

THE INSTITUTE FOR HISTORICAL STUDY

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NEWSLETTER

Another Role for Historians – Part 2

An important source of historical documents can sometimes be found among family possessions. Often they are worth preserving in public collections where their longevity is secure. But accomplishing this delicate transfer from family to historical society/museum /archives is challenging. I thought it worth sharing a couple of my experiences, and I have asked members Dot Brovarney and Rob Robbins to join me in exploring a topic not often considered. Rob's contribution is below; Dot's appeared in the spring issue, but she asked that it be reprinted because the mailed print version of the newsletter lacked part of the article. It is on page 11. – Ed.

A number of decades ago, I can't exactly remember when, I was talking to Dan Feller, my friend and colleague in the University of New Mexico history department, when he mentioned quite casually that his grandmother was a terrorist. Sure, I thought, some grandmas are a bit terrifying, but that was not what Dan meant. His grandmother, Klara Klebanova Halpern, was an honest-to-God Russian terrorist, a member of the Maximalists, a radical offshoot of the Socialist Revolutionary Party. In the early years of the 20th century and especially around the time of the Revolution of 1905, the Maximalists staged daring assaults on the officials of the tsarist regime. Their best known effort was an attempt to assassinate Prime Minister Petr Stolypin in August 1906, when three of their number entered his home and blew themselves up, killing 27 people and injuring 70 others. (Stolypin escaped harm.) Grandma Klara had not been in on that event and, much to her regret, never got to kill anyone (although she did smuggle dynamite into Russia with the intent of blowing up a police station). She was arrested before she could do any damage, spent several years in jail, and emigrated after her release in 1909. She married (common-law) a Maximalist comrade, Lipa, started a family, and eventually ended up in the US.

As a historian of Russia with a special interest in the late-imperial period, I was fascinated. Were there papers? Indeed there were. Klara had written her memoirs in the 1920s. Dan believed that they were originally in Russian, but that they had been published in Yiddish in the *Jewish Daily Forward*. There was an unpublished English translation, too. There was probably other stuff as well, Dan didn't know how much, but his mother had it at her home out in Berkeley. And, oh yes, there was something else. Klara had a sister, Dora Lazurkina, a Bolshevik, who was "repressed" in 1937 and spent many years in prisons camps and exile until her release in 1953. Rehabilitated in 1955, she spoke at the XXII Congress of the CPSU in 1961 stating that she had always held Lenin in her heart and that: "Yesterday I consulted with Il'ich [Lenin] and it was as if he appeared to me and said: 'It's unpleasant for me to lie [in the mausoleum] next to Stalin.'" Stormy applause followed and the Party decided that Lenin should sleep alone. Stalin was relocated to less august quarters.

My expression of strong interest in his family history prompted Dan to ask his mother, Gilda Feller, to send some materials to me, which she did. (You Berkeley folks may remember her from her days on the City Council in the 1980s). I'd like to say that I then proceeded to build an archival collection forthwith, but unfortunately that was not the case. Dan moved from UNM to the University of Tennessee where he taught and served as editor-in-chief of the Andrew Jackson papers, and consequently our contacts became less frequent. It was not until I moved to the Bay Area that things (sort of) got back on track. Dan, his wife Claudia and daughter Daisy made annual trips to Berkeley during the winter break. He invited me to meet his mother, who had just turned 90, but was sharp as a tack. Gilda was full of information about Klara, who never abandoned her radicalism and was active in the Communist Party. (Husband Lipa became a

– *continued on the back page*

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

We continue to live in interesting times—scary times in many ways. Coronavirus variants. Threats to our democracy. Rising sea levels. Serious drought and fire danger in California, along with the ever-present threat of a major earthquake. And now the field of American history has become a hot topic in our polarized political sphere.

Looking on the bright side, most Institute members are independent scholars or retired professors and have reason to at least be thankful that they have not been teaching history this past year and a half. We haven’t had to deal as directly with remote teaching, controversies over school and building names, how to use pronouns, how to avoid micro-aggressions and triggers, and the brouhaha over how to teach about the history of racism.

