

THE INSTITUTE FOR HISTORICAL STUDY

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NEWSLETTER

Serendipity, Cyberspace, and the Tactility of Documents by Carol Sicherman

Remember library stacks? Browsing among books? Serendipitously finding on a nearby shelf what you didn't know you needed? There are still stacks, though nowadays you might be crushed if someone turned the crank. Public libraries have stacks. But where do we do most of our research?

On the internet, of course. Does serendipity exist in cyberspace? It does. At the 2016 annual Institute meeting, Charles Sullivan described finding a document that had seemed nonexistent, simply by using the right search terms. Advised to pursue primary sources, he worried about traveling to archives hither and yon. Did he travel? Not at all: the documents had been digitized.

I am now working with primary sources in my possession: ninety-nine postcards that my mother-in-law, Matylda Sicherman, brought with her from Poland when she emigrated in 1926. Out of them, and with the aid of other primary sources, I've teased out the stories of a mostly Hasidic community in the first quarter of the twentieth century. I'm hoping that the owners of the cards will donate them to the Center for Jewish History in New York, which is digitizing its entire archive. In the future, these cards could be read in the countries from which they were sent—Poland, Romania, Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, Ukraine, Russia—and by anyone anywhere with access to the internet.

But for me, physically handling these battered cards is essential to understanding them. Each one was written by a particular person in a particular place, stamped by a post office or military postal service, read by someone in a different place and circumstance. One card depicts four generals shaking hands in 1915 to signify Bulgaria's joining the Central Powers—"die neue Waffenbruder" (the new brothers-in-arms; the phrase is given in Hungarian and Polish). The sender, Private Jacob Isak Sicherman, wrote each brother's nation above his head: "BULG. TURKEI, OS-UNG [Austro-Hungary], DEUT[SCH]." He wrote on 1 June 1916 while convalescing in a Cracow military hospital. The card is stamped by the hospital and by the military postal service (there's no postage stamp). Like most of the cards, it went to his wife, then living in a small town in Hungary because her home in Poland wasn't yet safe. His words overflowed the space. He writes intimately, yet anyone who read his crabbed handwriting would find no secrets:

I am going to note for you who each of these high and mighty gentlemen is. You'll also know by yourself. Let me know whether you received it. I kiss you and the dear children heartily—[also] the dear parents. Your faithful J. Isaak

Holding this card contributes an ineffable sense of connection. Years ago, in the Public Records Office in London, I pored over scraps that a colonial official had scribbled in the course of his duties. I also felt his presence.

This tactile connection is only part of the pleasure of my often-serendipitous research preparing an edition of the postcards. Early on, an Institute member told me about a genealogy site, JewishGen.org, loaded with an astonishing wealth of ever-growing databases and a large and friendly community of scholars and translators offering their skills for free. The main translator of the German cards, Isabel Rincon, teaches German literature and languages at a Munich *gymnasium*. There was more than her training in German philology that prepared her for the task. Her personal history impelled her to volunteer: her grandfather and his best friend (Jewish) had both been in love with a young Jewish woman. She left Germany in the

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings!

The Institute pot luck dinner on June 11 was a great success, thanks to the wonderful hospitality of Jody and Stuart Offer and the culinary efforts of the attending members. As always it was great to see old friends and to make some new ones.

The members of the Institute are busy with a number of exciting programs that will unfold over the course of the year ahead. As part of the LaborFest celebrations, on July 22 **Steven Levi** will make a presentation about the San Francisco Preparedness Day bombing of 1916. On July 25 **Harvey Schwartz** will be reading from his *Building the Golden Gate Bridge*. For July 30, **Peter Meyerhof** has arranged a visit to San Francisco's historic Presidio. On September 24 and 25 **Rose Marie Cleese** will lead a weekend trip to Volcano and Amador County. In October **Kathy O'Connor** will be hosting a panel discussion about archives and what archivists do. In November **Jody Offer** will be working with the Oakland Public Library on a young persons' public reading of Jack London's *White Fang*. And, yes, there will be more. Stay alert for updates.

