

THE INSTITUTE FOR HISTORICAL STUDY

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NEWSLETTER

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THE INSTITUTE is affiliated with the National Coalition of Independent Scholars (NCIS), the American Historical Association (AHA), and the National Coalition for History (NCH).

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

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I thought I would continue the archives theme of the previous column by discussing a new piece of legislation that could potentially have a great impact on archives in the United States. This proposed law is known as the "Preserving the American Historical Record" (or PAHR) Act. What this law seeks to do is provide a stable and relatively generous source of grants for archives and historical records repositories that currently have few funding options. It seeks to establish an equivalent for archives to the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the federal agency that provides annual grants to libraries throughout the nation.

The bill proposes 50 million dollars annual funding, which would be distributed to states in proportion to their population. For California, this would mean slightly over 5 million dollars of grants annually. To put this in perspective, the current budget for the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), one of the chief providers of grants to archives, is only about 10 million dollars for the entire nation. If this bill were passed and fully funded for a number of years, it could have an almost revolutionary impact on archives. Among other things, it would make possible much greater digitization of records and access to sources through the Internet.

The Council of State Archivists, an organization of the heads of the state archives throughout the country, has played a major role in pushing this legislation. Introduced into the current Congress, it now has twenty-five sponsors and its backers are seeking an additional twenty-five in the hope that will be adequate for it to gain consideration and maybe passage. If it does not pass this Congress, I would assume it will be reintroduced into the next.

Institute members who would like to learn more about this bill should visit www.Archivists.org/pahr for additional details.

Mike Griffith

WORK-IN-PROGRESS – Karen Offen

“Who’s Afraid of Women in Politics? and Why?” were the questions **Karen Offen** considered on June 22 at **Lyn Reese’s** home. She opened by discussing recent political successes by California women such as Senators Barbara Boxer and Diane Feinstein and Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi. Yet, Karen pointed out, women who enter politics are still criticized for not staying home or for being too emotional; when they prove to be effective leaders, they are criticized for being too much like a man. Looking back over four centuries, she asked why have so many men (and some women) in numerous nations strongly opposed giving political power of any kind to women? After describing this widespread fear of women, especially ruling queens, Karen turned to consider some early spokesmen and spokeswoman who championed women’s rights, including the right to rule and command.

Karen enhanced her presentation with Power-Point illustrations: some showed portraits or photos of the women she talked about. Other illustrations had quotations in large type from the writings of early advocates of political rights and authority for women, whether on a throne, in a parliament, or at the ballot box.

In ancient Greece, birthplace of democracy, elite women were confined to the household and, like slaves, had no rights. Aristophanes' play, *The Parliament of Women*, satirized what would happen if women were in charge. After women took over the government, chaos ensued: they proposed to give every Athenian free food and shelter and institute free love for all. Moving on to Europe after the Middle Ages, Karen showed that although the notion that “God’s law” restricted women to the home was the common wisdom, there were, in fact, several effective women monarchs in these centuries: Isabelle of Castile, Elizabeth I of England, and in the eighteenth century, Catherine of Russia and Maria Theresa of Austria.

In 1622, Frenchwoman Marie de Gournay argued in her essay “The Equality of Men and Women,” that women as well as men are imbued with reason, but lamented their situation: "Happy you are, Reader, if

you do not belong to this sex, which has been deprived of liberty and kept from all benefits; which has also been excluded from all virtues and barred from obligations, offices, and public functions: in a word, deprived of power." In 1787 the French male philosopher Condorcet wrote: “Is it not as sentient beings, capable of reason, having moral ideas, that men have rights? Then women should have exactly the same rights," and be able to vote and participate in government, because they, too, had these same attributes. Condorcet was no doubt responding to a more famous philosopher in that century, Jean Jacques Rousseau, who had argued that the inferior emotional and physical nature of women made them unfit to govern. However, some women in France claimed their political rights. They formed political clubs and called for separate Parliaments for women. In England, Mary Wollstonecraft stressed women’s need for more education and related rights. John Stuart Mill strongly advocated that women have political rights and representation in Parliament.

Moving to the present era, Karen said it seems easier for a women to win the top office under a parliamentary system than in the US single-constituency electoral system. Prime ministers Margaret Thatcher of Britain and Angela Merkel are recent examples. Current elected female presidents of nations include Pratibha Patil of India, Michelle Bachelet of Chile, and Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner of Argentina.

