

# THE INSTITUTE FOR HISTORICAL STUDY

VOLUME 26, No.1, FALL 2005

# NEWSLETTER

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THE INSTITUTE is affiliated with the National Coalition of Independent Scholars (NCIS) and with the American Historical Association (AHA)

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The NEWSLETTER is sent to all Institute members, as well as colleges and university libraries and other interested scholars. The Institute appreciates all tax-deductible contributions made by non-members who wish to remain on our mailing list.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*Changes in the Board:* **Hildi Kang** resigned from the board, as she found that she was over-committed. The board, using its prerogative to name new members when there is a vacancy, asked **Jules Becker** to take the seat, and he accepted. Jules was one of the founding board members, a former president, and now convener of the California Round Table. We are lucky to have him back on the board.

*Recent activities:* **Maria Sakovich's** exhibition at the Richmond Museum of History was the Institute's June program. The July picnic with its traditional history quiz was greatly enjoyed by the few who actually attended. (I was on a rafting trip down Hells Canyon on the Snake River.) The board will be reviewing the picnic to determine if the low turnout signals lack of interest or simply scheduling conflicts for members who did not attend.

*Future events:* Several Institute members will be attending the October conference in Portland on October 8<sup>th</sup>, sponsored by the Northwest Independent Scholars. The topic is "Selling Your Scholarship: Writing Marketable Non-Fiction" and the program looks very exciting. There is still time to register for the workshop by going to the website of the National Coalition of Independent Scholars ([www.ncis.org](http://www.ncis.org)).

Once again I will point out our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary dinner to be held November 5<sup>th</sup>. **Francesca Miller** has agreed to be the speaker for the evening. One of the Institute's founding members, Francesca has had an interesting time combining occasional teaching, research and publishing on Latin American history with an emphasis on women's issues, and her new research on an Irish lady pirate. Her talk, titled *A Brief History of the Littlest Generation*, will offer her thoughts on the importance of history.

*Ellen Huppert*

## WORK-IN-PROGRESS – Maria Sakovich

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### *The Art of the Launch*

On Sunday, June 19, **Maria Sakovich** invited Institute members and friends to the Richmond Museum of History to share with them her work as curator of the exhibit “The Art of the Launch,” on display from April 24<sup>th</sup> to June 26<sup>th</sup>. The show included photographs, silk-screened programs and noteworthy memorabilia from the launching ceremonies for the 747 ships built at the Kaiser Richmond shipyards during World War II. Maria very effectively shared her enthusiasm and expertise in historical “sleuth work” as she researched the subject and then curated a most informative and captivating show.

The launchings were elaborately orchestrated events with numerous roles, from sponsor-- always a woman-- to matron of honor, flower girl, master of ceremonies, or speaker, not to forget the person who offered the invocation. The many photographs in the exhibit were living testimonials to the importance of these rituals. Among the numerous memorabilia on display were a sample of the fashionable clothing worn by one of the women who were the official “sponsors” of the launchings, and a champagne bottle, or what was left of it, wrapped in its colorful red-white-and-blue ribbon encasing, used in one of the launchings.

Why these fancy launchings? Work in the shipyards was hard and even dangerous. Though largely white (from the Midwest and South), there was considerable diversity in the workforce of the shipyard, especially for the times: up to one-third of the shipyard workers were women; ten thousand were African-Americans from Texas, Louisiana, and Arkansas; two thousand were Chinese-Americans who commuted from San Francisco; and a sprinkling were European refugees grateful to be employed. One special worker was an Austrian refugee who worked as a shipfitter in Yard Two. He actually wrote stories about the people he worked with and the common purpose of building Liberty ships. This is the way he described the multi-ethnic experience in one of his stories: “There was a time when Jason thought he couldn’t work together with girls. There was a time when Okie Red would rather

have quit than handle the same machine with a black man. When Red was an ‘Okie’ and Tiny a ‘Chink.’ But we forgot our squabbles and joined forces for the wonderboat.” The launchings became important events in the lives of the workers, many of whom were honored by being included in the ritual. It motivated the workers and displayed their pride of community, not to mention their sense of patriotism in contributing to the war effort.

