

# THE INSTITUTE FOR HISTORICAL STUDY

VOLUME 29, NO.2, SUMMER–FALL 2009

# NEWSLETTER

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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 want to highlight three Institute events scheduled for this fall. On September 12, the Institute will have its annual potluck. This is always an outstanding opportunity to relax, eat excellent food, and catch up with members you may not have seen for awhile.

On October 18, the Institute will be holding a special event at San Jose's History Park, a few minutes south of downtown. The History Park features numerous historic buildings moved from their original locations, and the buildings capture the diversity of the Santa Clara Valley's past. Among other structures, the park includes the home of poet Edwin Markham, a Chinese American temple, and a Portuguese Imperio. Many of the buildings now feature museums or display galleries. We hope to arrange a guided tour of the park for Institute members to enhance the experience. The park also is very close to History San Jose, the primarily historical society for the city, and it may be possible to visit there as well. To learn more about the park, visit History San Jose's website ([historysanjose.org](http://historysanjose.org)), click on "Visiting HSJ" and then on "History Park."

Concluding its fall schedule, the Institute will hold its annual dinner on November 21. You will receive an official notice as to time and place.

On a wholly different subject, for an engaging view of what we know and especially what we don't know about a distant past, I heartily recommend Mary Beard's *The Fires of Vesuvius: Pompeii Lost and Found*. While recapturing some of the strangeness of the Roman world, Beard also shows how difficult certainty is about many features of ancient life. By doing so, she reinforces the importance of humility and skepticism as virtues for all historians.

*Michael Griffith*

## WORK-IN-PROGRESS – Celeste MacLeod

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Any author who published her first book at the age of fifty-three and went on to publish forty more books in the remaining thirty-one years of her life would be worthy of note, but Fanny Trollope is worthy of much more than passing attention. Known nowadays chiefly as the mother of novelist Anthony Trollope, she launched her own writing career in 1832 with *Domestic Manners of the Americans*, which became a best-seller on both sides of the Atlantic, albeit for different reasons. This book is still discussed and debated by scholars and readers of American history. On March 15, at the home of **Joanne Lafler, Celeste MacLeod** presented an overview of her book in progress, *What Fanny Saw: Mrs. Trollope and Her Infamous Book on Young America*, to a large and receptive audience.

Fanny Trollope came to America in 1827 not as a journalist or social critic but out of necessity, for her husband was unable to support their family in England. A friend, Scottish heiress Frances Wright, had started a utopian colony in Nashoba, Tennessee to better the condition of slaves. She urged Fanny to join her there, saying she could save money and her son Henry could be the school's headmaster. Trollope and her children arrived to find a dank swamp with a few leaky cabins. There was no school. They soon moved on to Cincinnati, where Fanny used a small inheritance to open a shopping bazaar that she planned to turn over to Henry. When that enterprise failed, she conceived the idea of writing a book about her experiences in America, beginning the project while she stayed with a friend in Maryland and finishing it after returning to England.

She had not come with the intention of disapproving of Americans and their conduct, but her experiences had not been happy and she wrote candidly about what she had seen, never hesitating to express her opinions vigorously. For example, she thought American men worked all the time and were money-mad, while women were undervalued and ignored. Above all, she was affronted by what we now call "American exceptionalism"—the way Americans constantly bragged about being the best, the freest, the most unique and greatest country the

world had ever known. It is hardly surprising that Fanny Trollope's observations affronted her American readers.

Celeste noted that Britain in 1832 was mired in controversy over the Reform Act, and Trollope's publisher encouraged her to write a new preface that stressed the negative aspects of American democracy, although Trollope, unlike Alexis de Toqueville—whose *Democracy in America* was published in 1835—had little interest in politics and had not raised that issue in the book itself. Either because of the timely preface, or simply because her account was vivid and lively, the British edition of *Domestic Manners of the Americans* was a huge success. Trollope would continue her career as a best-selling writer of novels, often taking on social issues as slavery, evangelical excesses, child labor, and the bastardy clauses of a new Poor Law.

Since there have been a number of full-length biographies of Fanny Trollope, Celeste intends to focus on *Domestic Manners*, and especially on Trollope as perhaps the earliest foreign visitor to comment on American exceptionalism. She asked for suggestions about secondary historical sources that would provide context for Trollope's experiences in America, and she received a number of suggestions, including Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.'s *The Age of Jackson*.

