

The CCWH Newsletter

The Newsletter for the Coordinating Council for Women in History

THE ONGOING RELEVANCE OF THE CCWH RACHEL FUCHS

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Why do we need the CCWH? Is it still relevant when some major universities now have women presidents and provosts? In recent years, women have been elected presidents of the AHA as never before. Why do we need an organization such as the CCWH to support women historians when there are increasing numbers of women deans, directors and department chairs? It is quite gratifying to see greater gender equality in the academy at many levels, and we applaud the efforts of all groups that helped make this possible. Yet, there are problems in our profession that result, in part, from the current diminished respect for the humanities, the economic hardships of universities, and the desire of universities to support disciplines that engage in problem solving from a local to global level. Unfortunately, university administrators often fail to recognize how the study of history helps in recognizing and solving global issues. Furthermore, the development of MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) taught by distinguished faculty and open to many thousands of students are threatening to change higher education as we know it and result in a loss of jobs for historians and other faculty. These developments, as well as others, affect men as well as women. Women may not face any more concrete challenges than men in gaining acceptance to graduate school, getting published, or getting hired. Note the order in which I put these: getting published is often a prerequisite to getting hired in a tenure-track position. Furthermore, there is a valid argument that women are not necessarily, by gender, more passive or self-effacing than men.

So why do we need the CCWH to support women in history when we have made great strides toward equality and when the current difficulties affect both women and men?

First, despite the advances of women to the ranks of full profes-

sor and to administrative positions in colleges and universities, women may still find the halls of these institutions somewhat chilly. In 1982, Roberta M. Hall and Bernice R. Sandler, as directors of the Project on the Status and Education of Women of the Association of American Colleges and Universities, issued an oft-cited report, "The Classroom Climate: A Chilly One for Women?" They demonstrated that certain behaviors—both overt and subtle—created a chilly classroom climate for women, which put women at a distinct disadvantage to achieving academic success. I suggest here that institutions of higher education today might still create a chilly climate for women faculty, both tenure-track and adjunct, as well as for graduate students. Some chairs and administrators still refer to outspoken women as "aggressive" or "hostile" and criticize others as "emotional" and "irrational." I've recently heard male administrators refer to certain women in those terms and have experienced someone referring to me in those terms myself. When not considered "hostile" or "aggressive," women, especially graduate students, are still sometimes patronized. Yes, there has been a climate change over the past decades, usually for the improvement of the status of women, but the "chilly climate" still lingers, sometimes more subtly, with resulting

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misunderstandings, miscommunications, and gender discrimination—intentional and well as unintentional. Use of language used in a derogatory fashion is just one example.

Another “chill” for women is the situation when many colleges and universities provide awards to faculty members or feature faculty members’ achievements on their web pages. What is the proportion of women so honored? Is it proportional to their presence in the institution? With the current emphasis on global initiatives and scientific innovation, do institutions favor disciplines with a preponderance of men to the detriment of disciplines in the humanities that often have as many female as male faculty? The CCWH can call attention to such a somewhat subtle chilly atmosphere for women in history. The CCWH—through this newsletter, at the AHA and Berks conferences, and through personal contacts—offers support to women and showcases women’s successes, creating a warmer climate. The CCWH also supports women and all its members financially through the Nupur Chaudhuri First Article Award (\$1000) and the Catherine Prelinger Memorial Award (\$20,000). See www.theccwh.org for further details.

Second, John W. Curtis, Director of Research and Public Policy of the AAUP, reported on the “Persistent Inequity: Gender and Academic Employment.” Although in 2009, over 50 percent of undergraduate students were women, “only 42 percent of all full-time faculty members are women.” The gender gap in 2009 among tenured faculty was great, with 14 percent more men than women employed in tenured positions. We don’t yet have the current numbers. These data are not discipline specific, but include engineering and the sciences where men still outnumber women. In a subsequent CCWH newsletter, I will discuss the data for history. Nevertheless, for now, it’s important to know that the AAUP has pointed out gender inequity, and part of the mission of the CCWH is to work with other organizations to try to rectify that inequity.

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Third, adjunct faculty, both men and women, often teaching five courses a semester and traveling from one institution to another, are increasing in number and in proportion to tenured and tenure-track faculty. Among these part-time faculty, women comprise 55.5 percent with a gender gap of more than 8 percent. Among full-time non-tenure track faculty, the gender gap is even greater, approximating 10 percent. Life in these positions is difficult for both men and women, and rewards are few. Adjunct faculty have no voice in their departments and schools, are often treated with a complete lack of respect, are asked to teach at the last moment, and are “used” to teach the largest classes. The halls of academe are not just chilly for both men and women contingent faculty, but can be downright cold. The CCWH has started working with the AHA and other groups on ways to help these scholars find the released time from teaching, especially during the summer, to enable them to publish and move into more stable positions. The CCWH will also work with the AHA and other organizations to try to secure some benefits for these contingent faculty. Both the Prelinger and Chaudhuri awards of the CCWH are open to adjunct, part-time, or un- and under-employed historians and provide both much-needed recognition and financial support.

