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NEWSLETTER

English Novelist Presages Donald Trump 150 Years Ago by Jody Offer

In the 1860s, George Eliot became fascinated with a local parliamentary election and wrote a political novel about it, called *Felix Holt, the Radical*. Felix was not a candidate but a young collier who becomes accidentally involved in the election, or more specifically, in trying to stop the violence associated with it. In *Felix's* coal mining town, production is down and the whole town is struggling to feed its kids and wondering what will happen next.

George Elliot was one of the “three major authors” I studied for my MA orals, so I know some of her novels very well. But when I plucked *Felix Holt* from my shelf in December, I was home sick with bronchitis, depressed by not only my illness, but by the results of November’s election, and looking for diversion. I didn’t remember Felix Holt well, but I knew I could depend on Eliot for a well-told tale. As I read, however, I started feeling a little like the Trump election was emanating from Eliot’s pages.

An example: Into Felix’s town comes the candidate’s rep, Johnson, representing the candidate’s program. (In 1860, politicians couldn’t go on TV or radio; they hired pros to “cover” their territory.)

“He’s a mid-sized man, we’ll say; stout, with coat upon coat of fine broadcloth...none of your dark, scowling men, but one with an innocent pink-and-white skin and very smooth light hair—a most respectable man who calls himself by a good, sound, well-known English name.”

Like...Trump? Ha ha, I thought. Or maybe I’ve got that too much on my mind. Then the man started speaking.

“As this country prospers, it has more and more need of you, sirs. It can do without a pack of lazy lords and ladies, but it can never do without you brave colliers. And the country will prosper! I pledge you my word, sirs, this country will rise to the top top of everything, and there isn’t a man in it but shall have his joint [roast] and his spare money jingling in his pocket...”

I promise you, we’ll bring coal back! America will be great again! Lord, I thought. I thought I was reading this book to get my mind off that, and here we are in West Virginia, at a Trump rally.

One difference between our elections and those of George Eliot’s day was voting was not secret, or even by ballot. You marched to the polling place and “stood up like a man” and spoke the name of the man you wanted in a clear voice. And it was expected that people could come in, to watch and listen, to “keep you honest.” You can imagine some of the mischief that might result from this, but you don’t have to, because Eliot describes it for you. It turns out one of Johnson’s duties was to arrange for groups of unemployed miners to prevent the other guy’s voters from voting. By arranging for local taverns to serve free booze, the candidates’ reps set up groups of drunk men roaming the streets, looking for a fight and scaring away the voters. (The KKK in Mississippi?)

Felix is horrified by Johnson, and his ilk, “...men of no real opinions, but who pilfer the words of every opinion, and turn them into cant which will serve their purpose at the moment; men who look out for dirty work to make their fortunes by, dirty work wants little talent and no conscience.” (The Steve Bannons, Sean Spicers and Kellyanne Conways of the world?)

– continued on the back page

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

On We Go!

This is my first message as president of the Institute’s board of directors. I’m just starting my second year on the board, so I have some catching up to do about various matters, but plenty of time ahead to serve this organization and help to increase the public’s awareness and appreciation of history, in the San Francisco Bay Area and elsewhere.

Thanks to Rob Robbins for setting such a fine example of presidential behavior. I will try to give you a similar combination of practical judgment, inspiration, and good humor. Thanks also to the other directors and Institute members who have been so dependable and supportive—keep on doing your thing, and count on me for the dependability and support that you deserve in turn.

As discussed at the annual meeting on February 11, the future of the Institute needs not only the vitality and dedication of current members, but also the energy and diversity of interests that new members can bring. We will be focusing this year on ways to increase our numbers selectively, by making or developing connections with history-focused organizations in the Bay Area and with history-minded individuals such as those we encountered during the “San Francisco History Days” in early March. I am also glad to see a closer relationship between our Institute and the Mechanics’ Institute, where I serve on the board of trustees.

As we go forward, it will be especially important to highlight what we have to offer to newcomers: individual experience in “doing history” and a wonderful tradition of working together on projects of mutual interest. For example, I have a work in progress that I would like to share with you later this year . . .

