

THE INSTITUTE FOR HISTORICAL STUDY

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NEWSLETTER

“From the Editor” by Maria Sakovich

Traditionally at our annual meetings I have reported on the Institute newsletter, but a recent question from a newish member reminded me that an audience of perhaps only 25 hear my remarks. So I am using this space for a more in-depth report and for reaching more members.

I have always begun with a big thank-you to the writers of the various articles and I do so here as well: *Thank you to all the contributors*. No writers, no newsletter! I also want to entice more members to write for the newsletter. From the very first issue, which dates to December 1979, the newsletter was the primary means of communication with members. I think it still is, despite the existence of a user-friendly website, which extends our outreach to members of the public, and the use of email, primarily for announcements and reminders. With the advent of the website, our newsletter, too, can be read by a larger audience. (I discovered some years ago that one of the Doe Library’s retired reference librarians was a reader.)

Some of the newsletter’s features date back to our early years: summaries of our activities, members’ professional news, including welcoming new members and, increasingly in the past few years, *in memoria*, as well as reviews of members’ books. I want to put in a plea for writers to summarize our Monthly Programs. Today’s attendees seem reluctant to volunteer. We have a backlog of talks not yet written up. Keep in mind that it has become the custom that presenters share notes with the writer and review the article, making it less daunting than in the past. The task is easier, too, if one writes up the summary soon after the talk, while one’s memory is freshest. As to length, I’m flexible: a couple of columns (one page) or even three or four columns. I’ll say more about word count below.

A major change in the newsletter format came with cofounder Ellen Huppert’s suggestion in 2014 that the first page needed to be replaced with something more interesting than the president’s message and our masthead. First Page articles are short essays on any topic of history or history practice, including book reviews. (I’ve contributed in the past a couple of member interviews.) I like to have a cache of these articles on hand, to avoid panic as the quarterly deadline of the newsletter approaches. Since my cache has been depleted, please consider replenishing it and sharing recent interests or experience. Short means around 950 words—the amount of space to be covered is the uncolumned first page and half, or a bit more, of the back page.

A more recent feature is “History Remembered,” inspired by a comment on an NPR program to the effect that people born in the last decade of the 20th century, and later, knew nothing of the Cold War period. This got me thinking. I remember the thawing of that era in the late 1980s and 1990s. From this I realized that Institute members, primarily of middle and later age, were likely a gold mine of historical memory, an asset, not a liability, as some have worried. So I introduced “History Remembered,” personal accounts by members of their experiences during particular times. We began with a two-part segment by late member Bogna Lorence-Kot from her memoir in progress, followed by Leslie Friedman’s, “Moscow, 1985: Beginning of Transition.” Lyn Reese wrote of her work “Bringing the Global History of Women into the K-12 Classrooms.” I’ve been wanting to write about the all-too-short period of *glasnost*, especially its impact among Russian American communities and on the citizen diplomacy movement here in the San Francisco Bay Area. (At least I’ve started writing.) I hope that you will look back into what you

– *continued on back page*

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

On February 24th, the Institute held the first in-person annual membership meeting since the coronavirus pandemic hit in 2020. This meeting, which took place at the Golden Gate Branch of the Oakland Public Library, was also the first hybrid meeting, and many members attended on Zoom. Topics of discussion included the future of study groups, monthly programs, taking public stands on history-related issues, and membership recruitment and retention. For the program, Peter Crane, who joined the Institute in 2023, delivered an illuminating presentation on the lives of Leo and Sophia Tolstoy. The hybrid nature of the meeting proved to be a learning experience, and the Institute will purchase a microphone so that members attending the annual potluck and future membership meetings on Zoom can better hear those attending in-person.

The terms of two productive board members came to an end. Many thanks and much appreciation go to Michael Griffith, who served as treasurer, and Rob Robbins, who graciously volunteered to remain on the membership, mini-grant, and nominating committees.

A warm welcome is extended to new Institute board members John Barnard, who has authored the just-published book *The Creole Incident*,” and Pam Peirce, who is writing a book about her grandmother, Katharine Gibson Wicks. The returning board members in addition to myself are Jim Gasperini, Marilyn Geary, Dan Kohanski, Peter Meyerhof, Louis Trager, and Tim Welsh.

I am very pleased to report that three new members have joined the Institute: Alison Lingo, who is rejoining after an absence, my colleague Patricia Southard, and my sister, Alice Thacker. See member news on page 9.

Dan Kohanski has arranged a full slate of monthly programs for 2024, and several members have already delivered presentations: Peter Crane, Judith Robinson, Dot Brovarney, and Cathy Robbins. See page 13 for the forthcoming programs. Jim, as the Institute liaison to the National Coalition of Independent Scholars, and I have been working on collaborations with NCIS. In September, NCIS member Susan Breitzer will present a centennial program on antisemitism and the Immigration Act of 1924.

Finally, a big thank you to the members who made donations to the Institute when renewing their memberships.