*Joanne Lafler*

## Anne Homan – WORK-IN-PROGRESS

### Livermore Caricatures 1910-2010

At the home of **Jeanne MacDonnell** on June 21, **Anne Homan** presented her most recent historical research project. It received its impetus quite by accident. A fellow member of the Livermore Historical Society mentioned at one of its monthly meetings a collection of 43 caricatures of local citizens created in 1910 at The Hub, a popular bar frequented by men only. The collection is now owned by Dan Berry of Burlingame, a descendant of the last owner of Dan's Place, the successor of The Hub, where the caricatures were on display until Dan's Place closed its doors for good.

Anne and her co-researcher, Richard Finn, contacted Dan Berry and were invited to view his collection. The 43 caricatures were created by Vasco Loureiro, also known as Louis Vasco, an artist of Portuguese descent, who was born in 1882 in England and raised in Australia. Already well-known as a cartoonist in Australia, Vasco—as he signs his creations—exhibited a strong urge to go on a global “walk about.” He financed his globe-trotting with “his pencil,” in other words his skills as an artist and cartoonist. One of his travels landed him in San Francisco, and eventually in Livermore, where for a short time he made a modest living by drawing local citizens who frequented The Hub Saloon. And with that information, their project began to take shape. Anne and Richard have taken it upon themselves to identify each of the 43 subjects and place them in the context of family and local history. They hope to eventually publish the caricatures along with the results of their research.

How Vasco came to make his living in Livermore is anyone's guess. But what better place to find subjects to draw, and who could also pay a modest fee, than a bar that functioned as a kind of social club for men exclusively and where a sense of camaraderie created a suitable atmosphere for his art and livelihood. That's how Louis Vasco became a regular at The Hub. It also explains why the collection features men only. Women sometimes tried to gain entrance to the Hub only to be politely but firmly turned back.

For fifty cents or a dollar—or if all else failed, a drink—Vasco would draw sketches of the customer. These drawings then joined a growing collection of caricatures gracing the walls of The Hub saloon. In time, The Hub moved to a new location, now named “Dan's Place” and the collection moved along.

Vasco's medium was conté-crayon on paper. True to a caricaturist's style, he drew his subjects with exaggerated physical characteristics: very large heads drawn in profile on tiny bodies, as the example on this page demonstrates. He embellished the drawings with whimsical little critters like birds, chicken, horses, or sheep, often tied to their human subjects by a tether. Anne assumes that all these details had specific meaning for the individual subject. Some of the subjects were identified by name, some by a nickname, for example “Oily George” who has been identified as George Beck who had invested in oil wells on lands around Livermore. The project requires painstaking research: wading through old newspapers and records with the keen eye of a sleuth. As an example, Anne cited one of the drawings titled “The Colonel” that lacked any other identification. Going through a local newspaper of the time, Anne hit pay-dirt when she came across an announcement of the birth of a new grandson to a John Sweeney, also known locally as “The Colonel.” Bingo!

Vasco's drawings of his Livermore subjects are all dated 1910. Exactly where he went from there is not known, but he eventually returned to Australia where he enlisted in the army during WWI. He died in 1917 at the age of 37 of wounds sustained in France. In the short time that he shared his life and artistry with the Livermore community, he added a touch of class and humor to the lives of a number of Livermore residents. They are forever memorialized by the pen of a talented caricaturist, who by all accounts, was a true citizen of the world.

*Monica Clyde*

## WORK-IN-PROGRESS – Georgia Wright

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### “Run that by me again, Father!”

On Sunday, July 29, at the home of **Ellen Huppert, Georgia Wright** challenged the assumption of art and church historians that laity in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in France knew enough about Christianity to interpret church decorative programs such as the rich and complex sculpture of Gothic cathedrals. It raises the question of what church-goers did know and how they knew it.

Georgia opened her discussion by reviewing the level of education of the congregations. The few who went to grammar schools would have learned enough Latin for legal contracts. The large majority of church-goers, however, were illiterate. Although since the fourth century, Church Councils had emphasized preaching to educate parishioners, they bemoaned the number of uninstructed priests. As late as 1200, the Dean of the Cathedral of Amiens was fired because he did not know Latin. In sum, illiterate parishioners were being instructed by clergy who themselves were often illiterate in Latin.

