Sandstone and Tile

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Stanford and Australia
Cover photograph: Professor James B. Angell, University Carillonneur, in 1982.
This page: The bourdon on the Stanford carillon. At 1350 pounds, it is the biggest bell.
I Ring for Peace

The Bells at Stanford

By James R. Lawson

Fifty years ago the carillon at Stanford University sounded for the first time, but not from the tower of the Hoover Institution. Its first home was, rather, a belfry set upon a wide Atlantic ground.

For three years, New York City had planned and prepared for its spectacular World’s Fair of 1939-40. The salt marshes of Flushing Meadow had been drained, and a fantasy land of pavilions, exhibitions, fountains, parks, statues and amusements was constructed. All the nations of the world were invited to display their wares, and many accepted with enthusiasm.

Among them was Belgium. During World War I, Americans had contributed money for Belgian Relief. They gave so generously that not all of the donations were spent. Following the war, the Belgian American Education Foundation was established, and the surplus funds enabled Belgians to study in America and Americans in Belgium. Herbert Hoover, Stanford’s most distinguished alumnus and later America’s 31st president, administered the Belgian relief efforts. He was revered by the Belgians and Americans felt a close kinship with their European ally.

It was, therefore, fitting that Belgium be given a prominent location in the Fair’s international section. The modern Belgian pavilion housed a restaurant and exhibits extolling Belgian industry and art. Among the art objects was a white marble bust of Belgium’s king, Leopold III. In the Hall of Honor hung five large, handmade tapestries which had been woven in Brussels and Mechelen. On one of them appeared King Leopold and on another Herbert Hoover in a World War I scene.

Domingating the building was a 165-foot-high tower topped with a carillon which sounded there for two eventful years before its bells were moved to the Hoover Institution at Stanford.

The carillon had been cast in Tournai, Belgium, by Marcel Michiels. His work in America included 28 bells for a Minnesota church, and a carillon of 48 bells sold in 1927 to William Randolph Hearst for his castle in San Simeon. For an earlier World’s Fair, the Chicago Century of Progress Exhibition, 1933-34, Michiels had provided 36 bells.

For the New York Fair, Michiels cast 35 bells, or three octaves minus the two lowest semi-tones C# and D#. The smallest bell weighed 25 pounds. The bourdon, or largest bell, weighed 1350 pounds, and was adorned with this Latin inscription:

QUA NOMINOR LEOPOLDUS REGIUS
UNA PRO PACE SONO SUPER FLUCTUS ATLANTIS.
(Because I am called Leopold the Royal / for peace alone do I ring over the waves of the Atlantic.)

All the bells hung from oak beams. Below them stood the playing keyboard (clavier). It was constructed in Mechelen under the direction of Jef Denyn, founder of the Belgian Carillon School. Near the clavier sat an electrically-operated drum of steel plate, also made in Mechelen. Its 7200 square holes for pegs enabled 120 full bars of music to be played automatically at specific times. On the hour, the bells played a composition by Peter Benoît, the most famous Flemish composer of the 19th century. Called “Rubensmarch,” it was written to commemorate the 300th anniversary (1877) of the birth of the Flemish painter, Peter Paul Rubens. At the first quarter, the bells played a Flemish folksong, “Daar ging een pater langs het land”; at the half hour, a Walloon folksong, “Le Doudou”; and at the third quarter, another Walloon song, “Valeureux Liegeois.”

On May 1, 1939, the Fair opened with much fanfare. The Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Rudolph Hines, played the Coronation Scene music from Boris Godunov. The composer, Mussorgsky, had wanted bells to sound during this scene. The Philharmonic might have used the bells at the Belgian Pavilion but instead preferred to use an amplified recording of the carillon at the Riverside Church in New York City. This was and is the largest and heaviest carillon in the world—72 bells (later 74) with a bourdon weighing over 20 tons.

Though not used with Mussorgsky’s music, the Belgian Pavilion carillon did sound on opening day. The first recital was played by Kamiel Lefevere, a student of Jef Denyn and carillonneur of the Riverside Church. His program could be heard in the Fair’s Court of Peace, where a vast assemblage gathered for the formal opening ceremonies. May 1, 1939, therefore, may be observed as the birthday of the Stanford carillon.