The launchings also testified to a real desire to honor workers and heroes of many races and nationalities. Some of the more notable participants in the launchings were celebrities like Lena Horne, Dinah Shore, Bing Crosby, Walter Gordon, the first African American police officer in Berkeley and his wife Elizabeth, who insisted on the first integrated launching team, and the writer-to-be Jade Snow Wong. There was one launching by then Crown Princess Juliana of the Netherlands. Christening a ship was a chief prize for a worker in the shipyard. Some ships were launched by women in military and Red Cross uniforms. Besides a cast of shipyard workers, the photographs of many of the launchings showed a colorful array of participants; one launching was performed by the winner of an essay competition on the problem of absenteeism--Jade Snow Wong. In her writing of the event, she described herself as she christened the ship, striking the bow with a champagne bottle and crying out “I christen thee the William A. Jones!” and then “the ship rumbled down the way with a thunderous roar.” Pearl Sun, a granddaughter of Sun Yat Sen, and Dr. Aurelia Henry Reinhardt, president of Mills College, as well as convalescent sailors from Oak Knoll Naval Hospital, can be seen among those in attendance.

It is hard to imagine how so many ships could be built in such record time. During the peak period (1943) launchings took place nearly daily (and on occasion twice in one day). Maria’s show was a fitting testimonial to the many women and men who contributed so significantly to the war effort and whose participation was captured by excellent photographers, for the most part still unknown.

*Monica Clyde*

## CALIFORNIA ROUND TABLE

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The newest star in the California Round Table "firmament" is **Monica Clyde**, in whose house we met on June 4<sup>th</sup>. She presented material unfamiliar to most of us concerning the presence of many Germans in California before and at the time of the 19th century Gold Rush. She mentioned several names of which we've heard but about whose connection with the Gold Rush we hadn't known.

The German Jesuit Kino established the first mission in Baja California at a time when many thought that Baja was an island. In 1702 he discovered that Baja was part of the mainland and drafted the first accurate map of the area, making him responsible for the expansion into Alta California. Long before Johann August Sutter arrived in California, Germans had visited the area and written about it. The well-known German writer and scientist Friedrich Heinrich Humboldt (1769-1859) wrote a detailed and influential report in 1804 based on Mexican writings about California, although he never came to this area. Humboldt County bears his name. Several less familiar German names are also connected with early California. The German Romantic writer and scientist Adalbert von Chamisso came to California in 1816 by sea as a member of a scientific team on the Russian ship Rurik. He described the San Francisco area in great detail, documented the Spanish Government, and wrote about the exploitation of the native Indians. He is most famous for discovering and classifying the flora and fauna of the region and the discovery and classification of the State flower: the golden poppy. Otto von Kotzebue explored the San Francisco Bay. Christian Beusemann of Prussia was Commander of Fort Ross on behalf of Russia for many years; he erected the first windmill on the Pacific Coast.

After the secularization of Catholic church property in 1834, we hear more familiar names, such as Johann August Sutter (born in Germany and for whom Sutter Street in SF is named) who arrived in California in 1839. He came to the Sacramento Valley, where the Mexican Government gave him permission to establish a settlement. Sutter set up New Helvetia, which attracted many German immigrants, and he raised the American flag over

New Helvetia in 1846. It was at Sutter's Creek that James Marshall discovered gold in 1848. In fact, all German immigrants enlisted in the Mexican War on the side of the U.S. Their numbers exceeded those of all other nationalities.

