

History Re-imaged by Richard Robbins

The Past, they say, is another country. But it is also contested terrain as recent conflicts over monuments and murals clearly demonstrate. Efforts to remove statues of Confederate “heroes” have caused mayhem and murder. San Franciscans have been riled up about “politically incorrect” depictions of George Washington on the walls of the high school that bears his name. And at Zimmerman Library of the University of New Mexico, murals from the WPA era that were designed to *celebrate* the “tri-cultural heritage” of the Land of Enchantment (Native American, Hispanic, and Anglo) are now denounced for “insensitivity” and worse. What is to be done with (and to) these troubling images? Demolish? Paint over? Hide but preserve for appropriate “teaching moments”?

None of this is new, of course. Re-imaging the past is at least as old as ancient Egypt where Pharaohs regularly destroyed their predecessors’ monuments, chiseled their names off temple walls, and appropriated their tombs. And modern “Pharaohs” seek to repeal the “signature achievements” of hated figures, even if they cannot blot out their names and pictures. History has always been to some degree “politics projected into the past,” a fact that should not surprise Americans who have watched the “consensus school” of US historiography (that dominated into the early 1960s) evaporate as national consensus waned.

Revolutions are particularly vigorous in the work of re-imaging the past. The English, American, and French revolutions all witnessed the destruction of symbols of the *ancien regimes* and their replacement with new and appropriate images. But for most revolutions this process of re-imaging proved relatively brief, a product of these upheavals most radical phases, and was often followed by some kind of restoration. The experience of the Russian/Soviet revolution proved somewhat different. Because the “revolution” lasted 75 years and saw enormous changes in its course, how the past was “imaged,” what and who could be depicted—and how—also periodically shifted to meet changes in the official line. Russian Orthodox religious culture assigned great significance to icons, depictions of saints and biblical scenes that were seen as holy in themselves, endowed with miraculous powers. The revolution, while destroying many monuments and churches, denigrating icons and other religious symbols, quickly grasped the importance of visual arts—motion pictures, sculpture, posters, and photographs of revolutionary leaders—as means to propagandize and propagate the new faith of Communism.

With Lenin's death in 1924, images of the great leader became ubiquitous icons of the revolution. As Stalin rose to power his public representations would soon be everywhere, ultimately surpassing Lenin's. And of course the images of his defeated rivals disappeared. There was, however, a certain problem, those pesky photographs which showed Lenin and Stalin in the company of those who by mid to late 1930s were deemed to have been spies, wreckers, agents of foreign capital, enemies of the people. What was to be done with them?

Not to worry. If history can be rewritten, à la the infamous *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Short Course*, what's to stop a little retouching of photos as well? Doctoring of photographs was nothing new, but under Stalin it rose to the level of a grotesque new art form (all without the benefit of Photoshop). No problem air-brushing Stalin's pockmarks, Trotsky could be air-brushed as well—right

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear fellow historians,

We are living in a historic moment as we cope with the COVID-19 pandemic. I hope all of you and your loved ones are staying healthy and safe. With luck, you are finding ways to continue learning about history, sharing your knowledge, and having a positive influence on our democracy and our planet. I've been contributing to Berkeley history online and writing postcards to people who have been removed from the voter rolls in Georgia, among other things.

This is also a time of great uncertainty. I had hoped we would be able to have our 40th Anniversary Luncheon on May 23rd, but in our board Zoom meeting on April 11, the rest of the board talked me out of it. Let's hope we will be able to celebrate together sometime during 2020! If you are in touch with former IHS members who might like to be in on the celebration, please ask them to contact me so we can be sure to invite them. We were pleased to recently welcome back as a member Paula Gillett, one of our founders and the Institute's first president.

Our Monthly Programs have been on hiatus during the shelter-in-place orders, but as more of us use Zoom and other video-conferencing systems, it occurred to the board that we could do them that way! Please think about whether you have a talk you'd consider giving on Zoom. Oliver Pollak has already offered, on Sunday, May 24: "The Treatment of the Black Death, Bubonic Plague, Epidemics and Pandemics in World Civilization Textbooks and Other Sources." Conceivably, this could be a wave of the future for the Institute even after restrictions are lifted. It would enable our members to tune in and participate without having to drive or take public transit to an in-person meeting. Just as email has transformed how the Writers' Group operates since the days when they would read out loud to each other, we can be thinking about adapting to 21st century technology.