– *Elizabeth Thacker-Estrada*

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

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

MONTHLY PROGRAMS

“First Ladies and Women’s Rights: Daughters of the Enlightenment”

On August 20, **Elizabeth Thacker-Estrada** and her colleague independent scholar Patricia Southard presented our Monthly Program, shining a bright light into a dim corner, at least for me, and I suspect for others too, of our earliest First Ladies. Patricia traced the history of women’s rights from colonial times through the years of the Early Republic. Within this context, Liz described the lives of presidential wives Martha Washington, Abigail Adams, Dolley Madison, Elizabeth Monroe, Louisa Adams and the presidential daughters of the widowed Thomas Jefferson. Their presentation created a surprising, fascinating tapestry of politics, people, manners and morés in a growing country.

One of the greatest constrictions to women’s lives at this time was the law of coverture in which a woman’s legal rights were subsumed by those of her husband, and wives, with rare exceptions, were unable to make wills or enter into contracts. Enlightenment values from Europe, however, provided the impetus for questioning restrictions to women’s lives. According to Patricia, the Enlightenment influenced founding mothers as well as founding fathers, emphasized the power of the pen, and supported the belief that women were equally as rational as men. The ideal of Republican Motherhood emphasized the importance of women in the development of the fledgling United States, advancing the role of formal education for women at a time when the number of female academies blossomed. This concept emphasized the crucial role mothers played in educating their children for the civic good. First Lady Abigail Adams, for one, exemplified Republican Motherhood. But as the revolutionary past receded, the notion of “true womanhood” became dominant and more restrictive, with the tenets of the “cult of

domesticity” stressing piety, submissiveness, domesticity, and purity for upper and middle-class White women. The doctrine of separate spheres—the public domain of men and the private realm of women—held sway.

Against this historical background, Liz spoke about the lives of the First Ladies whose tenures spanned the years 1789 to 1829. She described the relationship of presidential wives and daughters of this era to women’s rights and to their nascent activism on behalf of these rights. From the beginning, they advocated for women and the causes and activities they cherished, their voices and abilities growing to match the incipient movement for women’s rights.

Martha Washington began what has become a tradition of all First Ladies: taking on a personal social cause as her own. She advocated for the welfare of Revolutionary War soldiers and veterans. Forward thinking as well, she cautioned her niece to avoid the “wretched state” of dependence on others. Abigail Adams admonished her husband, John Adams, to “remember the ladies” in all his work. She championed for education for women, as did Martha Jefferson Randolph, daughter of President Jefferson. Abigail’s belief that women should not have to give birth to all of the children they were capable of bearing anticipated the 20th-century birth control movement. In violation of the law of coverture, Abigail wrote a will, which her husband executed upon her death. Her daughter-in-law, Louisa Adams, wife of John Quincy Adams, learned from Abigail’s example that women were not inferior to men in “mind and intellect.” Influenced by abolitionist and feminist Sarah Grimke, Louisa embraced abolitionism, coming to see that the oppression of Blacks and women sprang from similar motives.

First Lady Dolley Madison, wife of James Madison, kept a cool-head when she took government papers and the Gilbert Stuart

MONTHLY PROGRAMS

portrait of George Washington away from the White House for safekeeping when English troops were burning Washington during the War of 1812. She also helped the women of Washington establish an orphanage and acted as its “directress.” Fragile health prevented Elizabeth Kortright Monroe, wife of President James Monroe, from taking on an active public role while the couple occupied the White House. However, earlier in her marriage, as the wife of the US Minister to France, she visited the wife of the Marquis de Lafayette in prison, a gesture that saved the noblewoman from the guillotine during the French Revolution.

In an age when “ladylike” meant unseen, largely uneducated, and imprisoned by a social structure that made women the mistress of the home and virtually nothing else, these mini-portraits of First Ladies revealed a surprising and inspiring reevaluation of these foremothers’ attitudes and roles. What an extraordinarily interesting lot those First Ladies. What a wonderful discovery! The talk is available for members on YouTube.* If you missed the presentation, do have a look; it is a revelation. *<https://youtu.be/Qev56yEBDJw>

– *Bonda Lewis with Elizabeth Thacker-Estrada*

“Bringing History Alive from the Words of Those Who Were There”

At February’s Monthly Program **Judith Robinson** spoke about five of the ten biographies she has published. She described her acquaintance with her subjects and their friends. The quotations below are from her talk.

Children of Pride by Robert Manson Myers (1972) awakened Judith’s interest in biography. “I wanted to bring historical information from the bowels of the archives to light,” she said, “and make them available to people and historians.” She has written about individuals who have made impacts on America: the

HOW HISTORIANS WORK

Hearsts, Frances Mahoney, “the people’s lobbyist,” and William Ingraham Kip, first Episcopal Bishop of California. As legislative aide to Senator Gaylord Nelson (D-WA), she met and wrote about California’s Representative Phil Burton and Senator Alan Cranston.