Georgia consulted a variety of sources to try to find out what the lay congregations did know. In addition to the popular beliefs reported in Aron Gurevich's *Medieval Popular Culture*, she looked at the beliefs revealed in the testimony in the inquisition in southern France in the early fourteenth century (see LeRoy Ladurie, *Montaillou, the Promised Land of Error*) which focused on the practices that identified a good Christian: fasting, pilgrimages, alms-giving, taking communion, confessing, and doing penance.

The most fruitful source for finding out how the Church instructed the congregations are the few collections of vernacular sermons. These include those by Maurice de Sully, Bishop of Paris, who wrote between 1161 and 1171, and an anonymous Provençal manuscript of around 1200, copied by a Catalan and now in the cathedral of Tortosa.

Bishop Maurice's sermon to his priests lists the books they should have; besides those with services for Baptism and Communion and a penitential to

help them quiz those confessing, they would have a Lectionary with brief passages from the Bible to be used in the Sunday services. These readings, often reduced to a single verse, were used as the themes for Sunday sermons, and they appear to have been the only way the Biblical text was directly transmitted to the auditors.

Samples of the bishop's sermons show surprising omissions in the story of Christ as well as odd commentaries on the Biblical narrative. His sermon for Easter Sunday refers only in Latin to the words of Christ at the Last Supper and then deals with who should NOT take communion. Those still in a state of sin risk damnation. However, the Church, he says, will allow those sinners who feel embarrassed to be singled out may receive communion anyway!

In their sermons on the Feeding of the Five Thousand, taken as one example, the bishop and the Provençal preacher expand imaginatively and differently on the Biblical text. Even more than Maurice, the Tortosa preacher's vivid digressions from the Biblical text, such as a chatty conversation between Adam and God in Paradise, evoke the cry “Run that by me again, Father!”

*Sally Wages*

### **Report from the EUROCLIO Conference, Nicosia, Cyprus, April 2009**

History teaching is a battleground in a divided Cyprus with teachers on both sides caught in the middle. After 30 years the island remains split between the Turkish North and Greek South. In the past, teachers worked against each other based on their national backgrounds. Now they are overcoming mutual suspicions to work on ways that history can help students see a common future of unity and reconciliation. To support their aim, annual conference of the European Association of History Educators (EUROCLIO) was held in the capital, Nicosia, itself divided into north and south. Attended by 150 teachers from 30 different countries, including three from the United States, Cypriot teachers worked together to present a week-long series of panels, practical teaching workshops, school visits, and tours—all designed to illuminate connections and continuing problems across the old divide. Not surprising, the theme was “Taking the Perspective of the Others: Intercultural Dialogue in Teaching & Learning History.”

I was aware of the continuing separation as I had to pass through border controls over twelve times during my stay. All the sessions were held in Nicosia’s buffer zone, most at the sprawling old Ledra Palace hotel, which since 1974 has housed the United Nations forces. Daily we walked from our hotel into the zone where we had to summon a UN soldier to unchain the gate into the Ledra. My hour and half workshop, “Women’s Ways to Connect Across Cultural Borders,” was held next door at the Fulbright Center.

The ongoing use of Cypriot history textbooks to promote national agendas was one of the topics of interest to many of the conference participants. In the past, the Greek texts presented Cypriot history as basically beginning with the Greeks; ancient Greece, medieval Greece (the “glorious Byzantine Empire”), and modern Greece (the creation of the Greek state during the nineteenth and twentieth

centuries). The Turkish texts, labeling Justinian and the Byzantines as “imperialists,” stressed the glories of a benevolent Ottoman empire. Both histories leaned heavily toward presenting their own group as the victim. For example, the cover of the Greek primary school history textbook showed a group of Greek fighters being held captive, while a Turk wielding a curved sword was ready to behead them.

Refreshingly, recent changes in both texts now present the amazing discovery that Cypriot history actually started in 9000 BCE. New maps show a country with no borders, a mosque and church on the same page, and stress the times Greek and Turkish Cyprus had common goals, for example, during the 1955 miners strike in Lefke. Three conference workshops developed by Cypriot teachers did the same, using topics they considered non-political, such as nineteenth and twentieth century Cyprus wedding traditions, child labor in twentieth century Cyprus, and Cypriot Bazaars as seen by nineteenth century travelers.

