Jack London’s Photographs

A PASSION FOR ORCHIDS

THE JAPANESE GARDEN APPROACHES ITS CENTENNIAL

The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens
FROM THE EDITOR

HEEDING THE CALL

JACK LONDON IS BEST KNOWN FOR WRITING THE CALL OF THE WILD, the story of a domesticated dog from the Santa Clara Valley that ends up leading a sled in the Yukon before ultimately joining a pack of wolves in the wild. In 2008, the book was the focus of The Huntington’s Big Read, a series of programs sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts and organized by Sara S. “Sue” Hodson, curator of literary manuscripts at The Huntington.

While many readers may know that London heeded his own call to adventure, few are likely aware that he took thousands of photographs of those experiences—from documenting war zones and the aftermath of natural disasters to taking candid shots of the working crews of sailing vessels and the inhabitants of the Solomon Islands. Many of those images have been gathered into a new book, Jack London, Photographer, which includes photographs from The Huntington’s own voluminous London archive as well as from the California State Parks, Jack London State Historic Park Collection. In this issue of Huntington Frontiers, Hodson and co-author Jeanne Campbell Reesman explain how London’s insatiable appetite to follow the action is conveyed in the immediacy of his writing and photography (page 16).

Botanist Lance Birk has long felt the pull of nature, although for him the focus has been on the singular quest for orchids. He has trekked through Mexico, Indonesia, China, and the Philippines, developing a specialty in paphiopedilum (or “lady slipper” orchids) along the way. Although international regulations have long restricted the collecting of species from the wild, Birk encourages young enthusiasts such as Brandon Tam to get out into the world to observe orchids in their native habitats. The two are helping to care for 6,000 orchids donated by the family of the late collector and grower S. Robert Wetz (page 11), a gift that will help The Huntington become a center for orchid conservation.

By all accounts, Wetz threw himself into a hobby that became his life’s work, hybridizing countless award-winning orchids. What passes as orchid fever is really no different from Jack London fever. A passion takes hold in a collector who someday becomes a donor. It then spreads to curators, volunteers, interns, and researchers. Appropriately, Jack London, Photographer is dedicated to two people who epitomize the untold ways various vocations often converge around a particular collection. Milo Shepard, who died recently at the age of 84, was the literary executor of the London estate and donated many items to The Huntington over the years. Earle Labor is a scholar who has used the archive for decades and will soon publish a new London biography. “To Milo Shepard and Earle Labor,” the dedication page reads, “for their vision.”

MATT STEVENS
In the Round

CURATOR CATHERINE HESS ON THE HUNTINGTON’S BRONZE COLLECTION

The exhibition “Beauty and Power: Renaissance and Baroque Bronzes from the Peter Marino Collection” is on view in the MaryLou and George Boone Gallery through Jan. 24, 2011. The Huntington is a natural venue for such an exhibition because Henry Huntington was one of the first private collectors of small bronzes in the United States. Hess, the chief curator of European art at The Huntington, describes the institution’s bronze collection and one of its most remarkable works, on permanent display in the Huntington Art Gallery.
How did Henry Huntington start collecting bronzes?
We can thank J. P. Morgan for the high quality of The Huntington’s collection. He began collecting bronzes around 1900, at a time when no one was collecting them in the United States. He was an American, but he kept his collection in London. He had a very astute eye, and he built what was one of the greatest private collections of small bronzes at that time. He decided to have his collection exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum around 1912, so he sent his bronzes to New York. I don’t think he ever intended for them to stay in the United States, but he died suddenly in Rome, and his son decided to sell off the collection. It was acquired by none other than Joseph Duveen, Huntington’s art dealer. Duveen approached Henry Clay Frick and Henry Huntington, both of whom were planning to turn their homes into public museums.

Frick got the first choice, but Huntington ended up with about 20 bronzes, including Giambologna’s *Nessus and Deianira*, which I daresay is one of the most important Renaissance bronzes in the United States.

What makes it so significant?
The thing about bronze casting is that you can make multiple copies of an object. Giambologna would cast several bronzes if a composition became popular, but perhaps his workshop assistants would have a large hand in completing the casting process, so they wouldn’t necessarily be signed by him. There are only three versions of this composition that are signed by Giambologna—on the band around Nessus’ head. The other two are in Paris and Dresden, so this is the only one in the United States.

What’s unique about the composition?
Giambologna developed a style that was a move beyond the Renaissance into the Baroque period, a style called Mannerism—“mannered” meaning somewhat artificial, elegant, and stylish. The whole emphasis was on the stylishness of its figures and composition.

He also developed a very inventive way of showing figures in what is called *figura serpentinata*, or a serpentine figure, which urges the viewer to walk all the way around the sculpture because there is no primary viewpoint. Giambologna often did this with a single figure, but this practice is even more impressive with two, as in *Nessus and Deianira*.

How so?
Even though bronze has great tensile strength, it is an enormous challenge to achieve a balanced composition of not one but two bulky, struggling figures. Also, Nessus’ hefty mass is completely balanced on his two hind legs. There’s great drama here, great movement, which is quite a feat when you are trying to express drama in metal. The story is based on a mythological tale of the centaur Nessus kidnapping Deianira. Deianira is struggling to get away and Nessus’ brow is deeply furrowed while he charges forward.

