

INSTITUTE FOR HISTORICAL STUDY

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NEWSLETTER

Interview with Member Jeanne Farr McDonnell

Jeanne, you've practiced history in a variety of ways—cofounder of a museum, writer of a biography, preservationist—how did you come to the profession?

I came to believe at one time that historians ignored women, so I looked for ways to correct that. I had studied literature in depth, and had worked as a journalist and newsletter editor, so my first long project was a book, which publishers refused, about California woman suffrage. I did propose to the history museum at DeAnza College that the organization I had started, the Women's Heritage Museum, might work with them to create an exhibit for the 75th anniversary in 1986 of California women gaining full and equal voting rights. We worked together and that exhibit traveled for years in California and even to Seneca Falls, New York.

My interest in preservation had a lot to do with my belief that objects and places speak strongly about the past. I was at one time executive director of Nature Explorations because to me the environment is intrinsically part of history and needs to be taken into account in regard to people and how they have interacted with land and water. When for the first time I saw the name of Juana Briones it was in a newspaper article about the house she lived in for many years in Palo Alto. I contacted the owner, a descendant of a nephew of the third owner of the property, and we agreed that she would get a tax deduction in return for permitting public tours of the house and grounds 20 days a year. The organization I had started, the Women's Heritage Museum, trained docents and sponsored the tours. It was an unforgettable privilege.

Several Institute members who previewed the Juana Briones exhibit at the California Historical Society were impressed by the presence of a piece of adobe wall from her home. Will you describe the efforts to preserve the structure and the outcome?

Many people worked to preserve the Juana Briones house in Palo Alto. It was a very sad experience that, even with very expert legal assistance, we were unable to prevent the owner, who had acquired it later, from tearing it down. Several dedicated people were able to salvage some materials, including one part of the wall of the original house which is now on view as part of the exhibition. One of the sailors that Juana had helped desert from his ship, Charles Brown, worked in the nearby redwoods when she had purchased the 4,000 acre ranch. I believe he helped supply the wood frame, filled with adobe mud, and also contributed some American building skills to the construction. I composed the material that led to the National Trust for Historic Preservation putting the house on its Eleven Most Endangered list, but even that did not secure this valuable historic asset.

What are you doing at the present?

I am one of the editors of the newsletter of the Palo Alto Historical Association and am a member of their board of directors. I am also the historian of the Woman's Club of Palo Alto. Several aspects of the

– continued on the back page

Continued from the front page:

Club's history connect with some of my long time interests. For one, the Club originated simultaneously with the City, and members called themselves the women's arm of government, planting and protecting trees, training residents to avoid throwing trash about, originating a reading room that became the public library, and much more. One of the board members made her home available for the first school in town. The club's board president in 1911 headed the Palo Alto team that influenced men in the town to vote yes on the successful resolution to give California women full and equal voting rights. She, Emily Elliott Pardee Karns Dixon (she married three times) was also the president in 1916 when the clubhouse was constructed. I have contributed to the application in process for placing that structure on the National Register of Historic Places.

Jeanne also shared some of her personal background:

I grew up in Akron Ohio, attended Stephens College in Missouri, partly because I like to ride horses and the admissions people seemed interested in that. I finished my BA at Ohio State, where my Shakespeare professor recommended that I apply for a Fulbright Scholarship. I got it and studied comparative literature at the University of Brussels. When I disembarked from the ocean liner in New York on my way back to Akron, I went exploring, and thought Columbia University looked neat. I applied and got my MA degree there in American Literature. After that I was young in a society that didn't favor jobs for women, but I did earn a bit filing articles for reference at the *Akron Beacon Journal*, which gave me an early taste for my much later preoccupation with archives. I moved, along with my Brooklynite husband, Eugene McDonnell, and children to California from Pennsylvania in 1974. So I was something of a novice in western history and ecology, which gave me the boost of wonderment—it's a different story out here.

