

From the Interim Editor

I would like to begin with a note of appreciation to Maria Sakovich and to Anne MacLachlan for their years of editing the Institute's Newsletter. Second, I would like to thank Ann Harlow, who has stepped in to be copy editor for this newsletter. During this transition, Maria, Jim Gasperini, and Elizabeth Thacker-Estrada have been long suffering and patient with my many emails. Thank you, too, to the contributors to this issue. You have been gracious and generous with your patience and time, despite the record heat and your busy schedules. Thank you. Thank you all.

In preparation for this task, I have reviewed many previous newsletters, a task facilitated by Jim's Web management. This archive is a treasure trove of history, data, and member interests. If the character of an organization can be read in that organization's publications, then these newsletters show an organization with a multi-faceted and astonishing breadth and depth of historical subjects and stories—the stories of us. Oliver Pollak delved back into one such newsletter to write a reflection on *Potlucks, Past and Present*, found in the last pages of this edition.

Inside this newsletter:

Elizabeth, in her **President's Message**, begins with a note about changes in the newsletter staff and an appreciation for the work of Maria and Anne on newsletters past. She then describes what sounded like a delicious and stimulating Potluck. Next she informs us that members will have another "opportunity to get together" on February 22, 2025. She closes with a note about the possible revival of previous study groups and the creation of new study groups, which she elaborates on in her **Report of the President on Study Groups** on page 7.

Monthly Programs shows off the recent work of members. Jim provides a writeup of Esther Mordant's July talk on the *Origins of "Blood Libel"* or the accusation "that Jews kill Christian children to use their blood in secret rituals," a false and "pernicious" charge that still resurfaces. Judith Offer tackled the writeup of Peter Meyerhof's August talk about his research into the forgotten *Chinese Population of Sonoma in the 19th Century*. Though now overlooked, the Chinese played an important part in Sonoma's economic and social history. John Barnard's October presentation on *The Creole Incident* and Jim's November talk about *Fire Rituals* are referenced, as is Susan Breitzer's talk on antisemitism and the 1924 Immigration Act. Originally scheduled for September, Susan's talk has been rescheduled to January 19, 2025. See **Monthly Programs** for more information, starting on page 3.

Group Reports is an update and discussion about the Institute's Study Groups. These groups comprise one element of the Institute's mission, to be "a scholarly organization designed to promote the research, writing, and public discussion of history." Rob Robbins gives a report on the Writers Group, perhaps the only group to survive Covid. Elizabeth delivers a report on the impact of Covid on many groups and a discussion of the revival of previous groups and the creation of new groups.

Member News keeps us updated on what members are doing. Pam Peirce, Bert Gordon, and Karen Offen have been very active. Pam also responds to "Hamburgers – The Making of a Cultural Icon (Summer 2024 issue) with what may be the nucleus for a new section, "Letters to the Editor." She recounts the experience of this *icon* by a young German student she met in college. In **Reflections**, Oliver Pollak brings us full circle, with his review of "Potlucks: Past and Present."

Wishing you all good health, productive research, and a happy upcoming holiday season.

– Patricia Southard

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

New IHS member Patricia Southard and longtime Institute member Ann Harlow graciously agreed to serve as interim newsletter editor and copy editor, respectively, on the fall newsletter. Their work on this issue is much appreciated. Former newsletter editor Maria Sakovich and former copy editor Anne MacLachlan relinquished these positions following the publication of the summer edition of the newsletter. Institute members thank them for their long service.

