

# THE INSTITUTE FOR HISTORICAL STUDY

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# NEWSLETTER

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## **“Hamburgers – The Making of a Cultural Icon” by Bertram Gordon**

As a graduate student at Rutgers University during the 1960s, I was exposed to the theme of food in history when most historical studies focused on military, diplomatic, and political concerns. I arrived later at Mills College to find that the college had a January mini-semester in which instructors were encouraged to offer subjects that they might not during the fall or spring terms. I thought of cuisine history; I was impressed by the contributions to American foodways made by the German-American community, the largest ethnic group in this country. This led me to the hamburger, whose history I later discussed in papers in California, France, Austria, and most recently for the Oakmont Lifelong Learning group in Santa Rosa.

A few foods have assumed a culturally iconic status as religious, social, or national symbols, an example of which is bread, “the staff” of life, mentioned in the Old Testament Book of Ezekiel and later referred to as “the staff of life” by Jonathan Swift. The croissant has been depicted as a symbol of French cuisine. In the United States the use of “hamburger” as a political image illustrates how the term has become an emblem extending far beyond its actual function as a food. It has gained a notoriety, sometimes seen as America’s “national” dish, shown by the many stories of how, where, when, and by whom it was supposedly invented. That people care about the origins of the hamburger and where and when the first one was consumed attests to its cultural significance.

There are varying accounts of the hamburger’s origins. Chopped raw beef, now called Steak Tartare, was known in Central Asia and in medieval Europe. An instruction on how to make “Hamburgh sausages,” using “minced” beef, appears in Hannah Glasse’s well-known *The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy*, published in London in 1758. “Hamburg Beef” and “Hamburg Steak” may be found in early 19th century English and American cookbooks, in forms very different from today’s ground beef versions. A recipe for “Beef, Hamburgh” in Arnold James Cooley, *A Cyclopaedia of Several Thousand Practical Receipts* (1846), calls for pickling the beef for three weeks, with salt, treacle, and saltpeter, then drying it in “wood smoke.” An increasing interest in the hamburger is evidenced in the story of a menu marked as 1834 from Delmonico’s Restaurant in New York, which listed “Hamburger Steak,” and was said to be the first mention of hamburger on a menu. Later research, however, established the menu’s date as the late 1880s.

Early factors supporting the growth in popularity of the hamburger were the coming of electricity and freezing technology. The 20th century brought the automobile and the drive-in burger restaurant. The modern American hamburger took off after World War I, based on inexpensive beef—fed on the “grass of Uncle Sam,” facilitated by the growth of railways. Sandwiches were known in the nineteenth century and there were few anti-beef taboos in the late 19th and early 20th century Western world. The hand-held grinder, patented in 1869, or “meat-chopper,” as it was called in an 1886 advertisement, also facilitated the production of ground beef. Health concerns played a role as well. According to the 1886 advertisement: “Eminent physicians advise dyspeptics . . . to eat Hamburg Steaks cut by the Enterprise Meat-Chopper.” The first hamburger on a bun is said to have been made by Oscar and Fanny Bilby of Tulsa, Oklahoma, to celebrate the Fourth of July in 1891. Others date the bun to Drexel’s Pure Food Restaurant and Lunch in Chicago in 1917.

“Hamburger Steak,” both plain and with onions, was listed on a Luchow-Faust World’s Fair Restaurant menu at the 1904 Saint Louis World’s Fair, sometimes said to mark the emergence of several popular foods,

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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This issue marks the end of an era for the Institute newsletter. This is the last issue with Maria Sakovich as newsletter editor and Anne MacLachlan as copy editor. Their careful and conscientious work has, for many years, produced an excellent quarterly publication. Maria has edited the newsletter for exactly 14 years; she could always count on the oversight of the copy editors, Anne MacLachlan, beginning with the fall 2019 issue, and before her, Ann Harlow.

For Maria the newsletters celebrating the Institute's 40th anniversary and responding to the early days of the pandemic were especially satisfying. Over the course of the year, beginning in Fall 2019, the "40th-Anniversary Extra" featured an article or excerpts from articles from the oldest newsletters. "Report on the New York Conference" (from Volume I, No. 1) presented the historical context for the establishment of the Institute. (The article was not signed.) The last article in the series was Joanne Lafler's article "Of VDT's, CRT's and Historians: An Editorial" (from December 15, 1982). As Maria wrote: "Something else was afoot besides the new movement of independent scholarship: the digital revolution. And revolution it proved to be for history research."