– *Charles Sullivan*

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ANNUAL MEETING PROGRAM

Challenges on Writing the Biographies of Lesser Known People

At the Institute's recent annual meeting in Berkeley, we were fortunate to hear three member authors discuss their experiences in writing biographies of remarkable individuals who are less well known than the subjects of many popular biographies today. The authors encountered a unique set of challenges in their research. These presentations were of great value to all of us who have become obsessed with a life we know is worthy of research and publication, so a wider audience can appreciate what we have discovered. And we can take comfort that the research and writing often takes place over years as we carry on with full-time work or other responsibilities.

For six years **Taryn Edwards** has been researching Andrew Hallidie (1834-1900), father of the San Francisco cable cars (and much more). Hallidie's interest in cable cars began after observing a horrific accident involving a horse-drawn car on a San Francisco hill. Hallidie developed a prototype for the cable car in August of 1873, based on his father's English-patented wire rope used for mining elevators and railroads.

Taryn believes Hallidie ought to be better known for his many other contributions. She wants to present "the real facts of his life." The 17-year-old Andrew Hallidie and his father came to California after the Gold Rush, but his father soon returned to London. Andrew eventually married and lived in San Francisco with his wife Martha and an adopted son. He contributed greatly to the San Francisco Mechanics' Institute, the oldest library on the west coast, where his portrait hangs today. For 40 years he was active with the Institute and served as president for 14 years. He was also a founding regent of the University of California, contributed greatly to San Francisco's economy, and became a champion of libraries after a tour

of the East Coast and Europe. On his 1875 visit to the Boston Public Library, he learned that it was funded by tax dollars. He encouraged a similar tax in San Francisco. With the help of Senator George Rogers, the Rogers Free Library Act became law in California and established the first public libraries in San Francisco, Oakland, and other communities.

Research on Hallidie has been difficult because much of his correspondence was destroyed in the earthquake and fire of 1906, although a diary from the time of his immigration and a few personal papers survived and are housed at the California Historical Society. Taryn is planning to travel to London to investigate the scope of his father's and brothers' businesses. Based on her experience, Taryn concluded with the advice, "Be diligent and look everywhere and you will find goodies."

Rob Robbins has recently completed a comprehensive biography of the important but relatively little known Russian, Vladimir Dzhunkovsky (1865-1938). Rob became fascinated with this individual from his earlier research on the institutions of the old regime and especially the provincial governors.

Rob started working on the biography in 1990, and credits the Institute's writers group for valuable advice. Dzhunkovsky was integral in "the continuum of the changing style in how Russia was governed." His life was so extraordinary that when Rob contacted an agent in New York about this biography, he had to insist it was all true in response to her comment that she "didn't do fiction." The book will be published by the "Pittsburgh Academic Press in late 2017 or in 2018.

Dzhunkovsky seemingly knew everyone. He was a courtier in the Russian imperial court and vocal opponent of Rasputin while Governor of Moscow (1905-1913), head of internal security in Russia, and a rising frontline military

commander in the First World War. He was arrested and put on trial in 1919, but because of popular support, he was released in 1921. He subsequently served as advisor to the communist security forces in the USSR, but by 1937 he became a victim of Stalin's terror campaign, leading to his arrest and execution in 1938.

Dzhunkovsky was a workaholic and had written 13 volumes of memoirs by the late 1920s. Rob believes he was motivated to write these extensive memoirs "because the past was being wiped away with the revolution." Dzhunkovsky also saved a huge amount of material that is found today in the State Archives of the Russian Federation in Moscow.

Rob has visited Russia multiple times since 1967. It was important to judge the veracity of the quantities of available material and then "to chip away to find the biography in the memoirs." Dzhunkovsky appeared to be an accurate historian but lacked introspection and "expunged events that were painful." His memoirs only covered the portion of his life before he left the army in 1918. Fortunately much more information was available in the police files of his arrests and in his correspondence. In writing this biography, Rob noted the "book got bigger and bigger and resembled Dzhunkovsky's own memoirs," yet the publisher wisely recognized the value of this epic story for both specialists and nonspecialists. Rob is trying to "make Dzhunkovsky's story Russia's story"—a continuing presence in the country's passage from the era of the "Great Reforms" to the time of Stalin's terror.