I want to thank Nancy Zinn for graciously coordinating our Monthly Programs for something like three years. She has resigned, and we need a volunteer to replace her. Please, won't someone step forward to take this on? Email or call me (ann@annharlow.com or 510-559-3616).

– Ann Harlow

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Maria Sakovich

COPY EDITOR

Anne MacLachlan

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Address:

P. O. Box 5743

Berkeley, CA 94705

www.instituteforhistoricalstudy.org

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THE INSTITUTE is affiliated with the National Coalition of Independent Scholars (NCIS), the American Historical Association (AHA), and the National Coalition for History (NCH).

At the Institute's 40th annual meeting three new members introduced their work. Included in **Pam Peirce's** presentation was an image of the cultural leaders of late 19th-century Indianapolis who were members of the influential Portfolio Club. Two of those pictured were the parents of Katharine Gibson (1893-1960), a "New Woman," who is the topic of Pam's biography. Her research is taking her to all kinds of new territory, including family history (Katharine is Pam's adopted grandmother), the history of mental illness (Katharine spent four years in a mental asylum and wrote about the experience), and mid-20th-century children's literature (to which Katharine made contributions). An interesting facet of the story is that the still-read pseudonymous memoir of four years in a mental asylum and subsequent recovery has never been connected to Katharine's successful and unconventional life as a museum art educator and author of books for children.

A 1848 Gold Rush map found in London, a thriving winery (Natoma Vineyard) in the Sacramento Valley documented by photos found in the Bancroft Library, and sheet music—"Bugbey Champagne Waltz" and "Bugbey Champagne Galop"—commissioned to promote the vintner's sparkling wines, were elements in **Kevin Knaus'** lively presentation of his work to bring forty-niner Benjamin Norton Bugbey to life. A year ago he published *Benjamin Norton Bugbey, Sacramento's Champagne King*, in which he traces his evolution from relatively successful vintner and land owner to a progressive socialist calling for radical land reform in the 1890s.

Before the internet, hobbies took place in circles shared by other enthusiasts and collectors. Now with a click or two or three we can look over the shoulders of all kinds of explorations and deep dives into new worlds. **Tim Welsh** created his website to take viewers on "Then and Now Tours" through the history of San Francisco via

films and photography which he gathers from a variety of sources—books, movies, personal collections as well as the internet. He shared a few examples of how he managed to track down locations for movies made in San Francisco. His work is for "noncommercial and nonprofit purposes only." (Since I just discovered four 1939 snapshots of San Francisco residences taken by my recently-arrived mother from Canada, I will be consulting Tim for guidance on identifying the locations.)

– *Maria Sakovich*

"Wild Women Suffragists and Their Reputation as Sex Radicals"

At the monthly program at Lynn Reese's home in Berkeley on January 18, **Joe Miller** presented colorful stories and persuasive arguments for why the vote for women's suffrage would have failed had it been up to women to vote for it. He drew from his extensive research on the topic, posing the question "Why were so many women opposed to what would seem to be in their best interest?"

Women had many reasons to oppose it, but Joe maintains that a primary cause for their opposition is that suffragists aligned themselves with some disreputable characters who promoted radical ideas, free love in particular. This caused many women to shut the door in the faces of suffragists with "a curl of the lip and expressions of ridicule and disgust." Joe cited a number of examples to back up his premise.

– Frances Wright founded the Tennessee Nashoba community which included slaves she had freed. Wright advocated abolishing religion and promoted complete sexual freedom for women. A scandal involving free love plagued the failing community. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony placed an image of this "Red Harlot of Infidelity" on the frontispiece of their *History of Woman Suffrage*, Volume 1.

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– Victoria Woodhull, who ran for U.S. President in 1872, was a big liability to the suffragist movement. She was called “Mrs. Satan” for her brazen promotion of free love. She maintained that chastity is not a virtue, but rather a crime against nature.

– Suffragists also supported Laura Fair, the first woman sentenced to death in California. Fair had shot her lover, married attorney Alex Crittenden, on a San Francisco ferry as he sat with his wife and children. Married four times, Laura Fair had a scandalous reputation, but Emily Pitts Stevens, editor of *The Pioneer* newspaper and co-founder of the California Woman Suffrage Association, applauded and stamped her feet in the courtroom in support of Fair. Anthony and Stanton visited Fair in jail, again inciting criticism.