First was *The Hearsts: An American Dynasty*, published by the University of Delaware (1991), then by Avon (1992). The book includes George Hearst, miner, and William Randolph Hearst, newspaperman, but Judith focuses on Phoebe Apperson Hearst. Her husband made his fortune in silver in the Comstock Lode. Judith writes, “He bought that hole in the ground and ultimately would own a number of mines in America, Mexico, and South America. . . .” He and Phoebe became immensely rich. Phoebe underwrote seven free kindergartens; the first was on Union Street in San Francisco. She became the first female regent of the University of California. She paid for buildings: “the Hearst pool, Hearst Mining Building, women’s gym, and notably a design for the entire campus. . . .” Her scholarships for women, starting in 1891, were the first at any public university in the US. These scholarships, nicknamed Phoebies, are still awarded. Her goal was to educate women so they could support themselves.

William Randolph Hearst wrote to his father about “our miserable little sheet,” but that sheet made him a “newspaper mogul.” Judith worked for the San Francisco *Examiner*, Hearst’s first newspaper, and was one of the first female editorial writers in the US, in the early 1980s. She reveals characters through quips. George Hearst answered his son who complained there were too many fools in the world. George said, “I would not be too hard on the fools if I were you, Willie. If everybody were very clever, you and I might have a pretty hard time getting along.”

Judith’s *You’re in Your Mother’s Arms*, is about Phillip Burton, Bay Area Democratic

MONTHLY PROGRAMS

congressman. The title quotes Burton's assurance for other representatives that they would not be "redistricted negatively for election purposes." Judith knew Burton personally while she was working for Senator Nelson, the founder of Earth Day. Burton wrote many of the environmental protection bills and led the fight for them. He was one of "a core of liberal members of Congress who enacted far-sighted bills in the 1970s." Phil Burton succeeded in "tripling the size of national park lands beyond what Teddy Roosevelt had accomplished in the 1910s." Burton recognized the irony of his role in environmental protection: "Wilderness experience for me was to see a tree in a goddamned pot." Others chimed in: "the longest Burton spent outdoors was to smoke a cigarette when it was not permitted inside." At Yellowstone, when rangers organized hikes, horseback rides, and fishing, his staff advised, "Get him a 'bottle of vodka and let him look out over the park from the comfort of a hotel.'"

He protected landowners near Point Reyes and promised that open spaces "would eventually go into a park." In Eureka, 1977, he promoted his bill to save many acres of redwood forests by creating a park. Residents were furious and frightened him. He offered "programs to help displaced workers. That placated the opposition . . . the park went forward and those trees were protected for posterity." Phil Burton fought for and won the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, the California Wilderness Bill, the preservation of Alcatraz Island, and sites in other states, such as the Women's Rights Convention of 1848 in Seneca Falls, New York. Burton called the results of determination and negotiation "parks for the people."

Burton died in 1983, in San Francisco; his memorial service was at Fort Mason. One hundred and twenty-five members of Congress arrived in three Air Force planes. Judith stood in

the crowd. "I said to myself, 'someone should write a book about this guy.' Then resolved, 'Do it yourself.'" Her book, highly praised by Assembly Speaker Willie Brown, sold out in 1994. Phil Burton's brother John gave a copy of the book to every San Francisco Public Library branch.

Alan Cranston Senator from California: Making "a Dent in the World" was written because Cranston and his sister hired Judith to write "an objective memoir," and they "did not in any way interfere with the final manuscript." A review of this biography will appear in a future newsletter.

It is not surprising that Judith was attracted to the subject of *Noble Conspirator: Florence S. Mahoney and the Rise of the National Institutes of Health*. Judith's father had told her to "eat the 'mold' on the cheese, it was penicillin." Chief Surgeon of the *Intrepid*, an aircraft carrier in the South Pacific, he rationed "precious penicillin, which had not yet been mass-produced. . . . He collected the urine of men to whom it was given and recycled the penicillin. I confirmed that with the health experts." The intrepid Frances married Dan Mahoney in 1926. A widower, his wealthy father-in-law, James Cox, had been a congressman, governor of Ohio three times, and lost the presidency to Warren Harding. Florence met "movers and shakers" through Mahoney. After bearing two sons, she supported the League of Nations and studied public health policy. She and Mahoney divorced in 1950. Florence moved to D.C. and bought a Georgetown home to be her HQ. She met Mary Lasker, the wife of "advertising mogul" Albert Lasker. Together they worked for biomedical breakthroughs.

Judith noted that Lasker and Mahoney saw that the US government lacked commitment to research using public money. "In 1944, there was one National Cancer Institute; the taxpayer-supported program grew into the National

MONTHLY PROGRAMS

Institutes of Health.” Mahoney and Lasker pushed NIH’s first National Institute on Mental Health, and, on her own, Mahoney prodded Congress to create an Institute on Aging, in 1974. Judith herself, while working as legislative aide to Senator Nelson, worked hard to keep the Cancer Institute in NIH, “to scientists’ great relief.” It was one of the first bills which Judith pushed through. (Once one has seen and read a Judith Robinson book, it is hard to imagine that she researched and wrote thorough and precise histories while working as legislative aide.)