The next day, the Belgian Pavilion had its formal dedication, led by Dr. Joseph Gevaert, Belgian High Commissioner to the Fair. Again Lefevere played the bells. During the speeches Hoover was praised for his “humanitarian and noble” work on behalf of Belgium during World War I. Following the dedication, Lefevere played regular carillon recitals on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays at 8 p.m. These preceded a dazzling fire, water and steam display on the Lagoon of Nations near the belfry.

In August, the Guild of Carillonneurs in North America held its third Congress at the Riverside Church. About 25 carillon players from the United States and Canada attended, and all of them visited the Fair. They were among the six million people who visited the Belgian Pavilion during its first year, so the Stanford carillon had an enormous

Borne from their Belgian coast,
they shaped the enclosing magic;
Sky blessing spread upon a wide Pacific ground.

—John Gould Fletcher
In May, 1940, Germany invaded Belgium. King Leopold surrendered and chose to remain in his country, a decision for which he was praised by some and denounced by others. The Belgian government split, one faction forming a government-in-exile in Limoges, France. This group deposed Leopold.

On June 1, the Belgian Pavilion did not open its main doors, though the restaurant was opened for business. Gastronomical matters, according to an old Flemish proverb, always take precedence over politics. Three days later, the entire Pavilion was reopened on orders from the government-in-exile. On the fifth, the white marble bust of Leopold was removed from the reception room. Dr. Gevaert explained to the press that the Belgian Prime Minister had accused Leopold of "treating with the enemy." Soon Leopold's portrait also was removed. The tapestry showing Leopold, however, remained hanging; it was a handsome example of Belgian art. In the tower, the bourdon named Leopold continued ringing.

The attitude of the Belgian government-in-exile was extremely confusing. Towards the end of the Fair, the white marble bust was restored. But after the war, Leopold, unable to keep his throne, abdicated in favor of his son, Baudoin.

Sounding above all this political and emotional turmoil was the 35-bell carillon. What would happen to it? Fortunately, it was not in Europe: In July, 1941, the Germans occupying Belgium ordered all bronze bells confiscated. With the exception of a few historic instruments, such as the carillon in Mechelen, they were to be melted down and turned into cannon.

After the Fair closed, the Belgian Pavilion tower was moved to Virginia Union University in Richmond, Virginia. The bells were offered to Washington National Cathedral, but no tower had yet been built and the Cathedral already had a commitment to purchase a larger instrument from the Taylor Bell Foundry in England.

The Belgian bells, however, soon found a new home. In July, 1940, Bernice Miller, secretary to Herbert Hoover, announced that the Belgian Pavilion carillon had been presented to Stanford University and would be installed in the new Hoover Library on War, Revolution and Peace, as soon as the tower was completed. According to the July 4, 1940, *Palo Alto Times*: "The gift is a symbol of the Belgian people's appreciation of all Mr. Hoover had done for them." The carillon was acquired through the efforts of Perrin Galpin and the Belgian American Education Foundation.

These were not the first bells at Stanford. The original Stanford Memorial Church had a massive spired tower resembling the tower of Trinity Church in Boston. The tower contained four bells, but on April 18, 1906, the tower collapsed during the great earthquake that led to the destruction of much of San Francisco. Miraculously, the bells were undamaged in their fall. In 1915, they were placed in a wooden tower behind the Church, and there they sounded until 1967, when the tower came down because of redesign of the area. In 1983, they were placed in a new, more centrally located clock tower. Through glass windows at the bottom of this tower, visitors may see the original clock mechanism which operates the bells ringing the hours above.

The new 35-bell carillon—valued at $40,000—was to sound from a 285-foot "skyscraper," which would dominate the Stanford skyline. Hoover Tower was designed by Arthur Brown Jr., the architect famed for San Francisco’s City Hall. It was not his first bell tower; he also had designed the Tower of the Sun at Treasure Island (Golden Gate International Exposition, 1939-40), which contained the carillon later moved to Grace Cathedral in San Francisco.

Ground was broken at Stanford on August 14, 1939, and by March, 1941, the tower was ready for the carillon. Dismantling, transportation from New York, and installation were carried out by Nelson Youngster of the engineering staff at Riverside Church. The $2823.37 expense was borne by the Belgian American Education Foundation.

