

The Institute for Historical Study Newsletter

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Under a cloudless sky, a great white egret reflected in Lake Temescal looked like the design on Japanese wrapping paper this morning. Molly, too old and grizzle-chopped to disturb the dour black-capped night heron hunched on a branch, paddled after sticks in her game of "you throw, I'll touch it, then you throw another." Who can do history in this late summer weather?

The annual Institute picnic, in July at Tilden Park, was, Joanne Lafler reports, "the mellowest ever." The picnic site was large, private, and easily accessible; the shared goodies were equal to the high Institute standard; the history bee was hard fought, as usual; it was good to see new as well as old faces. And if Merlin Lafler and Bullwinkle Frangquist no longer play together as charmingly as they did when they were puppies, hey! you can't have everything.

Heedless of the congested freeways, large numbers of gourmands turned up for the September potluck at Ruth Willard's lovely house in St. Francis Wood. Thanks to Ruth's easy hospitality, this is a favored location for the annual event. We were provided with name tags so that those of us suffering from memory loss would know who we were. We remember the food, at any rate.

On October 17 we will gather at International House on the UC Berkeley campus for a program on California immigration, organized by Anne MacLachlan. Gray Brechin will be the moderator/commentator, and Jules Becker, Rose Scherini, Catherine Ann Curry, and Maria Sakovich will speak. Come and bring a state legislator.

Over the Columbus Day weekend we'll be having our annual board retreat at Lake Tahoe where we eat, walk, and talk for several days and often come up with great ideas for programs. We promise not to devise any more five-year plans. They have much the same history as the Soviet versions.

Sometime in October an Institute committee will meet with several Marin County teachers to discuss workshops we plan to present to high school faculty. We call the program "Resource Historians." If you have not yet been approached to participate, you

may well be at a later date. If the pilot is successful, we hope to continue in other counties with other topics.

November 9 is the date for our History Mystery Dinner, the first dinner for which homework has been assigned. We are a very serious Institute!

—Georgia Wright

IN MEMORIAM

We greatly regret our loss, on July 28, of Ruth Friedlander, a founding member of the Institute and a delightful presence in the history play reading group.

Ruth was born in 1921 in Vienna, where she received a classic Humanities education. She came to this country as a young adult and pursued a career in psychiatric nursing. In 1961 she was admitted to graduate studies at the University of California, San Francisco, earning a Ph.D. in 1973 in the history of psychiatry. Her dissertation was entitled "Benedikt-Augustin Morel and the Development of the Theory of Degenerescence (the Introduction of Anthropology into Psychiatry)."

Ruth's achievements did not stop there. According to her fellow-tenants at Strawberry Creek Lodge, in Berkeley, she was the creator of clever sketches and cartoons and of various literary pieces, including plays. At least two of these were history plays: *Xanthippe*, a comedy about Socrates' much-maligned wife, and another comedy for performance in the Jewish festival of Purim, based on the two books (one apocryphal) of Esther. [Editor's note: Ruth also wrote a history play about King Saul, which she presented at one of the earliest work-in-progress programs.] As a historical playwright herself (a fact she modestly withheld from the group), Ruth brought a rare imagination to the history play reading group. This was enriched, perhaps, by her having memorized in school vast reaches of the dramatic works of Goethe and Schiller!

At the Berkeley chapter of the League of Women Voters, on a volunteer basis, Ruth held down key

jobs, such as office manager and front desk. From the League we learn that she was a founding member of the Grey Panthers.

There may be no more vital foundation for a bubbly personal style like Ruth's than a fine education, quiet creativity, and a commitment to work with others towards peace, reason, and compassion. It has been a great privilege for us to have known her.

—Anne Richardson

CONFERENCE REPORT

Third National NCIS Conference

Hosted by the Princeton Research Forum, the third national conference of the National Coalition of Independent Scholars, "Situating Scholarship," took place 3-5 May 1996, at the Vincentian Renewal Center, a pleasant spot north of the town of Princeton, New Jersey. Besides the expected number of participants from the northern Atlantic states, there were representatives from as far away as Greenbank, Washington (near Seattle), San Diego, Chicago, Minnesota, and Iowa. Two Institute members, Joanne Lafler and Ellen Huppert, were on the program.

With the triple themes of "Situating the Discourse," "Situating the Scholar," and "Gathering and Processing Scholarly information," the program put together by Gloria Erlich and her committee offered a wide range of presentations. On Friday evening, Laura Garcés (Washington, DC) reported on the results of a survey of NCIS members, which she had directed, regarding library access. In the discussion, members expressed concerns about access to, and use of, online catalogues.

On Saturday morning, Stanley Katz, president of the American Council of Learned Societies, addressed the subject "After the Disciplines," stressing the importance of widening and crossing academic disciplines. In the plenary session, Margaret Jacob (New School for Social Research), coauthor of *Telling the Truth About History*, spoke about "Doing History After Post-Modernism" and participated in a panel discussion about doing scholarly work in a period of "epistemological disarray."