So why didn’t Frick buy the bronze?
There’s no clear answer. But I think it’s because a year or so before the Morgan bronzes came on the market, Frick acquired a composition of *Nessus and Deianira* in a larger scale, which I believe he thought was by Giambologna. So when he saw the Morgan bronze come up for sale, he figured he already had one. The upshot, however, is that years later scholars learned that Frick’s bronze was not by Giambologna but by one of his students, Pietro Tacca.

How does *Nessus and Deianira* fit into The Huntington’s collection?
It shows a fascinating moment in Mr. Huntington’s early collecting activities. A lot about this place is about collecting and taste and the desires of Henry and Arabella. At the same time we are able to present in a historically coherent...
manner the development of certain chapters in art history. We have 15th-century Flemish and Florentine paintings; then it goes into 16th-century material, and we are soon going to have a 17th-century gallery; and we have a bumper crop of 18th-century material. So I think our visitors not only get to see how the Hunttings collected but at the same time receive an interesting art history lesson—or history lesson in general—about the development of art in Europe from the 15th century onward.

Interview conducted by Matt Stevens, editor of Huntington Frontiers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HENRY TO THE THIRD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

by Stephen H. Grant

While Henry Huntington and Henry Clay Frick were buying up J. P. Morgan’s bronzes, Henry Folger was snapping up duplicate books from Huntington’s own library. Folger specialized in Shakespeare. Huntington displayed a wider palette; he also enjoyed deeper pockets. Huntington bought around 200 entire libraries, resulting in numerous duplicate editions. While Folger gave his spare Elizabethan books to family, friends, students, and college libraries, Huntington traded up by taking his duplicates to the auction house. From 1916 to 1925, he sold more than 8,000 of them at Anderson Galleries in New York, bringing in more than $550,000. Folger obtained from the lot more than 100 volumes printed before 1700. One man’s castoffs became another man’s treasures.

In the Huntington and Folger libraries, I examined Shakespeare quarto plays, the ones Henry H. kept and the others he sold that Henry F. acquired: *Romeo and Juliet* (1599), *Henry the Fourth* (1599), *Pericles* (1609), *Titus Andronicus* (1611), and *Hamlet* (1611). How were they different? The Huntington’s copies were all pristine. The Folger’s contained what many collectors at the time considered objectionable imperfections: writing on flyleaves, a title page in facsimile, a title page inlaid and mounted, pages torn and repaired, leaves unbound. In Henry Folger’s neat clerk’s hand appears a description from his card catalog, “a few headlines shaved.”

When Huntington reached his goal of obtaining a flawless book, he shed his imperfect copy. Folger did not require a perfect copy; he was more concerned with stretching his dollars. Ahead of his times, Folger believed that scholars would recognize the usefulness of textual variants, as indeed they do. Contemplating the departed volumes, Stephen Tabor, Huntington curator of early printed books, commented wistfully, “We wish we still had them.”

Stephen H. Grant is an independent scholar currently working on a biography of Henry and Emily Folger, founders of the Folger Shakespeare Library. His numerous articles on the Folgers appear on www.stephenhgrant.com.

Henry Folger, 1910. Photo courtesy of Stephen H. Grant.
THE CALIFORNIA FLORISTIC PROVINCE is a climate zone stretching from southern Oregon to Baja California, venturing inland all the way to the Nevada side of Lake Tahoe before narrowing as it drops south of the U.S.-Mexico border. Conservation International has dubbed it one of the world’s biodiversity hotspots because of its high concentration of endemic plants—approximately 2,000 species are unique to the region and are not found anywhere else in the world.

A subspecies of the California quail, Callipepla californica plumbea, does not pay attention to state borders but is well aware of the boundaries set by climate and geography, especially as the province gives way to a transitional desert zone around the 30th parallel, near the city of San Quintín, Mexico. That’s where the quail makes its home—“where the chaparral meets the desert,” according to botanist Sula Vanderplank. She has led five field trips this year to document the quail’s habitat in Baja California. While some studies have focused on quail in central California, little has been documented of the species or its habitat south of the border.

Vanderplank, the herbarium administrative curator at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, is collaborating with The Huntington in a project that transcends boundaries. She, along with staff members from The Huntington, worked informally with quail biologists from the Universidad Autónoma de Baja California and the Centro de Investigación Científica y de Educación Superior in Ensenada, Baja California.

“This project is a nice way of bridging disciplines,” says Vanderplank, who explains that botanists and ornithologists don’t always cross paths in the field. “We’re looking more holistically at habitat and ecosystems.”

In the process, she and her team—which included conservation specialist Sean Lahmeyer and plant propagator Karen Zimmerman from The Huntington—came across the plant Anemone tuberosa, the only known occurrence west of the group of mountains called the Peninsular Ranges of Baja California. Vanderplank and Lahmeyer hope to soon describe their findings in Madroño, the journal of the California Botanical Society.

