

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Moran - Reedy

Section 5, Pages 121 - 150

A series of research correspondence from the Robert Taft collection relating to frontier artists. Robert Taft (1894-1955) was a professor of chemistry and author on the subjects of photography and art. The artists included here are Peter and Thomas Moran, Samuel F. B. Morse, R. A. Muller, John Mulvany, Charles Nahl, Henry Alexander Ogden and Walter Yeager, George Martin Ottinger, Charles Parsons, Edgar Samuel Paxson, Frederick Piercy, Theodore B. Pitman, Henry R. Poore, Henry Cheever Pratt, Charles Preuss, Sam Pride, William Tylee Ranney, Edward Rapier, Frank Reaugh, Allen C. Redwood, and Leonard H. Reedy.

Date: 1930-1955

Callnumber: Robert Taft Coll. #172, Box 27

KSHS Identifier: DaRT ID: 308638

Item Identifier: 308638

www.kansasmemory.org/item/308638

KANSAS
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Moran - Reedy

Frontiersmen at annual gathering Norfolk,
Nebr, June 18, 1927, critique Custer pictures.
Custer probably among first to fall.
N.Y. Times June 19, 1927, p. 13, C. 2.

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Moran - Reedy

PRESS COMMENTS
—ON—
John Mulvany's Painting of
CUSTER'S LAST RALLY

BY MR. WALT WHITMAN.
[*New York Tribune*]

I went to-day to see this just finished picture by John Mulvany, who has been out in far Montana on the spot at the forts, and among the frontiersmen, soldiers and Indians, for the last two or three years, on purpose to sketch it in from reality, or the best that could be got of it. I sat for over an hour before the picture, completely absorbed in the first view. A vast canvas, I should say twenty or twenty-two feet by twelve, all crowded, and yet not crowded, conveying such a vivid play of color, it takes a little time to get used to it. There are no tricks; there is no throwing of shades in masses; it is all at first painfully real, overwhelming, needs good nerves to look at it. Forty or fifty figures, perhaps more, in full finish and detail, life-size, in the mid-ground, with three times that number or more, through the rest—swarms upon swarms of savage Sioux in their war bonnets, frantic, mostly on ponies, driving through the back-ground through smoke, like a hurricane of demons. A dozen of the figures are wonderful. Altogether a Western, autochthonic phase of America, the frontiers, culminating typical, deadly, heroic to the uttermost; nothing in the books like it, nothing in Homer, nothing in Shakespeare; more grim and sublime than either; all native, all our own, and all a fact. A great lot of muscular, tan-faced men brought to bay under terrible circumstances. Death a-hold of them, yet every man undaunted, not one losing his head, wringing out every cent of the pay before they sell their lives.

Custer (his hair cut short) stands in the middle with dilated eye and extended arm, aiming a huge cavalry pistol. Captain Cook is there, partially wounded, blood on the white handkerchief around his head, but aiming his revolver coolly, half kneeling (his body was afterwards found close by Custer's). The slaughtered, or half slaughtered horses, for breast-works, make a peculiar feature. Two dead Indians, herculean, lie in the foreground clutching their Winchester rifles very characteristic. The many soldiers, their faces and attitudes, the carbines, the broad-brimmed Western hats; the powder smoke in puffs; the dying horses with their rolling eyes, almost human in their agony, the clouds of war-bonneted Sioux in the background, the figures of Custer and Cook, with, indeed, the whole scene, inexpressible, dreadful, yet with an attraction and beauty that will remain forever in my memory. With all its color and fierce action a certain Greek continence pervades it. A sunny sky and clear light develop all. There is almost an entire absence of the stock traits of European war pictures. The physiognomy of the work is realistic and Western.

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Moran - Reedy

NY Tribune, Aug 15, 1881
p. 5, C. 5.

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Moran - Reedy

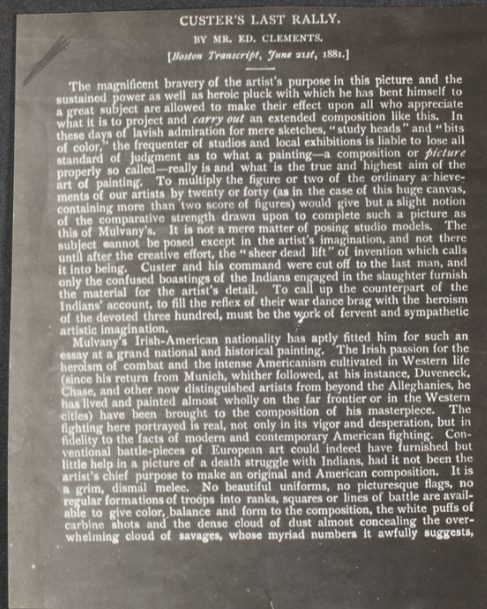
2

I only saw it for an hour or so, but needs to be seen many times, needs to be studied over and over again. I could look on such a work at brief intervals all my life without tiring. It is very tonic to me. Then it has an ethic purpose below all, as all great art must have.

The artist said the sending of the picture abroad, probably to London, had been talked of. I advised him if it went abroad to take it to Paris. I think they might appreciate it there—nay, they certainly would. Then I would like to show Monsieur Crapeau that some things can be done in America as well as others.

Altogether, "Custer's Last Rally" is one of the very few attempts at deliberate artistic expression for our land and people on a pretty and ambitious standard and programme, that impressed me as filling the bill.

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Moran - Reedy



Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Moran - Reedy

4

Those who would study the detail of this work, which requires and invites the closest scrutiny, should go and see the idealization of the typical figures in the foreground; the courage of Custer at bay; the glorious sullenness of the soldier of the line; the brave spirit that animated every one of the two score men in a different phase, and gives intelligence to the very brutes that are neighing their desperation in carnage. They will find that the painter has been true to his story; and yet, while confining himself to historical and material accuracy, has put genius in to breathe life into the truth. They may not like the horses, but they were the horses of that battle. Not the mincing and slim thoroughbreds, but the tireless and noble horses of Kentucky—

"This-maned, thick-tailed, broad buttock, tender hide."

The barbaric surroundings of the West have given Mr. Mulvany's work a picturesque heroism. He has given his country its first great characteristic painting. As Walt Whitman says: "There is nothing like it in the books, nothing in Homer, nothing in Shakespeare; more grand and sublime than either; all native, all our own, all a fact." It is a work that deserves national adoption.

CUSTER'S LAST RALLY.

[*Louisville Commercial*, December 17, 1882.]

The artist has brought to this subject deep and careful study, and it has cost him three years of hard labor. There has been the personal visit to the scene of conflict; among the forts, studying the various types of soldiers, arms, accoutrements, dress, etc.; in the Indian lodges, making careful note of everything about him. All this has been done with a love of country and a burning desire to portray one of the most illustrious deeds in its history. His genius enables him to bring all into one great picture.

The story will never grow old—how Custer and his comrades fought on that awful and bloody day. Men who had been musing for years on the Indian question had their warm blood stirred and came to an opinion on that subject. A most valiant leader and his band had laid down their precious lives while men in Congress and elsewhere were theorizing as to the value of moral suasion to men with guns in their hands; and the "untimely taking off" of these servants of the nation—these men whom we loved and who were part of our home-life as well—roused the nation as nothing had done before, to the wretched and senseless modes in which the Indian question had been met.

The artist has seized on the last great effort of these gallant warriors as his theme. As you stand before the picture you are thrilled through and through. Nothing could be more realistic. Custer is there "fighting to the death," but his spirit has animated the whole body of his faithful compatriots. Brave and God-like as is the General, what a soul there is in Cook, wounded, and yet determined (they were found side by side). Yates, the gallant and forceful, lies in death's array, not "cold, stark and stiff," but as if in peaceful sleep, awaiting a better day. What a royal face and figure that is which kneels above his corpse; the highest type of an American, handsome, lovable manly, strong and courageous. Back of him a poor fellow has just received his mortal shot, and to our mind nothing is more realistic than this figure. The white charger is magnificently done—he gives not up his life unconsciously. Custer's horse is superbly drawn, and is full of fire and action. To speak of the artist's power on this part of the picture is useless; it tells its own story in the most unmistakable way. While the "center" and "left" of the picture cannot be exhausted by what we have said, we turn to the "right" for a moment.

