The Institute for Historical Study
Newsletter

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Although we worried that the sun would never shine, it did appear and those who attended the Institute's annual summer picnic spent a cool but pleasant day at Bay Farm Island Shoreline Park in Alameda. The food, as usual, was plentiful and good, and we all enjoyed our fifth annual history bee, even if Jules Becker wasn't there to stun us all with his knowledge of sports history. Obviously, historians can have a good time being "trivial" as well as scholarly.

One new feature of the *Newsletter* is a series a profiles of the members of the Board of Directors. Edee Piness, John Rusk, and Masha Zakheim are featured in this issue, and profiles of other members will follow in future editions. Not only will IHS members and friends get to know the members of the Board, but I think you will be surprised and pleased to see the variety of backgrounds and interests displayed.

Also, many thanks are to be extended to John Rusk for his great work as our "Webmaster." If you haven't looked at www.tihs.org for awhile, please do so. It also showcases the interests and accomplishments of our association.

Membership is the next big issue to be addressed by the Board. We will be discussing ways and means of gathering new members, and you are asked to help. You will shortly receive some IHS brochures in the mail. Please give them to friends and associates who might be interested in the Institute. If you find that your membership adds value to your life, it might add value to theirs.

Hope to see you all at the Membership Pot Luck in September!

—Lorrie O'Dell

WORK-IN-PROGRESS

Autumn Stanley

"Toolgate: Intersections Between Archaeology and the History of Technology."

Autumn Stanley wants to expose a common cover-up: the assumption that technology is a reflection of uniquely male skills and creativity. We associate inventiveness with men and technology with complex machinery. Women's inventiveness, if ever revealed, is undervalued. Autumn has corrected this for historic women in her book *Mothers and Daughters of Invention* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1993; New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1995, paperback.) Now she has taken on the androcentric assumptions of traditional archaeology in order to indicate the inventiveness of prehistoric women.

Presenting her Work-in-Progress on Sunday, 17 June, at the home of Agnes Peterson, Autumn showed first how traditional archaeologists have assumed that men invented, for example, pottery, cooking, butchering, and weaving, even when it was women who overwhelmingly worked at these tasks. Logic suggests that the primary users were often the inventors, since they knew what the work required. Archaeologist Leon de Vore has estimated that sixty to eighty percent of humankind's food produced south of the Arctic Circle was produced by women. It makes little sense to assume that women waited for men to hand them the tools. New DNA evidence often now identifies the remains of women buried with their tools. The use of these tools is marked in the bones. Women's remains show that they habitually kneeled down and ground grain. Moreover, a very large proportion of the tools archaeologists find are in or near the home, and some—such as baby bottles (made of skins) and poultices to soothe nursing breasts—are specifically associated with women.

Autumn reiterated an argument from her book that women built technology clusters, e.g., cooking led them to the discovery of fire-hardening techniques, and herbs used in cooking sometimes served as medicines. Foods were used to preserve mummies.

Corrections

In the Winter 2000–2001 issue, in the "IN MEMORIAM" for Ruth Willard's husband, Orris, was the statement that "He shared Ruth's love of, and scholarly interest in, meteorology." The correct word should have been "metrology"—the science of measures and weights.

In the Spring 2001 issue, the Work-in-Progress was given by Margaretta Mitchell, not Edith Piness.

And Autumn cites Joan Gero, among others, to show that wear marks on tools can tell us precisely what the tool was used for. If we find that a tool is used in women's work, then we can argue that women may well have made that tool.

An important argument that Autumn developed indicated the necessity for considering the context. To understand any technology we must understand its use, location, and materials, and its esthetic as well as practical appeal. Understanding past societies and cultures will free us from current assumptions.

Autumn closed by asking us this: since women were critically important to technological development, how and why did scholars and the public assume that they were not?

The importance of this question was brought home to this reviewer during a recent visit to the South Tyrol Museum of Archaeology in Bolzano, where the famous "iceman"—5,000 years old and well preserved—is on view. Tourists passed cases of weaving, pottery, and clothing. They viewed models of farming, hunting, gathering, cooking, even family life. Except for a familiar and headless statue of the mother-goddess, women were ignored. Neither the display labels nor the audio-tape mentioned women. In writing to an Italian scholar living near Balzano, I discovered that this is a common problem—another proof for Autumn Stanley's thesis: Toolgate.

