

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) and with the American Historical Association (AHA)

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

The Anniversary Dinner, held on November 5 to celebrate twenty-five years of the Institute, was a great success. The food was very good, especially the hors d'oeuvres brought by board members Joanne Lafler, Perri Hale, and Jules and Jody Becker. The company was at least as good as the food. After Lorrie O'Dell provided a brief history of the founding of the Institute, we heard Francesca Miller's talk, *A Brief History of The Littlest Generation*, which generated much interest and discussion. Using demographic data, Francesca pointed out that the population increase during the decade of the 1930s was the smallest increase of any decade in United States history. Those born during the 1930s constitute a very small company, especially in contrast with the Baby Boom generation which followed. While some in the "Littlest Generation" had great opportunities open to them because of its small numbers, others found real disadvantages. Francesca elaborated on the consequences of those demographic factors with reference to her experiences as an historian and in her personal life.

Future plans: The Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday, February 25, at the Dimond Branch of the Oakland Public Library. As usual, we will spend the morning on the business of the Institute. That will include reports on the year's activities and the election of members to the Board of Directors. In the afternoon the program will feature members' work on local history. Anne Homan will bring her new book on the history of Livermore, and all members will be encouraged to bring their own local history work. Members will receive full details in the mail as the date approaches. Guests are always welcome.

The Institute will present a program at the San Francisco Public Library on April 19 at 6:00 p.m. to commemorate the centennial of the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake. The program, co-sponsored by the library, will feature first-hand accounts of earthquake experiences read by Malcolm Barker, Anne Homan, and Joanne Lafler. This event, which features our members' research, helps the Institute fulfill its mission to make history available to the public. In the mean time, don't overlook the monthly Works-in-Progress.

Ellen Huppert

WORK-IN-PROGRESS – Peter Mellini

The Women at PUNCH: 1910-1948

On Sunday, September 18, before an attentive, responsive, and knowledgeable group, **Peter Mellini**, a founding director of the Institute and retired professor of British history at Sonoma State University, gave a Work-in-Progress on *The Women at PUNCH* at the Berkeley home of **Georgia Wright**. Using text which may become an article or even another book, Peter discussed the changes in the unique British illustrated comic weekly over the period between 1910 to 1948, a time which included two world wars and a major shift in the social structure of the country.

Peter began by setting the stage, reviewing the context of the magazine and its evolution under the direction of a series of male editors. On a weekly basis, *PUNCH* blended verbal and visual humor combined with political and social comment, all inside an unchanging cover that only occasionally was in color. He also mentioned the appearances of facetious news items, verses, stories, sketches, small “gag” cartoons, and a “kindly” satirical summary of the week’s debates in Parliament, which also included caricatures of its Members. During the period between the wars, reviews of stage plays and movies were added.

Peter pointed out that, “During these years *PUNCH* was a ‘shop window’ for upscale advertisements, and profits shot up.” Because of the increase in ads, the magazine grew from 16 to 20 pages and, finally, to 28 pages in 1924, while the cost of the ads grew from £25 in 1910 to £450 by the mid-1920s. By the mid-20s, *PUNCH* was reaching almost two million readers a year, with annual revenues of about £650,000, the vast majority of which were from ad revenues.

Peter described how the magazine was directed by men at the start of this period, 1910, and how no women were allowed “at the table” for the meetings which determined the weekly content. But women began to make inroads in the management of *PUNCH* when “a formidable Scot” named Marion Jean Lyon became assistant advertising manager in 1910. Later, in 1922, she became advertisement

manager and the first woman executive at the weekly and the first at a prestigious Fleet Street paper.

In the 30s, with the worldwide Depression, revenues and circulation declined, only to pick up at the end of the decade, just as World War II began in 1939. By then, a number of women were part of the *PUNCH* team, Peter noted, including writers Jan Struther, “who later created Mrs. Miniver”; diarist Elizabeth Monica de la Pasture, who wrote as E.M. Delafield; Angela Milne, who used the byline “Ande”; and cartoonist Antonia Yeoman, who signed her work “Anton.” Quoting Peter, “These writers eventually, if belatedly, made it possible for a series of talented and able women to become ‘tablers’ (invited to join the men at the table), but not until the mid-1970s.”