Yet, the battle is not over! The spring elections in both the North and South produced a swing toward the right. The National Unite Party campaigned on the promise to “revise the books turning what is now the history of culture into pure national history, in spite of European Union interference.” The left also entered the debate, calling textbooks a form of brainwashing. They claim that by not acknowledging divisions, and white-washing past conflicts, history teaching has avoided the truth and thus failed to help prevent similar problems in the future. Participants at our conference from Estonia, Latvia, Georgia, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Northern Ireland, among other nations, affirmed the continuation of ethnic and religion hostilities being played out in their national texts. For these reasons, the sessions worked on ways to break down idea that history is fixed, rather than a subject which changes with time. History, said one teacher, is not the past but the meaning we take from it. It was agreed that training teachers with new techniques, such as ways to teach using multiple perspectives, will be more effective than changing the texts.

*Lyn Reese*

## STUDY GROUPS

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The **HistoryPlay Readers** recently read **Boris Godunov** by Alexander Pushkin. Boris was the Czar of Russia from 1598-1605 and had been a favorite of “Ivan the Terrible.” After Ivan’s death in 1584, he became the virtual ruler of Russia, acting as Regent for Ivan’s young son Feodor. He is believed to have ordered the murder of Feodor’s younger brother and heir, Dimitri, in order to secure the succession for himself. Upon Feodor’s death in 1598, he was chosen czar by the Zemsky Sobor, the national assembly, and crowned several months later. Initially his rule was fairly stable with domestic progress and improved relations with neighboring Sweden and Poland. In time, political difficulties and famine undermined his rule and rumors of the true fate of Dimitri were circulated. These reached the ears of an ambitious young monk named Gregory, who was the same age as the murdered Dimitri. Playing on the rumor that Dimitri was not murdered, Gregory planned to return to claim his (Dimitri’s) birthright. He escaped from the monastery, crossed the frontier to Poland, rallied support and invaded Russia, bent on establishing his fraudulent claim. Distressed and contrite, Boris died while the army of the Pretender was still far from the Russian capital. He was succeeded by his son, Feodor II, who was unable to defend the throne against the false Dimitri and was murdered several months later by the enemies of the Godunovs. The play ends with proclamation of Dimitri as Czar.

Pushkin’s play received a warm reception from his fellow Russian intellectuals, but it ran afoul of the censor and languished for years. It attained worldwide fame with the operatic version by Mussorgsky. After completing the reading of the play, the History Play Readers were treated to an afternoon watching a DVD of the opera, a 1987 production of the Bolshoi Theatre with Yevgeni Nesterenko in the title role.

The History Play Readers then moved from Russian drama to French, reading Jean Racine’s last play, *Athaliah*, which was written in 1691. The play concerns the Old Testament story of Athaliah, Queen of Judah, who was a worshiper of Baal.

After the death of her husband, Joram, their son Azariah inherited the throne, but died a year later. Athaliah became the ruler, the first woman to sit on the Throne of David. She then murdered all of her grandchildren. Only Joas survived, being secretly kept alive by Josabeth, his aunt, and raised by her husband, the high priest Joad. Joas was unaware of his origins. Athaliah sat on the throne for six or seven years. Scholars date her reign sometime in the vicinity of 842-837 BCE. The play describes the Queen tormented by bad dreams. When she enters the Temple she sees a young boy she recognizes from her dreams as Joas, her grandson, whom she believed long dead. In the ensuing action, Athaliah is killed and Joas becomes the King. The story unfolds in the Temple of Jerusalem, in a single day. Racine concludes the play here, but Joas, as he grew older, like his grandmother, abandoned Yahweh for Baal.

*Edith Piness*

The **Biography Writers Group** welcomed **Celeste MacLeod** as a new member in May. When making our introductions and summarizing our projects, we found that there were several points in which our work intersected with others’. The Erie Canal and the history of western New York appear in the work of **Ellen Huppert**, **Elizabeth Thacker-Estrada**, and **Joanne Lafler**, and there are connections between Albert Bender, Anne Bremer, and Harry Lafler in **Ann Harlow’s** and Joanne’s writing. We learned that Fanny Trollope, Celeste’s subject, was traveling through the United States during the period in which Abigail Fillmore began her life as a political wife .

Celeste explained that her project, a book about Fanny Trollope and her infamous *Domestic Manners of the Americans* will explain the context in which she wrote it and the reactions to the book in the United States and abroad. The group looks forward to seeing some of the text.