A name that we usually associate more with the ancient city of Troy than with California is Heinrich von Schliemann (1822-90). Although he launched his famous excavations later in life, he had come to California in 1851 on family business rather than to dig in the gold fields. During his year and a half of commuting between San Francisco and Sacramento he founded a bank in Sacramento, where he bought gold dust that he sold in San Francisco. After several bouts of illness, he liquidated his business in Sacramento and returned to Russia, where he had started a business before traveling to California. He returned to Europe considerably richer. According to Monica, it may be that there had been shady dealings with weights, causing him to leave rather in a hurry.

With the discovery of gold and the subsequent population expansion, "Sutter's Empire" began to crumble. However, Germans left their marks by founding numerous California towns: Stockton; Sacramento; the town of Nicolaus named for Nicolaus Altgeier on the Sacramento River; Bloomfield, for pioneer physician F.G. Blume; and New Mecklenburg, which has evolved into today's Marysville. There was German influence on California's important wine industry. Emil Dresel from the Rhineland began producing wine in the 1850s in Sonoma County. Jacob Gundlach was initially with Dresel. Although there are too many to list, a few familiar names are still in the business: Krug and Beringer in particular. Other prominent German names in the business community were Adolph Spreckels, Levi Strauss, Adolph Sutro, and James Lick.

We who live here haven't always been aware of the contributions of 19<sup>th</sup> century Germans to the history and culture of our present thriving State of California.

*Masha Zakheim*

## GROUP REPORTS

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### BIOGRAPHY WRITERS

The Biography Group met at chez Lafler in July.

**Joanne Lafler** talked about taking a different approach to a chapter that has given her some difficulty. Throwing out most of the pages she had written and re-titling the chapter (it is now "Joining the Crowd") was a great help. She now focuses on Harry Lafler's friendship with the poet George Sterling, through whom Harry met Jack London and members of the social group called the "Crowd," which included socialist intellectuals and activists.

The group pin-pointed some places that needed further clarification. . . . "For the first half of her life, Juana Briones was, at heart, a town person." That sentence now opens the chapter that **Jeanne McDonnell** reworked discussing Juana's life on the 4,000-acre Briones Ranch from 1844, when she purchased it, to 1870, just before she divided up the half she had not sold for her children. The group suggested adding dates to improve continuity and including more about the Santa Clara Valley. . . .

**Ann Harlow** was grappling with how to interweave the story of an individual, Anne Bremer, with details of the historical context: the development of art in San Francisco; the Aesthetic Movement; and the role of women artists. . . . **Ellen Huppert** presented another segment of "Barton and Marietta," the story of the family's tour of Southern states in 1851-2. This section tells of the hazardous journey they took through the Big Black Swamp of east central Mississippi. They lost their way, encountered some interesting, if sinister, characters and managed to get away from a band of highwaymen. . . . With the help of Ellen Huppert and other biographers, **Georgia Wright** is revising for the umpteenth time her first chapter of a biography based on a diary of a Roman Catholic royalist, written during the French Revolution. . . .

**Bonda Lewis** received some useful suggestions about imagery used in a scene dealing with the frustrations of the protagonist; querying what one, in fact, does when the dog is rattlesnake bit; and a discussion of the clothing one bought from the Montgomery Ward catalogue in 1912—did it include overalls, winter coat? Every question brings deeper involvement with the period and helps

sharpen her perceptions for the next lot. . . .

**Autumn Stanley** has found a way to deal with the conflicting stories of Charlotte Smith's marriage, and is now intrigued by the astonishing correspondences between a serial story (written by Enrique Parmer) in her 1870s magazine and the story of the horrors of her marriage Charlotte told the 1890s *Washington Post*. These are so close that one wonders whether "Enrique Parmer" wrote his story after hearing the story of her marriage or if the name was a pseudonym for Charlotte herself.