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Moran - Reedy

5

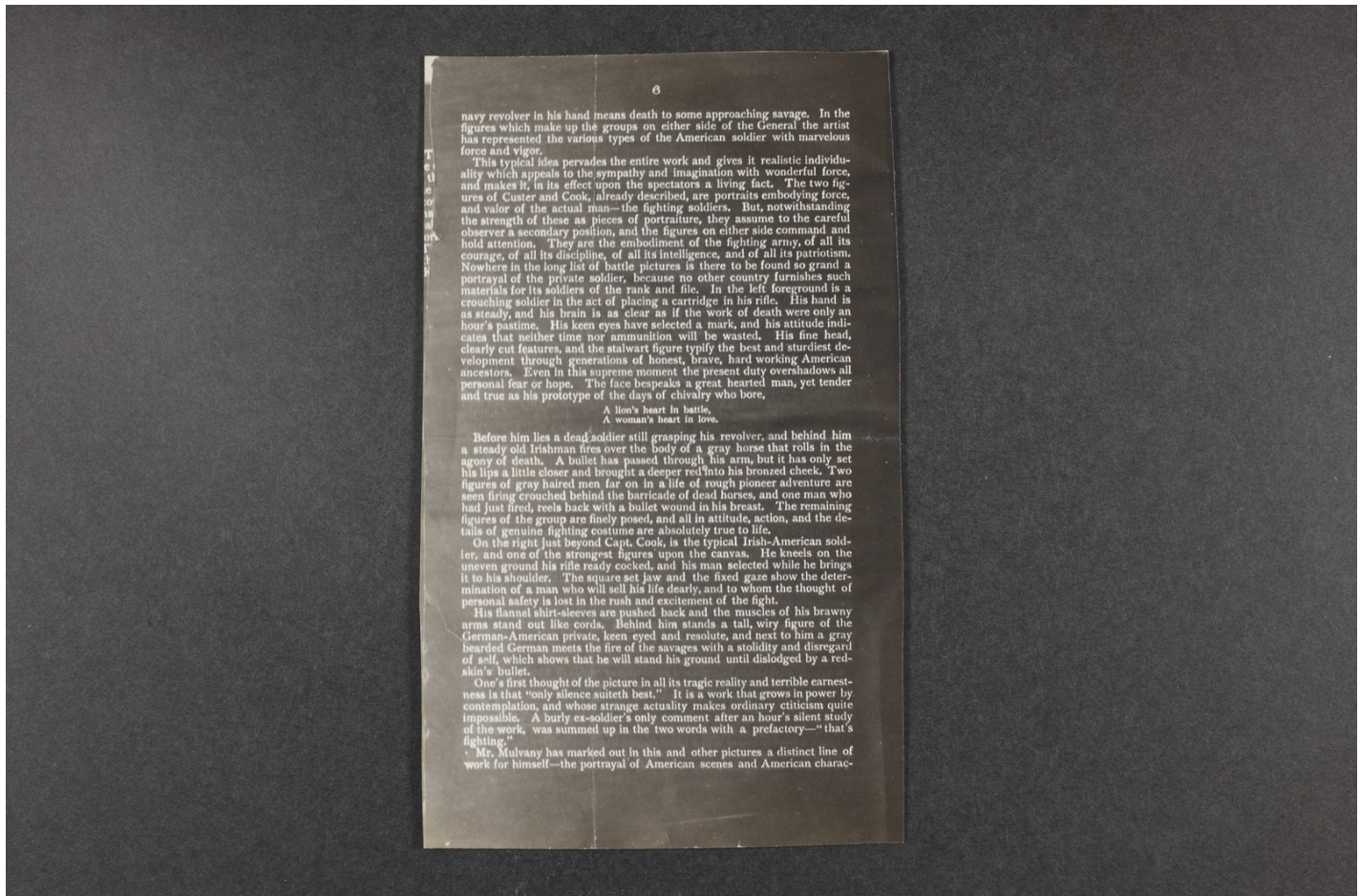
Here stand two brave fellows behind their insecure entrenchments of horseflesh, one standing, the other kneeling, both brave where all were brave, but so cool and cautious, despite the fact that every fibre of their blood and nerve is wrought up to the utmost tension. Can they die? How is it possible that the good God shall not stand by such high valor, intelligence, honesty and civilization as lies in this small group of honest men, honest now, if never they were before, to all good resolutions, to home and family, now absorbed in defending the nation.

CUSTER'S LAST RALLY.

(*Chicago Times*, Aug., 1882.)

In this work, to which Mr. Mulvany has devoted the last three years, he has portrayed a tragedy of frontier warfare which is yet fresh in public memory, and which for sublime heroism and dauntless endurance is scarcely equaled even in the annals of a history that records the story of Thermopylae and the "Charge of the Six Hundred." The picture occupies a canvas twenty feet long by eleven feet high, and depicts a scene near the end of the terrible massacre, when General Custer rallied his few remaining soldiers, between twenty and forty men, about him, and the doomed band completely surrounded by their savage foes, fought to the death with the same steady nerve and unflinching courage with which they would have rushed to victory. Finding themselves completely surrounded by the enemy, the soldiers have shot their horses before them, in a circle, half of which fills the foreground, and from behind this barricade of dead and dying animals, they make their last stand. The group of soldiers in the foreground faces the spectator, the men having turned to defend themselves against a part of the attacking force. Other soldiers behind them are facing in the opposite direction to meet the onrushing savages in the rear. The mounted Indians in the background, with their war bonnets and lances from which float scarlet pennons, seem almost countless, as they are outlined against great clouds of lurid smoke, and the rush of this resistless force as it surges around the hapless victims is wonderfully portrayed. The great power of the work lies in the fact that the spectator does not see the battle as an outsider, from a distance, but is taken into the very midst of the conflict and sees and feels it in all its horrible hopelessness, as the few brave men who made it one of the grandest and most pathetic events of American history must have seen it. Behind them sweeps up the fierce red tide to the very ground they hold, on the right foreground its circle is drawn like a band of flame close to the broken ranks, and its presence in front is forcibly shown in the action and pose of the soldiers, and by the two Indian braves, naked, save for the breech-clouts and gaudily colored war bonnets, writhing in their nakedness where they had fallen, with their rifles still grasped in their hands and their faces full of savage ferocity. Of the group of soldiers filling the center of the picture, the gallant Custer is of course the central figure. He stands with bare head, holding a revolver in his right hand and a sword in his left. The body is firmly poised, the face is resolute and the eyes intent, as though he might have just uttered some ringing words of cheer to his men, perhaps his last words, for the set faces around him show that the time for action is brief, the time for words has already passed; beside the General is a magnificent horse, with head thrown back in the agony of a death wound just received. On Custer's left is the kneeling figure of a cavalry officer, Capt. Cook, and these two faces are strong and life-like portraits, the Captain's head is bound with a blood stained handkerchief, his hat lies upon the ground, and his buckskin overcoat is thrown open, showing his uniform, his brow is drawn, but the eyes are steady in their fixed attention, and the

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Moran - Reedy



Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Moran - Reedy

7

ers, not the national life of the city or the older culture, but the experience and characteristic development of the frontier, with its keen intelligence and steady nerve.

CUSTER'S LAST RALLY.

BY HON. JOHN F. FINERTY.

(*The Citizen, Chicago.*)

The fine painting of "Custer's Last Rally," by Prof. Mulvany—an Irish-American artist—is on exhibition at 209 Wabash Avenue. It is the most realistic battle picture we have ever seen, and is, beyond question, the only Indian engagement that has been faithfully depicted on canvas. The attitudes, expression, costumes, arms, accoutrements and general "make up" of United States soldiers engaged in bloody combat with the terrible warriors of the plains are true to nature. The dead and dying horses, whose carcasses formed the barricade of the "last rally;" the men firing at the enemy over the slaughtered animals, the wild and picturesque figures of the ferocious savages, the smoke from the rapid volleys, the deeper gloom and flame of the burning village; the form of Custer—an admirable and characteristic likeness—all these are produced with a genius that no one who has ever seen an Indian battle will fail to appreciate. It is, indeed, without exaggeration, a noble work of art, and reflects credit upon the race from which Prof. Mulvany has sprung. The proper place for the great picture would be upon the walls of the National Capitol, where, no doubt, it will be finally placed.

