

THE INSTITUTE FOR HISTORICAL STUDY

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NEWSLETTER

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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

I'm pleased to take on the role of president of the Institute, as by and large it runs like a well-oiled machine — provided that the oil is actually wine! I am indebted to previous boards and especially Anne Homan, my predecessor, for their hard work. Thanks also to our new committee chairs: Hildi Kang, Program Chair; Monica Clyde, who is coordinating Works-in-Progress; and Edee Piness, Membership.

Recent activities: On April 17, Gretta Mitchell opened her lovely Berkeley home to Institute members for the annual potluck dinner. The food and wine were, as always, delicious and plentiful. Since this is one event without a program, the evening was taken up with lively conversations. Thank you Gretta, for your hospitality.

On May 14, Institute members and guests picnicked and then toured the John Muir house in Martinez. Besides enjoying a fine sunny day in very pleasant surroundings, we learned about John Muir's life in the beautiful house and orchards that his wife's parents built (see **Nancy Zinn's** report, page 3). Thanks go to Joanne Lafler who organized the day. We would like to continue the practice of having "field trips" to local sites of historical interest. The Board has been discussing possible places, but we welcome suggestions from members.

Coming attractions: Our traditional picnic will be held July 17 in Redwood Park, and will, as always, feature the History Bee. Don't miss it! The highlight for the Institute this year will be our 25th Anniversary Dinner, to be held on November 5th at Preservation Park in Oakland. The program is still being created, but you can expect recognition of the accomplishments of the organization and its members over the past 25 years.

Ellen Huppert

WORK-IN-PROGRESS – Anne MacLachlan

The Unlikely Employment of a German Historian

Anne MacLachlan's report of her Work-in-Progress, delivered at the home of Georgia Wright on Sunday, March 20th, bore the intriguing title "*The Unlikely Employment of a German Historian.*"

For several years now Anne has been employed by UC Berkeley's Center for Studies in Higher Education, where she is now Senior Researcher. The Center's purpose, and Anne's, is to investigate, among other things, how well Berkeley's graduate school is serving its graduate students, how successful it is in placing its PhDs, and the extent to which it is expanding opportunities, both for graduate students and faculty, and for women and minorities. To do this, she must gather facts — from the president of the university, from deans, and from professors of all ranks.

She amusingly indicated that her PhD in German history had prepared her for her work at the Center in a rather unexpected way. To understand German history, it had been necessary to learn in detail how the Holy Roman Empire actually worked. She found that it was a particularly hierarchical system, beginning with the emperor at the top, descending through grand dukes, various bishops, counts and so forth, with the bottom rung being the knights. Not surprisingly, the lower people on the ladder had to pay deference to all above them; a knight could not hope to gain support from someone higher than himself unless he could convince someone higher still to intervene; and a higher position in the hierarchy did not necessarily correlate with greater ability.

She found, she said, that a university faculty is organized very much as was the Holy Roman Empire, with faculty members not inclined to go out of their way to help those of lower rank. She likened her position when she started at the Center as being a knight who got little cooperation from the professors until she went over their heads to a grand duke who issued orders.

Among the early findings was the fact that although UC Berkeley produces more PhDs than most other

universities in the United States there was a real paucity of information on whether or where they had been employed after leaving the university. Too many professors appeared simply to dismiss from their minds the students they had advised once they were gone. This lack of information made it difficult to judge the effectiveness of the various graduate programs and to make improvements. Similarly, many of the departments hold faculty meetings very rarely, not, as one might expect, because there are no policies that need discussing, but because such meetings always produce so many disagreements that the department chairmen prefer not to precipitate discussions.

One gets the impression from Anne that although she and the Center have had their successes, she is still basically feeling right at home dealing with the Holy Roman Empire. One also has the impression that when she decides to leave, the University might consider getting a Byzantinist to replace her.

Dan Wages

CORRECTION

In the Spring 2005 edition of the NEWSLETTER, the Institute's program at Holy Names University, *Fire on Pier 32: A History of the ILWU, 1934-2002* by Jack Rasmus, was reviewed. In that review, Harvey Schwartz was quoted as observing that "while the ILWU has taken the glory for creating independent unions, the International Ladies Garment Workers (ILGWU) actually led that development."

Harvey has sent the following comment: "On the contrary, it was the longshore union's victory in 1934 that inspired the tremendous upsurge of unionism along the Pacific Coast that followed 'the big strike.' . . . One of the unions that grew in strength in northern California [between 1934 and 1941] was the ILGWU, but it was the ILWU that led the way. The ILWU did get the glory for all of this, it is true. But it also deserved it."