The Annual Potluck was held on Saturday, September 21st at the beautiful home of Lyn Reese in Berkeley. On that lovely, sunny day, guests enjoyed a panoramic view of San Francisco Bay while meeting new people and renewing old acquaintances. Those attending were hosts Lyn, her husband Chuck and son Nick, Michael Several, Maria Sakovich, Oliver and Karen Pollak, Suzanne Perkins-Gordon and Bert Gordon, Pam Peirce and David Goldberg, Jody Offer, Kathleen O'Connor, Gretta Mitchell, Ann Harlow and Phil Zimmerman, Marilyn Geary, Jim Gasperini, Monica Clyde, Rose Marie Cleese, and me. For some, this was their first time attending the event. We were pleased that Peter Stansky joined us via Zoom. Mingling in small groups, people discussed such topics as members' historical writings, possible publishers, membership recruitment, and potential study groups. We imbibed the flavorful beverages provided by Lyn and savored a variety of delicious foods brought by members. With such good company and good food, a fine time was had by all.

Members will have another opportunity to get together in person and virtually at the Institute's Annual Meeting, which is scheduled to take place on February 22, 2025, the fourth Saturday of the month, at the Miller Avenue Baptist Church in Mill Valley. Many Institute members live in the North Bay, and carpooling for members who reside in the East Bay and on the Peninsula can be arranged. Details will be forthcoming.

Over the last few years, especially during the pandemic, certain Institute study groups were discontinued. Regarding the revival of past IHS study groups and the creation of new ones, please see the "Report of the President on Study Groups" in the Group Reports Section of this newsletter.

Wishing you the best this holiday season and in the new year as we approach the end of 2024.

– Elizabeth Thacker-Estrada

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Patricia Southard

COPY EDITOR

Ann Harlow

ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY

Maria Sakovich

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.

Mailing Address:
1399 Queens Road
Berkeley, CA 94708

Website:
www.instituteforhistoricalstudy.org (or tihs.org)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Elizabeth Thacker-Estrada - President
Jim Gasperini - Vice-President
Marilyn Geary - Secretary
Timothy Welsh – Treasurer
Dan Kohanski
Louis Trager
Peter Meyerhof
John Barnard
Pam Peirce

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

MONTHLY PROGRAMS

“The Origins of ‘Blood Libel’” Talk by Esther Mordant July 21, 2024

In July member **Esther Mordant** traced the origins of the “blood libel,” the charge that Jews kill Christian children to use their blood in secret rituals. Drawing on her training as a psychologist and psychotherapist, she examined the first case of this persistent and pernicious slander, which took place in southeast England near where Esther now lives.

In March 1144, just before Easter and Passover (which coincided that year), a boy named William was found brutally murdered in a forest near Norwich. From the way the boy’s partially dressed body was found, investigators today would think it likely that the perpetrator was a murderous pedophile. Some Norwich townspeople instead blamed the crime on a small, newly arrived French-speaking Jewish community. Lurid stories were told of the boy’s blood being used to cook matzos and of a mock crucifixion. Fortunately for the accused Jews, the Norman sheriff protected them, since they came under the jurisdiction of the King rather than local Anglo-Saxon laws.

Local monks proclaimed William a martyr and possible saint. Esther argues that these monks, engaged in building an expensive cathedral, needed a way to draw pilgrims to their city. Though the Church did not officially canonize William, it allowed the establishment of a local cult. This folk Catholic cult waxed and waned in popularity over the centuries. A stained-glass window depicting Saint William of Norwich was installed in a nearby church in Suffolk during the 15th century.

Though the cult of William was the first to develop around a murdered boy, over the next eight centuries many others grew up in other English towns and in France, Italy, Austria, and

Poland. Such incidents became so common and shared so many elements that the term “blood libel” came to describe them as a class. Esther illustrated the presentation with woodcuts, windows, murals, and paintings depicting evil Jews luring children away and sacrificing them in grotesque rituals. One such painting, which long hung in the cathedral in Rinn, Austria, was only removed in 1994.

Addressing the question of why this unfortunately influential practice first appeared in East Anglia, Esther pointed to a local English folk tale, “The Babes in the Wood,” in which an evil uncle conspires to steal the estate of his nephews, who end up starving to death in the forest. As boy-martyr cults spread across Europe they drew on local folklore, particularly vampire stories. They focused on boy victims, in association with the martyred Christ, though 20th- century “blood libels” also featured girls.