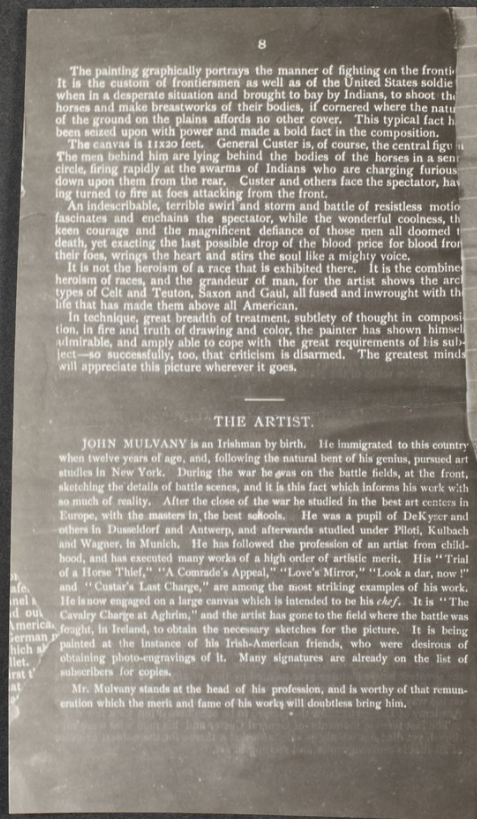
CUSTER'S LAST RALLY.

(*Chicago Weekly Magazine.*)

Just in the closing days of the first century of life of the American republic occurred an event as remarkable and characteristic as any of its history. On the 25th of June, 1876, at the heart of the continent, on the bank of the Little Big Horn, a tributary of the Yellowstone river, General Custer's last battle with Indians was fought, a battle alike appalling in its ending, memorable in its results, and made dramatic not only as the culmination of the conflict of civilization with savagery, but also by an exhibition of human fortitude and heroic warfare that the world has never seen surpassed. Only from the sole survivor of the command, a half-breed Upsaroka scout, and from the boasts of the Indians who were the victors, is known that Custer attacked the Indians on June 25th, that he met unexpectedly with furious resistance, and, surrounded, by overwhelming numbers, company after company, officers, men and horses, were slaughtered in the positions assigned them, till at last, with thirty-eight officers and men, out of three hundred and fifty, Custer fought his way to the top of a little knoll and died with all that were with him fighting gloriously!

All truly great national paintings have been inspired by some such dramatic and signal event. There is now on exhibition in this city one of the greatest battle pictures ever painted in this or any other country. It is entitled, "Custer's Last Rally," and was painted by John Mulvany, who was on his way to Paris with the picture, and was induced by his friends and the Academy of Design to allow the picture to be seen here if but for a few days. The last terrible moments of General Custer and his men who were sacrificed, yet died not wholly in vain, afforded a theme for the noblest exercise of all that is most vigorous and sterling in art.

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Moran - Reedy



Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Moran - Reedy

November 20, 1939

Professor Eugen Neuhaus:
Department of Art
University of California
Berkeley, California

Dear Professor Neuhaus:

I am indebted to you for your letter of November 10th and for the suggestions it contains, and especially for the reprint of the important paper on Nahl. I had missed it completely in my search for material on Nahl. The only excuse I can advance is that the Quarterly of the California Historical Society is not listed in the general bibliographical indices, all of which I have examined with some care.

I have an item or two of information which may be of interest to you, expanding slightly the statement on page 2 of your reprint (last line) concerning Nahl's work at the Art Union. In the Bulletin of the American Art Union I find reference to the following work of "C. Nahl" or "Charles Nahl":

November, 1849, p. 44 #258 "Turkish Ladies at the Bath" (36-1/2 x 29)
C. Nahl

December, 1849, p. 40 "Spanish Lady" (35-3/4 x 45)
C. Nahl

June, 1850, p. VI "Death of Bayard" (74 x 59)
Charles Nahl

September, 1850, p. VIII "Arab and Charger" (13 x 12)
(India-ink drawing) C. Nahl.

Also in the June, 1850 issue (p. 45) is the statement: "The recent difficulties in Europe have caused a number of artists to emigrate to this country. ... [Among them are] Messrs. Nahl and Wenderath, Germans by birth, but recently from Paris."

Yes, I am familiar with Hill's painting "The Last Spike" and have a copy of it. Wasn't Hill the painter of whom the story is told that when questioned about his painting of the Yosemite replied: "Well, the Yosemite doesn't look like that but I paint it as it ought to be"?

Thanks again for your help. I appreciate it highly.

Sincerely yours,

RT/edc

Robert Taft.

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Moran - Reedy

CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY

SACRAMENTO

December 27, 1939

Professor Robert Taft
Department of Chemistry
University of Kansas
Lawrence, Kansas

Dear Professor Taft:

We are enclosing typed copies of several of the newspaper articles concerning which you have written. Two references, those to the San Francisco Call of July 10, 1892, and April 16, 1911, are long and will require photostating. The cost of the negative prints is \$.25 each, and four prints will be required for the two articles. If for your purpose you wish to obtain photostatic copies of all the items listed, kindly notify us and return the typed pages. The cost of negative photostats of the remaining ten articles would be \$2.50.

A reference to Paul Frenzeny is found in the Call article of July 10, 1892.

Sincerely yours,

Mabel R. Gillis
State Librarian

C:D



Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Moran - Reedy

MABEL R. GILLIS
STATE LIBRARIAN

CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY
SACRAMENTO

ELEANOR HITT
ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

January 23, 1940

Mr. Robert Taft
Department of Chemistry
The University of Kansas
Lawrence, Kansas

Dear Mr. Taft:

We have sent under separate cover typed material and photostats of some of the articles requested in your recent letter. Most of the material had been typed and sent before we received the University order. We trust the typed material will be satisfactory for your purpose. We will keep the order until we have completed the transaction, as it is possible you will want more photostats made and we can apply them to the order.

The State Library has an incomplete file of the California Weekly Mercury, v. 6, no. 19, March 12, 1865 - v. 14, no. 5, December 6, 1868. The Nahl illustrations are from woodcuts and include illustrations to The Idle and Industrious Miner, also several of DeGroot's articles. The illustrations are very good. If you wish any of these photostated, let us know.

Sincerely yours,

Mabel R. Gillis

Mabel R. Gillis
State Librarian

C:D

ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO THE STATE LIBRARIAN, SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

N64 10 39 20M

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Moran - Reedy

January 26, 1940

The Director
Leland Stanford Art Museum
Leland Stanford, California

Dear Sir:

I have in preparation a book The Frontier in Picture which is to deal with the artists and illustrators who recorded the life and growth of our American west. Included in my list of artists is Charles Muhl, whose paintings "Crossing the Plains" and "Saturday Night in a Mining Camp" are owned by your Museum. Are photographic copies of these paintings available and if so, might I purchase prints? May I also have permission to reproduce the prints in case they are available? Due credit would, of course, be given you.

Thank you for your aid.

Sincerely yours,

RT/cdo

Robert Taft.

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Moran - Reedy

CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY
SACRAMENTO

MABEL R. GILLIS
STATE LIBRARIAN

ELEANOR HITT
ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

CHARLES CHRISTIAN NAHL

Place of birth: Cassell, Germany
Date: In the year 1818

Father: Frederick Nahl
Mother: Henrietta Wyck

Not married.

Arrived in California in 1850.
Residences in State: Rough and Ready, Marysville, Sacramento, and San Francisco.
Died in San Francisco, March 1, 1878.

Studied in Germany (Cassel and Dresden) and in France (Paris).
Studied principally with Horace Vernet.

Honors received: Exhibited (Salon Paris) 1847 or 1848. Numerous medals, diplomas etc. from exhibitions and fairs. Most art exhibitions in California at that time were at State Fairs, etc.

Titles of principal works; if exhibited, where; present location: 1907

"Wallenstein" Gallery of Stuttgart, Germany.
"Sunday in the mines" Sacramento, California.
"After the Bull fight" Piedmont gallery, Oakland, California.
"Crossing the plains" Stanford Collection.
"Miner's cabin" " "
"Rape of Sabines" Three paintings, Golden Gate Park Museum, San Francisco.
"The Pandango" Sacramento, California.