On the other hand, when you’re not tied to the academic year calendar, and when the temperature is in the 50s in the mornings, can summer really feel like summer? Well, even if it doesn’t, the Institute board has decided to revive one of our traditions, a summer potluck picnic. Please save Saturday, August 28, noon to 3 p.m. and watch your email for the location (probably a park in Berkeley or Oakland) and other details.

Another summer tradition is the announcement of our annual deadline for applying for mini-grants, September 15. Do you have a research or publishing project that could use a little support? For information see [<https://instituteforhistoricalstudy.org/what-we-do/mini-grants/>]

Our recent call for comments on whether we should have monthly programs some time other than Sunday afternoons did not get a whole lot of response, so the board decided to continue with that tradition as well. Having the programs on Zoom continues to make it easier for more people to attend, and with the continued uncertainties around Covid we are not sure when we will be ready to meet in person in people’s homes again. Please make an effort to attend the monthly programs in support of your fellow members and your own lifelong learning! If you use an electronic calendar, put “IHS Monthly Program” in for the third Sunday of each month, 2 p.m.

– *Ann Harlow*

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MONTHLY PROGRAMS

Centennial of the Suffragist Portrait Monument in the US Capitol

Our monthly program on February 21 harkened back to the days of “Works in Progress,” in that it was a dress rehearsal for an upcoming program, in this case a presentation online by the San Francisco Public Library, Merced branch, during Women’s History Month in March. **Elizabeth Thacker-Estrada** had discovered a speech Sara Bard Field gave 100 years ago at the unveiling of the Suffragist Portrait Monument in the US Capitol Rotunda. Since fellow Institute member **Bonda Lewis** had played the role of Sara Bard Field in solo performances many times, it was a natural for Liz to ask Bonda to do so once again. Through the magic of Zoom virtual backgrounds, Bonda was able to appear as if standing in front of the monument itself. (This dry run revealed that some more work needed to be done, i.e. using a green screen so Bonda’s image didn’t shimmer or “ghost.”)

Liz placed the speech in its historic context with a PowerPoint presentation. She described the importance of the three women depicted in the marble monument, Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Susan B. Anthony, and of sculptor Adelaide Johnson. She pointed out that the monument was perhaps the most controversial piece of sculpture ever placed in the United States Capitol due to its unusual composition, deliberately unfinished look, and the realistic depiction of actual women, not idealized allegorical figures. This was “the first monument of women to womankind done by a woman presented by women for women.”

In Sara’s speech we heard themes that still resonate today: “We have won political freedom and now man and woman, comrades in the experiment of political democracy, we stand ready to advance together. Men and women are not yet free. The slavery of greed endures. . . . So long as the earth belongs to the few of each

land, those few will, like dogs over a bone, fight for its possession and the young men will be sent out to die for the Few. . . .”

For those who missed the program, Sara Bard Field’s speech is available at: [<https://archive.org/details/speechofsarabard00fielrich/>].

– *Ann Harlow*

Beth Wright’s Keys to Successful Self-publishing

Writing coach and book editor (and daughter of our late member Georgia Wright) **Beth Wright** demystified self-publishing and provided practical information for self-publishers on Sunday, March 21 via Zoom. In her presentation Wright advised authors to begin by conceptualizing a clear vision concerning purpose and goals. She encouraged authors to answer questions such as: What is your niche or genre? Who is your audience? Do you want your book in classrooms or libraries? Do you want your book reviewed by professional critics?

Next, determine whether you have the capacity to meet those goals. Are you tech savvy and can design your own website? Do you have a network of friends, colleagues, or organizations? Are you an alumnus, hobbyist or activist? Do you have strong ties to your local community and its newspaper, or to a professional organization and its newsletter? Networks provide pathways for the all-important task of marketing.

Before the editing process finishes (see more below), think about whether you want to hire freelancers and manage the production process yourself. Or, do you prefer to hire a hybrid press to transform your manuscript into a book? Hybrid or subsidy presses usually require the author to pay up front a portion of production costs. The press will produce, print, and distribute the book for a fee. After publication, the press and the author will share sales revenue.

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Prior to signing any contract, have a lawyer review it. Beth mentioned several reputable hybrid presses: Boyle and Dalton, Greenleaf Book Group, Wise Ink Creative and She Writes.