For the summer 2020 issue members responded enthusiastically to Maria's request for "stories in the general area of 'living during a historic moment' or historically interesting times: either currently or some other time during your lives." Her parenthetical comment—"the 1918-1919 pandemic seems not to inhabit space in our collective memories"—generated a great deal of interest as well as three articles.

As newsletter editor, Maria had the sad task of compiling tributes to most of the founding members—Ellen Huppert, Georgia Wright, Lorrie O'Dell, and Joanne Lafler. The format asked members to share their memories. (Frances Richardson Keller—who introduced me to the Institute—died in 2007, but she had also received the collective "In Memoriam.")

I want to thank Maria and Anne for their dedicated work on and outstanding contributions to the IHS newsletter, and, by extension, to the Institute.

In other Institute news, mini-grant applications are due on September 15 (see page 9). In partnership with the National Coalition of Independent Scholars, the Institute will observe the centennial of the Immigration Act of 1924. For the Monthly Program on September 15, NCIS member Susan Breitzer will speak on the topic of antisemitism and the Immigration Act. The annual potluck will take place on Saturday, September 21 from 12:00-2:30 p.m. at Lyn Reese's home in Berkeley. Again we are planning a hybrid picnic potluck so that members who are unable to participate in-person are able to attend virtually via Zoom.

– *Elizabeth Thacker-Estrada*

## NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Maria Sakovich

## COPY EDITOR

Anne MacLachlan

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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## MONTHLY PRESENTATION

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### “Mendocino Refuge: A World Apart and A Part of the World”

For the March monthly presentation, **Dot Brovarney**, introduced us to some of the people, plants, and animals that have inhabited the wild Reeves Canyon on California’s North Coast. She spent eight years researching and writing *Mendocino Refuge: Lake Leonard and Reeves Canyon* (2022), producing an in-depth portrait that is a blend of regional history, environmental history, and character study. Dot carefully selected her subjects for the hour-long talk—“two hardy women, two Pomo men, Mendocino’s natural world”—who helped “reveal the many connections between this rural place and the larger world.” She amply illustrated this exploration into this past with photographs, maps, paintings by artist Grace Hudson (known especially for her portraits of Pomo people), and even poetry.

A little here about the land: In some photographs Lake Leonard gives the appearance of being located in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, much higher than its actual 1800 feet. The lake and Reeves Canyon are part of the upper Russian River watershed in the Northern Coastal Range of mountains. This area’s remoteness also makes it appear to be much farther away than the dozen or so miles up the road from the town of Ukiah in Mendocino County. Geologic studies of this near-pristine lake date its origin to at least 3,500 years ago, when a landslide came down on a spring-fed creek. Despite the sometimes intensive logging in the area over the years, the lake is still surrounded by old growth Redwood and Douglas Fir trees.

Dot’s profiles of the two Pomo men, Charlie Bowen and Stephen Knight, provide insight into traditional Pomo life and into the drastic changes brought about by European American incursion into this place. Charlie Bowen was born in 1850; at the age of ten he was chosen by

an uncle to train for the sacred role of “singing doctor.” As part of this training and practice he had access to supernatural places, where he would go with his medicine sack to gather healing materials and return to the village. Another role that Charlie took on much later in his life was consultant to the many anthropologists who came to study Pomo life. What struck Dot was the absence of Lake Leonard in all the interviews provided by the singing doctor. The lake was an obvious place of healing powers. “Had he talked about this powerful place, he may have broken part of his oath. The consequences for that was that as a doctor himself, he might have become sick, or worse yet lose his power to heal.”