Karen ended her lecture by listing some areas in which feminist women, and men, in a variety of countries have campaigned over several centuries to make improvements in women’s lives: equal access to education, equal pay for equal work, changes in laws for marriage and property, protective laws for women workers, and reproductive freedom. (She later gave this illustrated presentation as a plenary address in Argentina at the IX *Jornadas de Historia de las Mujeres y IV Congreso Iberoamericano de Estudios de Género* on July 31, 2008.)

Celeste MacLeod

MARE ISLAND TOUR

On a lovely, sunny but not too hot June 1st about 30 Institute members traveled to Vallejo for a tour of Mare Island. After a lunch in Vallejo, it was a quick jaunt to the Vallejo Naval & Historical Museum—located in the old City Hall—where museum director Jim Kern gave a slide presentation on the history of Mare Island and its neighboring metropolis. The overview proved valuable when we actually undertook the tour of the Island. (Many were surprised to learn that the city of Benicia was named for General Vallejo’s wife.)

A short drive across the Napa River, and we arrived at Alden Park, named after a nineteenth-century Navy Yard Commandant. Mare Island Historical Park Foundation docent Joyce Giles greeted us and pointed out that several of the exotic trees surrounding the park were brought at Alden’s request. Our next stop was the magnificent 10,000 square-foot Commandant’s Residence. This “replacement” structure, built by Congressional fiat upon its predecessor’s foundation after the 1898 Mare Island earthquake, impressed us with its grandeur—huge rooms, lovely walnut wood wainscoting, massive pocket doors between the grand entry hall and capacious sitting rooms on either side. The crowning glory of our visit was the elegantly quaint St. Peter’s Chapel. Built at the beginning of the twentieth century, it features 29 gorgeous stained glass windows, 16 of which were made in the famed Tiffany studios of New York. The chapel also features a series of ceiling plaques representing famous persons, military units, battles, and, most recently, the 150th anniversary of the Navy Yard’s founding, mounted in 2006.

After a brief amble around the venerable Drydock No 2, constructed of stone quarried in the Sierra, we finished our day with a walk through the Mare Island Museum. It is housed in one of the earliest industrial buildings in the Yard, and now is home to a huge variety of artifacts—from early sail-making equipment to sophisticated solid-state electronic gear. By 4:30 pm, we were tired but satisfied that we’d seen one of the most important historical sites in northern California.

Tom Snyder

MEDIEVAL STUDY GROUP

In April, **John Rusk** hosted the group for a presentation by **Ellen Huppert** on the book *The Archimedes Codex*, by Reviel Netz and William Noel. This codex was a palimpsest reusing a 10th copy of Archimedes’ work done in the tenth century for a twelfth century Christian liturgical text. (A palimpsest is parchment that has been scraped and washed, and then written on again.) However, the erasure was incomplete, and modern digital processing has been able to produce images of the original pages. The palimpsest contains solutions of problems that would now be treated by integral calculus, invented in the seventeenth century by Isaac Newton and Gottfried Leibniz. After years of lying unknown in a Paris apartment, the ownership of the palimpsest was challenged in 1998 by the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem. However, the ruling was in favor of the heirs and the document was bought by an anonymous buyer who works in the information technology field. The palimpsest is now at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, where scientists are continuing to reveal more of the Archimedes text.

In June, **Nancy Zinn** made a presentation to the group on medieval music at the home of **Lyn Reese**. Nancy started her talk by pointing out that it is almost impossible for us to really know how medieval music sounded. Although many of the instruments were precursors of their modern versions, reconstructions made from drawings and descriptions can be only approximations of the medieval sound. Nancy made use of a web site to illustrate the sounds made by a variety of reconstructed instruments. Nancy also talked about musical notation, and the development of ‘neums’ or the markings used to determine pitch and rhythm. Written above the words on the music sheet, they change over time from simple lines with different lengths, to lines with dots underneath, to squares joined by lines, and eventually to the notation now used. It was clear from Nancy’s talk that music played a big part in medieval life, from church liturgies to minstrels, local music groups, and traveling troubadours.