At our June meeting, we welcomed **Ethel Herr’s** return after a long absence following her surgery and treatment for cancer. She is writing an account of her illness in memoir form, with encouragement to others who are struggling with this common problem.

## STUDY GROUPS

**Ann Harlow's** pages concentrated on the exciting cultural scene in Paris around 1910, when Anne Bremer was there. She is continuing her research on the Paris artistic climate. She is also polishing her article on "The Beginnings of San Francisco's Art Museums" for the *Argonaut*, the magazine of the San Francisco Museum and Historical Society.

**Ellen Huppert** reported that she has completed a first draft of "Lizzie's Story" and has returned to the earlier part of her book, "Barton's Story." She presented pages taken from his sermons and other writings on the subjects of slavery, the Civil War, temperance, and women's suffrage. In August, Ellen brought drafts of material she will be sending to a publisher. As always, the group's suggestions helped greatly in improving the draft.

**Elizabeth Thacker-Estrada** has been editing the manuscript of her book about First Lady Abigail Powers Fillmore. The insightful comments and valuable suggestions of Joanne Lafler, who read the first cohesive draft of the book in its entirety, and other members, who read portions of the work prior to each meeting, have assisted Liz in polishing the manuscript.

**Autumn Stanley** has turned from promoting *Raising More Hell and Fewer Dahlias* to work on the "Orchard Wizard" article about her grandfather. She is currently organizing the latter half of the article around the challenges he faced in managing his orchard: weather, mechanical problems, World War II shortages of labor and materials, low income, and his own health problems, among others. She hopes to publish the article in *Smithsonian Magazine* or the *Ohio Farmer*. The handwritten journals on which the article is based will go to Ohio University for their agricultural archives.

*Ellen Huppert*

The **Medieval History Study Group** has met five times since our last report. In April, I discussed an issue that had arisen many times over the years of our meetings—when did the Middle Ages end? The fall of Constantinople in 1454, Columbus' discoveries in 1492, the invention of printing, and the Italian Renaissance have all been suggested as possible ending points. Instead, I approached the issue by looking forward and noting the changes that occurred in the sixteenth century, a time dramatically different from the previous centuries. In May, **Georgia Wright** was our guest presenter, describing the miracles that were reported at King Louis IX's tomb before he was canonized. Louis died in 1270 and was entombed at the abbey of Saint Denis. Immediately people came to the tomb to pray and soon reports of miracles began to appear. Louis was canonized in 1297. In June, after her trip to Cypress and the EUROCLEO conference (see page 5), **Lyn Reese** presented a short history of the island. Its medieval history begins with the capture of Cyprus by Richard the Lionheart in 1191 who used it as a supply base for his Crusade against Saladin. In 1192, Guy of Lusignan became king and his descendants ruled Cyprus until 1489 when the Venetians seized control. Lyn's presentation was complemented by slides taken on her travels. In July, we discussed the book, *A History of Histories: Epics, Chronicles from Herodotus and Thucydides to the Twentieth Century*, by John Burrow. The author's approach is to "focus on the question of the pasts that people have chosen for themselves." Our discussion moved from the medieval works of Gregory of Tours through Bede, crusader histories, and annals and chronicles. On a very hot day in August, **John Rusk** reported on the medieval Norse Atlantic. Icelandic settlement was first begun in 874 but lost its Independence to Denmark in 1262. Greenland was settled about 986, and for five hundred years, it survived with an economy based on trading pelts, walrus ivory, whale oil, and wool. Greenland settlement eventually faded due apparently to climate change; the last archeological evidence dates from 1450.

*Lorrie O'Dell*

## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

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The Institute is pleased to announce four new members:

**William Meehan** has a PhD in European History from The University of California, Berkeley, as well as a Ph.D in Clinical Psychology from the Wright Institute. His current research is on the history of the philosophy of psychology.

**Catherine Robbins** has a Master's Degree in English from New York University. Her next project is a cultural history of present-day Calabria. She is also a members of San Diego Independent Scholars.

**Richard Robbins** has retired from teaching at the University of New Mexico and is currently working on the biography of a high official in the last years of the Russian Empire, the popular governor of Moscow and reforming head of the Secret Police.