– Stanton and other suffragists supported Abby McFarland, a woman whose abusive husband had killed her lover. The suffragists argued for less strict divorce laws, but their support of McFarland only confirmed opinions that the suffragists were free love advocates.

– Anthony and Stanton also associated with other controversial characters, including George Francis Train, who joined Anthony and Stanton in 1867 on a tour of Kansas. Train had a reputation for eccentricity. After a world tour which he claimed made him the model for Phileas Fogg in Jules Verne’s *Around the World in 80 Days*, he twice again traveled around the world, his last trip taking only 60 days. His talks were wildly popular, but he was also considered to be an attention-getting lunatic. His association with Anthony and Stanton provoked criticism. Abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison wrote to Anthony decrying her association with Train. He was appalled that Anthony and Stanton were lecturing with that “crack-brained harlequin and semi-lunatic, George Francis Train!”

– Joe also attributed some of the suffragists’ problems to Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s penchant for controversy or “mischief.” She humiliated abolitionist Horace Greely, who had originally been a suffragist supporter.

Miller could have expanded on any one of these intriguing stories, but time was limited. He concluded by reiterating his main point: men were not the enemy.

The fascinating and complex topic of women’s suffrage has a multitude of facets and can be viewed through any number of lenses. Lively discussion took place throughout the presentation, particularly related to the context of events presented. Judith Offer, who is also researching and writing about the suffrage topic, saw events differently. She questioned Miller’s characterization of Elizabeth Cady Stanton as “mischievous” as well as the reason he gave for the split between the two women’s suffrage groups. Joe would like to give this presentation to other groups, particularly to young audiences. If you have suggestions, contact him (joemiller1@gmail.com).

– *Marilyn Geary*

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enemy in our Mediterranean, fire-prone California environment? I can’t remember specific jokes but Georgia’s take on so many things saw the humor underlying our human frailties. In rebuilding her house after the 1991 fire, she incorporated a pleasant meeting, and eating, space for Institute events. What a pleasure to attend activities at 105 Vicente, nearly always with one dog or another there to greet us. On two occasions, one a long time ago and one recently, Georgia provided much appreciated help—bringing me cooked pasta when I was on crutches and offering space for my file cabinet when it needed a new home. It doesn’t get better than that.

Continuing Our 40th Anniversary Celebration

Remembering Our Beginnings, from the Newsletter, Vol. I, No. 2 (April 1980)

“The first membership meeting of 1980 was held at the Sutro Library in San Francisco on February 9th. Twenty-nine members and guests attended. First board president Paula Gillett announced that “our application for incorporation as a non-profit, public benefit corporation and our California state tax exemption have been approved. IRS tax-exempt status will be somewhat longer in coming. . . . A number of committees have been formed and more are planned: Liaison, Development, Publicity, Program, Project Development, Study Groups, Newsletter.”

The newsletter introduced the board members; many stated their aspirations for the newly formed organization: “To bring together historians in traditional fields and modes with those working in areas such as documentary film, oral history and historical preservation. . . . [Since] history is dangerously neglected in popular culture, including formal school curriculum, . . . the Institute for Historical Study [is] an important means of introducing history to the public consciousness, especially to young people for whom history as story, adventure or example is practically unknown. . . . Many others besides teachers should be involved in historical work and . . . the Institute is one way of opening up our historical heritage to all of the people. . . . The Institute is a means of encouraging historians to become involved in public history projects and in historical works that reach a wide audience. . . . I would like to see the Institute function as a community of scholars—not in opposition to the academic world, but as an alternative association working in cooperation with the established historical community. . . . The Institute is becoming a genuinely innovative alternative to traditional academic institutions, both in its potential to support research historians with grants and to produce high-quality scholarship for popular as well as academic audiences. . . . The Institute is a new kind of scholarly community . . . in an ecological sense, a habitat for scholars. At a time when many fear that historians and scholars in general are becoming an endangered species, at least in traditional habitats for our kind, it seems crucial that we really become this kind of community of different kinds of individuals interacting in a variety of ways.”