The guide Quail-Friendly Plants of Baja California will include around 100 species and will be published in 2011 as part of the Rancho Santa Ana’s Aliso “Occasional Publications” series. –MS
IN THE JAPANESE TEA CEREMONY, EVEN THE smallest movements have a purpose that collectively brings greater meaning to the whole. From the selection of the utensils and the decor to the eventual serving of tea, the ritual is not so much a series of steps but rather an integration of actions that come from the heart. The “Way of Tea” also encourages participants to be in the moment of a life filled with impermanence, *ichi-go ichi-e*—translated loosely as “one time, one meaning.”

Thanks to careful planning and a little serendipity, The Huntington is integrating a new tea garden and teahouse into the existing nine-acre Japanese Garden, which will soon celebrate its centennial. The addition is part of a larger project that also will include upgrades to the garden and pond infrastructure, development of additional pathways for increased accessibility, and some pruning of dense foliage to create new views throughout the garden. The new tea garden, itself about a half-acre, will occupy a pre-
viously undeveloped area on the plateau southwest of a Japanese house that was the focal point of the garden built by Henry Huntington and his superintendent, William Hertrich. That historic house, which is a residence rather than a teahouse, also has been the focus of renovation efforts by a number of architects and designers, including Long Beach architect Kelly Sutherlin McLeod.

Thanks to careful planning and a little serendipity, The Huntington is integrating a new tea garden and teahouse into the nine-acre Japanese Garden.

Jim Folsom, the Telleen/Jørgensen Director of the Botanical Gardens, has assembled an international project team, including a pair of residents from Kyoto—the respected landscape architect Takuhiro Yamada and architect and craftsman Yoshiaki Nakamura. Landscape architect Takeo Uesugi, a retired professor from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, is overseeing design plans for expansion of the Japanese Garden, including the new tea garden.

One hundred years ago Hertrich reconstructed a Japanese house that Huntington had purchased from a shop run by George Turner Marsh at the corner of California Boulevard and Fair Oaks Avenue in Pasadena. Coincidentally, as Yamada and Nakamura discussed plans for the new tea garden, attention turned to the donation of a teahouse that graced the grounds of the Pasadena Buddhist Church, a mere seven miles from The Huntington.

““The Huntington is very lucky to have the best architect and landscape architect in Kyoto,” said Uesugi, referring respectfully to the pair from Kyoto and drawing attention away from his own acclaim as a designer of many Japanese gardens in the United States. Yet another member of the team is Takeo’s son, Keiji Uesugi, himself a well-regarded landscape architect and professor at Cal Poly Pomona. “I believe that there was some force behind how we all came together,” the elder Uesugi concluded.

Nakamura said he was pulled toward the project by The Huntington’s earnestness and desire to integrate a teahouse and tea garden into a landscape that has already been established for nearly a century. In 2006, a fully equipped Urasenke teahouse was donated to The Huntington by Pepperdine University, but the project team deemed it too fragile to be placed outside on permanent display. The later offer from the Pasadena Buddhist Church was welcome, but research was required before positioning the structure in the landscape and designing the surrounding garden. Nakamura’s late father, Shoshei, was a legendary master

Opposite: The teahouse, called the Arbor of Pure Breeze, is a gift of the Pasadena Buddhist Church. Right: A few of the 500-plus tea accessories donated by Pepperdine University in 2006. Photos by Andrew Mitchell.

THE URASENKE SCHOOL

While the ritual that promotes harmony (wa), respect (kei), purity (sei), and tranquility (jaku) dates back to the 12th century, the tea ceremony was popularized and formalized by Sen Rikyu in the late 1500s. His influence spawned three main schools: the Omotesenke, the Mushakojisenke, and the Urasenke. The Urasenke school takes a more naturalized approach in everything from the teahouse itself to the use of an untreated bamboo whisk to stir the tea for a lengthy period. Landscape architect Takuhiro Yamada and architect and craftsman Yoshiaki Nakamura are residents of Kyoto and members of Urasenke International, the best-known organization dedicated to promoting the Japanese cultural tradition of tea ceremonies.

The Japanese Garden project is being funded in part by a $2.6 million endowment from the late longtime Huntington supporter Mary B. Taylor Hunt, and from a series of new major gifts. The Japanese Garden will close in early 2011 and will reopen in early 2012.
carpenter who created the Nakamura Sotoji Komuten construction company in Kyoto. The son now manages a firm that has 30 carpenters and six architects who have built more than 200 teahouses in Japan and abroad. Despite this global reputation, even Nakamura was surprised by something that occurred when he visited the teahouse, called the Arbor of Pure Breeze. On close inspection of the building that had stood on the church grounds since 1964, Nakamura discovered it had been crafted by his family’s company.

“I was convinced that this is not something I just wanted to do, but had to do,” Nakamura said.

Yet despite the familiarity, there was something slightly different in the building. “There was a feeling it was our work, a column or something, but there was also a different feeling,” Nakamura said.

Curious, he returned to Kyoto to investigate. After further research, Nakamura confirmed that the elements of the structure had been produced by his family, but he concluded that local Japanese carpenters had assembled the materials after they arrived in the United States. From this, Nakamura fully realized that this fortuitous melding of all the elements big and small—whether it was the formation of the international team, the donation of the teahouse, or even the timing of putting all the components together—had a meaning that was much deeper, and longer lasting, than he had originally expected.

