

THE INSTITUTE FOR HISTORICAL STUDY

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NEWSLETTER

“Hamilton, History, and Broadway” by Judith Offer

I’m assuming that members of the Institute have heard about the wildly popular Broadway show “Hamilton,” about the historic figure, Alexander Hamilton. It was created, music and libretto, as well as first produced, by Lin-Manuel Miranda. Most of the music is a sort of hip-hop. And Mr. Miranda went whole-hog with innovations by casting many of the historically White characters with Black actors.

As a writer of plays about American history, I have to be glad that Miranda popularized an episode of our history the way he did. Maybe some of the interest has rubbed off on my shows, and given me, if not caché, at least respectability. But here is my issue with the historicity of the play: it doesn’t really tell you anything about Black people. Yes, it gives some living Black actors a chance to Make It Big, as well as make a good living, which is a good thing. It shows them with the power, the respectability, the authority of White males of that era, or at least what it might have looked like if Black men could have had the same opportunities. But in the end, it’s another show lauding the exploits of Famous White Men.

Of course you can argue that Miranda chose Hamilton and his cohort because they were the movers and shakers of the day, the “main actors” in our heroic democracy story, which makes them characters people now will pay to see. And he cast it with Black people because he wanted to show that Black people can be just as amazing as others (or more so) in their acting and singing and dancing; but also because he wanted audiences to get used to seeing people of color in positions of influence and power. He did all of that very successfully, at a time theater was willing to accept it, and has garnered a huge reward. Tickets run \$200 and up.

But during the time of Hamilton, Washington, Burr, et al., Black people were doing things of some note. Some, for example, were building a lot of America. But who were they, exactly? What did they accomplish, and where did they live? What did they build? Were any of them in charge of the building? Did they invent some of the things White men got credit for, as with the accomplishments of many White women? We know now that the Capitol and the White House were built by enslaved Blacks. Wall Street? State Capitols? Some of those enslaved builders must have been very accomplished in their skills and judgment, in spite of all the disadvantages they experienced to get those skills.

Most educated Americans know something about Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, and Harriet Tubman. But Americans in general are largely ignorant of the lives and contributions of historic African Americans. In order to help counter this, we ought to be showing in theaters the stories of some of the other Blacks/African Americans who made significant contributions, and what they struggled through to accomplish things. The Fourtens of Philadelphia are one example, including perhaps the story of Port Royal, South Carolina, where the first effort to develop education for former slaves took place. Or the story of the first Black Regiment of the Civil War and its huge effect on the war. Or move further on in history and show Mary McLeod Bethune and her college, or the work of Ida B. Wells who worked against the lynching of Black men in the South, or about the *Chicago Defender*, the nationally-read African American newspaper that published some of her work.

All these stories could become wonderful Broadway shows (and the music for them is practically already written, because of the extant huge body of African American music.) The same is true for other minorities. There are plenty of situations and events in the fabric of our history that could make good musicals—the Chinese who built the railroads, Okies coming to California, the unique Appalachian

– *Continued on back page*

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Do you think of yourself as an independent scholar? If so, what does that mean to you? I came across a 2017 blog post called “Hey Academics, Please Stop Calling Me an ‘Independent Scholar.’” Its author, Megan Kate Nelson, wrote:

“Independent scholars” came into being during the 1970s and 1980s, as the population of PhDs doing scholarly work outside of academia grew larger and formed organizations of their own. I imagine that this first group conceived of the term as positive—something akin to “independent filmmaker” or “indie rock.” It denoted a certain kind of freedom and rebelliousness; without being tied to universities and their rigid expectations for promotion to tenure, these scholars could do whatever they wanted.

“However, the term has morphed into something less positive in the years since. Instead of suggesting a liberated approach to scholarly work, it emphasizes failure: the inability to get or retain a tenure-track job. It is a term that silos people working in different areas of knowledge production. It marginalizes and others them.

“At no time is this more apparent than in the late summer and fall, when scholars are scrambling to put together panels for next year’s round of conferences, and to register and make arrangements for attending this year’s meetings.”