Lorrie O’Dell

GROUP REPORTS

BIOGRAPHY WRITERS GROUP

Joanne Lafler continues to work on the rewriting and fine-tuning of her manuscript, of which she completed a rough draft earlier this year. At recent meetings she shared re-written pages from chapters about Harry Lafler's second marriage and his business and civic career in Oakland. She was pleased with the comments of group members—all very helpful and encouraging—and hopes to be finished in a month or two.

Ann Harlow recently spent five days doing research in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale. The library has quite a constellation of papers relating to modern American literature and art. Ann was able to confirm the acquaintance of Anne Bremer and Albert Bender with Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas. She discovered that Anne Bremer visited Florence and Venice (although no date was indicated), and found peripheral material about Robinson and Una Jeffers, Mabel Dodge Luhan, and Maurice Sterne. Anne's research trip was supported by a grant from the Society for the Preservation of American Modernism.

Ellen Huppert presented chapters from the journals in which Lizzie Taylor wrote of the births of three more babies and became active in the temperance movement. Ellen's editing of the last pages of Lizzie's journals is mostly finished and now she has turned to revising the earlier sections. Much will be added from the journal pages which were photographed in December 2007 in Ann Arbor.

Motivated and inspired by helpful suggestions from fellow Biography Writers Group members, **Liz Thacker-Estrada** continues to make progress on her book about First Lady Abigail Powers Fillmore. She has consolidated the information into a smaller number of chapters and has reorganized the material within the chapters. By focusing more on Abigail's life and less on that of her husband, President Millard Fillmore, Liz is creating a more cohesive and condensed book.

Ellen Huppert.

HISTORY-PLAY READERS

This summer the History-Play Readers began reading *The Coast of Utopia*, a 2002 trilogy of plays: *Voyage*; *Shipwreck*; *Salvage* by Tom Stoppard. *Voyage* premiered at the National Theatre in London in June 2002, *Shipwreck* and *Salvage* followed in July. The three plays run for a total of nine hours. The plays opened in New York in 2006, at the Vivian Beaumont Theatre at Lincoln Center. The trilogy, which focuses on political and philosophical debate about Russia between 1833 and 1866, was performed in Russia in 2007. *Voyage*, the first of the trilogy, is set in 1833-1844. The action centers on the aristocratic Bakunin family, its patriarch Alexander, the beloved, mercurial son Michael and his intelligent and lively four sisters of marriageable age. The initial setting is at the lavish Bakunin country estate, Premukhino; later the action shifts to Moscow. Michael is enamored of the ideas of the leading philosophers of the day—Fichte, Schelling, Kant and Hegel. His Moscow acquaintances descend on the bucolic estate, and we later meet them under different circumstances in Moscow. The play is characterized by much discussion about the backwardness of Russia and the meaning of history and reality. The Russian intellectuals are disheartened by the failed 1825 Decembrist Revolt and the hard-line repressive reaction to it by Czar Nicholas I. Alexander Herzen, his family, and his literary friend Belinsky dominate the Moscow sequences in *Voyage*, as well as the second and third plays. *Shipwreck*, the second in the trilogy, covers the years 1846-1852, with the action set in the vicinity of Moscow, as well as in Salzbrunn and Dresden, Paris and Nice. While the first play envisions hope for a better, more enlightened society, the second sees the smashing of those ideals with the failed revolutions of 1848.

The Play Readers have just finished Act I of *Shipwreck*. The group will begin reading Act II at its next meeting on September 17. All interested members are cordially invited to attend

Edith Piness

ESSAY – Joanne Lafler

How I Learned to Love—and Use—Google Book Search

When you do a Google search you may have gotten entries that include the phrase "Google Books Result." Clicking on the hyperlink brings up a digitized text with the words or phrase you've searched for. But have you tried using Google Book Search itself? I heard about it from Ellen Huppert, whose sister Frances had been using it for family history research. And I learned that Google Book Search targets a variety of texts that a regular Google search will not turn up.

Here's how you find and use it: On the upper left-hand side of the Google home page you'll see a list of options that reads: "Images—Maps—News—Shopping—Gmail—more." Click on "more" and then on "Books." Voila! You're in Google Book Search. Enter the keyword or phrase you're looking for in the box, just as you would in a regular Google search, using quotation marks around more than one word. For example, I have searched variations of Harry Lafler's name: "Henry Anderson Lafler" "Harry Lafler," "H.A. Lafler"—even "Harry Lafler" (as the name is sometimes misspelled), sometimes adding a plus mark and another word or phrase.