Peter finished his presentation by describing the demise of *PUNCH* after World War II. It had been an enormous advertising medium before the war, but afterward, disagreements among its owners led to its sale to a newspaper chain, and the weekly was shut down in 1992. “For the first half of the 20th century, *PUNCH* often defined what was funny for the respectable classes,” he concluded. “And a tiny number of remarkable women played a crucial role” in its success.

There followed a general discussion about the weekly and the social class structure of England. There was continual interchange between Peter and those attending, most of whom had an interest in British history, women’s history, and social history, highlighted as Peter passed around copies of ads, ad schedules, cartoons, and photos which provided background to his comments. The meeting ended with Georgia’s outstanding culinary delights, emphasizing the 25-year motto of the Institute: “First we meet, then we eat, and eat, and eat!”

Jules Becker

WORK-IN-PROGRESS – Frances Richardson Keller

Slavery and the French and Haitian Revolutionists (1788-1805) by Anna Julia Cooper

Members and friends of the Institute met on Sunday, October 16, at the home of **Monica Clyde** to hear **Frances Richardson Keller** talk about the new edition of her translation of Anna Julia Cooper's book, *Slavery and the French and Haitian Revolutionists (1788-1805)*. The forth-coming edition is being published in the spring of 2006 by Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. This second edition features Frances' new interpretive essay "The International Connections of Anna Julia Cooper's Story," intended to give the reader a broad understanding of how France and Haiti dealt with slavery.

Anna Julia Cooper's work, "*L'attitude de la France à l'égard de l'esclavage pendant la révolution*," was first presented and defended as her Ph.D. dissertation before the review committee at the University of Paris on March 23, 1925. It was literally discovered by Frances when she came across an inconspicuous volume while doing research on slavery in the library at the University of Chicago. She decided to translate this little known work to make it accessible to a wider audience of students and scholars of history.

By any standard, it is an outstanding intellectual achievement, the product of years of determination and hard work. Cooper was sixty-six years of age at the time. It also represented the culmination of the unusual life's journey of a child born to an enslaved mother in 1858 in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Cooper's life story is an incredible testimony to the courage and strength in the human spirit of this remarkable woman. Talented and outgoing, at the age of eleven she became a student-teacher at the Raleigh St. Augustine Episcopal School. In the 1880s she was admitted to Oberlin College, where she did remarkably well. This is where she first developed her gift for languages, eventually becoming polished in French. She received her BA in 1884 and MA in 1887.

In 1892, at the age of thirty-three, she published her first book: *A Voice from the South by a Black Woman of the South*. She later studied at Columbia University and *La Guilde Internationale* in Paris. She also became a school principal in Washington, DC. She lived to be 105 years old.

Cooper's work, according to Frances, offers a bold interpretation of the French Revolution. It examines the relations between the 18th century revolutionists in Paris and the representatives and inhabitants of the richest of the French colonies, San Domingue. Cooper argues that the legalized slave trade became a critical issue in the struggle over the rights of man during the French Revolution. According to Cooper, to understand the French Revolution and its repercussions, it is necessary to add the dimension of race.

As an African-American woman, Cooper provides readers with a unique and powerful perspective on the events during the French and Haitian Revolutions. Legal slavery in the U.S. had ended when Cooper was a child of five. But there was no escape from the effects of race prejudice. She felt these effects in every aspect of her life: in the practice of religion, in seeking education, in seeking and holding employment in teaching, in working in educational administration and the government bureaucracy, in purchasing a house for five motherless young relatives she adopted, and in traveling and in writing.

Frances sums up Anna Julia Cooper's life as being committed to a mission to bring liberty, equality and justice to black people, especially black women.