This hasn’t been an issue for me, because I don’t go to scholarly conferences. It was probably more of an issue in the early days of the Institute for Historical Study, which was one of the pioneering organizations recruiting nonacademically-affiliated PhDs as indicated above. Getting help while preparing for conference panels has always been mentioned in our brochures.

Some of our founders also helped launch the National Coalition of Independent Scholars in the late 1980s. We remain a partner organization of NCIS, and I encourage you to look into the possibility of joining it as well (see ncis.org). The Institute, however, has a unique focus on history and has traditionally included some tenured professors as well as part-time, adjunct, or “contingent” faculty members—who are now included under the umbrella of independent scholars, at least as far as NCIS is concerned.

If you do consider yourself an independent scholar, you might enjoy the *Independent Scholars’ Handbook* by Ronald Gross, first published in 1982 and a second edition in 1993. Reviewers say they’ve found it helpful even though dated. I haven’t read it, but I think Oliver Pollak has; he and I recently attended a virtual “Colloquy of Independent Scholars” led by Ronald Gross, who may be working on a third edition.

Whatever kind of historian you call yourself, we are glad to have you among us and hope you are enjoying your membership! Remember to tell others about us and direct them to our website! — *Ann Harlow*

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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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MONTHLY PROGRAMS

“George T. Strong, the Civil War Sanitary Commission, and the Women’s Movement”: A Continuation

In the previous newsletter I reported on **Christopher Webber’s** discussion of the life of George Templeton Strong, a Wall Street lawyer who kept a remarkable diary and served on the Sanitary Commission of the United States during the Civil War. Christopher also became interested in the work of women as nurses and hospital and relief workers during the Civil War and the implications of their experiences for the next generation of women. That story continues here.

Christopher described women who served as nurses during the Civil War as a “parallel army.” They tended sick and wounded soldiers and helped remove the bodies of the dead, often at posts close to the front lines. They worked under horrific, exhausting conditions. Few of them had professional training. It often became necessary for them to improvise and take command. From those experiences they drew strength.

After the war ended George Templeton Strong returned to his law practice in New York City. But the women who had overseen relief efforts during the war understood that the end of hostilities did not bring an end to the nation’s problems. Instead of withdrawing from public life, as Strong had done, they found ways to transfer their wartime experiences to work that addressed public needs.

– Louisa Schuyler, a young nurse, made use of wartime experiences when she visited hospitals and poorhouses in New York State that were notorious for corrupt administration. In 1873 she organized the New York State Charities Association. In 1874 she established the first training school for nurses in the United States.

– Abby May Alcott—mother of Louisa May Alcott—had been a social worker in Boston. After the war her interests turned to the

administrative role of women in public education. She lobbied for the right of women to serve on the Boston Education Committee and became the first woman to do so. She was appointed to the Massachusetts State Board of Education, served for ten years, and became known as a leader in education reform.

– Mary Livermore, a journalist before the war, served on the Sanitary Commission by monitoring hospitals throughout the Midwest. She would later write of her wartime discovery that “a large portion of the nation’s work was badly done or not done at all, because women were not recognized as a factor in the political world.” From there it was an obvious step for her to become a central figure in the suffrage movement.

We can be grateful to Christopher for opening a fascinating historical window.

– *Joanne Lafler*

“Out of the Fog: The Surprising Origin Story of the Cable Cars”

Taryn Edwards has been researching Andrew Smith Hallidie for the past ten years and shared with us her most recent findings in September’s program. Because of the destruction of historical records in the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire, it is difficult to document Hallidie’s contacts, connections, and accomplishments.

Andrew Smith Hallidie started out as Andrew Hallidie Smith and Taryn’s conjecture is that he changed his name to distinguish himself from too many other “Smiths” drawn to San Francisco in connection with the Gold Rush. Andrew Smith Hallidie was born in London in 1834 and died in San Francisco in 1900.

The young man was brought to San Francisco by his father, a civil engineer in London who had obtained a patent for wire rope in 1835 and ran a company for the manufacture of that product.