A woman known simply as Jean was the subject of **Phyllis Grilikhes'** doctoral dissertation and the subject of much additional research, resulting in a recently published book, *Autism's Stepchild: A Mother's Story*. This is the story of Dora, a mother, and her daughter Jean. (Phyllis used pseudonyms for both individuals in order to protect their privacy.) Dora carried out an

unfailing struggle over decades, beginning in the 1930s, to find adequate care for Jean, who had a condition that today would be known as autism. Renowned psychologist Erik Erikson became interested in Jean, worked with her, and counseled her family. She inspired the chapter "Early Ego Failure" in his classic book *Childhood and Society*. Constantly misdiagnosed and mismanaged, her childhood was frustrating for her and for those around her.

Phyllis's book chronicles Jean's life after work with Erikson and follows her through adolescence and adulthood to the present. It reveals the story that has never been told. Phyllis's research included Dora's diaries (used with her permission) and interviews with Jean's brother Mark, as well as conversations with Erickson. Dora, a strong woman, researched ways to help Jean learn to communicate. Ultimately she became an advocate for Jean and others with mental differences, speaking up for them to be treated with empathy and respect. One of her accomplishments was the creation of the "Berkeley Activity Center" for Jean and similar children (predecessor to the East Bay Activity Center and today's East Bay Children's Agency).

At present, brought about in part by her mother's vision, Jean lives in a community setting in a home with women her age. At the very end of the book Phyllis comes back to visit Jean, rekindling a decades-old friendship. "You can still see an old spark in her face."

— *Peter Meyerhof*

Tom Mooney Revidivus—23 Years in California and International History, 1916 - 1939

In the 1970s, Institute member **Richard Raack**, professor of history at Hayward State University (today's Cal State East Bay), co-created the history media project for graduate students

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wanting to learn how to make historical films for the classroom. In lieu of a master's thesis, students produced a documentary film. On Sunday, January 15, Richard and his former student George Mancuso presented *Tom Mooney: San Quentin 31921, History's Great Labor Martyr*, a video documentary about the 20th-century frame-up, trial, conviction, and eventual release of labor organizer Tom Mooney. Institute members and friends of the filmmaker gathered at the home of Georgia Wright.

George Mancuso made his documentary 39 years ago—in an era before personal computers and technical production tools were widely available outside studios and networks. The video describes how Mooney became a local, national, and international cause célèbre and ends with his pardon and release from San Quentin 23 years after the 1916 San Francisco Preparedness Day bombing of which he was accused. It is how the pardon came about that is the real coup of the film. By 1979, when the film was made, five books had been written about the Mooney case; a sixth was published in 1983. None had the “inside information” about the pardon that Mancuso managed to obtain during a long interview with one of Mooney's lawyers, George T. Davis.

Part 1 introduces the viewer to the Tom Mooney case. Despite the rich visuals, film clips from 1916 newsreels, for example, and a contemporary soundtrack (labor songs from the teens), I found the early scenes difficult to follow. Three things made it hard to get into the film: a lot of footage of Tom Mooney reading from a prepared text from prison, without looking up at his audience, the poor quality of the sound (which, fortunately, improved in part 2), and a narration that was too fast-paced. Perhaps this documentary was not aimed as an introduction for newcomers to the material but as enrichment for those who were already familiar with the case.

Part 2 features the interview with the attorney George Davis, an oral history, in fact, though the questions of the interviewer were edited out. Before Davis's intervention, none of Mooney's efforts to establish his innocence through court action had been successful. Judicial figures, from J. Edgar Hoover down through the hierarchy, were openly hostile to his cause. Davis was very forthcoming in describing the deal that he managed to pull off to win Mooney's pardon. While I have mixed feelings about videotaping oral history subjects (for some the camera is intimidating) video was the perfect medium for Davis, who by the end of the 1970s had taken on many high-profile cases.