All these prospective events should convince us that the Institute for Historical Study is still a vibrant organization. We should use the opportunities that they provide to enhance our profile and reach out to recruit new members. Whatever may be said about the decline of the humanities on college campuses, history is a growth industry appealing to the mature and the youthful. If an eight-hundred-page biography of Alexander Hamilton can become the basis of a Broadway smash—my grandchildren know every word of every song—anything is possible!

In this spirit, I hope you had a Glorious 4th. Long live the Revolution!

– *Rob Robbins*

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WORKS IN PROGRESS

“When Governments Control History”

At the home of Georgia Wright on January 17, **Richard Raack** took on the task of asking about the money, that is, how and where some big bucks are in play in writing history. “Notable instruments of control are scholarly groups funded directly or indirectly by governments,” Richard said. The Russian Academy of Sciences and the Polish Academy of Sciences are two such research-sponsoring entities. In Germany, the federal government, almost from its founding, has financially sponsored an Institute for Contemporary History in Munich and its journal, *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* (Quarterly for Contemporary History). Russian President Vladimir Putin’s continuing efforts to revive Stalin-era glories provides us the liveliest testimony to investment in a politically correct history.

Richard’s decades-long research centers around the part that Nazi Germany and the USSR played in starting World War II. In the five states (Poland, Germany, France, the United Kingdom and the USSR), all participants in the Second World War from its start in September 1939, albeit on different fronts and in varying coalitions, the subject still remains a politically-infused hot topic.

On August 19, 1939, just before Stalin and Hitler made their so-called “Non-Aggression Pact” on August 23, Stalin apprised the Soviet *Politbiuro* why the USSR should aid a German attack on Poland. In his clandestine speech, Stalin propounded to his insider cronies that the European war that resulted from the attacks would first lead to internal collapses among the warring states to the west, and then bring about the Sovietization of Europe. Marxist-Leninists like him had been pursuing that goal since the success of the Bolshevik revolution.

“It is important for us,” Stalin told his *Politbiuro* fellows, “that the [coming] war

continue as long as possible in order that both sides (Western Allied and German) exhaust their forces.” The Soviet Union, he said, would supply the Germans with petroleum and raw materials so that the fight would go on as long as possible.

In the August 23 Pact, the collaborating tyrants secretly agreed to war on Poland. Germany attacked Poland on September 1, the USSR attacked on September 17. Germany, by attacking first, was then, and still is, blamed as the aggressor. In the late 1940s Winston Churchill wrote the first major account of the War, a *pro domo* six-volume memoir-history. Churchill “was the overweeningly influential progenitor of the argument that Germany was the sole aggressor in the 1939 Polish war.” That contention most other history writers, including most Western academics, have long supported.

Stalin’s speech to the *Politbiuro* was leaked to journalists, and published in several versions, in French and Low Country newspapers in late November 1939. (Twenty years ago, Richard discovered the original text in a German archive.) Masses of testimony by Soviet defectors, as well as captured documents from Red Army and other Soviet sources have since emerged to corroborate the newspaper accounts of Stalin’s war plan. They underscore the historical truth about the Soviet plot to use the devastating war to Sovietize Europe.

Professors, Anglophones from places like Oxford and Cambridge, the Ivies, and other major campuses, as well as Continental Europeans, many on the payrolls of local government institutions, many of them authors of books on Stalin and his foreign policy, as well as on the coming of the Second World War, have for decades ignored the role of the Soviet leader’s speech in igniting the European conflict. Richard asked: is this refusal to deal with—failure to mention—obviously relevant

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evidence an international consequence of the riches bestowed by governments abroad on creating politically-correct history? Do the moneyed, foreign agencies, “driven by the fevered, controversial, international and local politics connected with them,” also affect history writers in North America, thereby effectively censoring historical output over here?

By looking at post-1991 writings of North American provenance on the subject of how the 1939 and 1941 wars came about, investigators may easily discover where academic obfuscators can be found on this side of the Atlantic. The questions which emerge are: Why and how do they continue to help to perpetuate the concealment of historical evidence? (Stalin’s speech is the salient, but far from solitary example.) What are the professional (and unprofessional) mechanisms which make the suppression possible?

