

THE INSTITUTE FOR HISTORICAL STUDY

VOLUME 43, NO. 3, WINTER 2024

NEWSLETTER

“Genealogy on the Cheap” by Carol Sicherman

In 1997 Jonathan Safran Foer was looking for a topic for his senior thesis at Princeton. His mother, Esther, suggested that he visit her ancestral area in western Ukraine to research her father, Louis Safran. Failing in that task, he turned his experiences in Ukraine into his thesis and then, in 2002, into his blockbuster novel, *Everything Is Illuminated*. Writing fiction, Foer could fool around with history. His mother still searched for “facts.”

Living near Washington, Esther Safran Foer gathered information with the aid of friends in high places—an ambassador there, a national security adviser here, an FBI expert in photographs, and so on. She spent a day in the Map Room at the Library of Congress, photocopying maps. Some twenty years after Jonathan’s trip, she traveled to Ukraine, Israel, Denmark, and elsewhere to meet possible sources. She found illumination and published a memoir (*I Want You to Know We’re Still Here*).

The classical scholar Daniel Mendelsohn undertook a similar, even more extensive, search for family history, detailed in his best-selling memoir, *The Lost: A Search for Six of the Six Million*. With such examples of well-funded and well rewarded research—as well as Henry Louis Gates, Jr.’s TV program “Finding Your Roots,” underwritten by foundations and corporations as well as PBS—an ordinary person might suppose that it would be futile to hunt for ancestors. Not true. You can sit at your computer and explore an array of ever-enlarging and proliferating sites. You can email a query to the Map Room of the Library of Congress. This is what I did when searching for my maternal roots in Western Ukraine. Two days later, two late-nineteenth-century German maps appeared in my inbox.

My mother’s ancestral village of Dolgosel’ye (“long village” in Ukrainian) was so inconsequential that when her family emigrated, they gave Olevsk, eight miles distant, as their native place, simply because it was a known place. Hunting in online communities, in Ancestry, in a specialized site called JewishGen, and a Jewish history site in Ukraine yielded nothing. But a straggling line of houses labeled Dolgosel’ye appeared in the maps sent by the Library of Congress. An online ship’s manifest recording the arrival of my grandmother Annie Frager and her three surviving children at Ellis Island revealed Annie’s mother’s name, Brucha Hakman Poltorak and the town where she lived. Brucha’s name led to a dizzying array of Hakmans and Poltoraks extending into the eighteenth century. I hadn’t left my desk.

I came to this project through my mother’s oldest sister, Vida Castaline, whom I interviewed at age 67 in 1975. Vida knew that she, her sisters, and her mother arrived in December 1921; that information led to the ship’s manifest. I value even more her memories of daily life—the boy set to watch over his mother’s corpse when she died of typhus, the deaths of her two siblings from accident and disease, Gentiles loaning Jewish children clothes to disguise them from Cossacks, the utility of cobwebs to stanch bleeding from a cut, the entire village running to the forest when soldiers invaded. She remembered that after fleeing Dolgosel’ye during the Russian civil war, they found safety in Rovno (now Rivne). An online photo showing masses of refugees in 1920 prefigures photos made a century later in Rivne, again flooded with refugees from a war. Websites have period photos of Olevsk, where my grandmother bartered her milk products for sundries that she would sell in the village in order to earn cash. Vida’s family was too poor to hire photographers.

– *Continued on back page*

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

The Institute maintained a presence at the American Historical Association (AHA) annual meeting in San Francisco, January 4-7, 2024. IHS sponsored a session and several Institute members attended the conference. (**Oliver Pollak** discovered that four current Institute members, Bertram Gordon, Karen Offen, Oliver Pollak, and Peter Stansky, are 50-year members of the AHA.)

On the morning of January 5th, **Rob Robbins, Jim Gasperini,** and I staffed the Affiliate Table for an hour. We were joined by **Bert Gordon, Suzanne Perkins-Gordon, Ann Harlow,** and **Karen Offen.** Some of us had not seen each other in-person since the start of the pandemic, and we had a pleasant reunion. The table featured literature about the Institute, including the monthly program, and flyers about books published by members: Marilyn Geary’s *Miners, Milkers & Merchants*, Dan Kohanski’s *A God of Our Invention*, Karen Offen’s *The Woman Question in France, 1400 -1870* and *Debating the Woman Question in the French Third Republic, 1870-1920*, and Rob Robbins’ *Overtaken by the Night*, which Rob brought for display.