Monica Clyde

WORK-IN-PROGRESS – Kathleen Casey

“Dry Fruit: My Very Own International Relations, 1927-1957”

“My father's mother arrived early one morning, well before breakfast, to tell us the old man was dead. Annie Craft couldn't afford a telegram, any more than we could afford a telephone. She had walked almost all the way from her place off the Harrow Road in Paddington to our place just south of Chelsea, a good ten miles or more; not an impossible distance at a time when people were used to walking, but quite a stretch for a woman in her late seventies who'd kept going all through the night, after the tubes and buses stopped running. We were in shock even before her long wattle quivered and her toothless mouth opened to say, ‘E's gorn.’ Wordlessly, we stood back to admit the apparition. ... She would neither sit down by the fire ... nor take off the calf-length black coat, shiny with age, worn over her drab floor-length skirt, or unpin and pry off the huge old black hat top-heavy with dusty ruffles. Nobody but old Queen Mary dressed that way in 1938.”

So began Kathleen Casey's reading of excerpts of her manuscript memoir: “Dried Fruit: My Very Own International Relations, 1927-1957.” Whether taking the form of memoir, autobiography, or novel, the probing of one's past serves several purposes. Two surfaced in our discussion with Kathleen. One is the act of remembering and the translation of those memories into words. Writing enables us to make sense of and perhaps come to new understandings about past events in our lives. It also, in Kathleen's words, “creates order where none exists.” Another part of the process is finding meaning that can be shared with others. A memoir, paraphrasing Kathleen, is something of oneself that can be left for others.

Kathleen grew up in England in the shadow cast by the catastrophe of World War I and she directly experienced its encore, World War II, though she writes: “to tell the truth, I got off lightly.” One of the major themes she explores is her long process of propelling herself out of the limitations of “mediocre circumstances...and very little money,” a journey which took her not only to the London

School of Economics and the Council of Industrial Design, but also to Prague for the first World Federation of Democratic Youth Congress, to Genoa to work (illegally), to Egypt as an editorial assistant and bride of Abdel Rahman Selim during the Suez crisis. In her travels Kathleen confronted not only history but the rigid and long-entrenched British class system. Kathleen's “collision with history” came not only in the events leading up to war but in her realization (at the early age of ten) that she “was linked, personally and physically, with people no longer alive and yet alive in me, who had been frightened by world events no less tumultuous, in times no less dangerous than our own.... For the first time, I saw my four known grandparents as children like myself, with parents who had parents, who themselves had parents.” She notes, however, “I didn't even know their names. Not until my parents and their parents were gone did I learn how to grow a family tree, how to track written records and how, lacking them, I could have questioned relatives while they were still alive.”

Had we had more time, and had Kathleen not stated in her introduction to her reading that her “personal memories were burned into her,” we might have asked what role imagination played in her writing when recollection failed. We might also have pursued other aspects of memoir writing, as suggested by the reviews of others Kathleen provided. How did the need for a good story shape the telling of her life? Or did her “search through her threads of memories” connect to a desire for any kind of healing? Although the process of writing has been personally revelatory and satisfying, one of the questions Kathleen posed for our consideration was what to do with it. All agreed that she should pursue publishing. Several suggested that certain points needed to be made more explicit. Individual sections might become separate articles. Whether taken as a whole or in pieces, “Dried Fruit” powerfully evokes the historical context of the first thirty years of Kathleen's life as she followed her impulses to create a life with fewer boundaries than previous generations in her family.

Maria Sakovich

CALIFORNIA ROUND TABLE

At the home of **Ellen Huppert** on September 17, **Ann Harlow** presented her research for an article on the history of fine arts museums in San Francisco. It's a complicated story, but Ann traced several major threads: artists' organizations, private collections and civic pride.

From the beginning, the San Francisco Art Association, founded in 1871, intended to create an art museum, partly as a place for exhibiting members' work. However, it took decades to come to fruition. By the 1880s there were a few privately operated art galleries, including one at the Sutro Baths complex. Wealthy collectors like the Stanfords and Crockers might have founded museums in San Francisco but didn't. Enter Michael H. de Young, proprietor of the San Francisco *Chronicle* and moving spirit behind the Mid-Winter Fair in Golden Gate Park in 1894.