An extensive bibliography is available from Richard Raack.

– *Georgia Wright, Maria Sakovich, and Richard Raack contributed to this report.*

“Russian Choral Music in 1920s and 1930s San Francisco: An Example of Cultural Sharing”

On Sunday, April 17, at the home of Ellen Huppert, **Maria Sakovich** gave a work-in-progress report. Prompted by the discovery of a few pages of handwritten music belonging to her grandfather and with knowledge of his role as a Russian Orthodox priest at Holy Trinity Cathedral on Van Ness Avenue at Green, Maria realized that he had a role in promoting Russian sacred music in San Francisco. Maria searched for materials to set her family’s legacy into its historical context and to document the encounter between Americans and Russian choral music, new on the city’s musical scene. The Main

Branch of the Public Library keeps a collection of large scrapbooks of concert programs and newspaper reviews giving evidence of a rich and varied musical life in San Francisco. The bi-weekly *Pacific Coast Musical Review* was also helpful.

Russian immigrants to the city, arriving as early as 1905 but coming in increasing numbers after the revolution and the civil war, added their choral traditions to the mix of San Francisco’s musical diversity and contributed to the growing a cappella movement taking place here and across America. San Franciscans heard both secular and sacred works—the twenty years before the revolution, 1897 to 1917, had been an innovative period in Russian church music.

After the Russian revolution, funding of church activities and payment of priests’ salaries ceased and each parish was left on its own. Father Vladimir Sakovich arrived at Holy Trinity Cathedral at a most precarious moment (January 1918). He eventually determined that music would be part of his efforts to support his church, which was burdened by debt and needing to serve the increasing influx of refugees.

The 1920s concerts by the Holy Trinity Cathedral choir elicited enthusiastic tribute from local American listeners. In addition to concerts, the choir sang at services at Episcopal churches, including several at Grace Cathedral. San Francisco’s Music Week, aiming to schedule one thousand musical events throughout the city, featured the choir in 1924 and 1926.

In addition to music performed by the church choir and an earlier but short-lived Russian Singing Society, as well as a newly formed Russian chorus with costumed performers, touring Russian groups also introduced Americans to Russian choral music in the 1920s and into the 1930s. Presentations of Russian choral music were so popular that concerts were sometimes repeated and/or moved to larger

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venues, including the Civic Auditorium. Among the earliest performers in San Francisco were the Russian Grand Opera Company, the Ukrainian National Chorus, the Russian Symphonic Choir, the Kedrov Quartet as well as the long-established group founded by Dmitri Agrenev-Slavyansky in 1868.

By the mid-1930s new Russian choral groups had formed in the Bay Area: one, composed of all Russian male singers, and two primarily of American singers under the baton of Russian directors. With the sponsorship of the YMCA, the Berkeley Men's A Cappella Choir sang a varied program in addition to Russian choral music. At its first concert, the Palo Alto Symphonic Choir performed Russian and German works. Both conductors had taught their American choir members to sing in Russian.

Maria's presentation had her own enthusiastic reception. In elegant prose, she had demonstrated her thesis that the transplanted Russian choral tradition enlarged the American musical canon but, rather than being absorbed into the American musical fabric, it retained its integrity of composition and performance and added a new strain to San Francisco's musical scene, at least until World War II. We had a lively discussion and encouraged Maria to submit her work to musical as well as historical journals.

– *Cornelia Levine*

“Lincoln's Gettysburg Address in an International Context”

On May 15, 2016, a group of members met in Georgia Wright's home to hear a very interesting presentation by **Dick Herr**. His talk was based on a presentation he had made in 2013 on the 150th anniversary of the Gettysburg Address. He pointed out that his interest in this speech was sparked by two lines from Lincoln's address: “Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so

conceived [in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal and so dedicated,] can long endure.” ... and “that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”

Dick pointed out that the survival of a union consisting of at least the northern states was not in doubt in 1863 and that Lincoln had something else in mind when he wrote these lines. He noted that since the time of the American Revolution, the United States had been a model for a successful republican government. In the 1830s the Young Italy, Young Germany, Young Poland, and Young Europe movements were formed with the goal of furthering the principles of a republic based on universal manhood suffrage. In the United States, a Young America movement gave these movements support.