“I was convinced that this is not something I just wanted to do, but had to do,” Nakamura said.

That is why, on a humid late September day, as the sound of saws and hammers filled the air just outside the Pasadena Buddhist Church, the project’s first step of dismantling the house was in full swing with the craftsman perspiring happily amid it all.

Taking a break from the painstaking method of hand-washing the pieces of wood and stacking them into small, neat piles, he excitedly related step by step the process of packing the parts up, shipping them back to Kyoto for refurbishing, and then sending them to The Huntington next spring, when Nakamura will oversee the structure’s reconstruction in the new tea garden. This meticulousness was important because each action, no matter how small or repetitive, collectively had great meaning toward the larger goal.

“That attention is what The Huntington expects from us and what we expect from ourselves,” Nakamura said, “because, moment by moment, we must concentrate on building a structure that is worthy of its place.”

Mike Takeuchi is a freelance writer based in Santa Barbara.
On a warm October morning Lance Birk and Brandon Tam are busy pollinating orchids in a humid Huntington greenhouse filled with 6,000 specimens of eye-popping color and beauty. Bearing a toothpick, the 17-year-old Tam gingerly extracts pollen—far smaller than a grain of rice—from the column of one *Paphiopedilum rothschildianum* and carefully inserts it into that of another. The veteran orchid enthusiast Birk instructs Tam on how best to spread the sticky pollen under the plant’s stigmatic plate.

“We’re making a sibling cross between these two randomly selected plants of the same species,” explains Birk. “With the seeds produced, we’ll grow about 50 plants.” Then, by comparing the offspring against one another, they can study the genetic diversity and variations of that particular species to understand its full and natural expression.

Thanks to the single-minded passion of a former stockbroker from Santa Barbara who spent decades amassing one of the world’s great orchid collections, The Huntington is on course to becoming an important center for orchid conservation. The late S. Robert Weltz, whose daughters donated his entire orchid collection to The Huntington after he died last spring, is also the inadvertent creator of an unlikely partnership; it pairs an orchid expert who has traveled the world searching for rare species with a bright and focused teenager who came to The Huntington as a volunteer and stayed as an intern.

Birk’s interest in orchids dates back to 1962, when he began trekking through Mexico, Indonesia, China, and the Philippines to uncover elusive species. He developed a specialty in paphiopedilums (commonly known as lady slipper orchids). At his home in Santa Barbara he built his own orchid collection, which he eventually
While Birk and Tam come from different worlds, they are bound by that inexplicable orchid fever.

For Birk, it was a *Lalia anceps* that his best friend’s father had planted on a tree. “I was 24, and they dazzled me. Orchids were something none of my friends knew anything about, and that intrigued me.”

For Tam, it was a cymbidium he spotted in his grandmother’s garden. “One day when I was eight, I came across this plant that I thought was so ugly, and I completely ignored it,” he says. “When it bloomed, I realized it was an orchid. The flower lasted about two months, and I was fascinated.”

Tam already had one foot firmly planted in horticulture, gardening regularly with his grandmother. “She came over from Hong Kong and owned a liquor store,” Tam says. “She was always busy, but she made it a priority to garden with me every Sunday after church. She was the one who introduced me to the world of orchids.”

As Tam continues to pollinate, Birk, craggy and suntanned, assesses a table of phalaenopsis orchids and shouts out orders. “This plant is too dry—feel the leaves. We need to water this a couple times a week.”

Tam nods, calmly absorbing Birk’s every word, which range from intricate descriptions of plant anatomy to tales of falling off a cliff in the Philippines and plunging into a river while trying to reach an orchid. The endless hours of work the two share are filled with easy banter as Birk divulges his vast knowledge.

“This boy is a sponge,” laughs Birk. “Everything I teach him he learns.”

Days are also spent repotting plants, documenting and cataloging the collection, and setting up a lab space inside the Botanical Center where they can conduct further research. The two work in tandem with Dylan Hannon, The Huntington’s curator of conservatory and tropical collections and custodian of the preexisting collection of orchids here. While Hannon specializes in the pure species, Tam and Birk are lending a hand to sorting through the hybrids in the Weltz collection.
Perhaps The Huntington’s orchid collection will forever be referred to as “Before Weltz” and “After Weltz.” Boasting beautiful and rare natural species as well as rare and unusual hybrids, the Weltz collection elicits such superlatives as “world’s best” and “one of a kind.” A great many of his plants have won top awards.

“Bob would get there first, and he paid the most and sought out the best,” says Birk. “His desire was for award-quality hybrids.” Indeed, Weltz spent countless hours in his greenhouse creating strange and even bizarre hybrids. His cross of a *Paphiopedilum rothschildianum* with a *Paphiopedilum armeniacum* produced the difficult-to-obtain *Paphiopedilum dollgoldi* ‘Laurie Susan Weltz,’ earning him a perfect 100-point First Class Certificate from the American Orchid Society. He even set up his office in his greenhouse, bringing in his Bloomberg machine, a computer system that helps to analyze the financial markets, so he’d never have to leave his plants. By all accounts, he was completely impassioned, driven by the desire to produce hybrids, a process that can require cross-pollinating thousands of plants to eventually create one significant specimen.

