

Tracing the Truth: Adventures in Historical Research Online and In-Person by Taryn Edwards

In the last issue we left off with Taryn advising us on how to create a research plan.

Part II: Brief overview of types of sources and where to find them

One of the most important components of a research plan is to think about what sources you will need for your research and consider who might have created them or who might have compiled the data that you need. There are two categories of sources: primary and secondary.

Primary sources are immediate and firsthand accounts of an event or topic from people who had a direct connection with it. They include:

- Texts of laws and other original documents.
- Newspaper reports by reporters who witnessed an event or who quote people who did.
- Speeches, diaries, letters and interviews—what the people involved said or wrote.
- Datasets, survey data such as census or economic statistics.
- Photographs, video, or audio that capture an event, documents, diaries, manuscripts, autobiographies, recordings, or any other source of information that was created at the time. Basically they are an original source of information about the topic.

Secondary sources are those that quote or use primary sources. They can cover the same topics but usually add interpretation and analysis. Secondary sources include:

- Most books about a topic.
- Analysis or interpretation of data.
- Scholarly or other articles about a topic, especially by people not directly involved.
- Documentaries (though they often include photos or video portions that can be considered primary sources).

For the most part, secondary sources are easy to find – just ask your librarian!

Primary sources however are trickier. Consider whether they are published or unpublished and who might have created that information. Thinking about this will help you find where primary sources might lurk. If you're looking for tax records or census returns for example, those might be held in a government office; if you're looking for letters or diaries or photographs, those will more likely be held in the collections of a historical society or local historical archive. Published sources will likely be the easiest to locate because they were probably mass produced (like government documents, census returns, magazines, and newspapers). Many of these items will be microfilmed or digitized and may be part of a service you can subscribe to, like Ancestry.com, or use with your library card. Sadly however, most published sources are still not digitized. To see them you'll have to do research the old fashioned way.

These are my five favorite free digital collections:

Online Archive of California - <https://oac.cdlib.org/> The OAC is the best starting point for researchers who want to go beyond what is available online and locate the actual, physical item. The OAC provides free public access to detailed descriptions of primary resource collections maintained by more than 200 contributing institutions including libraries, special collections, archives, historical societies, and museums throughout California and collections maintained by the ten University of California (UC) campuses.

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PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

This year’s annual election of board members on February 23rd involved less turnover than last year’s. Sue Bessmer has retired from the board and Marilyn Geary and Oliver Pollak have joined it; the rest of the cast of characters remains the same. Thank you to all past, present and future board members for your service to the Institute.

And special thanks to Oliver Pollak: one, for agreeing to host board meetings at his house, since the rent at the Mechanics’ Institute has gone up, and two, for delving into Institute history with enthusiasm as we approach our 40th anniversary. He is systematically reading all of our past newsletters and finding them “a fascinating goldmine . . . a cavalcade of our profession.”

Not only that, Oliver will present our next Monthly Program. We will break out of the living-room talk routine for a tour of the exhibition *Pioneers to the Present: Jews of Richmond and Contra Costa County* at the Richmond Museum of History, on Sunday, May 19, at 2 p.m. Oliver participated in the work of the exhibit’s planning committee. Please save the date and time. The museum, located in a former Carnegie Library building, also features an overview of Richmond’s history.

Thank you to all the volunteers who represented the Institute at San Francisco History Days and to Richard Hurley and Steve Sodokoff for donating books to our prize drawing, by which we collected 38 cards for people who expressed some interest in learning more about us. Three have already become members; we hope to see them at some of our upcoming programs.

Remember, we need the help of our existing members to recruit new people to join the Institute—especially people working in fields other than local history. If you don’t personally know people in the Bay Area doing history research, you can suggest others you don’t know, such as people you may read about. Tracking down their e-mail addresses and sending them to Rob Robbins and Rose Marie Cleese would be helpful. Our website continues to be a good way to inform people about who we are and what we do. We hope to be able to upgrade it in the coming months to make it more adaptable to reading on handheld devices. Please send me any suggestions you may have for improving the website—or the Institute in general!