A small publishing project that doesn't involve illustrations and permissions could cost as much as \$10,000 if you work with a subsidy press. It typically will take a minimum 5 to 6 months. If you assume the role of project manager and hire freelancers, you might spend \$5,000. Always allow extra time in case of unforeseen delays.

While formulating goals and considering publishing methods, research and create a marketing plan. Identify a book comparable to yours and study its synopsis, look at the keywords that make it searchable, and read all the reviews to learn what critics value and praise. Read the author's biography. Remember that readers want to know your academic background, credentials, affiliations, qualifications for expertise, and personal journey to authorship. Look at the book's back cover to see its shelving category, which is determined by BISG (Book Industry Study Group). Either at the top or bottom of the back cover are words such as "Sociology/Religion," or "Current Affairs," or "Biography/Music," or "Memoir." The shelving category determines where booksellers shelve your book and how online shoppers find your book. Reading authors' blogs can provide insight into the publishing experience. Beth recommends reading the blog published by IngramSpark, a self-publishing platform that offers printing and distribution services.

For indie authors hiring freelancers, the most important people to pay are the editors and the cover designer. The developmental editor reads your manuscript with an eye for structure and substance. This editor provides a big-picture, overall critique. The copy editor knows good writing and makes changes relating to clarity and style. The text should generally follow one

standard style, such as The Chicago Manual of Style or APA (American Psychological Association, most commonly used to cite sources within the social sciences). The proofreader reads the text after layout and must understand book design standards and typography, as well as style conventions and rules of grammar.

Cover design can influence saleability. So put money into hiring a talented designer, who understands design impact and who has a good track record. Expect to pay at least \$500 to \$700. When your self-published book sits on a bookstore's shelf alongside a traditionally published book, it must measure up. Make sure the design looks good in thumbnail size (about 1" x 2"), because it will be miniaturized on a page that lists products for sale.

The cover should coordinate with inside pages, captions and illustrations. The book's interior can be a template-generated design, which is adequate, but professionally-designed is better. "Book design is under-valued," according to Beth, "but it makes a difference." She personally recommended a designer, Christian Storm, who offers discounted rates to indie authors (currently around \$700). See: [<https://cfuenfhausen.com>].

If you need to hire a book indexer, check out the online directory of the American Society for Indexing. Professional indexers use software to expedite the otherwise time-consuming and tedious process of creating an index. Choose an indexer who has experience in your subject and who can supply a list of references. You might avoid making embarrassing blunders, because your indexer knows esoterica, such as the spelling and sequencing of foreign names. Expect to pay about \$4 per book page. So a 300-page book would cost \$1,200 for indexing.

Before your book is published, think about marketing, which happens in three stages. Pre-publication is the first stage. During this time, contact people known to be knowledgeable

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about your subject matter. Ask them to write an endorsement blurb that will be published on your back cover. A blurb is a brief sales pitch or mini-review of your book. Send this person a galley, which is your book in layout—you often can simply email a PDF. The galley is used by authors, editors, proofreaders, endorsers, and reviewers to provide final proofing and assessment before publication.

The second stage is the launch, which can be one big event, such as a reading in a bookstore. It can also be an ad that announces your book's publication and debut in bookstores. The third stage consists of post-publication events. Ask friends to generate interest by mentioning your book on social media. Send a press packet (author bio, synopsis, contact information, reviews) to local newspapers and radio stations.

Book reviews add credibility and saleability to your book. So paying a professional reviewer at Kirkus can be worthwhile. Kirkus assigns your book to a reviewer knowledgeable in your genre. This reviewer writes an honest review that is not guaranteed to be positive. The author pays \$425, and has the option to suppress, rather than publish, the review. The author also can use a brief excerpt as a blurb. Keep in mind that some journals require that galleys be submitted three months before the book's publication date.

Although authors must carefully dance around pitfalls, Beth advised, "Enjoy the process of self-publishing. Not many people finish writing a book, and even fewer publish it."