Fourth, feminist battles for equity have not all been won. Feminists, with our ideological and political struggles for equality and respect for women, also eventually improve equality and respect for all—both women and men. CCWH helps develop strategies to challenge inequalities; it recognizes women’s potential and achievements and helps open up spaces and climates for success. In what has been called the “post-feminist” era, many people are reluctant to admit or even entertain the notion that women are still discriminated against, much less talk openly about it. Without organizations such as the CCWH (as well as the AHA and AAUP), inequities and discrimination might become invisible.

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Fifth, in these years of financial uncertainty and greatly diminished resources in the humanities, graduate students need more support, both in terms of finances and information. Research trips are expensive, and the CCWH provides much needed funding. Here, I want to call attention to the Ida B. Wells Graduate Student Fellowship and the CCWH/Berks Graduate Student Fellowship. Each carries an award of \$1,000 and is for graduate students at a crucial stage of research of the final year of writing. The deadline is September 15. See our website www.theccwh.org for details.

Finally, as I was thinking of the relevance of the CCWH to women historians in 2013, a little rhyme from a children's book came to my mind: "To give advice is very nice, but friends can do much more. Friends should always help a friend. That's what friends are for." The CCWH is a friend for women historians, from graduate students, to the unemployed, partially and under-employed, to tenured and senior faculty. It provides help and support, most often in the form of knowledge. Our "primary goals are to educate men and women on the status of women in the historical profession and to promote research and interpretation in areas of women's history." To move from a hyper-moralistic and simplistic children's book to the ideas of Francis Bacon, Thomas Jefferson, Doris Lessing and Michel Foucault, among others, knowledge is power; the CCWH can empower women by sharing knowledge. However, to give help and support, the CCWH also requires help and support from friends. It needs support from members, in particular senior, tenured, or tenure-track members in the form of membership, mentoring, and money. Thus, I end with a plea for support from senior historians and for those who are able to give back in these uncertain times and pay forward to a younger generation.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS: LERNER-SCOTT PRIZE

The Lerner-Scott Prize is given annually by the Organization of American Historians for the best doctoral dissertation in U.S. women's history. The prize is named for Gerda Lerner and Anne Firor Scott, both pioneers in women's history and past presidents of the OAH. A dissertation must be completed between July 1, 2012, through June 30, 2013, to be eligible for the 2014 Lerner-Scott Prize. The prize will be presented at the 2014 OAH Annual Meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, April 10–13.

Application Procedures

Please send an electronic attachment (in Microsoft Word format) of your complete dissertation to each of the three committee members listed on the website. Each committee member must receive all applications by October 1, 2013. Each application must also include a letter of support from a faculty member at the degree-granting institution, along with an abstract and table of contents. Please provide email addresses for both the applicant and the adviser, if available. The final decision will be made by the Lerner-Scott Prize committee by February 2014. The winner will be provided with details regarding the OAH annual meeting and awards presentation, where s/he will receive a cash award and a plaque.

You can find more information online: <http://www.oah.org/awards/awards.lernerscott.index.html>

APPLICATION DEADLINE: OCTOBER 1, 2013

NOTES FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

SANDRA TRUDGEN DAWSON

I went to see *Despicable Me 2* with my daughter a couple of weeks ago. Those of you without small children may not know the *Despicable Me* story of Gru, a super villain, and the three little orphans who change his life. The sequel continues the story but this time Gru is recruited by the Anti-Villain League where he falls in love with Lucy, his clumsy spy partner. The film ends with the perfect family—Gru, Lucy, and the three little adopted girls living happily ever after—a sort of Annie ending without the tears.

As a child I remember wanting this kind of perfect, loving family. Instead, I had another kind of family. A hardworking and loving single mother and two siblings who held my life together. Looking back from today I realize it was just as “perfect” as the one at the end of the movie because of good friends and neighbors, teachers and relatives. It reminds me of bell hooks’ chapter on parenting in *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* where she turns the idea of a “traditional” nuclear family on its head and encourages parents to seek out the wisdom of the aged, infirm, and others around us and to trust our children to them.¹ Too often we look at our children as private property and instill in them a mistrust of others (rightly so, at times) without really recognizing the valuable experiences of others. Parenting is often more communal than we think and this can enrich our children’s lives, our communities and our society. Just something I have been thinking about lately.

But now to CCWH business! I am very excited to let you know that the keynote speaker for the 2014 CCWH Awards Luncheon is Crystal Feimster from the African American Studies program at Yale University. Crystal is a longtime member of the CCWH and a former graduate student representative. Crystal’s current research is an examination of rape in the US Civil War. Her keynote address, “The (Civil) War on Women: A Case for Women’s History,” will incorporate some of her research with current affairs to argue that women’s history still matters.

I hope that all of you have had a chance to look at the new website and send any ideas to Sara Kimble at web@theccwh.org. The Executive Board has been debating the idea of a CCWH blog that will introduce members and their work to other members. Would you be interested in a blog like this? I believe it would work well to allow members to get to know others and to potentially help in putting together panel proposals for conferences. Please let me know your opinion at execdir@theccwh.org. We would also like to start collecting useful website, award, fellowship, and prize information and post these to the website. If you know of good resources for grad students, junior or senior scholars, or teaching aids, please send them to Sara Kimble at web@theccwh.org.