In the creation of this documentary history, George Mancuso managed to make an important contribution to that history: before he approached Davis, the lawyer had not granted interviews about the Mooney case. Circulation of the video, however, has been short-lived. While receiving a lot of attention in 1979, its last public showing took place in 1981. It has not been placed in an archive, even though the UC Berkeley Media Resources Center would like very much to acquire a copy. It could also find a home at the Yale Law School Library. A year ago librarians there mounted an exhibit “Free Tom Mooney!” from their rich collection of items from this once-well-known case.

– *Maria Sakovich*

The Swiss-Italian Connection: Linking West Marin Dairy Ranchers to Their Alpine Roots

On March 26th, at Georgia Wright's home, Marilyn Geary regaled us with stories of some of the young men who left a small valley in the Italian-speaking Swiss canton of Ticino to come to California, many of whom gravitated toward West Marin County. Life was difficult in the Vallemaggia, with little arable land and frequent floods and avalanches. It became even harder in

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1853 when the Austrian general ruling neighboring Lombardy, Josef Radetzky, forced the workers who had been coming into Lombardy as seasonal laborers back across the border.

By that time, the gold rushes in both California and Australia were well underway, and shipping agents were advertising heavily (and deceptively) to lure men across the seas, often placing them in serious debt in the process. With the southern border closed, leaving Ticino meant traveling over the Alps by stagecoach or on foot. The male population of Ticino declined significantly, leaving women to do back-breaking work, such as hauling loads of hay and wood.

Marilyn became intrigued with the story of Swiss-Italian immigrants to California when she came across a book containing letters written in Italian by emigrants from Ticino, including letters of Rotanzi family members. Two of the Rotanzi brothers immigrated to California and one to Australia. In working on a book about these brothers, she has traveled to Peccia, their home village, and explored the valley, so she was able to show us photos of the traditional stone houses of the region, the rugged landscape, paintings inside churches and outside homes documenting migration, and monuments, including ones honoring men who brought wealth back from California.

The Rotanzi family were local *patrizi*, or patricians, with certain civic leadership responsibilities. For the two brothers who came to California, things did not work out as well as for some of the other Ticinesi Marilyn told us about. The men from Ticino had some familiarity with dairy cattle, used to feed their families in the old country, so often they went to work on the dairy farms that were already established in West Marin. Some were able to save enough money to buy property and establish their own dairies, and some even became bankers. San Francisco had a Swiss-American Bank that also had branches in San

Luis Obispo and Ticino. Charles Martin (name anglicized from Carlo Martinoia) and colleagues founded a bank in Petaluma, facilitating remittances to families back home. There was a particularly high concentration of Swiss Italians on the ranches around the town of Tomales, which hosted the annual Swiss Club festival celebrating Swiss Independence Day. Earlier immigrants were able to help the ones who came later, and many traveled back to Ticino. In the village of Someo a man named Tognazzini sponsored a cemetery, known as the “American cemetery,” with monuments to some of the people who had come to California. Most of the immigrants kept their Italian names. Descendants of these Swiss Italians still ranch on much of the land in West Marin.

– *Ann Harlow*

A Few Encounters at San Francisco History Days from Our Table Staffers (Abbreviated)

All recommended a visit to this well-attended annual event featuring all-manner of Bay Area history-related groups and authors at the old Mint building. **Jody Offer** talked “with a young man who turned out to be able to help me with a project. He was the grandson of a Chinese immigrant who had been helped by Donaldina Cameron, superintendent of the Presbyterian Mission Home for Chinese Girls for over 40 years. His grandmother had been brought to the United States by her merchant husband, but her eye infection needed expensive treatment before immigration officials would allow her to enter the US. Donaldina was able to help, and after treatment, Mrs. Wong was freed from detention at the Angel Island Immigration Station. Best of all for me was that Craig Wong knew where Cameron’s records were located, something which I had not been able to learn. We had a wonderful conversation and I am looking forward to some very interesting reading.”

