

The Institute for Historical Study Newsletter

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Since I will be leaving the office of President of the Institute in February, this will be my last President's message for the *Newsletter*. I have enjoyed my two-year tenure more than I can say, and I know I will be leaving the helm of the Institute in very good hands. So many people have contributed time, energy, and money over the past two years. I cannot even begin to name all of them. I want to thank everyone who participated in the Institute's activities and who helped make them the successes they were.

However, the activities continue. In addition to our monthly Work-in-Progress meetings, in January, we will co-sponsor a program on German unification with St. Mary's College in Moraga. In February we plan to revive our "movie review" meetings, and will hold a discussion of the film *Dances With Wolves*, currently playing at movie theaters in the Bay Area. Please plan to see the movie and then be prepared for some heavy, often controversial analysis. This film is in keeping with the theme of our upcoming film series — "Hollywood and the Myths of the West" — to be held this coming spring at DeAnza College in Cupertino. You will receive announcements of all these events with exact dates, times, and places.

One special date to mark on your calendar is Saturday, February 23, the date of the Institute's annual membership meeting. This year we will hold the meeting at Lone Mountain College in San Francisco. The membership meeting will be held in the morning; reports by Karen Offen on her attendance at the International Women's History Conference last year and by Anne MacLachlan on her study of the current hiring situation in academia should create an interesting and informative afternoon. Institute members will receive their official notices in January.

May the new year bring peace, prosperity, and success in all your endeavors.

—Lorrie O'Dell



WORK-IN-PROGRESS

Gray Brechin

In October, Gray Brechin provided a fascinating Work-in-Progress on the subject of "Forces and the Fair: Themes of Conquest at the Panama Pacific International Exposition of 1915," which will become a chapter in his forthcoming book on Imperial San Francisco. His presentation was richly illustrated with slides of visuals that support his premise about San Francisco's early aspirations to become a center of power and "imperial" grandeur, built on commercial expansion.

Gray, an architectural historian, is interested in the environmental impact of city building as well as United States expansion in the Pacific Basin. He introduced his talk with a slide of a mural by Emanuel Leutze entitled, "Westward the Course of Empire Takes its Way." The westward movement found its symbolic and mythical interpretation in this mural, an interpretation that Gray found repeated in the Pan-Pacific Exposition of 1915. Among the mythical figures in the mural are the heroic and virile pioneer who has conquered nature and is rewarded with the prize of California, and the madonna-like woman, a symbol of virtue, abundance, and prosperity. Equally prominent in the mural is the display of a rifle brandished in a gesture symbolizing force and power. In the distance to the west, the mural depicts the Pacific Ocean, the new horizon for the hero to conquer.

Gray traces the efforts to make San Francisco into an "imperial" city — a "Paris of the Pacific" — back to the 1880s. These efforts culminated in the monumental Burnham plan for beautifying the entire city in a manner befitting a European-style imperial city. Not until after the earthquake and fire of 1906 did Burnham see an opportunity to implement his plans, but he was again thwarted by commercial interests. Eventually the city was rebuilt in its former shape. By 1909, San Francisco was preparing for the extravaganza of the Panama Pacific Exposition that would show the world that San Francisco was still queen of the Pacific. The Pan-Pacific Exposition of 1915 was to become the visual expression of what San

Title

O'Dell

Elaine for a book
very soon after he can
a member who didn't
step in process?
to write a book

Area Seminar
run by M.L.
Reese

Francisco really aspired to be. Research into the extensive exposition archival material led Gray to photos, posters, and plans that depict the heavy symbolism of the fair. Instead of Paris, he found Venice emulated in the fair's grandiose squares and plazas along the waterfront. Gray found the theme of conquest evident in much of the iconography of the exposition. The elaborate Tower of Jewels, for example, was interpreted by Gray as a symbol of the wealth to be brought to the city by way of the newly opened Panama Canal. The Palace of Fine Arts, designed by Maybeck, is the only remainder of the exposition still in existence and in use. It was indisputably the most admired and handsome of all the buildings of the exposition.

Gray is continuing his research by searching for some voices critical of the exposition. Imperial San Francisco promises to be well-researched and written, and a somewhat controversial documentation of an interesting period in the history of San Francisco.