Enjoy the rest of the summer and remember to encourage grad students and junior scholars to apply for one of the CCWH awards. The deadline for each is September 15.

¹ bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, 2nd ed. (South End Press, 2000).

CCWH MEMBER NEWS

Nupur Chaudhuri presented a paper titled “State-Sponsored British Girls’ Emigration to Canada, 1869–1895” at the 2012 Midwest Conference on British Studies, in Toronto, October 12–14. She also chaired a session titled “Enlightenment and Local Communities in Eighteenth-Century Europe” at the European History Section of the Southern History Associations Conference in 2012. Nupur is also the co-track director for the Empire, Nations and Commons for the 2014 Berkshire Women’s History Conference; additionally, she is co-editing with Dr. DiCostanzo (University of Strasbourg) a special issue on the decolonization of India for the journal titled *Revue Française de Civilisation Britanique*.

Amy Essington published a review of *Double No-Hit: Johnny VanderMeer’s Historic Night Under the Lights* by James W. Johnson in the *Journal of Sport History* (Spring 2013) and a review of *Transpacific Field of Dreams: How Baseball Linked the United States and Japan in Peace and War* by Sayuri Guthrie-Shimizu in the *Pacific Historical Review* (May 2013). She published the entries “Indianapolis Clowns,” “Pittsburgh Crawfords,” “Curt Flood,” “Kenesaw Mountain Landis,” “Satchel Paige,” “Vin Scully,” and “Woody Strode” in *American Sports: A History of Icons, Idols and Ideas* (ABC-CLIO, May 2013).

Amy Forss will be teaching overseas as a U.S. Fulbright Scholar from January to June 2014 at Kecskemet College in Kecskemet, Hungary. Her first book, *Black Print with a White Carnation: Mildred Brown and the Omaha Star Newspaper, 1938–1989*, will be published by University of Nebraska Press in January 2014.

Natalia Ginsburg won the Women’s History Prize with her senior paper, “The Hidden History of Jane: Chicago’s Forgotten Underground Abortion Service and *Roe v. Wade*.”

Carol Gold has published “On the Streets and in the Markets: Independent Copenhagen Saleswomen,” in *Female Agency in the Urban Economy: Gender in European Towns, 1640–1830*, edited by Deborah Simonton & Anne Montenach (Routledge, 2013), pp. 35–55.

Susan Goodier has written her first book, *No Votes for Women: The New York State Anti-Suffrage Movement* (University of Illinois Press). It is part of the Women in American History series.

Jeanne Farr McDonnell is working on co-editing for the Palo Alto Historical Association a book about Mayfield, the small community that preceded Stanford University and Palo Alto, and was the last stop on the original railroad from San Francisco. The railroad stop is still there, but the town of Mayfield was annexed by Palo Alto in 1926. As the historian of the Women’s Club of Palo Alto, which dates to 1893, along with the City of Palo Alto, she is also at work on an exhibit to celebrate the centennial of the clubhouse in 2016. The speaker at the gathering for the laying of the cornerstone was Samuel Shortridge, the brother of Clara Shortridge Foltz, California’s first woman attorney.

La Shonda Mims graduated with a PhD in U.S. History from the University of Georgia in July 2012 and is exceptionally grateful to the CCWH for the Prelinger Award, which funded her final months of writing and research. She will deliver the annual keynote address for the Southern Association for Women Historians, titled “Drastic Dykes: The New South and Lesbian Life from Hotlanta to the Queen City” at the annual meeting of the Southern Historical Association in St. Louis this October. Currently a visiting lecturer at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, La Shonda is looking forward to teaching the first course on U.S. LGBT history there in the coming academic year.

CCWH MEMBER NEWS

Mary Beth Norton will be starting phased retirement in January 2014. She is at work researching a new book, back in the revolutionary era after an absence of more than two decades.

Grey Osterud's recent book, *Putting the Barn Before the House: Women and Family Farming in Early Twentieth-Century New York* (Cornell University Press, 2012), has been awarded the Theodore Saloutos Prize by the Agricultural History Society. The work was completed with assistance from the CCWH's Catherine Prelinger Award. A review of the book can be found on page 12.

Nicole Pacino graduated with her PhD in Latin American history from the University of California, Santa Barbara, and is beginning as an Assistant Professor of History at the University of Alabama in Huntsville in the fall.

Ilaria Scaglia was hired as an Assistant Professor in Asian and International History in the Department of History and Geography at Columbus State University (Columbus, GA). She will be starting on August 1, 2013. Also, in 2013 she participated in and presented at the following conferences/workshops: "The Interwar Roots of Cultural Diplomacy," Institute for Cultural Diplomacy, Berlin, Germany (February 13–17, 2013); and "Cultural Diplomacy's Past and Present: Historiographical Debates and Longstanding Questions," The Symposium on Cultural Diplomacy in the USA (New York City and Washington, DC, June 24–28, 2013).

Marcia Synnott published a new book this month, *Student Diversity at the Big Three: Changes at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton since the 1920s*, by Transaction Publishers. One of the chapters discusses the lengthy paths to full coeducation at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton.

Lynn Weiner has retired from her position after twelve years as Dean of Arts & Sciences at Roosevelt University and has begun her new appointment as University Historian.