Concurrent sessions on Saturday and Sunday included two panels devoted to members' discussions of their current research. In one of these panels, Evelyn Witkin's (Princeton Research Forum) paper on a seventeenth-century book of curiosities that both Darwin and Browning had read was a high point, and it was particularly interesting to learn that Witkin had begun her current work on literature after retiring from a long career as a molecular geneticist.

Other panels included presentations by independent scholars discussing their experiences on the

fringe of academia and a session on "The Scholar in/and Society." In the latter panel, Gertrude Dubrovsky (Princeton Research Forum) gave a fascinating presentation on the origins of her research on British "Kindertransport" during the Nazi era, a topic that came to her by chance when she befriended the woman who had led volunteer efforts to place Jewish refugee children in and around Cambridge, England. Gertrude will be interviewing adults who as children had been sent to England by their parents, of whom very few survived the war. Her Princeton Research Forum colleague, Sarah Hirschman, spoke of her project, funded by the New Jersey Humanities Council, which brings together groups of people of all ages and backgrounds to read and discuss short stories.

On Saturday evening, the winner of the second Elizabeth Lewisohn Eisenstein Article Prize was announced. The award—which honors the eminent historian and supporter of NCIS—goes to the author of a recently published article that not only exhibits fine scholarship but is accessible to a wide audience. This year's winner was Institute (and NCIS) member Karen Offen for "Women, Citizenship, and Suffrage with a French Twist, 1890-1993," published in conference proceedings celebrating 100 years of woman suffrage in New Zealand.

At the business meeting, President Frances Davis announced that NCIS will move to a biannual schedule for national conferences; in the intervening years NCIS will co-sponsor regional conferences with its affiliate groups. The next national conference will be held in 1998, probably in the Midwest.

—Ellen Huppert

WORK-IN-PROGRESS

Michael Griffith

Proudhon could well have used Oakland as an example for his famous dictum, "property is theft"; he could, in fact, have used *all* of California, but our subject on May 19 was Oakland. Michael Griffith, historian and archivist for the U.S. District Court, presented a paper at Anne MacLachlan's home in Oakland, based on his continuing investigation of primary sources—"Who Owns the Harbor?"

As Michael correctly observed, "Just as many towns have founding heroes or heroines, Oakland has a founding villain." Horace Carpentier at one time owned much of the East Bay, but you will not find his name on even a street, for the apparent reason that he was more than customarily blatant in his theft, greed, and corruption of other public officials.

Carpentier got in on the ground floor during the Gold Rush, leasing the site of Oakland, with two

partners, from the Peralta family and promptly promoting and building a city on it. Despite the Peraltas' objections that the trio were stretching hospitality a bit far, Carpentier had come home to California equipped with a tool far more useful than a gold pan—a law degree from Columbia. Michael demonstrated how, in the following decades, Carpentier skillfully bent the law and the land to his own considerable material gain, leaving the Peraltas in history's dustbin.

One has to admire Carpentier for his effrontery. In 1852, he persuaded the California legislature to incorporate Oakland and promptly had himself elected to its five-member Board of Trustees, which gave him title to the city's entire waterfront, in exchange for a few "token" improvements.

The details of this land transfer did not go unchallenged then or in the future, for they sufficiently clouded title to offer a long-running bonanza for attorneys. By creating a corporation known as the Oakland Waterfront Company, in partnership with the Big Four, Carpentier helped make Oakland the western terminus of the transcontinental railroad, and for many years California's second city. Selling out to the Central (later Southern) Pacific, Carpentier returned to New York a millionaire, leaving the railroad, through the OWC, in total control of the city's most valuable asset, its harbor. (Carpentier maintained such extensive interests in the East Bay that he was able to buy his niece, Maude Burke, the title of Lady Bach-Cunard.)

In the second half of his paper, Michael followed Oakland's many legal battles to gain control of the waterfront from the hated railroad monopoly. "Here," he said, with some understatement, "the story becomes somewhat complicated." Michael used maps to explain the conflict that resulted when, around 1905, the rival Western Pacific Railroad attempted to enter Oakland. A battle involving the federal courts reopened all previous cases, allowing litigants to wallow in the sort of pettifogging casuistry so typical of California land titles. When the Ninth Circuit Court ruled that the Southern Pacific might own the waterfront but did not have exclusive rights to construct wharfs, it effectively broke the SP monopoly.

Michael concluded that several publics, rather than one, were pitted against private interests, and that it was a toss-up whether Oakland or the state (as in the case of San Francisco) would win possession of the waterfront. More importantly, perhaps, the ultimate decision resulted not from a contest between "the public" and a private corporation, but between two giant corporations. In this, the Oakland harbor case resembles the famous Sawyer decision of 1884, which stopped hydraulic mining in the Central Valley. Contrary to those who claim that landmark case

as an environmental victory, it represented the triumph of one form of real estate over another.