Stephen Knight, a Yokaia Pomo, became a crusader to restore land rights and to challenge broken treaties between the Pomo people and the American government. Briefly stated, in 1850 the US Army marched into Pomo country and massacred villagers of what is now Upper Lake (in Lake County); as they continued west they murdered Pomo inhabitants of the Ukiah valley area. The numbers killed range from 60 to 800. A year later the US government offered a peace treaty. The Pomo people agreed to leave their traditional land in exchange for protection from White vigilantes “which was an ongoing horrific problem.” Congress never ratified the treaty, which included other provisions as well. In its stead was the establishment of a reservation in Round Valley in 1864, “where a number of different tribes were expected to coexist, some of whom had been historic enemies.” The abuses of Native peoples did not cease. Finally Pomo people just left the reservation, returned to their original homeland, and managed over time to purchase small acreages that became rancherias, extant even to this day.

In 1922 Stephen Knight led a delegation of California Indians to Washington, DC to lobby for compensation for lost lands. While California’s Congressional senators and

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representatives supported these efforts, the full Congress did not. Only in 1944 did the Pomo and other Native peoples receive a ruling that gave \$17 million in restitution. However, “government costs” reduced this sum to \$5 million; the surviving 136,000 California Indians received a paltry \$150 each. Steven Knight and his co-crusaders, though, did put up a good fight and provided inspiration for later efforts. Beginning in the 1990s and increasingly into this century, Pomo people and other California Natives began acquiring reparations in the form of parcels of their ancient lands.

Dot chose entrepreneur Tapping Reeves to represent the logging portion of the history of the canyon which bears his name. Very briefly, though Reeves came to California for gold, by the late 1850s he was in Mendocino County working for Albion Mill on the coast. By 1864 he and a couple of partners established their own mill. In 1874 Reeves bought an inland sawmill in the canyon and made it work. In 1881 he sold his mill to an ambitious Boston mining company which had grandiose plans to construct a flume 13 miles in length, with “six tunnels that involved blasting through ridges in four different watersheds.” Had the flume been built, the destruction of the land and its plant and wildlife would have been great. “Luckily . . . the capitalists failed to raise the necessary capital.”

“I felt it was extraordinary to find two such strong hardy females in this tiny crack of earth in the North Coast Ranges,” Dot stated. Una Boyle, whose parents bought the lake in 1885, was born there in 1890 and spent her life at Lake Leonard, eventually acquiring the moniker “Lady of the Lake.” Despite the challenges, in 1921 at the age of 30 she chose to stay at the lake year round; most inhabitants stayed for just the long summers. She wrestled with the winters – creek flooding, trees falling, bridges collapsing; she tried her hand at raising sheep; her nature observations contributed to the work

of others; she hosted interesting visitors, well-know thoracic surgeon Leo Eloesser of San Francisco and Frederick Law Olmstead, Jr. to name two. Una had a front-row seat to the changes in the logging industry. She wrote to her friend Bea Howitt: “The slaughter of the poor trees—I really hate the destruction. Not only the trees wrecked but the ground bulldozed to an extent of ruin; it would break your heart.”

Dot designated her second woman, Hazel Dickson Putnam, “the Lady of the Canyon.” Born in 1899 in Ukiah where her father practiced medicine, she grew up among a menage of family horses and Bruno the bear; the horses would inspire her teen-age study of dressage. By the time she was five years old, her father had purchased 400 acres in Reeves Canyon, providing her and her siblings an “understanding of nature” and their love of trees. At the summer cabin on Mill Creek, Hazel became well adapted to life in the woods. Although she and her husband Harry Putnam lived in the East Bay, they returned to these woods every summer. In 1960 they returned to the canyon permanently. Among her activities was teaching “a bunch of hippie ladies to ride.” Until her death the locals knew her as “quite a character, a tough old bird.”

The story of Reeves Canyon and Lake Leonard ends with a righting of some of the wrongs of the previous 100 years. After Una Boyle died in 1951 the family property was sold to the Dakin family. Not only did Dick and Susanna Dakin embrace a rather unusual agreement, to protect the lake habitat forever, two of their adult children and a grandson in 1998 placed a conservation easement not only on the lake property but also on the additional properties they had acquired, for a total of 4,000 acres. In perpetuity wild life, wildlife corridors, native plants would be protected, “creating refuge so needed in our changing world.”