*Jeanne McDonnell*

### HISTORY-PLAY READERS

The History-Play Readers moved from Tom Stoppard's clever portrait of Lenin, Joyce and the Dadaist Tzara in Zurich during WWI, to Cleopatra's encounters with classical Rome. Currently, we are reading George Bernard Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra*, which we plan to complete at our September session. Following that we shall read Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*. Shaw completed *Caesar and Cleopatra* in 1898; it was produced in 1901. The action is set in Egypt at the time of the Roman invasion in 48 BC. Shaw paints Caesar as a wise old philosopher interested in leaving a legacy of civilized politics. Cleopatra, who was the last of the Ptolemy line, was sixteen when Caesar came to Egypt. In his notes, Shaw points out that "...in Egypt sixteen is a riper age than it is in England." He paints her as an impetuous and moody teenager, but explains that the childishness that he ascribed to her was not a matter of years, but of character. In 1945, the play was made into a British film with Vivien Leigh, Claude Rains and other notables, but even so it was poorly received. Of course we know what Hollywood did with *Cleopatra* in the 1963 blockbuster with Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton. The Irish-born Shaw lived well into his nineties. He won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1925.

*Edee Piness*

### MEDIEVAL HISTORY GROUP

In June, **Lorrie O'Dell** introduced the group to the women who played major roles in England's Wars of the Roses in the fifteenth century. The stories of Katherine of Valois, Margaret Beaufort, and especially Margaret of Anjou, the wife of Henry VI, are usually lost in the tales of dynastic battles and feudal feuds.

In August, **Georgia Wright** gave a guest presentation (as a guest in her own home) on "The Abbey of St. Denis and the French Monarchy, 1000-1300." Georgia outlined both the changes in architectural styles used for the French kings buried at the cathedral of St. Denis, as well as the political implications of their placement in the cathedral in relation to the ongoing struggles with the French church.

### MEMBERSHIP NEWS

**Francesca Miller** gave a paper, "Moving from the Vote into Citizenship: A View from the Americas," at the Thirteenth Berkshire Conference, June 5<sup>th</sup>, at Scripps College: "Sin Fronteras: Women's Histories, Global Conversations." Also, she is contributing articles on "Las Madres: The Mothers of the Disappeared" and "The First Feminist Congress of the Pan-American League" to the forthcoming *Encyclopedia of Women in World History*, Oxford University Press.

On July 26<sup>th</sup>, **Lyn Reese** gave a presentation to teachers at the UC Berkeley center for International and Area Studies (ORIAS). Lyn's talk, "Women as Cultural Emissaries: Using Primary Source Accounts," drew upon legends, poetry, letters, journals and excerpts from travelogues as ways to access the female gaze and consider topics relevant to the female travel experience. Also, Lyn's latest curriculum unit, *Women's Work in Industrial Revolutions: Primary Source Lessons from Europe & East Asia*, has been accepted for distribution by Social Studies School Services and will appear in their fall catalogs.

In March, 2005, the University of Toledo presented **Leslie Friedman** in residence for several days as part of their year-long symposium, "Feminisms & Globalization." The symposium featured leaders in politics, science and the arts. Leslie gave two public lectures and also performed her concert, *Heroic, Beloved*, a collection of dances about historic women, with music or text by historic women. In July, Leslie was Guest Speaker at the National Asian Indian Dance Convention, in Dallas. Leslie researched, wrote and produced *The Gold Rush!* a program of narration taken from letters from the mining fields, archival photographs, music and dance. The program, originally presented as part of San Francisco's Sesquicentennial Celebration, was performed in April for school districts including Alum Rock, Palo Alto, and Mountain View. Leslie says "thank you" to the Institute, through which she learned about Mills College's need for someone to teach Western Civilization. She is delighted with Mills and with her class.

**Georgia Wright** asks: Ever wonder how other independent scholars live and work? David Sonenschein has analyzed the responses from 180 questionnaires received from members of the National Coalition of Independent Scholars. He looked at demographics, training, finances, languages, scholarly activity, professional relations, technology, and satisfaction levels. The appendices include detailed information as to the learned societies, word processing and bibliographic management programs, search engines, image management programs and translation services used by the respondents. The 63-page study is available for \$7 from NCIS, P.O. Box 5743 (yes, shared with IHS) Berkeley, 94705. And it's fascinating!