– *Ann Harlow*

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MONTHLY PROGRAMS

“Introducing Big History”

A good crowd attended the program on January 20 at the home of Joanne Lafler. Ross Maxwell introduced the concept of Big History, which combines into a single timeline the 13.8 billion years from the beginning of our universe to today. Drawing on the findings of scientific fields, Big History posits a framework for all knowledge, a schema of eight major historical thresholds or stages. At each new threshold, ingredients and structures have met the just right “Goldilocks conditions” for a transformation. Big History takes from astronomy, biology, archaeology, cosmology, and other scientific disciplines to understand how the right conditions have enabled a new threshold to emerge.

The eight thresholds suggested by Big History, each of increasing complexity, are: The Big Bang, Stars, Heavier Chemical Elements, Planets, Life, Homo Sapiens, Agriculture, and the Modern or Anthropocene World. Ross distributed a handout showing a chart of the eight thresholds, their ingredients, structures, and goldilocks conditions required to create transformation—new emergent properties. Energy plays an important role in Big History, since energy flows are required to hold together evermore complex structures.

David Christian, by training a historian specializing in Russian history, began teaching a course on Big History at Macquarie University in Australia. His approach to history caught the attention of Bill Gates. Together they cofounded the Big History Project, a multidisciplinary curriculum designed to engage and teach middle and high school students. The approach aims to make students aware of the big, multidisciplinary picture and to find a balance between humanist and scientific studies. Educators form a large contingent at International Big History Association conferences.

Our new geologic stage, the modern or Anthropocene era, is characterized by rapid globalization, acceleration in collective learning, and an increasing ability to transform the biosphere, as evidenced by skyrocketing carbon dioxide and methane levels in the atmosphere.

Maxwell pointed to several books on the topic: *Origin Story—A Big History of Everything* and *Big History: Between Nothing and Everything*, both by David Christian; *The First Three Minutes: A Modern View of the Origin of the Universe* by Steven Weinberg; *Cosmic Evolution: The Rise of Complexity in Nature* by Eric J. Chaisson; and Fred Spier’s *Big History and the Future of Humanity*.

– Marilyn Geary

“Waves of Beans”

Nourishment for both mind and body distinguished Monika Trobits’s inaugural presentation to publicize her new book, *Bay Area Coffee: A Stimulating History*, at Nancy Zinn’s home on February 16. Fine coffee and two crescent-shaped pastries—croissants and Monika’s homemade kipferl—accompanied a talk that ranged over millennia from coffee’s origin in Ethiopia to its spread to the Middle East and thence to Europe, and finally to its arrival in North America. Alluding to the Islamic symbol of a crescent moon, the pastries signified the Christian victory over the army of the Ottoman Empire at the Battle of Vienna in 1683.

Monika has been gathering coffee memorabilia for decades. Her collection of vintage coffee advertisements (1915-49) and coffee cartoons (1994-2018) provided some of the plentiful illustrations included in the book (published, like Monika’s previous book on San Francisco and the Civil War, by History Press).

By the time coffee arrived in Europe, it had been enlivened with sugar; later, the Viennese

MONTHLY PROGRAMS

added milk. Meanwhile, Pope Clement VIII absolved coffee from the stigma of its infidel source, and it quickly became public through the emergence of coffeehouses. In London, Paris, and Vienna coffeehouses were sometimes sites of political discussion, a custom followed in colonial Boston and New York. Condemned by the British as “seminaries of sedition,” colonial American coffeehouses made coffee “the drink of democracy.”

Colonialism was also associated with the spread of coffee cultivation to New World possessions of European powers. A sapling stolen from Louis XIV’s botanical garden at Versailles began the cultivation of coffee in Martinique, and it traveled thence elsewhere in the Caribbean and down to Brazil. Thus the coffee served in America came from south of the border. Jefferson, whose household consumed a pound a day, declared coffee “the favorite drink of the civilized world.” Whereas New York was the main coffee port in the 18th century, in the 19th, New Orleans first and then San Francisco superseded it.