Numerous paintings in private collections. Paintings of considerable size and value that have been lost by fire, were, "Battle of Winchester" for which Gen. Phil Sheridan posed in Chicago, painting ordered by Judge E.B. Crocker. "Isthmus scenes", and "Royal family of Hawaii", "The pack train", "Panama girls", etc., etc.

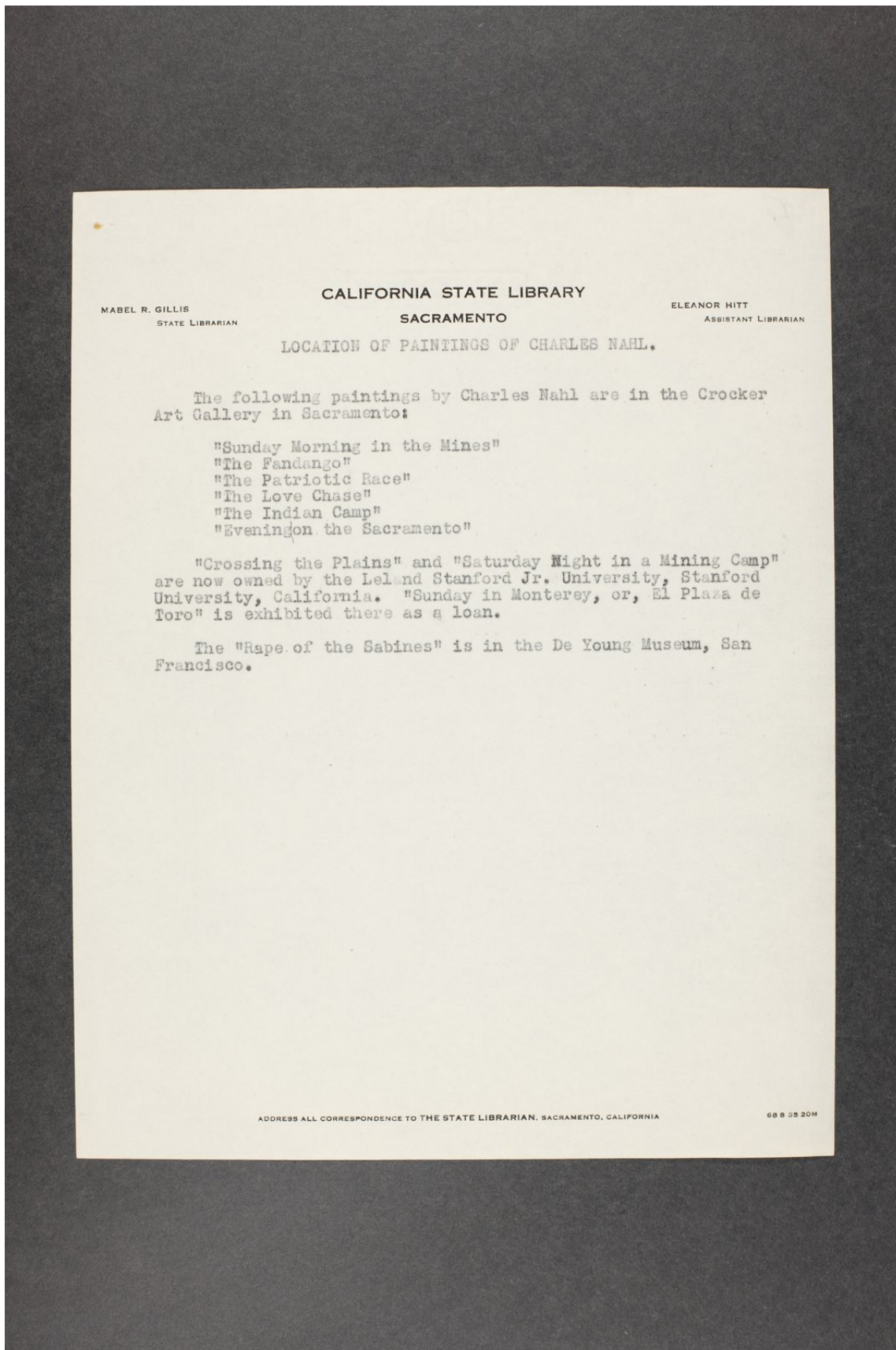
Miscellaneous notes:
Aside from his paintings, Charles Nahl made hundreds of drawings on wood for engravings on wood by William Keith, Van Vleck, Armstrong, and others for illustrations of the time, and many lithographs, engravings and etchings were made directly by him.

[Information taken from biographical card filed 1907
in State Library and filled out and signed by Perham W. Nahl.]

ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO THE STATE LIBRARIAN, SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

68 11 20 20M

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Moran - Reedy



MABEL R. GILLIS
STATE LIBRARIAN

CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY

SACRAMENTO

ELEANOR HITT
ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

LOCATION OF PAINTINGS OF CHARLES NAHL.

The following paintings by Charles Nahl are in the Crocker Art Gallery in Sacramento:

"Sunday Morning in the Mines"
"The Fandango"
"The Patriotic Race"
"The Love Chase"
"The Indian Camp"
"Evening on the Sacramento"

"Crossing the Plains" and "Saturday Night in a Mining Camp" are now owned by the Leland Stanford Jr. University, Stanford University, California. "Sunday in Monterey, or, El Plaza de Toro" is exhibited there as a loan.

The "Rape of the Sabines" is in the De Young Museum, San Francisco.

ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO THE STATE LIBRARIAN, SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

68 8 35 20M

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Moran - Reedy

<p>MABEL R. GILLIS STATE LIBRARIAN</p>	<p>CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY SACRAMENTO</p>	<p>ELEANOR HITT ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN</p>
--	--	---

CARL CHRISTIAN NAHL

Book and Periodical References:

qc759.1 Comstock, Sophie P
C7 Painters of Northern California. (Paper read before the Kingsley Art Club, Sacramento, March 15th, 1909. p.2-4)

qc759.1 Hailey, Gene, ed.
H1 California art research monographs. 1937. 1st ser. v.1, p.19-56.

Neuhaus, Eugen
Charles Christian Nahl; the painter of California pioneer life.

qc379.4 California Historical society Quarterly, vol.15, no.4, Dec.1936, p.295-305
Clhi

qc759.1 - - -. same
N1

qc763 Peters, Harry T
P48 California on stone. 1935. p.172-173
- - -

fc051 California Weekly Mercury *Auto*
Clsm (Many illustrations by him appear in this periodical.)

qc770.5 Cameracraft, December 1900, p.106-116
Cl Sketch, and reproductions of his pictures.

qc770.5 Cameracraft, January 1901, p.237
Cl "Across the Isthmus in early days," illustrated by C. Nahl.

qc051 Hesperian 2:1
H5 Portrait of George C. Yount, by Nahl Bros.

- Hesperian 2:49, 97
Portrait of Thomas O. Larkin, by Nahl Bros.
" " Mrs. " " " " " " " "

Hesperian 2:145
Portrait of Jacob P. Leese by Nahl Bros.

News Letter, Aug. 29, 1936, p.11, col.1
Criticism of picture, "Rape of the Sabines".

(cont. on second page)

ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO THE STATE LIBRARIAN, SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

N64 10 39 20M

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Moran - Reedy

Nahl, ^{Wendell} Carl Christian

-2-

c051 Overland monthly, v.11, no.65, May 1888, p.452
036 Mention.

c051 Pacific monthly, v.10, July 1865, p.102
Film Mention.

What Cheer, Dec. 1926, p.7
"Sunday in the mines," (picture) and other mention.

