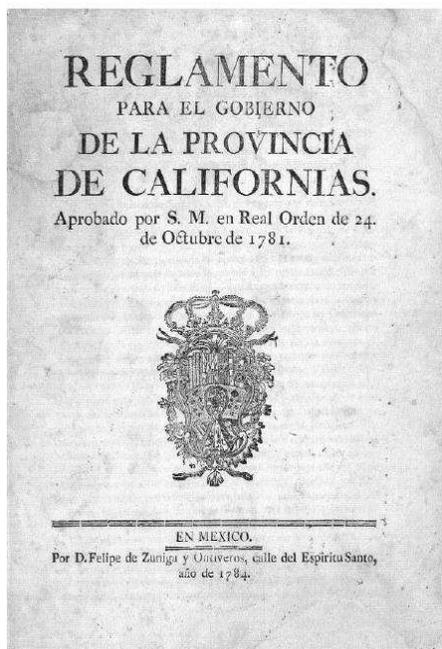




The Elusive Zamorano 80 Captured Again: The Volkmann Zamorano 80 under the Hammer in February

By Everett Wilkie



Item 62. Thomas W. Streeter's copy of the *Reglamento*.
Item 62. Thomas W. Streeter's copy of the *Reglamento*. First printing of "the earliest collection of decrees and ordinances prepared for the government of Upper California.... Copies of the original are of excessive rarity" (Cowan).

Although there have been four known complete collections of first editions of the so-called Zamorano 80, only one has ever been sold publicly as an entire collection. The second such collection will be brought under the hammer in California in February, proving once again the enduring appeal of this list compiled over fifty years ago by a few members of the Zamorano Club as an historical contribution to California's history.

The Zamorano Club has a long, distinguished history. No book club that includes a person so accustomed to hard reality as a cement manufacturer among its founding members can go wrong. Named after Agustin Vicente Zamorano, the first printer in Alta California, the Club was created on 25 January 1928 after the founding group, which included cement manufacturer Garner A. Beckett, had held several preliminary meetings. Ironically, the group had no name at that meeting; it was not until the 29 March 1928 meeting that the present name was agreed upon. Limited to eighty regular members, the Club had as its primary purpose "to establish contact and encourage exchange of thought among its members, who shall be men interested in fine books." Secondary purposes included encouraging book arts, building a collection to support that aim, and occasionally printing items sympathetic to the club's goals. Practically since its founding, it has been exerting influence on collectors and librarians, many of whom have comprised its membership over the years. Those members have, in turn, influenced the collecting world at large, especially through the Club's publications, of which *The Zamorano 80* has been by far the most influential. The Club's own publications, usually fine press works printed in limited numbers, have also become rare and desirable. Even the Club's ephemera, such as menus and invitations, have

some market value.

Unlike some things designed by committee, *The Zamorano 80* came out looking like a thoroughbred instead of the legendary camel. As recounted in Homer D. Crotty's introduction to the original 1945 publication, winnowing the list of potential significant California books to the eighty presented was the result of "discussion and struggle," some second thoughts, some retractions, some additions, and perhaps such things as "duckling a l'orange or the *Bombe Waikiki*, or other ingredients" served at the two dinners at which the compilers also chewed on their final selections. The result of their deliberations, published as *The Zamorano 80: A Selection of Distinguished California Books Made by the Members of the Zamorano Club* (Los Angeles: The Zamorano Club, 1945), has become one of the holy grails of book collecting. Many individuals and institutions have attempted, with varying degrees of success, to collect all eighty books listed therein. (All of them no doubt are grateful that the committee did not agree on more books.)

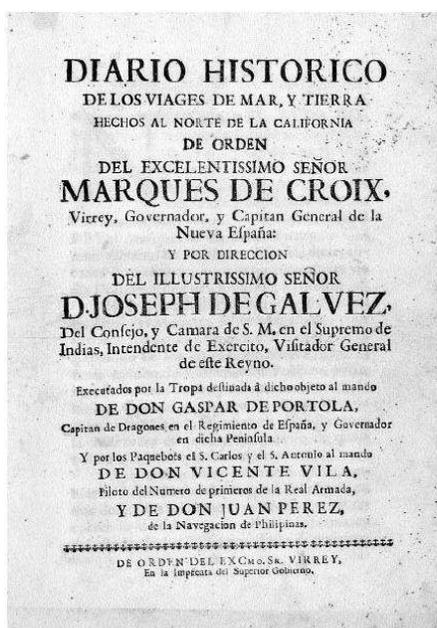
The Zamorano 80 was compiled by Phil Townsend Hanna, Leslie E. Bliss, Robert E. Cowan, Henry R. Wagner, J. Gregg Layne, Robert J. Woods, Homer D. Crotty, and Robert G.