Judith is a great-great granddaughter of the subject of *Gold Rush Bishop: William Ingraham Kip—First Episcopal Bishop of California and His Family* (Telegraph Hill Press, 2017). By telling the history of the Kip family, Robinson tells US history, especially that of California. The Kip of this biography “was asked to be missionary bishop to the wild west as the Gold Rush erupted.” He, his wife, and one son journeyed west from New York by flat bottomed boat, train, mules, ship, and on foot. Bandits attacked them. They were ship-recked off San Diego. They arrived in San Francisco in January 1854 and discovered the intellectuals and eccentrics of California. When Bishop Kip traveled to Southern California, part of his diocese, he found pro-slavery attitudes among the Episcopal congregations. He kept “his anti-slavery sympathies” to himself while there. His assignment required him to be apolitical. Bishop Kip observed a California style: “You speak to a miner in a red flannel shirt, about the geological formation of the mine in which he is working, and the first sentence of his answer—the very wording of it—shows him to be scientifically educated and by his training, an accomplished man.”

Judith Robinson’s biographies are enlightening and enjoyable, as was her talk that February Sunday afternoon. — *Leslie Friedman*

HOW HISTORIANS WORK

Round Table on Historians’ Work Oliver Pollak: “The Long Gestation”

In 2022 the Nebraska Jewish Historical Society in Omaha invited me, a cofounder, to give the keynote presentation celebrating their 40th anniversary. What should I talk about? I had written several books and hundreds of stories, many of which touched on Nebraska’s Jewish history, but I wanted something fresh. As I approached my 80th year I thought about my almost six decades as a professional historian and how I selected topics to explore. I remembered the unpublished typescript by Ella Fleishman Auerbach, “History of Jewish Settlement in Nebraska” (1927), which I had read in 1979 and which had been a springboard for many deep dives.

Later Rob Robbins and I gave a Monthly Program on our lives in history. Rob pointed out that Isaiah Berlin in *The Hedgehog and the Fox* (1953) identified two kinds of historians. “The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing.” Rob concentrated on Russia; I mined the histories of England, southern Africa, southeast Asia, and the Midwest, as well as the histories of higher education, print culture, and Jewish, legal, and culinary studies. I’m the fox.

I was raised in a loving home, surrounded by an almost wordless family history encompassing the pall of the two world wars, antisemitism, refugee life, concentration camps, their victims and survivors. My parents fled Germany and Austria in the late 1930s. My maternal grandfather survived Theresienstadt, my paternal grandmother did not. My family talked about the living rather than the dead and making a living in America rather than retrieving property lost in Europe. They had lived tenuously in Germany, Austria, France, Czechoslovakia, Palestine, and England. They grimaced when they heard German spoken in the supermarket.

HOW HISTORIANS WORK

The V2 rocket hole in our London neighborhood had become in postwar England a Guy Fawkes Day bonfire venue. Food rationing, inadequate housing, and limited educational opportunities suggested immigration. My parents contemplated Australia and South Africa but settled on the States where we had family. We boarded the *Liberté* and arrived in New York in November 1952; I was eight years old and kept some menus from the voyage. In retrospect I identify those menus as early evidence of historical sensibility. I read Horatio Hornblower books by C. S. Forester who, to my surprise, lived in Berkeley. I watched “Victory at Sea” with my father on a black and white TV, accompanied by the music of Richard Rodgers. I joined the Naval Reserve while in high school.

Approaching college graduation in 1964, I contemplated graduate work in history, librarianship, and law school. Perhaps the silent family history propelled my drifting along the path of least resistance into the mystery of unwritten history. I developed bibliographic habits and went to law school later. I love research, discovery, and sharing its fruits. I thrive on the notions “one thing leads to another,” “law of unexpected consequences,” “all history is autobiography,” and “stories within stories.” Sometimes you find the topic, sometimes the topic finds you. For instance, as an attorney specializing in consumer bankruptcy during the early 1990s, I noticed that the number of women filing bankruptcy seemed to be increasing, at least anecdotally. Using historical skills I confirmed that starting in the 1990s more women than men were filing for bankruptcy. That research made the front page of *USA Today* and drew the attention of then law professor Elizabeth Warren.

“Place,” *terroir*, has played an important role in selecting topics. My early life in England led to teaching English history in Africa and the US. Service in Vietnam (1965-67) nurtured an interest in Southeast Asia and my doctoral

dissertation on Burma, before it became Myanmar. During my first teaching appointment in Rhodesia before it was Zimbabwe I read and corresponded with Doris Lessing. Publishing a couple of articles on Southern African economic history contributed to getting a tenure-track teaching position in Nebraska. This was the mid-1970s, a dire period for securing academic humanities positions (a problem which was precisely the foundational motivation for establishing our Institute for Historical Study).

Moving to Omaha, Nebraska and living there for 42 years kindled interest in Nebraska and Jewish history. I read Willa Cather, befriended Tillie Olsen, and cofounded an historical society. I shared my findings in talks, newspapers, popular and peer-reviewed journals, book reviews, as well as eleven biographies, institutional histories, and reference books. I proposed a series entitled “International Historical Statistics” to G.K. Hall, publishers in Boston, and guided several scholars compiling eight volumes of the series. I taught English, Southeast Asian and Southern African history, and the required undergraduate seminar in historical research, assisting students with the goal of preparing a publishable article. I assigned *The Modern Researcher* as required reading. I find joy in historical methodology. As an undergraduate I had been introduced to *The Modern Researcher* (1957) coauthored by Columbia University scholars Jacques Barzun (1907-2012) and Henry Graff (1921-2020, a victim of Covid-19). I also curated a library exhibition, “A Work In Progress, Jacques Barzun and ‘Six Editions of *The Modern Researcher*, 1957- 2003,” as well as several other print culture exhibits.