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ANNUAL MEETING

Those who attended the annual meeting on February 15 were privileged to hear valuable and insightful talks by three members who have recently joined our ranks. **Sue Bessmer**, a retired professor from San Francisco State, where she taught interdisciplinary social science, spoke about the problem of striking a proper balance between scholarship and accessibility in teaching. This was a significant issue at SFSU, where the best students, often men and women who had left school earlier and had returned with great life experience, were the equal or superior to those at Stanford, while the worst were often woefully prepared for study at the college level. But students of both levels might be sitting side by side in her classes. How could she teach to both types at the same time? Bessmer's solution was to provide ample theory for the better students while illustrating those propositions with "good yarns" and concrete examples that engaged the less well-prepared.

After retiring and working as a lecturer on cruise ships, Sue pulled together her ideas and experience and produced *How the World Worked: From the Pharaohs to Christopher Columbus* (reviewed in the winter Newsletter). This accessible work looks at the Ancient World through an economic and sociological lens, but blends the theoretical with a host of effective illustrations. In her book, Sue tells how she convinced students, many of whom were of Asian background, of their Greco-Roman heritage by simply pointing out that to get to what we call the Far East from America we have to travel westward and to get to Western Europe, we must go east. Our very sense of geography is rooted in concepts developed in Ancient Greece! Sue provided many other examples, including an excellent discussion of the differences between slavery in the ancient world and in the antebellum South.

Our second speaker, **Patricia Bracewell**, told us of the genesis of her historical novel *Shadow on*

the Crown (New York: Penguin, 2013) based on the life of Emma of Normandy, who married two kings of England and was the mother of two others. This volume, the first of a projected trilogy, begins in 1002 with the arrival of Emma in England as the young, fifteen-year-old bride of King Aethelred II, and ends in 1005 with the birth of her son. Pat told us how she worked to use documented events and established sources to provide a factual structure for the story, but employed informed imagination to fill in the many gaps. Gaps in the record may drive historians nuts, but they are essential for the novelist who turns those gaps into story. In the eleventh century, Pat noted, the gaps were vast where her heroine is concerned. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, the great source of early English history, only mentioned Emma twice between 1002 and 1005, and the *Economium Emmae Reginae*, a work Emma herself commissioned toward the end of her life, said nothing about the time of her marriage to Aethelred. Drawing on the *Chronicle*, Pat tried to tell the story of those three years from Emma's point of view. She tried to imagine what it would have been like for a girl on the brink of womanhood to marry a foreign king who was much older than she. How would she forge relationships with her husband's many children? How would she deal with an unfamiliar court? Where and how would she find allies in an alien land?

Pat is working on the second volume of her Emma trilogy, *The Price of Blood*, which begins in 1006 and ends in 1012. This was a terrible time of turmoil and bloodshed, when Viking invasions ravaged the country. Sources don't mention Emma, but Pat is determined to place her at the center of events. "I'm a novelist, not a historian," she admits. "I'm interested in drama, conflict, and good storytelling. Besides, just because Emma wasn't mentioned in the sources doesn't mean she wasn't there."

Our third scheduled speaker, **Katherine (Katie) Sibley**, was unable to join us for the meeting, but her ideas were ably presented in an excellent paper entitled “Engendered by War: The Legacy of World War II for Women’s Work, Lives, and Activism,” read by Institute member **Elizabeth Thacker-Estrada**. Sibley challenged the established idea that despite their increased participation in the work force during the conflict, that experience had no significant impact on women’s lives. Once the war was over, so the established narrative goes, women put jobs aside and went back to the kitchen and part-time, hubby-supporting jobs, until the clarion call of Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique* roused them from their slumber in “the warm brightness of home.”

Sibley argues against the Friedanian notion that the war years left no mark and that the late ’forties and the nineteen-fifties were a dead zone for women. Sibley demonstrates that, instead, women’s roles were expanding in these supposedly “dead” years and that this is what accounts for the widely expressed fears of impending “matriarchy” and the horrors of “Momism,” which supposedly weakened men emotionally, provoked homosexuality, and even made them candidates for “brainwashing” à la *The Manchurian Candidate*.