MONTHLY PROGRAMS

He went bankrupt in 1850 and chose to try to rebuild his fortune in California, arriving in San Francisco in 1852 with two of his sons. The father returned to England, but Andrew remained in California where he had an illustrious career and became a lifelong promoter of San Francisco, and of his own accomplishments.

Andrew Smith Hallidie built a wire rope factory in San Francisco in 1861. Wire rope—what we would come to call cable—could outlast fiber rope by ten times, could not be chewed by rats, and was clearly a most useful product in gold and silver mining, but also in other transportation endeavors. It is Hallidie’s contribution to the development of the cable cars and their components that has assured him a place in local history. Andrew Hallidie made his earliest contributions to using machined cable for building bridges and other structures for mining enterprises, especially along the middle fork of the American River and later the Klamath River. By 1863 he had built seven suspension bridges in three years, including one in British Columbia. But it was the ability to manufacture great lengths of cable and the addition of a mechanism to loop such cable into a wire ropeway that ultimately led to the creation of the cable cars.

Though Taryn has her hesitation about the veracity of this story, Hallidie told of having witnessed an accident of a horse-drawn wagon on a hill that resulted in tragedy. He claimed that the accident inspired him to creatively apply his ropeway—an invention of his that was similar to a ski lift—as a safer alternative.

In 1872 Hallidie bought the license from Benjamin Sherman Brooks to create a railway for Clay Street. But the issue was always funding! Partnerships with and contributions from other entrepreneurs finally resulted in the building of the Clay Street Railway.

However much Andrew Smith Hallidie contributed to his own myths, there is no question that he was an extraordinary man. He was an inventor and a member of the Mechanics Institute which afforded him access to other inventors and businessmen who helped him advance his ideas and projects. He was also a lifelong member of the UC Board of Regents and champion of the city of San Francisco. He held patents in other countries, including England and Australia, before patents were internationally secured. Sadly, however, his widow was exploited by shady business partners.

To the question of when the San Francisco cable cars became the tourist attraction they are, Taryn surmised that it was the use of the cable car in the advertisement by the Rice-A-Roni company in the 1960s.

– *Cornelia Levine*

“Organized Crime, Big Business, and the Corruption of American Democracy”

The gangster Johnny Roselli popped up revealingly at various points in modern American history, like some venal Zelig or Forrest Gump figure. So, too, did Meyer Lansky and Roy Cohn. They represent a thread neglected by scholars, guest speaker Jonathan Marshall said in our monthly program for October, in which he explored the “role of organized criminals, along with their allies in big business and national politics, in the corruption of our democracy.”

Roselli was “a dapper and genial gangster who was friends with top [movie] studio executives like Harry Cohn of Columbia Pictures,” according to Marshall. With other Chicago mobsters, Roselli went to prison for his role in taking over Hollywood’s largest craft union in the 1930s under the banner of anti-Communism.

MONTHLY PROGRAMS

He won early parole—in what became one of a string of corruption scandals that gave the Harry Truman administration a big black eye, but have since been largely swept aside in admiration for the president.

In 1960, the CIA, working through an agent for the wacky billionaire Howard Hughes, recruited Roselli to organize the assassination of Cuban Communist leader Fidel Castro through underworld bosses Sam Giancana and Santo Trafficante. Castro survived, and the resulting “14-year history of blackmail and cover-up . . . contributed to the Watergate break-in, the Washington Post’s coverage of the scandal, Nixon’s cover-up, and finally his resignation in disgrace.” About half of Marshall’s densely detailed presentation involved Nixon, notably his deals with Teamsters Union leaders Jimmy Hoffa and Frank Fitzsimmons and his long and tangled friendship with Cuban American businessman Bebe Rebozo.