GROUP REPORT

Neil Dukas: “I prize the shared passion for history and the curiosity expressed by all the participants on a tremendous diversity of interests. We fielded lots of great questions at our table from people wondering what the Institute had to offer. Many attendees seemed to be school teachers looking for new ways to inspire students.” For **Cathy Robbins** “one of my favorite people was a teenage boy who came by our table. In chatting with him I asked what drew him to the event. I remarked that plenty of younger kids had come, but I hadn’t seen too many teens. He said he was with a bunch of his pals from San Mateo High, and they were just hanging out in the city. Their history teacher had told them about History Days and they came in to see what it was. He had broken off from the group when he reached the Institute table. He was clearly impressed by the “history” he was seeing—alive, lively, with an excited crowd. I thought later that History Days had gained a young fan for history.”

Rose Marie Cleese encountered a Sonoma resident “who might be a high tech retiree who started a program with elementary students that gives them historical information every day electronically. It all sounded very exciting—instilling a love of history in young kids!”

Play Readers

We thoroughly enjoyed reading the historic play about the partition of British India into two states, India and Pakistan. *Drawing the Line*, by Howard Benton, was first performed in London in December 2013.

Drawing the Line is the tale of the tortured partition of India in 1947. Lord Louis Mountbatten served as the last Viceroy of India. Because of the volatile political situation, time was of the essence. All the historic characters are included in the play, some more prominently

and accurately portrayed than others. The British Prime Minister Clement Atlee wished for a speedy solution in India. His Lord Chancellor had summoned Cyril Radcliffe, a leading judge in London, to his chambers for an unlikely mission, the division of the Indian subcontinent along Muslim and Hindu lines. He explained that since the Hindu Leader Nehru and the Muslim Leader Jinnah would never agree on borders, they were entrusting these critical decisions to him.

For this monumental task Radcliffe was given five weeks in 1947! He had no special knowledge of India nor of map-making. This reader recalled years ago being bewildered that the borders were not mountains or rivers which are normal dividing points. Then I learned the sad truth about the bartering which occurred among the principals—Nehru’s Congress Party and Jinnah’s Muslim League.

In order to get a better perspective, I returned to an excellent book on the subject, *Freedom at Midnight*, a classic by Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre published in the late 1970s. Jinnah, hailed as the father of Pakistan, first became aware of the concept of division in 1933 in London. Earlier in his career he had espoused Hindu-Muslim unity. Like Gandhi, he studied law in London and was called to the bar. Unlike Gandhi, he is reputed to have returned back from London as an Englishman. He did not speak the native language, his food, drink, demeanor, and clothes were those of an English gentleman. During the negotiations, it was later learned, he was suffering from a fatal disease, thus haste in the negotiations was essential for him. He barely survived for a year in the new state of Pakistan. Gandhi never gave up hope of a united subcontinent of both religions. Upon learning the details of the partition, Gandhi acknowledged that while it would be the end of British rule, it would be a day of sorrow as well as rejoicing.

The play does not really emphasize the crucial role of the British government in London in determining the pace of the British withdrawal in India. There is also the reputed romance between Nehru and Mountbatten's wife Edwina. Albeit it makes for good theater, there is no certified evidence that she proposed to Nehru that she remain on in India as his wife, nor is it accepted that Mountbatten hurried the negotiations as he wished to be out of India in order to terminate her romance. Indeed, he remained on for a year as Governor-General.

The formerly naive Cyril Radcliffe is clearly a good person, who quickly becomes politicized and ends up with real sympathy for the potential victims of his decisions. It is estimated that more than half-a-million people were killed and there were at least 10 million refugees following the partition. Radcliffe is unwell during his stay with grievous stomach problems, and there is some comedy about how best to treat or to endure this condition. An interesting character in the play is Christopher Beaumont, a long-time civil servant in India who served as Radcliffe's secretary. His memoirs of the momentous events in those several weeks served as a reference for later generations as to what had transpired so quickly and in stealth.