### MEMORIAL CONCERT

MusicSources announces a tribute to **Laurette Goldberg** on Thursday, September 15, 2005, 8:00 PM, at the First Congregational Church, Dana and Durant Streets, Berkeley. The program is also sponsored by the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. For more information, call 510-528-1685.

## BOOK REVIEW

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*San Francisco's Fillmore District,*  
by Robert F. Oaks  
(Arcadia Publishing, San Francisco, 2005).

In *San Francisco's Fillmore District*, Robert F. Oaks has created a book that is both charming and thought-provoking. It is charming for its pictures of San Franciscans at work and play in eras that can appear to be more graceful than our own. At the same time it causes the reader to wonder about the tensions underneath the social fabric on display.

The book is part of the *Images of America* series, published by Arcadia Press. The format is short, 128 pages, and dominated by the photographs. Chapters are arranged by topics which are both historical ("Post-Quake Years," "Between the Wars") and thematic ("Redevelopment," "Amusements") Each chapter introduces the photographs with a brief historical essay.

As a long time resident of the Fillmore District, I enjoyed this book as a sort of family album. What a treat to see the life around the main street of one's own neighborhood over generations of change! The appearance of Fillmore Street itself changes as do the ethnicities of its residents, the character of its buildings, and the styles of everything from shoes to suits, dresses, and means of transportation.

The Fillmore District's remarkable ethnic diversity is one of the factors that qualifies it for the special treatment of its own history. Among the groups which left their mark, in addition to the white middle-class majority, were European Jewish immigrants, African-Americans, and Japanese. Though all three groups are still represented in the contemporary Fillmore, all three communities were subject to splintering and disappearance due to vagaries of economics, politics, and social prejudice. For example, the photo collection shows Japanese-American children pledging allegiance to the American flag just a few days before being evacuated to "relocation camps." Their families lost the properties they stand by so proudly in other pictures.

The chapter on redevelopment opens by stating with clarity the competing values of cleaning up "blighted" neighborhoods and the "disruption (some would say destruction) of the community." Most of the residents who were removed were African-American, and many local businesses closed as their clientele disappeared. The rents rose enough to prevent many who had to leave, such as the Japanese-Americans, from returning in the years just after World War II. Redevelopment, involving the destruction of buildings and the clearing of whole blocks, began in 1948 and lasted into the 1980s with construction of the Fillmore Center, a complex of nine structures including high-rises.

The Fillmore District's history mirrors national events, population changes, and economic shifts at the same time that it reflects a sturdy personality of its own. Part of that personality includes the lively presence of jazz musicians and nightclubs and the Bill Graham rock concerts at the world famous Fillmore music hall. Oaks has included this unusual musical life in intriguing pictures. Curious about how the author made his choice of photos and subjects, I asked him about the process of writing this illustrated history. He said that he had to limit the jazz history because many photos were tied up in books on jazz. He also found that he had to limit some selections as both the San Francisco Public Library and some individual collectors required payment for use of their photos.

For all the pleasure historical photographs can offer, the Fillmore's story suggests the continuity of a disturbing theme. Present day pride in the district's diversity is at odds with the separate communities the diverse groups inhabited, and the disastrous effects, especially for Japanese and African-American residents. Oaks presents the facts without forcing any conclusions down the readers' throats. And he does so deftly without cutting corners or belaboring the obvious. Quite a big achievement in so small a space.

*Leslie Friedman*

### Sports and History -- A Catchy Combo

An example of how eclectic is the Institute, I offer the combination of a sports writer on major metropolitan newspapers in Chicago and San Francisco and an historian with an enduring interest in immigration to the United States, particularly by Asians.

Actually, when one considers that combination, it's not strange after all, because sports are all about history. A fan tracks his (or her) favorite team or player not only by how they are doing today, but how that compares with their record last year and many years before.