– *Maria Sakovich*

## MONTHLY PRESENTATIONS

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### “Judaism, Christianity, and War”

“We are not a nice species,” **Dan Kohanski** began our June presentation, in which he explained “How the Way These Two Religions Developed Changed the Way We Look at War.” He estimates that in the 5,000 years during which we have documented our history, we recorded no wars during only about 300 of these years—and many conflicts went unrecorded. In the Ancient Near East (from Egypt through the Fertile Crescent to Persia and Mesopotamia), somebody was almost always waging war against somebody else.

The many wars discussed in the Bible can be classed into three broad categories: local wars, imperial wars, and mythical wars. Most numerous were the many local conflicts the two Israelite kingdoms had with each other and with their neighbors. More consequential were the imperial wars between the Egyptians, Hittites, and a succession of empires based in Mesopotamia. To attack each other, the armies of these imperial superpowers of the day often marched through the thin strip of land along the eastern Mediterranean called Canaan (later Palestine). Frequently one side or another would make the Israelite states vassals to serve as convenient buffers.

When the ancient Israelites lost wars, they tended to blame this on their failure to strictly follow their god Yahweh. Certain prophets also tried to explain these events as resulting from moral failings. The destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 586 BCE posed a major theological problem. How could Yahweh have permitted such a disaster? Could it mean that the Babylonian god Marduk was more powerful than Yahweh? Ultimately this event solidified the belief that Yahweh used war to punish the Israelites for their sins.

Two examples of mythical wars were the war of annihilation against the Amelikes during the Israelites’ journey through Sinai and the

conquest of Canaan by Joshua, who was commanded by God to kill, expel, or enslave all the previous inhabitants. Though this never actually happened, the myth became a model for later wars of annihilation at the unquestionable command of God. During the period from the 2nd century BCE to the 2nd century CE, many Jews came to believe that they were witnessing a war between good and evil and that the end of the world was at hand. After the failure of a large-scale revolt against the Roman Empire, however, “they backed away from this idea.”

The notion that the end of the world could happen at any point had a major influence on early Christianity. The Book of Revelation predicted the wrathful, violent return of Jesus after a final battle between good and evil. Most early Christians were pacifist, however, enjoying the benefits of the Pax Romana and refusing to join the Roman army. That attitude changed when the Emperor Constantine, fighting a rival during the Battle of Milvian Bridge (312 CE), saw a cross in the air and heard a voice saying *In hoc signo vinces* (by this sign, conquer). When his soldiers put a Christian symbol on their shields and won the battle, he made Christianity a tolerated religion. In 380 under Theodosius it became the official state religion of the empire. This made the Roman army, and all an army does, a Christian responsibility. A theological justification for war was needed.

Using novel interpretations of Biblical texts and the writings of Cicero, the influential Bishops Ambrose and Augustine devised a doctrine of “just war.” Dan summarized their thinking as “One must not wage war with passion, but with love.” Augustine made an exception for wars of annihilation commanded by God, citing Joshua’s Conquest. Over the next six centuries, Church doctrine gradually evolved from the idea that just wars could sometimes be permitted by the Church to the idea that holy wars could be commanded by the Church.

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This change culminated in the Crusades. During the First Crusade of 1096-1099, a religious war against Islam, fighters could win remission of their sins through participation in war. The massacre of the population of Jerusalem in 1099 was justified by reference to Joshua's war of conquest. Dan briefly cited other "Holy Wars" (the Inquisition, the Albigensian Crusade, wars of religion in France, the Thirty Years War); he then discussed in detail a more recent example on our own shores: the Pequot Massacre in 1637. Puritan soldiers killed all the inhabitants of a camp of Pequot Indians, justifying the slaughter with reference to "King David's War." The Puritan ministers Increase and Cotton Mather justified brutal violence against Native Americans as fulfilling the will of God.

Both sides of the American Civil War evoked holy war to justify their cause, most famously on the Union side in the Battle Hymn of the Republic—"Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord." Preachers on the Confederate side cited the Bible just as ardently to justify their fight against "atheistic" abolitionists.

The Civil War coincided with a major shift in millennialism, the belief that the Second Coming of Jesus occurs within a thousand-year time frame. Largely a Protestant belief since the 17th century, American millennialists predicted the return of Jesus after Christians have ruled the Earth for a thousand years. This version is known as post-millennialism. Around the mid-19th century, however, pre-millennialism took precedence. In this view, first Jesus will return, fight a great battle at Armageddon, and then rule for a thousand years. Many Evangelicals hold this view today.