Cleland. All but Cleland and Cowan, who was ill at the time, provided commentary on the entries, which are signed with initials. Roland O. Baughman was responsible for much of the bibliographical work reflected in the apparatus. Despite the potential controversy inherent in any such selection, the group made no apologies for its choices, dismissing some titles as "meretricious." As Crotty repeatedly explained: "Our emphasis has been on distinguished books, not on books of great rarity... We do not make any claim that our selection includes the eighty most important books in the field of Californiana.... In the choice of eighty titles we are convinced that each one is distinguished in the field of Californiana." (Apologies have hardly proven necessary over the years, as libraries and individuals have validated the group's selections by opening their purses in both booksellers' shops and auction rooms.) The results of the group's deliberations were embodied in a handsome volume printed in red and black with wrappers at Pasadena on Grant Dahlstrom's Castle Press. It included 13 full-page plates and a folded frontispiece, the images for which were provided by the Huntington Library. Printed in an edition of 500 copies, the original volume is long out of print. A 1969 Kraus reprint is also out of print. A readily available, in-print edition of *The Zamorano 80* is Martino's 1999 reprint edition, which, like most of his reprints, is a workmanlike affair not reflecting the splendor of the original. All of those editions are readily available at varying prices.

The same cannot be said of the contents, although many of the books routinely sell for less than \$1000. Writing nearly 60 years ago, Crotty justifiably remarked about the group's selections: "No doubt, some of the books listed are of great rarity, but nearly all of them are within the means of the average collector." For better or worse, the mere act of publishing *The Zamorano 80* pushed many of these books beyond the means of the "average collector," skewed the market, and presented collectors with difficult choices. Some, such as La Perouse, may be expensive but are still to be had. Others, such as Helen Hunt Jackson's *Ramona*, were published in so many editions that finding some copy of the text is a matter of no more than a few dollars, even if the first edition at a few hundred dollars is elusive. The extremely important and distinguished 1784 *Reglamento* is a rare book but not unobtainable, although one is not likely to acquire a copy for the \$335 that Streeter paid for his in 1937. Even the notorious book thief Stephen C. Blumberg routinely stole items listed in the publication, hoping to acquire a complete set, which he never quite did. At the Clifford sale, however, for less than \$20,000, as reflected in the prices realized, a single bidder could have acquired over half of *The Zamorano 80*.

Others, however, are hardly to be had at any price. For example, by including as number 64 John R. Ridge's *The Life and Adventures of Joaquin Murieta, the Celebrated California Bandit, by Yellow Bird* (San Francisco, 1854), the group pushed this book into legend. This book occupies a minor niche in publishing history because it was written by the first Native-American to support himself by writing. As academic understanding of it has developed, it has also become important for its depictions of how Yankees mistreated native Mexicans in California. Howes, however, dismisses the book: "First biography of this sanguinary villain, the flimsy, romanticized base on which has been built an apparently enduring hero myth." Its description reminds one of a tale similar to an especially brutal New England Indian captivity, here displaced west by 3000 miles.



Item 22. Costanzo's *Diario historico* (Mexico, 1779), report of the first land expedition to Alta California—"The first book that relates exclusively to California" and "probably the cradle of all Californiana" (Cowan).

This little 91-page first edition is so rare that it is most assuredly unread and unseen by most people, even those interested in studying or buying it. One surmises it was included because the only known copy at the time had been owned by Wagner, one of the compilers, who had sold it to Thomas Streeter before the publication of *The Zamorano 80*. That same copy was knocked down to F. W. Beinecke at the Streeter Sale in April, 1967, for \$10,000, after having been moved forward from its original place so the aging collector could have the satisfaction of buying it, thereby adding to his *Zamorano 80* collection the only piece he was missing from it. What real value this "distinguished" book could have for California compared to the fatal trials of La Perouse, the wit embodied in the "Celebrated Jumping Frog," or even the breathy heavings of *Ramona*, has been a labored question. If one wanted to document California in another way, one could try to collect every edition of *Ramona* rather than spreading quick lime to catch a first edition of Yellow Bird. Of course, the former task is impossible no matter how much money is involved; the latter is achievable with sufficient funds and opportunity. Such difficult collecting choices are again on the horizon.