CONFERENCE: ASSOCIATION OF PERSONAL HISTORIANS

Worldwide members of the Association of Personal Historians (APH) will gather for their annual conference in Bethesda, Maryland, November 8–12, 2013. The five-day conference is a magnet for personal historians wanting to network with fellow professionals and explore ways to enhance their businesses of documenting personal and family histories, in print, audio, and video.

APH conference program chair Ronda Barrett has planned a stimulating program for experienced and beginning personal historians that will feature twenty-five workshops and three keynote speakers—a PBS producer, an Oscar-winning filmmaker, and a bestselling author. "In our ongoing quest to raise the caliber of the services provided by personal historians to their clients, we have invited industry experts to enlighten and inspire our talented members," says Barrett. "They will be addressing all facets of working in this industry for anyone serious about earning a living in this growing field."

Founded in 1995, the Association of Personal Historians has more than 625 members representing 11 countries. For more information about the Association of Personal Historians and their conference, please visit www.personalhistorians.org/conference/c2013/annual_conference.php.

NEH NATIONAL MEDALIST: NATALIE ZEMON DAVIS JAMES WILLIFORD

On July 10, Natalie Zemon Davis was among twelve Americans to receive a National Humanities medal, presented by President Obama on behalf of the National Endowment for the Humanities, for “outstanding achievements in the humanities.” Below is an excerpt of Davis’s NEH.gov profile, which was written by freelance author James Williford and which can be found in full online: <http://www.neh.gov/about/awards/national-humanities-medals/natalie-zemon-davis>.

Few historians have combed the archives of the early modern world with the meticulous erudition of Natalie Zemon Davis. Fewer still have emerged from those archives with the embarrassment of gifts that, over the past five decades, she has presented to her discipline. Focusing less on the great moments and movers of history and more on the everyday lives of those relegated to the boundaries of power—peasants, artisans, women—and the opportunities that they made of their circumstances, Davis has tackled some of the most elusive facets of human experience. To get at her subjects, she has drawn on the resources of anthropology, literary scholarship, and film studies (to name just a few of her interdisciplinary excursions), producing seven books and numerous scholarly articles, nearly all of them pushing in some way at the limits of the historical enterprise itself.

Davis has taught at Brown, the University of Toronto, Berkeley, and Princeton, where she is the Henry Charles Lea Professor of History Emeritus. She has received honorary degrees from institutions in the United States and Europe, served as president of the American Historical Association, and, in 2010, was awarded the Holberg International Memorial Prize.

Over the years, the scope of her research has grown from Lyon to Western Europe to North

Africa and the New World, all while maintaining a remarkable continuity of thought and theme. “I work on something,” she says, “and it often leads me to something else, requires me to go in a new direction.” As a consultant and scriptwriter for the film *Le retour de Martin Guerre* (1982), a slightly fictionalized account of a sixteenth-century peasant impostor, she was struck by the questions that the actors (among them, Gérard Depardieu and Nathalie Baye) asked her about their roles. “They weren’t,” she says, “the kinds of questions that a historian would ask,” but, for just that reason, they gave her fresh ideas to explore in her own prose history of the subject, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (1983). When she had finished that book, which was based principally on two contemporaneous written accounts, Davis found herself wondering how the largely illiterate peasantry of the time would have told the story. For answers, she turned to letters of remission, documents dictated to notaries by capital offenders who hoped to secure a royal pardon, and ended up writing *Fiction in the Archives* (1990).



NATALIE ZEMON DAVIS (CONT.)
JAMES WILLIFORD

Despite her predilection for the early modern world, the present is never far from Davis's work. During the 1980s—an era marked, as she puts it, by “a passion for consumer culture and capitalism”—she began to develop the material that eventually became *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France* (2000), an anthropological approach to the history of gifting, charity, and reciprocal obligation that engaged popular discourses of its own time. After September 11, she fleshed out what was originally intended to be a long chapter on Leo Africanus, an African Muslim-turned-Christian in sixteenth-century Italy, into a book-length study of his life and work, *Trickster Travels* (2006). “Twentieth- and twenty-first-century questions can nourish a historical subject,” she says—provided one “stays true to the historian's rules of presentation and interpretation.”

BOOK REVIEW: KIM TODT
UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT LAFAYETTE

Mahogany: The Costs of Luxury in Early America. Jennifer Anderson. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012. 398 pp. \$35.00. ISBN: 978-0-674-04871-3.

The radiantly polished surfaces of mahogany tables mirrored all manner of things in brilliant detail. In numerous paintings, eighteenth-century artists replicated jewels, exquisite lace, and precious metals—the period's symbols of luxury and bespoke craftsmanship—and used a mahogany surface to reflect the items. Glossy surfaces such as a mahogany table forced the observer to think about the importance of the materials and, consequently, the person portrayed. Despite capturing the clarity of the surface and the reflections of hands and objects, the depictions blurred the extent of the human and ecological cost of how mahogany was harvested.

In this engaging history of mahogany, Jennifer L. Anderson introduces the rich and seductive wood and examines the commodity beyond traditional political or national boundaries of either its natural habitats or its consumption. Far more than just a paean to the wood and the artisans who crafted it, Anderson situates the natural resource within a cultural, economic, and ecological framework while paying attention to the entwining human experience. Through detailed exploration across broad swaths of space and time, she examines its production, distribution, and consumption.