In the early afternoon, **Bert Gordon** chaired the Institute-sponsored panel session, “Tourism and History: From Soviets to Space to Anti-Tourism.” Attendees found the session so engrossing, they did not want to leave at its conclusion but stayed to speak with the presenters. In addition to this event, I attended sessions on women’s history, biography, and publishing, and I also enjoyed the poster sessions and publishers’ booths. I have been in touch with those I met at the annual meeting who expressed an interest in the Institute.

Our annual membership meeting will take place on Saturday, February 24, 2024, at the Golden Gate Branch of the Oakland Public Library. It will be our first in-person annual meeting since 2020 and our first hybrid meeting. (See the enclosed announcement.)

Our members are presenting an increasing number of programs in person (see Member News). Just announced is February’s monthly presentation on the 18th: **Judith Robinson** will speak about her experiences with well-known San Francisco personages, at the North Beach Branch of San Francisco Public Library and via Zoom. On March 2nd at 3:00 p.m. at the Merced Branch, Patricia Southard and I will cover the tenures of Barbara Bush, Hillary Clinton, and Laura Bush in our presentation “First Ladies and Women’s Rights, 1989-2009.”

– *Elizabeth Thacker-Estrada*

NEWSLETTER EDITOR
Maria Sakovich

COPY EDITOR
Anne MacLachlan

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Address:
1399 Queens Road
Berkeley, CA 94708
www.instituteforhistoricalstudy.org

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AT THE AHA ANNUAL MEETING

“Tourism and History: From Soviets to Space to Anti-Tourism”

As an affiliated organization with the American Historical Association (AHA), the Institute for Historical Study may sponsor sessions at the January annual meetings of the AHA. This year’s annual meeting was held in San Francisco and, with the support of the Institute’s president, Elizabeth Thacker-Estrada, we were able to organize a session titled “Tourism and History: From Soviets to Space to Anti-Tourism,” which met on January 5. The session addressed the linkages between history and tourism, expanding our knowledge of the many ways in which tourism has influenced history, ranging from post-World War II Russia to space tourism in the United States, to the broader phenomenon of anti-tourism.

In “War and Peace: Images of World War II in Early Thaw (mid-1950s) Soviet Travelogues,” Alexey Kotelvas addressed the post-Stalin “thaw,” or easing of Cold War tensions under Khrushchev, and how this was reflected in travelogues by Soviet citizens who had toured abroad. (Kotelvas is a former graduate student at the Moscow School of Social and Economic Sciences and a rising doctoral candidate at the University of Florida.) He focused on the accounts of participants in the 1956 European cruise for Soviet tourists on the ship “Pobeda.” Although a peacetime tour, memories of the Second World War formed a continual backdrop in the accounts of the tourist participants.

In “Space for Play: Inspiring the Next Generation of STEM Workers at US Space Camp, 1982-1996,” Emily A. Margolis discussed the development of the United States Space Camp in Huntsville, Alabama, which became a popular destination for tourist families who could “play astronaut for a week.” Participants could “train” for spaceflight through a combination of classroom lessons and simulated missions in full-size mock-ups of

International Space Station modules and other spacecraft. Her presentation addressed gender inequalities and how they have been addressed over time. Emily is Curator of the History of American Women in Aviation, Spaceflight, Astronomy, and Planetary Science for the National Air and Space Museum at the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory.

In “‘Tourists, Go Home!’: Exploring the History of Anti-tourism,” Kristin Semmens (associate professor in the Department of History at the University of Victoria) examined the multi-faceted phenomenon of “anti-tourism” from an historical perspective. Going back to criticisms of Thomas Cook’s package tours in the nineteenth century and moving to current protests against gentrification, Americanization, and consumerism, she discussed slogans such as “Tourists, go home!” that have appeared on neighborhood walls and on protest banners during the last decade, from Spain to Germany to Italy. Her presentation explored the historical roots of protests ignited when people challenge the environmental, economic, and societal impacts of tourism, and resist being viewed as tourism objects themselves.

Igor Tchoukarine, University of Minnesota, commented on the presentations with additional suggestions for further research. He is co-author of *The History of the European Travel Commission, 1948-2018* (2018) and currently completing a book titled “Come See the Truth: The Touristic Strategy of Tito’s Yugoslavia (1945-1980).”