In 1979 I revived my law school ambition to improve employment possibilities in university administration as well as geographic mobility. I graduated from Creighton University School of Law in 1981. I volunteered at Legal Aid and enjoyed the adversarial environment. Teaching

full-time while going to law school and running a law office for 35 years necessitated careful scheduling. The law degree fostered an interest in legal history, and I wrote and published the centennial history of the law school.

Retiring from my academic position in 2012 and leaving the practice of law in 2016, I moved to California and started two local projects, both unfinished—history of the Contra Costa County Jewish community and a 59,000 word account of the Institute.

The internet has made archival and primary sources enormously more accessible. WorldCat, JSTOR, Link+ interlibrary loan, and ever expanding online digitized newspapers, government documents, census records, city directories, journals and books has accelerated research and strengthened my penchant for chasing down new stories and digging deeper. (I recommend “Digitized Newspapers and the Hidden Transformation of History” by Heidi J. S. Tworek in the March 2024 issue of the *American Historical Review*.) Scholarly Zoom programs presenting fresh ideas and validating sound practice are of inestimable value.

I titled my 2022 Omaha presentation “The Long Gestation.” I had frequently referred to Ella Auerbach’s “Jewish Settlement” manuscript over the decades. The *New York Times* Monday edition “Overlooked” obituary column recognizes people whose death and contribution went unrecognized by the *Times*. I am attempting to do justice to Ella’s historical legacy, virtually ignored at the time of her death at age 78 in 1972. Ella, a high school graduate, an Omaha *Daily Bee* and Omaha *World-Herald* journalist, volunteered with the Jewish Welfare Board to serve in France in 1919; she coauthored *History of Medicine in Nebraska* (1930), visited Moscow with her husband in 1937, and traveled the world. Why did it take from 1979 to 2022 to write her story? I had written encyclopedia

entries for Barbara Tuchman, Tillie Olsen, and Mary Arbitman Fellman in 1997 for *Jewish Women in America: An Historical Encyclopedia*. Sometimes the fox does not recognize the significance of his prey. My forthcoming article, “The Mohel’s Daughter: Ella Fleishman Auerbach, Journalist, Historian and Traveler, 1894-1972,” corrects my oversight.

At the 137th annual meeting of the American Historical Association in San Francisco this past January, I was listed among the 580 members who had belonged for 50 years or more. I plan to be an active historian for as long as I love it and continue to be surrounded by the vital stimulants—the Institute, the Book Club of California, historical societies, the Richmond Museum of History, Zoom, discussion, and travel—that reveal new topics to explore. I have thanked my wife Karen since the 1960s for her assistance in proofreading and editorial suggestions. Remembering to say “please” and “thank you” to those who assist in life’s journey is part of my mantra.

– *Oliver B. Pollak*

Writers Group

At our Winter sessions, the group focused on the work of Pam Peirce and Jim Gasperini. In January and again in March we discussed two sections of Pam’s biography of her grandmother, Katharine Gibson. The materials presented in January covered a ten-year period from the death of Katharine to the death of her mother. Those presented in March examined Katharine’s descent into mental illness, attempted suicide, and her incarceration, first in an private asylum, and later, her confinement in a large state-run facility. The group felt that the January materials presented the most problems due to the complexity of events—a series of traumas that pushed Katharine towards mental distress. The sources available tended to shift the focus from Katharine to her mother and to

MEMBER NEWS

dilute somewhat the story of Katharine's decline. The March material was deemed especially strong, both in terms of Pam's writing and the gripping story that she had to tell.

In February we looked at a somewhat revised version of a chapter in Jim's book "A Fire in the Mind" that he had presented in December. The material treated the symbolic and metaphoric use of fire in a number of different cultures. Jim was responding to suggestions that he refine his "encyclopedic" approach and produce a clearer line of "argument" in the chapter. The group agreed that Jim had moved successfully in the proposed direction. The group's reaction could be summed up in the word "Onward," encouraging Jim in his efforts to move forward toward the publication of this exciting work.

– *Rob Robbins*

In Memoriam

Georgiana Davidson, a long-time member of the Institute, passed away in January of this year after an extended illness. A scholar of early modern Europe, Georgiana earned her BA at the University of Michigan and her MA at Case Western University. After completing her MA, she instructed in a US government program on Okinawa and then taught Latin in the Palo Alto schools. In 1964, she entered the PhD program at UC Berkeley, where she wrote her dissertation on Caesar Baronius, an important figure in the Counter Reformation.

Georgiana was doing research in Rome when the Arno River flood of 1966 devastated Florence. After rushing to the city, she worked for one of the agencies seeking to rescue the multitude of books, archives, and art works damaged by the flood.