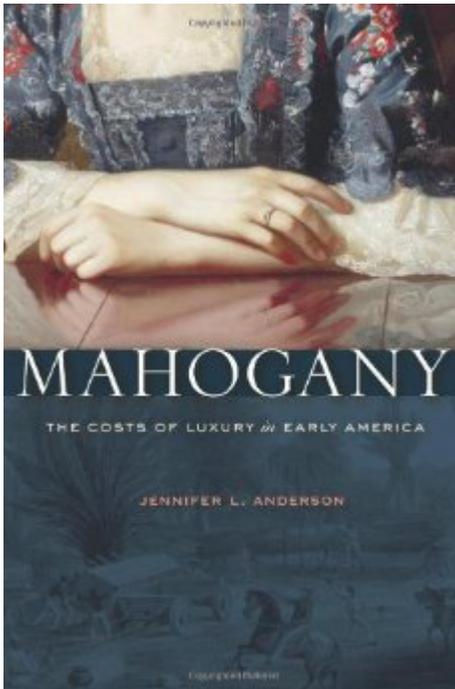
Anderson stresses the distinction of mahogany from other commodities: its limited availability, its durability, and its increasing scarcity. Found in a restricted geographical region—the North Central Caribbean and the smaller surrounding islands of the northern Antilles—plantation owners' efforts to apply early modern agricultural practices to produce the trees in a manner similar to familiar mass-produced crops proved largely unsuccessful. While consumers had easy accessibility to popular tropical commodities such as sugar and tea, and consumed the same as quickly, goods produced from mahogany offered a longer-lasting mark of elevated status and permanence. And, as a consequence of mahogany's popularity, plantation owners felled old-growth timber, quickly forcing timber of lesser quality to redefine the meanings associated with mahogany.

Along with an environmental assessment of the history of mahogany, Anderson describes the human cost surrounding mahogany's production and consumption. As elsewhere in the New World, plantation owners sought to capitalize on the popularity of a commodity, in this case mahogany, and supplanted the labor of European indentured servants with imported enslaved Africans. Anderson advances that slaves became the

BOOK REVIEW: KIM TODT

UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT LAFAYETTE

mainstay of mahogany logging even as London investors and merchants transformed many Caribbean islands into plantation-based slave societies. Diverting slave labor from seasonal crops proved problematic for plantation owners who sought to maximize their financial return and protect



their slaves from hazardous logging activities. Nevertheless, the potential profits of clearing mahogany persuaded many planters to hire woodcutters who had their own slave forces. Whether enslaved by a planter or a woodcutter, Anderson contends that felling mahogany offered slaves a more flexible form of bondage than slaves elsewhere in the Caribbean.

Nowhere was slavery's flexibility in changing economic and geographic circumstances more apparent, according to Anderson, than in the Spanish territory of the Bay of Honduras (now Belize). There, English woodcutters, or Baymen, came initially to fell logwood, and later mahogany. Because Baymen could not hold real property in Spanish territory, their human property became their most valuable assets. Without slaves, the Baymen could not conduct their logging operations and reap anticipated profits. As well, the Spanish promise of freedom to English runaway slaves meant the Baymen controlled their slaves with "an odd mixture of positive inducements, such as rewards, incentives, and concessions, and various forms of coercion and discipline, including threats, harsh punishments, and negative propaganda about the Spanish." Anderson deftly narrates the co-existence and interplay between Baymen and slaves in which slaves obtained accommodations and, occasionally, freedom.

In subsequent chapters, Anderson explores the hazards of the mahogany trade engaged in by New England merchants with plantation owners in the Bay of Honduras; the shifting notions by craftsman and consumers of what comprised quality mahogany as sourcing of old growth trees became more problematic; the technological advances in production, transportation, and manufacturing that transformed the commodity during the nineteenth century; and, the cultural connotations of mahogany over time including racialized exoticism, romanticized nature, and historical nostalgia.

If there are weaknesses with this impressive study, they lie in the difficulty of placing mahogany in the larger economy of early America. Anderson does well to situate Boston and Rhode Island in the context of the mahogany trade, but largely ignores connections with merchants and artisans in New Netherland (later New York), Philadelphia, and Charleston. Intercolonial traders, paying little regard to the Navigation Acts and political boundaries, actively sought out opportunities for profit such as that presented by mahogany. A more expansive examination of the connections beyond New England would have demonstrated the integrative nature of trade in early America within the broader Atlantic context.

This minor criticism should not detract from Anderson's achievement. Charles Dickens, disturbed by slavery and the ensuing products from slave labor, wrote an account of an English mansion containing "old Honduras mahogany" which revealed "in the depth of its grain, through all its polish, the hue of the wretched slaves." Anderson, too, has found "the hue of the wretched slaves" through her complex portrait of mahogany and its many human agents. She has avoided a prosaic and anecdotal narrative. Instead, Anderson's erudition and interpretations make this a commodity history worthy of discussion both within and across the multiple themes she pursues.