Remembering Georgia Wright, part 2

In the previous issue I wrote about some of Georgia’s many contributions to the Institute. For this issue I’m adding a few more observations and sharing memories from other members. (If any have inadvertently been omitted, my apologies.) I had almost forgotten one of her lasting contributions: a set of name-tags that we have worn on many occasions over the years. When we wore them at our recent annual meeting, I appreciated not only their elegance in appearance but the fact that they’re legible across a crowded room. The wearer’s first name appears in a large font—Georgia’s idea—so that new members can become acquainted more quickly . . . and older members can have their memories jogged.

I think about the breadth, as well as the depth, of Georgia’s scholarly work and how, as a result, she was immensely helpful to so many members. Nothing new phased her, including learning about videography in order to produce her DVDs on European cathedrals. As well as serving the Institute in many capacities, she participated actively in the birth of a new organization: the National Coalition of Independent Scholars. In fact, she began editing the NCIS newsletter, “The Independent Scholar,” three years before the organization was formally established in 1989. Neither earthquake nor fire stayed her in her appointed tasks. In October of 1989, while dust was still settling from the Loma Prieta earthquake, she hosted a meeting of representatives from the six local groups who comprised NCIS at that time. After the 1991 Oakland-Berkeley Hills wildfire destroyed her home she never lost a beat. The next issue of “The Independent Scholar” was published under the phrase (as I remember): “Notes From a Burned-Out Editor.”

– *Joanne Lafler*

Memories and Comments from Other Members (edited for reasons of space)

From Judith (Jody) Offer: My most fun memory of Georgia Wright was when she took me to the UC Library to show me catalogues of grants for the arts. I was trying to pay for a self-produced show, and she not only assured me she knew where the information was, she took me there, helped me find the right volumes, and worked with me, searching through them. We totally enjoyed the morning, reading through and comparing, and laughing at some of the weird requirements. In the most concrete way possible, she let me know that she thought my work was worthwhile. A few weeks later, I had two grants. Georgia reminded me a lot of the llamas across her street: tall, long-legged, a bit gawky, with a great air of natural dignity. Underneath, a huge curiosity and more than a little sweetness. It seemed perfect that she could look out her kitchen window and see llamas.

From Bonda Lewis: Georgia was a glorious and generous teacher and scholar, not only for her art history class on the religious symbolism in paintings (for which I, a non-Christian, actually bought a Bible), but from the first time we met, early in my Institute days. I was invited to share what I do, and so presented my first show on Jane Austen, *Tea and Sensibility*, on a Sunday afternoon at her house. After that performance she gave me a copy of Austen's *History of England*, with Cassandra Austen's illustrations—a revelation and delight because I had only had access to the text. It was the first of a thousand gifts of books, thoughts, support, and jokes that she shared. She shaped my understanding of what IHS is and might be—a scholarly group of historians, but also one that is generous, full of humor and compassion. I will always miss her.

From Bert Gordon: Georgia was a cherished colleague during my first years on the faculty at Mills College. When I arrived there, in the fall of 1969, she made me feel welcome and a real part of the community. She combined a vivacious and friendly demeanor with the height of professionalism both in teaching and in her research on Medieval art history. Following her departure from Mills, we kept in communication and I became a member of the Institute for Historical Study. At her suggestion I gave three talks for the Institute, most recently in 2012. My wife Suzanne Perkins, an artist, also remembers Georgia fondly. We will both miss her.

From Peter Mellini (a founding member of the Institute): Georgia Wright enlivened the IHS. Exuberant and scholarly, her enthusiasm, not only for her specialty but for history in general, was infectious. And her sense of humor: after the Oakland-Berkeley Hills fire she noted it was the first time she ever had matching outfits. Always helpful to members, alert to using visual technology as well as the “normal” historical sources, she brought Medieval churches and other buildings back to life. Georgia was a teacher and I wish that I had had the opportunity to take a course or two from her. To know her was to relish her.

From David Chadwick: Georgia Wright was my best friend in the Institute. When I first joined up she spent a good amount of time educating me about fundraising. She took me to a center in San Francisco with lots of information on foundations and which ones would be appropriate for my work. I always tried to sit next to her at IHS functions. She'd steer me in the right direction whenever I had Institute-related questions. When I sent Michael Goldberg to her for help with his documentary on the great Japanese Buddhist scholar D.T. Suzuki, she put him up and gave him a generous donation. I will miss her.