Before Weltz, The Huntington’s orchid holdings were scattered, “a smattering of some nice species,” says Folsom, explaining that they consisted of about 2,000 species and hybrids. “We had breadth but not depth, some great plants but nothing noteworthy. The Weltz collection is composed of spectacular species. It concentrates on slipper orchids and unusual hybrids, so overnight we have a notable, core collection.”

What The Huntington didn’t have in its collection, it made up for by cultivating an orchid culture that would support receiving this gift and an interest in orchids that stretched all the way back to Arabella Huntington, who loved and collected them. In fact, the Huntingtons’ San Marino estate was the first place in Southern California where cymbidiums were grown outside as landscape plants. But after Henry Huntington died in 1927 and following the stock market crash two years later, personnel managing the property needed to cut expenses. The gardens were trimmed back and the orchid collection sold.

But orchids found their way back in a variety of ways. They came through the knowledge of Folsom, who focused on orchid-related field taxonomy and evolutionary biology as a graduate student in botany, and through the long association with *Orchid Digest* magazine. The publication maintains its editorial offices in the Botanical Center, and Folsom is a member of its publication committee. In 2002, The Huntington received an endowment from the late orchid enthusiast David Nax that provides ongoing funds to support the orchid collection by perpetuating their cultivation, display, interpretation, and study here. More recently, Geneva and Charles Thornton made a promised gift of their San Marino home and garden, which includes a conservatory that will soon house 2,000 specimens from The Huntington’s orchid collection. And orchids also arrive every fall with great fanfare for the annual Southland Orchid Show, hosted by The Huntington.
in the Botanical Center and in The Rose Hills Foundation Conservatory for Botanical Science.

For these reasons, a cadre of orchid experts regularly congregate at The Huntington: Harold Koopowitz and Ernest Hetherington, who both serve on the board of *Orchid Digest*, are often found in the gardens or Botanical Center, just as scholars are found in the Library. Koopowitz is professor emeritus of ecology at the University of California, Irvine, and a *Paphiopedilum* expert who has traveled extensively to study orchids in the wild and to serve as an advocate for their conservation. He is the author of several books on horticulture and conservation. Folsom describes Hetherington as a guiding light for The Huntington for 20 years. “He’s one of the great orchid legends of the world, not just of Southern California,” says Folsom. “He ran Stewart Orchids for decades and has written extensively. He nurtured *Orchid Digest* and nurtured the connection with The Huntington. He’s a patriarch of the whole business.”

In fact, Hetherington served as a mentor to Folsom. “In the plant world, that is the way it happens,” says Folsom. “You’re really fortunate if you hook in to someone that has the same passions.” Coincidentally, Birk also served as a mentor to Dylan Hannon, the curator of conservatory and tropical collections at The Huntington. “He first knocked on my greenhouse door at the age of 13, asking for a job,” Birk recalls. Folsom now says of Hannon, “There is no better grower than Hannon—and he is more current on orchid identification than any of us.”

Tam appears lucky enough to have two mentors, Folsom and Birk. Folsom mentors Tam in the scientific realm by providing a rounded sense of plant botany whereas Birk focuses mostly on the pure horticulture of growing plants.

Today as Birk and Tam assess the vast stretch of orchids jammed on tables, the mentor encourages his charge to get out of the greenhouse, to the far corners of the world—Borneo, Thailand, Vietnam, China, or Laos—to see orchids in their natural habitats. Tam is clearly savoring the excitement of his own early adventures scouting wild species. “The best way for Brandon to learn about orchids is to get out there and see where they are from, and how they survive in the wild,” he says.

Tam laughs. In his young life he’s so far traveled to Canada and Hawaii. Trekking through a jungle in Laos searching for wild orchids must seem like a faraway dream. But working with a world-class orchid collection at The Huntington is also a dream come true.

*Traude Gomez Rhine is a freelance writer based in Pasadena. In the Fall/Winter 2009 issue of Huntington Frontiers she wrote about the Tissue Culture Lab at The Huntington.*
More than 25,000 different species of orchids are believed to exist in the wild, making it the largest family of plants on earth. Though often associated with the tropics, where they tend to grow on the trunks or branches of trees, orchids appear in many climates, including cooler regions in North America. In fact, orchids can be found everywhere but the Arctic and the Antarctic. Orchids are also slow to grow, taking years to bloom, thus requiring delayed gratification from collectors. Indeed, the pollination that Birk and Tam are beginning now won’t yield a flower for at least five years.

Regarded as exotic, mysterious, complicated, seductive, and temperamental, orchids seem to stand alone in their capacity to capture collectors’ attention and stir their passions. They have inspired such artists as Georgia O’Keeffe to hail their beauty in paintings, and writers such as Susan Orlean, who explored their allure in her popular book The Orchid Thief. Eric Hansen’s book Orchid Fever details the lunacy and fervor of many of the world’s less-known orchidists, including Robert Weltz.

It wasn’t that long ago that orchids were hunted and collected in almost every part of the world by people fixated on their often-garish colors or fascinated with categorizing orchids and figuring out their pedigrees and unique pollination systems. These days collecting from the wild has become virtually impossible because of regulations imposed by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). All wild orchid species are categorized as endangered, but some specimens can be collected with proper CITES permits, particularly for research purposes; CITES also allows for an exchange of wild-collected species between research institutions for scientific study. Collecting without proper permits, however, can result in fines and even incarceration.