A lively discussion of the problems, sources, and historiography of this topic followed. The group recommended that Autumn seek a publisher for this wonderful work.

—Sunny Herman

Bill Strobridge

Institute members enjoyed reserved parking (!!) in San Francisco's Chinatown, and toured the soon-to-be-opened Chinese Historical Society of America's national museum and educational center. The facility is at 965 Clay Street in a former YWCA. Stepping over boards and wires, Bill Strobridge introduced IHS members to Irene Poon Anderson, CHSA board member, co-chair exhibit curator, and author of *Asian American Artists of the Older Generation.*

With enthusiasm and knowledge, Irene showed IHS members an indoor basketball court that was being converted into the main exhibition area and a theater stage that will be climate controlled, a necessity for such objects as Don Kingman's paintings. She pointed out highlights of Julia Morgan's brilliant design for the many-tiered building, and showed us a hidden courtyard that will become a formal garden.

The tour moved on to two side rooms—one to exhibit the Julia Morgan/YWCA heritage and the other to house the Daniel Ching collection of 10,000 catalogued objects that show how America pictured its Chinese American citizens. Irene then led the group upstairs through stacks of boxes to the building's tower for a panoramic view of the city and the harbor. The area is planned for storage space, but it was a unanimous IHS opinion that with such a view someone would claim it for executive space.

GROUP REPORTS

History Play Readers

The history play readers spent two sessions reading and discussing Robert E. Sherwood's *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*. Produced on Broadway in 1939, with Raymond Massey in the title role, it won a Pulitzer Prize. (Massey also starred in the 1940 movie version.) Most of our discussion centered on Sherwood's mythologizing of Lincoln.

A historical chronicle in three acts and twelve scenes, the play covers events in Lincoln's life from the early 1830s, when he first came to New Salem, Illinois, until February 11, 1861 when he left Springfield for Washington, D.C. and his inauguration. In the first two acts Sherwood depicts Lincoln's initial reluctance to run for the state assembly; his tentative courtship of Ann Rutledge and despondency after her death; his early relationship with William Herndon (who became his law partner) and opposition to Herndon's fiery abolitionism; and his troubled courtship of Mary Todd. Act III deals with the senatorial campaign of 1858 and his election to the presidency.

In the first published edition of the play, Sherwood included a discussion of historical sources and his reasons for departing from them. "Like many others," he wrote, "I obtained my first instruction in Lincoln's life from Ida M. Tarbell, and in the events of his period from Albert Bushnell Hart, but it was not until I had read Carl Sandburg's *The Prairie Years* that I began to feel the curious quality of the complex man who, in his statement of the eternal aspirations of the human race, achieved a supreme triumph of simplicity. It was Sandburg who guided me back to the main sources of Lincoln lore, made me wish to know more of the forces, from within him and without, which shaped this strange, gentle genius."

Sherwood takes his cues from Sandburg's romanticized vision of a man of humble origins who rose to the presidency. We see little of the ambition that drove Lincoln to persevere in politics. The play jumps from his marriage to Mary Todd in 1842 to the debates with Stephen A. Douglas in the senatorial campaign of 1858, skipping over the years in which he was a highly successful lawyer, a lobbyist for the Illinois Central Railroad, and a one-term congressman.

Sherwood suggests that others, including Mary

Todd, impelled the reluctant backwoodsman into the political arena, and his portrait emphasizes Lincoln's dark and moody nature. In scene six, in which a depressed and agitated Lincoln determines to break his engagement with Mary, a friend suggests that he see "a good man named Dr. Drake who makes a speciality of treating people who get into a state of mind like yours." (According to historical sources—chiefly Herndon, upon whom most writers have relied—Lincoln did write to a Dr. Daniel Drake in Cincinnati, describing his symptoms and asking for help. Evidently Drake never examined him, and the matter went no farther.) I suspect that something of Sherwood's unhappy first marriage (to a woman named Mary) crept into his portrayal of Lincoln's relationship with Mary, especially their bitter recriminations on election night, in scene eleven, for which there is no historical source.

In addition to Sandburg's biography, the play is clearly influenced by 1930s preoccupations and events: popular interest in psychology and psychiatry, the heroizing of common people (so evident in New Deal art and in films of the period), and the imminence of a second world war. These circumstances, and the exigencies of Broadway production, did not encourage a complex, fully satisfying portrait of Lincoln.