Subsequently the 1848 revolutions arose throughout much of continental Europe in order to achieve manhood suffrage and other freedoms enjoyed in the United States. The brutal defeat of these revolutions resulted in large numbers of political refugees, mostly Germans and Irish, fleeing to the United States. One of these immigrants was Carl Schurz, who had been very politically active in Germany. Schurz became immersed in American politics and strongly opposed the Kansas-Nebraska bill that would have allowed slavery in these territories. He met Abraham Lincoln in 1858, during one of the Lincoln-Douglas debates, became active in the Republican party, and played a major role in Lincoln's election of 1860, addressing both German- and English-speaking crowds across the Union, upholding the image of the United States as the beacon of liberty across the world. Lincoln appreciated his message. It was through Schurz and others that Lincoln became quite aware of the crushing of democracy in Europe after 1848.

Schurz was present at Lincoln's inauguration and Lincoln appointed him ambassador to

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Spain, dismissing Secretary of State Seward's objection to sending a European revolutionary to a reigning queen. Additionally during the American Civil War, Napoleon III, who had overthrown the Second French Republic, sent a French army to overthrow the Mexican republic and install Maximilian as his client emperor of Mexico. Lincoln was distressed at the time he was composing the Gettysburg address that the Civil War kept him from responding to Mexico president Benito Juárez's plea for help against the French. Lincoln's anxiety about the perishing of democracy on earth should be seen in the light of the image of America as the beacon of democracy and these developments outside the United States.

– *Peter Meyerhof*

Medieval Studies Group

In May, **Ellen Huppert** reported on *The Murder of William of Norwich: the Origins of the Blood Libel in Medieval Europe* by E. M. Rose. This retelling of the story of a boy found dead on the outskirts of Norwich in 1144 emphasizes the social and political aspects of the event and its aftermath.

At the time, little attention was paid, but eventually William's body was moved into the cathedral area, and he became a saintly martyr. William's new status was promoted by Thomas of Monmouth, a monk in the Benedictine abbey of Norwich. Thomas's account, *The Life and Miracles of St. William of Norwich*, the only record of William's death, was not written until a decade after the events; it was transcribed and translated from Latin in 1896.

Rose points out that the period in question was one of much turmoil in England, and especially in the East Anglian area. A civil war was being waged over the disputed succession to the English throne. In the ensuing chaos, lives and property were threatened. The Second Crusade

(1147-49) sent many local lords to the Holy Land, not only to regain control of sacred sites from the invading Muslims, but also to glean lands and booty. But the crusade was a failure, and many returned home deep in debt.

When Eleazer, the leader of the Norwich Jewish community, was murdered in 1149, Simon de Nover was widely recognized as responsible. Simon was tried in Norwich with King Stephen presiding, but a postponement was granted and the trial reset in London. Turbe, the bishop of Norwich, defended Simon. Turbe claimed that Eleazer's death was revenge for the earlier killing of William by the Jews. This rhetorical device created the first instance of an accusation of a Jewish killing of a Christian for ritual purposes, the first blood libel in western European history. Blood libel has taken different forms. A witness at the trial of Simon claimed that international Jewry met near Easter each year to determine which Christian would be sacrificed so that his blood could help Jews return to Palestine. In other cases, the charge was that the blood was used for Passover matzo.

In the years after the death of William of Norwich, the idea that Jews killed innocent Christians for their own purposes spread. Gloucester and Bury St. Edmunds in England and Blois and Paris in France each had their martyrs. Rose's work makes only an implicit claim that the belief in Jewish culpability in Christian deaths was not because of popular belief, but due to the specific actions of lay or religious leaders to enhance their power and wealth. For example, King Philip Augustus of France used the charge of murder against the Jews of Paris. He expelled them from the area and took over their properties in the city, in turn granting those lands to secure the loyalty of his own people. One of the sites he obtained was that of a 600-year-old synagogue which became the church of the Madeleine, today one of the iconic buildings of Paris.