We apologize for the inadvertent error.

On Saturday, May 14, 2005, eighteen members and friends of the Institute gathered at the John Muir home in Martinez. The home site consists of nine acres; this, with a few non-adjacent parcels are all that remains of the original Martinez land grant of some 17,000 acres. The weather was glorious, sunny and warm with a refreshing breeze and the picnic area adjacent to the home saw us all enjoying the lunches we brought plus drinks and delightful desserts provided by the Institute and several of its members.

After lunch we saw a capsule (8 minute) video on Muir's life, which was followed by an informative tour of the Muir Home, led by Ranger Ted Shay. The 17-room Italianate Victorian home, built in 1882 by Muir's father-in-law, Dr. John Strentzel, was occupied by Muir, his wife Louie and his daughters, Helen and Wanda, from 1890 to 1914. Both Strentzel and Muir were fruit ranchers on the site, and the remnants of the apple, peach, cherry, almond, walnut, lemon, orange, pear, apricot, plum and prune orchards are still visible.

The ground floor of the home consists of two front parlors on opposite sides of the front entrance, a library, dining room and kitchen, and a conservatory and sun porch on opposite sides of the building. The furnishings are sparse as there are few of the originals available, though they are gradually acquiring appropriate pieces from the period 1900-1914. One piece from Muir's time is the large piece of marble topping a kitchen work table. Another original piece is Muir's desk, upstairs in his study or "scribble den" on the second floor. There are family and guest bedrooms, a bathroom and lavatory and a study annex (Sierra Club exhibit room) on the same floor. The third floor attic is open space, with a stair leading to the bell tower, which affords a 360° view of the grounds. A carriage house and windmill complete the structures associated with the house.

It was a splendid outing, and we look forward to similar visits to local historical sites in the future!

Nancy Zinn

Having seen Robespierre off to the guillotine at the end of Stanislaw Przymysk's *Thermidor*, we turned to a very different historical time and place — Zurich in 1917 — and a very different playwright. Tom Stoppard's *Travesties*, which I saw in its original production in London in 1972, is not a seriously-intended history play, but it deals with serious subjects. Its cast includes Lenin and his wife Krupskaya, James Joyce and Tristan Tzara (a founder of the Dada movement), all of whom happened to be in Zurich at this time.

Stoppard weaves a sprightly fantasy in which these characters meet and interact in a library, along with two fictional characters— the librarian Cecily, and Joyce's assistant, Gwendolyn. He introduces a fourth historical character, Henry Carr, whose claim to minor fame is that he played the role of Algernon Moncrieff in a production of *The Importance of Being Earnest* in 1918, for which Joyce was the manager. *Travesties* moves back and forth in time, between the primary action in 1917 and the older Carr's reflections. It also moves in and out of *The Importance of Being Earnest* (the names of the two young women are not coincidental), with scenes and dialogue lifted directly, and adapted, from the Wilde play. The result is a frothy concoction, but we agreed that beneath the froth there are significant political and artistic issues. Lenin is preparing for his return to Russia— in the famous sealed railroad car that will take him through Germany to the Finland Station in St. Petersburg. We hear much about in-fighting among the revolutionaries, from which Lenin's Bolsheviks emerged as the dominant force. Joyce and Tzara are engaged in literary and artistic work that challenges the status quo, but they disagree as to the form that modernism should take. I can testify that when you see a production on stage, you have no time to ponder the historical significance. But WE stopped our reading often both to discuss these matters and to laugh.

Our next play, George Bernard Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra*, takes us to classical Alexandria, after which comes Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*.