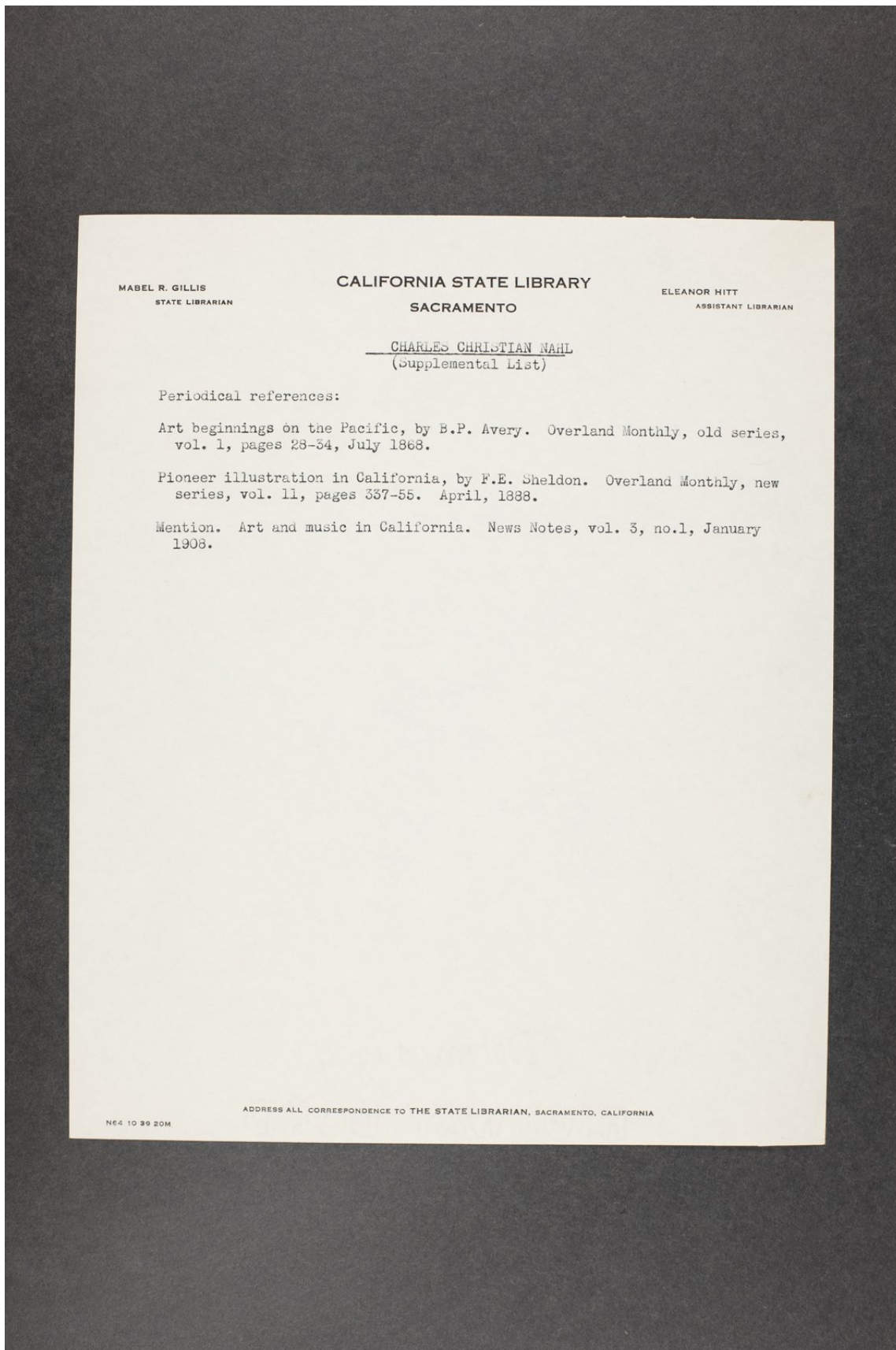
- - -

Newspaper references:

"Portrait of Little Girl"	S.F. Alta	Aug. 7, 1853	2/3	X
"Crossing the Plains"	Sac. Union	" 30	1858	4/2 ✓
	" "	Sep. 11	"	1/5 ✓
Three large paintings on exhibit at 6th annual state fair	" "	" 16	1859	1/4 ✓
Complimentary	S.F. Alta	Aug. 14	1860	1/1 ✓
"Instructions in Gymnastics" by Nahl Bros.	" "	Jul. 26	1863	1/2 X
Mention	" "	" 10	1870	1/1 X
Pictures by Nahl, Wandesforde, Butman and others	" "	Jan. 15	1871	1/2 ✓
"Rape of the Sabines"	" "	Feb. 3	"	1/1 X
Picture of California mining life	" "	Apr. 15	1873	1/1 ✓
"Sunday in the Mines"	" "	Apr. 20	"	1/3 ✓
"Fandango" described	" "	" 15	1874	1/2 ✓
"The Gala Day" described	" "	Jan. 10	1875	1/3 ✓
Death; sketch	Sac. Union	Mar. 5	1878	1/8 ✓
	" "	" 9	"	6/3 ✓
	S.F. Alta	" 3	"	1/2; 2/1 ✓
	" "	" 4	"	1/3 ✓
	" Bulletin	Mar. 2	1878	2/1 ✓
	San Jose Pioneer	Mar. 23,	1878	2/2 ✓
"Sunday in Monterey" loaned to Stanford Museum	S.F. Chronicle	Aug. 28,	1916	4/2 X
California history in art of Nahl	" Examiner	Oct. 28	1917	51/3 ✓
"The Idle and the Industrious miner- a tale of California life." Verses by Alonzo Delano, illustrated by Nahl. Republished from Pictorial Union, Jan. 1, 1856.	Sac. Union	Mar. 31, 1920	p. 8, 9 (61st anniversary number.)	✓
"Sunday morning in the mines"	S.F. Chron.	Jun. 28, 1931	D7/3	✓
Information on paintings of, sought by Nethaus	" "	Apr. 2	1936	10/3 X
Paintings exhibited at Calif. Palace of the Legion of Honor; cut of "Sacramento Indian with dogs."	S.F. Chron.	Aug. 23, 1936	D6/1	X

*Picture of painting
no reference to
Nahl.*

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Moran - Reedy



MABEL R. GILLIS
STATE LIBRARIAN

CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY
SACRAMENTO

ELEANOR HITT
ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

CHARLES CHRISTIAN NAHL
(Supplemental List)

Periodical references:

Art beginnings on the Pacific, by B.P. Avery. Overland Monthly, old series, vol. 1, pages 28-54, July 1868.

Pioneer illustration in California, by F.E. Sheldon. Overland Monthly, new series, vol. 11, pages 337-55. April, 1888.

Mention. Art and music in California. News Notes, vol. 3, no.1, January 1908.

ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO THE STATE LIBRARIAN, SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

N64 10 39.20M

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Moran - Reedy

<p>MABEL R. GILLIS STATE LIBRARIAN</p>	<p>CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY SACRAMENTO</p>	<p>ELEANOR HITT ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN</p>
--	--	---

CHARLES CHRISTIAN NAHL

Book references: (Supplemental list)

<p>qc917.94 D33</p>	<p>Delano, Alonzo Alonzo Delano's Pen-knife sketches; or, Chips of the Old Block... with the illustrations by Charles Nahl...San Francisco, The Grabhorn press, 1934.</p>
<p>cD3373</p>	<p>Delano, Alonzo Old Block's sketch-book; or, Tales of California life, illustrated... by Nahl, the Cruikshank of California. 1856.</p>
<p>c917.94 D33p</p>	<p>Delano, Alonzo Pen knife sketches; or, Chips of the old block...[Illustrated by Charles Nahl.]</p>
<p>c917.94 H67a</p>	<p>Hittell, Theodore H. The adventures of James Capen Adams, mountaineer and grizzly bear hunter, of California...San Francisco, Towne & Bacon, 1860. [Illustrated by Charles Nahl]</p>
<p>c051 H37</p>	<p>The Miner's own book, containing correct illustrations and descriptions of the various modes of California mining...San Francisco, Hutchings & Rosenfield, 146 Montgomery street, 1858. (Illustrated by Nahl.) [Made up from articles that appeared in "Hutchings' California magazine" v.2, pp.2-14; 97-100; 145-155.]</p>
<p>qc741 N1</p>	<p>Nahl, Charles & Nahl, Hugo Wilhelm Arthur Instructions in gymnastics by Arthur and Charles Nahl; illustrated with 53 plates, containing several hundred figures. San Francisco, A. Rosenfield, 1863.</p>
<p>c917.94 W736</p>	<p>Williston, Henry C California characters; by Whittlestick. Includes Mining scenes and sketches, by an old miner. [Charles Nahl]</p>
<p>c911.08 Y69</p>	<p>Young, Mrs. Carrie F. Pen pictures illustrated, The snow storm and other poems. San Francisco, E. Bosqui & co., 1877. (illustrated by Charles Nahl.)</p>

ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO THE STATE LIBRARIAN, SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

N64 10 39 20M

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Moran - Reedy

MABEL R. GILLIS
STATE LIBRARIAN

CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY
SACRAMENTO

ELEANOR HITT
ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

Charles Christian Nahl

Nahl has finished up another large picture, about the same size as that of the Sandwich Islanders, representing a Scene on the Plains. An emigrant wagon is seen, drawn by two oxen, one of which has given out, and is lying upon the sword. There is a whole family of emigrants, a very old man and old woman, the younger people and several children. The men and larger children are standing about and trying to assist the fallen ox; while the others are looking on with the interest and anxiety which such a scene might be supposed to inspire. As far as one can look is to be seen nothing but the dry and parched plain, without water and without foliage. Along the trail are the skeletons of dead cattle, and the simple wooden crosses of lonely and hurried graves. The figures are life size. A fair opportunity has been presented the artist to display his powers in throwing intense expression into all the faces. This fine picture will be one of the many fine works which will grace the Mechanics' Institute Pavilion, at the forthcoming Fair.—S.F. Bulletin.

From: Sacramento Union. Aug. 30, 1858. 4/2.

.....

... The other picture represents "A family of emigrants crossing the Plains in 1850." It consists of ten persons, being three generations, which, according to my idea, are an old man, his wife, and four sons grown to manhood—one of whom has a wife and four young children. They have a three ox team, harnessed with one for a leader, a covered wagon, and a dog. They have nearly crossed the desert, on the arid plains, of which behind them lie the bleaching bones of cattle and horses, with a wooden cross here and there to denote the resting place of the ashes of some human victim; while at some distance in front loom up the Sierra Nevada mountains, among whose valleys will be found grass and water. But here one of the near cattle gives out, falls in its tracks, and its leaden eye plainly indicates that another sacrifice is being added to the demon of the desert. The various emotions of the parties at this calamity are strongly depicted on each countenance. The young men are nonplussed, and would as soon "live as die." The old man has his wits about him, and at once presents a little water to the dying beast. He is aided by the young man of family, who is remonstrating with one of his brothers for standing still and scratching his head in a perfect stupor. The fourth man is the driver, evidently the youngest of the brothers, who stands with body bent over on one hip, and whip handle brought around across the small of his back, waiting for the others to get the team in readiness. He has done his share in driving, and is ready to do it again, but if the brutes will shie, he can't help it; and if it wasn't for the women and children, he'd "make" for the mountains on foot. The old lady remains in the wagon, with a resigned look of

ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO THE STATE LIBRARIAN, SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

N64 10 39 20M

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Moran - Reedy

Charles Christian Nahl

-2-

anxiety, and preventing the youngest child, which exhibits much glee, from falling out. The young mother has got out, and is looking on with a strong desire to be of assistance, but only succeeds in wringing her hands. The different degrees of intelligence beaming from the countenances of the children, according to their ages, excite the admiration of the beholder. Everything appears taken from nature, and shows the hand of an artist; but the picture is not a laborious piece of work, and should not be approached closely on examination.

From Sacramento Union. Sept. 11, 1858.

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Moran - Reedy

MABEL R. GILLIS
STATE LIBRARIAN

CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY
SACRAMENTO

ELEANOR HITT
ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

Nahl Brothers

Three Pictures--Nahl Brothers exhibit three large pictures (16 by 10 feet), in northeast, northwest and southwest corners of the hall. In northwest corner is a representation of an immigrant scene on the Plains. An immigrant wagon, drawn by three oxen, has just reached the knoll of a small hill, and one of the wheel oxen has "given out." Attempts are being made to revive the poor animal, for the fall of which the driver is evidently receiving reproach from one of the party. In southwest corner is a representation of Sydney in 1851. In northeast corner is a picture of "Saturday Evening in the Mines." There are six persons in the cabin. Through the open door of the cabin the moon is shining, and from the sill a winding stream can be seen. One of the party is engaged in cooking over a large fire; one is already, half-seas over, in the enjoyment of the contents of a bottle, which he clasps in his left hand; one is weighing out the week's or day's "dust"--an operation which is closely watched by two others of the party. The bunk is already occupied by a sleeping member of the company.

From: Sacramento Union. Sept. 16, 1859. 1/4

ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO THE STATE LIBRARIAN, SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

N64 10 39 20M

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Moran - Reedy

MABEL R. GILLIS
STATE LIBRARIAN

CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY
SACRAMENTO

ELEANOR HITT
ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

Charles Christian Nahl

Mr. Quivey has a picture by Nahl, representing him sitting at the foot of a tree, with a revolver and bowie knife in his hands, and a dead panther lying stretched out before him. It was taken from a photograph which was itself taken from nature. The panther was one which Mr. Quivey killed with his revolver, after it had been driven into a tree by his dog. He went up under the tree and killed the brute. The picture is done in Nahl's best style, and would do no discredit to any gallery. Nahl, by the way, is a great artist, notwithstanding the fact that he has painted many bad pictures; in some important respects he has no superior. As a designer of forest and hunting scenes, and allegorical drawings for wood engravings and lithography he is unsurpassed, and as a painter of animals he is excellent. Mr. Quivey has promised to send this picture to the Agricultural Fair of the District.

From S.F. Alta. Aug. 14, 1860. 1/1

ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO THE STATE LIBRARIAN, SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

N64 10 39 20M

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Moran - Reedy

MABEL R. GILLIS
STATE LIBRARIAN

CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY
SACRAMENTO

ELEANOR HITT
ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

Charles Nahl

...One of the most notable historical pictures which has been produced in this city for some time, is just from the easel of Charles Nahl. It is one of a series of three paintings, executed by this artist for Judge Crocker, of Sacramento. The series will give the history of the Rape of the Sabines, the first being The Abduction, the second The Entreaty, and the last The Reconciliation. The picture just finished represents a young Roman warrior carrying off a beautiful young Sabine girl. The warrior is clad in the simple armor, of the era, wears a shining helmet with a waving plume, and grasps a short Roman sword in his right hand. His left arm firmly holds the limbs of the young Sabine woman, who is on his shoulder, agonized and struggling vainly. The young Roman is just mounting a broad step leading to a mansion, apparently, cut off by the limited scope of the design, the attitude is striking and spirited, and though it may appear a trifle strained, is justified by the apparent approach of an enemy, whose shadow artfully projected on the foreground, heralds his approach, unseen by the spectator. The figure of the young Roman is lithe, muscular and exceedingly well drawn. The figure of the girl, however, just veiled in a light floating drapery, shows more conspicuously the artist's thorough study of anatomy and acquaintance with that science. The rounded knee of the girl, as she struggles backward, is remarkably fine drawing, and is most delicately finished in color and foreshortening. The tearful face, the convulsed hands and feet, the dishevelled hair, are all painted with great care and fine effect. In the distance is a confused pile of buildings, partially obscured with smoke and dust with throngs of soldiers, citizens and woman engaged in contest or in flight. The canvas is large, and the artist gives only two figures upon whom the interest of the composition shall concentrate, wisely refraining from crowding the canvas with a confusion of figures. This treatment of the somewhat hackneyed subject is novel, and has the merit of originality. The general effect of the picture is agreeable; it has all of the fine finish and minute attention to detail which characterizes all of the works of this artist. Nothing can excel the truthfulness of his textures and the faces bear the closest examination. The flesh tints are delicate and transparent, and the drawing wonderfully clever, especially when it is considered that artists here have no living models. It is a pity that Mr. Nahl will not sometimes sacrifice something of his exquisite finish to effectiveness. The face of the girl, for instance, in this picture, is painted like a miniature, but loses its expression when viewed at the distance necessary to obtain the best effect of the whole work. The criticism invariably made upon Nahl's paintings by vapid critics is that they are "finical," and, certainly, if there were more vigor with the brush and less polish and pre-Raphaelite minuteness in his work, not much would be left to be desired in the production of this genuine artist. ...

N64 10 39 20M

From: S.F. Alta. Jan. 15, '71. p.1. col. 2.