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A factor promoting the spread of attacks on Jews because of the blood libel was the “road trip,” which the Bishop of Norwich undertook to France, circulating relics of Saint William in order to raise money for rebuilding the cathedral after a fire. The saintly relics provided a good means of financial support for an abbey or church, as pilgrims came to pray. Along the way, the bishop publicized the advantages of attacks on Jews. For rulers and community leaders, blaming Jews for the deaths of innocent Christians allowed the confiscation of property which could be used in many ways to enhance their power.

Conclusion: Rose sees all these incidents as used by powerful players to enhance their own prestige, powers, and wealth. Initially, popular feeling was not aroused. But over time, the general populace took up the belief and blood libel entered the public imagination and survived into the twentieth century.

– *Ellen Huppert*

At the June Medieval Studies meeting, **Lyn Reese** reported on females who appear as “sleuths” in fictional medieval mysteries. In the nineteen books from this period she has reviewed on her website, the most popular characters are nuns and abbesses. In a time when the enclosure of nuns who were required to practice strict separation from the affairs of the external world was not the norm, women religious had numerous ways to uncover misdeeds and help solve crimes. Lyn chose to focus on two of the nun series set in sixth and seventh century Ireland. In these, authors often drew upon the Celtic traditions of Druidism and Laws of Brehon which gave women considerable freedoms and rights. Most popular is Peter Tremayne’s Sister Fidelma series. His twenty-five books have such an international following that the *Irish Post* has called Sister Fidelma the “best ambassador of Irish culture we have.”

Surprisingly there is only one series which features an historic personality. While many stories reference prominent women like Eleanor of Aquitaine, only Alais Capet (1160 - ca.1220) in Judith Koll Healey’s series has become a primary protagonist. Lyn suspects Healey chose her because of the very limited documentation about Alais. Healey thus can imagine her as a feisty woman well positioned to halt various intrigues since Alais was first sent to King Henry II’s English court at an early age and then was traded back to her brother King Phillip II of France at age 33. Although marred by some questionable “facts,” the series richly details the people and customs of the court, in particular the diverse women who inhabited them.

Some mysteries take advantage of the reality that female healers could be ideal crime solvers. In her beautifully written *Mistress of the Art of Death* series, Ariana Franklin gives us Adelia Aguilar, a physician based on the historic Trota (Trotula) who, like Franklin’s character, was educated at the prestigious University of Salerno. The series often uses Adelia’s exploits to illustrate twelfth century cultures and religions, and the circumstances of both court and village women.

Only a few characters from the common folk appear in stories. One is the delightful twelfth-century Magdalene La Bartarde, an atypical madam of a brothel located in London’s historic Southwark area. In the series by Roberta Gellis, Bartarde has some leeway to investigate crimes because she is protected by two powerful men, one being the Bishop of Winchester to whom she pays rent. The madam claims that some of the freedoms in her life also are because “I am not beholden to any man for the bread I chew, the fire in my hearth, the clothing on my body.”

Lyn reminds us that these fictional accounts are directed at modern audiences whose knowledge of women in the Middle Ages is probably very limited. In some stories the outlook and speech

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pattern of the characters are too contemporary and do not ring true. Others, if well researched, can give the reader solid details which enliven the plot and offer glimpses into the lives of the women who are its principal actors. Lyn gives high marks (stars) to books that provide author's notes, some notation of sources perused, and perhaps a map. All her reviews of females in history mysteries can be found at: www.womeninworldhistory.com/mysteries.html.

Lyn Reese

Play Readers

This spring we read a drama by Dion Boucicault, *The Poor of New York*. The play was adapted from a French play, *Les Pauvres de Paris*, written in 1856. The Boucicault play was first performed at Wallack's Theatre in New York in 1857. The play was revived in following decades as *The Poor of Manchester, of Leeds*, then as the *Streets of London or Dublin*. It was popular with 19th-century audiences, if not with the critics. Dion Boucicault, born Dionysius Lardner Boursiquot in Dublin, arrived in New York City in 1853. He was a major influence on American drama, helping, among other things, to produce the first copyright law for drama in the U.S. He was a prodigious writer as well as an actor with an early concern for social themes.