Exactly what great enemy Jesus will need to fight in the final battle has changed many times over the years. Recently a prime candidate has been China. In 2006 John Hagee, founder of Christians United For Israel (CUFI) wrote of

God's call "for every nation to send their armies to Israel to destroy China." Why are millenarians so interested in Israel, and how could a battle there somehow involve faraway China? Because "Armageddon," so vividly depicted in the Book of Revelation as the site of the final apocalyptic battle, was originally a mountain in Israel. For certain Biblical literalists, if Revelation says the final battle will take place at a mountain in Israel, that's where it will take place. God will somehow get the Chinese there so that Jesus can defeat them in the appointed time at the appointed place. (Perhaps not all 1.4 billion Chinese. Just the 99 million members of the Chinese Communist Party might do, or even the two million soldiers and sailors in the People's Liberation Army.)

Discussion turned to questions about how this history might explain the thinking of participants in wars today. How does "the Jewish theology of war" explain recent actions of the State of Israel, so much in the news? Dan responded that he disapproves of Netanyahu, many of whose actions seem motivated mostly by self-interest. The questioner noted that the Israeli public, by and large, approves of the Israeli army's actions in Gaza, and many "settlers" on the West Bank justify their warlike actions against Palestinians by referring to Joshua. Dan noted a high amount of controversy in Israel, "as always when there are two Jews there will be three opinions, multiplied by seven million."

Dan based his talk on a chapter of his recently published book, *A God of Our Invention: How Religion Shaped the Western World* (Apocryphile Press, 2023). Asked about Islamic thinking about war, Dan briefly outlined that history, concluding that "Muslims do not see war quite the same way that Christians and Jews do, and there are as many variations." Enough for a second book? "Not by me. I don't read Arabic."

– Jim Gasperini

## Writers Group

During the spring, we held only two sessions; our scheduled May meeting was canceled due to Mothers's Day.

In April **Jim Gasperini** stepped away from his study of fire in the human mind to present the first half of "The Rose in the Forest," a work designed for children. The story was inspired by a real rose planted in the 1790s by Jim's five-times great grandmother near her family cabin in up-state New York. The cabin has long since burned down, but the rose remains. Jim's book tells the story of 200 years of societal and ecological change from the perspective of that rose. (The material presented covered the rose's first century).

The group found Jim's story to be both well-written and entirely charming, but expressed some concerns about its length and intended audience. While its language was unquestionably accessible to children, some felt that the book's size might be off-putting. Would a rose be a sufficiently compelling character to a generation raised on action heroes? Certainly, the book would require a good many illustrations.

In June, the group continued its examination and discussion of **Pam Peirce's** biography of Katharine Gibson. The chapters presented covered the dramatic period of Katharine's incarceration in the Columbus State Hospital for the Insane. This section, based chiefly on Katharine's pseudonymous memoir *Reluctantly Told*, recounts her struggle to come to terms with her situation and the despair that led her to make one last attempt at suicide. Her failure in this effort caused her to reverse course and to commit herself to making a full recovery. The chapters end with her return to freedom. The group was very favorably impressed with the quality of Pam's writing and with the story she so effectively told. We look forward to the succeeding chapters. – **Rob Robbins**

## In Memoriam

I was worried when **Peter Mellini** didn't renew his membership. I later discovered that he had died this past March. I didn't know him well, but I always enjoyed our encounters. I had been an MA student in the Department of History at Sonoma State University, where he had taught (1970 -2001), and that seemed to provide a bond of sorts. Sometimes he would catch me up on the activities of my former professors. I last saw him at the Institute's annual meeting in February 2020. Later on I suggested to him that perhaps I could interview him about the early years of the Institute, but this conversation did not happen.