Historical footnote: after seeing the play, Eleanor Roosevelt wrote a warm letter of appreciation to Sherwood and invited him to the White House. This marked the beginning of Sherwood's career in public life, as a speech writer and advisor to Roosevelt and as director of the overseas branch of the Office of War Information. After the war, Sherwood published the immensely popular *Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History*.

Next on the agenda for the history play readers is Michael Frayn's *Copenhagen*, about the much-speculated-upon meeting between physicists Niels Bohr and Werner Heisenberg in Copenhagen in 1941. If you'd like to receive announcements of the group's meetings, contact Lorrie O'Dell at (510) 451-8682 or at calmar@ccnet.com..

—Joanne Lafler

Medieval History Study Group

On 20 May we met at Nancy Zinn's home, where Lorrie O'Dell took up the subject of nuns in the Middle Ages. The central focus of the presentation was the general change from small, independent, isolated communities of religious women to nunneries that became increasingly under the control of either political or religious authorities. These religious women were separated into two groups. One group consisted of cloistered nuns who lived by strict rules. The other group, the Begines, were able to live a more independent yet structured life in urban settings. The books that Lorrie consulted were *Sisters in Arms: Catholic Nuns Through Two Millennia*, by Jo Ann Kay McNamara, *Women's Monasticism and Medieval Society: Nunneries in France and England, 890–1215*, by Bruce L. Venarde, and *Canon Law and Cloistered Women: Periculoso and Its Commentators, 1298–1545*, by Elizabeth Makowski.

Lyn Reese hosted the meeting on 23 June, when John Rusk discussed the Hanseatic League. He described how the league developed in Northern Europe as a response to the needs of the merchant class. Following is John's presentation, slightly modified by the gentle hand of the editor.

Several new towns arose in what is now northern Germany during the twelfth century as German-speaking people moved into territories formerly occupied by the Wends. [Ed.: Members of a Slavic people in Saxony and adjoining parts of Prussia.] One of these new towns was Lubeck, founded in 1154. The town plan and charter of Lubeck became a model for many later towns as German influence extended eastward. Traveling merchants banded together as they traded in what was the "Wild East." They called themselves "Hanse," meaning "group" or "crowd." From a group of merchants to a league of hometowns of these merchants was the next step; merchants composed the councils of many of the towns.

The Hanseatic League is difficult to define as a political entity. Germany at the time was a political hodge-podge. Some towns, such as Lubeck, were free Imperial cities; others, such as Cologne, were Church sees; while still others were beholden to territorial lords. The Hanse, as a political organization, was deliberately dissembling—never publishing a roster of members, and sometimes even denying the exixtence of a league when it suited diplomatic purposes.

The League existed mainly to promote trade. Privileges were negotiated in the name of the League throughout northern Europe. Trade consisted of fish, salt, and grain from northern Germany, lumber, naval stores, and furs from the East, wool from England, and manufactured cloth from the Low Countries.

Several factors contributed to the decline of the League: the rise of nation states in England, France, Spain, Sweden, and elsewhere; the coming of the Reformation; and the emergence of Dutch traders. Lubeck, Hamburg, and Bremen maintained their free-city status until they were stripped of their privileges by the Nazis. Even today, the official titles of these cities begin with the words "The Free and Hanseatic City of . . . ."

—Perri Hale

California Round Table

[There was to have been a meeting of the Califor-

nia Round Table on 11 August, but it was canceled because most members were out of town or too busy. Following is the presentation that would have been made—Theories of Learning in Early San Francisco Schools, by Catherine Ann Curry.]

Most people tend to think of the schools of 150 years ago as spartan institutions where children were instructed in the three R's: reading, 'riting, and 'rithmatic. But the schools of the time had other functions than just imparting the basics—functions and methods of operation and teaching dictated by one or more prevailing theories. In the earliest period of San Francisco's public schools, the educational theories of Horace Mann, the secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education during the 1830s, prevailed in San Francisco.

Mann believed that if the children of all classes of society were to attend common schools, there would be an end to poverty, crime, fraud, and class struggle. The basics of this common education were a common piety rooted in the Scriptures, a common civility learned from the history and documents of the Republic, a common intellectual culture embracing the three R's, spelling, English grammar, singing, and good health. Such an education would be the means of eliminating poverty and securing abundance.