—Myrna Smith

Elaine Rosenthal

In October, at the home of Carroll Brentano, Elaine Rosenthal presented a preview of a paper she will be reading at the AHA meeting in New York in December. A large audience of Institute members and friends offered friendly advice and suggestions to Elaine. "Love, Trust, and Honor: Women and the Law in Renaissance Florence," the title of Elaine's paper-in-progress, will be presented as part of a panel on "Women and the Law in Early Modern Italy." The thrust of Elaine's paper was to point out discrepancies between the laws regarding women's legal capacity and the actual practice in Florentine society.

Florentine women of the Renaissance had no legal standing. They were obliged to be represented legally by a guardian, the *mundualdo*, who was in charge of any official legal business. Elaine's research, however, led her to uncover documents with evidence showing that in practice the system allowed for manipulation of the rules, allowing women to conduct their legal affairs without interference from a guardian. Women, despite what was decreed by law and statute, were in numerous instances able to act independently in their own behalf in executing acts before notaries in Florence.

The areas of legal affairs in which women held their own were in property holdings and in inheritance. There is much evidence that husbands and fathers, through judicious transfer of property to a wife's or daughter's name, were able to effect lower taxes for their common estate. This meant that women were able to be property owners in their own

right. One model of female inheritance in Florence reveals that not infrequently a woman specifically excluded male heirs and prohibited interference in inheritance matters by male members of a family. One can only speculate whether these kinds of explicit stipulations reveal the individual expressions of distrust by a woman made wise through bitter personal experience, or whether there is a trace of marked hostility toward men.

Florentine women were sometimes also named executrices of estates, a role one would not expect of those who had no official legal standing. Along the same line, men sometimes appointed women as their procurators, or in other instances a husband could give certain legal rights to his wife to act on his behalf in his absence. Elaine also found two instances where women were appointed arbiters, a prestigious role for men in arbitrating disputes between citizens.

Just how often the laws were flouted and statutory requirements pertaining to women's legal standing ignored cannot be fully assessed by Elaine at this time. In conclusion she raised the question of the "real" standing of women in Florentine society. At least some women must have earned the devotion and trust of men, enough to warrant the obvious circumvention of laws preventing any legal standing for women. The subject, as Elaine stressed, is wide open to further research.

—Monica Clyde

Diane North

At the home of Myrna Smith, in November, Diane North presented a Work-in-Progress on the subject of "Civil Liberties and the Law: California and World War I." The advent of the First World War set in motion different political, social, and economic dynamics for the state and people of California. Although physically far removed from the battlefields of western Europe and from the centers of political and financial power along the eastern seaboard of the United States, during the war period and its immediate aftermath Californians witnessed a time when forces in society interacted on a more profound basis. Those interactions, and their effects, included the expansion of state and local government functions to meet the challenges imposed by the federal government, the growth of private citizen associations to work with or against the state, the use of new political surveillance techniques, restrictive legislation, the rhetoric of democracy to direct behavior and to control and suppress the Industrial Workers of the World, certain racial and ethnic minorities, and protest in general.

—Diane North

BOOK REVIEW

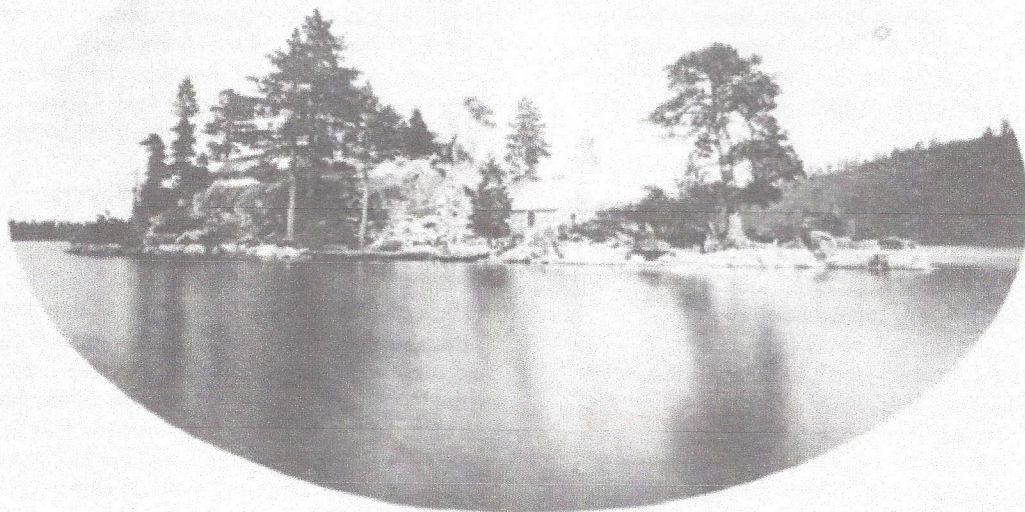
Barbara Lekisch *Tahoe Place Names, The origin and history of names in the Lake Tahoe Basin.* Great West Books, 1988, \$11.95, xviii, 173.