I was privileged to serve as moderator of a highly informative and interesting session.

– **Bert Gordon**

We have just learned of the death of member Georgiana Davidson on January 24th. We will remember her in the Spring newsletter. – Ed.

Writers Group Report

In October the group considered a chapter from **Rose Marie Cleese's** long-planned biography of her grandfather Angelo Rossi who served as mayor of San Francisco during the turbulent 1930s and early 1940s. Rose Marie's segment covered the opening days of World War II focusing on the reaction of Rossi and San Francisco to the news of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. The group greatly appreciated the dramatic circumstances that Rose Marie sought to depict, but there was a general feeling that the effort fell somewhat short of its potential. The members urged Rose Marie to limit historical material on World War II that is generally quite familiar and to instead heighten the account of Rossi's own actions in the days surrounding the attack.

In November **Louis Trager** presented an overview of a book he has been contemplating for a number of years. The working title is "Rings of Power: Paul Hoffman and the Corporate Liberals, Engineering Consensus in America for a New Global Order." This is a rich, complex story which describes the role of liberal business elites in shaping and directing US policies in the period of World War II and its aftermath. The efforts of these now seldom-remembered individuals and groups created an internationalist political outlook, a broad consensus that endured until the end of the 1960s. The group was impressed by Louis' vision and design. Its members suggested that he might narrow his focus somewhat, concentrating on the figure of Paul Hoffman and on the period from 1940 to 1952 when the general contours of post-war world order took clear shape.

In December **Jim Gasperini** submitted a new chapter of his book "A Fire in the Mind." This segment probed the symbolic and metaphoric use of fire in a number of different cultures. As always, Jim's writing is rich in detail and stylistically well-polished. Some members felt

that Jim's encyclopedic approach to his vast subject might be overwhelming to his readers and urged him to explore the possibility of introducing a clearer line of "argument," perhaps tracing the evolution of humanity's understanding of its nonhuman "relative." Jim's work is now nearing completion and the Writers Group looks forward to seeing the finished product in print.
– **Rob Robbins**

The announcement for the October monthly presentation asked "How do historians work? How do they decide what to study, how to plan their research, what sources to seek out, what other historians to consult? And what do they do with the finished product?" Members Rob Robbins and Oliver Pollak spoke of their prior work in university history departments, thus launching what might be a series of speakers or writers on this topic. I asked Rob to write up his talk for the winter newsletter; Oliver's remarks will follow later. We hope members will consider taking up this topic for forthcoming newsletters. – Ed.

"Notes of a One-Note Historian"

If historians can be divided into Hedgehogs (those who concentrate on one big thing) and Foxes (those who pursue a variety of subjects), I am definitely a Hedgehog. Since graduate school days at Columbia University I have focused my research on the fate of late-imperial Russia: Was the country pulling together or falling apart? Absent the trauma of the Great War, did Russia as it existed, say, in 1913 have the capacity for long-term survival, or was revolution by then unavoidable?

For me, this question had been posed by the debate that followed the appearance of Leopold Haimson's "Problem of Social Stability in Urban Russia, 1905-1917" published in *Slavic Review* in late 1964-early 1965. Haimson challenged the widely-held idea that the war was

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the decisive factor in the empire's demise, arguing instead, that by 1914 large-scale social and political fragmentation presaged not only a revolution, but also the triumph of the most extreme radical forces, very likely the Bolsheviks. He added that the Great War had not accelerated the revolution, but had, in fact, retarded its outbreak. A tantalizing question mark arose and a very lively discussion ensued between "optimists" and "pessimists." I wanted, in some small way, to participate.

Influenced by the teaching of Professor Marc Raeff, I began to think that I might approach the problem by looking at the institutions and officials of the tsarist government, and particularly the way they actually functioned day-to-day, to examine in concrete situations how they worked and to show the kinds of problems they faced. Such a study might help to assess the viability of the old regime. But what methods should I adopt, what problems should I pursue?

An answer came in the form of a book by the Soviet historian Petr Andreevich Zaionchkovsky: *The Crisis of Autocracy at the End of the 1870s and the Beginning of the 1880s*. In that work Zaionchkovsky gives a detailed account of the struggle between the Russian government and the terrorists of the *Narodnaya Volya* (the People's Will). But unlike most Soviet works which stressed (and glorified) the actions of the revolutionaries, Zaionchkovsky wrote the story from the perspective of the government and its officials at both the central and the local levels. Perhaps the study of another crisis might be a way for me to go. But which one?