Monika then spoke about the Bay Area, where coffee arrived during the Gold Rush. The three main San Francisco coffee purveyors originated at this time: Folger’s, Hills Brothers, and MJB. Both world wars influenced further developments, as veterans exposed to European coffee opened houses such as Tosca’s after World War I and imported espresso machines after World War II. The quality of the coffee put out by the national coffee companies had already been suffering for decades. That, combined with relentless advertising by the cola and “uncola” soft drink companies, pulled away some of the next generation potential coffee drinkers. Ultimately, coffee won the war because of the rise of specialty coffee purveyors such as Peet’s.

Monika provided detailed accounts of local coffee businesses, particularly those in North Beach. Appreciative murmurs in the audience

signaled recognition of personal landmarks. Responsive sighs, however, took over when Monika turned to the present moment. The increasing presence of corporate chains threatens old-time, smaller establishments, several of which have recently closed. Peet’s is now owned by a European conglomerate, though Starbucks remains in American hands. Advocacy of Fair Trade practices has yet to improve the lot of most growers. Are we better off now that robots can customize our coffee?

– *Carol Sicherman*

“The Oratory of Frederick Douglass and Martin Luther King Jr.”

On Sunday, March 17, a dozen or so Institute members met at the home of Edee Piness to hear Chris Webber give a fascinating talk on the oratorical mastery of two of our most famous African Americans, whose stirring speeches separated by a century moved people of all colors.

Chris, who moved to San Francisco from rural Connecticut six years ago and joined the Institute just last year, bemoans the loss of oratorical skills among our leaders and other public voices today. Being an Episcopal priest who is called upon to give sermons, he is well aware of the importance of this lost art and wrote the book *Give Me Liberty: Speeches and Speakers that Shaped American History* to spotlight great oratory.

During his presentation Chris talked about the tools used by classic orators—a combination of words, gestures, and voice, which varied among America’s famous speakers. Daniel Webster, for instance, used a minimal amount of gestures, putting his hand in his vest and letting his other arm hang by his side. William Jennings Bryan, on the other hand, used precisely placed gestures throughout his speeches. Abraham Lincoln mocked Bryant’s “spread eagle oratory;

he mounted the rostrum, threw back his head, shined his eyes, opened his mouth, and left the consequences to God.” What they did have in common is that they all spent weeks assiduously preparing their speeches down to the last word.

Speaking of Douglass and King, Chris pointed out that they had radically different styles, partly because of the orators who influenced them and the types of audiences they addressed. Douglass spoke primarily before white audiences, which tended to be passive, and learned his craft from *The Columbian Orator* (published in 1797), “a staple of American education in the 19th century.” Born into slavery in Maryland, he was taught to read by the wife of his owner and learned of the book through some white boys he’d made friends with. The book emphasized the importance of pronunciation, gestures and facial expressions. King’s oratorical prowess, in contrast, was rooted in listening to his father preach each week to his black congregation, a speaking style that had its roots in the rhythms of African speech. King further honed his speaking skills at the liberal northern seminary he attended, where he took nine courses in preaching. His audiences were anything but passive and it’s doubtful that he ever heard of *The Columbian Orator*.

Chris delved deeper into these speakers’ techniques and content, examining two of their most memorable speeches. Douglass’ powerful “Fourth of July Oration,” given in Rochester, New York on July 5, 1852 to a white audience, eloquently pointed out what a sham the holiday was to American slaves. Right after it was given some 700 people signed up to get a copy of the speech and it soon took its place in the annals of famous speeches. King’s “I Have a Dream,” spoken on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial on August 28, 1963 in the midst of the Civil Rights Movement, reached more than a quarter million listeners. “But the planned speech wasn’t really King,” said Chris, “it was too stiff, too formal—and so he moved away from his text and

began to improvise. Mahalia Jackson sitting behind him said, ‘Tell them about the dream, Martin . . .’ and so he segued into speeches he had made before in Detroit and St. Louis—sort of like a jazz trumpet improvising on a familiar theme.” And the rest was history.

In sum, Chris’ penetrating talk opened our eyes about the importance of good oratory and will likely make us more discerning listeners—more aware of the words, gestures, and voices coming from the constant stream of talk we hear today.