– *Elizabeth Nakahara*

"Campaigns of the California Volunteers"

On May 16th via Zoom **Richard Hurley** presented the story of the California Volunteers who signed up to fight rebels in the Civil War. Instead of seeing battle in the war against the southern states, the volunteers ended up scattered throughout the Southwest fighting Native Americans.

In 1860, as in the rest of the nation, California was divided between pro-Unionists and pro-Confederates. Residents had brought their politics from elsewhere with them; many Confederate sympathizers ended up concentrated in Southern California. Slavery was a hot issue at California's Constitutional Convention in Monterey in 1849. The legislature voted against slavery, not for humanitarian reasons, but to prevent large companies with slave laborers from dominating mining in the state.

Richard's presentation featured several prominent military officers who played a role in California's wartime activities. One in particular, Albert Sidney Johnston, had been appointed commander of the US Army Department of the Pacific in 1860. A slaveholder, Johnston resigned his commission when the Southern states seceded. He joined the Los Angeles Mounted Rifles, a pro-Southern Confederacy California volunteer militia that marched across the Southwestern deserts in intense July heat, dodging federal patrols and Indians along the way to join the Confederate Army. Johnston was put in charge of all troops west of the Appalachians.

The first California volunteer infantry regiments were composed largely of Northern Californians. When it was thought that the Confederacy would gain control of New Mexico, the regiments marched to Fort Yuma. General Henry Sibley, commander of 3,000 Confederate troops in the Southwest, wanted to drive Union forces out of the region. Instead, the

2,350 men of the California Column advanced to meet Sibley. Patrols from the two armies skirmished at Picacho Pass, considered by many to be the westernmost action of the Civil War. Sibley was pushed out of New Mexico by a combined force of Colorado and New Mexico volunteers before the Californians could bring him to battle, but the Column stayed on to become the core of the federal presence in the Southwest.

Union Major General James Carleton, leader of the California Column, became commander of the Department of New Mexico. He decided to put an end to Native American raids on white settlers throughout the Southwest. He selected Kit Carson, who had to come out of retirement, to command forces against the Apache, Navajo, Kiowa and other tribes. Carleton decided to force the Navajo out of their homelands and turn them into agriculturalists in a newly settled area.

The Navajo hunkered down in the Canyon de Cheily, a natural fortress besieged by Carson with his force of 1,000 men, a mixed group including volunteers and Ute scouts. Without resources, many Navajo died of starvation. In January 1864, in what is now called the Long Walk, 8,000 to 9,000 Navajo, split into fifty groups, were forced to march hundreds of miles to Bosque Redondo at Fort Sumner in today's New Mexico. There they planted 3,000 acres of corn, which were later destroyed by cutworm. With Bosque Redondo sitting on the edge of Comanche territory, the Navajo were frequently attacked by those fierce raiders and their Kiowa allies.

Though California had over 16,000 volunteers, more volunteers per capita than any other state, most fought in the West against Native Americans rather than the Confederates they had hoped to defeat. The First California Volunteer Calvary joined Kit Carson in fighting the Kiowa, Kiowa-Apaches, and Comanches. Hurley recounted a battle detail—how Satanta, a

Kiowa chief, confused Carson's forces by blowing his bugle in commands that countered those of Carson's.

Hurley filled his presentation with many more fascinating details and images of the California Volunteer activities. If you missed it or would like a refresh, you may view the entire presentation.* Hurley's well-researched storytelling makes this fascinating and largely unknown part of California history come alive.

*[<https://youtu.be/xU43VLSS3bs>]; see also Hurley's books *California and the Civil War* and *Queen of the Northern Mines* at [<https://www.bearriverbooks.com>]; and [<https://caeducationalmedia.org/history.html>].

– *Marilyn L. Geary*

Writers Group

We continued our Zoommeetings which have, among other things, enabled us to enjoy the work of our colleagues on the other side of the pond. In April we got to read the first chapters of London-based Laure Latham's young adult historical novel "Attaman" set at Fort Ross in 1839, toward the end of the Russian settlement in northern California. The story centers on the character of Attaman, a Pomo Indian boy. The opening chapter shows him responding to a challenge from Boris, a surly Russian lad, in an intercultural conflict that threatens the freedom of Attaman's young sister. In the discussion group members expressed enthusiasm for Laure's story, her writing, and the research she has put into the subject. The group made numerous suggestions on matters of dialogue, the use of Pomo and Russian expressions, and geographical details, but the general feeling was that Laure's novel shows great promise. Members eagerly await the next installment.