Sibley uses the technique of collective biography to produce a strikingly different picture of the world BBF (Before Betty Friedan), a picture she plans to develop into a book. She focuses on six women who became activists in the years after the war, but whose activism was rooted in their WWII experiences. Her subjects are Lenore Guinzberg Marshall, a leader in the peace movement; Bella Abzug, civil rights lawyer, peace activist, and later congresswoman; Pauli Murray, one of the founders of the Congress on Racial Equality (CORE) and a life-long fighter for the rights of African-Americans; Rachel Carson, the

pioneering environmentalist and author of *The Silent Spring*; Margaret Bourke-White, the leading photo-journalist, who turned her cameras toward the faces of poverty and injustice and the horrific consequences of war; and Martha Haven Fletcher, a Unitarian activist, forced to flee the country, charged with being a communist agent. All of these women, Sibley argues, cut their teeth during WWII and carried their experience into their activism in the years that followed, liberated women who helped blaze the trail for their sisters in the Post-Friedan Era.

– *Richard Robbins*

“Dragon of the Waldorf: Arthur J. Goldsmith, the Mid-century Interventionists, and the Civil War of the American Elites”

On Sunday, January 19, at the home of Lyn Reese, Louis Trager presented his subject, Arthur J. Goldsmith (1892-1964), a New York City financier, industrialist, philanthropist, and Republican insider, and a ubiquitous participant in internationalist organizations. He was also an enthusiastic supporter of world government movements. Internationalists were pivotal in influencing American foreign policy. They promoted American intervention in World War II as well as the formation of the United Nations and the Marshall plan for the rebuilding of Europe at the end of the war.

Goldsmith proved to be an elusive subject for research because there is no archived collection of Goldsmith’s papers. Documents about or by him are available in others’ collections. He ran, with great discretion, numerous political action committees out of his apartment-office suite in the Waldorf Towers and was content to work behind the scenes. The epithet “the dragon of the Waldorf” was coined by Westbrook Pegler, a syndicated Hearst columnist throughout the

WORKS IN PROGRESS

1950s. Pegler demonized Goldsmith mercilessly as aiming to subvert the GOP and American sovereignty in the interest of Communism. Goldsmith did little to defend himself, even though he expressed a life-long hatred of Communism. The one important document where Goldsmith talks about himself is in a thirteen-page letter to Russell Davenport, senior editor of Henry Luce's *Fortune* and *Life* magazines in the 1940s.

Without a sufficient paper trail, the difficulties of deconstructing the right wing mythology, created by the John Birch Society and others, about Goldsmith are seemingly insurmountable. Louis' research is shifting toward the investigation of bi-partisan internationalist committees that were active in congressional elections from 1940-1952. Goldsmith was active in all of these and ran most from his Waldorf suite. Louis is discovering how these same internationalist organizations—operating under different names over time—were not only pivotal in turning the tide in favor of US intervention in World War II, but also helping shape the political and social consensus of the postwar era. A handful of internationalists associated with each other back to the early 1940s and the Friends of Democracy were pivotal in the 1954 Senate censure campaign that halted Joe McCarthy's anti-Communist crusade. Goldsmith had worked closely with the participants and is cited by right-wingers as having played a central role in the group that organized the effort against McCarthy, the National Committee for an Effective Congress. These internationalist organizations, while often grassroots, private groups, also attracted the elites: government figures, journalists, clergy, intellectuals, financiers, and not least, members of the influential Council on Foreign Relations.

– *Monica Clyde*

“From the Anschluss to May 1939: More Background on How the War Came. (It wasn't as you likely have read it.)”