—Rose Marie Cleese

Writers Group

We have had a fruitful first three months of 2019. In January we met at the home of Rose Marie Cleese where we discussed the second chapter of Jim Gasperini’s book “A Fire in the Mind.” This chapter focused on fiery beginnings and endings and ranged across ancient and modern civilizations and their conceptions of fire as creative force and as the ultimate destructive climax. The group felt that like Jim’s earlier presentation the work was very well written and compelling. The chief criticism was that the chapter seemed rather too episodic and unconnected. The chief suggestion was for Jim to work on improving the “flow” of the material.

In February, we met at Jim Gasperini’s home and discussed Steve Sodokoff’s work on San Francisco clocks: “Timepieces Hidden in Plain Sight.” The group found much to admire in the work that Steve has done so far and was greatly impressed with the photographs that he has assembled. There was considerable concern that in its present form the work lacked a clear purpose. Was it going to be about clocks or about the neighborhoods where the clocks were located and the historic businesses in the various areas of the city? We suggested that Steve do more to personalize the story and perhaps to discuss the evolving meaning of clocks and timepieces.

GROUP REPORTS

In March, the group met at the home of Louis Trager to discuss the overview of his projected work, tentatively titled, "Pivotal People: How Plutocrats Enlisted Liberals and Government to Dominate America and the World." This is a complex subject, and Louis is groping for a way to show how various well-intentioned business, governmental, journalistic, and academic figures developed a series of organizations that in responding to the crisis caused by the onset of World War II, pushed for US involvement in the conflict and the shaping of the postwar world. Louis feels that these groups would eventually push the US into a Cold War posture that led to the Vietnam debacle. The discussion of Louis's thesis and approach was vigorous to say the least. Some felt the work was headed in a far too polemical direction, but there was general agreement as to the importance of the topic. Louis was encouraged to tighten his focus, give broader context, and perhaps simplify things by concentrating on one or two key figures in the story.

In April the writers group will meet at the home of Cathy and Rob Robbins to discuss a chapter of Cathy's book on Calabria: "A Torrid Splendor."
– **Rob Robbins**

Play Readers

We are halfway through our reading of Tom Stoppard's *Arcadia* and will report in full in the next newsletter. After *Arcadia*, we will read *Curtmantle* by Christopher Fry, which will take us to the reign of Henry II (b. 1133 - d. 1189), whose life has been the subject of other plays, including *A Lion in Winter*. (The king was noted for wearing shorter-than-usual robes, hence his nickname, "Curtmantle.") We meet once a month on Tuesday afternoons in the East Bay or San Francisco. If you're interested in receiving information via our group email list, contact me (jwlafler@gmail.com).

– **Joanne Lafler**

INSTITUTE HISTORY

For Ellen

Willows weep and shed their leaves.
The creeks are salty tears
For we have lost the dearest friend
Whom we have loved for years.

In history, drama, and writing groups
At the Institute she founded
She lent her voice and wisdom
Her interests were unbounded.

Ellen, three times president,
Had kept the board on track.
We would have chatted all the time
But she would bring us back.

She and Fran searched many states
To look through old archives
For documents to help them write
Peter's and their dad's lives.

For those who loved her as I did
I have few words of cheer,
But we will hold each other close
And share our memories here.

Spring is coming with days of sun.
The fruit trees are in bloom.
Ellen's spirit like a ray of sun
Will cut through fog and gloom.

Written and read by Georgia Wright at Ellen's memorial, February 24, 2019.

Institute History

The death of Ellen Huppert has reminded us that the Institute needs to preserve its own history. We have already lost a good deal because Ellen had not yet written down her memories about the founding and no one had interviewed her. (One of our annual meetings, probably commemorating the 30th anniversary, was devoted to various early members' accounts of the founding, but that panel was not recorded.) As a relatively new member of the Institute and just elected to the board, **Oliver Pollak** has

volunteered to work on our history as we approach our 40th anniversary. “I want to contribute my historian skills,” Oliver writes. “Presumptuous, perhaps, for a newish member, but I recognize the reluctance to write our own histories. I enjoyed 40 years of researching and writing histories of universities, law schools, history departments, professional associations, clubs, loan societies, and more. I was cofounder of the Nebraska Jewish Historical Society and have served on several nonprofit boards. Since our annual meeting in late February I’ve read about 34 (1980-86) exciting and revealing *Newsletters* online; 145 to go. **Please consider this a call** for your ideas, comments, leads, memories, memorabilia, artifacts, photos, documents, and ephemera that would enhance what could be, in the Institute spirit, a collaborative project.” Oliver can be reached at obpomni@aol.com.