This ideology appealed to many San Franciscans, especially since it seemed to provide a way of assimilating the large number of foreign-born children in their midst. In 1856 a teacher wrote, "Perhaps in no city of the world are children with such diversity of habits, creeds and thoughts and feelings." She thought it important that the schools have excellent teachers and that all classes and races should attend so that they "could prove themselves Americans in heart and action."

John Swett, a native of New England, applied Mann's theories to the San Francisco public schools. He advocated free schools, uniform state textbooks, and the professionalization of teaching. In 1862, during the Civil War, he declared that the public schools were important to the Union cause, and after the war asserted that but for the public schools "the nation could not have been saved." The citizens of San Francisco seemed to agree with Swett—they sent their children to the public schools and voted for bonds to build new schools.

Mann was highly interested in the pseudo-science of phrenology, a theory that associated qualities of mind and emotion with bumps on one's head. Among the outgrowths of applying phrenology to the public school system was a decline in the study of Greek, Latin, and mathematics—hard subjects that supposedly trained pupils to think about anything—in favor of studying directly whatever it was that a pupil wanted. There was an emphasis on rewards rather than punishment, and a constant concern that children not wear themselves out by over-studying and excessive homework. Too much mental exercise at an early age would weaken the brain. Phrenology gave rise to the short school day (9:00 to 3:00), well ventilated classrooms, and physical exercise in schools to balance and enhance mental training.

Among other prevailing notions that seem all too familiar as we endure the eternal struggle to "fix" the public schools was the "see and say" method of teaching, rather than phonics. Moral instruction was another feature. Nineteenth-century educators also believed that the ability to read could be dangerous if not learned from materials prescribed by the state.

The public schools of San Francisco in the nineteenth century were not just places of rote learning and strict discipline; they were also afflicted by social and political concerns that seem quite contemporary. *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.*

—Peter Browning

Brief Biographies of Board Members

Edith Piness

Edith Piness is a native of New York City but has lived in California since college. She received a PhD in History from the Claremont Graduate University. She has written and published about British administration and administrators in South and Southeast Asia and has served as a contributing editor of the *Indo-British Review.* Her particular interest is in Burma and its unique position in the British Empire as a province of British India. She is a long-time member of the Burma Studies Group based at Northern Illinois University. More recently she has served on the boards of the California Historical Society, which she chaired for several years, and the San Francisco Historical Society. Edee joined the IHS in the early 1990s after moving full time to the Bay area from Southern California. She is a member of the Institute's play reading group. She is grateful to IHS for academic stimulus, enlightened companionship, lively discourse, and wonderful friends.

John Rusk

My interest in history came from my Midwestern farm-boy childhood. I listened to my mother telling me of her grandfather's service in the Civil War. I fondled the arrowheads my father collected as he plowed the back forty. I saw the George Rogers Clark Memorial in Vincennes. I was reading such books as Lloyd Lewis's biography of William Tecumseh Sherman before I was in junior high school.

My interest continued during my twenty years in the U. S. Navy. I read everything I could get my hands on. I spent three years in Naples, a city suffused with

history from Grecian times onward. I married my wife of thirty-two years while stationed in Yokohama. I found a discarded tombstone dating from the sixteenth century within a few hundred yards of our apartment. I wandered through the streets of Kamakura, whose heyday was even earlier. I attended Indiana University after retiring from the Navy. I worked my way through BA and MA degrees in history, completing all requirements but a dissertation for a PhD in Colonial American History. Besides taking the normal courses for degrees in American History I attended classes in such subjects as Iranian history and early modern European mysticism. My never-completed dissertation research was on Anglo-American seamen in the eighteenth century.

I felt isolated when I returned to the Bay Area after leaving Indiana University: I missed the serious discussions of history I so enjoyed during my student years. It was an epiphany when I wandered into the Institute of Historical Study suite during an American Historical Association meeting.

I have never regretted my decision to join. I enjoy the company of working historians as well as the friendship of those who, like myself, have a compulsion to learn more about the past. I especially appreciate what is now called the Medieval Study group. It has given me a chance to read some of the great Greek and Roman historians and now the works of medieval scholars. I am now in my fourth and final year on the board. It has been a challenging but rewarding experience.