At his work-in-progress meeting on March 16, **Richard Raack** took his listeners over the convoluted and complex events that took place in European diplomacy starting with Hitler's annexation of Austria in March of 1938, through the Munich agreement in September/October, to the resignation of Maxim Litvinov as Soviet Commissar of Foreign Affairs and his replacement by Viacheslav Molotov in May of 1939. This period is usually seen as a time of desperate efforts to forge a system of collective security designed to stop the Nazis. But Raack's research has led him to a different conclusion. While some, like the pacifist Chamberlain, did indeed seek peace, and even Hitler would condescend to get what he wanted without resort to war, one key figure saw a new European conflict as both inevitable and desirable.

That man was Joseph Stalin, who viewed the world from both a Marxist-Leninist and a Russian perspective. As a revolutionary and as a Russian statesman, Stalin could have no commitment to the Versailles system, which was designed to sustain the “imperialist” world order and lock Russia out of Europe. A new war between the capitalist powers would gravely weaken them and pave the way for revolution and a Soviet advance into Europe. Stalin worked to foster that conflict while keeping the Soviet Union out. But Stalin always played his cards close to his vest and Litvinov, his foreign affairs spokesman, put the gloss of “collective security” on his designs. Raack portrays Litvinov as essentially powerless and terrified, not in any way an independent actor.

Richard suggested that Stalin may have unleashed a rumor of German troops massing on the Czech border in May 1938 that caused the Czechs to mobilize and France to move in their support. This phony crisis led Chamberlain to

realize that France's commitment to Czechoslovakia could pull Britain into a war, and he subsequently worked to modify the French position. By the summer of 1938, the French had told the Czechs that they would not go to war over the Sudetenland and Stalin had told German Ambassador Schulenberg that the Soviet Union had no interest in protecting a "legacy of Versailles." At the time of the Sudeten crisis, Stalin made noises about supporting the Czechs, but it was all a bluff and, according to Raack, Stalin was displeased with the Munich accords that saved, for the moment, the fragile peace. After Munich, Stalin began to make serious overtures to Hitler and simultaneously did his best to block a possible Polish-German rapprochement.

Raack had some very interesting things to say about the German establishment of its Protectorate in Bohemia and Moravia in March 1939. He notes that on March 10, five days before the Germans marched into Prague, Stalin had made public his unwillingness to support the Versailles system. Raack also claims that Emile Hácha, the Czech president, was not bullied into submission by the Germans but had been extremely pliant and even led the way in accepting Hitler's takeover. The British press, large segments of which were hostile to appeasement, misinterpreted events, exaggerating the brutality of the German move. This pushed Chamberlain, on March 31, to give Poland a guarantee that Britain would defend her against Germany. Stalin could now move toward a pact with Hitler. The removal of Litvinov in May simply took the lid off the stew he had been cooking all along.

– *Richard Robbins*

In January and March the **California and the West study group** organized two exhibition tours, described here by some of the participants.

Juana Briones y su California ~ Pionera, Fundadora, Curandera

Entering the California Historical Society, our attention was immediately drawn to a large section of a wall, 9 feet tall and 8 feet long, standing at the entrance of the exhibit hall. Because our Institute tour took place on the day before the exhibit opened, we witnessed the architect and restoration specialist, Gil Sanchez, putting final touches on this important historical artifact—all that remains of the ranch house that Juana Briones built in what is now Palo Alto in the 1840s, before Mexican California became American California. Positioned at the beginning of the exhibit, the wall is a fitting gateway to the world of a woman whose life spanned more than three quarters of the nineteenth century. The destruction of the house was a great loss to history, as Institute member Jeanne McDonnell, and others who fought to save it, can testify, but the CHS exhibit brings that history to light through the use of documents, paintings, photographs, and artifacts from its own collection and a variety of sources. One visit was certainly not enough for me to absorb all of it.