From Maria Sakovich: A capacious mind willing to challenge accepted beliefs in diverse fields, a wry sense of humor, generous and practical are the characteristics that come readily to mind that describe our beloved colleague. How many people do we know who would (with careful research, of course) upset the apple cart in Medieval sculpture studies and hold firmly to the belief that eucalyptus trees are *not* the

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GROUP REPORTS

Writers Group

Before the world as we knew it came to an end, the we had three productive meetings. The January event, rescheduled from December, was devoted to a discussion of Cathy Robbins's book on Calabria. There was general agreement that the work showed signs of significant progress; discussion focused on the meaning and sequencing of various historical events and the vexed question of how much of the author's personal and family story should be included.

In February, Jim Gasperini hosted a meeting devoted to a discussion of a portion of his cultural history of fire. This chapter focused on fire gods and other fire divinities. There was considerable excitement about the remarkable information that Jim presented and for the elegance of his writing. There was some concern that while the details of work were fascinating the book may suffer from a lack of "narrative," a sense of development and movement through time.

In March, Rose Marie Cleese hosted a discussion of the opening chapter of Katya Miller's work, "Lady Freedom," a biography of the statue that stands atop the US Capitol dome. The group shared Katya's enthusiasm for the subject but felt that the introductory chapter contained a great deal of disparate and unsubstantiated information. Katya was urged to proceed with developing the rest of the story and to come back to the earlier portion of the work and reshape it as she moves toward completion.

The Covid-19 pandemic will make it impossible for our group to meet physically any time soon. But Jim Gasperini will be hosting a Zoom session in April. We all hope that this will go well and enable us to continue our discussions of members' literary efforts.

– *Rob Robbins*

Play Readers

Due to winter holidays, interruptions of various kinds, and sheltering in place during the corona virus pandemic, we have read and discussed only one new play since the last newsletter, but its power has stayed with us. If you have seen a performance of Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey Into Night* on the stage, or as a movie, you will know how we felt.

The play takes place within a single day in August of 1912. Its setting is the parlor of a family home on Connecticut's seashore—a place that Eugene O'Neill remembered well, just as he would always remember summer fogs and groaning foghorns. The family in the play is surnamed "Tyrone," but their lives, and their story, closely mirror the author's family history. This is what dramatists call a "memory play." The playwright himself appears as the younger son, Edmund Tyrone. His father James O'Neill—an actor famous for playing the title role in a popular melodrama, *The Count of Monte Cristo*—was the inspiration for the character of James Tyrone, the paterfamilias. The character of Jamie Tyrone, a once-talented actor now in the throes of alcoholism, is based on O'Neill's older brother Jamie, who drank himself to an early death.

Mary Tyrone, the mother of Edmund and Jamie, is the focus of the play even when she is not onstage. Like O'Neill's mother, the fictional Mary Tyrone has become addicted to morphine given to her during a painful childbirth. She periodically withdraws to a convent to overcome her addiction, only to relapse after she comes home. This is essentially the plot of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, for Mary's current return will be like all the others. As the day grows longer, James and Jamie observe signs that she is using morphine again. Mary can be heard moving around upstairs from her bedroom to the room where she hides her morphine and paraphernalia. Until close to the end, Edmund insists on denying it.

As audience members and readers, we are caught up in events that Eugene O'Neill witnessed in his childhood and youth. In his late forties he was finally able to tell the story with insight and compassion. He dedicated it to his wife Carlotta in these words: "I give you the original script of this play of old sorrow, written in tears and blood." He ordered that it should not be published until twenty-five years after his death and that it should never be produced on stage. He died in 1953, and we are fortunate that Carlotta Monterey O'Neill was persuaded to ignore his wishes. The play was published by Yale University Press in 1955 and produced for the first of many times in 1956.

– *Joanne Lafler*

In Memoriam

We did not learn of the death of long-time member Carroll Brentano until just awhile ago. An early newsletter reports that the fourth work in progress (April 1981) was shared by Carroll and Georgia Wright, Renaissance and Medieval art historians respectively, making "separate but related presentations" on funereal art. Member Anne MacLachlan, who has written the remembrance below, knew Carroll over the course of thirty years. –Ed.