The choice was not difficult: the famine of 1891-92. That crisis had long been recognized as a significant turning point in Russian history. It marked the end of the period of quiet that followed the assassination of Tsar Alexander II. It began a new period of economic and social debate and the rise of opposition to the existing

order. But the famine itself had been little studied. It had never been looked at in terms of the government's response, but about that question there were a number of established "truths." The government, we were told, tried at first to ignore the famine and to suppress all news of the disaster. Then when it was finally forced to act, its relief measures were inadequate and its officials incompetent. Finally, the story went, an aroused Russian public rushed into the gap and saved the day.

The topic of the famine seemed perfect to me. Within a compact time period, I could study the formulation of government policy at the top, in the Committee of Ministers, and follow its implementation by institutions at the provincial and local level. An account of the government's response to the crisis would show its officials in action and shed light on the issue of the viability of the old regime. A good topic, great plan. Just one problem. The key documents were almost certain to be in the archives of the Soviet Union.

So the crucial ingredient was luck, which came my way at every turn. To begin with, I discovered, by sheer chance, that a virtually complete documentary record of the Committee of Ministers' actions regarding the famine had been sitting untouched at the Hoover Institution Library: three massive volumes, which I was able to get on microfilm. Then I was selected to participate in the exchange of scholars between Soviet and US academic institutions that had been established in the late 1950s. This brought me to Moscow and Leningrad for ten months in 1967-1968 where, luckier still, I worked under the direction of Professor Zaionchkovsky.

The volume of material I received was overwhelming, forcing me to rigorously narrow and focus my coverage. But in the end a dissertation and first book emerged (*Famine in Russia, 1891-1892: The Imperial Government Responds to a Crisis*). My conclusions challenged the "truths" about the event.

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Government relief efforts were far larger and more effective than previously believed. Institutions and officials had functioned better, and efforts of the public were far less extensive than had been presented in the established narrative.

Work on the famine pointed me toward my next study in institutional history: Russian provincial governors. These officials, who had played a central role in the relief operations, were crucial figures in the empire's administrative structure, the indispensable link between St. Petersburg and the vast hinterlands. Like the famine, the governors had been little studied. The last scholarly treatment appeared in 1905, and about them there were well-established "truths." Governors as "satraps," wielders and abusers of vast powers, comically incompetent mini-autocrats chosen on the basis of favoritism were images well fixed in Russian journalism, belles lettres, and historical literature. My research on the famine suggested that this picture might benefit from a corrective. But how to go about it?

The subject was enormous. Even within a relatively narrow time frame (1880-1914), at least 200 men had held governorships in the 50 provinces of European Russia. Source materials, mostly archival, were widely scattered. I would need to cast a wide net, try to use whatever I dragged in, chastened by the knowledge that my picture would be a partial mosaic at best. Two semester-long research trips to the Soviet Union (1976 and 1981) as well as investigations in the US, let me gather diverse materials from 53 collections in nine separate archives: diaries, family correspondence, annual reports, personnel files, papers of various provincial institutions, accounts of government inspectors, memoirs (lots), etc., etc. What resulted seemed at first to be an unholy mess. How could all this be organized and presented?

After repeatedly shuffling through my note

cards, I began to shape a plan. A broad survey of the development of the institution over the centuries was a necessary starting-point. Then prosopography—statistical material on governors' background, education, and the career paths that led to a governorship. How had these things changed over time? Could one speak of gubernatorial professionalization? And then beyond this, something even more vital: the human dimension. What was it like to be a governor? What "came with the territory"? Could I depict a "day in the life . . ."?

As I contemplated the governors' world of work I realized that it was defined by a series of relationships, each of which should be treated in a separate chapter. "Viceroy and Flunky" examined the link between the governors and the center—the emperor and the ministry of internal affairs. "Prisoner of the Clerks" explored the governors' management of institutions and personnel under their direct control, while "The Issue of Their Charm" surveyed their often tense relationship with field agencies of other ministries, officials not fully subject to their orders. A chapter entitled "Persuaders-in Chief" discussed the even more fraught connection between the governors and the local institutions of self-government with their frequently testy elected officers and appointed personnel. "Instruments of Force" looked at the police powers of the governors and the men entrusted to enforce the rules. Finally, "Their Compulsory Game" followed governors as they sought to deal with the manifold needs and discontents of workers and peasants.