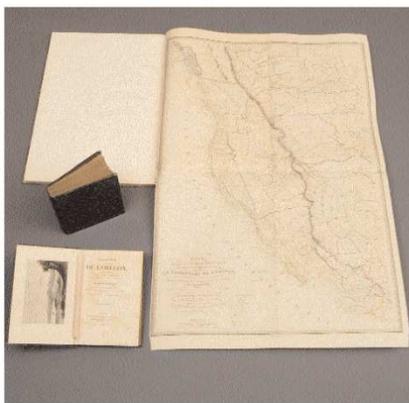
Those who have completed a collection including first editions of all titles listed in *The Zamorano 80* breathe a rarified atmosphere that they do not have to share with many others. So far as is known, only four individuals have ever managed to complete such a collection. The first was apparently Zamorano Club member Thomas W. Streeter, who completed his in 1957 according to a statement he made in entry 2874 of his sale catalogue. The second was F. W. Beinecke, who gave his collection to Yale, thereby

Item 22. Costanso's *Diario historico* (Mexico, 1770) .

ensuring that that institution was the only one to hold a complete set. (The Bancroft lacks only the Yellow Bird; other libraries also have substantial collections of the titles.) The third person was Zamorano Club member Henry H. Clifford, who completed his collection at the Doheny Sale in February, 1988, by acquiring *Zamorano 80* number 15 (Carrillo's 1831 *Exposicion*) and number 22 (Costanso's [1770] *Diario*). The fourth is architect Daniel G. Volkmann, Jr., the only living member of this exclusive group.

Some of the titles in Volkmann's *Zamorano 80* collection were originally acquired by his mother, Beatrice Simpson Volkmann, who had accumulated the books as part of her interest in Californiana. By her death in 1969 she had accumulated fourteen of them, along with many other titles of Western Americana. Her collecting activities were guided in her early years by a physician. The family pediatrician, George D. Lyman, himself a distinguished California historian in an era of polymaths, advised her as she collected and read Californiana. After her death, the collection was appraised by Warren Howell at just over \$8,000.

Ironically, it was not *The Zamorano 80* that set Volkmann in motion, but rather the allure of the Grabhorn Press. At first, he concentrated on buying Grabhorn reprints. Later he started purchasing the original editions on which the Grabhorn reprints were based. He also acquired many first editions of classic Californiana, such as works by John Steinbeck, John Linville Hall, Bret Harte, and Frank Norris. After nearly thirty years of collecting,



Item 30 - Duflot de Mofras
"One of the great books of the West Coast" (Grant), with a "landmark map" (Mheed).

PLATE 5

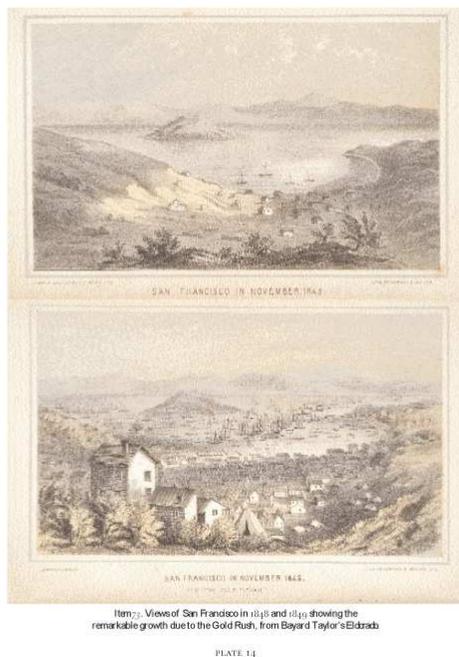
Item 30. Duflot de Mofras.

Volkmann's collection of Grabhorn Press is extensive; his collection of the Allen Press is complete. Other editions of California fine press editions swell his library, as well. The collection also includes a choice selection of California maps. As a consequence of those varied collecting activities, he had also managed to acquire many of *The Zamorano 80*. In 1994, Volkmann purchased several of his missing titles at the Clifford sale, including the fabled Yellow Bird. Unlike Beinecke's collection, Volkmann's was completed with a whimper rather than a bang. In the end, the only missing book was a first edition of Thomas J. Farnham's *Travels in California* (1844), which had sold at the Clifford sale for just over \$4,000. It was acquired from a compliant private collector who happened to have an extra copy with which he was willing to part. Ironically, it is not known exactly how the Volkmann collection began. The first *Zamorano 80* title that his mother purchased is a mystery. One would like to believe it was *Zamorano 1*, Gertrude Atherton's *The Splendid Idle Forties* (1902), in which Volkmann's mother penciled on the front pastedown this warning to all collectors: "1st ed. Rummage Sale." The good doctor Lyman by his counsel obviously inoculated her well against certain bibliographical diseases.