The action in *The Poor of New York* begins during the financial panic of 1837. The play opens in the office of bank-owner Gideon Bloodgood who, anticipating the collapse of his bank, is preparing to abscond to England. His clerk Badger has kept a secret file of his employer's questionable dealings. At this point, a Captain Fairweather enters and deposits his life savings. He leaves with a receipt of his deposit, only to return shortly to demand his money back, having learned of the bank's imminent collapse. The banker refuses to refund the money, and in the heated discussion which follows, the Captain dies of a heart attack.

Badger helps dispose of the body and acquires the deposit slip.

The action moves forward twenty years to 1857. We now meet the surviving Fairweather family, mother, son, and daughter. They have fallen on hard times, as have most of the other characters in the play, with the exception of Bloodgood. There is something very familiar in a speech by one of the characters, Livingstone, who declares that the true poor of New York are the newly impoverished middle class.

Despite her wealth, Bloodgood's daughter, upon whom he dotes, has not been accepted into Society. She gets her father to forgive Livingstone's debts, so that he will marry her and be her entrée into New York Society. Livingstone and the late Captain Fairweather's daughter Lucy are in love, but she willingly gives him up rather than see him ruined.

Badger, who had gone off to Australia, keeping the receipt, has returned and informs the late Captain's son how Bloodgood robbed him of his family's money. Bloodgood has Badger arrested, but Badger is able to hide the receipt in his lodgings. In the last act, Bloodgood is spied setting fires in Badger's lodgings. A massive fire occurs, with the set dramatically being lit on fire and a real fire engine on the stage. The spectacle was ingeniously staged, described at the time as beyond outstanding, which supposedly set a precedent for subsequent scenes of this sort. To add to the spectacle, steam was used to create the illusion of smoke as Badger emerges holding the paper that will convict the evil banker. Livingstone learns that his beloved Lucy had made a bargain with Bloodgood's daughter to give him up in return for Bloodgood's support of him. The play ends with the marriage of Livingstone and Lucy. The money is returned to the Fairweathers and the family forgives Bloodgood. At the conclusion, the playwright exhorts the audience to be good to the poor of New York, or wherever they may be!

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The Play Readers welcome members of the Institute to join them in their reading. Please contact Joanne Lafler.

– *Edith Piness*

Writers' Group

We met in June to review excerpts from **Celeste MacLeod's** book, "A Woman of Unbearable Opinions: Fanny Trollope's Singular Eye on Early America." Published in England in 1832, just three years before Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, Trollope's *Domestic Manners of the Americans* was an immediate hit in England, although it infuriated Americans. She had spent four years in the United States, mostly in Cincinnati but also traveling to various places. *Domestic Manners* was the 53-year-old Trollope's first book, and after she returned to England, she went on to produce dozens more, including romances and "social protest" novels about injustices in her homeland. Trollope became one of England's most successful authors and supported her family (including son Anthony who became a leading novelist). While Celeste's book is not a full biography of Trollope, it covers the circumstances around the writing of *Domestic Manners* and her later career.

Celeste provided us with the introduction, chapter list, and the first chapter. Members made several important suggestions about these drafts. Some thought the introduction should be shortened or even eliminated with parts moved to Chapter One which might serve as an introduction. Also, some information about Trollope should appear close to the front of the book. While some readers might be aware of Fanny Trollope, most will not know about her remarkable achievements, especially her publishing history and how she overcame a number of personal setbacks, including an unhappy marriage and her family's financial

straits. The group also discussed publishing possibilities for the book.

The Writers' Group welcomes Institute members working on projects. Each month, we gather to comment on drafts that a writer provides. Charles Sullivan presented at our latest meeting on Sunday, July 10, at the home of Carol Sicherman. (Please note that we meet in members' homes, mostly in San Francisco, Berkeley and Oakland; we use carpools to crisscross the Bay.)