In May we were able to see a portion of Dan Kohanski's reworking of his book "After God."

In response to previous questions and prodding from Writers Group members, Dan has abandoned for the most part the academic character of his earlier drafts. He now aims his work at an audience of secularly-minded people who have decided that while organized religion has little to attract them, they do want to understand the nature and importance of Western faiths. The chapter we read, entitled “Salvation for the Christians,” deals with the emergence of the “Jesus Movement” within Judaism and its transformation into a religion for the “Gentiles.” Dan considers the historical Jesus, the questions surrounding the reasons for and the meaning of his death, and the emergence of the belief that Jesus was both the messiah and God. The group felt that, as always, Dan’s writing was distinguished by both clarity of style and remarkable, if lightly worn, erudition.

In June we considered Katya Miller’s revised first sections of her “biography” of Lady Freedom, the statue that adorns the top of the US Capitol. Katya asked that the group concentrate on her second chapter entitled “Revolutionary Founders and Iroquois Leaders.” In the lively discussion that ensued, the group felt that in this section Katya was leading her potential readers too far afield. She was spending an inordinate amount of time on the alleged influence of the Iroquois (*Haudenosaunee*) confederacy of six Native American tribes on the leaders of the American revolution and the US constitution. This is a highly contested idea that has very little relevance for the history of the Statue of Freedom. The group advised Katya to scrap or at least greatly modify this section and move the reader more quickly to the story she has already developed of the statue’s origins and the debates about how “freedom” would be depicted.

– **Rob Robbins**

In Memoriam

John Rusk’s death in 2019 left little public record. Some old-fashioned gumshoe sleuthing revealed that John died two years ago, only a year after the death of his wife Micchi. John had been a member of the Institute since 1994, serving twice on the board of directors, including as treasurer and as secretary. As I recall he was also chair of the mini-grants committee.

John graduated with a BA in history from Indiana University and completed all work towards a PhD, also in history, except for finishing his dissertation; his field was Early American colonial history with emphasis on 18th-century maritime history. Whether the this subject propelled him into the Navy upon graduation from a rural high school in Indiana or emerged as a result of his 20 years in the Navy, we are unlikely to discover. At some point he added Mayan archaeology to his list of interests. After graduate school, John worked as an independent computer programming consultant.

Lyn Reese remembers John “as an affable big guy who was an enthusiastic member of our Medieval and then World or Global History Group. Lorrie O’Dell once told me that John saw our meetings as an important part of his life. He always made a great effort to attend them. Sometimes he would drive me to San Francisco when they were hosted there. Occasionally I would drive him. His presentations allowed him to delve into his love of maritime history, touching on important events and their involvement in major trade routes. Multiple handouts for us always accompanied his talks.”

Joanne Lafler recalls: “During the many years that John Rusk was an active member of the

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Institute he served as a volunteer at the Regional Parks Botanic Garden in Tilden Park in the Berkeley Hills. His primary interest was the propagation of native plants from cuttings and seeds, but he also served on the board of Friends of the Regional Parks Botanic Garden and edited their newsletter. He took photographs of his favorite plants in their seasonal glory and sent them to friends via email. I am lucky to have shared the ‘other life’ of a fellow historian.” It wasn’t surprising to learn from a neighbor of the Rusks that the plants that he and wife planted at their home are thriving still.

John kept a low profile, quietly and actively supporting organizations whose interests mirrored his. When he joined the Institute, he was a member of AHA and the Society for Nautical Research, as well as an associate of the Institute for Early American History and Culture. There was something of the “Renaissance man” about John, his interests running broad and deep. I certainly appreciated his support and understanding of my work on post-Revolution refugee-emigrants from Russia who settled in Northern California.