Somewhat dazzled by the intricacies of the Oakland harbor fight, the audience discussed the circuitous paths by which land titles are given legitimacy when founded upon such patent fraud. All agreed that Oakland, in comparison with San Francisco, provides a fertile and largely unploughed field for historians, and its founding villain deserves far more biographical consideration from one willing to follow his devious paths.

—Gray Brechin

Jules Becker

"Chinese are almost as much alike as a flock of sheep, and it is practically impossible to tell them apart if they want to conceal their identity" (*San Francisco Chronicle* May 3, 1892). This quotation is taken from one of many clippings that Jules Becker brought to illustrate the well-attended discussion on 21 July of his work-in-progress, "Not Welcome in America," which is also the title of his book, to be published in a revised edition.

Chinese "coolies" (from the Hindi "kuli": an unskilled laborer hired for low or subsistence wages) were enticed to the United States to build the Southern Pacific railroad and later to work in agriculture. The caves used for wine cellars in the old Napa Valley wineries were dug by Chinese laborers. When the Chinese settled in California they were exposed to terrible prejudice, beaten, and even murdered. This was a subject of one of Mark Twain's serious essays, when he was a reporter in San Francisco.

The very first immigration act, The Restriction Act of 1882, excluded Chinese, lumping them with criminals, paupers, and physical and mental defectives. The Exclusion Act of 1924 set quotas for future immigrants, but completely excluded Japanese as well as Chinese. Before 1924, Japanese immigration had been governed by a "gentleman's agreement," whereby the Japanese government would limit the immigration of its citizens. The abrogation of this agreement was viewed as a slap in the face by the Japanese and, according to Jules, may have been one of the motivations for the attack on Pearl Harbor. The exclusion of Chinese was repealed in 1943, to enable returning G.I.'s to bring home their Chinese brides, but the quota was only 100.

Japanese immigrants fared better than Chinese, because the Japanese government strongly protected them against any abuses. But this ended with World War II, when American-born as well as immigrant Japanese were removed from their homes on the west coast of the United States and interned—the only ethnic or national group to be treated in this manner.

A number of reasons are cited for prejudice and

discrimination against the Chinese, including competition for jobs. Labor unions excluded Chinese workers. Chinese were also used as targets in close political campaigns, and they were widely viewed as criminals and considered incapable of assimilating into American life. From his study of the treatment of Chinese and Japanese in newspaper articles in the *San Francisco Chronicle* and the *San Francisco Examiner*, Jules has concluded that the underlying reason for discriminatory treatment of Chinese and Japanese was racism.

In a new chapter for the second edition of his book, Jules notes that today Chinese and Japanese are well accepted, but a subtle racism is still apparent—for example in the descriptions of the smuggling of Chinese immigrants and the newspaper coverage of trade battles with the Japanese. A not-so-subtle reminder that all is still not well is the report of 452 anti-Asian incidents in the United States for 1995, mostly motivated by anger against immigrants.

Thanks to Mae Silver for hosting this discussion in her beautiful new-old house. Her house itself is a work-in-progress, and we were treated to a tour.

—John Brunn

Fred Isaac

Fred Isaac is examining a 1913 incident that received very different treatment in local and national newspapers. A large group of hopworkers in Wheatland, California, held a meeting to protest working conditions. The owner of the hopfields, having responded to only a few of the requests that arose in two earlier meetings, called the authorities. A dozen men showed up, shots were fired, and four men were killed—the popular district attorney, a deputy, and two workers.

What the local Marysville paper treated in a sober and even-handed fashion, other papers later blew up into a riot and a “Wobbly plot.” Under this pressure, investigators concluded that outside organizers from the IWW had incited a riot. Leaders of the IWW, whether present at Wheatland or not, were pursued to other states. Two men, one who had addressed the workers and one who had not been there, were arrested, tried, convicted of murder, and sentenced to long prison terms.

At the local level the event had been precipitated by the arrival of 2,800 people at the hopfields, attracted by flyers the owner had distributed widely. This crowd, almost three times the normal number of seasonal workers, overwhelmed the ten privies, the few ragged tents, and the water supply. In a few days dysentery, exacerbated by the citric acid added to the water, raged. Without ladders to reach to the tops of the vines, without gloves to fend off the thorns, the workers were suffering from cuts. The owner paid

one dollar per hundredweight of hops, picked in August under a merciless sun, and subtracted the costs of food, water, and shelter.

Fred is intrigued by the disparity between local and national reports of the incident. There is no byline for the article in the local Marysville paper, so one is left to wonder who reported the event. A reporter who thought 2,800 people attending meetings on a weekend was worth a look-see? A deputy trained to report “just the facts”? At any rate, someone reported that the first shot was fired in the air by one of the authorities. This detail has the ring of authenticity, and it is somewhat exculpatory in suggesting that the authorities drew first. The paper also reported that the action was over in eight minutes.