Peter was one of the founding members of the Institute and served on the first board of directors. According to a newsletter profile of him, "he saw the Institute as a means of encouraging historians to become involved in public history projects and in historical works that reach a wide audience." Though hired to teach Modern European History and World History, during the 1970s Peter became involved in an innovative program at Sonoma State College (as it was then). In 1974 the history department began offering practical experience in local history and historical photography. By 1975 Peter became director of "the only undergraduate interdisciplinary program in historic preservation west of the Rockies." (The work of these professors and their students culminated in the creation of the Sonoma County Preservation Project, now housed in the campus library's regional and special collections department.) In 1977 his biographical study of a British administrator in Egypt in the late 19th C was published: *Sir Eldon Gorst: The Overshadowed Proconsul* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press), followed by *In "Vanity Fair,"* coauthored with Roy T. Matthews, in 1982 (UC Press). (The collection of caricatures is now housed at the Department of Special Collections and University Archives at Stanford's Green Library.) Between 1985 and

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1989 Peter had a joint appointment with the Journalism Department at San Francisco State, where he taught the history of journalism. Not content with a rich academic life, Peter joined his local Rotary Club and after retirement volunteered at the free clinic established by the club. Members may contribute their memories of Peter Mellini for a forthcoming newsletter.

– *Maria Sakovich*

After 31 years at the San Francisco Public Library, **Liz Thacker-Estrada** (Institute president) retired on June 29th. “The Chief of Branches and the Chief of Programs and Partnerships arranged for me to receive the ‘Certificate of Honor’ from Mayor London Breed. This recognition was a welcome and wonderful surprise. I appreciate the list of achievements during my career at the Library, including being ‘an in-house expert on US women’s history.’ This certificate is especially meaningful to me as it is signed by the first African American woman mayor of San Francisco!”

**John Hyde Barnard’s** *The Creole Incident: The Beginning of the End of Slavery* (Coldwell & Hyde Publishing LLC, 2024) has just been published.

“Democracy is being assailed by a domestic threat, that actively seeks the take-over of the government. The year is 1836 and the United States of America is on the verge of losing its democracy. *The Creole Incident* recounts how the Constitution of the United States was saved by select members of the House of Representatives, a small group of radical abolitionists, and nineteen individuals—all of whom were enslaved. Their goal was to arrest the increasing power of Southern representation in Congress.

“At the heart of the story is a remarkable young man from Old Dominion named Madison Washington. He escaped slavery, made his way to Canada and freedom, yet, returned to Virginia

to rescue his wife from thralldom. In the attempt, he is caught, put in chains, auctioned to the highest bidder and shipped South onboard the brig *Creole*, bound for New Orleans and the lethal sugar cane fields of Louisiana. The journey ends, however, in Nassau, Bahamas, where Washington and others are imprisoned on charges of mutiny and murder. Washington’s actions onboard the *Creole* set in motion a sequence of events that would culminate in a series of floor fights in the House of Representatives as the balance of power precariously hangs between North and South, between freedom and slavery. The conclusion of *The Creole Incident* will enlighten, educate, and give pause to consider the fragility of democracy and the enduring strength of love. It is an American story, for all Americans.” The book is available online at Barnes & Noble and Amazon and John’s local book store, Sausalito Books By The Bay.

“Here is an update on my journey to Ticino to celebrate the translation of my book [*Miners, Milkmen and Merchants: from the Swiss-Italian Alps to the Golden Hills of Australia and California*] into Italian,” writes **Marilyn Geary**. “The event is/was to be held on August 16th at the International Center of Sculpture in Peccia. Unfortunately, heavy storms and floods ravaged the area at the end of June. At least six people have died, and many have had their homes destroyed. The director of the local sponsoring organization has suggested that the event still will take place, but the International Center of Sculpture has been closed due to the disaster and the July events cancelled. I have told the director that I totally understand if the event in August needs to be cancelled. I am on hold waiting to hear.”

**Anne Maclachlan**, compiler and editor of the collection of documents created for 150 years’ history of women on the Berkeley campus, reports that it is now available in the California

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Digital Library. See the Table of Contents (<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2td1m68j>).

From **Alison Lingo**: “I am giving papers for two panels at two different conferences to honor Natalie Zemon Davis who passed away last fall. I am giving more or less the same paper at both conferences: “‘Women on Top’: A Retrospective Perspective.” One of the conferences is specifically being convened to honor the historian at Princeton on November 15-16. The other is the Sixteenth Century Society Conference in Toronto, also in November, where several panels will be honoring Natalie.