The 35 bells were placed in the belvedere on the 14th floor, occupying a space approximately 20 feet square, with a height of about 18 feet. Around the bells was plenty of
room for an observation area. The total weight of the carillon was about nine tons. The clavier and mechanical drum were placed on the windowless 13th floor.

Kamlei Lefevere supervised the installation. He and Nelson Youngster set appropriate melodies on the drum to sound every quarter hour. They included "Hail, Stanford, Hail," "America the Beautiful" and the French nursery tune, "Frere Jacques."

The celebration of Stanford's 50th anniversary began on March 9, 1941, Founder's Day. The carillon was not ready to be played, but a brass choir, directed by Charles R. Bubb, sounded from the 14th floor of Hoover Tower. The Palo Alto Times issued a 100-page special edition in which Harry McMasters reported that Kamlei Lefevere was testing "the carillon that will soon peal the University's birthday happiness."

On March 18, the carillon was ready. "Bells Halt Traffic" was the headline on a Palo Alto Times story telling of an unannounced concert by Lefevere. Following his rendition of "Jeannie With the Light Brown Hair," students leaning from the windows of Encina Hall were heard to shout "More!" During another "test" recital, students in the library reading room were perturbed when Lefevere played "The Star Spangled Banner." Some students stood while others were undecided, feeling that—as one student put it—"the national anthem was not directly addressed to us and our primary duty is to our studies."

Another cause for perturbation arose from the custom of male students and faculty to sunbathe and swim naked in nearby Encina Men's Pool. Could they be seen from the tower's observation area?

On March 21, Lefevere played an announced recital at 7:30 p.m. This performance coincided with the radio broadcast of the Joe Louis-Abe Simon prizefight. Hundreds of cars were parked near the tower and their occupants listened to the fight with one ear and to the new carillon with the other, "enjoying both tremendously," according to The Times.

The next day was Sunday, and Lefevere played just before the morning service in the Memorial Church, then returned to New York. It was announced that he would be back for the formal dedication of Hoover Library in June. During this three-month interval, Warren D. Allen, University Organist, tried to play the carillon but found that it was not like an organ and required special training.

Also during this interval, finishing touches were put on the two-story building at the tower's base. The five tapestries exhibited in New York had accompanied the bells to Stanford. The one showing Herbert Hoover was hung in the office of Hoover Institution Chairman Ralph Haswell Lutz. Exhibits to commemorate the work of the Commission for Relief in Belgium were placed in the museum room to the right on the main floor. Over the doorway leading from the main hallway into the entrance room was placed this inscription:

THE CARILLON OF THIRTY-FIVE BELLS IN THIS TOWER WAS ORIGINALLY CAST BY MARCEL MICHEL'S IN TOURNAI, BELGIUM, FOR THE BELGIAN PAVILION AT THE NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR 1939 AND 1940. THE CARILLON IS A GIFT TO STANFORD UNIVERSITY FROM THE BELGIAN AMERICAN EDUCATION FOUNDATION WITH WHICH ARE ASSOCIATED THE BELGIAN UNIVERSITIES AND EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS, RECIPIENTS OF ENDOWMENT FUNDS FOR THE COMMISSION FOR RELIEF IN BELGIUM, 1914 - 1919. DEDICATED ON JUNE 20, 1941.

In June, 1941, Lefevere returned for Commencement and dedication week, and played a number of recitals. The main event was held on Friday, June 20. Following a half-hour recital, D. Elton Trueblood, University Chaplain, gave an invocation. Speeches by Ralph Lutz; Herbert Hoover; Edgar Rickard, chairman of the building committee; Charles Seymour, president of Yale; and Ray Lyman Wilbur, president of Stanford, followed.

Lefevere concluded with the national anthem, and this time, everyone stood. It was a long program, broadcast over the National Broadcasting Company system. Radio time was running out, so Ray Lyman Wilbur cut his speech short. He did squeeze in one memorable sentence:

"I am talking against time, and all I want to say is: This is a great shaft of light up into the blue for the long look of history. We need that long look."

That evening, there was another carillon recital, followed by a performance of the San Francisco Symphony conducted by Pierre Monteux. As the sun dropped into the Pacific, the Hoover Tower was floodlit under the direction of Leland H. Brown of the Stanford Electrical Engineering Department, assisted by graduate student John Samter. The audience of 7000, who had gathered in Frost Amphitheater within sight of the Tower, was enchanted.