The wealthy de Young had amassed a collection of his own "museum works," as had other local magnates. These collections combined high art -- or reasonable facsimiles thereof -- with whatever took the collector's fancy: spoons, birds' nests, and so forth. Capitalizing on the civic pride engendered by the fair, de Young promoted a permanent museum in Golden Gate Park. The "neo-Egyptian" building that had served as the Fine Arts pavilion for the Fair reopened as a city-owned museum in 1895. De Young added to the collection and to the building over the next thirty years. It was named the M.H. de Young Memorial Museum in 1925. Having been severely damaged in the 1906 earthquake, the original building underwent several major interior and exterior renovations before being torn down and replaced in 2005.

Another outburst of civic pride -- the Panama-Pacific Exposition of 1915 -- led to the establishment of a second museum, appropriately enough in the Palace of Fine Arts. Although the building had been intended as a temporary structure, the San Francisco Art Association saw an opportunity to establish their museum. From 1916 to 1926, the Palace of Fine Arts housed the San Francisco Museum of Art. In the meantime, another

wealthy San Francisco family -- avowed enemies of the de Youngs -- got into the act.

Adolph Spreckels, heir to the family sugar business, had shot and wounded Michael de Young in 1884, over the *Chronicle's* allegations of stockholder fraud. Pleading temporary insanity, he was acquitted, but relations between the families understandably remained frosty. With the gift to the city of the Legion of Honor Museum near Land's End in 1924, Spreckels had an opportunity to show up the de Youngs *and* satisfy "Big Alma," his socially ambitious wife who had developed an interest in French art. Honoring Californians who had died in France in the Great War, the building was copied from the French pavilion at the 1915 Exposition, itself a replica of the Palais de la Légion d'Honneur in Paris.

By the mid-1920s, it was clear that the Palace of Fine Arts would not be a long-term solution to the Art Association's desire for a museum. Civic pride was rallied to create a fine arts venue in the Civic Center. The Board of Supervisors planned an impressive building to house both an opera house and a museum, but after the 1929 Crash there was only enough money -- from a bond issue and private donations -- for the opera house. Fortunately, with backing from local veterans and a second bond measure, the Veterans Memorial was built next to the War Memorial Opera House, providing space for an art museum and offices for veterans groups. The San Francisco Museum of Art opened there in 1935. Under the guidance of director Grace McCann Morley, with major patronage from Albert Bender, it soon evolved into a modern art museum.

Was this history unique to San Francisco? That was one question raised during the discussion, which was also concerned with exploring some of the topics more fully and suggesting places to publish the article.

Joanne Lafler

GROUP REPORTS

HISTORY-PLAY READERS

The History Play-Readers have continued to focus on Ancient Rome and the lives and loves of Julius Caesar, Mark Antony and Cleopatra. We finished George Bernard Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra* at our September meeting, and then moved on to the continuation of the story as told by William Shakespeare, in his *Antony and Cleopatra*, written in 1607. The styles of the two plays are obviously very different, as well as the emphasis on the motivation of the main characters. At the end of Shaw's play, Caesar promises to send Cleopatra a young man whom she will love. This certainly comes true in Shakespeare's play. Cleopatra is infatuated with Antony, as he is with her, and their story is told within the struggle between Antony and Octavian for control of the Roman Empire. Cleopatra's jealousy of Antony's political marriage to Octavian's sister, as well as Antony's passion for Cleopatra combine to lead to their deaths, both by suicide. Our next reading will be on the same subject, with excerpts from a John Dryden play about this pair of lovers.

MEDIEVAL STUDY GROUP

Five members of the Medieval Study Group gathered in September to hear a presentation by **John Rusk**. Using Alastair Dunn's 2004 book, *The Peasant's Revolt: England's Failed Revolution of 1381*, John expanded on the theme of "the most significant popular protest in British history." According to Dunn, the participants shared enough grievance to "justify calling it a national revolt." The term 'peasant' has been imposed on the rebels by modern historians; the rebels called themselves "the King's true commons." Provoked by a tax increase to support Richard II's war with France, the uprising was led by Wat Tyler and John Ball. They were marching on London when the King agreed to meet with them at Smithfield. What happened next is hard to discern from the chronicles, but the leaders were killed, and the revolt was over. However, the names of Wat Tyler and John Ball have survived as folk heroes in English history.