The catalogue of this sale has been expertly prepared by the auctioneer, Dorothy Sloan of Austin, Texas. The catalogue itself will no doubt end up being a classic reference work in its own right, not only for the books themselves but also for California history. Each of the lots has been meticulously and carefully researched and described. Gary F. Kurutz (Director of Special Collections for the California State Library in Sacramento) and Dr. W. Michael Mathes (Honorary Curator of Mexicana at the Sutro Library in San Francisco) wrote historical essays on each of the *Zamorano 80* titles. Mr. Kurutz's essay fairly definitively settles any lingering doubts one may have about the importance of the Yellow Bird. In an unusual departure from normal procedure, Sloan has expended much time and ink describing maps and plates in some detail. In most book auction catalogues, those items present in the books are often treated as the poor cousins of the volumes themselves. Sloan has gone to considerable lengths to examine these items, to explain why they are important, and to give insight into the value they add to the text with which they are associated. (See for example the description of La Perouse at lot 49.) An important adjunct to that research is the republication in an appendix of Mathes's "Historiography of the Californias: Imprints of the Colonial Period, 1552-1821" from the *California State Library Foundation Bulletin*, No. 72 (winter & spring 2002), pp. 16-25. As is to be expected in such a catalogue, the printing and layout are done to the highest standards, and the lots are heavily illustrated with both color and black and white plates. Because the catalogue includes items that are later editions, there are considerably more than eighty lots.

Despite the achievement present in the catalogue, Sloan expresses some frustration with it. She had originally hoped that the catalogue could be more on the order of a formal bibliography. As she correctly points out, there has never been a proper

descriptive bibliography done of *The Zamorano 80* titles, an ironic lacuna in light of the enduring influence the work has had. Despite the bibliographical yellow brick road that beckoned this particular Dorothy, she chose not to follow it, realizing that such an extensive undertaking would require far too much time under the circumstances. Although it is difficult to imagine better hands than hers to undertake such a work, it will apparently have to wait for different ones to take up the challenge.



Item 73. Views of San Francisco in 1848 and 1849, from Bayard Taylor's Eldorado.

complete his *Zamorano 80* collection.

On 5 February 2003 in San Francisco at the Society of California Pioneers his collection will be auctioned by Dorothy Sloan. The entire rare book and collecting community, from the extremely dedicated to the idly curious, will wait in great expectation for this sale. For information about the sale, Sloan may be contacted at

P.O. Box 49670, Austin, TX, 78763-9670;

phone: 512-477-8442;

fax 512-477-8602;

email: dsloanrarebooks@aol.com.

The catalogue is on-line at www.dsloan.com/Auctions/A12/A12Contents.htm

Sloan, who became a Zamorano Club member after the group began to admit women in the early 1990s, established her rare book business in 1984, after serving an apprenticeship with Warren Howell at John Howell--Books in San Francisco and managing the Latin Americana Department at The Jenkins Company in Austin, Texas. She handles books, manuscripts, and maps in all areas but specializes in Americana. In recent years, she has moved into the auction business and away from the more traditional bookseller format of a retail-based dealer who issues catalogues. Her tenth auction, *Cartography and Views, with an Emphasis on Texas and the West, Including the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Stuart B. Gleichenhaus* (2001), reflected her interest and expertise in those subjects. Her eleventh sale, *Rarities: Books, Manuscripts, Broadsides, Photography, and Ephemera, with an Emphasis on Texas and the West* (2001), was a general catalogue of 372 lots, including a copy of the extremely rare 1835 *Declaration of the People of Texas in General Convention Assembled*.

Sloan will no doubt be remembered in book history as the only person ever to sell two complete sets of *The Zamorano 80* titles. She also accomplished this feat in two different centuries. Her second auction sale, the Henry H. Clifford collection, took place in 1994 and realized \$608,856 (including buyer's premiums) for *The Zamorano 80* titles, which were listed in the first of a three-part catalogue printed by W. Thomas Taylor. Because of her expertise with the subject, she was asked to dispose of Volkmann's collection, as well. After all, it was Sloan who located for him the last book needed to