**Persia Woolley** is an historical novelist and has written several works on the Arthurian world. Her next project will focus on the history of Troy.

**Autumn Stanley** is celebrating the appearance (after thirty years of intermittent detective work) of her biography of the feisty nineteenth-century feminist, reformer, and magazine editor Charlotte Smith. It was published by Lehigh University Press in June under the title *Raising More Hell and Fewer Dahlias* (see review in this issue). Autumn is now working on a biographical article on her grandfather, whom she calls an "Orchard Wizard, in SE Ohio in the 1940s," and on getting some of her twenty-five stories for children published.

**Anne Homan's** book, *Historic Livermore, California: A-Z*, won several honors from the Bay Area Independent Publishers Association: it tied for the first-place "gold award" for "best overall book" and also took first place for "best interior"—an honor for Anne and for Hardscratch Press designer David Johnson.

**Maria Sakovich's** manuscript titled "When the 'Enemy' Landed at Angel Island" has been published in *Prologue: Quarterly of the National Archives and Records Administration*

(Summer 2009). This is the *Prologue's* 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition.

**Anne Richardson** has an opinion piece coming out in *MOREANA* in No. 176 (June 2009). "It's a bluff-call to the charge that Tyndale fathered fundamentalism, in James Simpson's Harvard University Press book, *Burning to Read: English Fundamentalists and Their Reformation Opponents*." She has also had an article accepted by the *Tyndale Society Journal* for the Winter 2009 issue, about Tyndale's field day with a sermon published by St. (Bishop) John Fisher in 152. "My more momentous news, perhaps, is that I have separated myself from the group project to edit the Independent Works of William Tyndale and am no longer the primary editor of *The Obedience of the Christian Man*."

Last year's LABORFEST included a reading of **Judith Offer's** *Compared to What?*, a play about two Pullman porters set in 1925 in West Oakland. West Oakland was the end of transcontinental railroad lines, many porters lived in West Oakland, and A. Phillip Randolph was just beginning to organize the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. During the past year, using comments from the reading, Judith has rewritten the play extensively. Two different readings were held: Oakland Public Main Library on August 14, and The Noodle Factory, an arts cooperative in West Oakland, on Sunday, August 16.

**David Rosen** reports that he gave a paper on "Port Security in NYC in WWII" at Coast Guard Island in March, and he chaired a session on Coast Guard History at the annual conference of the North American Society for Oceanic History at California maritime Academy in May.

**Celeste Lipow MacLeod's** article, "Cultural Connections Between Australia and Asian Nations: The Outlook for the Rudd Years," appeared in the Spring, 2009 issue of the *Harvard Asia Pacific Review*. The article points out that Australians of Asian ancestry now make up more than 10 percent of the country's population.

## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

**Fred Isaac** has put together *Jews of Oakland and Berkeley* for Acadia Press. In addition to the images, he attempted to expand the quick history in the captions. The Union for Reform Judaism has accepted his history of the Reform movement. As yet, there is no release date.

Alaska member **Steven C. Levi** will have three books out this year. One is a scholarly study of the Preparedness Day Bombing in San Francisco in 1916 and is titled *The Committee of Vigilance: The Law and Order Committee of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce and Its War Against the Left, 1916-1919*, (Academica, 2009). He also has a book of Alaska Gold Rush short stories, *Derelicts, Scoundrels, Bummers, and Doves*, (Zumaya Publications, 2009) as well a book of faux history stories of North Carolina's Outer Banks.

**Jeanne Farr McDonnell** was one of two featured speakers at a program honoring women at the National Hispanic University, at which she spoke about Juana Briones. She presented a paper, "The Biographer's Dilemma: Juana Briones of Nineteenth Century California," at the Western Association of Women Historians, co-edited the newsletter of the Palo Alto Historical Association this year and will continue next year. She has also joined the board of Palo Alto's preservation organization, PAST, and is the co-historian of the Women's Club of Palo Alto, founded in 1893. Her next project is promoting the centennial of California women gaining voting rights in 1911, the sixth state to do so

**Bill McPeak** writes that he has a feature article on a history of medieval to early sixteenth century European higher-clergy who fought rather than turned the other cheek. Entitled "Battling Bishops of Christendom," it will appear in the August issue of *Military Heritage*.