Roy Cohn was the savage chief counsel to Senator Joseph McCarthy during the anti-Communist witch hunt. Cohn’s patron was Lewis Rosenstiel, a liquor mogul and former bootlegger at the intersection of organized crime and anti-Communist activism, Marshall said. “The anti-Communist crusade . . . was a useful way for mobsters to distract attention from their crimes while appearing as patriotic supporters of free enterprise.” Cohn later became a leading lawyer for the New York Mafia, including a mobster who took a cut from the large construction contracts of Cohn’s protégé Donald Trump.

Rosenstiel was a close friend of Meyer Lansky, a leader of the East Coast crime syndicates from Prohibition days, according to testimony of a former wife of Rosenstiel’s. Lansky, in turn, was a partner with the originator of Hollywood’s anti-communist blacklist, in the Las Vegas strip’s first great hotel-casino, the Flamingo. Representing Lansky’s interests in Los Angeles for a time was mobster Mickey Cohen. In the

1950 campaign that propelled Nixon into the US Senate, the candidate spoke to 250 organized-crime figures whom Cohen had invited to a Hollywood hotel, including the leaders of the Los Angeles and Las Vegas mobs. Cohen had his guests locked into the banquet room until they came up with the equivalent of today’s \$250,000 for Nixon’s campaign.

After touching on presidents Dwight Eisenhower, Lyndon Johnson, Ronald Reagan, and especially Donald Trump, Marshall concluded with his suggestions for policy directions to get big crime out of American politics: “We need to crack down on secretive corporate shells, offshore financial accounts, and other devices for laundering money. . . . These are daunting tasks, but we can do them if we insist that our representatives in Washington finally get serious about draining the swamp.”

Marshall’s talk drew on research for his 2020 book, *Dark Quadrant: Organized Crime, Big Business, and the Corruption of American Democracy, from Truman to Trump* (Rowman & Littlefield). Beyond synthesizing previously known facts, the book incorporates the author’s extensive research at the National Archives and presidential libraries and in declassified federal-agency documents. Marshall has published five previous books of widely varying history of political economy and intrigue. He has also served as the economics editor of the San Francisco Chronicle and editorial-page editor of the Oakland Tribune.

— *Louis Trager*

“Exploring Indigenous California History”

For November’s monthly program **Ann Harlow** described her recent adventures in developing a group and blog site, “Honoring Indigenous Peoples,” formulating a “land acknowledgment,” paying Shuumi land tax, and initiating an exhibit on “Indigenous Berkeley” for the Berkeley Historical Society. She also spoke of the recent

MONTHLY PROGRAMS

UC Press book on Native California (*We Are the Land: A History of Native California*) and what Heyday Books and California ICAN are up to.

Indigenous people anywhere fall far from my own subjects of study, so of course Ann Harlow's talk on the Indigenous tribes of the Bay Area was irresistible. Ann introduced the subject by explaining that as a descendant of the Choctaw Nation herself (with two Choctaw great-great-great-great-grandmothers), she was raised to have respect and pride in the connection. Her great-grandfather served in the Choctaw Legislature as journalist, minutes-taker, and translator from Choctaw to English. Knowing this sparked her interest in finding out more about the Indigenous people in the Bay Area.

What she discovered was sad but not surprising. The local Ohlones received similar treatment to what most other Indigenous people experienced throughout the US: diseases, massacres, relocations, virtual slavery, their sacred areas desecrated, their lands and villages overtaken by foreigners, and forced abandonment of their languages and traditions. And all this happened in an area that was probably the most densely populated part of North America before 1492, an area that was home to as much as a third of the continent's population.

Ann's talk gave me an entirely different perception for the land that lies between Gilroy and Marin County, between the coast and the foothills, because the original people inhabited a whole different world from what we find today. Her presentation made the entire Bay Area map a new experience. Before Ann's presentation where these people lived, or how, were unasked questions, but now I want to know more. Isn't that inspiration why we share our findings?