Welcome New Members

John Graham is a visual artist, writer and oral historian, whose body of work is about California. He is the creator of the El Fornio Story Cycle, detailing the happenings of a fictional city and county on the California coast. Visit the web site (www.elfornio.org) to find out more. “Everyone Has A Story To Tell” is his oral history project for the Library of Congress’ Veterans History Project which records the stories of veterans for inclusion in the national record. John also records family histories. His walking tour, “A Meander: From Jurassic Seas to Woolly Mammoths, William Burroughs & The Pony Express,” takes place throughout the year in San Francisco. John received his Master of Fine Arts from UC Santa Barbara in 2002, with an emphasis in California history, colonial theory, and Spanish mission history.

Daniel Kohanski has a lifelong interest in history, particularly European and American, a

long career as a computer programmer, and a five-year stint in the Foreign Service. His current historical interest is the development of Judaism and Christianity and how the ways in which they developed have had consequences for the world. Dan has a BA in philosophy (Colgate) and an MS in computer science (Rutgers).

Robert McNally’s history interests cover the American West and Native America. He has written or co-written ten nonfiction books including *The Modoc War: A Story of Genocide at the Dawn of America’s Golden Age* (Bison Books/University of Nebraska Press, 2017), which won the Gold Medal in Californiana at the 87th Annual California Book Awards in 2018. He is a much published poet and writes feature stories, news, and essays for a variety of publications. Robert’s BA (international studies) is from Ohio State University; his MA (political science) is from UC Berkeley.

Member News

After many revisions, **Joe Miller** submitted his article “‘Wild Women’ Suffragists: How Their Reputation as Free Lovers Slowed Their Movement’s Progress” to an academic journal. “Hopefully,” he writes, “it will be published during 2020, the 100th anniversary of the Susan B. Anthony Amendment.”

From **Maria Sakovich** a “clipping” from the Fort Ross Conservancy which sums up her long-awaited news: “FRC juggles all sorts of projects, everything from event planning to educational programming. . . . Unfortunately as we’ve taken on more park management, we are finding it difficult to carve out the quiet time needed to get new interpretive content released. . . . but we’re immensely pleased to have one important publication in print—‘The Chapel at Fort Ross: 150 Years of Russian and California History.’ Author Sakovich’s 45-page essay describes the design, construction, and use of

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the chapel during the Russian era and documents its many incarnations during the subsequent Ranch and State Parks eras, all abundantly illustrated with interesting historic photos and drawings. This will be a new offering at the Fort Ross bookshop.” Maria adds: “It looks great!”

Leslie Friedman’s new book, *The Dancer’s Garden*, is now available. Text by Leslie and more than 70 full-color photographs by Leslie and internationally admired, award-winning photographer Jonathan Clark. The limited-edition book’s short essays center on making and maintaining a garden. “Neighbors, strangers, cats, crows, trees, flowers, and weeds appear in the garden and in my memory,” writes Leslie in the introduction. “I explore the relation of plants to political, cultural, and culinary history, and of course the element of time that one encounters in a garden.” Preview readers have called book “entertaining and informative,” “funny...poignant.” It is available from the Lively Foundation (livelyfoundation@sbcglobal.net).

Oliver Pollak writes that he has been honored in the current issue of the journal *African Studies* for his taped interview of Jasper Savanhu in 1973. The former MP and parliamentary secretary in the Central Africa Federation government (1953–1963) is the subject of Professor Allison Shutt’s article in the same journal, “Writing Jasper Savanhu’s Biography from his Awkward Self-narratives.”