Despite historic reservations as to the accuracy of some of facts and the portrayal of several of the characters, *Drawing the Line* was a delight to read. It moves quickly, with splendid, revealing conversations between and among the various characters. Our group was animated during the two afternoons spent reading it and we enjoyed very lively discussions afterwards.

– *Edith Piness*

Member News

After the publication of her *Mothers and Daughters of Invention* and a “dismissive and unfair review,” leaving **Autumn Stanley** “hurt

and angry,” she received a letter early in March from journalist-now-scholar Don Glickstein (*After Yorktown*). Part of it reads: “I just got around to reading the entirety of *Mothers and Daughters*. What a tour de force! It certainly led me to look at the world with different eyes. So I wanted to let you know that nearly a quarter century after it came out, your book is still valued. It's a seminal contribution—not to women's history, but to history. It speaks about our ongoing need to continue to question assumptions and to value diversity. Plus, it's one hell of a good read. Thank you for your . . . brilliant contribution to our collective knowledge.”

In observance of Women's History Month at the Merced Branch of the San Francisco Public Library, **Stephanie McCoy** presented her research about the little-known American author Constance Fenimore Woolson (1840-1894) and read from her second work of fiction and forthcoming book, “The She-Novelist in Venice,” based on the last months of Miss Woolson's life.

On Saturday, March 25 **Ann Harlow** and **Rose Marie Cleese** returned to the Gold Country “at the invitation of the Amador County Historical Society to attend a lunch and meeting featuring talks about several prominent Italian American families of Ligurian descent from the Gold Rush era and the installation of the interpretive signs that accompany the mining artifacts on display in Sutter Creek's tiny new Miners' Bend Park. The all-weather signs go into great detail about the mining equipment, the Gold Rush in general, and the geology of the Mother Lode in Amador County. Well-worth a half hour of your time if you're ever in the neighborhood!”

Two presentations are coming up for **Monika Trobits**: Sunday afternoon, April 23, at 2 p.m. on the Antebellum/Civil War eras in San Francisco, at Cypress Lawn Heritage

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REMEMBERING STATE HISTORIAN KEVIN STARR

*When I learned that long-time member **Linda Larson Boston** had taken a class with the late Kevin Starr, I asked if she would write an obituary based on her experience with the scholar. Independently Peter Meyerhof submitted his own remembrance. Fortunately each essay is different from the other. Below is Linda's; Peter's will follow in the next newsletter.*

Dr. Kevin Starr, a Brilliant Mind

Early in my career, a unique individual encouraged my interest in historical research and writing. I had the good fortune to take a California history course from Dr. Kevin Starr when he taught as a guest professor at Santa Clara University in the late 1970s. With his death on January 14, 2017, from a heart attack at age 76, California lost one of its brightest minds. He was busy with the sequel to his 2016 book *Continental Ambitions: Roman Catholics in North America, the Colonial Experience*.

Dr. Starr oversaw the State Library, which functions as a research resource for state government and the public, when he served as state librarian (1994 to 2004). The State Library also collects and preserves historical California artifacts, making it an ideal office for someone whose life mission was to chronicle the history of the state. He made history interesting, enlightening, and most of all relevant to today for students and readers.

According to major newspaper obituaries, he was a fourth generation San Franciscan and/or a seventh generation Californian. Dr. Starr endured a humble beginning, including a stint in an orphanage with his brother when their divorced mother suffered mental issues and severe poverty. He often credited the Catholic Church's strong educational mission for his determination to succeed.

Since I had taken other courses in California history and researched local historical topics on

my own, Dr. Starr's class was a pleasant diversion in a heavy workload that included working part-time at the *Santa Clara American*, a weekly independent newspaper. Starr took the train down from San Francisco to teach, the Santa Clara station conveniently located across from the main entrance to the university. In fact, he proudly shared with his students that he used his time on the train to write, developing what I believe was his first and only novel, *Land's End*. Prior to teaching at Santa Clara, only *Americans and the California Dream, 1850 – 1915* had been published (1973). It was the initial entry into what became the multi-volume series "Americans and the California Dream," for which he is best known. The series took readers from the Gold Rush up to the early 1960s, covering a wide range of topics. Dr. Starr could discuss subjects as varied as art and architecture, water infrastructure, literature, and the entertainment industry with the ease of someone who had devoted a lifetime to researching and writing about just one.