“I am working on a collaborative project with Professor Cathy McClive at Florida State University on the gendering of tools in the birthing room and the regulations that surrounded the use of tools in 17th- and 18th-century France.

“I am also at the very earliest stages of writing an essay on the Nobel Prize-winning author, Annie Ernaux. Her novellas, published diaries, and social commentaries as well as meditations on her own evolution and trajectory from a rural area of northern France to becoming a member of the Paris intelligentsia make her a good subject for a historian of sex and gender. During her career she shocked and scandalized some while being the darling of others due to her candid and graphic portrayal of her romantic and often transgressive liaisons. She also presents poignant portrayals of her mother and father that pay homage to the sacrifices and tough realities of the working classes from which she came. How does the personal become political in France and what does that process mean for the history of women in France and beyond? My thoughts on Ernaux are still inchoate but I feel that her oeuvre is well worth commentary by a historian.”

“Thank you to all,” **Maria Sakovich** writes. “The newsletter would not exist without member participation—summarizing monthly presentations, reviewing books, writing the Front Page article, sharing the latest news, and offering interesting pieces for publication. With each issue I wondered whether there would be enough material, but I’m grateful that I needn’t have worried. Despite my sometimes having to wrestle with words and wait for late articles, Institute members always came through. After 14 years I’m looking forward to spending a lot more time with my own writing, finally tackling a portrait of a Russian Orthodox priest in San Francisco, my grandfather, with his refugee-emigrant parishioners who were trying to recreate new lives in California after the Bolshevik revolution and ensuing civil war turned their world upside down.”

### **It’s Mini-Grant Time!**

The board of directors of the Institute is again pleased to offer the membership the chance to apply for mini-grants to support research and the publication of their scholarly projects. (Check your email boxes for the announcement and application form sent on 27 July.) The deadline is September 15, 2020. Information about the grants and application form can be found on our website. Applications can be sent to the Institute’s mailing address, 1399 Queens Road, Berkeley, CA 94708, or emailed to the mini-grant chair, Louis Trager ([ltrager@sonic.net](mailto:ltrager@sonic.net)).

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including the hamburger, the hot dog, and iced tea. What is striking in these accounts is less the issue of their veracity, important as it may be, than the fact that people care as much as they do about the origins of these foods, which may be best termed culturally “symbolic.”

The descriptions of unsanitary practices and contaminated meat in Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle*, published in 1905, highlighted the dangerous working conditions endured by American meatpackers and are also said to have diminished the appetite for ground beef among the upper classes. Hamburgers came to be looked down upon as lower-class street food, an example being the hamburger stand of Billy Stahl in Coney Island in 1913. Stahl came to be known as the “Hamburger King.” In 1925 the hamburger with a bun was featured in a New York off-Broadway play, “The Hamburger King,” by Marian Spencer Smith. It tells the story of an elderly immigrant hamburger street vendor who becomes an urban folk hero by befriending teenagers in Manhattan. It is not certain if Smith’s play was related to the Billy Stahl story, but the hamburger with bun was now a symbol presumably recognizable by all.

The coming of radio and the automobile in the United States further contributed to the growing popularity of hamburgers. In 1916, what would become the White Castle chain was established in Wichita, Kansas, and in 1929 Stern’s Rite Spot in Los Angeles served what has been claimed as the first cheeseburger. The year 1948 saw the beginnings of McDonald’s, in San Bernardino, established by Richard and Maurice McDonald, with its introduction of assembly line food production, and the opening of In-N-Out Burger, California’s first “drive-thru” hamburger stand, in Baldwin Park. The first Burger King restaurant was opened in Miami in 1954 and in the following year Ray Kroc’s McDonald’s opened in Des Plaines, Illinois, with the Big Mac introduced in 1968.

Not surprisingly, there were reactions against McDonald’s and “fast-food.” In 1989 Carlo Petrini created the Slow Food movement after protesting the opening of a McDonald’s on the Spanish Steps in Rome, and ten years later José Bové became a celebrity by demolishing a McDonald’s under construction in France. By the early 21st century, however, the French were among the top consumers of McDonald’s burgers. Japan had more than 3,600 McDonalds branches and hamburgers were said to be the favorite food of young Japanese. The hamburger had become a worldwide icon.

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