BOOK REVIEW: NORALEE FRANKEL HISTORICAL CONSULTANT

The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks. Jeanne Theoharis. Boston: Beacon Press, 2013. 304 pp. \$27.95. ISBN 978-0-8070-5047-7.

Most people know the Rosa Parks myth. On December 1, 1955, a tired, old seamstress decided to remain seated on a segregated bus rather than give up her seat to a white man. The myth disintegrates when Jeanne Theoharis points out that one of the policeman arresting Parks tried to persuade the bus driver not to press charges. The officer knew that Parks was connected with the Montgomery NAACP.

Theoharis has written a persuasive and informative political biography of the real Rosa Parks. The author attacks the myth by stressing Parks's lifelong battle against discrimination in the South and in the North, when she worked for Detroit Congressman John Conyers and by analyzing Parks's militancy.

Theoharis explores Rosa Parks's activist background. A supporter of Marcus Garvey, her grandfather advocated for African American self-protection. After World War I, Parks's grandfather occasionally stayed on his porch with a shotgun to ward off the Ku Klux Klan. Her mother and grandmother also passed on a legacy of strength to Parks, who was born in Tuskegee, Alabama, on February 4, 1913. Parks joined the African Episcopal Church, an institution which had a measure of autonomy from whites and proved to be another source of her determination and persistence.

Rosa Parks learned political activism from her husband, Raymond Parks, whom she married in 1942. He was a barber, whose chair became a place to discuss politics and discrimination. He protested the arrest and jail sentences of the Scottsboro boys, who were unjustly accused of raping two white women. When they moved to Montgomery, Alabama, Raymond joined the NACCP in 1943. Raymond quit the organization because he felt the middle-class members looked down upon working-class supporters. Throughout the book, Theoharis analyzes problems of

class and elitism within the African American community and the Civil Rights movement.

In spite of Raymond, Rosa Parks increased her role within the local and state NAACP. Theoharis describes Rosa Parks's frustration with the failure of voter registration and aborted attempts to fight against Jim Crow in the decade before the bus boycott. As secretary of the Montgomery NAACP, she sought out African American victims of white violence, including sexual abuse, and watched as police and prosecutors refused to bring charges against the perpetrators. Parks's also ran the Youth Council, which served as another outlet for her activism. She adored working with young people and urged them to protest against segregation. Working with her group invigorated her. Earning a scholarship in 1955, she attended a two-week course at Highlander Folk School in Tennessee that trained grass roots community leaders. Parks experienced a taste of interracial equality as she gained confidence during her time at Highlander.

Recounting the bus boycott, Theoharis stresses Parks's courage in her decision to stay seated. Throughout her life, Parks explained that she was not particularly fatigued that day: she was "tired of giving in" (p. 62). She had previously decided that if a driver ever asked her to move, she would refuse. Theoharis explains the devastating impact of the boycott on the Parks family. Both Rosa and Raymond lost their jobs. Although Rosa volunteered tirelessly during the boycott, she was not paid. Quickly, the male leadership, such as Martin Luther King, Jr., relegated her to being a symbol of the movement, but they rarely consulted her on policy.

Several months after the boycott successfully ended, Rosa and Raymond Parks left Montgomery

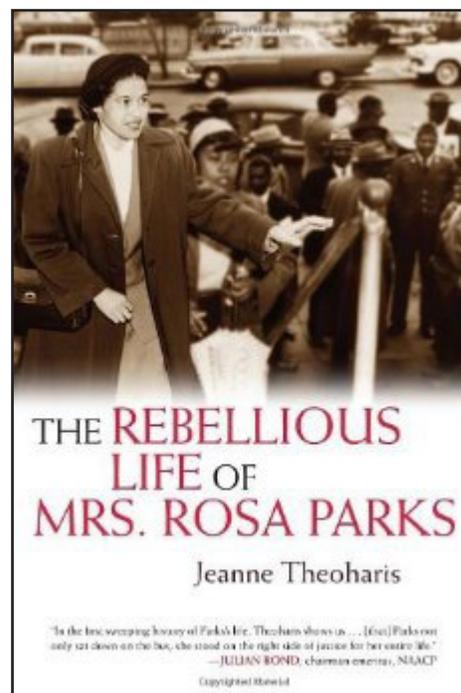
BOOK REVIEW: NORALEE FRANKEL HISTORICAL CONSULTANT

and moved to Detroit. Parks held no illusions about the North, referring to it as “The Promised Land that wasn’t” (p. 166). After a decade of economic struggle, Parks began working for the young, dynamic Congressman John Conyers. In Detroit, Parks fought against discrimination in housing and schools, as well as against police brutality.

She supported the Black Power movement. According to one activist, Parks “was everywhere” (p. 207). She visited a Community School run by the Black Panther Party and allowed militant organizations to use her name to gain legitimacy. Theoharis explodes the mythology of the weary seamstress through one anecdote: When asked in the 1990s about her hero, she responded, “Malcolm X” (p. 207). Parks never fully agreed with Martin Luther King’s stand on non-violence.