– *Maria Sakovich*

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Rob Robbins writes: “I just finished reading Sean McMeekin’s sure-to-be-controversial new book *Stalin’s War*. In it he makes a gracious acknowledgement of Institute member **Richard Raack’s** scholarly generosity and contributions to the field. Raack, he writes, is one of the ‘courageous scholars who have probed the mysteries of Soviet foreign policy and military planning under Stalin before me. . . . Richard Raack [is] an American scholar who now publishes mostly in obscure Polish and Central European journals to the detriment of Western historians who pay much less attention to his work on Stalinist foreign policy than they should. Although Professor Raack’s health issues have prevented us from meeting in

person, he was game enough to write and speak by phone on numerous occasions, and I am grateful for his time and advice.’ (This acknowledgment appears on pp. 673-74 in my Kindle edition.)”

New member **Stephen Barton’s** biography, *J. Stitt Wilson: Socialist, Christian, Mayor of Berkeley*, has just been published by the Berkeley Historical Society. On July 22nd he will present a talk on Zoom, co-sponsored by the Institute for Historical Study, “The Social Crusader: Berkeley Mayor J. Stitt Wilson’s Lifelong Quest for a Just Society.” Institute officers Rose Marie Cleese and Ann Harlow made essential contributions in the editing and production of the book.

To celebrate the return to operation of San Francisco’s cable cars next month, **Taryn Edwards** is participating in a conversation about Andrew Smith Hallidie and “the invention and the importance of the cable car to the city’s history, development, character, and culture.” Sponsored by the Mechanics Institute the event (August 2, 6-7 p.m.) is free via Zoom but registration is required: [<https://www.milibrary.org/events/san-francisco-cable-car-conversation-taryn-edwards-and-rick-laubscher-aug-02-2021>].

For the Online Biographical Dictionary of the Woman Suffrage Movement in the United States, **Elizabeth Thacker-Estrada** completed a biographical sketch of Alice Elaine Fletcher Paddison (1869-1948). Paddison, an inventor and businesswoman in Salt Lake City, Utah, served as a delegate to national and county Progressive Party conventions. In addition, she was the president of a Progressive Women’s Club and a Bull Moose Party floor committee member. Liz appreciates the insightful comments she received about the sketch from Institute members Rose Marie Cleese, Bonda Lewis, and Joanne Lafler.

HISTORIANS AND THEIR PROFESSIONS: REFLECTIONS

Bert Gordon completed several essays to be published as chapters in books. They include: “‘Sous les pavés, la plage’: Sun and Sand in French Tourism—The Evolution of an Image,” in Patrizia Battilani and Carlos Larrinaga, eds., *On the Beach: The New Material Culture of Coastal Tourism in Southern Europe in the XXth Century* (Peter Lang);

“Dining at the Tour d’Argent in Occupied Paris: Ernst Jünger—Power, and the Othering of Paris,” in Sandra Ott, ed., *Nazi Germany and Occupied France: Jewish, American, German, French, and Basque Perceptions* (Center for Basque Studies);

“Monuments and Memorialization,” in Michael Di Giovine, Josep-Maria Garcia Fuentes, and Teresita Majewski, eds., *Handbook on Heritage and Tourism* (Routledge); and

“Tourism Governance in France: The Role of a Dirigiste State,” in Amir Gohar, ed., *Tourism Governance: A Critical Discourse on a Global Industry* (De Gruyter).

His essay in honor of his doctoral advisor appeared as “Professor Robert A. Kann: Historian, Scholar, Mentor,” in the *Austrian Studies Newsmagazine*, 32:2 (Fall 2020), pp. 6 and 26; and online 16 September 2020: [<https://cla.umn.edu/austrian/news-events/announcement/cas-exclusive-professor-robert-kann-historian-scholar-mentor>].

His paper “‘Longing to See More’: War and Tourism,” was presented virtually at the Conference “Dialogue authentique entre la Russie et le monde francophone dans l’espace de la culture, de la langue et de la littérature,” at Moscow State Linguistic University, April 23, 2021.