That summer, Warren Allen continued his struggle to learn to play the instrument, and a barn owl built its nest near the bells. "The hungry screeching of two young owls may be heard, along with the carillon, even from the ground," reported The Stanford Daily. A new Stanford literary magazine made its appearance. The title: Carillon.

In September, 1941, I enrolled as a graduate student, and my first recital as Stanford's first carillonneur was played on October 2. I had learned the art while a student at the University of Chicago. Lefevere had told me about the new Stanford carillon and I applied to Ralph Lutz for a job.

Author James R. Lawson at the Stanford carillon clavier in September, 1941
"We have no funds for a carillonneur," he replied, "but you may pick up and eat any of the oranges that fall from the Stanford orange trees." It wasn't that grim. To insure that the bells would be played, Harry McMasters and Jeannette Hitchcock, a librarian, found a donor for a scholarship for me.

What a remarkable opportunity for a novice carillonneur! I could break in a new carillon on an extraordinary audience in one of the most beautiful universities in the world. I was ecstatic. Herbert Hoover gave me encouragement and an autographed portrait. The Palo Alto Times and The Stanford Daily provided an astonishing amount of publicity. I learned how to make a carillon recital newsworthy and even turned out some magazine articles. One, in Etude, was called "Bells for Peace."

There was some difficulty in finding the right time to play the recitals. Ringing when the main library reading room was open was verboten. After the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor there had to be some adjustment in schedule because of wartime black-out restrictions. I remember ringing on Sunday, December 7, one tune only: Ein' feste Burg, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." Less was best that day.

The war heightened interest in the new library. There were national and international radio broadcasts. Hundreds of special groups visited the tower. In trying to arrange appropriate music for them, my repertoire grew enormously. During the United Nations Conference in San Francisco in 1945, busloads of delegates came to Stanford. One Sunday, I was alerted that Molotov and the Russians were coming. Thinking that the "Internationale" was the Russian national anthem, I played it. Reporters raced to their typewriters. The New Yorker carried this item: "Incidental Intelligence: When Molotov visited Stanford University during his stay in San Francisco, the 'Internationale' was played in his honor on the Hoover Chimes."

This prompted the stern reminder that the Hoover Library had the stated mandate from Herbert Hoover to "demonstrate the evils of the doctrines of Karl Marx." It was all most embarrassing. Mr. Hoover forgave me, however. Another time, the Netherlands' Princess (later Queen) Juliana visited the Tower. For her, I played the correct national anthem.

My first year with the carillon was unforgettable. I didn't have a cold all winter thanks to all that vitamin C from the fallen fruit. I wanted it to last forever, but in July 1942, I was drafted and sent to a training camp near Little Rock, Arkansas. Living nearby was an American poet, John Gould Fletcher. We became close friends and later he wrote a sonnet honoring Stanford and me.

After my army experience, I returned to Stanford and played the Hoover bells until 1948. The GI bill providing education benefits for veterans was about to expire, and I decided to use part of my benefits for study in the carillon school founded by Jef Denyn in Mechelen. Instead of returning to Stanford after graduating, I went to Chicago to play the University of Chicago carillon. When Kamiel Lefevere retired from the Riverside Church in 1960, I succeeded him there. On the wall of my office in New York hangs my prized autographed photograph of Hoover and the framed manuscript of Fletcher's poem.

Stanford carillonneurs have included Maurice John Forshaw, Ronald Barnes, Oscar Burdick, C. Thomas Rhoads, and John Mullen. Barnes now is the carillonneur at University of California, Berkeley.

In 1960, I learned that my friend James B. Angell, who was playing the First Methodist Church carillon in Germantown, Philadelphia, had accepted a professorship at Stanford in the Electrical Engineering Department. "Rejoice," I wrote Herbert Hoover. "Soon your bells will be played by a fellow engineer." Mr. Hoover, promptly welcoming Angell to Stanford, wrote "It is always interesting to learn of the proclivities of fellow engineers."

Angell has remained at Stanford almost 30 years and during his tenure has trained a number of carillonneurs. One, Margo Halsted, went on to play at the University of California in Riverside and currently plays at the University of Michigan. Angell also should be remembered for his beautiful wife, who has the perfect name for the spouse of a carillonneur: Betty Belle Angell. And their daughter is named Carolyn.