Where am I going with this? Well. Lorrie O' Dell, our esteemed *Newsletter* editor, asked me to explain how a sports writer became a historian. And as you who have been Institute members for more than 60 minutes know, no one says "No" to Lorrie.

When I started to think about it, I realized I was into history when I started getting into sports. I didn't recognize it at the time, but the ability to quote batting averages and major league won-lost records, and recalling college and professional football and basketball team lineups and championships, was exactly the training I needed when I returned to academe 20 years after receiving an undergraduate degree. The result was an MJ, an MA, a Ph.D., and a book that sold at least 25 copies, counting those bought by friends and family.

As a newsman, I started on a metropolitan daily, figuring I could always work my way down. My first job was with the *Chicago Times*, a feisty tabloid and forerunner to the current *Sun-Times*, as a copy editor; three months later I moved to the Sports Department and, pardon the pun, began making history.

Almost 10 years later I was at the *Sun-Times*, the papers having merged in the interim while I had sidestepped for two years to Hearst's *Chicago American* for more money. At the *Sun-Times*, in addition to editing copy, I covered professional and

college football and basketball, hockey, boxing, and tennis, and almost every summer day watched the Cubs, using my press pass to enter Wrigley Field before starting work at 3PM.

Then one day I received a phone call from a college pal working in San Francisco, asking if I wanted a job on Hearst's *San Francisco Examiner* as assistant sports editor. Having barely survived another Chicago winter, my response was "What time tomorrow should I be there?" Of course it wasn't quite that easy, but we sold the house, I left after two weeks' notice, and my wife, two kids, and the dog followed a month or so later.

I didn't stay at the *Examiner* for very long, got a job in public relations, then opened my own business, and I haven't suffered a Chicago winter since. After some years, I decided to get a masters degree in journalism; while I was in that program, and teaching "Introduction to Journalism" at UC Berkeley, and running my business, I realized how much I enjoyed the academic environment.

So after receiving my MJ, I shifted to the History Department at Berkeley, and began the long trek to the doctorate. Along the way, somehow, I met Lorrie, Ellen Huppert, Frances Keller, Joanne Lafler, Peter Mellini, Francesca Miller, and similar bright, talented people, and became involved in the organization and development of the Institute.

During this journey, I realized the parallels between sports and history. Both had winners and losers, numbers and results, research to explain decisions. Both had scorekeepers; in one instance they were sports writers, in the other historians, and in my life I have been both. And I realize the standard for both should be, as a long-time friend titled one of his best-selling books, there is *No Cheering in the Press Box*.

# CALENDAR

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|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| September 17 | California Round Table Meeting      |
| September 18 | Work-in-Progress – Peter Mellini    |
| October 16   | Work-in-Progress – Frances Keller   |
| November 5   | 25 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner |
| November 20  | Work-in-Progress – Kathleen Casey   |
| December 18  | Work-in-Progress                    |
| January 15   | Work-in-Progress – Anne Richardson  |
| February 25  | Annual Membership Meeting           |

Members are encouraged to let us know all their news – a paper being given at a conference; a new job or position; the awarding of a grant or fellowship. Please send all material for the NEWSLETTER either by e-mail to [lorrie@galleyslaves.com](mailto:lorrie@galleyslaves.com) or to the Institute's postal address given below. Also, we welcome the opportunity to review members' newly published books. Contact **Autumn Stanley** at [autumn2\\_dave@compuserve.com](mailto:autumn2_dave@compuserve.com). The deadline for the next NEWSLETTER is **November 30th**.

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The NEWSLETTER is the official publication of the Institute for Historical Study, a scholarly organization deigned to promote the research, writing, and public discussion of history. Membership in the Institute is open to independent and academically affiliated scholars who are in agreement with its aims and who have a commitment to historical study. Membership inquiries should be sent to the Institute address.

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