Jody/Judith Offer’s play “Compared to What?” has been rescheduled for production by the Masquers’ Theatre which has been closed for over a year by the pandemic. “My show,”

she writes, “won’t go up until September 2022, but by that time the theater crew will have become completely familiar with the new lighting, sound and tech equipment, new stage space and curtains and will be able to use it all to maximum effect.” The play explores the dilemma of two Pullman porters who are in conflict about joining the Brotherhood of the Sleeping Car Porters and risk being fired. The year is 1926; the action takes place in West Oakland.

Bibliographies, Biographies, Autobiographies, Gender, Faith, and Historians: Reflections

Historians examine the lives of others and occasionally look in the mirror. Biographies of historians are joined by a growing genre by scholars examining the profession through their own experience producing group autobiography. (Festschrifts, written by colleagues and students to honor the contributions of senior scholars, will be considered on another occasion.)

The 22-page bibliography in *History, Historians and Autobiography* by Jeremy D. Popkin (University of Chicago Press, 2005), reveals that about 60 percent of the books and articles were written by men. Popkin suggests military veterans who become academics have a higher propensity for autobiography. William G. Palmer’s *Engagement with the Past, The Lives and Works of the World War II Generation of Historians* (University Press of Kentucky, 2001) is also instructive.

Other remarkable biographies and autobiographies of historians have appeared more recently. In 2019, D. W. Hayton published *Conservative Revolutionary: The Lives of Lewis Namier*. Sir Lewis Bernstein Namier (1888-1960) revolutionized the study of 18th-century British history. In the same year Neil McKendrick honored another chronicler of the

HISTORIANS AND THEIR PROFESSION: REFLECTIONS

subject, John (Jack) H. Plumb (1911-2001), with *Sir John Plumb, The Hidden Life of a Great Historian*; it is a personal memoir by a long-time colleague and friend.

Women and Jews have created and investigated their gendered and ethnic historical calling. In 1999, Indiana University Press published *Voices of Woman Historians: The Personal, the Political, the Professional*, edited by Eileen Boris and Nupur Chaudhuri. Twenty women historians told of their upbringings, career challenges, and accomplishments. Among the authors were Gerda Lerner and early Institute members, Barbara Penny Kanner and Napur Chaudhuri as well as Karen Offen contributing “Going Against the Grain: The Making of an Independent Scholar” and Frances Richardson Keller, “A Graduate Student’s Odyssey.”

No Straight Path, Becoming Women Historians, ed. Elizabeth Jacoway (Louisiana University Press, 2019) appearing two decades after *Voices*, is regionally focused. At the center of *No Straight Path* are 13 Southern women who earned history doctorates. Their stories recall choosing a major and graduate advisors in a male dominated system, taking written and oral exams, selecting and writing the dissertation, seeking tenure track positions in a tight job market, moving goal post expectations, researching women of the South and exploring segregation, marriage, having children, divorce, and sexual identity. They accumulated “firsts,” as chairs and deans. They all belonged to Delta Women Writers, a support group established in 2008. Twenty women still meet over a weekend twice a year in Jackson, Mississippi where four members present research papers.

People of the Book, Thirty Scholars Reflect on Their Jewish Identity (University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), edited by Jeffrey Rubin-Dorsky and Shelley Fisher Fishkin, reveals how being Jewish influenced intellectual choices. Most are scholars in literature, three are historians; they are equally divided by gender. *Conversations*

with Colleagues: On Becoming an American Jewish Historian, edited by Jeffery S. Gurock, appeared in 2018 with contributions by 16 historians, 9 women and 7 men, born in the 1940s and 1950s. Sixty percent taught in the Northeast. Chance, choice, destiny and planning are anecdotally described as peregrinations, unexpected stumbles, intellectual migration, accident, intersection, meandering, serendipity, twist of fate, several way stations, odd turn of events, and an unarticulated passion for history.

Careers of historians rely on preparation and unpredictable good fortune, misfortune, coincidence, happenstance, and synchronicity in which being at the right or wrong place at the appropriate or inappropriate time plays a part. Sylvia Frey of Tulane University nailed it when she asked: “What makes us who we are? My answer to myself is heritage and experience, a combination of geography, ethnicity, education, and luck. Genetics and family heritage made me sensitive to displacement, if only at a subconscious level, which formed the core of my research.” Such wisdom. On June 29, 2021, I googled her; she had died in Lafayette, Louisiana at the age of 86 a few days earlier. Honor our profession by reading her obituary. [https://www.nola.com/news/education/article_5759026c-ced4-11eb-aef409b9472f0c8f9.html].