After returning to Berkeley, Georgiana became an adjunct instructor at St. Mary's College in Moraga and at California Polytechnic State

University in San Luis Obispo before finishing her dissertation in 1981. She then joined the Office of Admissions and Records at UC Berkeley, where she worked for many years. Georgiana was an active member of the Institute and also of the Western Association of Women Historians.

In the early 2000s, Georgiana moved to Cleveland to be closer to family. A lover of film, classical music, and opera, Georgiana was a warm and gracious presence whose company was treasured by her friends and all those who had the good fortune of knowing her.

– *Mike Griffith*

Welcome New Members

Actually it is "welcome back" to **Alison Klairmont Lingo**, who was previously a member of the Institute. Alison received her Ph.D. in history from UC Berkeley. Following her dissertation, "The Rise of Medical Practitioners in Sixteenth-Century France: The Case of Lyon and Montpellier," she has written numerous articles for a variety of scholarly publications in the area of early modern medicine, including the topics of female medical practitioners, women's health, midwifery, history of the body. In 2014 she joined the Department of History at UCB as research associate. Alison received the Josephine Roberts Award for the best scholarly edition in the field of early modern women and gender published in 2017: Louise Bourgeois, *Midwife to the Queen of France*. She is currently exploring the debate about medical instruments and female midwives in France in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Institute president Elizabeth Thacker-Estrada recruited not only her colleague Patricia Southard but also her sister Alice Joanna Thacker, whom she introduces here. **Patricia Southard** has degrees in library & information science, gerontology, and psychology. Most recently, she worked at the Golden Gate

MEMBER NEWS

National Recreation Area Park Archives in San Francisco. She has written and lectured on a variety of subjects including the history of libraries and archives, holocaust survivors, aging, women's health, life transitions, and caregiving. She and Liz are researching and speaking on the relationship between US first ladies and women's rights from colonial times to the present. They are planning a book based on their research.

Alice Joanna Thacker earned her doctorate in mental health at St. George's Hospital Medical School, University of London. Now retired, she was a senior lecturer there and a visiting tutor at Oxford University. She has had a keen interest in the history that surrounds her life in the U.K. and has been active in a variety of projects. She and her husband Bruce volunteered as excavators at the Neolithic Ness of Brodgar, an archeological site on the main island of Orkney, Scotland. They live in London on the site of the William Morris and Arthur Liberty cloth mills, a perfect setting for her to demonstrate her talent in historical textiles: spinning, dyeing, and knitting period costumes. On the grounds of the nearby medieval Merton Priory, close to the Chapter House, Alice is planning and planting a monastic garden that will feature herbal remedies and dye plants. She is looking forward to becoming acquainted with fellow Institute members in both the US and the UK.

Elizabeth Thacker-Estrada was invited to serve on the Advisory Board of the Correspondence of Zachary Taylor and Millard Fillmore Project, an initiative of American University's Center for Congressional and Presidential Studies. Three volumes of the presidents' selected letters will be published. She also participated as a panelist in the program "In Sickness and in the White House: First Ladies' Illnesses" hosted by the First Ladies Association for Research and Education (FLARE). Liz spoke about First Ladies Elizabeth Monroe,

Letitia Tyler, Margaret Taylor, Abigail Fillmore, and Jane Pierce, and how, despite their ill health, they contributed to their husbands' presidential administrations. Together with **Patricia Southard**, Liz presented "First Ladies and Women's Rights, 1989-2009: A Century Ends, A Millennium Begins" at the Merced Branch of the San Francisco Public Library. They spoke about First Ladies Barbara Bush, Hillary Clinton, and Laura Bush.

At the annual meeting of Pro Ticino Nord California in March, **Marilyn Geary** read from her book *Miners, Milkers & Merchants: From the Swiss-Italian Alps to the Golden Hills of Australia and California*. She is also pleased to report that the book is being translated into Italian by the Swiss publisher Armando Dadò, to be released in August 2024.

Maria Sakovich was invited to speak to the Russophone Los Angeles Research Collective about the earliest days (1922-1931) in the development of the second Russian Orthodox church in California, Holy Virgin Mary in Los Angeles. "My presentation preparation brought me back to research I had undertaken in the 1990s when I had first become interested in the post-Bolshevik emigration in California. The box labeled LA and the Golitsin family and Zoya Leonard folders brought forth treasures I had forgotten about. Very satisfying to bring this material to light."

Oliver Pollak's article "Disbelief and Disability: Vivian Edwards' Transcontinental Goat Cart Odyssey, 1907-1910" was published in the Spring 2024 issue of the *Nebraska History Magazine*. The subject had its first public debut as a Monthly Program in February 2023.

Jody (aka Judith) Offer provided an update to her work with the group of volunteers at the North Star House in Grass Valley for the staged reading of her "Scenes From the Life of Julia

MEMBER NEWS

Morgan.” “All reports are positive,” she wrote. “One of the actors put together an excellent slide show of Julia’s work to run with the reading. Another has brought in lighting, and the sister of the director is a professional costumer and has taken over the costuming. The director keeps in touch and reports they seem to be having a very fun time. So I think it will be good for North Star in every way. And I get paid. Can it get any better?”