Carroll Winslow Brentano died on May 9, 2019 at the age of 92, after, as the *San Francisco Chronicle* obituary put it, "a life of optimism and adventure." She was a long time member of the Institute and was a strong supporter, if infrequent participant at our events. She had a large circle of affiliations and a very large circle of friends and supporters on the UC Berkeley campus and far beyond. Her perspective on life, politics, and the academy was extraordinarily positive, even when she denounced events she saw as ridiculous (and there were quite a few!). Her views never hindered her from truly listening to other points of view, and she would accept often radically different ideas from her own without rancor, never transferring her

disagreement to judgement of the speaker—with some exceptions—real idiots she could not stand. She was very encouraging to others and of the point of view that whatever it was—go for it! Life was an interesting adventure indeed.

Carroll brought people together and used her skills of persuasion to stimulate the writing of the articles which appeared in the nine volumes of the *History of the University of California* when she was at the Center for Studies in Higher Education. The journal was founded "to increase the store of institutional memory and thereby to revitalize institutional identity and enhance community." The first volume on disasters afflicting the Berkeley campus led off with the remark: "Disaster history provides entertainment but practical lessons as well—and not only in the University's classroom," —a statement of her overall perspective. Like this first volume, all subsequent volumes illuminated corners of Berkeley campus life which would otherwise have remained dark. This was achieved through her broad acquaintanceship, her devotion to "Cal" and her ability to engage others in this project. Beyond the *History* she co-edited a series of books with Sheldon Rothblatt published by the Institute of Governmental Studies (IGS) on many other topics related to the history of the University of California. She also published in her field of art history.

Carroll was born on the 4th of July and not only appreciated the fireworks on her birthday, but enjoyed the theater of American politics. It amused her to be distantly related to James Buchanan, the "worst president" of the United States (although she might have made him the second worst at present). She was a great friend to individuals and to the Berkeley campus, a great wit, with an ever probing analytical mind. Her forceful positive presence is sorely missed.

In honor of her memory in the context of the year-long Berkeley campus celebration of 150 years of women at Berkeley, Paula Fass and I have planned a memorial symposium on October

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16, 2020, 4-6 pm at the Women's Faculty Club on campus with the support of the Club, the Center for Studies in Higher Education, and likely the Institute for Government Studies. This event is open to all Carroll's friends and fans. (For many more details of her life please see the full obituary published in the *San Francisco Chronicle*:

<https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/sfgate/obituary.aspx?n=carroll-brentano&pid=193706103>.)

– *Anne MacLachlan*

Welcome Back!

A founding member and first president of our board of directors **Paula Gillett** has rejoined our ranks. She is now professor emerita in the Humanities Department of the College of Humanities and the Arts at San Jose State. Her published works include: *Worlds of Art: Painters in Victorian Society* (Rutgers University Press, 1990) and *Musical Women in England, 1870-1914: "Encroaching on All Man's Privileges"* (St. Martin's Press, 2000).

Katya Miller was the featured speaker at the Cal Alumni Club in Sonoma County in February. She presented her work on the Statue of Freedom, erected on the Capital dome in 1863 in middle of the Civil War.

Joe Miller gave his talk, "Wild Women Suffragists and Their Reputation as Sex Radicals" to the Sonoma Valley Historical Society in February. "The audience laughed in the right places, and the feedback from them was encouraging."

Maria Sakovich contributed another vignette to the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation cache of stories at the *Immigrant Voices* website, "The Contrasting Cases of Two Russian Choral Directors" (<https://www.aiisf.org/immigrant-voices>).

Jody/Judith Offer reports that her interview by Nina Serrano, a regular reviewer of poetry books, was broadcast on KPFA on April 14th. Under discussion was Jody's collection of poems, *The Grating of America*. Jody also continues with the rewrite of "Just Vote," a history play about the 1872 election, in which a number of women all over America, including Susan B. Anthony, went to the polls and attempted to vote. She and thirteen other women in Rochester were allowed to do so, but were then arrested. The vote, the arrest, and the trial made national news.

Since all the arranged local readings of this play have been shut down, Jody is offering an opportunity for a "sheltered-in-place" reading. Contact her* for a copy of the play. "Read whatever portion you care to and drop me whatever comments you have." She has been planning readings and more research at various Susan B. Anthony sites in Rochester and Seneca Falls, New York and in Adams, Massachusetts—all for the 100th anniversary of women suffrage, now "possibly for the 101st."