Monika Trobits notes that her readings and presentations for her coffee book at Omnivore Books and the Mechanics’ Institute, among other places, “have been well attended and well received. My brief presentation in the authors’ room at the San Francisco History Days in early March attracted Carl Nolte of the *San Francisco Chronicle*. He came over to my table display afterwards, struck up a conversation and bought a copy of my coffee book. The following

weekend, on March 10, the book and I were featured in his Sunday *Chronicle* Native Son column.”

Member Reports

From **Joanne Lafler**: At the end of March, with my South Bay family, I visited the Los Altos History Museum exhibit on Juana Briones, a remarkable woman whose life spanned nearly nine decades of California history—from the early days of the San Francisco Presidio to the emergence of the city of San Francisco from the pre-Gold Rush hamlet of Yerba Buena, to the founding of the state of California and finally to the hills above today’s Silicon Valley, where she maintained an extensive ranch. The relatively small gallery space was cleverly arranged in alcoves, each of which focused on a specific aspect of her life, so that it was possible to linger and roam, taking in her roles as family matriarch, businesswoman, advocate for women’s property rights, and famous healer of the ill. The exhibit, which employed beautifully mounted historic maps, artefacts that we were invited to touch, and concise historical information in both Spanish and English, was both professional and approachable.

Peter Meyerhof writes: Using funds from the minigrant as well as a grant from the California Missions Foundation in the summer of 2017, I conducted a ground penetrating radar (GPR) survey to locate the original site of the “Great Adobe Church” of Mission San Francisco Solano in Sonoma. According to a contemporary priest’s report, the perimeter of the church, built on stone footings, measured 165 feet long by 37 feet wide and was completed in 1832. By 1860 the remaining portions of the walls of the Great Adobe Church had completely dissolved into the soil, and the land was described as being completely vacant. Three small wooden cottages were built on the site in the 1890s. After 80 years’ ownership by one family, these cottages

were about to be sold in 2017. No archaeological investigation had ever been conducted on this private land. The radar survey was looking for the exact footprint of the stone foundations, at least 5 feet wide, which had been dug by the neophyte Indians on the east side of the enlarged priest's quarters.

I approached a private archaeologist, Phil Hanes of the Natural Investigations Company, who was proficient with the operation and interpretation of state-of-the-art GPR, and he agreed to work on this project for hire. He had recent experience on a GPR survey of the state property directly to the northwest of this site. Because of the size of the massive stone foundations of the Great Adobe Church it was thought to be relatively easy to determine the exact location, the exact depth, and the spatial relationship to known structures of the Sonoma Mission. The field work of laying out grids around the cottages, conducting the actual survey, and analysis of the data-created maps for interpretation was carefully performed. To our great disappointment, there was no clear indication of stone foundations in the radar survey. Although it is possible that the radar was done in the wrong location, it is also possible that after the adobe walls melted away into the ground, all the stones from the foundations were repurposed for construction elsewhere in Sonoma leaving no trace of the once imposing Mission church.

Overtaken by the Night: One Russian's Journey through Peace, War, Revolution, and Terror by Richard G. Robbins Jr. (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2017)

Biographies have always been my favorite way into the history of a country, an era, a movement. Richard Robbins' portrait of Vladimir Fedorovich Dzhunkovsky does not disappoint. Through the life of an able administrator, the reader learns not only about an interesting individual, but also about a very

tumultuous time in Russian history. *Overtaken by the Night* is a masterful work, rich in detail, and beautifully written.

In the four years before Dzhunskovsky's birth in 1865, Tsar Alexander II freed Russia's serfs and instituted local self-government and a new judicial system, reforms not seen since the time of Peter the Great. Vladimir Fedorovich grew up during a flourishing period which saw significant economic growth and concomitant burgeoning of a new working class, a blossoming of Russian music and literature, as well as early signs of revolutionary activity and social reforms in several arenas. He enjoyed a privileged up-bringing in a loving family, who instilled the values of "devotion to God and a concern for the needs of others," expressed in their motto *Deo et proximo*. These became the bedrock of his later success and carried him through difficult challenges. Schooling in the elite Corps of Pages brought him to the first part of his military career in the Preobrazhensky Guards along with growing close contacts with members of Russia's ruling family. An appointment in 1891 by Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovich (uncle to the future Tsar Nicholas II) to join his entourage as he assumed the governor-generalship of Moscow broadened Dzhunkovsky's horizons and set him on his career as a conscientious and humane administrator.

