, Theresa curated the Latin Americana collections, from 2004-2016. She acquired significant collections related to Mexican print culture, including the collection of Juan Pascoe, the premier contemporary printer of Mexico, and prints from artists such as Artemio Rodriguez and Sergio Sánchez Santamaría. She also built photographic collections related to New Mexico and Mexico, by photographer Miguel Gandert, and (with fellow former-curator, Jack von Euw) acquired thematic portfolios from Guatemala (The village churches of Santiago de Guatemala and CIRMA 30th Anniversary Fototeca Collection 1980-2010) with images by

Central American photographer Daniel Chauche.

In addition to building collections, Theresa has, throughout her career, endeavored to make those materials available to all. She's worked on numerous collaborative digital projects, including Chinese In California, 1850-1925; The Japanese American Relocation Digital Archive (JARDA); The 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and Fire; and California Cultures. She has also provided scores of researchers with reference assistance, taught hundreds of students, and serves as The Bancroft Library's coordinator for the Breath of Life: Archival Institute for California Indigenous Languages.

Theresa has also curated (or co-curated) several exhibitions, including Visualizing Place: Maps from The Bancroft Library; Michael Maurice O'Shaughnessy (1864-1934): Engineering the Promised Land; Sustaining Grandeur: The First 100 Years of Save the Redwoods League; New Favorites: Collecting in The Bancroft Tradition; Guerra Civil @ 80; California Crossings: Stories of Migration, Relocation, and New Encounters; David Ross Brower: A Force for Nature; Grandeur of a Great Labor: the Panama-Pacific International Exposition; Celebrating Mexico: The Grito de Dolores and the Mexican Revolution: 1810 | 1910 | 2010; 1906: The Great Quake: The Legacy of a Disaster; The Bancroft Library at 100: A Celebration 1906-2006; and The Chinese in California, 1850-1925: Between Two Worlds.

Theresa was already an accomplished curator and librarian before coming to Bancroft in 2004. Her first professional position was as a manuscript librarian at the Library of Congress, after which she worked in the Prints and Photographs Division of the New York Public Library, and as a Special Collections Librarian at the University of Arizona, where she worked with the photograph and rare book collections. Theresa is widely recognized and respected by colleagues across the country and throughout her career has been professionally active, holding leadership roles in the Western History Association, the Western Historical Quarterly, the Society of American Archivists, the Rare Books and Manuscripts Section (RBMS) of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), as well as the Librarians Association of the University of California (LAUC).

Theresa plans on traveling across the country during her retirement. Please join me in thanking Theresa for her decades of service to the profession and The Bancroft Library, and wishing her well on adventures yet to come.

Edited excerpt of email Kate Donovan sent to library staff

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