– *Bonda Lewis*

Some of the websites Ann mentioned: honoringindigenouspeoples.group (curated by Ann); sogoreate-landtrust.org; muwekma.org;

ramaytush.org; shellmound.org;
<https://www.kcet.org/shows/tending-the-wild/untold-history-the-survival-of-californias-indians>;
heydaybooks.com; californiaican.org

“The Four Wars That Shaped George Orwell: From the ‘Great’ One to the ‘Cold’ One”

Peter Stansky presented December's monthly program about George Orwell, describing how the author of *Homage to Catalonia*, *Animal Farm*, and *1984* could be understood through his experiences of World War I, the Spanish Civil War, World War II, and the Cold War. Stansky is coauthor with the late William Abrahams of two biographical books about Orwell. *The Unknown Orwell* (1972) focuses on Orwell's early years up to 1933 when *Down and Out in Paris and London*, his first book under the Orwell pseudonym, was published. Stansky and Abrahams next published *Orwell: The Transformation* (1980) following Orwell through struggles as a teacher, bookseller, reviewer, and novelist up to his decision to go to Spain.

Eric Blair was born in India, 1903; his father was employed in the British opium trade. When very young, Eric traveled with his mother and sister to live in England. His father stayed on in India making Eric feel he was the “man of the house,” though his mother was a strong figure herself. He grew up with cherished ideas of England as Blake's “green and pleasant land.” This patriotism evolved as he grew older but never disappeared. Stansky's insight is that Orwell was a rare thinker who was both socialist and patriot. Being both demonstrates a British cultural ability to change and still stay the same.

Blair's ancestral family had money. The wealth came from his great-grandfather's slave-owning plantations in Jamaica. The family did not remain rich; the author's father was the tenth son of a vicar. Family members retained status but had to earn their living. In 1911, a scholarship

sent Eric to an elite public school he detested, St. Cyprian's. Blair wrote the essay, "Such, such were the Joys," about life there. Schools like St. Cyprian's trained future rulers of the Empire. Stansky notes that England's social structure developed in these schools. Students absorb status and responsibilities along with their Greek and Latin and learn to write. Blair was the King's Scholar, an honor based on achievement rather than need, though he needed it to attend Eton. Many Etonians died in World War I which mowed down young officers. Students were aware of the deaths. The atmosphere around Blair gave him an identity by class and education and helped to shape his patriotism.

When the Spanish Civil War began in 1936, Orwell wanted to be there to report on it, not to fight. Stansky finds that ideas of equality and infuriating events in Spain changed Orwell. Groups which declared similar goals fought each other. Orwell was drawn to the Independent Labor Party, affiliated with a Trotskyite militia. Communists fighting in the streets also attracted him, but he saw them betray their principles. He saw the press report the false, Communist line as though it were true. He became an anti-Communist but a committed socialist. As Stansky reports, Orwell became a pacifist, convinced that there was no "good side."

The Russian-German pact, however, made him declare that the UK must fight Germany. Orwell believed England needed a social transformation to secure public support. Getting rid of the House of Lords would be a good start; post-war, a socialist welfare state. World War II, says Stansky, shaped his political thoughts.

Orwell is credited as the first person to use the term "Cold War." He saw communism become authoritarianism. His writing's moral authority made Right and Left claim him and denounce him, too, for being claimed by the other side. World War II, Stansky observed, reinforced his patriotism and his socialism.

Orwell said his was socialism, "as I understand it." He was an artist, not a politician writing position papers. His vision in *Animal Farm* (1945) and *1984* (1949) was a powerful weapon against authoritarianism. Criticized for writing works that were distributed and made into films by the CIA, he could be applauded for demonstrating the dangers of authoritarian leaders.

It was a splendid talk which drew many comments and questions. Stansky revealed much about Orwell's complex world view, dedication to socialist ideas, and devotion to England. By talking about Orwell, Stansky also showed us many aspects of British culture. He is writing another book, which will address George Orwell and war.

– *Leslie Friedman*

* All of the above monthly programs but one ("Out of the Fog: The Surprising Origin Story of the Cable Cars") can be viewed at YouTube.com: search for "Institute for Historical Study."