Why did the other papers leap on the incident, call it a riot, and point at the Wobblies? Fred described the generally conservative and nervous mood at the end of the Progressive Era. He cited the movement to exclude Asians, the tensions with Mexico before the beginning of World War I, and the attacks on the International Workers of the World by Teddy Roosevelt and William Howard Taft. The IWW had been implicated in the recent bombing of the *Los Angeles Times* building. In effect, if there's trouble, look for the immigrants and their unions. (The 2800 hopworkers included twenty-seven nationalities.) The hopfields needed these workers, which may explain why the Marysville reporters were not antagonistic (cf. Pete Wilson's position in favor of amnesty for illegal migrant workers), but city businesses and newspapers feared them (Pete Wilson and his new constituency). If this summary is a bit simplistic, you may blame *this* reporter, not Fred, who has a more nuanced grasp of the period.

—Georgia Wright

MINI-GRANT

A few months ago, photographer Bob Dawson and I met to utilize one of the Institute's mini-grants. I received the funds over a year ago to conduct aerial reconnaissance for a forthcoming book and exhibition on the state of California's environment, to be called *Farewell, Promised Land*. A fortuitous conjunction of free days with crystalline weather and ace pilot Saul Chaikin finally got us into the air.

Chaikin is a volunteer for Project Lighthawk, a network of thoroughly professional pilots who allow writers, photographers, and politicians to see what would otherwise be invisible from the ground. We took off from the Palo Alto Airport at 8 a.m. and headed west in order to avoid the flightpath of departing planes from San Francisco Airport, then up the San Mateo coast. From over the Pacific, we looked back at the homes sliding off the bluffs where the San

Andreas Fault zone leaves the mainland south of San Francisco. In the 1950s, with apparently no objections, developer Henry Doelger covered the rift with the suburban tracts of Daly City, immortalized by Malvina Reynolds's song "Little Boxes." This is only one of many examples of how builders and engineers have covered the land with developments whose inevitable fate confuses the term "natural" disaster.

Another example is downtown San Francisco, built on a cove filled with garbage and flattened hills. The clustered towers of the financial district embody a power capable of remaking the landscapes of the West in the ideal image of a market commodity.

The less publicized face of that image is seen on the south coast of the Carquinez Strait. Bob photographed the petrochemical plants that have given the Contra Costa shoreline communities some of the highest cancer rates in the state. From the air, one can see the devastated landscapes that are the counterparts of the San Joaquin oilfields at the other end of the pipeline. We photographed the latter on an earlier trip and found them to be the most nightmarishly denatured, and least visited, of all that we have seen.

From Antioch we flew down the route of Governor Pat Brown's California Aqueduct, enjoying the view of hills Irish-green with winter rain. From the air, one can best see the radial street plan of Patterson, an ideal farming town whose unusual pattern was inspired by Parisian *rond-points*. From there we headed west across the Diablo Range to the mini-Los Angeles now carpeting the Santa Clara Valley, finding one large farm holding out in the full flood tide of development. Saul took us over the New Almaden quicksilver mines, which bleed mercury into the valley's streams, then back to Palo Alto.

Bob's photographs will largely be used to illustrate sections called "Alabaster Cities" and "Energized Landscapes." The aerial perspectives are invaluable, and we are grateful to both the Institute and to Project Lighthawk for their aid. Enough remains from the grant to enable us to schedule an additional flight over the hydraulic mining regions of the Northern Sierra for a chapter on mining.

The book will be published by UC Press, with a concurrent exhibition at the Oakland Museum in the spring of 1998. *Mother Jones* has excerpted my chapter on agribusiness for its November issue.

—Gray Brechin

BOOK REVIEWS

Peter Browning, ed. and comp., *To the Golden Shore: America Goes to California—1849*. Lafayette, CA: Great West Books, 1995. xiii, 461 pp., illus., \$22.95.

In *To the Golden Shore*, Peter Browning has done us all a favor by reading newspapers contemporary

with the Gold Rush of 1849 on microfilm and excerpting relevant articles. Papers excerpted include the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, the *Illinois State Journal*, the *New York Herald*, the *Philadelphia Public Ledger and Daily Transcript*, and the *Washington National Intelligencer*. These papers used material from other parts of the country—Boston, New Orleans, etc.—and sometimes from London. Many of the selections are personal accounts written by travelers. There are also poems, sermons, ads, and letters from the Isthmus, from ships rounding the Horn, and from the Gold Country itself.

"Here is the California Gold Rush—upheaval, adventure, suffering, death, great success, and tragic failure—as it was presented to and understood by people in the United States." In these contemporary accounts, there are many things we look at differently today or have forgotten. We are reminded by the sesquicentennial of the raising of the United States Flag in San Francisco that our town, *entrepot* for the would-be miners, was remote and little known, just a small place in the vast annexations of 1846–1848, not one of the most famous cities in the world. Correspondents explained where it was and described some of the contingent geography of California.

At first the tales of gold were given little credence, but finally President Polk, in his annual message in December 1848, confirmed the reality of earlier reports. Browning excerpts the relevant passages of this speech. Then the "whole world" tried to come and make its fortune in the golden hills.