What is in a name? Obviously quite a bit—as ten years of detective work in archives and libraries testify, resulting in this extraordinary encyclopedia of Tahoe place names. This is the second publication by an Institute member on place names. In 1989, Peter Browning's *Yosemite Place Names* was reviewed in the *Institute Newsletter*. As Barbara Lekisch writes in the preface to her book, publisher and editor Peter Browning was also instrumental in encouraging her to see this project to completion through the long years of research and writing.

My own interest in Barbara's project began with her request for help in translating a number of passages from the diary of the German explorer and cartographer Charles Preuss, who accompanied John Charles Frémont on his second expedition to the West, 1843–44. On February 14, 1844, Frémont and Preuss became the first white men to see the "mountain lake," which—several name changes later—came to be known as Lake Tahoe. I looked forward to the publication of Barbara's book with anticipation, not because of my minor contribution, but because,

like countless other Northern Californians, I consider Lake Tahoe with its breathtaking mountain scenery one of the most memorable areas in California. I have at times—in a casual manner, to be sure—wondered about the origin of the many colorful place names that one encounters at every corner around the big lake.

Barbara Lekisch's book begins with a brief introduction by historian Richard H. Dillon, followed by the preface, and then the author's introduction in which she defines the parameters of the areas included in her work, her method of citation, and the type of information provided. This introduction gives a first hint of the fine quality of research and the meticulous documentation, not to mention the prodigious amount of research Barbara invested in her task. She pays a fitting tribute to the many diverse people who created the history of the Tahoe Basin, foremost to the Washoe Indians, who in the end contributed the name Tahoe, one of the few, but important, reminders of the Washoe heritage at "The Lake." The main body of the book consists of individual entries of place names, listed in alphabetical order. Maps and historical photographs lend authenticity to the descriptions, which range from an occasional entry of just one sentence, when the origin is unknown, to lengthy entries of several pages.



Island in Emerald Bay.

N. J. Wetzel

Lake Tahoe Series

Fannette is probably a corruption of the name Coquette. "The island is called Coquette Island, for the reason enclosed in a champagne bottle which is placed in a crevice at the end. A Sacramento lady named the island the Coquette, because 'being the center of a brilliant circle of admirers attracted by her beauty, she still has a stony heart.'" (*Sacramento Daily Union*, August 4, 1866.)

This is not a book that one reads from the first page to the end; rather it is meant for browsing. I read the entries on the well-known places first—for example, the name Tahoe itself—and found myself totally engrossed. There is enough historical detail and human interest to satisfy the most discriminating reader.

Not only is this book well researched and documented, but it is also written in a lucid style that dispenses with unnecessary fluff and focuses strictly on the essentials. Reading this book—who would ever think of enjoying reading an encyclopedia—was also a pleasurable experience. I found myself chuckling when I read that in 1865 it still took eighteen hours to get from Sacramento to Zephyr Cove and that one-hundred-foot lots at Homewood, which went begging for \$50.00 in 1889, were finally offered free of charge to anyone willing to build a "substantial house." And then there is the story of the name Tahoe itself, a Washoe Indian word that early white people assumed meant "big water." But the truth is to be found in *Wa She Shu: A Washo Tribal History*, published in 1976. "The Washo lived around the lake, and referred to it as *Da ow a ga*, which means 'edge of the lake.' White people who mispronounced *Da ow* as 'Tahoe' gave the lake its English name." The story makes for fascinating reading.