Sondra Herman contributed a chapter to *Alva Myrdal: A Pioneer in Nuclear Disarmament* (Springer Cham, 2022). “Solidarity Abroad: Alva Myrdal’s Campaign for the Developing Nations” is the only chapter in the book not about her work for nuclear disarmament. Sondra also reports that she has written and self-published a memoir, *My People, Our Places*. “Among the sketches are childhood and college friends, people I met and kept in touch with in the Netherlands, and Professor John Higham for whom I was a research assistant when I was a graduate student at Rutgers University; the memoir concludes with an extended piece on my husband, Frank Herman, who died in August 2021. I recommend memoir-writing both as a pastime and as a gift to your family, especially grown children. I would love to hear about members’ experience with memoir-writing.”

Again this year (April 20th) **Peter Stansky** hosted “A Company of Authors,” presentations by Stanford writers and editors about their recently published books. **Leslie Friedman** chaired one of the panels, “Taking Action.”

Pam Peirce has cowritten an article on the Unitarian minister Rev. Dr. Frank Scott Cory Wicks (1868-1952), whose ministerial career took place primarily at All Souls Unitarian Church in Indianapolis, 1905-1937. The short biography will appear in the *Journal of Unitarian Universalist Studies*, Vol. XLVII

(Summer 2024). Later, a shortened version of the article will appear in the online Dictionary of Unitarian Universalist Biography (uudb.org).

Nathan Foxton’s solo exhibit of his art opens at Moth Belly Gallery (912 Larkin Street, San Francisco) on June 6th and up through June 29th.

In connection with the publication of her book (see below) **Bonnie Portnoy** “is celebrating two solo exhibitions. A four-month exhibit just concluded on March 30 at the Museum of Sonoma County—‘Tilden Daken: The Art of Adventure.’ A second exhibition of the same title, also curated by Museum of Sonoma County, showcases this spring in the House of Happy Walls Museum at Jack London State Historic Park, from April 19 through June 23. ‘My mother is looking down with tremendous pride—Tilden and Jack will be together again on Beauty Ranch.’”

Members’ New Books

Celeste MacLeod: After years of hard work and dedication, I am pleased to announce the release of my new book, *A Woman of Unbearable Opinions: Fanny Trollope, Dynamic Satirist*. now available on Amazon.*

Americans were furious in 1832 when English visitor Fanny Trollope’s satirical travel book *Domestic Manners of the Americans* made fun of their insistence that they lived in the most exceptional country in recorded human history. But when she went back to England and wrote novels advocating for social justice, British reviewers accused her of being a dangerous radical. And when she wrote novels about English women’s experiences in oppressive marriages, reviewers excoriated these books as crude and vulgar.

* <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0CJSYLX4Z>

MEMBER NEWS

By examining Trollope's life and the controversies generated by her writing, *A Woman of Unbearable Opinions* invites readers to consider the enduring relevance of these issues and encourages reflection and discussion in the context of modern society. Fanny Trollope's writings remind us that many of the challenges and debates she confronted in the 19th century are still very much a part of our contemporary world.

The book delves into the fascinating life of a dynamic woman whom I greatly admire, and I believe it will resonate with readers of varied backgrounds and interests. I would be honored if you would consider reading it and sharing your thoughts with me.

Bonnie Portnoy: My fully illustrated biography *The Man Beneath the Paint: California Impressionist Tilden Daken* has just been published. Institute member Rose Marie Cleese performed the final honing of my manuscript with great aplomb.

About fifteen years ago, I joined the Institute and its Writers Group after launching my legacy project on artist Tilden Daken (1876-1935). Famous in his day, he was the grandfather I never knew. My 25-year research and writing journey began in 1999 while my mother was still living, the older of Daken's two daughters, both born in Glen Ellen. I grew up hearing the stories from my mother of her father's friendship with Jack London.

Raised in Sacramento, Tilden Daken began to paint en plein air at the age of six, studied classical music, and mined for gold with his father in the Sierra Nevada foothills. Today he is considered one of the most prolific and adventurous painters in the American West. Historians claim he painted more than 4,000 works—landscapes in every California state park and national park in the West—from the

redwood forests, to the High Sierra, to beneath the Pacific in a custom-built diving bell.

The covers feature a beautiful tribute to Tilden's legacy by Armando Quintero, director of California State Parks and a blurb by Nancy Dustin Wall Moure, the noted California art historian. The foreword is written by Matt Leffert, executive director of Jack London Park Partners. The book will be available in selected indie bookstores and museum shops, and online through the Nevada Museum of Art bookstore.

Mary Judith Robinson announced the publication of her *Memoir of a Reluctant Debutante or When in Danger, Breathe*. From the back cover: "She has had a career as a journalist, editorial writer, legislative assistant in the US Senate and House of Representatives. Adventures included exploring mind-expanding drugs that took her on unique journeys. Lessons learned were that 'All things pass—a sunrise does not last all morning.' She is the author of ten published biographies [five of which formed the basis of her Monthly Presentation in February—see page 4]. Her ancestors were colonial settlers of New England and New York, pioneers to the Midwest who settled Kansas City, Missouri, Lawrence and Wichita, Kansas, a founding professor of the University of Kansas, and the first Episcopal Bishop of California. The memoir can be ordered from Judith: Telegraph Hill Press, 562 B Lombard Street, San Francisco, CA 94133-7057.