The latter day argonauts used many routes to get to California. Some came over the plains from Independence, Missouri; others by a southern route through Arizona. There were many routes via Mexico as well as the more famous Nicaragua and Panama routes by land and sea. The latter two were the quickest, using ships from New York or New Orleans and traversing the Isthmus by mule and by boat via Lake Nicaragua, then taking the Pacific Mail steamers up the west coast to San Francisco. Other gold seekers bought or chartered ships, rounding Cape Horn or going through the dangerous Strait of Magellan.

Travelers on most of these routes wrote letters home or directly to the newspapers. These correspondents were literate—many were well-educated professionals. They discuss several developments that do not occur to the twentieth-century reader, for instance the depletion of grass for grazing when tens of thousands of animals—horses, mules, and oxen—crossed the arid plains. The utility of mules versus oxen was another lively topic. Many well-equipped wagon trains had to jettison furniture, other treasured possessions, and even food. Several writers favored coming with the minimum of supplies via muleback.

Sadder are the accounts of the skeletons or bodies

of young men who perished on the trail or crossing Panama. Most of the travelers were young men; the trip was deemed too dangerous for women, although many families came across the plains, following the Donner Party and other less famous but more successful expeditions. The shortage of women in San Francisco and the mines had an influence on later history, such as the story of the Vigilance Committees.

At San Francisco, argonauts quickly learned they had to work to survive, with food and lodging at premium prices. Fortunately, ordinary laborers were well paid. Even doctors were employed as sweepers.

Some merchants came from the East with merchandise that glutted the market and was simply thrown overboard into the cove, with all of the abandoned ships. Others brought supplies that were in demand, which became their private gold mines. About half of the houses in the village that was becoming a city had canvas walls—not a sufficient shelter in the damp climate. There were many gambling dens, some quite luxurious, where the newly rich could lose their new riches and newly arrived would-be miners were tempted to lose the bankrolls they had brought with them.

The travelers who finally arrived in San Francisco were often part of teams or companies organized in their home towns in the East. Others joined forces with companions they had met on the journey. When they finally arrived at the mines they learned that they had to work very hard to make a profit. In the beginning, most of the mining was done at streams like the American River, coming down from the Sierra. Primitive methods such as panning or using cradles prevailed. Food was very expensive and also unhealthful, and the miners lived in tents and shacks during the mining season of 1849, when scores of thousands came from all over the world. Foreigners such as Mexicans, Chinese, and Chileans were despised and taxed, though some American teams hired them. But taxing foreigners had a negative effect and caused the gold output to decline.

All of these accounts are enhanced by contemporary illustrations taken from nineteenth-century books and periodicals, and the layout of the book is very attractive. The book is organized around such topics as "Before the Gold," "Our New Territory," "The Panic to Go," "The Rush is On," "The Overland Routes," "Cholera and Gold," "Death and Dollars," and finally "The Golden Shore." Peter Browning has added helpful notes to the selections, explaining references and unfamiliar words.

This book is invaluable for anyone who is writing about the Gold Rush period as well as for the general reader interested in the Gold Rush. California and San Francisco historians will find it very valuable for insights into the early American period of California

history. Peter Browning is to be thanked for his labors in bringing this unique material to us in *To the Golden Shore: America Goes to California—1849*.

—Catherine Ann Curry

Malcolm E. Barker, ed., *San Francisco Memoirs 1835–1851: Eyewitness Accounts of the Birth of a City*. San Francisco: Londonborn Publications, 1994. 317 pp., illus., \$14.95.

San Francisco Memoirs, compiled and introduced by Malcolm E. Barker, has that essential characteristic of any good book—it entices the reader to look for more reading and other ideas on the subject.

The book contains the editor's lucid, concise history of San Francisco's founding, his pertinent reminder about language difficulties born of period differences and confusing variations in place names, and his spare, helpful, but unintrusive introductory comments on each section. The selections are excerpts from journals, letters, articles, and books that give interesting insights into the early days of the city.

Good design harmoniously unites the selections, the editor's text, and the well-chosen photographs and drawings that are located with the text to which they pertain. I was particularly pleased with the maps, partly because so many books do not include them.

The book is divided into five topics, creating a pleasing flow and unity that a different organization—chronological or by author—would not have achieved. All selections are brief, readable, and give unique viewpoints. There is a good intermingling of familiar and accessible selections with ones that are less so. For example, Barker's use of French sources elucidates a corner of the San Francisco heritage that is often overlooked. Anyone who dips into San Francisco history will assuredly be apprised of the prostitute population and will know that some of the prostitutes were French. Beyond that, most sources do not venture, but the French author quoted here professes the rather novel, and plausible, idea that a distinctive French presence helped create a Parisian flavor in San Francisco.