But it’s not collecting that threatens orchids in the wild so much as the destruction of their habitats, which often results in the loss of their pollination system as well. “When an orchid exists only on five mountain tops,” says Folsom, “and it depends on an insect that itself might exist only on those five mountain tops, we risk losing the orchid forever if we start fracturing and changing the habitat.”

It’s Folsom’s vision that over time The Huntington will become a major player in orchid conservation, doing so, in part, by organizing a consortium of gardens that will collaborate on conserving as many kinds of orchids as they can. After reproducing rare orchid species here, The Huntington can send the extra plants to other institutions for study as well as for safekeeping and further reproduction of pure species.

“Orchids are a highly imperiled group, and a lot of gardens need to coordinate and maintain collections,” says Folsom. “We can grow orchids here pretty well, but one garden cannot manage the full range of biodiversity across orchids. Still, it’s important to do all that we can, because these are phenomenal examples of evolution that would otherwise be lost.”
WRITING IN
The Huntington is home to the largest archive of Jack London materials in the world, spanning some 50,000 items and following the great California writer from Alaska to Hawaii to Asia and beyond. London may be known best for his iconic novel, *The Call of the Wild*, but, in fact, he had a colorful stint as a photojournalist, chronicling current events at the turn of the 20th century. A new book examines London’s eye for adventure and reproduces, for the first time, his remarkable photographs of key moments in history. It showcases photos from The Huntington and the California State Parks, Jack London State Historic Park Collection.
hen new war correspondent Jack London arrived in Moji, Japan, to cover the Russo-Japanese War for the Hearst newspapers, he was arrested by military police. The Japanese authorities suspected London of being a Russian spy. But, as he relates in one of his earliest newspaper dispatches in February 1904, “How Jack London Got in and out of Jail in Japan,” a Japanese journalist succeeded in securing the return of his camera.

London recalls his meeting with a reporter for the Osaka Asahi Shim bun: “I could have thrown my arms around him then and there—not for the camera, but for brotherhood, as he himself expressed it the next moment, because we were brothers in craft. Then we had tea together and talked over the prospects of war.”

London (1876–1916) went on to cover the war in Korea as one of the first and only correspondents to reach the front lines, though he was repeatedly arrested and returned to Seoul. (The land battles of the war were fought mainly in Korea and Manchuria.) He sent regular dispatches on battles largely unseen by anyone but the participants, and he made dramatic photographs, mostly behind the lines. These images and accounts, along with his few actual battle photographs, ran across the front pages of the San Francisco Examiner and in syndicated papers worldwide. London’s hundreds of photographs capturing military scenes and the daily lives of Korean refugees and Japanese foot soldiers form an extraordinary record of what he called the “human documents” of the war. This period of his development as a photographer coincided with his first worldwide acclaim as a writer, especially for his novels The Call of the Wild (1903) and The Sea-Wolf (1904).

The term photographie, coined by French explorer Hércules Florence, means “writing in light.” As a writer who was also a practicing photographer, London was not unique, though few so excelled in both roles. Artists contemporary with London who were interested in both photography and literature included the writers Henry James, William Dean Howells, and Stephen Crane as well as the photographers Edward Steichen, Walker Evans, and Alfred Stieglitz.

Of course, London was not primarily a photographer who had adventures but rather an adventurer and writer who...
made photographs. Yet he thought of himself as a professional: he expected to sell his photographic output just as he did his writing. The subject matter—the English poor, Korean refugees, Japanese soldiers, tent cities in the aftermath of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, prisoners of war in Veracruz, a sailing crew rounding the Horn, fieldworkers in Hawaii, and the disappearing societies of the Marquesas and other South Seas islands—also makes his photographs of value to military historians, cultural geographers, and anthropologists.

The sense of realism—"writing in light"—that pervades London's fiction also informs his photography. His writings have been described as both realistic and romantic, but most often they are termed naturalistic. Influenced by the ideas of Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, and Charles Darwin, and using the techniques of the French novelist Émile Zola, American naturalistic writers such as London, Stephen Crane, Frank Norris, and Theodore Dreiser depicted the lives of the poor as struggles against the pitiless and illimitable forces of biology and society. Though many of their protagonists are heroic, they are not usually able to overcome the forces arrayed against them. These writers employed a documentary, photographic use of detail that contrasted strongly with the leisurely accumulation of details in realist novels.

In his photographs as in his fiction, London most often sought to capture the common emotional life of his subjects. Even in his photographs of the many buildings destroyed by the San Francisco earthquake, his compositions evoke the human toll of the cataclysm, sometimes by contrasting the size of human subjects with the massive ruins around them. London sought to depict the potential for human drama. He was drawn to any subject—even a ruined city hall that would later be rebuilt—that indicated something of the struggle to survive.