*Only at the last minute did I learn of the recent publication of yet another member's book: **John Hyde Barnard's** The Creole Incident: The Beginning of the End of Slavery. He will introduce it in the summer newsletter. —Ed.*

BOOK REVIEW

In *Mendocino Refuge: Lake Leonard & Reeves Canyon*, Dot Brovarney takes readers deep into the heart of redwood country, to Mendocino County's largest natural lake and the rugged expanse of Reeves Canyon.

Dot's narrative begins by tracing the primordial origins of the terrain, its flora and fauna. From there, she celebrates the original people of this region, the Pomo Indians and their profound spiritual ties to the land and its waters. Two chapters focus on the Pomo, one describing their rich cultural heritage and spiritual traditions, the second laying out the history of colonization. Stories and songs of Coyote and the water monster Bagil, along with a depiction of the singing doctor Charlie Bowen, paint vivid images of the Pomo people's close connection with nature.

Dot traces through the centuries the complex interplay between human activity and the environment. The advent of California statehood brought a seismic shift, as waves of White settlers irrevocably altered the landscape. The book chronicles the encroachment of logging and the efforts of landowners to preserve the wilderness with its old growth redwoods. At the core of Brovarney's narrative are individuals who shaped the destiny of the region: from John Leonard, the pioneer farmer who gave name to the lake, to the formidable presence of Hazel Dickinson Putnam, who fiercely safeguarded the ancient redwoods with shotgun in hand.

Drawing from historical artifacts discovered in a trunk once owned by Putnam, Dot meticulously pieces together stories of the characters populating Lake Leonard and Reeves Canyon in the early 20th century. In particular, she shines a spotlight on two remarkable women: Hazel Dickinson Putnam and Una Boyle. In the details of their lives, the reader is afforded a glimpse into the struggles and joys of life in the remote wilderness.

Throughout the narrative, the reader accompanies the author as she conducts impeccable research in archives, in oral histories, and through interviews with subject-matter experts. She is relentless in pursuit of answers, connections, reasons why. Readers feel her frustration as she bumps up against brick walls and her exhilaration when, for example, she discovers Una Boyle's correspondence. A former curator of the Grace Hudson Museum in Ukiah, California, Dot augments the text with evocative and informative images: photographs, maps, documents, and newspaper excerpts.

Through its exploration of local lore and historical anecdotes, its descriptions of people intertwined with place, *Mendocino Refuge* offers readers an engaging journey through time, inviting them to discover the rich tapestry of history that lies beneath the surface of Lake Leonard and Reeves Canyon.

– Marilyn L. Geary

Forthcoming Monthly Programs

May 19: **Program cancelled.**

June 16: **Dan Kohanski** – Judaism, Christianity, and war

July 21: **Esther Mordant** – the Norwich blood libel

August 18: **Peter Meyerhof** – the early Chinese of Sonoma Valley

September 16: **Susan Breitzer** – antisemitism and the Immigration Act of 1924

October 20: **John Barnard** – the Creole incident

November 17: **Jim Gasperini** – fire rituals: theory and practice

No program in December – Happy Holidays!

have lived through and consider sharing an experience or two. (Be sure to read the member news item on page 11 sent in by Sondra Herman and her comment on the value of memoir-writing. The newsletter is an opportunity to experiment with the genre.)

On occasion I have used the term “Special” to designate a category for longer-than-usual articles or those that don’t quite fit into an established space. In the fall 2020 newsletter I published Jim Gasperini’s “Whatever Happened to Great-Uncle Jay?” as “a departure from newsletter tradition,” noting that “if there are enough motivated writers, such articles could be occasionally included.” David Rosen submitted two longer essays. I included “Remembering a Second Home in Swabia” as a “Special” and “Querido – Not a Teaspoon of Warm Water” as “History Remembered.”

Just in the previous issue of the newsletter, Rob Robbins’ article “Notes of a One-Note Historian,” based on his talk for the October presentation with Oliver Pollak, suggested a possible new series: “How Historians Work.” Both Rob and Oliver talked about their research and writing during their many years-long careers in university history departments. But new contributors to this topic need not be from the academy. We are a diverse group who can shed light on the diverse ways that historians work.

The “takeaway” from this outline of categories is that if you wish to write an article for the newsletter, even if “longer than usual,” there is generally enough flexibility to accommodate your piece. While my predecessor as editor, cofounder Lorrie O’Dell, firmly believed in 600-word summaries of “Works in Progress” (the earlier name of our Monthly Programs), I don’t hold to a specific length. But remember that a newsletter is best for shorter articles. (I must smile here: a member jokingly called this edition of 14 pages, well 13.5 pages, “the Moby Dick (or maybe more like War and Peace) of newsletters!”)

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