Joanne Lafler

Georgia Wright is now taking a narrative approach toward her subject, stressing the theme of her diarist's faith. Her paper, *A Catholic in the French Revolution*, explained the problem of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, which made clerics employees of the State and prohibited relations with the pope. **Autumn Stanley** presented biographies she is compiling for her college's 50th reunion. After overcoming her classmates' general reluctance --mostly by asking specific questions--she noted striking differences between men's and women's stories and those who were used to writing. In describing Juana Briones' reputation as a *curandera*, **Jeanne McDonnell** referred to a 1919 article calling Juana "California's Clara Barton," high praise then, when Barton was well-known as the founder of the American Red Cross. However, Jeanne admitted in her text that headlines will exaggerate. **Bonda Lewis** brought part of a chapter from her novel, *Thursday's Children*, about the new day-to-day farm and school life and its contrast with the previous experiences of the arriving Train Orphans. She appreciated **Ellen Huppert's** suggestions based on her years in a one-room school in Wisconsin. **Joanne Lafler** has considerable information on Harry Lafler's second wife, Gladys Courvoisier, a glamorous "society girl" whom he married in 1911. Her parents were divorced and Gladys' first husband divorced her after less than a year. The group suggested including comments about divorce in California at this time. **Ellen Huppert** presented part of a chapter about Barton and Marietta Taylor's trip through the south over the winter of 1851-2. She made the hardships of their journey vivid by using Marietta's diary and Barton's reminiscences. Ellen has rewritten the piece on advice of the group (especially Bonda), opening with an account of one of the small-town concerts they gave to finance their trip. **Ethel Herr** shared part of her dialogue with Ellen Cohen about Aaron Lansky, a collector of over a million Yiddish books. By visiting the National Yiddish Book Center in Amherst MA, Ellen recognized her attachment to Jewish cultural roots and gave Ethel more appreciation of identifying across cultural barriers.

Jeanne McDonnell

The Medieval Study Group's March meeting was held at the home of **Lyn Reese**, when **John Rusk** presented a review of *Chronicles: The Writing of History in Medieval England*, by Chris Given-Wilson (Hambledon and London, 2004), a study of written history, both verse and prose, in medieval England. Most such histories were in Latin, but some were eventually written in the vernacular. Most were written by monks; the few layman chroniclers were soldiers. There are 50 or so surviving chronicles from the mid-13th century to the mid-14th century. These writings purported to be "telling the truth" which could mean that they got the facts straight; they conveyed universal truths; or they told facts about the past as the way 'it should have been' such as the tales of King Arthur. Oral evidence from those who had personally witnessed events was considered the best evidence; written sources, such as court and judicial records, only become important as they become available. The chroniclers believed that their writings conferred "immortality" on events. Thus, subjects they chose as worthy of memory were influenced by questions of faith, by the belief in miracles, by their male viewpoint, by their faith in prophecy, and by the growing number of histories of kings and queens.

In April, **Nancy Zinn** invited the group to her home for a taste of medieval food. After serving us caudle (almonds and saffron in hot wine) and pottage (cooked peas) along with unleavened rye and barley bread, Nancy related the results of her extensive research into what food was common in this period and where it came from. One major regional difference was that residents of the north of the continent mainly drank beer, those of the south drank wine. Food migrating from the Middle East, such as eggplant and citrus fruit, influenced Southern Europe. Kitchen gardens, heavy on root vegetables, cabbages, beans and peas, fruits and nuts, contained most of what we have today. Herbs and salt were used for seasoning; for most, spices were too expensive. Fish and pork were also available to some. In general, the producers were the consumers, but class distinctions played a major part in what people could eat.

Lorrie O'Dell

CALIFORNIA ROUND TABLE

On Saturday, March 5, members of the California Round Table met at the home of **Masha Zakheim**, where **Jules Becker** read the epilogue to the revision of his book, *The Course of Exclusion, 1882-1924*, (Mellon Research University Press, 1991). Jules has titled this new edition *Not Welcome in America: Chinese and Japanese Exclusion 1882-1924, as covered by the SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE and the SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER*. The epilogue presents the research Jules has done, including oral histories, to bring his study up to the present day.

Although attendance at the meeting was small, the discussion was lively, and Jules was appreciative of the comments that were made. The next meeting of the group was held on June 4 and will be reported in the next issue of the NEWSLETTER.

NEW MEMBERS

The Board of Directors is pleased to announce the acceptance of two new members since the publication of the last NEWSLETTER.

New member **Steven Levi** is our first member from Alaska. An author of many articles on a wide variety of subjects, Steven hopes that membership in the Institute will offer him an opportunity to communicate with other scholars, and he offers the opportunity to trade research time with scholars who need Alaskan materials in exchange for research on Alaskan subjects in the lower 48 states. He says his current research interest is in the "Great Red-Scare Radicals."

After attending the Institute's annual meeting in February as a guest of **Jules Becker**, **Susan Morris** applied for membership and was accepted by the Board at its March meeting. Susan is the former Director of the Judah L. Magnus Museum in Berkeley, and has publications in her field as well. She is interested in the history of California Jews, and in joining the California Round Table.