* joffer@juno.com

Hanging out at the AHA Convention

When we get back to "normal," whatever that might be, we can all gather, congregate, meet. This account is for that time. Long ago (or so it seems these days) I attended the 134th annual meeting of the American Historical Association, during the first week of January in New York City. I hadn't been to an academic conference since my graduate school days, when I hung out at the MLA (yes, that MLA, the Modern Language Association, which publishes the ponderous PMLA). I'd been gone from this academic pursuit for too long, and now, I encourage you to keep your antennae out for a meeting to attend.

What brought me to the AHA? I belong to a couple of smaller national history groups. Through one of them, I received the program for the AHA meeting and quickly found the Society of Italian Historical Studies. I signed right up for some panels and what turned out to be some pleasant surprises. For instance, independent scholars worked freely among the academics. The chance to mingle with the scholars was another reward, and because some had come from Italy, I was able to practice my impoverished linguistic skills.

I found the mostly young—or youthful—presenters to be engaging and not all the droning sort that I remember from the old days. A couple of papers were particularly relevant for me because of my book project on Calabria. One was on bridging the north-south divide in Italy, still a burning issue. Another concerned the tragic fate of women in early twentieth-century southern Italy who bade farewell to their husbands heading to “L’America.” The men were supposed to write regularly and send remittances, but some women never heard from the men and were left adrift, often with small children. Although they lived in a region of extreme poverty and high illiteracy, many of the women did not acquiesce to their new circumstances. Italian law blocked them from leaving to look for their husbands abroad (because they needed the permission of those missing husbands!). So they went straight to their local officials who in turn went to regional prefects. The national government undertook sometimes extensive searches for the men, turning to embassies and consular offices. Not all the searches succeeded, unfortunately, but clearly in some Italian towns, male officials responded, sometimes generously.

The 135th meeting of the AHA will take place in January 2021 in Seattle. I’m up for it!

– *Cathy Robbins*

***Gold Rush Bishop: William Ingraham Kip, First Episcopal Bishop of California and His Family* by Mary Judith Robinson (Telegraph Hill Press, 2017)**

Mary Judith Robinson has written a fascinating biography of a person whose family history also reveals more of the history of the United States. The Right Reverend William Ingraham Kip (1811-1893) came to California to be its first Episcopal Bishop (1853-1893). He became a central figure in mid-nineteenth century religious, social, and political life. In addition to the lively biography of Bishop Kip, Judith’s research brings to light many individuals who were his descendants or offshoots of the Kip family. The lives in this family tree illustrate the development of California through dramatic, personal experiences. As the author concludes, “It is a story not only of families but of a nation.”

Judith is the great-great-granddaughter of Bishop Kip. Her career has included work as a journalist and editorial writer, and as a legislative aide in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. She is the author of eight books including *The Hearsts—An American Dynasty*; “*You’re in Your Mother’s Arms*”—*The Life & Legacy of Congressman Phil Burton*; *Alan Cranston, Senator from California* — “*Making a Dent in the World*.” She fits amongst the professors, doctors, lawyers, engineers, scientists of this remarkable family.

The Kips were one of the Dutch families that founded New York. Kip’s Bay was their family farm. Their house was the oldest building in Manhattan when it was torn down in 1851. Kip was selected by church colleagues and consecrated the first Episcopal Missionary Bishop of California in 1853. Giving the sermon at the event, his brother-in-law, Bishop George Burgess of Maine, saw the new bishop going where “thirst for gold, impatience of restraint, the vices of adventures, and all the ills of unavoidable lawlessness have been before

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you.” After Bishop Burgess said “Many prayers ascend for you in this hour,” Bishop Kip might have felt he needed them.

Kip, his wife, and fourteen-year-old son made the journey to California by ships, train, flat bottomed boat, mules, and on foot. It was an exhausting, dangerous, and almost disastrous journey. Their ship was nearly wrecked twice off the San Diego coast. Judith quotes descriptions from Kip and a fellow passenger, Henry Fisher. Both supply cinematic details. Kip wrote of accommodations for him and his son, “I have taken my meals in many queer places when travelling . . . but I confess never before in such repulsive circumstances. . . . All around us was one wild confusion, kept up through the night. . . . There were not only the most awful blasphemies that human ingenuity could devise, but the most foul-mouthed ribaldry that could be conceived. . . .” Fisher, an experienced seaman, wrote that he “was very certain that the ship would not be destroyed or sunk, although there was six feet of water in her.”