Writers Group

Excellent writing by our group's members has led to exciting and valuable discussions. In October Jim Gasperini gave us a "barn-burner" of a chapter from his book "A Fire in the Mind." In this segment he presented "creatures of fire," the animals, real and imagined, that manifested fiery powers. Jim's writing is always powered by an encyclopedic knowledge of the subject and a crisp, clear writing style. The group was particularly excited by this chapter and considered it to be the best yet.

In November we considered a section of Esther Shallan's study "God, Good and Evil." This portion examined the "Augustinian approach" to the problem of evil in the writings of Saints Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. The questions of free will and the presence of evil in a universe

MEMBER NEWS

where all that exists is good were central philosophical concerns for the two theologians and which Esther lays out and critiques. If free will is the supreme good, is evil a price we pay for it? Does this in some way normalize evil? Does this make God both sadistic and religiously irrelevant? Tough questions that left many of us thinking hard. We await further illumination as Esther develops her ideas.

In December Katya Miller presented a chapter of her “biography” of Lady Freedom, the statue that stands atop the US Capitol. Katya laid out the gripping story of how the statue’s plaster model was shipped in parts across the Atlantic and then cast in bronze by an African-American slave. Katya situates this moving tale in the context of the lowering clouds of civil strife and brings us to a climax in 1863, as the figure of freedom and nationhood is ultimately raised to the place where she stands today. The group was delighted by Katya’s crafting of this account and consider it her best work to date. It augers well for the prospects of publication.

– *Rob Robbins*

In Memoriam

Earlier this month I reported the news of the death of long-time member **Bogna Lorence-Kot**. I had planned to write her “In Memoriam” for the winter newsletter, but at the last minute I discovered that I no longer had the computer files of her draft memoir (which I helped to create). So for now I am postponing this sad but privileged writing task. I will only mention that Bogna lived a full, interesting life and that even as she coped with Parkinson’s disease, she never lost her intellectual engagement with the past and the present. – Ed.

Carol Sicherman notes: “I owe it to Bogna that I found TIHS. A mutual friend told me that Bogna might help me with some Polish-

language postcards I was researching. Indeed she could. After translating the cards, despite the awful handwriting, she casually suggested that I might enjoy belonging to the Institute. I’ve been grateful ever since for her generosity and thoughtfulness.”

* * * * *

Welcome to new member **Lyndon Comstock** who has worked in the field of community economic development. Since retiring, he has published books about Annie Clemenc and the 1913 Keweenaw copper strike, the early history of a Berkeley neighborhood, his grandmother in Salonica at the time of the Balkan Wars, and pre-abolition Black history in central Kentucky. Other historical research topics include: the United States Colored Troops at Fort Pillow; the community of Bolinas, California; Croatian partisans in World War II; Students for a Democratic Society; and Chögyam Trungpa’s life in Tibet before 1959. Lyndon also served as a primary source for Cliff Rosenthal’s book about community development financial institutions.

From **Kathleen O’Connor**: “At turning 70 next month I have decided that doing three part-time archives jobs with a three-transit-system commute is no longer a practical or viable way of working. I am finishing up my work with Notre Dame de Namur University (aka College of Notre Dame) in Belmont very shortly. I will continue to work for two Catholic sisters’ archives with the option of reducing my hours and working from home whenever possible.”

Rose Marie Cleese reports that she has written “a 5,700-word article that will be appearing in the next issue of the San Francisco Historical Society’s prestigious biannual journal, *The Argonaut*: ‘Days of Infamy: What happened in San Francisco on December 7, 1941, As Well As the Months Before and After the Bombing of Pearl Harbor.’” The article, which coincides

MEMBER NEWS

with the 80th anniversary of the bombing of Pearl Harbor this past December 7th, is an expansion of the prologue she's written for the biography she is researching and writing about her grandfather, Angelo J. Rossi, who was the mayor of San Francisco during that time. Rose Marie will provide a link to the article when it is available.

Leslie Friedman's article "The Hackers Journey: From Galicia to Missouri" was accepted for online publication by the San Mateo County Genealogical Society. "The essay tells stories of my mother's paternal ancestors who traveled from Central Europe to London, England, to Baltimore, Maryland, to Madison, Illinois, to St. Louis, Missouri," writes Leslie.