Dr. Starr was larger than life, a dapper dresser, and ever the optimist. He put his genius mind to good use. Quoting other historians without referring to his notes, he employed his virtually photographic memory to summarize the topic of discussion. He recognized the importance of including details about the people who played a role in the segment of history he was covering. His biographical style revealed historical facts with the eye of a filmmaker. He not only included well-known personalities but also the "Joe Averages" who made contributions often just as important. He brought a new perspective to the category of history-writing that had often been dry, lackluster, and dreadful to read. His nonfiction accounts were much like reading a novel. During class lectures, Dr. Starr was always cheerful, smiling, patient, and kind. His down-to-earth lecture style was entertaining and thought-provoking. Dr. Starr's encouragement to continue researching and writing California

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history gave me the confidence to do something I was passionate about and that I could share with others.

Four decades have passed since I took Dr. Starr's class. During those ensuing years I enjoyed two opportunities of meeting him again. First, when Mission San Jose (in Fremont) held a fundraiser "The Bells Shall Ring Again," to help restore the deteriorating mission and site. The event featured a history of the mission, presented in a multiple slide projector format, the forerunner to PowerPoint presentations. Employed at the time as a graphic artist, I had designed the text portion of the slides, highlighting the visual images that told the story of Mission San Jose. Dr. Starr remembered me and encouraged me to continue my interest in California history. At least another 20 years elapsed before I saw him for the last time. After the lecture he gave at Santa Clara University, I greeted him, expecting that he would not remember me. Surprisingly, his eyes twinkled with recognition. Once again, he urged me to continue researching and writing about California.

Dr. Kevin Starr enlightened thousands about the development of California. Perhaps more importantly he encouraged others to continue the quest of shedding light on the unique history that is the Golden State. That light is a little dimmer without him in it.

Separate But Equal: Individual and Community since the Enlightenment by **Richard Herr**. (Berkeley Public Policy Press, Institute of Governmental Studies, UC Berkeley, 2016).

Richard Herr, a member of the Institute for Historical Study since its beginnings, has written a wide-ranging study of western thought on individual and community. His thoughts on the evolution of these ideas is especially

relevant at the beginning of a new presidential administration in the United States which is undertaking to alter long-standing practices of inclusion of new groups into the national community.

In addition to providing analysis of differing ideas of individual and community since the Enlightenment, Dick has provided extensive summaries of political events from the American and French revolutions into the twenty-first century. Thus he shows that ideas do not arise out of the air but from the concrete circumstances of people attempting to find ways of dealing with the issues facing them. All this is well documented through footnotes citing and analyzing the sources.

In making his argument, Dick uses unusual materials. To show the movement from a profoundly religious culture before the Enlightenment to the secular culture which followed, he shows two paintings of burials, one by El Greco in the 17th century, the second by Gustave Courbet in the mid-19th century. He also uses literary works such as Frances Hodgson Burnett's *Little Lord Fauntleroy*—in that case to contrast the benevolent democracy of the US with the arrogance of wealth in England.

In the first of four sections, Dick outlines the Enlightenment vision of Montesquieu, for whom the best state structure was a monarchy under law. Checked from despotic use of power, such a monarch would rule a society reflecting both honor and virtue, individual ambition and community spirit. After the American and the French revolutions, Napoleon and George Washington both recognized that "a society that successfully provided personal freedom and public well-being required that its members be motivated by both principles, properly balanced. . . . The great achievement of the Enlightenment was to reveal how to organize peace and prosperity in a secular society."