California entered the United States in 1850 as a “free” state. Leading up to the Civil War and during it, California experienced divisiveness and frequent violence. Kip lived in San Francisco, but was responsible for the whole state. Secessionists were the majority in Southern California, though a minority in the state. Some Southern Californians hoped to split off from the state and join the Confederacy. Many miners opposed slavery but feared competition and felt color-based prejudice. Kip adhered to the Church’s neutrality, but his pro-Union personal feelings were never secret.

Bishop Kip became a Californian. He noted that in California one could not judge a person by appearances. Ragtag travelers could be educated engineers, a preview of cut-offs and flip-flops. In Europe in 1860 he longed for the “sunny side of the American continent.”

Gold Rush Bishop powerfully shows that looking at one life can open vistas into social, political,

and, in this case, Church history. It is a splendid example of eye-opening research in a treasury of documents and family archives. Bishop Kip and family are ideal subjects for his great-great-granddaughter’s historical insight and entertaining style.

– *Leslie Friedman*

– *continued from front page*

out of a photo showing him side-by-side with Lenin, leaving only a disembodied arm. He would disappear from many other photos showing him as revolutionary leader. The same fate would befall Nikolai Bukharin, Grigorii Zinoviev, and Lev Kamenev, all plucked from pictures of them with Lenin or Stalin in the early days of the revolution. And as the “Great Terror” of the late 1930s reached its height, frightened citizens took to their own form of retouching, inking out the faces of condemned figures in books and photo-albums, even their own family members.

With the death of Stalin in 1953, re-imaging continued. Stalin’s photograph which had appeared almost daily in Soviet newspapers virtually disappeared. Official De-Stalinization was three years in the future, but the straws were in the wind. The last straw would come in 1961 when an elderly lady Bolshevik, claiming to have the image of Lenin in her heart, told the XXII Congress of the CPSU that he no longer wished to lie next to Stalin who had done so much damage to the Party. The Congress forthwith voted to remove Stalin from the mausoleum where he had rested beside Lenin for eight years. Many of Stalin’s close associates were wedged out of the picture to become “non-persons” and Lavrentii Beria, the much feared head of the security apparatus, was not only shot but also had a four-page article about him (complete with picture) purged from the *Bol’shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia*. Subscribers were told what to do with the offending piece: “With a razor, carefully cut . . . and replace it with an article on the Bering Strait.” ⇨

With the end of the Communist regime in 1991, the Russian past would be re-imaged again. Nicholas II and his family, canonized as martyrs, are depicted on icons, while statues of formerly venerated Soviet “saints” like “Iron Felix” Dzerzhinsky, founder of the Cheka, have been pulled down and stored away. One of the most recent trends in the work of re-imaging has been the raising of monuments to figures who embody the idea of strong rulership, state power, and sanctity. In 1997 a huge statue of Peter the Great was unveiled in Moscow. Sure, Peter hated the city, but what the heck, he was a powerful leader. In 2016 a controversial statue of Ivan the Terrible (the country's first) appeared in the city of Orel. Ivan is touted as a tsar who crushed internal enemies and defended the Orthodox faith.

In that same year, Moscow received a new image, a statue of Saint Vladimir, the Christianizer of Rus' and the namesake of the current ruler. Vladimir or Volodymyr (c.958-1015) had nothing to do with Moscow, which did not exist at the time he reigned in Kiev and forced his subjects to adopt Byzantine Christianity. His most famous representation is to be found overlooking the place where he ruled, “the mother of Russian cities.” Moscow’s current Vladimir has raised this new statue to assert the revival of Russian Orthodoxy as the state’s religion and to present the image of a strong ruler. But Putin is also asserting another, quite ancient, claim as well. As the Princes of Moscow rose to prominence following the Mongol invasion, they advanced the idea that their city was the rightful heir of Kiev. This claim legitimized the Muscovite rulers’ ambition to “gather the Russian lands,” a process their successors continued down to the 1940s. The collapse of the Soviet Union shattered that achievement. But Putin is determined to reverse the results of what he has called the “greatest geopolitical tragedy of the twentieth century” and to gather again the lands (like Ukraine) that have unfortunately slipped away. A re-imaged past is a useful tool in this endeavor.

**INSTITUTE FOR HISTORICAL STUDY
1399 QUEENS ROAD
BERKELEY, CA 94708**