The automatic mechanism has been reset several times. In 1980, Margo Halsted set "Come Join the Band" and Handel's "Harmonious Blacksmith" on the drum. The latter piece was changed in 1982 by Halsted and Timothy Hurd to MacDowell's "To a Wild Rose." The Stanford automatic drum is the only one used for tune playing in North America.

It seems fitting to conclude this article with the poem by John Gould Fletcher. One of the original Imagist poets, Fletcher (1886-1950) was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for poetry in 1938. His sonnet was written in 1946, after visiting me at Stanford. The troubled times of Leopold the King are receding into silent history, but the carillon with the bourbon bearing his name continues to ring "for peace alone."

Does not Fletcher's poem provide an apt benediction for its story?

(To James R. Lawson)

Over the scattered trees, over the sunbrowned meadow,
The bells wove their rhythm of delicate, proud, airborne music;
Fragments of lacework through the far-air falling,
Trails of tone going outward, loops and loud curves of sound
The bells threw a sabbath of peace against the shadow
Of a mid-century torn with war, with lust, with famine;
Borne from their Belgian coast, they shaped the enclosing magic;
Sky blessing spread upon a wide Pacific ground.

Here as in days gone by, through centuries forgotten,
They sang through the sky to man, they wove the secret
Will of eternity, that passes to peace through strife.
Quivering from plain to peak, they shaped the heavenly garments,
And, as in older lands, they moved; angelic footfalls
Going, but none knew how, apart from death to life.

—John Gould Fletcher

The author, James R. Lawson, is carillonneur at The Riverside Church in New York City.
Stanford and Australia

By Rixford K. Snyder

The following remarks were made by Rixford Snyder, then president of the Stanford Historical Society, at the July 29, 1988 opening of an exhibit at Green Library on the Australian connection with Stanford University.

Stanford University's libraries contain one of the larger collections of Australian materials outside of Australia itself, and a view of the Commonwealth from Stanford is, therefore, most appropriate.

Our collection is largely the work of two men—Thomas Welton Stanford and Payson Jackson Treat.

Welton Stanford, as he preferred to be called, was the youngest of six brothers, all of whom came west during the California gold rush. Josiah, the oldest and first to come, established a general merchandising store in Sacramento, the taking-off place for miners heading to the Mother Lode gold fields. As each of his brothers followed, they, too, started stores for the miners. Welton established one in Michigan Bluff which eventually was taken over by Leland, the last brother to come west.

When gold was discovered in Australia in the 1850s, Welton, a bachelor, was told by an American who had come back from the Victoria gold fields that there was a great need for supplies, and particularly oil lamps and oil to burn in them in the "down under" gold country. Americans had long since given up tallow candles in favor of oil lamps, but Welton was told there was not a single oil lamp in Australia.

So Welton, with encouragement from his brothers, bought up a large supply of lamps and oil to fill them, and booked passage from San Francisco for a 96-day voyage to Melbourne, the fitting-out place for the local gold fields.

Twelve years ago, two Australians made extensive use of our collection in writing a biography of Welton Stanford. They stated that the voyage passed "affably." But 40 years ago, a young Stanford senior, Charles Wichman, now a prominent lawyer in Honolulu, also made use of our collection in writing his senior paper for my Australian seminar. He wrote a different version of the voyage.

Welton Stanford, he found, was a deeply religious man, and became deathly seasick on the voyage. At one point he beamed so ill he fell on his knees and prayed to the Lord, vowing that if he were permitted to reach Melbourne, he would live out his life there. This story may be apocryphal, but Welton's subsequent life gives credence to the young Stanfordite's version, for he did reach Melbourne and he did live out his life there. He made voyages to Sydney and became deathly sick each time, but never made the long voyage home to America.

He did retain his American citizenship, wore an American emblem in his lapel, flew the stars and stripes from his home, became our consul general in Melbourne, wrote his parents that he longed to see them once again, revealed a great interest in our University when it was founded, and wanted very much to visit our campus, but never faced up to that long ocean voyage. In 1907, when David Starr Jordan visited him in Melbourne, he told him he never would.