With each assignment Dzhunkovsky demonstrated his talent for quick learning and organizing; he adopted "a straightforward, honest approach and a refusal to take offence" in his dealing with people of all types. His appointment to be assistant chairman (and later chairman) of the Moscow Guardianship of Public Sobriety (a governmental program aimed at improving the lives of the city's rapidly increasing numbers of workers) brought forth his creative abilities and excellent communication skills; as he came to know the city's

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laboring people and their problems, he successfully established soup kitchens, tea houses, and “people’s houses” offering various educational activities. Despite the partial alleviation of workers’ poor conditions, labor unrest grew throughout the country, helping to generate the first revolution in 1905, and forcing Tsar Nicholas to embark on reforms, albeit reluctantly.

During the years (1906-1912) that Dzhunkovsky served as governor of the Province of Moscow, he became revered by people of different backgrounds because of his decency, fairness, and “the hard work of active engagement in the life of the city and province.” Rob writes that the governor’s “memoir reveals a man who truly loved his job with all its challenges and dangers. The energy he displayed, his attention to detail, and his eager involvement with all aspects of the work amazed his contemporaries.” When later (1919) Dzhunkovsky appeared before the Moscow Revolutionary Tribunal facing a possible death penalty, many Muscovite supporters, including “well-known figures from the arts and politics” testified in his favor, at some risk of arrest themselves.

It was perhaps surprising that Dzhunkovsky accepted a very different position in 1913: as assistant minister of the interior he would head the empire’s security police and the Corps of Gendarmes. As Rob points out, Vladimir Fedorovich “was not by nature a cop; he lacked an authoritarian impulse and was uncomfortable with secrecy and conspiratorial methods.” However, he thought he might be able to implement reforms. The internal police culture was resistant however, and the Great War complicated his job. In the end, Russia’s losses, growing anti-government and anti-monarchy sentiments and actions, as well as various political and court intrigues directed against the chief of security, pressured Tsar Nicholas to dismiss him. Rob explores what was perhaps at the heart of the dismissal, Dzhunkovsky’s report

about Rasputin, whom he recognized as a “public relations disaster to the monarchy.”

Dzhunkovsky remained part of the Tsar’s suite, but sought obscurity in the 8th Siberian Rifle Division of the Tenth Army’s III Siberian Corps on Russia’s Western Front. (By now he held the rank of general.) Though not experienced in battle, as before, he energetically educated himself and quickly won the confidence of his commanders and soldiers. After the tsar’s abdication and the takeover by a provisional government (February 1917), Vladimir Fedorovich’s skills and experience allowed him to maintain discipline in his troops while thousands were deserting the front. When the Bolsheviks claimed power, the old order collapsed, placing him (and many others) in an unfamiliar and dangerous world. In 1919 he faced charges of taking action in his previous governmental role to thwart “worker and peasant efforts to overthrow the autocracy.”

Each chapter of *Overtaken by the Night*, aptly titled, is a little gem, dense with narrative, details, and interpretation. Rob’s research took him to five Russian state archives as well as the Bakhmeteff and Hoover Institution archives. A Russian colleague graciously “shared material that had been denied [him] in Russia.” Of course Dzhunkovsky’s own archive and memoir were essential. Perhaps the most touching chapter (“That the Descendants of the Orthodox Might Know”) comes nearly at the end, where Rob’s skill as a historian enables him to speculate about the last almost two decades of his subject’s life as a “former person,” the Soviet designation given to “class enemies.” Much less is known about Dzhunkovsky at this time.

After his release from a Soviet prison in 1921, Vladimir Fedorovich survived when other members of his class were “subject to interrogations, arrest, exile, and even execution.” He even began writing the memoir of his previous life. Rob explores the likelihood

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of protection afforded the former tsarist administrator by a top-ranking Soviet official. And he documents the consultation that Dzhunkovsky provided high-level state security (OGPU) about his previous experience pertinent to internal passports, to the structure of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and to protecting the tsar while he traveled on the railroad. Nevertheless during these years Dzhunkovsky's world shrank as he limited his contacts because he feared that his status might put others in danger.