Jeanne Campbell Reesman and Sara S. Hodson, together with Philip Adam, are the co-authors of Jack London, Photographer, published by the University of Georgia Press. This article has been adapted from the book, with permission of the publisher. Reesman is the Ashbel Smith Professor of English at the University of Texas at San Antonio; Hodson is the curator of literary manuscripts at The Huntington.
“And I thought of my own spacious West, with room under its sky and unlimited air for a thousand Londons; and here was this man, a steady and reliable man, never missing a night’s work, frugal and honest, lodging in one room with two other men, paying two dollars and a half per month for it, and out of his experience adjudging it to be the best he could do! And here was I, on the strength of the ten shillings in my pocket, able to enter in with my rags and take up my bed with him. The human soul is a lonely thing, but it must be very lonely sometimes when there are three beds to a room, and casuals with ten shillings are admitted.”

From The People of the Abyss

“At 10 o’clock the Japanese battery on the right fired the first gun. Following the report was a sound as of the violent ripping of a vast sheet of cloth, as the shell tore through the atmosphere and sighed away in the distance. Two miles away, across the river and to the right of Tiger Hill, there was a bright flash, a puff of smoke and a dust-cloud rose where the flying shrapnel tore the earth.”

From “Give Battle to Retard Enemy,” Antung [Manchuria], in *Jack London Reports*
City Hall ruins from City Hall Avenue near Larkin Street, San Francisco, 1906. The rails and ties in the foreground were placed on top of the pavement for debris removal. California State Parks.

“An hour later I was creeping past the shattered dome of the City Hall. Than it there was no better exhibit of the destructive force of the earthquake. Most of the stone had been shaken from the great dome, leaving standing the naked framework of steel. Market Street was piled high with the wreckage, and across the wreckage lay the overturned pillars of the City Hall shattered into short cross-wire sections.”

From “The Story of an Eye-Witness,” in Jack London Reports
"Some of the King’s Household," Samoa, 1908. California State Parks.
"Day had come, and the sun should have been up an hour, yet the best it could produce was a somber semi-twilight. The ocean was a stately procession of moving mountains. A third of a mile across yawned the valleys between the great waves. Their long slopes, shielded somewhat from the full fury of the wind, were broken by systems of smaller whitecapping waves, but from the high crests of the big waves themselves the wind tore the whitecaps in the forming. This spume drove masthead high, and higher, horizontally, above the surface of the sea."

From “A Little Account with Swithin Hall”
Three Constitutional officers, Veracruz, Mexico, 1914. Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens.
A sampling of books based on research in the collections

**Out of Sorts: On Typography and Print Culture**  
Joseph A. Dane  
*University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010*

In *Out of Sorts*, Joseph A. Dane looks closely at books—specifically their typography. He explores how descriptions of typesetting devices from the 17th and 18th centuries have been projected back onto the 15th, making the earlier period not more accessible but less. In other chapters, he considers the modern mythologies of so-called gothic typefaces, the assumptions that underlie the electronic editions of a medieval poem, and the visual representation of typographical history in 19th-century studies of the subject.

**A Companion to Los Angeles**  
Edited by William Deverell and Greg Hise  
*Wiley-Blackwell, 2010*

*A Companion to Los Angeles* contains 25 original essays by writers and scholars who cover the complex history of the city through a range of disciplines, including history, political science, cultural studies, and geography. Essays cover demography, social unrest, politics, popular culture, architecture, and urban studies. Many of the writers featured in the volume, including editors William Deverell and Greg Hise, made and continue to make frequent use of The Huntington’s archives in their research.

**The Skull Collectors: Race, Science, and America’s Unburied Dead**  
Ann Fabian  
*University of Chicago Press, 2010*

By the time he died in 1851, Philadelphia naturalist Samuel George Morton had collected hundreds of skulls over the course of a long career. With *The Skull Collectors*, historian Ann Fabian tells the strange—and at times gruesome—story of Morton, his contemporaries, and their search for a scientific foundation for racial difference. Fabian also traces the continuing implications of this history, from lingering traces of scientific racism to debates over the return of the remains of Native Americans that are held by museums to this day.

**Images of the Pacific Rim**

The cover illustration of *Images of the Pacific Rim: Australia and California, 1850–1935* is from a popular tourist poster that promoted the Australian city of Canberra in the early 1930s. Author Erika Esau pinpoints her decision to write the book to the moment she looked at that image side by side with an item from the Jay T. Last lithography collection at The Huntington—one of thousands of citrus-box labels of the early 20th century that, in her words, “established the most enduring iconography of California: a perpetually sunny place, fertile and lush, often including a romanticized vision of the state’s Hispanic past.”

From pondering this shared iconography of red-roofed houses set amid orchards with mountain backdrops, Esau went on to explore the numerous aesthetic connections between the two Pacific Rim regions, including those found in photography, graphic art, architecture, and even depictions of eucalyptus trees.

The book, published in Australia by Power Publications in 2010, will be distributed by the University of Washington Press beginning in January.
THE SPINELESS CACTUS CRAZE

Luscious oranges, plump strawberries, and spineless cactus plants. Come again? It might sound odd today, but 100 years ago a hybridized Opuntia cactus was all the rage as an edible commodity in Southern California. But the new plant was not for feeding the masses of newly arriving Angelenos but for fattening the region’s livestock.