In October, the group heard from Lyn Reese on the subject of troubadours and court jesters (or fools). According to Lyn, it is much easier to find information about troubadours than about court jesters and fools. Some of the troubadours' songs and poetry have survived, but information on the individuals who wrote and sang these works is very sparse. Lyn used music and pictures of a variety of medieval art forms to illustrate their activities. Looking at the pictures she circulated provoked discussion of musical instruments from that period as well as what it meant to be a jester or a fool.

BIOGRAPHY WRITERS

The Biography Writers made two changes that have improved their process; each member distributes several pages by email a week or so before the meeting so that we can give thought beforehand to our suggestions. Most recently, we shared outlines of our chapters and tables of contents to help explain whether various contextual points had been treated elsewhere. We often would say we needed more background on something that had been explained in a different chapter.

Ellen Huppert has been writing her first chapter, "Young Barton", which is based on two surviving youthful documents of Barton Taylor and the many reminiscences Barton wrote later in his life. Her issue is to decide how much of the original material to include and how much editorial explanation is needed. The biography group's comments have been extremely helpful. **Joanne Lafler**'s discovery of new information about Harry Lafler's short story magazine, *The Blue Mule*, meant that a chapter she thought had been complete required some rewriting. In addition to correcting an error, she added new material which, the group agreed, was a significant improvement. She is now well into the chapter on Lafler's brief second marriage, his new career as an advertising writer, and his involvement in Oakland's civic development. As always, she is grappling with the question of the amount of historical background to include -- how much her readers need to know and how much is relevant to

the story she is telling. **Jeanne McDonnell** expected that comments on her own writing would be the group's most helpful feature, but equally beneficial has been hearing what other members are struggling with. Long immersion in the life of Juana Briones has made it difficult to distance herself from her subject. Ways of looking at other lives give fresh angles to problems of style and organization.

Autumn Stanley reported that after literally years of searching, she found a record of the marriage of her subject, Charlotte Smith, to her husband Edward. Ironically, it was information from the divorce case ending the marriage almost twenty years later that led her to the marriage record. Also ironically, these marriage details were almost the only part of Edward's divorce application about which he told the truth! The thing for which **Bonda Lewis** is most indebted to the group is their patience and support. They ask the questions she probably didn't think of, point out contradictions, smile in the right places and look at the story from several different angles. She is very grateful and considers the group to be the best gift ever!

Ann Harlow's research has detoured a bit into the early history of San Francisco art museums. This will give her some material for her biography of Anne Bremer and Albert Bender, but there is lots more that won't fit in the book, and the group encouraged her to write one or more articles on museum history. Ann is grateful to the group for research tips as well as supportive feedback and camaraderie. **Ethel Herr's** current project is completed in rough draft form. She has changed agents and is currently polishing her book of dialogues and searching for just the right arrangement of chapters. Ethel's previous project, the biographical novel of Juliana von Stolberg, is two years late but finally on schedule for production in June 2006. **Georgia Wright** has taken a leave of absence from the group; she must set the study of her French diarist aside due to the death of a Limestone Sculpture Provenance Project colleague, Lore Holmes.

RESEARCH TRIP TO MICHIGAN

Thanks in part to a mini-grant from the Institute, I was able to spend a week in Ann Arbor, Michigan, at the Bentley Historical Library, looking through the papers of my great-grandparents, Barton Stout Taylor (1820-1898) and Elizabeth Gurney Taylor (1840-1913). My husband Peter and my sister, Fran Taylor, also worked on the papers. The Bentley Historical Library on the campus of the University of Michigan is in a lovely building. The comfortable reading room has a large window looking into a garden. In March the trees were bare, but we were entertained by the visits of a groundhog

Fran read through Elizabeth's journals, which filled one box, and she marked many pages to be photocopied. Peter looked at some ancillary materials, including Barton's records of cases he settled as justice of the peace. He had taken over for his father, who was the first justice of the peace in Plymouth, Michigan.