– *Cathy Robbins*

Part of the writers' group report in the spring newsletter included reviews of services for writers, including editing companies, pay-for-services publishing houses, and coaching businesses. Institute member **Rose Marie Cleese** adds to the discussion: "I am an experienced book copyeditor and proofreader with a whole stable of satisfied authors and would be happy to be considered for such work when you have that need. . . . What I bring to the copyediting table that most other copyeditors don't is the fact that I am a writer as well, and I have 20-plus years of experience working in both trade book and college textbook publishing in the creative marketing area. . . . I always have my sensibilities tuned to the targeted audience for a book. I don't just focus on the flow, punctuation, grammar, etc., but also on what the reader is experiencing (does this part make sense? has something critical been left out?). That said, when I copyedit a book, I am sensitive to leaving the writer's voice and intent intact. I also try to limit my remarks, queries, suggestions, and edits to what is absolutely necessary. I am local, listen well, have zero tolerance for errors, am able to do fast turn-arounds, and care that your book does well."

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

July 30: On behalf of the California and the West Study Group, **Peter Meyerhof** has organized a field trip to the San Francisco Presidio for July 30. All members of the Institute, as well as families and friends, are welcome. (Consider inviting along a prospective member.) Peter writes: "We will meet at 10 a.m. at the flagpole of the main parade grounds of the Presidio. I will give a brief orientation and describe the buildings, cannons, and their historical significance. We will then visit the archaeological excavations in the original Mexican Presidio footprint and hear from experts what they are finding. The nearby Archaeological Lab will be open that morning for our group to see artifacts from recent digs. Next stop is the Officers Club next door and their excellent new museum on the history of the Presidio. After lunch (two options are close by), we will stop at the Society of California Pioneers, which moved to the parade ground area two years ago. The museum features a fascinating exhibit on the Gold Rush. Director Patricia Keats has kindly offered us the opportunity to submit some of our individual research topics beforehand (i.e. ASAP), and she will attempt to find material in the archives that may be of interest. For those who still want to see more, we can walk to the nearby 1906 earthquake cottages and then drive to Fort Point and tour this facility. Because we are recognized as being special, the only anticipated cost at the Presidio will be lunch. If you are interested, please RSVP: p.meyerhof@comcast.net so that we will have a tally of who will be coming."

September 15: Attention Institute researchers! The deadline for applying for **Institute mini-grants**, September 15, is fast approaching. If you are engaged in a research project and need financial support you should not pass up this opportunity. Go to our website for more information and the application form.

Beginning this year the Board has authorized the minigrant committee to consider larger grants. In the past, minigrants have generally been limited to a maximum of \$500. Last year we experimented with somewhat more generous awards. In the years to come we will try to be more flexible still. Obviously, our funds are limited, but we will be considering larger grants. Applicants must have been members of the Institute for at least a year. Information of other requirements can be found on our website.

September 23 - 25: **Rose Marie Cleese** is organizing a three-day, two-night trip for Institute members in the heart of California's Gold Country the weekend of September 23 - 25. The focus of the walks and talks will be on the early (Gold Rush era) and lasting influence of Italian-Americans in Amador County, specifically in the towns of Volcano, Jackson, and Sutter Creek. Our group will be joined by members of the Italian-American Studies Association. Attendees will be staying at the St. George Hotel, built in 1862 on the site of two earlier hotels. At one time, Volcano had 17 hotels and a population of several thousand; today Volcano has just over 100 inhabitants, but still a delightful and fascinating main street! Events include a guided tour of the Amador County Museum in Jackson on Friday; walking tours of Sutter Creek and Volcano, led by area historians, on Saturday; a reception and group dinner (\$30, plus tax and tip) Saturday night at the hotel with guest speakers; and a visit on Sunday to the annual Big Time celebration at Indian Grinding Rock State Historic Park. Hotel rooms available at a 10 percent discount; best to reserve early: Ed Tracey at 1-209-296-4458 or ed@stgeorgevolcano.com. Details and questions about the trip: Rose Marie at (415) 702-9797 or rclcese@earthlink.net.