Historian Jane S. Smith first wrote about “plant evoluter” Luther Burbank in The Garden of Invention: Luther Burbank and the Business of Breeding Plants, a book published in the spring of 2009, just before she arrived at The Huntington for a one-year research residency. The spineless cactus was one of 800 plants hybridized by the Santa Rosa breeder whose fame rivaled that of Edison and Ford.

In a new article published in the journal California History—“Luther Burbank’s Spineless Cactus: Boom Times in the California Desert”—Smith expands on the story of the spineless cactus craze, including the role it played in creating a real estate bubble in schemes such as Oro Loma, the Spineless Cactus Land of San Joaquin Valley.

ALTA CALIFORNIA: PEOPLES IN MOTION, IDENTITIES IN FORMATION, 1769–1850
Edited by Steven W. Hackel
Huntington Library Press and the University of California Press, 2010

Alta California is based on a conference held at The Huntington in 2006 that drew well over 200 attendees. Like the conference, the book throws light on the tumultuous era before statehood and on the issues of identity that played out among Indians, missionaries, soldiers, and Spanish and Mexican settlers. The book is the second in a new series called Western Histories, published by The Huntington in collaboration with University of California Press and closely linked to the Huntington-USC Institute on California and the West, directed by William D deverell.

THE WOMEN JEFFERSON LOVED
Virginia Scharff
Harper Collins, 2010

In The Women Jefferson Loved, Scharff creates a nuanced portrait of the preeminent founding father, examining Jefferson through the eyes of the women who were closest to him, from his mother, Jane Randolph, and his wife, Martha, to his mistress, Sally Hemings, and his daughters and granddaughters. “Their lives, their Revolutions, their vulnerabilities, shaped the choices Jefferson made,” Scharff writes, “from the selection of words and ideas in his Declaration, to the endless building of his mountaintop mansion, to the vision of a great agrarian nation that powered his Louisiana Purchase.”

Local Interest

WILD UNREST: CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN AND THE MAKING OF “THE YELLOW WALL-PAPER”
Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz
Oxford University Press, 2010

Charlotte Perkins Gilman wrote her famous story “The Yellow Wall-Paper” in Pasadena in June 1890. At last, fully separated from her husband, who had returned to Rhode Island, she could confront her own demons. In Wild Unrest, historian Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz draws connections between Gilman’s own life and the narrator of her story—a woman who descends into madness. Gilman had faced her own depressive episodes since adolescence, and with the arrival of marriage and motherhood, they deepened. In 1887 she suffered a severe breakdown and sought the “rest cure” of famed neurologist S. Weir Mitchell. Gilman’s move to Pasadena followed, one that Horowitz researched at The Huntington. She argues that Gilman’s great story emerged more from emotions rooted in the confinement and tensions of her unhappy marriage than from distress following Mitchell’s rest cure.

Helen Lefkowitz on iTunes U

Go to itunes.huntington.org to listen to the author speak about her book.
High-Class Treatments
TWO PAINTINGS RETURN TO THE THORNTON PORTRAIT GALLERY

If you imagine the 18th-century English gentry were high-maintenance, consider the long-term care of their portraits. In the Fall/Winter 2009 issue, Huntington Frontiers profiled retired Getty paintings conservator Mark Leonard and his decades of attention to Huntington masterpieces, including some of the British Grand Manner portraits in the Thornton Portrait Gallery. Leonard’s colleague Tiarna Doherty has since turned her attention to two more of the works in that room: George Romney’s paintings of Jeremiah and Rose (Gardiner) Milles. At the time of the paintings, Jeremiah, though under 30, was already a successful academic, but he was about to improve his fortunes dramatically with his marriage to Rose, who had recently inherited a significant fortune. The paintings have just returned to The Huntington after a varnish removal, which is actually much more complex than it sounds.

Doherty doesn’t really remove the varnish, but, over a period of months, she works to remove dirt layers and gently thin the varnish with an expert mix of solvents. She also makes sure to keep a thin layer of the original varnish intact to retain the paint’s rich colors without risking damage to the artist’s original strokes. Now Jeremiah’s gold suit is alive with luxurious sheen and Rose’s classical robes are white—not yellowed.

Doherty also X-rayed the portraits in the Getty’s labs and found that a country house had once been included in the background of each painting, where now are only vague grassy hills and trees, and that Mr. Milles’ legs were originally uncrossed, but later were changed so that they mirror his bride’s. ~

Thea Page is arts writer and special projects manager in the communications office at The Huntington.

George Romney (British, 1734–1802), Jeremiah Milles and Rose (Gardiner) Milles, 1780–83, oil on canvas.
On the Cover

Jack London (1876–1916) was a prolific writer—of novels, short stories, essays, and political tracts. He was also an international journalist, reporting on the San Francisco earthquake of 1906, the homeless of London’s East End, the Russo-Japanese War (front cover), and the cruise of the Snark (left), among other assignments. Few of his readers today know that he was an accomplished photographer as well, producing nearly 12,000 photographs during his lifetime. In an excerpt from Jack London, Photographer, Jeanne Campbell Reesman and Sara S. Hodson highlight some of the more than 200 photos that appear in their new book, which includes images from The Huntington as well as from the California State Parks, Jack London State Historic Park Collection.