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The second section discusses the long 19th century (to the end of World War I). Dick defines two different kinds of boundaries. Horizontal boundaries separated people, regardless of geography, into classes. A “liberal international” group of thinkers as different as the comte de Lafayette, the Italian patriot Giuseppe Mazzini, and the American Andrew Jackson all opposed the traditional alliance of Throne and Altar and the privileges of aristocracy and wealth. Demand for universal manhood suffrage became a common cause across the horizontal boundaries.

Vertical boundaries, dividing people into nation-states, created communities based on common language, ethnicity, and geography. Growing in strength throughout the century, such boundaries proved their strength in 1914 when working class people abandoned their devotion to workers’ rights. Instead, they supported their countries’ drive to “the murderous conflict of the First World War.”

In what Dick calls “the third act,” two chapters discuss the “homogeneous society” which developed during the 19th century. In addition to popular sovereignty through the ballot box and patriotic adherence to the nation, the idea of a single identity for each nation arose. A single language, culture, and ethnicity would guarantee loyalty, and the “others,” those who did not fit, would have to assimilate or leave. For example, the United States refused to grant citizenship to Chinese laborers, excluded Native Americans by moving them onto reservations while forcing assimilation on their children, and created the separate but equal society in the US to deal with ex-slaves. In Europe after World War I, the peace agreements attempted to deal with minorities within national boundaries by guaranteeing equal rights.

The community of women requires special attention in the book; men and women live side by side with their “others.” Besides the right to

vote, women demanded rights to hold property and to pursue higher education and careers. Dick sees this as women accepting the homogeneous vision of society: they wanted to assimilate into male society.

The fourth section of the book discusses the world after 1945, when the challenge was to provide a more just society, which was done by the creation of the welfare state and equal justice for all under existing frameworks. But there were tensions, such as the demands of Basques and Catalans in Spain and Welsh and Scots in the United Kingdom for separation. Some women demanded separation from the paternalistic society in which they lived, as some African Americans sought autonomy. The answer was the multicultural society. In the 21st century, gay, lesbian and transgender groups sought their own rights.

Separate But Equal addresses important issues still relevant today, as many countries in the West challenge multiculturalism and other principles derived from the Enlightenment and nineteenth century developments.

– *Ellen Huppert*

from page 8 –

Foundation, 1370 El Camino Real, Colma (2nd floor, Reception Center); an illustrated talk about 1850s San Francisco: “From Vigilantes to Duels,” on Wednesday, June 14 at 7 pm, at the Merced Branch of the San Francisco Public Library.

Corrections to “Back to the Gold Country” in the Winter Newsletter: Thomas Starr King is Patty Page’s great-great-great grandfather (three greats, not two); the spelling of the town that Rose Marie’s great-grandmother came from is “Canevale”—without an “r”; the line drawing in the Whiskey Flat Saloon depicts Volcano’s main street, not the Rossi family store.

continued from the front page –

“There are two sorts of power,” opines Felix. “There’s a power to do mischief—to undo what has been done with great expense and labor, to waste and destroy, to be cruel to the weak, to lie and quarrel, and to talk poisonous nonsense. That’s the sort of power that . . . never made a joint stool or planted a potato. Do you think it’s likely to do much towards governing a great country, and making wise laws, and giving shelter, food, and clothes to millions of men?” (Exactly.)

I won’t spoil *Felix Holt* for you by reciting the plot. Suffice to say George Eliot is the past master of developing characters of all economic levels and types, and of drawing the plot very believably with them.

But you may be interested in what Eliot has to say (through Felix) about what can control politicians. “I’ll tell you what’s the greatest power under heaven and that is public opinion—the ruling belief in what is right and what is wrong, what is honorable and what is shameful. That’s the steam that works the engines. How can political power make us any better, any more than religions we don’t believe in, if men laugh and wink when they see men abuse and defile it?”

So that was George Eliot, 150 years ago: “Stand up and be counted!” Time will tell whether the majority will actually make what is our real opinion heard, and put our democracy back into the safety zone. Or maybe our next generation will be speaking Russian, and Putin will be learned in school as our new Founding Father.

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