**Bernard Wisby** has just published his book, *War, the American Way* (XLibris Press, 2009),

**Cornelia Levine** writes, I has been busy writing a new conclusion to the New Deal part of Larry's [Lawrence Levine] and my *The People And The*

*President*. Also, the University of California Press is going to bring out a paperback of the first half of our book of letters to FDR and I am delighted. Larry would also have been thrilled. There had not been a paperback of the original full version and UC Press thought the New Deal part of interest right now. "

**Tom Snyder** has been very busy. He gave a paper on the history of the Mare Island Naval Hospital at the annual meeting of the North American Society of Oceanic History, held at Cal Maritime Academy. Also, he's had his first ever article accepted for publication (at age 66!) in a peer reviewed journal. *Navy Support to Civilian Authorities during the 1918 Influenza Epidemic—History's Lessons and Recommendations for Future Work* will appear in *Military Medicine* in the near future. Tom has been appointed as a Commissioner on the Solano County Historical Records Commission. "One of the goals of the Commission is to induce the County Board of Supervisors to officially designate the treasure trove of historical material now extant as a County Archive, thereby giving the documents, maps, records, photographs some official status and, it is hoped, protection." The Society for the History of Navy Medicine, of which Tom is co-founder and Executive Director, has attained the international membership milestone of 110. He's working on our Fourth Annual Meeting and Papers Session, to be held as a panel at the annual meeting of the Association of Military Surgeons of the United States in Phoenix, in November 2010. He's continuing his quarterly trips to DC for research at the National Archives. "I've so far covered correspondence relating to the Navy Hospital on Mare Island from 1856 through 1941. Yet to be perused and transcribed is the material covering the place up through the hospital's closure in 1957."

From **Gretta Mitchell**, "It has been a summer of becoming a hybrid! I have officially turned part of my work over to digital technology. Please go to my website ([margarettamitchell.com](http://margarettamitchell.com)) if you are curious and put your email address into the slot under the section "Contact." You will then be a subscriber and receive the next issue."

# BOOK REVIEW

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**Jeanne Farr McDonnell**

*Juana Briones of Nineteenth-Century California*  
(Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2008)

**Institute** members have long awaited the publication of Jeanne McDonnell's definitive biography of Juana Briones, the pioneering Bay Area woman whose remarkable life extended from the era of Spanish rule of California into the late nineteenth century. The wait was well worthwhile. Born in 1802 at the Spanish settlement of Branciforte, Juana Briones lived much of her life in what would become San Francisco. Moving near the Presidio in the 1810s, she married in 1820, and in 1833 moved with her husband to a small grant called the Ojo de Agua de Figueroa in the same area. As her marriage deteriorated, she set up a ranch in what is today North Beach and so was one of the earliest settlers of what became Yerba Buena and then San Francisco. By some accounts, the fledgling settlement received its name from the good herb—yerba buena—that she harvested as part of her work as a healer. Some years later, she acquired a second home near the Mission Dolores.

Even before the United States conquest of California, she built connections with the area of the Peninsula that today is Palo Alto. In 1844, she purchased the Rancho la Purisima Concepcion from Gorgonio, its Indian owner, and began residing there at least part of the time in 1848. She would continue living in the area until her death in 1880, in her later years moving to the town of Mayfield (now part of Palo Alto).

Juana Briones was exceptional in many respects. She lived through a period of great historical change, experiencing Spanish rule of California, Mexican independence, the American conquest, the Gold Rush, and the post-Gold Rush settlement and development of the state. As a consequence, she developed an unusual ability to relate to a wide variety of people from the native Californians to the Yankee conquerors of the area. She stands out as a landowner when few women owned land, as someone who successfully ran a working ranch, and

as someone comfortable with and capable of navigating two complex legal systems, Mexican and American. In addition, she enjoyed a storied career as a healer, whose abilities were frequently remarked upon.

Jeanne McDonnell re-creates this life through extensive and detailed research. Many of the specifics of Juana Briones' life cannot be known with certainty, of course, given the limited documentation available for Spanish and Mexican California. What does seem clear, given the breadth of the sources cited, is that what can be learned has been presented in this book. It seems unlikely that this portrait of Juana Briones will be superseded. One of the most valuable aspects of the book is the rich context it provides for Juana Briones' life. McDonnell is particularly good at placing Juana's early life in the setting of a California still greatly shaped by the native Californian peoples as well as by Spanish settlers. Later in the volume, she is equally adept at explaining in personal terms the impact of the United States conquest. The result is to make the early history of the state come vividly alive through the experiences of this one woman. Juana Briones did not shape the development of California, but she responded with great ability to a constantly changing environment. Despite the strong constraints placed on women, her life included significant achievements. Her successes stand out particularly in the context of the general loss of power and influence experienced by Mexican Californians after the United States conquest.

