Author Lecture Series gets underway Sept. 23

Kim Bancroft, the great-great-granddaughter of legendary 19th century California historian Hubert Howe Bancroft – and a former professor of teacher education at Sacramento State – will discuss her famous ancestor at 3 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 23, at the University Library Gallery.

She is the first speaker in the Friends of the Library’s 2014-15 Author Lecture Series. The four talks in the series are free and open to the public. A book-signing and reception will follow Bancroft’s presentation.

“My talk about H.H. Bancroft will provide a general background about his life before California and how he was able to become a successful bookseller, collector and historian here,” says Bancroft, editor of the 2013 abridged edition of Literary Industries: Chasing a Vanishing West, first published in 1890 as Volume 39 of The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft. “Since this is an author’s series, I thought I’d add an extra dimension about his life as a scholar and writer: how he saw the task of writing and his joy in becoming a historian.

“I think that the way in which Bancroft saw a future for California was unusual and even visionary – a future that he embraced in his collection of historical documents. So one question will be, in part, how we help save from our past and what we have now in order to strengthen the future,” she says.

Hubert Howe Bancroft, who lived from 1832 to 1918, collected tens of thousands of books, pamphlets, manuscripts, maps and newspapers relating to the American West, Mexico and Canada, and used them as reference material for his 39-volume history of western North America. That work included the iconic seven-volume History of California. In 1905, the University of California purchased the entire collection, which formed the nucleus of UC Berkeley’s Bancroft Library.

Kim Bancroft also is the author of the just-published The Heyday of Malcolm Margolin: The Damn Good Times of a Fiercely Independent Publisher, a collection of stories about the founder of Berkeley’s Heyday Books.

Sac State’s Author Lecture Series continues Thursday, Nov. 20, with an appearance by former Sacramento Bee editor Bruce Dancis, who will discuss his memoir, Resister: A Story of Protest and Prison During the Vietnam War.

On Tuesday, Feb. 10, David Covin, emeritus professor of government and Pan-African studies at Sac State, will talk about his novel Princes of the Road, the story of Pullman railcar porters in the late 1930s.

The series wraps up Thursday, April 9, with Christopher Castaneda and Lee Simpson, professors of history at Sacramento State, discussing the book they co-edited: River City and Valley Life: An Environmental History of the Sacramento Region. It’s a collection of essays that examine Sacramento’s extraordinary relationship with its natural surroundings.
For more information about the Friends of the Library’s Author Lecture Series, contact Sally Hitchcock, the University Library’s coordinator for community outreach, at (916) 278-5954 or hitchcoc@saclink.csus.edu. The series is co-sponsored by the University Library, the Hornet Bookstore, the Center for California Studies and the University Library Gallery.

For media assistance, contact Sacramento State’s Office of Public Affairs at (916) 278-6156. – Dixie Reid