Following the main body of the text are Appendix I, a list of Old Names, and Appendix 2, excerpts from the previously mentioned diary of Charles Preuss, followed by a list of illustration sources, and finally an impressive bibliography.

I found this book to be a thorough compilation of interesting facts about the Tahoe Basin and recommend it to anyone for whom the word Tahoe evokes the grandeur and beauty of one of California's most beloved areas.

—Monica Clyde

UPDATE

California Historical Society

From Glenna Matthews, we have the latest report about the California Historical Society. We are all familiar with the problems the Society has experienced of late; now, for some good news! First of all, four members of the Institute are now active on the Board of Trustees: Jeff Lustig, Glenna Matthews, Annegret Ogden, and Jim Williams. Jeff was on the search committee for a new executive director, and the final choice was Michael McCone. Michael has substantial experience in the Bay Area non-profit field, and is a strong leader who is also very energetic and enthusiastic. He has already secured a grant of \$100,000 for general operating expenses from the

Hewlett Foundation. The Society has also hired a new librarian, and the library is scheduled to reopen in 1991.

In addition, a developer of a new office complex near Third and Mission is going to donate to the Society the old Jessie Hotel along with a large amount of money to underwrite its renovation and conversion to the new headquarters. The site will have more exhibit space and much better public access in the heart of the new convention/cultural center than the current mansion. If the Whittier Mansion sells for near its asking price, the Society will be able to retire its debt, upgrade the library, pay for necessary work on the collections, and start building a statewide program. The Board of Trustees of CHS is now very optimistic about the future of their organization and would like as many members of the Institute as possible to join the Society.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Conference: Call for Papers

The Department of History at Loyola University of Chicago is sponsoring an international symposium in 1992, "Agents of Change: The Jesuits and Encounters of Two Worlds," to commemorate the Columbian Quincentennial. The conference—to be held October 8–11, 1992—will concentrate on the role of the Jesuits in the historiography and geographic reporting of the New World and will consider new approaches to analyzing their impact on the institutional development of the Americas. For further information, contact the Department of History, Loyola University of Chicago, 6525 North Sheridan Road, Chicago, IL 60626. Telephone: (312) 508-2221.

Conference: Call for Papers

The Renaissance Society of America announces its annual meeting to take place at Stanford University March 26–28, 1992. The general theme is Cross-Cultural Encounters, and submission of papers on that theme during the Renaissance is encouraged. Interdisciplinary panels are also welcome. Send abstracts of papers or proposals for full panels by April 30, 1991 to: Renaissance Society Program Committee, History Department, Stanford University, Stanford, CA 94305.

New Fellowship Available

The Department of the History of Health Sciences at the University of California at San Francisco is offering a Post-Doctoral Research Fellowship for a period of twelve (12) months, with a chance of

renewal depending on resources available. Preference will be given to scholars wishing to use archival and library resources in the Bay Area. In addition to personal research and writing, the position also offers possibilities of limited teaching. A PhD in History is required, preferably with concentration in nineteenth- and twentieth-century health-related topics. Inquiries should include: C.V., brief research proposal, and names of three scholars familiar with the applicant's work. The positions will begin either July 1 or September 1, 1991. The stipend for the twelve month appointment is \$25,000 with some health benefits and a research allowance included. Contact: Chair, Department of the History of Health Sciences, UCSF, 533 Parnassus Avenue, Room U 464, San Francisco, CA 94143. Tel: (415) 476-2766. Fax: (415) 476-9453. Deadline is April 15, 1991.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Alison Lingo has had a busy and productive 1990. Based on the Work-in-Progress she presented to us in April, she gave a paper at the inaugural meeting of the International Association for Research on Women, affiliated with the 17th International Congress of Historical Sciences. The title was "The Sense of Self Among French Noblewomen in Sixteenth Century France: Gender, Power, and the Power of Tradition." Alison also gave a paper on "Vernacular Print Culture and the Practice of Women's Health Care in Early Modern France: New Voices and New Debates (1536-1626)" at the Conference of the Western Society for French History and at the Symposium in Boston honoring Natalie Zemon Davis, both occurring in November.