The last section of the book, "Fire! 1849–1851," brings together a stunning set of eyewitness accounts, the most memorable of which describe iron buildings, far more difficult to assemble and far less satisfactory than advertised, and worse even than wooden buildings in the repeated devastating fires, one of which left the city "a pile of ashes." People died who thought, incorrectly, that iron buildings would be fireproof. One iron building was a "giant strongbox" that melted, along with the riches it held, into a "misshapen cage."

For a person on the lookout for gender difference, there seems to be a clear line drawn in these selections. Male authors were fascinated by gambling,

robbery, drunkenness, and fortunes made (and often lost). Women deplored a lack of water for washing, and almost reveled in their heavy workload—partly, it seems, because this work earned them a living.

Mary Jane Megquier operated a boarding house, where she baked all the bread, pies, and puddings. "I have cooked every mouthful that has been eaten," she writes, in addition to making six beds every day and doing the washing and ironing. One charming feature of Megquier's account is her enjoyment of the social life, including dancing and visiting, and there is also the luxury of having three newspapers delivered to her door every day. Another board provider opens up shop with the barest of provisions, claiming that people were "not particular about enjoying the luxury of both cup and saucer."

William Taylor was a Methodist minister who spent his seven years in San Francisco attempting to alleviate the misery and suffering of men—there is no mention of women—confined to the city hospital. One man who refused to let the doctors amputate his leg despite their dire warnings of imminent death went on to live a useful, active life. The good minister claimed to have saved others who were dying of scurvy by sending them out of the hospital and off to a hillside full of miner's lettuce. His essay is a sobering contrast to the gold-quest narratives that were uppermost in the minds of adventurers to the city.

I admire Barker's skill as an editor; one of the best features of this collection is his good ear for well-told episodes. But I would have liked more attention to the Hispanic population. One author describes the richly caparisoned horses and Mexican riders dressed in exquisite clothing as they rumbled into town, sometimes leaving the gambling houses hours later, having lost the huge ranches that were the sources of their wealth. It is a vivid and dramatic scene, but I would have liked more positive accounts, such as William Heath Davis's in *Seventy-five Years in California*. Davis was a keen and sympathetic observer of the Hispanic way of life. His description of the whole town camping out at strawberry hill to pick wild fruit in season provides the positive dimension that I missed.

Three of the selections are by Bayard Taylor, who wrote that what he saw "will hereafter fill one of the most marvellous pages of all history." Visitors to San Francisco—and nearly all of these authors were visitors—conveyed that sense of momentous times. Some authors let the "marvelous" and sensational take over the narrative, but Barker has conscientiously created a truthful, informative, and inclusive book.

In the next newsletter I will report on *More San Francisco Memoirs 1852-1899: The Ripening Years*, volume two of Malcolm Barker's proposed trilogy.

—Jeanne McDonnell

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALLS FOR PAPERS

The Pacific Coast Conference on British Studies will hold its annual meeting at Mills College in the San Francisco Bay Area on 4-7 April 1997. The PCCBS is seeking individual paper proposals or complete panels that deal with any area of British history or culture. Papers or panels on topics related to art or music and those that explore interdisciplinary themes will be especially welcome. Individuals who wish to serve as chairs or commentators are needed as well. Also welcome are proposals for roundtable or thematic sessions that explore new directions in, or the teaching of, British Studies. Proposals should be in the form of a 200-word abstract accompanied by a one-page curriculum vitae that includes a current mailing address, telephone number, and e-mail address (if available). Materials should be sent by 1 December 1996 to Lori Anne Ferrell, PCCBS Program Chair, c/o Program in Religion, Claremont Graduate School and School of Theology, 1325 North College Avenue, Claremont, CA 91711.

The Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association is holding its ninetieth Annual Meeting on 8-10 August 1997 in Portland, Oregon. The Program Committee for the 1997 meeting of the Association requests proposals on all aspects of history, historical writing, teaching, and multimedia and history. To participate in this conference please send a brief summary of prospective papers, with the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of participants and a short paragraph on each presenter, chair, and commentator. Proposals by individual presenters or complete sessions (2-3 papers, 1-2 critics) are welcome. Deadline for submission of proposals is 15 November 1996. Send proposals to either of the Program Committee Chairs: Nancy Fitch, History, California State University, Fullerton, P.O. Box 34080, Fullerton, CA 92834-9480; Carole Srole, History, California State University, LA, 5151 State University Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90032-8223.

The twenty-eighth Annual Conference of the Western Association of Women Historians will be held at the Asilomar Conference Center in Pacific Grove, California, on 30 May-1 June 1997. Proposals for panels are welcome on any historical subject, time period, or region, but those focusing on the theme "Difference and Power" are preferred. While WAWH has often had a special emphasis on women's history, we suggest that participants may also wish to think of this theme in terms of race, ethnicity, class, religion, age, education, and other relevant categories, including gender. Panels or workshops on long-term concerns of women in the historical profession are also encouraged. Proposals for complete panels,

including commentators, are strongly preferred, but individual papers will be considered. Proposals should include four copies of the following: a cover page that includes the title of the panel, names of the panelists, and titles of the individual papers; a one-half to one-page abstract for each paper; a one- to two-page curriculum vitae for each panelist; and a list of the panelists that includes their current addresses and phone numbers. In addition, please enclose one self-addressed, stamped postcard for each panelist. Send proposals to: Dr. Nupur Chaudhuri, 1737 Vaughn Drive, Manhattan, Kansas 66502. Deadline for submission of proposals is 2 December 1996.