INSTITUTE MINI-GRANTS

The Institute is again offering mini-grants to its members for support of their scholarly projects. All members were sent letters announcing these grants for 2005.

The deadline for applications is September 1. If you would like to apply, write to the Mini-Grant Committee at P.O. Box 5743, Berkeley, CA 94705 and you will be sent a set of guidelines and an application.

PHOTOGRAPHS

In celebration of the Institute's 25th anniversary, the archives have been searched and the photographs on the following pages chosen to illustrate a little of our history and our diverse membership.

Page 6—Top: The First Board of Directors, 1980. Lorrie O'Dell, Ellen Huppert, Roberta Wollens, Francesca Miller, Paula Gillett, Jules Becker, Frances Richardson Keller, Joanne Lafler. Absent, Peter Mellini..

Center: Tahoe Board Retreat, 1983: Bill Bonds, Lorrie O'Dell, Deborah Frangquist, Georgia Wright, Francesca Miller.

Bottom: Board of Directors, 1986: Michael Mao, Joanne Lafler, Glenna Matthews, Monica Clyde, Mary Agnes Dougherty, Carl Guarneri, Nancy McCauley, Bill Bonds.

Page 7—Reading Across: Anne Homan, Group of 'History Bee' players at an Annual Picnic, Ruth Friedlander, Bill Strobridge, Jules Becker, Peter Browning, Monica Clyde & Agnes Peterson, Bonda Lewis as 'Amelia Bloomer,' Masha Zakheim, Wolfgang Rosenberg & Anne Richardson, Mike Griffith & Elaine Rosenthal, Ellen Huppert, Jeanne McDonnell, Nancy Zinn





MEMBERSHIP

Leslie Friedman, who apologizes for having been out of touch for far too long, has much news to report! She presented a keynote paper at an international conference in Chicago held at Columbia College: *BharataNatyam in the Diaspora*. The paper was published by the *India World & News*. Also, she received the first Selma Jeanne Cohen Award for International Dance Scholarship, 2001, administered by The Fulbright Association. This award was endowed by Dr. Selma Jeanne Cohen, a legendary figure who created the academic study of dance history. The award was given for a previously unpublished paper of original research based on field work and interviews done in India while there as a Fellow of the American Institute of Indian Studies/Smithsonian Institution and also as a Fulbright Lecturer. Also, her essays on *The San Francisco Renaissance* and on *Alvin Ailey* appeared in the new publication, *The 50s*, published by Salem Press, 2004.

Ruth Silnes wrote an essay on art and had the opportunity to read it at Borders Books in San Mateo. The District Marketing Manager was in the audience, and when Ruth met her again a few weeks later, she asked how her book on art was coming along. "At that moment my essay became a book in progress, *Art of the Artist or Why Art*."

Lucia Chiavola Birnbaum's anthology, *She is Everywhere! An Anthology of Writing in Womanist/Feminist Spirituality* has just been published by iUniverse (New York, Lincoln, Shanghai, 2005) and was celebrated at a potluck book launching at Belladonna in Berkeley on May 13, 2005. There are 50 contributors. The back cover states: "Perhaps the first womanist/feminist anthology which includes women's voices from many cultural and spiritual traditions across the globe from past to present. This book will be enormously useful and stimulating to women's studies classes and the emerging vibrant study of women's spirituality." Also, Lucia will be participating in the conference on black madonnas at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley on June 18. She will then be traveling to research her current 'book-in progress': *Tanit! Primordial African Migrations to the Future*.

Autumn Stanley reports that on her recent trip to Lexington, Kentucky, for her 50th college reunion, her alma mater, Transylvania University, gave her its Distinguished Achievement Award for 2005. Transylvania, founded in 1780, is the oldest college west of the Alleghenies, twelfth oldest in the nation, and well recognized for excellence among small liberal-arts colleges and universities. Its average class size is 13. Congratulations to Autumn!

Ethel Herr's biographical novel about Juliana von Stolberg (mother of Willem van Oranje) has finally a spot on the publication schedule of the company who asked her to write it. June 2006!!! This will be three years after she finished writing and revising the manuscript for them. Interestingly, Juliana was born in February of 1506-- so this book will appear in the year of her 500th birthday!

Jeanne McDonnell filled a sudden vacancy on a panel at the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians at Scripps College, and was able to adapt her title to fit the presentation. She changed "Crafting the Female Biography" about Helen Keller, to "Crafting the Latina Biography" about Juana Briones. Jeanne says "I enjoyed telling about how Joanne Lafler had enlightened me at one of the Institute's Biography Group meetings when she said she'd like to see more Juana in it. Marvelous. I suddenly realized that, of course, I can't give just plain context — the reader doesn't know Juana as intimately as I do. I have to tell, for example, what it was in Juana's birthplace that her later life showed had influenced her."