As with many biographers, Theoharis tries to use a thematic and chronological approach to her subject and so the book becomes needlessly repetitious. In addition, Rosa Parks’s personal life is only discussed sporadically. Rosa Parks’s relatives and the Rosa and Raymond Parks Institute have fought in the courts for possession of Parks’s papers and other items. Although Theoharis creatively uses other sources, the book suffers from the lack of access to these papers.

Theoharis’s book should be widely read, not only in women’s and African American studies courses, but also in political history courses. The U.S. postal service recently released a stamp of Rosa Parks. The portrait shows a demure three-quarters profile, rather than her looking directly at the viewer. The image is based on a photograph at the time of her arrest. In the original picture, she is standing near a white police officer. By celebrating her as “an iconic and important figure in the civil rights movement” (“Rosa Parks Stamp,” USPS.com), the USPS, as with politicians and Parks’s myriad of interviewers, feed into the myth. Theoharis’s book is a strong reminder that the struggle for racial equity, in which Rosa Parks played such an important role, has not been won.



HAVE NEWS? SEND IT IN!

If you have a new book, article, or conference presentation, have recently graduated or won a recent promotion or teaching award, have completed professional service, or have other professional news to share, send it to newsletter@theccwh.org.

The CCWH newsletter will now be published four times a year with the following submission deadlines:

- The February issue has a submission deadline of January 15.
- The May issue has a submission deadline of April 15.
- The August issue has a submission deadline of July 15.
- The November issue has a submission deadline of October 15.

BOOK REVIEW: REBECCA MONTGOMERY TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Putting the Barn before the House: Women and Family Farming in Early Twentieth-Century New York. Grey Osterud. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012. 296 pp. \$26.95. ISBN 978-0-801-47810-9.

Grey Osterud, winner of the CCWH Catherine Prelinger Award, has a new study of rural women in south-central New York which provides an excellent example of the invaluable role of oral histories in helping us to bridge the gap between historical analysis and lived realities. Historians of rural women have long debated the exact nature of the tension between the patriarchal structure of property ownership and farming as a family enterprise: The former privileged men as heads of households, placing higher value on their labor and giving them greater decision-making authority, while the latter cast marriage as an economic partnership. Numerous essays and monographs have studied the efforts of farm women to negotiate a path between these two conflicting constructions, but such studies generally lack the depth and breadth of context necessary to reach definitive conclusions. Through decades of research in the Nanticoke Valley and painstaking attention to the meaning embedded in women's words, Osterud has allowed the complexities and nuances of this process of negotiation to emerge from the interwoven narratives of twenty-four women born before World War I. Moreover, by adding her own layers of analysis to the larger sweep of economic change, she provides new insights into the significance of women's labor in the strategies of survival adopted by family farms between 1900 and 1945.

For rural women, the process of negotiation included their willingness to put the barn before the house, which meant prioritizing the needs of the outdoor work that was their main source of cash income. Early twentieth-century reformers who sought to improve rural living conditions often incorrectly assumed that women who complained about a lack of household improvements were criticizing male

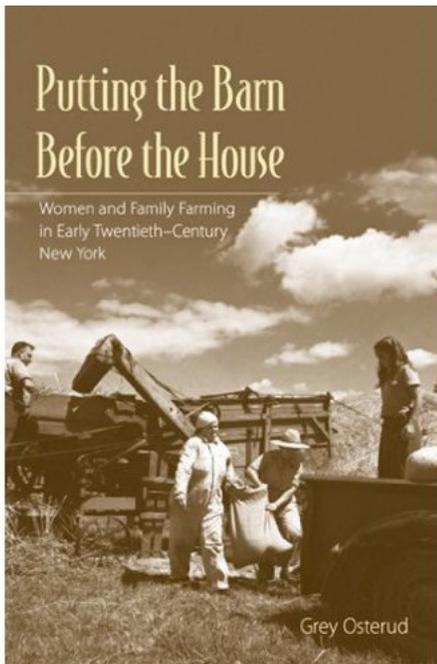
financial priorities (instead of simply trying to highlight the financial woes of farmers). While some rural women did accuse husbands of disregarding the needs of the home, others bristled at criticisms that depicted farm men as selfish and inconsiderate. Osterud's study provides the clearest explanation to date of the factors shaping women's positions in the debate. On the one hand, farm women understood, in Osterud's words, that "money spent for farm improvements was invested, but money spent on the house was merely spent" (118–119). For example, one woman agreed with her husband that they should first build a bigger and better barn for the cows, because she knew the cows would provide the income to build a bigger and better house. Nanticoke Valley women did not express regret for such decisions, but regarded them as choices freely made for the good of the family. On the other hand, they became discontented with their lives when they felt that their opinions and needs were not respected. In those instances resentment came not from their heavy burden of work or male financial priorities, but rather from men's failure to honor the reciprocal obligations of partnership.