MEMBER NEWS

In Memoriam

Ruth Hendricks Willard, a long-time member of the Institute, died March 26, 2016 at the age of 95. She joined at the urging of Frances Richardson Keller, whose student she was at San Francisco State. Ruth had completed her bachelor's degree at State after a long hiatus due to her marriage and family obligations. She was an outstanding student and very proud of her achievement. She wrote two books, *Sacred Places of San Francisco* and *Alameda County: California Crossroads*. Among her other many activities was collecting antique weights and scales. She helped found the International Society of Antique Scale Collectors. Many Institute members will remember the hospitality Ruth and her husband Will offered at their home in the Forest Hill district of San Francisco. We met there for works in progress and for potluck suppers. A memorial celebration was held at the Peninsula Regent in San Mateo where Ruth lived the last years of her life.

– *Ellen Huppert*

Peter Stansky's book *Edward Upward: Art and Life* was just published by Enitharmon Press in London. This is the first biography of the comparatively unknown and most radical member of the Auden circle, an iconic writer of the 1930s. Peter writes that "his long life (1903-2009) may be revealing about English cultural life of the 20th century."

Charles Sullivan will present a paper entitled "From Sea to Shining Sea: Measuring North America in the 16th Century" at the 57th Annual Meeting of the Society for the History of Discoveries, in Newport, Rhode Island, September 23, 2016. He has had several book reviews published in recent issues of the Society's journal, *Terrae Incognitae*.

Rob Robbins' biography of Vladimir Dzhunkovsky "Overtaken by the Night: A Russian's Journey through Peace, War,

Revolution and Terror" is now under contract with Pittsburgh University Press. Plans are for publication in the fall of 2017.

With permission from *The Argonaut*, the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation has added **Maria Sakovich's** 2011 article "Deaconess Katharine Maurer: The Angel of Angel Island" to its "Immigrant Voices" stories on its website (aiisf.org/immigrant-voices/discover). All the many photographs in the original article have also been reproduced.

Autumn Stanley reports the publication of her children's book *My Sign's Bigger than Your Sign*, appropriate for ages 6-10, available from Heart to Heart Publishers for \$14.95.

Rosalie Stemer Feldman, writing from her home in Connecticut, says "Hello to all my wonderful friends at the Institute!"

Members' LaborFest Presentations

"The Lessons of the Preparedness Day Bombing for Today: Repression, Frame-up, Labor, and Political Prisoners" by **Steven Levi**, July 22 at 7 p.m. ILWU Local 34 Hall - 801 2nd Street, next to AT&T Ball Park.

Book reading by **Harvey Schwartz** from *Building the Golden Gate Bridge: A Workers' Oral History*, July 25 at 6:30 p.m. Plumbers Hall - 1621 Market Street at Franklin, second floor. Also reading this evening is Bob Mattacola from *George W. Farris Diaries: A Daily Diary of a Union Carpenter in San Francisco, 1902-1910*.

– continued from the front page

1930s for America. Tempted to emigrate with her but not sharing her danger, the grandfather remained regretfully in Germany. His best friend also emigrated and married the young woman; all three friends remained in touch throughout their lives. Isabel knew them all.

Besides Isabel, I have had many pen pals met through JewishGen online discussion groups. Valerie Schatzker, author of the monograph *Jewish Oil Magnates of Galicia*—a wonderfully readable book—sent a source in a 1917 Austrian newspaper, explained Polish words, and offered to read the manuscript. A professional translator in Israel grappled with the intolerably messy Yiddish script. (Institute member Bogna Lorence-Kot translated Polish cards.) A man in Ohio eagerly offered to make a genealogical chart for the book. Rabbi Avrohom Marmorstein figured out the most likely way that Jacob Isak learned to read and write German—from his fellow pupils in one of the yeshivas that he attended. Like many Hasidim, his family ignored the imperial law that required all children to go to schools that included secular studies. Jacob and his parents preferred that he sleep on straw and go hungry, as long as he could absorb rabbinic learning.

What has been most rewarding about this research has been the human element: coming to know the people of the cards and the people of the scholarly community—discovering and being offered knowledge that illuminates the stories of these long-gone people.

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