For most people there is nothing worse than violent pedophilia. Accusations of pedophilia have the effect of dehumanizing those accused. Though the consequences to the Norwich Jews were not severe in the immediate aftermath of William’s murder, fifty years later a massacre of Jews did occur. Remains recently discovered in a well abandoned during the period were found to have Jewish DNA. As time went on, the “blood libel” was used to justify various violent collective acts of punishment including pogroms and the Nazi program of extermination. The story still resurfaces in Polish folk tales, Iranian television shows, and elsewhere.

Discussion afterward focused on details of this grim and unfortunate history. Though the origins of the term “blood libel” is uncertain, it likely came from a Jewish source. Several participants thanked Esther for explaining the origins of this term, with which they were vaguely familiar but had only a cursory understanding.

– *Jim Gasperini*

MONTHLY PROGRAMS

“The Early Chinese of the Sonoma Valley”

**Talk by Peter Meyerhof
August 18, 2024**

Peter Meyerhof recounted his latest research about the history of the Chinese population of Sonoma in his Zoom talk, August 18th.

Although the current Chinese population of Sonoma is very small, there were actually thousands of Chinese working in the vineyards, laundries, and mercantile operations in the 19th century. After searching through primary sources such as newspaper files, city records, maps, and museum artifacts for any mention of a particular Chinese name, business, or other hard information, Peter found himself unwilling to accept the stereotype of the “many nameless hardworking working men.” He illustrated his talk with many of these articles, maps, and pictures, many carefully annotated.

Even before the Gold Rush, Peter noted that the image of Chinese workers as being sober and hardworking was prevalent in California. A variant of this attitude was expressed in an issue of the 1854 CALIFORNIA FARMER newspaper, which recommended that farmers hire the Chinese, noting they would be “to California what the African slave has been in the South.”

In 1849, two Sonoma businessmen sent a ship to China with gold for trade. On its return, in May of that year, it carried a large cargo of fancy Chinese items, as well as two men, Atu, to work as a cook, and Aweye, who did tailoring. Records show they earned \$15 a month, plus room and board. Peter, however, found no further record of these men. Records for Chinese people are particularly scarce, since they didn’t speak or write in English, couldn’t marry and have families, and they tended to arrange for their remains to be shipped back to China. Nor were there birth, marriage, or cemetery records or markers that would normally provide additional information.

One interesting anecdote was about a marriage between a Chinese woman from San Francisco and a Sonoma rancher. In late 1849, a Henry Conrad married Ah Toy, a notorious madam of San Francisco, and brought her to his ranch in Sonoma. However, she fled back to San Francisco before the year was out.

In 1850, war, flooding, and civil unrest swept through Guangdong Province, leaving many residents starving and desperate for work. By 1852, 25,000 Chinese men had come to California, of which 1,000 went to the Sonoma Valley. Though, as early as 1851, a William MacPherson of Sonoma hired Chinese laborers to plant 4000 grapevines. Meanwhile, the Chinese Benevolent Association was established in San Francisco to facilitate transportation, hiring, and to provide needed services for the new workers in addition to “credit tickets” for most of the men.

By 1857, the Buena Vista Vineyard started hiring Chinese to “set their vines the flat way.” Instead of trellising vines, vines were plated on the ground, which required a great deal more stooping and squatting by workers. By 1864, Buena Vista employees were working 12,500 man-hours per year. The men were paid a dollar a day to work a 10- to 12-hour day. The employment agent for the vineyards was a Chinese immigrant named Po Ling. By 1862, workers had planted 20,000 vines. The Chinese were also hired for less-skilled labor. In 1878 a company in Schellville hired 156 men to dig waterways in the slough of that area.