– *Joanne Lafler*

I was intrigued by, among other things, the photographic portrait displayed near the end of the exhibition. For an exhibition about a prominent person in history, there would naturally have been the desire to show an image of the person. Unfortunately, no such photograph of Juana Briones has been found, so the museum had to settle for one of a relative who was said to have looked like her. I also enjoyed being there while the finishing touches were being put on the installation, and I appreciated being shown around by the executive director at a time when she probably had many other pressing things to do.

– *Ann Harlow*

OUT AND ABOUT

As an archivist, I was amazed at how much work needed to be done for the finishing touches to be complete for the opening the next day. I really enjoyed the variety of materials loaned for the exhibit, procured from many archives and museums. The story of the Briones home and the exhibit of the one remaining piece of the adobe wall is a lesson for people to realize that history matters. — *Kathleen O'Connor*

I was most impressed with the piece of Juana's adobe which was being installed in the gallery as we visited. The unusual use of lumber and plaster was not at all what I envisioned as a typical adobe. Nonetheless, I was so moved by the whole exhibit that I'm bringing a group of friends to visit in April. — *Ellen Huppert*

Historic Los Gatos

Institute members converged from the East Bay, South Bay, and San Francisco at the History Museum of Los Gatos on March 27th. Dawn Maxson gave us a leisurely tour, beginning with the story of the handsome stone building, part of a flour mill from the 1850s that hosted rock concerts in the early 1970s. We learned that Los Gatos became a kind of health resort because the air was considered good for people with asthma and other respiratory diseases. Two of our members, Rose Marie Cleese and Joanne Lafler, knew of people who had gone there for their health. The town had a "sketchy" reputation in the late nineteenth century and considered local prohibition of alcohol in 1906, but the measure was defeated. The website (historylosgatos.org) has a large archive of historic photographs and other information about the town.

We then toured the temporary exhibition, "American Bohemia: The Cats Estate in Los Gatos." Photographs, memorabilia, a time line, home movies, and other materials told the story

of Sara Bard Field and Charles Erskine Scott Wood, who bought the property in 1919, moved there full time in 1925, and hosted many guests who were notable figures in the arts, literature, and social reform. I was especially interested in seeing this show because Field and Wood were close friends and frequent correspondents with Albert Bender and Anne Bremer, about whom I am writing. Albert Bender appeared in costume in one of the photos, depicting Sara's 1932 birthday party. (I feel like I'm on a first-name basis with them because of hearing our member Bonda Lewis talk about them for years.) Other notable visitors to The Cats included Ansel Adams, Benny Bufano, Bennett Cerf, Charlie Chaplin, Robinson Jeffers, Eleanor Roosevelt, Carl Sandberg, John Steinbeck, and Lincoln Steffens.

Several of us stayed in Los Gatos for dinner and an evening program sponsored by the museum. Guest speakers Dona Munker of New York, who is writing a book, "Sara and Erskine, An American Romance," and Tim Barnes of Portland, an expert on C.E.S. Wood, made it clear that both Wood and Field were remarkable and controversial individuals. Their accomplishments and interests are too numerous to go into here. The audience included at least nine descendants of either Wood or Field (they had no children together). Bonda and I had a chance to chat with a few of them and the speakers afterwards.

I was disappointed that we were not able to arrange for a tour of the Cats Estate itself, which recently changed owners. However, we had the opportunity to see many images of the house and the art works the couple commissioned for the estate, and to learn about the amazing people who lived and visited there. As of this writing there are still four videos of the estate on the website of a local realtor (<http://duaneadam.com/CatsEstate.html>).

— *Ann Harlow*

GROUP REPORTS

The Institute's **Play Readers'** most recent endeavor was reading *The Heresy of Love*, a play about the life of a 17th-century nun and writer in Mexico, Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz (1651-1695). The play, by Helen Edmundson, was first performed at the Swan Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon in February and March 2012. The author was inspired to write her play after seeing a production of *The House of Desires*, a play written by Sor Juana in 1683.

Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz was born out of wedlock in then New Spain (Mexico). Abandoned by her father, she grew up in the home of her maternal grandfather, where she learned to read in his library, highly unusual for the times. She entered a convent in her teens where, ultimately, she lived comfortably, acquired a large collection of books, and held discussions with intellectuals and the elite. She was a formidable intellect who wrote secular plays and verses despite her religious vocation. She was well liked at the Court, indeed a favorite of the Vicereine, a "feminist" before the concept existed.

The play begins with the arrival of a dogmatic new Archbishop of Mexico, who views her with suspicion and disdain. Her confessor, a decent man and fond of her, is weak and unable to defend her. When her discussion of a theological matter is published without her wish or knowledge, with a critique by a "Sor Filotea," Sor Juana writes a response, *Respuesta a Sor Filotea*, defending women's intellectual rights and their right to education. This letter is her defining work as well as the instrument of her downfall. She is condemned by the Archbishop and forbidden to continue writing. We must remember that, at the time, in addition to disapproval from the Church, the cloud of the Inquisition hung over New, as well as Old Spain. Sister Juana is ultimately forced to lay down her pen, as her work is considered antithetical to her vows and her religious duty,

and recants her misdeeds with a signature written with her own blood. She dies during an epidemic while caring for members of the convent.

The play includes several characters who are not historical. There is a jealous, vindictive sister who seeks to undermine Juana with the clergy. There is also a subplot concerning her innocent young niece becoming romantically entangled with a Spanish aristocrat and the influence of this on Sister Juana's decision to stop writing and give up her books. Our group questioned the necessity for this melodrama, which diminished the splendor of her original, ground breaking thinking and writing regarding the position of women. She is highly regarded in contemporary Mexico, where her image is on the currency and she is a feminist icon.

The Play Readers welcome all interested persons. We meet monthly in the home of one of our group, enjoy refreshment, read aloud with gusto, and engage in animated discussion of each work. Contact Joanne Lafler.

– *Edith L. Piness*

The **Writers' Group** has expanded, with **Lilian Tsappa** joining in February and **Sue Bessmer** in March. Lilian explained her recent publication through Amazon of her work on hand gestures in yoga and their similarity to those in Christian Orthodox painting. Sue, a new member of the Institute, is looking for a new project following the successful publication of her book *How the World Worked from the Pharaohs to Christopher Columbus*.

In December, we met at Autumn Stanley's woodland home in Portola Valley and discussed **Louis Trager's** current pages on Arthur Goldsmith, known as the Dragon of the Waldorf. The group encouraged him to continue his efforts to create an understandable account of Goldsmith's many activities through many organizations.

Our January meeting, held at Liz Thacker-Estrada's Pacifica home, featured **Ellen's** draft of the history of the Huppert family, based primarily on documents she holds. The group agreed that it was an interesting story, but it needed work. The narrative should be more fluent—less dependent on the documents—and the background should be used to place the story in a wider context.

In February, at Louis Trager's home in Alameda, and again in March at his own home, **Rob Robbins** offered two additional chapters of his biography of Vladimir Dzhunkovsky. The story is fascinating, as Dzhun tried to carry on his duties during World War I and maintain his loyalty to the tsar despite his serious concerns about Rasputin's activities. Dzhun failed and the tsar dismissed him from his duties. The group, while acknowledging Rob's good writing, felt that the dramatic events needed a stronger narrative thrust.

Any Institute member engaged in a writing project that has anything to do with history is welcome to join our group. Please let Ellen Huppert know of your interest.

– *Ellen Huppert*

In Memoriam

Longtime Institute members will remember **Elaine Rosenthal**, an active member in the 1990s and, for several years, editor of the newsletter. Coming to historical scholarship late in life, Elaine had a passion for her subject, Italian Renaissance history. At UC Berkeley she studied with Gene Brucker, who became a valued colleague. At the University of London she completed her doctoral work in 1988, with a dissertation, "Lineage Bonds in Fifteenth-century Florence: The Giovanni, Parenti, and Petrucci." A seminal article, "The Position of Women in Renaissance Florence: Neither Autonomy Nor Subjection," was published in

Florence and Italy, Renaissance Studies in Honor of Nicolai Rubenstein (ed.. Peter Denley and Caroline Elam, London: Committee for Medieval Studies, Westfield College, 1988). Her interests also included family relationships and relationships between Christians and Jews in early modern Florence. The announcement of her death on January 6 brought back many memories, including her sparkling presence at our history bees.