IN MEMORIAM

We are saddened to report the news that former Institute member **Mary Anderson** died tragically in an accident in Oakland on May 9. As a history professor at Holy Names University, and as a participant in various Institute activities, she will be remembered as a fine scholar and a good friend.

“Refrains: Margaret Fuller’s Presence Between Centuries,” in *Margaret Fuller’s Cultural Critique: Her Age and Legacy*, Fritz Fleischmann, editor (New York, Peter Lang Publishing, 2000)

Judith Strong Albert’s aptly titled essay, “Refrains,” suggests the role female and gender scholars assign to Margaret Fuller, the subject of this work. Indeed, Margaret Fuller epitomizes female contributions and restlessness between and over the centuries, as well as woman’s search for her self and her connections with human history. These “refrains,” which arise from the resonance of Fuller’s life and work, are gifts from one generation’s women to the next generation’s women. In this short essay Albert offers a dynamic model for portraying and intensifying these legacies. While it might seem presumptuous to deal with this subject in a short study, in an extrapolation of congruent themes Albert demonstrates how concerns of today’s women descend from and relate to women’s concerns of previous centuries. Albert selects figures from Fuller’s “circle” in the 19th century, and showcases them in tandem with writers of the 20th century. From a wide array of writers, she chooses those most relevant to the themes deemed most urgent. Thus on the “joined subjects” of women’s rights and human enslavement, Margaret Fuller and Lydia Maria Child represent 19th century attitudes while Alice Walker and Angela Davis speak for the 20th century. On women as mothers and as independent beings, Albert chooses Margaret Fuller and Elizabeth Peabody for the 19th century and Adrienne Rich and Nancy Chodorow for the 20th century. For woman’s rights and woman’s self, Margaret Fuller and Caroline Wells Dall represent the 19th century and Carolyn Heilbrun and Gloria Steinem the 20th. On the subject of self and gender, the whole circle Fuller knew in the 19th century is chosen, and for the present moment, Betty Friedan and Gerda Lerner. Fuller’s aim was ambitious; she wanted women to be capable of “self-education,” and she meant education in the highest echelons. Albert’s essay is thought-provoking, and could well be expanded into a book. We hope that such a study will be forthcoming.

Frances Richardson Keller

A Mini-Grant Well Used

Aided by a mini-grant from the Institute, I recently traveled to the Huntington Library in San Marino, continuing my research on the life of Henry Anderson (Harry) Lafler. My husband John accompanied me as co-driver, reader's assistant and Official Photographer. We were given a small room at the back of the reading room where we could work together without bothering other researchers. It became our home from 9 a.m. until closing time for five days. With John's help, I surveyed many of the 600-plus items in the papers of the poet George Sterling and made a tiny dent in the vast Jack London Collection.

Examining the originals of George Sterling's correspondence, I learned more about this complex man and corrected a significant error in a published collection of his letters. Reading the diaries of Jack London's wife, Charmian, enlarged my sense of the social and sexual dynamics of the group of writers and artists of which Lafler became a member in 1905. An especially prized discovery was a 1917 letter from Rose Wilder Lane to Charmian London, inviting her to "climb Telegraph Hill to our little colony of cunning houses and quite interesting people." This was Harry Lafler's "compound," where he reigned as "King of Telegraph Hill."

We spent several hours at the Los Angeles Public Library, finding important information about Lafler's real estate work in the 1920s. We had always wondered why there were two streets named Lafler near the Los Angeles State University campus. I now know that Harry played a key role in developing City Terrace, a planned community of mixed industrial and residential property. Driving to East Los Angeles, we found and photographed both of the streets. Many of the houses on Lafler Drive clearly date from the 1924 development. What a satisfying conclusion to my Institute-sponsored research trip!

Joanne Lafler

CALENDAR

June 19	Richmond History Museum Tour
July 17	Annual Picnic and “History Bee”
August 21	Work-in-Progress
September 17	California Round Table Meeting
November 5	25 th Anniversary Dinner

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_dave@compuserve.com. The deadline for the next NEWSLETTER is **AUGUST 31st**.

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 it aims and who have a commitment to historical study. Membership inquiries should be sent to the Institute address.

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