I read through one and one-half boxes of Barton's papers. He seems to have never thrown away a piece of paper. Along with the sermons written over the thirty years that he worked as a Methodist minister, I found school essays as well as speeches and letters, and the manuscript of a book he published near the end of his life. Despite the vast quantity of writing left by Barton and Elizabeth, they were extremely reticent in dealing with emotions. For example, Elizabeth made little comment on the deaths of her children; of the eight she gave birth to, only one survived her. I will be challenged to turn their records into interesting narratives and bring Barton and Elizabeth to life using their own words.

We leavened our research time by visiting the villages of Northville and Plymouth, where Barton grew up. In Plymouth, the Historical Museum's library was staffed by volunteers eager to show us what they had, especially when they learned that we were descendants of original settlers.

Ellen Huppert

MEMBERSHIP

Maria Sakovich presented a paper to the Canadian Methodist Historical Society in Guelph, Ontario, in October: "Jane Ferguson: Immigrant, Pioneer, and Itinerant Wife in Upper Canada." The paper was also published in August in the *Hay Bay Guardian*, an annual journal of Methodist history in the Bay of Quinte and Upper Canada. Locally, Maria also signed copies of her book, *La Nostra Storia: Italian Americans in Richmond*, at a special Italian evening at the Richmond Museum of History. The Museum published the book, which presents photos and text of the exhibit by the same name (2003).

Leslie Friedman's play, *The Panel*, was accepted by the New One Acts Festival in Marin. It is a satire of a panel reviewing grant applications, and was performed at The Meadowlands Assembly, Dominican University, during November and December. Leslie's Lively Foundation will present the 12th annual *Festival of Lights*, a concert of music, dance, comedy, and storytelling honoring many holidays that come toward the end of our calendar year. It appears in San Francisco, at the Veterans Building, Sunday, December 11 at 3 PM.

Joanne Lafler moderated a session at the October 8 NISA/NCIS conference in Portland: "Selling Your Scholarship: Writing Marketable Non-Fiction." The panel, "Writing from Life," featured an author who had written a family memoir and an author who interjected himself into the biography he had written. Joanne said: "The sessions that I attended were both stimulating and informative."

Anne Richardson completed a compilation of the biblical citations in *The Obedience of a Christian Man* (1528) for *The Independent Works of William Tyndale*.

Phyllis Peet, Director of Women's Studies/ Women's Programs at Monterey Peninsula College, was awarded the Academic Excellence Grant for the second year in a row by the MPC Foundation. The program is in the process of planning their eleventh Annual Monterey County Women's Conference, which this year will focus on Immigration and Human Rights for Women, to be held at MPC on Saturday, March 11, 2006.

Dave Rosen reports that he just received his tenure status at the Coast Guard as Historian, after five months of bruising ups and downs. He is busy researching a book on hurricane Katrina, thus traveling non-stop for the last three months. He has written ten lectures for the Coast Guard: USCG History Overview; The Revenue Cutters; The Wright Brothers & the Coast Guard; USCG in World War II; USCG in Modern Times; History of Kodiak Air Station; Kodiak Air Station in World War II; USCG in the Columbia River; San Diego Air Station; Honolulu SAR Overview (Search-and-Rescue), and has three more in progress. Dave says he is still continuing his European history studies.

NEW MEMBER

The Institute is pleased to welcome **Dolores Cordell** as a member. A resident of Marin, she received her law degree from the University of Southern California in 1977. She located the Institute through our web site, and hopes to meet people with an interest in history for study and discussion.

IN MEMORIAM

On Friday, November 11th, the death was announced of **Lawrence I. Kramer** of San Rafael, a long-time member of the Institute. A community activist, Larry's historical interests were varied, but a principal one was his interest in the history of the Chinese in America.