– *Joanne Lafler*

It is with sadness that we report the death on February 12 of former Institute member **Masha Zakheim**. She was 82 years old. Masha taught English and humanities for 25 years at the City College of San Francisco, and after her retirement devoted her time to writing and helping to create public awareness of various murals in the city. Her main interest was Coit Tower, which includes a mural by her father, Bernard Zakheim. Her book *Coit Tower: Its History and Art* has helped preserve this iconic landmark. She was also a champion of Diego Rivera, the Mexican muralist, whose art graces various San Francisco venues, including The City Club, City College of San Francisco, and the San Francisco Art Institute. Her book, *Diego Rivera in San Francisco*, was published in Spanish in 1998.

Masha was an active member of the Institute. She took members on visits to the Coit Tower murals, the Diego Rivera murals at the City Club and other venues, as well as a tour of the Lucien Labaudt murals at the Beach Chalet in Golden Gate Park. She served two terms on the Institute board of directors, and she presented a number of works-in-progress sessions over the years. She also graciously opened her home to hosting these sessions for others.

– *Lorrie O'Dell*

Welcome to our newest members:

With a BA and MFA from Mills College, **Stephanie McCoy** is the author of *Brilliance in the Shadows: A Biography of Lucia Kleinhans Mathews* (Arts and Crafts Press, 1998) and the novel *Sweet as Cane* (Pen and Mouse, 2012). Her second novel, “The She-Novelist of Venice,” based on the last years of the American writer Constance Fenimore Woolson, will be published in 2015.

Currently a graduate student in sociology at UCSB, **Jamila Sinlao** is finishing a Ph.D. thesis on Catholic sisters in San Francisco, 1850-1925. She has an MA from UCSB (2012), “‘Money Can’t Buy You Class’: Cultural Capital, Etiquette and the White Wedding.” She recently published an article: “‘To the Ends of the Earth’: Catholic Sisters in Nineteenth Century San Francisco,” in *U.S. Catholic Historian* (Vol. 31, no. 2, 25-49).

Historical geographer **Elizabeth Vasile** (Ph.D. from UCB), among other activities, is the founder of Genius Loci, a cultural history tour and research group helping communities and institutions build cultural heritage programs; she also writes a column on various topics in Italian American history for the newspaper *Italo-Americano*. Her broad interests include public, women’s, and culinary history.

On January 26, **Monica Clyde** gave a talk, “Building a Civil Society in San Francisco: The German Contribution from 1850 to World War I,” which is also the title of her article just published in the winter 2013 edition of *The Argonaut*, the magazine of the SF Museum and Historical Society. The event was co-sponsored by the Gerlind Institute for Cultural Studies and the Excelsior German Center. The talk was well received by the audience which included the German Consul General and his wife, representatives of the German department at UC Berkeley, and Institute president Ellen Huppert.

Bonda Lewis presented a theatrical performance as Sara Bard Field and a dramatic reading of C. E. S. Wood’s satirical masterpiece “Heavenly Discourse” at the History Museum of Los Gatos on February 6.

An excerpt from **Celeste Lipow MacLeod’s** book, *Multiethnic Australia*, has been reprinted in *Thinking Globally: A Global Studies Reader* (edited by Mark Juergensmeyer). University of California Press, 2014.