Masha Zakheim

Masha Zakheim, a San Francisco native, is the daughter of Bernard Zakheim, a local artist of the 1930s. She secured degrees in English Literature from SFSU and UCB. Later she expanded her studies to include art history in teaching English and Humanities at City College of San Francisco for thirty years. Beginning with the fresco *Pan American Unity* by Mexican artist Diego Rivera at CCSF, she set up a San Francisco Arts course for students at CCSF, designing lectures about and on-site visits to the mural art of San Francisco, including The City Club, the SF Art Institute, Coit Tower, UCSF Medical Center, and the Beach Chalet.

She has published *Coit Tower, San Francisco: Its History And Art* and *Diego Rivera En San Francisco* as books, plus many articles. Now retired, she continues to give lectures, conduct tours, and publish. Her present project is the writing of a bio-memoir of her artist father.

Masha joined the IHS in 1992 when searching for a fiscal agent in the event of receiving funding for writing about the Arts of San Francisco. Although the project did not materialize, she was quickly drafted into chairing the California Round Table (an ongoing chairmanship); chairing, briefly, the Mini-Grants Committee; and serving two terms on the Board of the IHS.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Jules Becker and **Wolfgang Rosenberg** had an unexpected encounter. Jules reports:

For members of the Institute (and other interested parties) who question the worldwide impact of our organization, let me point out that there are few, if any, places on the globe where one is safe from the IHS. This was made clear to me last spring during a three-week tour of China, as my wife and I were visiting the sparkling new art museum in Shanghai.

We were moving from one exhibit room to another, in a wide hallway, when we heard a stentorian cry, JULES! We turned around in fear and trepidation, concerned that one of our fellow tour members had run afoul of the notorious Chinese thought police, when to our amazement and joy we saw Wolfgang Rosenberg, fellow Institute member, longtime friend, and veteran of common service on the IHS Board of Directors. Coming up close behind was Norma, his partner in whatever crime Wolfgang commits.

None of us had the slightest idea that the others were in China, had planned to visit China, or were anywhere near Shanghai. We had a pleasant chat and parted, only to run into each other again at a restaurant where our respective tours took us for lunch, and at a school later in the afternoon, where we encountered some Chinese educational PR with children showing off their acrobatic skills.

Rose Scherini contributed two articles to a new book, *Una Storia Segreta: The Secret History of the Italian American Evacuation and Internment During WWII*, ed. R. Lawrence diStasi. (Berkeley: Heyday Books, 2001.) One article, "Letters to 3024 Pierce Street," is new, based on letters from an Italian American internee from San Francisco. The other is a reprint: "When Italian Americans Were Enemy Aliens," a chapter in *Enemies Within*. (Toronto: U. of Toronto Press, 2000.)

Rose is on the planning committee for a new exhibit, "Enemy Aliens Files: Hidden Stories of WWII," sponsored by the National Japanese American Historical Society, the American Italian History Association, and the Japanese Peruvian Oral History Program. The exhibit, which will tell the stories of all the enemy alien groups, including Germans, will open on 21 September, 2001 at NJAHS, 1684 Post Street, San Francisco; (415) 921-5007. Call Rose for more information: (415) 464-1547.

Georgia Wright's article "The Reinvention of the Portrait Likeness in the Fourteenth Century," sixteen years in gestation, appeared in *Gesta* XXXIX/2, 2000.

She delivered a paper entitled "Orphan Heads and Neutron Activation Analysis" at the International Congress on Medieval Studies, at Kalamazoo, Michigan in May. The manuscript of *A French Revolutionary Pamphleteer* is in the last (?) stages of revision, and this is an excuse for not editing the New Deal video, for which filming is complete.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September	**9**	Potluck at Ruth Willard's in San Francisco.
October	**21**	Masha Zakheim and Bob Seward, Work-in-Progress, on Diego Rivera and Masonic symbols in his art.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Please send all of your *Newsletter* material to Peter Browning. You may use any PC word-processing format—or as a PC-ASCII file if you use a Macintosh. Send book reviews and books to be reviewed to Autumn Stanley. Please also send Membership News to Peter Browning on the inserted form.

Deadline for the Fall 2001 *Newsletter* is 30 October.

The *Newsletter* is sent to all members. Non-members who wish to receive it and to get regular announcements of Institute events are invited to make tax-deductible contributions to assist with the cost of printing and mailing.

Direct membership inquiries to: Joan Murray, Membership Chair, 2551 Ivy Drive #103, Oakland, CA 94606-2105.

The Institute is affiliated with the National Coalition of Independent Scholars (NCIS) and with the American Historical Association (AHA).

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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