Those who attended the picnic and tour of the John Muir House last June enjoyed talking to Larry, learning more about his historical interests and meeting his son and daughter-in-law from Portland. A celebration of Larry's life will be held in January. We express our heartfelt sympathy to his family.

What Do I Read Next?

"It's about time we got rid of all these books!" Thus this year's project started. Bookcases were scanned, boxes were dragged up from the basement and pulled out of closets—the accumulated stash of forty-five years by two book junkies. We began by sorting the books into three piles: what we might sell, what we would donate to libraries, and what we should keep. Decisions and more decisions. After some thought, I decided that the books I wanted to keep were those works about which I had always said "I'm going to read that some day." As my stack started to grow, I decided to put down the mystery I was reading and begin catching up.

The first book I picked from the stack was *LaSalle and the Discovery of the Great West*, by Francis Parkman. Published in 1865, it is one part of his six-volume work on *France and England in North America*. I chose this book because it contained the story of Father Marquette and Louis Joliet, and their explorations along the Mississippi River. (Near where I grew up in Chicago, there was a marker placed on the Chicago River where Marquette and Joliet were said to have landed.) It was a wonderful read. Parkman is an incomparable writer. The tale was told alongside his beautiful descriptions of still-pristine midwest landscapes.

My next choice was *The Golden Ass* by Apuleius, as loosely translated by Robert Graves. A fun read, made more enjoyable by Graves' charming prose. From Graves I went to a standard history, a volume in one of those series so popular in the 1960s and 70s, each covering a particular period and each written by an eminent scholar in the field. I chose a history of the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century, and tried very hard to read it. What I discovered was that the materials that were so important to read and learn when in graduate school seem very stiff and dry thirty years later.

One book I uncovered in our sorting was an old copy of Sir Walter Scott's epic poem, *Marmion*. On the inside cover, in my mother's childish handwriting, was written her maiden name. I couldn't

resist it, but I discovered that simply reading an epic poem isn't easy; one gets so easily lost. However, I found that reading it aloud let me keep the rhythm flowing. So, some of my time was spent stomping around the living room, declaiming Scott! I wonder if my mother really read the book.

Then there was *The Arcanum: The Extraordinary True Story* by Janet Gleeson. Published in 1998, it is the story of the quest in 18th century Europe to discover the secret of making porcelain. It started with the escape of an alchemist imprisoned by Frederick I of Prussia for his failure to make gold. Instead, he ended up in as a captive of Augustus the Strong, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland. It is a story of palace intrigue, professional jealousy, extortion, international politics and war, resulting in the establishment of the Meissen porcelain factory in Dresden.

My stack of books kept growing, but while I continued to work on this project, I managed to do some background reading for the Play-Reading Group, and to read up on various English queens for presentations to the Medieval Study Group. I confess to reading a few good mysteries as well. But I would also pick from the stack. My latest book was prompted by the Public Broadcasting System's televised production of *Elizabeth*, shown on two Sundays in November. Out of the pile came *Elizabeth and Essex: A Tragic History* by Lytton Strachey. Written in 1928, it is replete with quote after quote from the voluminous correspondence between the queen and her spoiled courtier. Although I got a little tired of the back and forth of fighting and making-up, at least I knew the story when I was finished.

I'm now beginning *The Lisle Letters*, a compilation of selected letters from the 16th century papers of Arthur Plantagenet, Lord Lisle, his wife, and their business agent. This will keep me busy for awhile. It's clear that the amount of time I have to read all the books I want to read is finite, while the number of books I want to read now seems infinite. But they'll just have to come and pry them out of my cold, dead hands.

CALENDAR

December 18	Film Discussion – <i>Good Night and Good Luck</i>
January 14	California Round Table
January 15	Work-in-Progress -- Ellen Huppert
February 25	Annual Membership Meeting
April 19	San Francisco 1906 Earthquake Program

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 autumn2_dave@compuserve.com. The deadline for the next NEWSLETTER is **FEBRUARY 28**.

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

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