In 1868 the Burlingame-Seward Treaty “temporarily” lifted the number of restrictions on immigration and hiring of Chinese laborers. Eight thousand new workers arrived every year until 1880. Three quarters of them lived in California. However, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 specified that few women could be admitted and forbade the Chinese from buying land, voting, or becoming citizens. It also placed bans on the immigration of Chinese laborers. Most of the vintners, however,

MONTHLY PROGRAMS

opposed the Act as they valued their Chinese laborers.

On Sundays the Chinese workers went into town to shop and socialize. During the week they generally prepared their own food, so they shopped for groceries for the entire week. Though there were Chinese businesses, there was no true “Chinatown” as most of the men lived on the farms and vineyards where they worked. There is evidence that one of the buildings in town was used as a “joss house” for religious ceremonies and socializing. During the 1930s, a small altar, found in this building, was restored as a WPA project.

Their hard work had made Chinese workers popular. By 1886 there were 15,000 Chinese in Sonoma County. Every middle-class family had a Chinese cook. The local boarding school employed two Chinese cooks. An agent who supplied Chinese labor, Quong Hie Sing, had an office downtown near the railroad station. The Chinese were considered the best workers and were considered unusually clean and organized.

Peter pointed out on a map the locations of several Chinese businesses, such as the Hi-Lo Chinese Laundry, which included a store with Chinese foods and an employment agency. He also shared a picture of the interior of one laundry, which showed men ironing clothes with eight-pound irons. The price to do the laundry for a family of six came to one dollar.

But by 1879, white men were getting anxious about the Chinese taking so many jobs. A San Francisco man, Dennis Kearny, organized an anti-Chinese movement. Soon, these “Anti – Coolie Leagues” developed in a number of towns, including Sonoma. These groups of white men and boys attacked and harassed the Chinese, causing fear among that population.

Peter found a famous case in local newspaper files about an accusation of murder against Ah How, who owned the Hi-Lo Laundry. Despite the fact that several character witnesses defended him and he was acquitted, he left town immediately after he was freed, and was never heard from again. In 1892 the Chinese Exclusion Act was renewed. By then the Tongs, a violent, secret “mutual aid” organization, had replaced the more law-abiding Chinese Benevolent Associations.

Between 1905 and 1911, all the Chinese laundries in Sonoma closed. Yet, about this time the Chinese became more integrated into the community. In 1904, one Ah Kay married Rose, a non-Chinese woman. David Burris, a local banker, adopted a Chinese boy named “John.” David’s son, Frank, adopted two Chinese girls, both of whom finished high school.

Peter reported a few more-recent facts such as the repeal of the Exclusion Act in 1946, the ending of the Chinese immigration quotas in 1965, and recent research using modern methods to uncover the large presence of the Chinese in Sonoma’s history. Lastly, groups have formed to memorialize this community. One such group is trying to erect a Chinese-style pavilion in a park. Another group is working to memorialize long-standing Chinese businesses with sidewalk commemorative tablets.

Peter’s talk, containing many more specifics, is available on YouTube via the Institute’s website.

– *Judith Offer*

Note: Many of our monthly programs have been posted on our YouTube channel, <https://www.youtube.com/@instituteforhistoricalstud4415>. If you were a presenter and would like yours added, please email jimg@well.com.

MONTHLY PROGRAMS

On October 20, 2024, **John Hyde Barnard** presented the program “**Democracy Under Attack. The Creole Incident: The Beginning of the End of Slavery,**” in which he discussed a threat to democracy in the years 1836-42, when Southern Representatives worked to establish slavery under Federal Jurisprudence. Using a slave revolt onboard the brig *Creole* to make their case, a handful of radical abolitionists, in concert with certain Congressmen, acted to break the stranglehold of slavery’s representation in Congress.

John Hyde Barnard is a member of the American Historical Society and the Phi Alpha Theta History Honor Society and was recently elected to the Board of Directors for the Institute.