One important factor shaping the process of marital negotiation was the especially flexible gendered division of labor common in the valley. Osterud argues that this was rooted partly in dairy farming's cooperative structure of labor, and she shows how women's roles in the flexible family work system were critical to farmers' ability to remain on the land during the lean years of the 1920s and 1930s. While rural reformers—first in the Country Life Movement and later in the New Deal—tended to see small-scale diversified farms as inefficient, many families who lacked the capital to expand production resisted displacement. Among those who used off-farm employment to supplement their incomes, women either brought in wages or assumed responsibility for farm operations in their husbands' absence. Women also increased the scale of their poultry operations, sometimes providing a majority of household income through sales

BOOK REVIEW: REBECCA MONTGOMERY TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY

of chickens and eggs while also contributing a considerable amount of labor to dairying. As Osterud explains, the necessity of work-sharing and cooperation on smaller farms rendered the sex of workers less important than their skills and abilities. Even on larger commercial farms women often worked alongside husbands until children were old enough to take their places, and afterwards they retained a say in decision-making and acted as family mediators.

Household mutuality had further significance for farmers' strategies for remaining on the land, as it reinforced



neighborly cooperation and helped them to resist the competitive individualism (and separate spheres ideology) underlying the commercial model of economic development. Nanticoke Valley farmers have a history of collective action that can be traced back to the local grange chapters established in the 1870s. They founded cooperative creameries at the turn of the century, and after shifting to fluid milk production in the mid-1910s, they formed the Dairymen's League to negotiate better prices with shippers and processors. Perhaps most interestingly, they consistently resisted both the gender roles and the commercial goal of farm consolidation promoted by experts associated with the Farm Bureau. Rather than being co-opted by the Bureau, League members adapted it to their own purposes. Local chapters renamed themselves the Farm and Home Bureau to reflect the equality of status of both components of the farm enterprise, and men and women could belong to one or both departments. Moreover, while home demonstration agents mostly offered services targeting women's roles as consumers, local control of Home Bureau units enabled members to create programs of study that emphasized women's productive contributions to household income. Female Bureau members also sponsored gender-integrated

events to counteract the tendency of large organizations to become male-dominated.

The above themes only scratch the surface of this important study. Historians and other scholars of women, gender, household, and community will be interested as well in Osterud's discussions of generational change, rural class formation, and migration between farm and city. By integrating oral histories into a larger narrative without violating the integrity of individual stories, she has allowed the centrality of women to rural strategies of survival and resistance to emerge with remarkable clarity. Although the consolidation of milk processing shut out small producers after World War II, during the preceding decades, Nanticoke Valley farm families were able to substitute women's labor for capital in order to maintain their traditions of mutuality and cooperation against great odds.

PUBLISHED A BOOK? HAVE IT REVIEWED!

If you have recently authored, co-authored, or edited a book, please let Whitney Leeson (CCWH book review editor) know, as we would like to have it reviewed for the newsletter. Whitney's email is wleeson@roanoke.edu.

OBITUARY: ANN J. LANE, PIONEER IN WOMEN'S HISTORY, DIES AT 81

Ann J. Lane, 81, of New York City, died on May 27, 2013. She was born in Brooklyn on July 27, 1931, the daughter of Harry and Betty Brown Lane. Lane completed all of her schooling in New York City. She earned a BA from Brooklyn College in English in 1952, an MA in sociology from New York University in 1958, and a PhD in history from Columbia University in 1968.

Lane served as Assistant Professor of History at Douglass College of Rutgers University from 1968 to 1971, and then as Professor of History and Chair of the American Studies Program at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York, from 1971 to 1983. She was a research fellow at the Mary Ingraham Bunting Institute of Radcliffe College, Harvard University 1977–1983.

Early in her career, Lane specialized in southern and African American History, the fruits of which appeared in two works published in 1971, *The Brownsville Affair: National Outrage and Black Reaction*, a monograph on a 1906 racial incident involving black soldiers and white citizens, and *The Debate Over "Slavery": Stanley Elkins and His Critics*, an edited work on an important historiographical controversy for which she also wrote the introduction.

Lane's interest in advancing women's careers and scholarship about them earned her appointments as Director of Women's Studies and Professor of History at two formerly all-male institutions: Colgate University, from 1984 to 1990, and the University of Virginia. She arrived in Virginia in 1990 with two instructions from then-Dean of the Faculty, Raymond J. Nelson: establish Women's Studies at the university and "make trouble!" These directives Lane followed with passion and commitment, as she worked to advance feminist scholarship and to champion the concerns of women at the University of Virginia and beyond. An outspoken advocate when circumstances required, Lane was also known for her warmth and for her vital interest in the people around her.

It is her work on Charlotte Perkins Gilman that constitutes Lane's most significant scholarly legacy. Her rediscovery of Gilman's 1915 feminist utopian novel, *Herland* (reprinted in 1979), followed by *The Charlotte Perkins Gilman Reader* the next year, helped direct the attention of literary scholars as well as historians to this neglected feminist writer and theorist. Lane's extensive work on Gilman and feminist theory culminated in her innovative 1990 biography, *To "Herland" and Beyond: The Life and Work of Charlotte Perkins Gilman*. Drawing on one of the fundamental insights of second-wave feminism—that the personal was political—this accessible and innovative biography was organized around Gilman's relationships and their contributions to her feminist theory. A reviewer for the *Journal of American History* called it a "masterful biography...which explores the complex connections between Gilman's private world and the public sphere.... Lane has superbly reconstructed the life and thought of one of our feminist foremothers."

This obituary was excerpted from George Mason University's History News Network website and can be found in full online: <http://hnn.us/articles/ann-j-lane-pioneer-womens-history-dies-81>

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