Each search brings up a list of hyperlinked book titles. Some of them will be "full view." This means that the entire volume is available in digitized form. The hyperlink leads you to the page or pages on which the word or phrase you're searching for will appear, but Google Book Search also allows you to do key-word searches in the entire volume, which can be very useful. Some entries will be labeled "limited preview." This means that only one or two pages with the word or phrase you're searching for are available online.

Very frustrating, but still useful, is the "snippet view," which gives you a teeny-tiny sliver of a page with the word or phrase you're searching for. Even more frustrating is "no preview available," or "sorry, this page's content is restricted." BUT— with few exceptions, all of the entries you turn up will give you: 1) the full bibliographical

information you need in order to find the volume at your local library; 2) the names of local libraries that have the book; 3) the page number where the information you're looking for appears.

By doing these searches you can build a bibliography, but I've also found wonderful snippets of information through Google Books. One recent discovery was a letter written by Harry Lafler to the cultural maverick, Elbert Hubbard, in 1912, which helped me to tell the full story of Lafler's dealings with Hubbard at the time. The document did not turn up on a regular Google search, but while I was playing around with Google Books (warning: this can become addictive) I searched Wickham Havens, who was Lafler's employer at the time, s.v. "wickham havens" + oakland. Up popped a page from Elbert Hubbard's magazine *Fra*, on which Hubbard had reprinted the Lafler letter, written on Wickham Havens Realty letterhead.

Just a few days ago I nailed down the identity of friends of Harry Lafler who signed their letters "Hoppy" and "Jean." From internal evidence, I was pretty sure that "Hoppy" was an important San Francisco journalist, Ernest Jerome Hopkins, but city directories did not provide definitive information. including the name of his wife, Jean. Searching Google Book Search under "ernest jerome hopkins" +jean," I found the dedication of one of Hopkins' books "to Jean" and another item that used his nickname, Hoppy.

If you have not tried this source yet, I wish you happy searching. It's important to be creative and persistent in your search strategies. If you need further information, let me know.

Joanne Lafler

BOOK REVIEW

The First Day of the Blitz: September 7, 1940
Peter Stansky
(Yale University Press, 2007)

"We didn't need telling that a bomb had dropped," wrote Doris Pierce, a young woman in Battersea, London, about her experience of the beginning of the Blitz. "The screaming noise alone was heart stopping." Her family stayed safe in their shelter, but a direct hit killed an entire family in a nearby shelter.

In *The First Day of the Blitz*, Peter Stansky has written a fascinating and important story. He wisely lets "ordinary people" who lived through the bombing tell the story through their diaries and letters. Their voices give the book the power and clarity of immediate experience. Prof. Stansky draws from Mass Observation, a project begun in 1937. The anthropologist Tom Harrison and others used amateur notetakers to find out about ordinary life. During the war, the government used it to assess civilian morale. Additional sources come from diaries, letters, and books, many of them in the Imperial War Museum.

Stansky sets out to show that the beginning of Germany's terror attacks on London encapsulated much that one needs to know about England's preparedness for the war, class relations in English society, British peoples' attitudes toward their government, their government's attitude toward them, and even Britain's chances of enduring and winning World War II. The relentless bombing lasted from September 7, 1940, to May 10, 1941. He succeeds in convincing the reader not only of the drama of that first day, but also of the complex repercussions of the bombing on the war and on the peace that followed. He writes of this harrowing time with compassion and wit.

It would have been challenging simply to describe what happened in the Blitz, given the government's "spin" on bad news and the myths that began to grow around the bombing from the moment it began. However, Stansky also looks at questions of human, specifically British, behavior in the face of

terror. He considers whether there was a particularly British way of coping and, for those who were not killed or seriously wounded, surviving. Writing soon after the 2001 attacks on the United States, he also casts an historian's eye on some similarities between the two September disasters. The author describes his motivation in writing this book, "In part impelled by 9/11, I wanted to study the Blitz, including the 'myth of the Blitz'" in which everyone behaved so well. It is baffling how the British government could have been so ill prepared for the bombing. There was considerable talk of imminent invasion by the Germans. Only a miscalculation by Hitler—he turned his forces to attack Russia—saved the English from that horror. The government planned for many more dead. As it was, according to the author's statistics, throughout the Blitz there were 28,556 Londoners killed by the bombs and another 25,576 grievously wounded. On the first night, in London alone, 400 were killed.