A report on this presentation will appear in the winter issue of the newsletter.

On November 17, 2024, **Jim Gasperini** will give a talk on “**Fire Rituals: Theory and Practice.**” He will explore how “eternal flames” and “new fire ceremonies,” common throughout the world, sacralize practices that go back to the days when early hominin predecessor species first learned to control fire. Fire rituals predate language and have developed in every culture in myriad ways. You may wish to check out two previous talks by Jim for background to this presentation. They are “Eternal Flames: Excerpts from a work in progress” and “How We Domesticated Fire, and Fire Domesticated Us” on the IHS YouTube channel.

Jim Gasperini is the Vice President and Webmaster of the Institute.

On January 19, 2025, **Susan Breitzer** will deliver a program about “**Jeopardy Doubled: Racialized Antisemitism, Interwar Boundaries, and the 1924 Immigration Act.**” The Act severely restricted immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe in favor of “Old Stock” immigrants from Northern and Western Europe. It curtailed much postwar European immigration and completely excluded immigration from Asia. But the Immigration Act had an especially devastating effect on Europe’s Jews, with increased restrictionism just when refuge was most needed even before the Holocaust. European Jews were ill-affected by the U.S.’s stricter enforcement of restrictions and the evisceration of previous religious persecution exemptions. This presentation will examine the devastating and eventually deadly effect of this combination of morphing antisemitism and shifting geographical boundaries on the creation and the enforcement of the Act and the national origins quotas that were so central to it.

A member of the National Coalition of Independent Scholars, Susan Breitzer holds a Ph.D. in American Jewish history from the University of Iowa.

We need volunteers to write short reports on the November and January presentations for the newsletter. If you would like to volunteer, please contact the program coordinator, Dan Kohanski.

You are welcome to invite friends and colleagues to attend these Institute programs.

GROUP REPORTS

Writers Group Report, September 2024

Jim Gasperini and **Pam Peirce** were our stalwart presenters during the July–September period. In July Jim gave us the second half of his “Rose in the Forest,” covering the last period of its 200-year-long story. As before, the group agreed that this was an exceedingly well-written work but we continued to wonder about its publication prospects. It seemed rather too long for a very young audience, and perhaps not sufficiently interesting for young adults. Jim continues to ponder these comments.

In August and September Pam gave us two further installments of her biography of Katharine Gibson, which is currently under consideration at Indiana University Press. These sections cover the first years of Katharine's life after her release from the Columbus State Hospital. Pam traces Katharine's re-entry into the “normal” world and her emergence as a writer and educator. These chapters give insight into the way her work, especially her memoir *Reluctantly Told* was received. The group felt that Pam's writing continued to get stronger and looked forward to further sections of the biography.

One of the problems the Writers Group is having concerns the small size of our monthly meetings. A large number of IHS members have expressed continued interest in the group, but attendance has been small. At our August meeting those who had gathered decided to experiment with changing the time of our Zoom sessions. In September and October we met on the first Saturday of the month at 10 am. Attendance was somewhat better, and we will continue this experiment for the next several months.

Writing is often a lonely business, but all who write appreciate the insights of others. So even if you are not writing anything, or do not want to

subject what you are working on to collective examination, we encourage you to join us. Your insights will be valued, and the Writers Group can be a place for all of us to get together in creative partnership.

– *Rob Robbins*

Report of the President on Study Groups

Before the pandemic, the Institute sponsored several study groups. The Writers Group, under the leadership of Rob Robbins, is still going strong. A perusal of the Institute roster and website membership profiles revealed a convergence of interest in several historical fields, supporting the formation of more study groups. California and the West was an active group, and, following two local tours arranged by Rose Marie Cleese last year, ripe for revival. Women's History is another popular topic. Other members and I plan to create a study group on this subject. European History, including medieval history, also holds a fascination for many members.