– **Oliver Pollak**

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Another Role for Historians

As a museum curator and subsequently an independent historian, I have been fortunate to enjoy access to family artifact and photograph collections and historical documents. It has expanded and deepened my research process and my understanding—family knowledge provides details and a personalized history that archives and museum collections often lack.

One independent exhibit that I developed would have been impossible without family cooperation. While bits and pieces of the subject's life (1861-1945) can be found in several institutions, his family has retained most material. While descendants had preserved photographs and documents, especially his journal articles and important correspondence, I soon discovered more. A visit to the subject's home in the mountains—retained by the family but left largely uninhabited since the 1950s—revealed surprises. I found a 1925 newspaper announcing the death of a prominent person neatly folded in a bedside table drawer. This famous person was a close colleague and friend of my subject. It was not difficult to imagine that this item had been tucked away in this spot for 85 years! I opened the cover of an antique desk and discovered a journal of a family member documenting details of some important work that my subject did, which he himself did not record. Decades of business records had been stored in a basement that also served as home to rodents.

The success of the exhibition, in great part, rested with the descendants' generous loan of artifacts, photographs, and documents for the duration of the show. The other positive consequence of the project and the relationship I was able to build with the family (gaining trust is a key factor) was their agreement to relocate the abandoned documentary material to safer space at the family home in town. Here in plain sight it might serve as a reminder of its importance, as opposed to its former out of sight/out of mind status. It would be better

protected and potentially accessible to other researchers.

I recently contacted a family member to inquire—a decade after the exhibit—whether any consideration had been given to donating the collection to a local archive. I got a mixed response, likely typical of many families holding material saved by their parents and grandparents, and beyond. One family member believes donation is the right thing to do, rather than saddle the next generation with storing this large assemblage of material. This person also recognizes the educational value inherent in this particular collection. She also rightly understands that this collection requires and deserves more than storage—management, including cataloguing, conservation, and public accessibility are equally important. However, another key individual in the family is unwilling to let it go.

There is no simple formula for historians to assure preservation of a family's historical legacy, whether through commitment from the next generation, or by donation to a professionally-managed archive. Nonetheless, historians hold a key to opening the door to this issue. We have an obligation to build trust with families who are generous enough to share their historical material with us. That they have preserved their collections and are willing to share them are signs that they cherish their family records and attach importance to them beyond the nucleus of family. Establishing a trusting relationship with people who appreciate history and are willing to work, in effect, as research partners, opens the door a crack. We are then in a good position to appeal to the family's sense of legacy, and advocate for the value of institutional preservation. Museums, libraries, universities, and local historical societies offer long-term conservation of family heritage resources, and, at the same time, provide a space where these historical materials will be available to the public for generations to come.

– Dot Brovarney

New Deal Democrat.) Klara even considered returning to Russia and in 1926 took Gilda and an older daughter to Moscow where they stayed for a year. Prospects for staying in the USSR dimmed due to Klara's outspokenness concerning things political. Sister Dora warned her that this trait was likely to lead to trouble and Klara decided that the US might be the safer bet. Gilda laid out this and other stories in a series of delightful letters which will be meat for any future archive.

Gilda had other records and materials which should be archived, but she was not physically able to sort through them and Dan and his brothers did not have the chance to peruse them either. So things lapsed. But in 2016 Gilda died at the age of 96 and Dan moved her papers to his home in Knoxville where they currently sit. He has just retired from teaching and putting the final touches on the volume of the Jackson papers he has been working on. If he gets energetic, work on the Klebanova archive may resume. And who knows, with the plague passing, I may get to go east to help. But in the meantime things are not at a complete stand-still. Other family members, some quite distant, have found pictures and other material. And, *mirabile dictu*, Klara's memoir is now available for all to hear, re-translated from the Yiddish and voiced by Caraid O'Brien. Check it out. [<http://www.yiddishbookcenter.org/language-literature-culture/translation-initiative/last-maximalist>]

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