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Moran - Reedy

MABEL R. GILLIS
STATE LIBRARIAN

CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY

SACRAMENTO

Charles Christian Nahl

ELEANOR HITT
ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

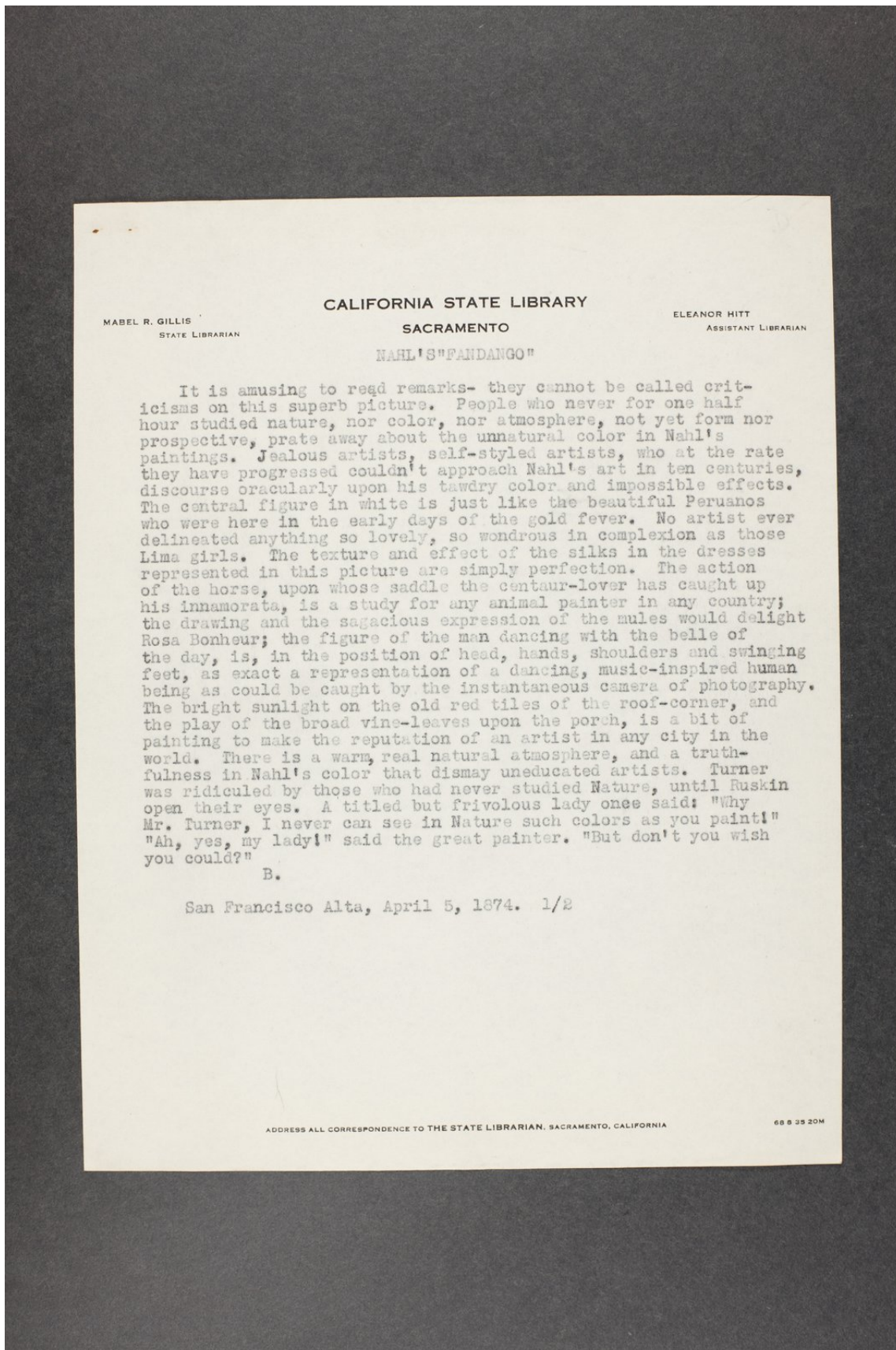
Charles Nahl's picture of California mining life in 1849, six by ten feet in size, was placed in the window of Nile's frame shop, on Kearny street, yesterday afternoon, and created a great sensation, the admiring crowd blocking up the sidewalk in the evening. As a popular attraction, it exceeds any painting ever exhibited in San Francisco. The number of the figures, the variety and vigor of action, the warmth of the coloring, the good arrangement and strength of the light and shade, the multitude of suggestions--even down to the empty porter bottle, sardine can, poison oak and manzanita--the interest of the subject, and the thoroughness of the finish, all fasten the attention at the first glance. If the colors be too high, the attitudes too theatrical, and the expression of the faces too much like grimace in some cases--objections that have been made--still the picture is full of life, vigor and solid and very meritorious work, and, even in its defects, indicates rare artistic ability.

From: S.F. Alta. April 15, 1873. 1/1

ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO THE STATE LIBRARIAN, SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

N64 10 39 20M

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Moran - Reedy



CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY

MABEL R. GILLIS
STATE LIBRARIAN

SACRAMENTO

ELEANOR HITT
ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

NAHL'S "FANDANGO"

It is amusing to read remarks- they cannot be called criticisms on this superb picture. People who never for one half hour studied nature, nor color, nor atmosphere, not yet form nor perspective, prate away about the unnatural color in Nahl's paintings. Jealous artists, self-styled artists, who at the rate they have progressed couldn't approach Nahl's art in ten centuries, discourse oracularly upon his tawdry color and impossible effects. The central figure in white is just like the beautiful Peruanos who were here in the early days of the gold fever. No artist ever delineated anything so lovely, so wondrous in complexion as those Lima girls. The texture and effect of the silks in the dresses represented in this picture are simply perfection. The action of the horse, upon whose saddle the centaur-lover has caught up his innamorata, is a study for any animal painter in any country; the drawing and the sagacious expression of the mules would delight Rosa Bonheur; the figure of the man dancing with the belle of the day, is, in the position of head, hands, shoulders and swinging feet, as exact a representation of a dancing, music-inspired human being as could be caught by the instantaneous camera of photography. The bright sunlight on the old red tiles of the roof-corner, and the play of the broad vine-leaves upon the porch, is a bit of painting to make the reputation of an artist in any city in the world. There is a warm, real natural atmosphere, and a truthfulness in Nahl's color that dismay uneducated artists. Turner was ridiculed by those who had never studied Nature, until Ruskin open their eyes. A titled but frivolous lady once said: "Why Mr. Turner, I never can see in Nature such colors as you paint!" "Ah, yes, my lady!" said the great painter. "But don't you wish you could?"