Another member of that seminar—40 years ago, Donn Carlsmit—now a successful lawyer in Hilo—wrote his senior paper on Welton's merchandising activities—particularly about his success in selling lamps.

But Carlsmit, grandson of two Hawaii residents who were members of Stanford's pioneer class, found that all was not "roses" with the lamp sale to miners and others.

One of the ships, scheduled to bring the regular supply of oil from San Francisco, was shipwrecked, causing a serious gap in the oil supply Welton had guaranteed. When the frontier spirit of the miners began to assert itself, Welton's situation became desperate. Fortunately, the next scheduled supply ship arrived just in time to save Welton's neck.

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Welton was Senator Stanford's favorite brother, a feeling which the younger brother returned. Thus, when the University was established, the younger Stanford took a great interest in it and its research facilities. He bought every book then in print about Australia, some 3000 in all, and sent them to the University library.

He subscribed to the parliamentary papers of each of the colonies, and when the Commonwealth was established in 1905, to its papers also. He subscribed to the major Australian newspapers, and these, too, came to the University library. He collected maps, charts, pamphlets, and other source materials, and when he died in 1918 his personal papers were sent over.

He had a great interest in art and owned one of the finest collections of Australian landscape paintings done by local artists. He became a very wealthy man in Australia and when Leland Stanford died and left him $300,000, he immediately gave it to the university to build the Thomas Welton Stanford Library to house his and other collections of research materials. This library was one of the first buildings in the outer quad, and when the present Green Library was built in the early 1920s, it became the Administration building, then the Law School, and now houses the political science department.

At his death, he left money to house his art collection in what is now the Thomas Welton Stanford Gallery. He continued to have a great interest in religion, particularly in spiritualism, and endowed a fellow-
ship at Stanford for psychic research. He finally left approximately $1 million at his death to the University’s endowment, the largest gift to Stanford up to that time.

Payson Jackson Treat was a graduate of Wesleyan University who came west to Stanford to study for a PhD in history, and received the first such degree given by our department. In 1907 he was tapped by David Starr Jordan to develop the fields of Far Eastern and Australian history at Stanford.

This young scholar accompanied Jordan to Australia where they met and spent considerable time with Welton Stanford. With funds made available to him, Treat added to the Australian collection. For a number of years, he gave the first and only course in Australian history offered in the United States. He discontinued the course in the early 1920s to concentrate on Japanese and Far Eastern history.

He retired in 1945 and in 1948 encouraged me to revive the study of Australian history by Stanford undergraduates. It was in this course and in an Australian seminar that Charles Wichman, Donn Carlsmit, and Virginia Spencer, a granddaughter of Mr. McGilvary who built the Thomas Welton Stanford library, enrolled.

It is most fitting that we are reminded this afternoon of the lives of two men—one who brought Australia to our campus, and the other who developed the Australian field of study and passed it on to me. The three of us more than span Stanford’s first 100 years.

In the centennial years of our University we can proudly point to William Lane, a Stanford graduate who is now our ambassador to Australia, thus maintaining the tradition established by T. Welton Stanford, who long ago served as consul general in Melbourne for the United States.

Society Given $500 Bequest

A bequest of $500 from the late Sylva Weaver Rowland of Pasadena, a 1930 graduate of Stanford, has been gratefully received by the Stanford Historical Society.

Mrs. Rowland, the widow of John Lincoln Rowland, a Los Angeles lawyer, was a member of a famous Stanford family. Her brother, Winstead “Doodles” Weaver ’35, was an outstanding comedian both in college and professionally in radio and TV. Her niece, Sigourney Weaver ’72, is also a well-remembered campus dramatics personality.

Mrs. Rowland’s interest in Stanford history was lifelong. It began in her student days, when she majored in history under Prof. Edgar Eugene Robinson. She was active on The Stanford Daily, the Chaparral and other campus publications, and she covered the campus celebration of Herbert Hoover’s election as president in 1928 for the Daily.

Her interest in journalism led to a career on The Los Angeles Times in the mid-30s as fashion editor. Retiring from newspaper work after the war, she continued to keep in close touch with her Stanford contemporaries, one of whom was the late Jim Watkins, founder of the Stanford Historical Society. Through him she became an interested member of the Society and a devoted reader of Sandstone and Tile and its other publications.