Stepping back from my mosaic, I saw that the governor was far from being the "master of the province." The "satrap" was very often a supplicant. A governor confronted a tough, complex job which he had to accomplish with limited powers and an often incompetent and demoralized staff. A governor faced institutional fragmentation, social and political pluralism.

ROUND TABLE ON HISTORIANS WORK

Success often depended on his ability to deploy many of the skills of a politician: compromise, palaver, pressing the flesh. To get along, a governor often had to go along, displaying what was called “service tact”—the ability to give orders without giving offense, to display firmness tempered by bonhomie.

After the publication of my book of the governors (*The Tsar’s Viceroys: Russian Provincial Governors in the Last years of the Empire*), I explored another approach to the study of the institutions and officials of the old regime: biography. I chose as my subject Vladimir Dzhunkovsky, who had been a successful governor of Moscow province in the years following the revolution of 1905. Initially, I envisioned his life story as a way to get “inside the head” of a tsarist administrator, but in time I found much more.

Dzhunkovsky was a man of all seasons. Over the course of his long life (1865-1938) he had been a courtier, civic activist (*obshchestvennyi deiatel*), governor, imperial security chief, front-line general in the Great War, political prisoner, writer, technical consultant for the Soviet secret police, and, ultimately, victim of Stalin’s terror. His tale had a Zelig-like quality as his path intersected with the main events of his time. He knew people of every station: the imperial family, artists and intellectuals, businessmen, workers, peasants and common soldiers. Once a prominent personage, he became a “former person,” but through turbulent and rapidly changing times, he remained a deeply religious monarchist, conservative, and patriot.

In writing Dzhunkovsky’s biography (*Overtaken by the Night: One Russian’s Journey through Peace, War, Revolution and Terror*), I had to confront a large problem: the man was his own Boswell. The chief and indispensable source was a huge memoir which covered his life up to 1918. (When I began my work in

1990, the memoir had been held in the archives for 60 years, deemed unpublishable in Soviet times. Since then it has appeared in print—four 600-page volumes). But memoirs are tricky; how trustworthy is a person’s own story, especially when he is often the only witness to events described?

Dzhunkovsky had a reputation for probity, so a working assumption of the memoir’s basic truthfulness seemed reasonable. The nature and structure of the work strongly suggested that it was based on a diary, which appeared to have been lost or destroyed. There was abundant supplementary evidence. Dzhunkovsky was a pack-rat; his archive had all kinds of documents, governmental and private, many of which he quoted verbatim in his text. Of course he made relatively minor errors of fact, often easily spotted, and vast as it was, the memoir was not a “tell-all.” (I reconstructed his romantic pursuit of a married woman on the basis of letters that his sister wrote to him.) In places where his account was challenged, testimony beyond the memoir that he gave on separate occasions suggested that if he was a liar, at least he was a consistent one. And of course, an account of the twenty years of his life after 1917 had to be told without the benefit of Dzhunkovsky’s assistance.

Biography is a narrow path, but it can open up wide vistas. In addition to his own story, Dzhunkovsky’s biography showed the rapid changes that were occurring in late imperial Russia: growing pluralism, the breaking down of the barriers between classes, the blurring of the boundaries between the state and civil society, the flourishing of non-governmental organizations. His life after the revolution illustrated the problems of the *ci-devants* in the new society, but it also revealed much about the cultural politics and police practices of the emerging Soviet regime. Ultimately, Dzhunkovsky’s biography permitted me to write, albeit in a limited way, the tragic history

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of Russia from the optimistic times of Alexander II's "Great Reforms" to dark days of Stalin's "Great Terror."

And what about the "optimist"- "pessimist" debate where my scholarly journey began? In the spring of 1914, a time of rapidly rising labor discontent, Dzhunkovsky, then the empire's security chief, was dispatched to Baku where the petroleum industry was in the grips of a bitter strike. He was armed with extensive repressive powers, but determined not to employ them.

Touring the oil fields, he was appalled by the living conditions of the workers. He called the managers of the major oil companies to a meeting, read them the riot act, and successfully jaw-boned them into agreeing to undertake significant reforms. After publicizing these reforms to the workers, Dzhunkovsky believed that the strike showed signs of breaking, but then news of impending war reached the city and the Baku strike, like those in the rest of the country, evaporated. Always optimistic, the memoirist Dzhunkovsky believed that reforms like the ones he imposed had "created a new basis for securing the well-being of workers in Russia" and might have fostered peace and stability. For this historian, however, the tantalizing question mark remained.