The government could not anticipate that the number made homeless by the bombing could be equal to the number they had expected to die. Shelters were of flimsy construction and too few; they also lacked sanitation. The government assumed each bombing would be quick. Instead, there are stories of those who were killed because they left shelters too soon. The government believed stress would cause the lower and middle classes to panic. Instead, they lived with fear and rubble day after day. The Germans made the East End, densely populated by the poor and working class, a prime target because of its docks and factories.

The myth of the Blitz features stoic, fearless Brits singing in their shelters and sipping countless cups of tea. It turns out there was singing and that the reflexive tea-making is almost comically constant. However, there was fear. One would perhaps need to be senseless not to have been terrified. Many of the diarists record their surprise at not being dead. The British habit of keeping personal thoughts inside seems to have given them a convenient camouflage, as if saying,

"If we don't tell each other we're scared, maybe we can get through." The myth of pulling together does not hold up 100 percent. There was looting, for example. More alarming still, community solidarity did not extend to those the majority considered not quite fully English: the Jewish Londoners in the East End were targets of complaints and anti-Semitism.

The myth did have justification and usefulness. The Blitz was horrendous. The population of the East End especially endured attacks which would cause any human to feel panic. Despite it all, those who survived lived their lives in a nearly normal way. As a result of the regularity of the bombing, most Londoners incorporated fires, fears, ear-splitting noise, and injuries into their days. Making the horror commonplace allowed English individuals and, ultimately, their culture to continue. The victims became the conquerors in myth and in fact.

The book also presents observations from professional intellectuals. Many are notable for their distance from events, mental as well as physical. They measure the bombing against hopes for political change or pet theories of human behavior. One learns more from Len Jones, age 18. He wrote, "after an explosion of a nearby bomb, you could actually feel your eye-balls being sucked out."

Would the US today be better prepared for another terrorist attack than London was for the Blitz in 1940? Are we helplessly waiting for the next shoe to drop? This book subtly calls on the reader to face these questions. *The First Day of the Blitz* offers a model way to lace personal histories into historical context and fact. It suggests provocative uses of comparative history. Most of all, it offers a muted, cautious optimism for humanity's survival.

Leslie Friedman

In addition to being a land of clean air and water, Alaska, as the saying goes has 'miles and miles of nothing but miles and miles.' Alaska is the most sparsely populated state but Alaskans pay dearly for the pristine environment: it is very expensive to travel. A round-trip ticket from Anchorage to Seattle costs about \$700 and then, as Alaskans say, 'you're only in Seattle.'

I would like to thank the Mini-grant Committee for the \$500 I received last year. I was able to combine that money with a ticket I had already purchased for a conference in Washington D. C. Thus I was privileged to spend three days looking at original Alaskan documentation in the National Archive. My primary focus was anti-war activity in the Territory of Alaska during the First World War but I was also able to examine documents from the Alaska Gold Rush.

The results of that mini-grant have borne fruit. My composite history of the Alaska Gold Rush came out in November 2007 from Greenwood Publishers. This will be the first history of the Alaska Gold Rush in 40 years and includes documents not seen by Alaskans in more than a century. The anti-war documents were part of my scholarly treatise "Holding Opinions Your Neighbors Do Not Share," which is currently under consideration by Kent State University Press.

For those of us who do not live in the Lower 48, grant money, no matter how small, is welcome. Any work of quality on Alaskan history necessarily means travel Outside – and usually to Washington D. C. The grant of \$500 made it possible for me to spend two days doing research I could never had done without the grant. (A listing of my books can be found at www.bluecrabpublishing.com.)

Steve Levi

CALENDAR

September 14	Membership Pot Luck
October 19	Work-in Progress -- Susan Cohn
October 24-26	National Coalition of Independent Scholars Conference in Berkeley
November 8	Annual Dinner
February 28	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 or to the Institute's postal address given below. Also, we welcome the opportunity to review members' newly published books. Contact **Autumn Stanley** at autumn_stanley@sbcglobal.net. The deadline for the next NEWSLETTER is **November 30, 2008**.

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