Other frequently mentioned areas of historical interest include: Art/Photography/Film History, Religious History, and Nineteenth Century History. For historians to write they must first research, and Michael Several has suggested the creation of a Research Group to complement the Writers Group. If you would like to work on forming a group on any of these—or other—areas of history, please contact me. Members who gather regularly to discuss individual observations, readings, and research strengthen the bonds between them and advance the mission of the Institute. Thank you for your consideration.

– *Elizabeth Thacker-Estrada*

Pam Peirce recently co-authored an article on Reverend Frank Scott Corey Wicks, with Rev. John Buehrens. It was published in the 2024 *Journal of Unitarian Universalist Studies*. Rev. Wicks was the pastor of All Souls Unitarian Church in Indianapolis, Indiana for 32 years. He was well known and loved by many in the city, both in and outside of the church, for his social activism and his cheerful religious iconoclasm.

He was Pam's grandfather by adoption and the husband of Katharine Gibson Wicks, the subject of a biography that Pam has written.

Bert Gordon made two presentations at the annual Mills College Alumnae Reunion. The first was "The History of Mills as Represented in Art," on September 27, and the second was "The History of French Wine," on September 28.

He will appear in a video interview, discussing the 50th anniversary of the Western Society for French History (WSFH), at its annual meeting in San Francisco in November. He helped create the WSFH in 1974.

He will also be the commentator on the panel "Jews in Vichy France" at the San Francisco meeting on November 16.

Longtime Institute member **Karen Offen** (Ph.D., Stanford University) is a historian and independent scholar affiliated as a Senior Scholar with the Michelle R. Clayman Institute for Gender Research at Stanford. A roundtable at the WSFH is titled "Gendering French History: The Significance of Karen Offen's Books on the Woman Question."

Further information about the 50th anniversary annual meeting may be found at <https://www.wsfh.org>.

Member's Response

In her response to **Bert Gordon's** article on the cover of the Summer Newsletter, "Hamburgers: The Making of a Cultural Icon," **Pam Peirce** wrote, "When I was in college, in the American Midwest, in the mid-1960s, I met a young man who had immigrated from Germany a few years earlier. He told me that when his family emigrated to America, their trip included a stopover at Heathrow Airport, in London. There, they ordered hamburgers because they thought, being from Hamburg themselves, they might recognize the dish. But they found hamburgers totally alien. Not only were they unfamiliar, but they were unpleasant to eat. The sandwiches were too tall to get their mouths around and contained lettuce and tomato—which they considered 'rabbit food.' They felt they had made a terrible mistake, and were mystified how the sandwich got its name."

Potlucks, Past and Present

Oliver B. Pollak

Karen and I attended the annual Institute Potluck on Saturday, September 21 at the Berkeley Hills home of Lyn Reese, where she has lived since 1972 and has hosted many Institute events. Seventeen members and three significant others attended in person. Six of the attendees had been members since at least 1984.

I decided to read the September-October 1984 Newsletter, a bimonthly in 1984-1985 thanks to a \$5,000 L. J. and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation grant. The eight-page issue included Workshop Reports, President's Message, Work-in-Progress, Updates, Book Reviews, Books Received, New Members, Letters to "Dear Clio," Conferences, Membership News, Annual Potluck, Editor's Note, Summary of Board Actions, and Upcoming Events.

(continued)

REFLECTIONS

The Board of Directors were Georgia Wright, President; Jules Becker, Vice President; Lorrie O'Dell, Corresponding Secretary; Deborah Frangquist, Treasurer; Lyn Reese, Membership Chair; Ellen Huppert, Development Chair; Elizabeth Griego, Program Chair; Nancy McCauley, Francesca Miller and Chet Snow.

The Newsletter Editorial Board included Joanne Lafler, editor; Kathleen Casey, Alison Lingo, Ilse Sternberger, book review editor, and Joan Torykian, whose advice column "Dear Clio" referred a prospective member to Lyn Reese, Membership Chair and the 13th edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Joanne "decided to retire as a writer (of newsletter articles) and concentrate on editing."