NOTE: The editor has e-mail addresses, fax numbers, and online addresses for many of the above contact people. Just call Joanne Lafler at (510) 547-1791 to request them.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Bonda Lewis is preparing a new show on Sara Bard Field, California poet and activist, which will begin playing in January 1997. To research this, she has conducted hours of interviews with Field's daughter, Katherine Caldwell, and granddaughter, Sara Caldwell, in Berkeley, as well as interviewing Washington-based writer Amelia Fry, who did Field's oral history for UC Berkeley in 1966-67. In addition, she spent weeks at the Huntington Library, reading among the 32,000 personal documents of Field and her second husband, C.E.S. Wood, that were donated after her death. Other work is still to be done at the Congressional Union Headquarters in Washington, DC. She plans to present a work-in-progress in January or February.

Congratulations to Frances Richardson Keller for being named distinguished alumna of Sarah Lawrence College. She will travel to Sarah Lawrence in February 1997 to receive the award, which recognizes her distinguished career as a scholar and teacher.

Anne MacLachlan has been appointed Beatrice M. Bain Research Group Visiting Scholar at UC Berkeley. She is studying the experiences of women students of color in graduate studies and subsequent employment.

Lucia Birnbaum's book, *Godmothers and Others of Colors, Le Comari, a Sicilian Story*, has been sent to a prospective publisher. From October 8 through November 7, Lucia is off on a research trip for her next book in Italy, Malta, France, and Switzerland. On November 9, Lucia is a participant with China Galland in a workshop, "The Black Madonna," at the University of California Extension in San Francisco.

Michael Black has a number of professional and personal achievements to report. To begin with what

is clearly the most important: Michael and his wife Susan adopted a son, Walker Aaron Black, who was born on August 1, 1995. Warmest congratulations to Michael, Susan, and Walker. During the spring semester 1996, Michael Black was again teaching in the Mills College Government Department as a Visiting Associate Professor. On April 4 he visited Pomona College/Harvey Mudd College in Claremont, California, where he gave a guest lecture, "Searching for Economic Conversion in a Post Cold-War World." He was a session organizer and chair of the section "Strategies for Achieving Sustainable Use of Fish Resources" at the "Towards Sustainable Fisheries Conference" in Victoria, British Columbia, on April 29. On August 9, Michael presented "Searching for a Genius of Place: The Ambiguous Legacy of Golden Gate Park" at the AHA-Pacific Coast Branch conference held at San Francisco State University. The AHA-Pacific Coast Branch awarded Michael the 1996 Louis Knott Koontz Memorial Award, which is given annually by the editors of *Pacific Historical Review* as "... a way of recognizing the significance, the literary quality, and originality . . ." of its most deserving article. The award was for Michael's article, "Tragic Remedies: A Century of Failed Fishery Policy on California's Sacramento River," which was published in *Pacific Historical Review*, 64.1, in February 1995. On August 29 Michael delivered a paper, "Reversal of Fortune? Lessons for Estuarine Management from the Decline of Salmon in New England, California, and the Pacific Northwest," at the American Fisheries Society, in Dearborn, Michigan.

Alison Lingo taught "Society and the Sexes in Early and Late Modern Europe" during the summer in the History Department at UC Berkeley. This fall she is teaching "The Renaissance" in the History Department at San Francisco State University. She presented a paper at the Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, on "Louise Bourgeois and the Problem of Anger, Disease and Self Control," at Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

Peter Mellini had his article, "Punch and Ap-
peasement, 1923-1939," published in the May issue of *History Today*, as well as reviews in *Albion*. He is currently chair of the History Department at Sonoma State University through the summer of 1997. Peter was elected a fellow of the Royal Historical Society in November 1995. He is currently working on "Images of Nations" with Roy T. Matthews of Michigan State University.

Margaretta Mitchell published *English Gardens*, a Limited Edition Artist's Book from Urban Digital Color, Inc., 1996. Her book is limited to thirty numbered books, each book signed and numbered by the artist herself. From April 17 to May 25, the Witkin Gallery in New York City presented its first exhibition of Margaretta's work, consisting of a selection of

iris digital prints of images made in gardens. Also on exhibition were photogravures from her portfolio *Flowers* (Elysian Editions, 1991).

Vincenza Scarpaci contributed a signed article, "Italians in the Land," to the forthcoming *Italian American History and Culture: An Encyclopedia*, edited by Salvatore La Gumina for Garland Publishing.