Stalin consolidated his power in 1928, initiated his rapid industrialization scheme and soon afterwards his agricultural collectivization plans (the latter resulting in a severe famine in Ukraine). In 1934 the dictator began purging Communist Party members thought to be in opposition. There was little the former monarchist, Orthodox believer, and patriot could do as Stalin ramped up his purge to include, among others, officials of the old regime. A grotesque "mass operation" was planned: the more dangerous "anti-Soviet elements" were to be shot; the others sent to labor camps. "Regional quotas" were set: In the Moscow area 5,000 were to be executed and 30,000 sent to camps. Vladimir Fedorovich, age 72 and not in the best of health, was assigned to the "dangerous" category and met his end, likely with great dignity, in February 1938.

Many citizens of Russia, some like Dzhunkovsky in background, privileged, educated, comfortable, fought in Russia's civil war or fled during it, emigrating to Europe and China. Some managed to come to the United States. Those who ended up in San Francisco and environs have been the subject of my research. *Overtaken by the Night* illuminates aspects of the world from which they came and serves as a reminder of a different fate. It also provides an superb example of exemplary historical writing.

– *Maria Sakovich*

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Calisphere - <https://calisphere.org/> An excellent place to view online content: digital images and documents—primarily the digital content that is in the Online Archive of California. Here you can discover photographs, documents, letters, artwork, diaries, oral histories, films, advertisements, musical recordings, and more. The collections on Calisphere have been digitized and contributed by all ten campuses of the University of California as well as by other important libraries, archives, and museums throughout the state.

Archive.org is a trove of digitized magazines, journals, and books in the public domain, municipal reports, city directories, audio recordings, videos and web pages. I use it to read historic periodicals and connect with the digital collections of large libraries like San Francisco Public Library's History Room or the California State Library. Find what libraries you can connect with via their "American Libraries Collection" (on the home page, scroll down).

California Digital Newspaper Collection - <https://cdnc.ucr.edu/> contains over 1,500,000 pages of significant historical California newspapers published from 1846 to the present, including the first California newspaper, the *Californian*, and the first daily California newspaper, the *Daily Alta California*. It also has issues of several current California newspapers that are part of a project to preserve and provide access to contemporary papers.

Ancestry.org is a subscription database that is designed for individual use; however many local libraries subscribe to a "library" version that you'll have to use at your library. It has unparalleled coverage of the United States and the United Kingdom, including census, vital, church, court, and immigration records, as well

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well as record collections from Canada, Europe, Australia and other areas of the world. **Heritage Quest** provides similar content.

Breaking Down Brick Walls. Library catalogs aren't perfect—in fact many of them only gloss over the surface of what is in their collections. When searching for the papers of X person, that collection will be listed in the catalog, but what's within the collection often is only given cursory treatment. Try searching with different words or look for friends, family, and associates who may have had a relationship with your subject. I have been hugely surprised by what I've found just by widening my search a bit. Examine everything and everyone that has a remote chance of being relevant to your project.

When trying to find primary sources *you must think like the people who lived in the time and place you are studying. For example, newspapers from 100 years ago often used different terms or conventions than we use today.* When searching in newspaper databases for a woman's name, you should also look for her under her husband's name. So if I were looking for articles about Martha Hallidie I might be more likely to find her as Mrs. Andrew Hallidie or Mrs. A.S. Hallidie. Her husband, like others, often preferred to be referred to by just his initials and last name. If you get stuck, revisit some of your favorite books on your subject and *“train your brain”—relearn the terms, definitions, personal and place names* associated with your subject. Footnotes and bibliographies often provide help.

Lastly, sometimes the **answer-?** doesn't exist **anymore-?** but don't lose hope. Move on to the next item on your research plan and revisit the issue after some time has passed. Perhaps you'll gain a new perspective, think of a new angle to search from, or conclude that you don't need that particular fact anymore to tell your story effectively.