Al Baxter's article, "Louis Mullgardt's Last Commission," was published in the Winter 1990 issue of the Bohemian Club Library Notes.

Anne Richardson has received word that the Sixteenth Century Studies Society accepted her application on behalf of the Tyndale Project for a three-session, twelve-person conference program, "William Tyndale and the Law," to be held in Philadelphia in October 1991.

Margaretta Mitchell announces the production of a new project, "Flowers I," a portfolio consisting of several large hand-colored photogravures of flowers, with an introduction by art historian Wanda Corn. She also reports that Art Services International has arranged for a three-year traveling exhibit of her "Dance for Life" portfolio.

Peter Mellini published "Gabriel's Message" on the life and times of James Friell, cartoonist for the London Daily Worker and Evening Standard, 1936-1962 in the February 1990 issue of History Today. A version of this article was the subject of a Work-in-

Progress session last year. "Uncle Sam Versus John Bull, a Very Special Relationship" appeared in Humanities (August 1990), and "Why Didn't They Listen? Political Cartooning and Foreign Policy in Britain, 1933-1940" was in the Journal of Newspapers and Periodicals in September 1990. He presented "Uncle Sam vs. John Bull, 1934-1940: When It Was Not a Special Relationship" as part of a panel on images in Britain at the annual meeting of the Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association in Salt Lake City in August. During 1990, he reviewed books for Albion, The Economist, and History Today.

NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome to our newest members.

Marjorie Wilser received her BA in History from San Jose State University and is currently enrolled in the History Masters' Program there, with emphasis on American, local, and public history. Since 1987, Marjorie has worked as a volunteer at the San Jose Historical Museum in several capacities, including docent, building specialist for the print shop, costume designer, living history interpreter. She is currently working on several projects: an unpublished primary account of a U.S. family's missionary journeys (1836-1852); nine San Jose women printers listed in the 1873 City Directory; and a biography of Eugene Taylor Sawyer (d. 1923), San Jose newspaperman, historian, dime novelist, and author of the definitive History of Santa Clara County (1922). She joined the Institute because the stimulus of association with other historians is exciting and an excellent source of suggestions for further research. She has been attending Institute functions for several years and has met with the Historical Fiction Writers from their inception. She heard about the Institute from Ethel Herr and Frank Brechka.

Anne Schnoebelen received her BA from UCB and her MA from Brown University, both in English. She taught writing for six years, including two and a half years at St. Mary's College in Moraga, and is currently employed in a law office. She is a board member of the Treasure Island Museum Association, an archival assistant at the San Francisco Art Institute Library, and a consultant on art, architecture and the history of Treasure Island. Her current interest is in the history of the Golden Gate International Exposition (1939-1940) on Treasure Island. Other general scholarly interests include twentieth-century American history and art history; world's fairs history; and historic preservation. In connection with the latter, she and Michael Gray wrote and assembled an application to nominate Treasure Island as a State Historic Landmark; the application was approved on November 3, 1989. Anne has published articles in the



print culture



History Today

Oakland Heritage Alliance *News*, the *San Francisco Examiner*, and other publications. Her booklet, *Treasures: Splendid Survivors of the Golden Gate International Exposition*, will be published in late 1990. She has lectured widely about the GGIE on college campuses and at museums, historical society conferences, and symposia, and has coordinated a daylong symposium on the same subject. Through membership in the Institute, Anne seeks collegiality and a forum for discussion to develop ideas, editorial and writing suggestions, and help with planning slide lectures.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Please send all material for the *Newsletter* to: Elaine Rosenthal, 3750 Harrison Street, No. 205, Oakland, CA 94611. After January 10, she can also be reached at (415) 658-4403 with any special bulletins from the news front! Requests for book reviews should be sent to Peter Browning, P.O. Box 1028, Lafayette, CA 94549. Membership news should be sent to Thelma Bryant, 470 Vassar Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94708. Deadline for the Spring issue is February 20, 1991.

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The *Newsletter* is the official publication of The Institute for Historical Study, a scholarly organization designed to promote the research, writing, and public discussion of history. Membership in the Institute is open to independent and academically affiliated scholars who are in agreement with its aims and who have a commitment to historical study. Membership inquiries should be sent to the Institute address.

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