***San Francisco Lithographer: African American Artist Grafton Tyler Brown* by Robert J. Chandler (University of Oklahoma Press, 2014)**

The line between commercial art and fine art was less distinct a hundred and fifty years ago than now. Many a famous California painter, from William Keith to Maynard Dixon, started out doing illustrations for mass production. Grafton Tyler Brown (1841-1918) was a contemporary of Keith’s; both arrived in California from the East in the late 1850s. In addition to the fact that Keith worked in wood engraving and Brown in lithography, there was another major difference between the two: Grafton Brown was black. However, he was light-skinned enough that he managed to “pass” as white. This book relates how Brown became a successful San Francisco businessman in the 1860s and 1870s and then went on to prominence as a painter of landscapes over a wide-ranging area of the West.

In addition to the narrative, Robert Chandler has pieced together an impressive catalog of Brown’s work in both lithography (despite the ephemeral nature of the materials) and oil painting (despite their far-flung locations). The book is richly illustrated, and a casual reader could get a pretty good idea of the main ideas of the book simply by browsing the illustrations and reading their informative captions. Those

BOOK REVIEW

with a stronger interest in the evolution of printing in San Francisco will find a wealth of information and an extensive bibliography. The text itself includes interesting bibliographical notes and has an appealing conversational tone, reflecting the author's personality and enthusiasm for the subject. The early chapters and the Afterword by Shirley Ann Wilson Moore provide insight into matters of race in 19th-century California, including the evolution of the right of testimony for people of color.

Grafton Tyler Brown came from his native Pennsylvania in 1858 to Sacramento, where he worked as a servant in a hotel. He appeared in business directories and the 1860 census as "colored." The self-taught young artist received some recognition there for paintings, a steamship and a locomotive. In 1861 he moved to the What Cheer House on Leidesdorff Street in San Francisco. Coincidentally, the street was named for William Alexander Leidesdorff, now recognized as an African American pioneer, but successful at the time because he, too, was able to pass as white. The book explores a few other similar instances and the forces that drove people to turn their backs on their heritage.

"Either God blessed Grafton Brown with a nonobservant directory compiler in 1861 or Brown asked the compiler (perhaps offering something of substance) to exclude his race. In either case, that San Francisco directory—the first one in which Brown was listed—did not brand him as 'colored,' the term preferred by African Americans of the time, and thereby characterized Brown as white." (29)

Brown quickly developed expertise in producing "city views," which included a bird's-eye overview of a city surrounded by illustrations of specific buildings and sites. By 1865 Brown had his own lithography shop, with a few employees, some of whom became partners and eventually bought him out. Brown's shop competed with much larger companies such as

Britton & Rey and Edward Bosqui. The book argues convincingly that Brown's design work on such items as billheads (invoice forms), mining stock certificates, maps, and sheet music covers made them more artistic than similar pieces produced by other firms, although in some cases I found the differences quite subtle.

Various economic and taste changes, and perhaps a drive to try his hand as a "fine art" painter rather than a lithographer, induced Brown to sell his business in 1881. He joined the first British Columbia Geological Survey, which gave him ample opportunity to sketch rural and mountain scenery. He didn't stay in one place for very long during the 1880s; he lived in Victoria, Tacoma, Portland, and near Yellowstone National Park. He was active in the Portland Art Club, and the *Oregonian* newspaper reported regularly about his participation in the club's competitive "Sketch Nights."

I found this book to be well written and based on thorough research. It makes valuable contributions to knowledge about a noteworthy artist and about the history of lithography in San Francisco. My only quibbles, based on my own areas of knowledge, were with (1) the distinction made between "printing" and "lithography," since lithography is generally described as a form of printing; (2) "the San Francisco School of Design, which since 1916 has flourished as the California School of Fine Arts" (it was the California School of Design originally, and it's been the San Francisco Art Institute since 1961); and (3) "the softness of the romantic Hudson River School" (their paintings tend to be rather sharply delineated, not soft).

I was pleased to discover that much of this book is available on the web through Google Books. (Search on the key words "Grafton Tyler Brown" rather than the title.) Then if you'd like to add it to your library or coffee table, buy a copy!

—Ann Harlow