The Institute had 160 members in 1984. Six of them attended the 2024 Potluck 40 years later. Three were mentioned in the 1984 Newsletter, Monica Clyde, Gretta Mitchell, and Lyn Reese, three were not—Bert Gordon, Kathleen O'Connor, and Peter Stansky (by Zoom). About 23 of our current members were members in 1984.

The "Annual Potluck" report on page 7 of the 1984 Newsletter was probably written by Joanne.

The annual potluck dinner for Institute members in September is a purely social occasion at which history is discussed, but usually as an adjunct to the consumption of food and wine. It stands in contrast to the more sober annual business meeting in February, but it is no less important to the life of the Institute, for it is a time when members come together not to discuss a specific topic but simply as members, interested in each other's work. Football, trips to Europe, and family weddings are sometimes also discussed.

This year the potluck was held on September 30 at Gretta Mitchell's lovely home in Berkeley. Over forty people, including some spouses, attended. President Georgia Wright took the opportunity to introduce new members and to make a few announcements about future plans—a preview of her President's Message which appears in this issue. There seemed to be just the right blend of business and pleasure. Thanks are due to Gretta for providing the congenial setting, and, as usual, to Georgia.

The 1984 newsletter indicated member activities: "At Monica Clyde's suggestion a file box will be kept in the Bancroft Library so that when one member encounters an item that might be useful to a fellow researcher it can be entered on a file card under the appropriate subject: education, religion, health, art collecting, literary history, etc. Annegret Ogden sees the file as a scholarly version of the Christmas stocking." Gretta Mitchell received a grant from the Fleishhacker Foundation. Lyn Reese hosted the first meeting of the Nineteenth Century Group in August, spent six weeks in Nigeria with the Stanford Program in Cross Cultural Education, and served as Membership Chair.

Lyn Reese hosted the Potluck in 1985. Ann Harlow in her Fall 2011 President's Message stated, "As I write this I am digesting the wonderful offerings at our annual potluck at Georgia Wright's house....Many thanks to Georgia for hosting the Institute this time and more times than anyone can count over the past thirty years. We missed some of our 'regulars,' and hope to see you at the Annual Dinner."

I joined the Institute in 2018. On August 17, 2019, Karen and I attended our first potluck. About 18 people settled in Georgia Wright's kitchen, dining room and living room. We contributed Korean Bowl'd chicken wings and

wine and sat at a table with Anne MacLachlan, Monica Clyde, and Kathleen O'Connor. A convivial group, we ate a yummy repast, drank and schmoozed. I recall a large platter of shrimp. Georgia played a video tape she had created about the sculptures adorning French cathedrals.

The Pandemic disrupted socializing, public transport, and in-person meetings. It encouraged Zooming, working from home, telemedicine, purchasing through Amazon, and many other aspects of life. Congested freeways further reduced face-to-face gatherings. But the potluck,

February Annual Meeting, monthly programs, Writers Group, and occasional library, archive or historic site visits endure. The 2023 potluck in Jim Gasperini's backyard and the 2024 annual meeting included a Zoom option.

At this year's outdoor potluck, Karen sat with Monica Clyde and Gretta Mitchell. I sat with Lyn Reese. This potluck story could be thickened with readers' memories, signature dishes, and further lines of inquiry. OBPOMNI@gmail.com.

Forthcoming Events

November 17, 2024: **Jim Gasperini's** talk on *Fire Rituals: Theory and Practice*

(No programs in December)

January 19, 2025: **Susan Breitzer's** talk about *Jeopardy Doubled: Racialized Antisemitism, Interwar Boundaries, and the 1924 Immigration Act* (rescheduled from September)

February 22, 2025: Annual Meeting in Mill Valley

Institute for Historical Study
1399 Queens Road
Berkeley, CA 94708