As an oral historian for the Labor Archives and Research Center at San Francisco State University, **Harvey Schwartz** has conducted two to four interviews yearly since 1994 with long-term veterans of the Bay Area labor movement. The indexed tapes become part of that organization's growing oral history collection. Harvey is also the editor of "The International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union Oral History Project," which is part of a series, *The ILWU Dispatcher*, published in San Francisco. Since fall 1994 he has completed sixteen one-page articles in the union's newspaper, *The Dispatcher*. He is also the oral historian of Copra Crane Labor Landmarks Association of San Francisco. In this capacity Harvey conducts oral interviews with ILWU veterans who worked at the copra dock (pier 84) in San Francisco. The crane and pier will eventually be part of a labor landmark and public park projected for construction near Hunter's Point. In February of this year Harvey presented a paper, "The ILWU Oral History Project," at the annual meeting of the Southwest Labor Studies Conference held in San Francisco. In April of this year he presented a paper, "Bringing the Word to the Community: The ILWU Oral History Project," at the University of Miami as part of the Cooper Distinguished Lecturer Series.

Peter Stansky reports publication of his book *On or About December 1910: Early Bloomsbury and Its Intimate World*, by Harvard University Press, in October of this year. Last year his *Redesigning the World: William Morris, the 1880s, and the Arts and Crafts* was reissued by SPOSS/University of Washington Press.

William F. Strobebridge had two articles published, "Pilsbury 'Chips' Hodgkins: Wells Fargo's Southern California Messenger," in the Winter 1995 edition of *Southern California Quarterly*, and "Eugene Brown, Mendocino Wells Fargo Agent," in the Spring 1996 edition of *Mendocino Historical Review*.

Martin Tarcher delivered a paper, "The Next Stage of Economic Development," at the eighth International Conference on Socio-Economics at the University of Geneva, Switzerland, on July 14th. On April 21 he presented a paper, "Technology and Democracy," at the annual meeting of the Society for a Human Economy held in Concord, Massachusetts. His book, *Escape from Avarice*, is due to be published in November by Chandler and Sharp Publishers of Novato, California.

Kyle K. Wyatt, Curator of History at the Nevada State Railroad Museum, presented a paper, "Archaic

Design, Innovative Design: Pacific Coast Locomotive Construction in the Central Pacific Sacramento Shops Under A.J. Stevens, 1872-1888," on June 1, 1996, in Sacramento at the Society for Industrial/Archeology Conference. On July 17, Kyle was at the Railroad History Symposium during the National Model Railroad Association convention in Long Beach, California, where he presented "Early Locomotive Construction on the Pacific Coast: The San Francisco Builders in the 1860s." On October 12, Kyle will present "Pennsylvania Railroad Influence on the Pacific Coast in the 19th Century," at the Pennsylvania Railroad Symposium held at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania, Strasburg, Pennsylvania.

On November 19 **Irena Narell** will read from and discuss her book *History's Choice* at the Jewish Book Fair, to be held at the Contra Costa Jewish Community Center in Walnut Creek. Other readings are scheduled for November.

NEW MEMBER

Suzanne Perkins received her BA in Liberal Arts from the University of Chicago, specializing in the history of decorative arts in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, and France. She also has an MAT in art from Smith College, and an MBA from the Haas School of Business at UC Berkeley. Ms. Perkins has had curatorial and/or administrative responsibilities at the Stanford University Museum of Art; the University Art Museum, Berkeley; the San Francisco Art Institute; and the American Association of Museums, Washington, DC. She is a member of the Board of Governors of the American Decorative Arts Forum de Young Museum, and a former trustee and current decorative arts committee member of the Camron-Stanford House, Oakland. Currently she is working on European textiles from the Renaissance to 1900, especially those in English Royal palaces and the Lyons textiles in Lyons and Paris. She learned about the Institute from Bert Gordon, Professor of History at Mills College.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- October 17** "Outsiders in the Golden State: Immigration and Americanization in California," symposium at International House, 2299 Piedmont Avenue, Berkeley.
- October 20** Mae Silver, work-in-progress, "The Trail of Light: The Story of California Women's Suffrage."

- November 9 Annual dinner program, "History Mysteries," at the Laurel Heights Campus, UCSF.
- November 17 Work-in-progress, topic to be announced.
- December 15 Ilse Sternberger, work-in-progress, "Nehru and His Daughter, Indira Gandhi."
- January 19 Joan Murray, work-in-progress, title to be announced.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Deadline for the winter *Newsletter* is 27 December. Joanne Lafler, guest editor of this issue, is happy to report that Elaine Rosenthal is recovering from her most recent (and last!) rotator cuff surgery. Elaine looks forward to resuming her editorial duties—and her life—when the doctors say she can. As always, she would greatly appreciate getting any lengthy reports, reviews, or other pieces on 5¼" floppy disks in Word Perfect 4.1, 4.2, 5.0, or 5.1. If you have WP 6.0, the file should be saved in 5.0 or 5.1 before you exit. She promises to return your floppy disks!

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