– *Richard Robbins*

In Memoriam

Cornelia Levine joined the Institute in 1986. Twenty years earlier she had completed her course work in German history and passed her orals at UC Berkeley; she had also started on her dissertation. She remained, however, "ABD." Her early participation in Institute activities reflects this background. In March 1987, when IHS together with the Goethe Institute in San Francisco presented a four-part series "Berlin in the Twenties," Cornelia spoke about the

political, social, and economic backdrop to the Weimar Republic during the 1920s, highlighting the "promises and setbacks in Germany's first experiment with democracy" and explaining the problems brought about by reparations. Later that year she presented a paper at the annual meeting in Washington, DC of the American Historical Association: "Denial of Defeat: The Stab in the Back Legend in Germany at the End of World War I," for the panel "The Problem of Defeat in German History."

Many years later Cornelia with her husband, Lawrence Levine (historian of American culture at UC Berkeley), whom she met during her graduate student days, wrote *The People and the President: America's Conversation with FDR* (Beacon Press, 2002). They also produced a paperback, an abridged version, *The Fireside Conversations: America Responds to FDR during the Great Depression* (UC Press, 2010). After Larry's death, Cornelia took on two major tasks: reviewing the entire transcript of her husband's oral history and preparing his papers for donation to the Bancroft Library. Assisted by a friend she listened to the more than twenty hours of tape recordings and "meticulously made innumerable significant corrections in the transcript, improved the punctuation, verified spellings of names and Yiddish words, and filled in difficult-to-hear phrases."

Cornelia was elected to the Institute's board of directors (2009-2012) serving as treasurer for two years. This is probably the time when I began to get to know her. She had such a strong sense of responsibility for her new positions, a trait that likely characterized all her endeavors. She always showed support for me and my work, for which I was grateful. And I found her very interesting and easy to talk with.

Cornelia was born into a family of strong and long-lived women. (She expressed gratitude at having made 90 years herself.) Although born and raised in Germany, family members also

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lived in England and the United States; one of her grandmothers, in fact, was American—a large painting of her hung on the wall of the Levine’s dining room. In my last conversation with Cornelia she briefly mentioned her memories of wartime Germany (the family home was in a Berlin suburb). Although evacuated to the countryside, away from Allied bombing, she remembered being hungry. She also recounted the story of her first meeting with her Levine in-laws. Soon after she and Larry married in Berkeley, they and Cornelia’s eight-year-old son drove across the country to Washington Heights, New York City. Here Larry had grown up in a Yiddish-speaking, immigrant Orthodox Jewish family; his father owned a fruit and vegetable store. Despite the stark differences between Cornelia and her new family, they embraced her and her son with “openness and love—they couldn’t have been nicer and warmer and kinder.” I’m sure that Cornelia, with her openness and generosity of spirit made that easy. — *Maria Sakovich*

Cornelia’s quiet vivacity conveyed an openness to people that must have been present when she went, at age 16, from her home in Germany to Bristol, England, soon becoming as fluent in English as in German. By the time I knew her, Larry had died, but her stories of him created a vivid sense of who he was: funny, learned, devoted to social causes—like herself. Well after her diagnosis of inoperable cancer, she invited me to visit. “I’m supposed to be dying,” she said with a wry smile, “but I don’t seem to know how.” With loving family nearby and hospice care that she applauded, she did eventually learn how. — *Carol Sicherman*

My experience of Cornelia Levine was of an intellectually lively person who was very generous with her time and interest. I did not know her well, and met her initially through her husband. But when I saw her she inquired about my research and projects. She heard I might get

a temporary position at National Science Foundation and immediately offered me the use of their apartment in Washington, D.C. The job did not go through, but I never forgot her kindness. — *Anne Maclachlan*

Peter Stansky, professor emeritus at Stanford, received the Peter Davison Award from the Orwell Society in recognition of “outstanding ability and contribution to the study of George Orwell.” The judges considered Professor Stansky’s ground-breaking investigations and publications over fifty years, which have continued into the present day with the publication of *The Socialist Patriot: George Orwell and War* (Stanford University Press, 2023) and *Twenty Years On: Views and Reviews of Modern Britain* (Pinehill Humanities Press, 2020). “Virtual meetings have allowed Professor Stansky (who was 91 in 2023) to remain a major contributor to discussions and colloquia on Orwell, permitting readers and students from around the world to interact with him.” Peter notes that “the late Peter Davison was the editor of the 20 volumes of the collected Orwell which made it possible for me to continue to work on Orwell without going to archives.”