This book is an outstanding achievement and worthy of attention by any student of early California. It has been handsomely produced by the University of Arizona Press, and includes a substantial number of excellent illustrations, including some striking views of early San Francisco. The one addition I think would have been useful is a family tree for Juana Briones, enabling readers to keep better track of her many relations.

*Michael Griffith*

**Autumn Stanley**

***Raising More Hell and Fewer Dahlias:  
The Public Life of Charlotte Smith***

(Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 2009)

In the last three decades of the nineteenth century, Charlotte Odlum Smith championed economic parity for women, lobbied tirelessly for a variety of social reforms, founded three magazines, and created a national organization for working women. She has nevertheless been ignored by modern historians, in part because she does not fit the familiar model of the female social reformer. Although she was not hostile toward the woman suffrage movement, she was not a suffragist, arguing that if a woman lacked the education and training to earn her own living, the right to vote was of little use. She did not come out of the tradition of faith-based social reform, nor did she come from the educated middle class. In every sense, Charlotte Smith was a self-made woman.

Smith's personal life presented a major challenge to Autumn Atanley, for she left behind no diaries or personal papers and obfuscated details of her birth and early life. Her adventures often have the ring of a picaresque novel; there are conflicting stories about her marriage and divorce; the personal history related in a pension claim and in newspaper interviews is sometimes difficult to credit. But the solid facts that Autumn has unearthed are significant. Born in upstate New York in 1840, Charlotte was the eldest child of Irish immigrants, Richard and Catherine Odlum. Her father apparently abandoned the family before she was ten, reappeared for a few years, then left permanently. Charlotte devoted her childhood to helping with three younger siblings as her mother struggled to keep the family together. Later she would describe herself as "the man of the house." Married to Edward Smith in 1866, Charlotte had two children before she and Smith separated in 1869, leaving her as the head of a household that also included her mother and a brother. It was not from an abstract sense of justice that she became an economic feminist.

Smith's public life began in 1872, when she moved to St. Louis and co-founded *The Inland Monthly*, a substantial publication that grew in size and readership over the six years of its existence. Before long, she was the sole owner. Autumn stresses that *The Inland Monthly* was resolutely not a "women's magazine." The stories and articles reflected Smith's wide-ranging interests. Those on science and technology foreshadowed her later interest in female inventors. Selling the magazine in 1878, Smith moved to New York City and then to Washington, D.C., where she found outlets for her reforming passions. In Washington she discovered a talent for bringing herself and her causes to the attention of newspaper readers. She became one of the first female lobbyists and attended many sessions of Congress, not only as an observer but as a witness before congressional committees. She would be credited with influencing, and even writing, legislation. In 1882 she founded and became the chief spokesperson for the Woman's National Industrial League, and in 1887 she founded her second magazine, *The Woman Worker*, which brought issues such as working conditions and pay inequity to a larger public. *The Woman Inventor* (1891), which ran for only two issues, became Smith's platform for another cause: the promotion and protection of female inventors.

In the last years of her life, spent mostly in Boston, she campaigned for the protection and rehabilitation of prostitutes, arguing that prostitution was directly related to low-paid jobs for women, and founded the Women's Rescue League. Smith lived into the Progressive Era, dying in Boston on December 3, 1917. The biography would have benefitted from greater attention to historical context, especially more information on the political climate in Washington in the 1880s, the nineteenth-century labor movement, and the work of other social reformers, male and female, against which this singular, remarkable life could be judged more fully.

*Joanne Lafler*

# CALENDAR

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September 12	Annual Pot Luck Dinner
October 10	California Round Table
October 11	Work-in-Progress – Lyn Reese
October 18	Tour of San Jose's History Park
November 21	Annual Dinner
January 17	Work-in-Progress – Richard Robbins
February 27	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 [autumn\\_stanley@sbcglobal.net](mailto:autumn_stanley@sbcglobal.net). The deadline for the next NEWSLETTER is **November 30, 2009**.

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