"The information came from Dorismae Hacker Friedman to me. Dorismae was born in 1920 and passed away in 2021. I wrote down these stories to honor my mother. Not having written about my family since a grade-school essay about my father's grandmother, for me it was a new way to approach history. It is a different perspective: seeing things from the personal and glancing up at bigger events only when they intrude on private lives. Following Hacker generations across a continent, ocean, another continent, I connected what was happening in the larger world of kingdoms falling, empires rising only occasionally with the personal history of moving from region to region, starting a family, starting a business.

"Illuminating the personal puts economic booms and depressions, wars and peace in the background. These are there, but the light is on family and individual particulars. I knew my Hacker grandparents well, but did not know their parents. Looking at family history gave me an opportunity to acquaint myself with the Hackers who made the longest journey, from England to America."

Marilyn L. Geary is pleased to announce publication of her book *Miners, Milkers &*

Merchants: From the Swiss-Italian Alps to the Golden Hills of Australia and California.

Focused on the Rotanzi family from the Vallemaggia in Ticino, Switzerland, the family biography also reflects the experiences of the multitudes who left Ticino seeking relief from poverty in the mid-19th century.

Through the letters of three brothers and their father in the Vallemaggia, the narrative follows the immigrants from their Alpine village of Peccia to the gold fields of Victoria in Australia and the dairy ranches of California. As the young men struggle to survive in lands far from home, they bear witness to monumental historical events. *Foreword Reviews* magazine's Clarion Review has described the book as "an evocative, striking portrait of migration in the nineteenth century."

"The project took me over 15 years to complete," writes Marilyn. "I found the first letter in a library book, Giorgio Cheda's *L'emigrazione ticinese in California* and became intrigued when the name "Ghirardelli" popped out from lines of Italian I barely understood. I translated that page to discover that Virgilio Rotanzi worked in Domingo Ghirardelli's soda factory on arrival in San Francisco. Intent on learning more, over time I discovered two other brothers and more letters, 40 in all.

"Committed to a nonfiction account, I filled in gaps where letters were missing by drawing on other contemporaneous sources, including local newspapers, brochures, and guidebooks for immigrants. Research trips to Ticino and Victoria enhanced my knowledge of the family's origins and the Australian Gold Country where one of the brothers settled. I owe many thanks to members of the Institute's Writers Group for careful readings and invaluable critiques that helped refine the manuscript and make it shine."

Print and e-book versions are available at www.marilynlgeary.com.

culture, for example. There are a thousand stories about our great experiment in democracy and many thousands of true heroes and beautiful music, each characteristic of their cultures, which can be adapted by composers who are talented enough. Further, such musicals/plays could be cast by people of those cultures, and audiences would see not a fantasy of what could have been but what really was. It would be stimulating/challenging/inspiring, and really, truly American, which is the aim of much of my work.

As notable examples, consider “Showboat,” “Porgy and Bess,” and “West Side Story.” By incorporating some of the actual history of African Americans or Puerto Ricans, and using appropriate music, each of these has introduced a whole American culture to audiences. None of them has an actual historic figure, but new works could certainly introduce such characters. In my show “A Shirtwaist Tale,” I was able to incorporate two historic women, Rose Schneiderman, a labor organizer and later head of the National Labor Relations Board, and Alva Belmont, the richest woman in New York. I was able to tell the story of Eastern European Jews becoming part of America, and composer Arkadi Serper was able to use the music they brought with them.

If others like Mr. Miranda would start writing work like this, they would help build our country, begin to counter White Supremacy, and help maintain democracy. In order to make our democracy really work, we have to start telling all the stories, putting all the people into the picture, showing all the movers and shakers, making it impossible for a ridiculously ignorant man to wander around America blathering about the real America being White, ordering little children put into cages, and denying people of color the vote. So Lin-Manuel, where is the musical about your own people, that could be cast with the color they really were? There’s a musical I would pay \$200 to see.

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