Dot Brovarney’s seminal research on noted California native plant expert, **Ukiahah-?** Carl Purdy, will inform the upcoming issue of *Eden*, the journal of the California Garden and Landscape History Society. “My access to both personal and business records held by Purdy’s descendants enabled me to flesh out much of a fifty-year career which also included his work as a horticulturalist, nurseryman, writer, and landscape designer.” Dot’s book, *Mendocino Refuge: Lake Leonard & Reeves Canyon*, continues to sell well. Kirkus Reviews states “Brovarney deftly mixes regional history, ecology, and character studies of people who shaped and were shaped by the land, writing in lucid . . . prose dotted with flights of vivid

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lyricism.” To read the complete review, see *Mendocino Refuge* at www.KirkusReviews.com.

Nathan Foxton reports that he is “showing work in the group show “The Big Softie” at Soft Times Gallery, 905 Sutter Street, February 1 - 24. It opens February 1st, 6-9pm during the First Thursday Art Walk of the lower Polk and Tenderloin neighborhoods. I am facilitating a professional practices group for artists at my studio in the 1890 Bryant Street Studios building in addition to organizing collector tours with studio visits and artist talks.”

Joe C. Miller will be teaching a class on women’s history in the College of Marin Community Education program, “Wild Women Suffragists—A Forgotten Side of Women’s History.” The class meets weekly, on Thursday evenings, 7:10 - 8:30, starting February 1 and ending on the 29th (no class on the 22nd). Joe will also give a talk at the Merced branch of the San Francisco Public Library on Saturday, February 17. He reports that his recent talk on the subject at Mary’s Woods Retirement Community near Portland, Oregon was well received.

The discovery of a cabinet found on a San Francisco street containing hundreds of old Kodachrome slides of early Bart construction, city agencies, and family photos from the 1960s prompted **Tim Welsh** to add to his collection on his website “San Francisco Film Locations Then & Now.” Tim writes: “I took current photographs at the approximate location of some of the vintage slides of BART construction along Market Street in 1967 and 1968 for a comparison.” See <https://sfinfilm.com/2023/08/26/an-ode-to-bart/>; for the full story of the discovery of the Kodachrome slides see <https://www.sfmemory.org/TiffanyCabinet/>.

Leslie Friedman reports that she has been writing reviews of historical works and poetry.

“Several of the poetry collections have significant historical content. For *Wind—Mountain—Oak: The Poems of Sappho*, a new translation, I needed to get back to very early Greek history, the burning of the Alexandrian library, and cultural developments that led to 18th- and 19th-century translations. I also traced Sappho’s lines—of which there are so few—in Walt Whitman lines and a J.D. Salinger title. Another book of poetry, *membersy*, grew out of a woman channeling the lives of her grandparents during the Partition of India and Pakistan. It was a valuable window into the experiences of the Sikhs. The fate of Punjab, its language, religion, and customs, is seldom included in Partition histories. I also wrote about a novel, *What Start Bad a Mornin*, following Jamaican families to the United States.

Anne MacLachlan, researcher at the Center for Studies in Higher Education (CSHE), organized and spoke at a symposium in honor of the late Carroll Brentano, a long-time Institute member. “University History Past, Present and Future,” took place at the UC Berkeley Women’s Faculty Club on October 5, 2023. She notes: “Carroll’s work made major contributions to the history of the University of California. She firmly believed that a university and all those in it should know its own history. To that end she was the moving force in creating the University History Project in 1989 and launching two periodicals documenting the history of the University of California. ‘The purpose of creating the new series’ she wrote in the introduction to the *Chronicles of the University of California* was ‘to increase the store of institutional memory and thereby to revitalize institutional identity and enhance community.’ Now more than ever as documenting the history of the university seems to be on the decline, her purpose is even more significant. Several symposium speakers commemorated Carroll’s contributions. The program was concluded by Gia White, who spoke about the first African American

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students at Cal, based on an article she wrote for the campus project celebrating 150 years of women at Berkeley. Her article represents the mix of reflection and painstaking research which Carroll Brentano fostered during her lifetime.”