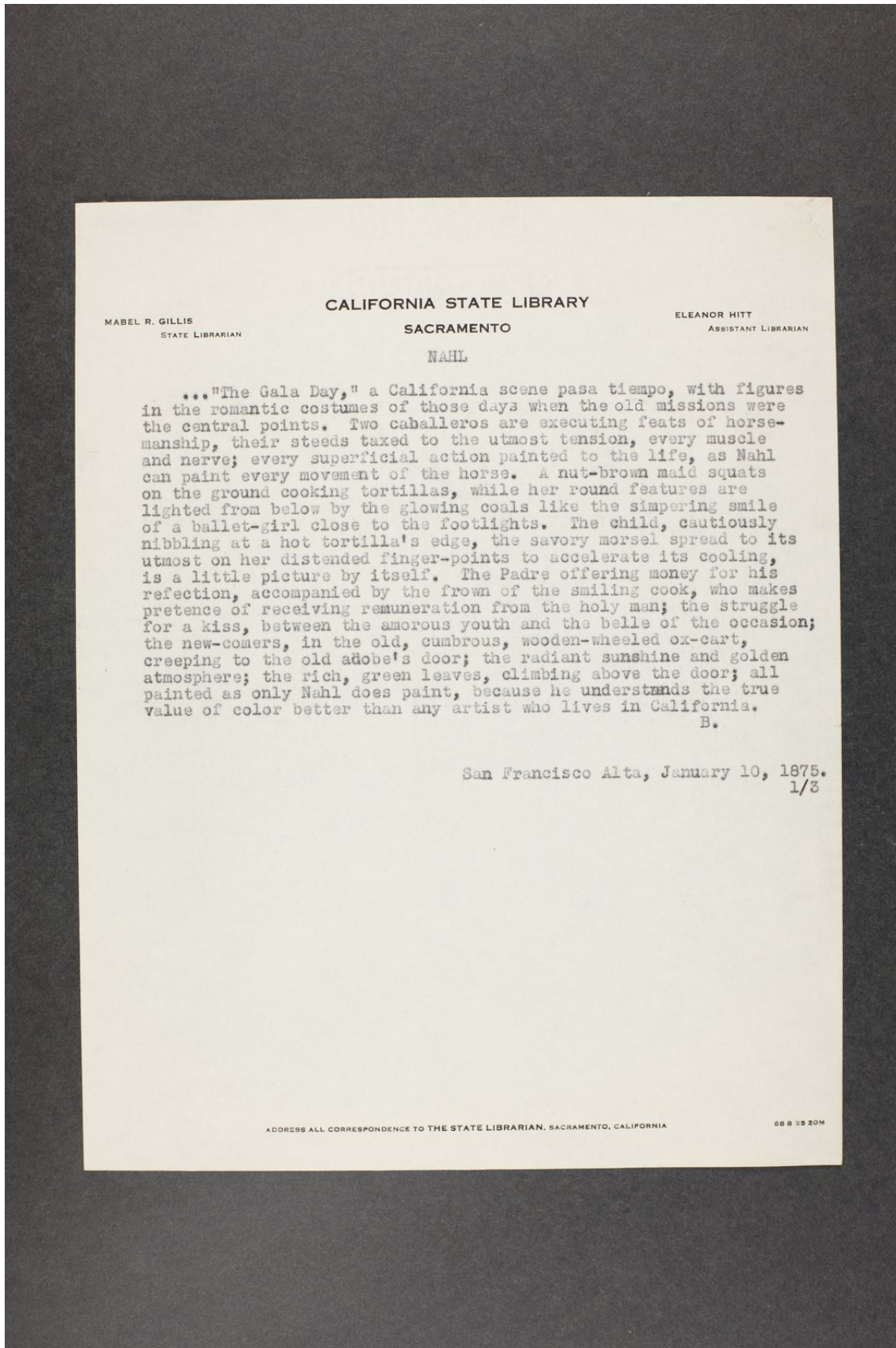
B.

San Francisco Alta, April 5, 1874. 1/2

ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO THE STATE LIBRARIAN, SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

66 8 35 20M

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Moran - Reedy



MABEL R. GILLIS
STATE LIBRARIAN

CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY
SACRAMENTO

ELEANOR HITT
ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

NAHL

..."The Gala Day," a California scene pasa tiempo, with figures in the romantic costumes of those days when the old missions were the central points. Two caballeros are executing feats of horsemanship, their steeds taxed to the utmost tension, every muscle and nerve; every superficial action painted to the life, as Nahl can paint every movement of the horse. A nut-brown maid squats on the ground cooking tortillas, while her round features are lighted from below by the glowing coals like the simpering smile of a ballet-girl close to the footlights. The child, cautiously nibbling at a hot tortilla's edge, the savory morsel spread to its utmost on her distended finger-points to accelerate its cooling, is a little picture by itself. The Padre offering money for his refecton, accompanied by the frown of the smiling cook, who makes pretence of receiving remuneration from the holy man; the struggle for a kiss, between the amorous youth and the belle of the occasion; the new-comers, in the old, cumbrous, wooden-wheeled ox-cart, creeping to the old adobe's door; the radiant sunshine and golden atmosphere; the rich, green leaves, climbing above the door; all painted as only Nahl does paint, because he understands the true value of color better than any artist who lives in California.

B.

San Francisco Alta, January 10, 1875.
1/3

ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO THE STATE LIBRARIAN, SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

66 6 35 204



Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Moran - Reedy

MABEL R. GILLIS
STATE LIBRARIAN

CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY
SACRAMENTO

ELEANOR HITT
ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

Charles Christian Nahl

A New painting, by Nahl, is in the window of a store on Kearny street. The picture is too large for the place where it is exhibited, nor can any just view be obtained by the spectator.

In the foreground is a rude cabin, its jagged eaves shaded by tree-branches spreading above the roof and nodding their leafy shadows on the sunlit wall.

An old miner sits by the threshold, reading the Bible to his younger companions, one of whom has gone, like Eri's first born, to the land of Nod, and sits sleeping in the rejuvenating sunlight. The outstretched limbs and relaxed muscles of the comfortable sleeper are artistically painted. Inside the cabin a man is "writing home." He is fixed up, bathed and trimmed and combed, and attired in the traditional "boiled shirt" of Sunday in '49. Two other miners are engaged in washing and repairing the toil-worn clothing of the by-gone week. Up the ravine, past the cabin, come racing at their utmost speed, on horseback, four or five miners, on a wild, equestrian spree, the excited riders thrashing their neighbors' horses, or their own, as fancy dictates. The nervous, bounding action of the eager horses, urged to their very best, is painted with the power and freedom--the great effect, yet exquisite detail, for which Nahl is famous--a justly earned fame, having studied, dissected and painted the anatomy of the horse for five years in the first schools of Paris.

Further on is the whiskey booth and monte game, the drunken gamblers firing their revolvers and miners dancing in bacchanalian glee, strongly painted to the life of those wild days. Nahl is a superb draughtsman, and uses color for its full value; bringing in close juxtaposition the florid orange and the deep blue. His colors are the most enduring pigments, and we often meditate whether the change of garishness in his color be not from the fact that Nahl paints closer to nature than other painters; that he gives colors their natural, true value, unappreciated by experimental or color-blind eyes.

We are told that this painting is for Judge Crocker, of Sacramento.

From S.F. Alta. April 20, 1875. 1/3

ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO THE STATE LIBRARIAN, SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

N64 10 39 20M

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Moran - Reedy

CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY
SACRAMENTO

MABEL R. GILLIS
STATE LIBRARIAN

ELEANOR HITT
ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

CHARLES NAHL
DEATH OF AN ARTIST.

Charles Nahl, a well-known artist of this city, died yesterday after a brief illness. The brothers Nahl, Charles and Arthur, were natives of Hesse Cassel, and after pursuing art studies some time in Germany, went to Paris for the further advantages which that city affords to all art students. They were in that city during the memorable revolution which resulted in dethroning Louis Phillippe. Soon after the Nahl Brothers, with their mother and sister, removed to New York, where the two artists worked for a time, and sent a number of pictures to the Art Union of that city. In 1851 Charles Nahl, with his brother and other members of the family, came to California. The brothers tried their hands at mining for a time, and finally removed to Sacramento. The great fire in that city soon afterwards made it expedient for them to remove to San Francisco, where the two brothers have ever since worked together as artists. Charles Nahl was a man of genius. Coming here in the early times, he saw little encouragement in the highest walks of art. He chose therefore to paint for such a market as he found. He was among the most conspicuous of the early painters, and his works found a ready sale. He accumulated a moderate fortune by his profession and afterwards seemed to have little ambition to do more. There always seemed to be more in the man than came out on canvas. He was an expert draughtsman, and could turn his hand to any kind of work in that line. His illustrations were always spirited, and often excellent. As a colorist, he had some vagaries. He seemed to have broken away from the school in which he had been educated, and had not the ambition to strike out in any new direction of his own choosing. His appropriate field was that of historical painting, but he did not like it, and was independent enough to turn his hand to anything he liked. Some of his paintings and sketches of mining scenes were probably as good as ever were executed here. Among the best of his works is THE DISCOVERY OF GOLD AT SUTTER'S MILL; a picture intensely realistic, and now of great value as an historical work. This picture is owned by A. Ramon & Co. The two brothers have worked so long together, it is impossible for one not familiar with all their usages, to separate the work of one from the other. If the elder one had confined himself to historical painting, and the younger to cattle painting, both would probably have acquired greater fame. Charles Nahl was a genial warm-hearted man, widely known with his brother in art circles, and greatly esteemed for his many qualities.

From: San Francisco Bulletin, March 2, 1878. 2/1
ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO THE STATE LIBRARIAN, SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

68 35 204