A recording of the symposium is available at the CSHE website (<https://cshe.berkeley.edu/>); find Gia White’s article at <https://cshe.berkeley.edu/i-walk-these-paths-honoring-unheralded-courage-african-american-women-pioneers-university-california>.

Rose Marie Cleese organized the visit to the Special Collections at Stanford’s Green Library, which she describes here.

“All-day Tour of Stanford’s Rumsey Center and Rare Book Collections a Thrilling Experience”

Six lucky Institute members spent a wonderful day at the beautiful Cecil H. Green Library in October. Our first stop was the Rumsey Map Center where Kristina Larsen, assistant rare map librarian, provided an overview of not only the map center but the separate map collection of David Rumsey—both accessible to the public online as well as by appointment at the map center itself. Thanks to the largesse of David Rumsey the map center opened in 2016, and its collection continues to grow.

Utilizing a giant floor-to-ceiling screen, Kristina walked us through the various sections of Rumsey’s website (<https://www.davidrumsey.com>) that often enhances the more than 125,000 maps and images with technology. She talked about the map center and explained how to access the maps and images located on the Stanford Libraries website through SearchWorks (<https://library.stanford.edu/libraries/david-rumsey-map-center>). Assembled on tables were real-life items, including early US Survey maps of San Francisco from 1853

and 1859; a book from one of the 16th-century printings of the world’s first atlas, Abraham Ortelius’ *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (Theater of the World); and some of the first maps showing the location of gold and other ores some from the Mother Lode made just four months after James Marshall’s discovery of gold in February 1848 at Sutter’s Mill near Coloma.

The frosting on the cake was back to the giant screen where Kristina juxtaposed old maps onto current Google maps, and faded the top map to better see the alignments. She did this with a Google aerial map of San Francisco and the 1859 map as well as with a current 3-D topographical map of Yosemite Valley with a 19th-century surveyor’s map over it to show how much they aligned. She was able to move the 3-D map around so we could view the area from several different angles. It was hard to leave the map center!

At the Rare Books Collection on the library’s fourth floor, we were greeted by Curator Benjamin Albritton. On tables was an exceptional collection of photos and books he had hand-picked to show: the original annotated cabinet cards of the world-famous experiment conducted by Eadweard Muybridge at the behest of Leland Stanford to determine if all four feet of a moving horse are ever off the ground at the same time; two big volumes of Muybridge’s photos depicting the interior of Stanford’s home on Nob Hill that burned to the ground after San Francisco’s 1906 earthquake and the exterior and grounds of the sprawling Timothy Hopkins mansion in Menlo Park; a copy of Frederick Douglas’ *My Bondage and My Freedom*, with a long, handwritten note to the book owner; an original Second Folio of the collected plays of Shakespeare printed in 1632; an early Galileo Galilei book; and a first edition of Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass*. Another place that was hard to leave!

– Rose Marie Cleese

About 1905, Annie Poltorak married Oscar Frager (whom I have traced only to his parents). His sister, already settled in Boston, had urged him to emigrate. He boarded the wrong ship—it was bound for Argentina—but returned and tried again. Arriving in Boston a month before WWI broke out, he contacted Annie once it ended and sent her money for tickets. Late in 1921, she made her way to Antwerp, where she and the children boarded the *Kroonland*, traveling steerage. Her illiteracy and poverty kept her detained for three days at Ellis Island. Finally, the inspector realized that because she was joining her husband, they would not be a public charge. All this is laid out in online documents.

Had the Fragers not emigrated, they would have perished in the Holocaust. The Poltoraks had originated in Wolbrom, a heavily Jewish city in Poland; nearly everyone there was murdered. Poltorak relatives in nearby towns that were similarly havens for Jews met the same fate. The same was true of Olevsk and its surrounding area.

I must now confess to a touch of genealogical madness. As my tree grew branches linked by marriage, it became a banyan, no longer an orderly oak; there are now over 26,000 names, and they keep on coming. My “family” includes people not only from Eastern and Central Europe but also from France, Italy, Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, Algeria, Morocco, Suriname, Jamaica, and further reaches of the globe. Pretty soon I will trace them to the Garden of Eden.

People from all over the world have sought (and still seek) safety in our country. For some, the fabled welcome of the Statue of Liberty has rung hollow. Hundreds of thousands now clamor at our southern border. Native Americans, our only citizens whose immigration goes back to ancient times, likewise seek sanctuary in their own land. What is to be done?