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#### CO-PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

# SHOULD WE WORRY ABOUT WOMEN'S HISTORY?

*By Rachel Fuchs*

There has been talk about the decline in women's history courses and in the numbers of historians of women hired in tenure-track positions. Colleges and universities do not seem to be replacing those of us who have recently retired. Should we worry about the future of women's history?

To try to see what may be happening, Amy Long, research assistant extraordinaire, and I surveyed 11 major universities from around the US. I chose the institutions arbitrarily to cover a geographical area and to include public and private research universities that I knew had strong decades-long programs in women's history. We planned to examine course catalogues, the schedule of classes, and faculty

profiles for 2005 and 2015. We set three goals: compare the number of courses in women's and gender history actually offered in 2005 and in 2015; compare the number of courses in women's and gender history that appear in university catalogues for those years; and determine if the number of faculty in women's history decreased in that 10-year span. The 2005 schedules of classes for most history departments were not available, so we were forced to abandon that calculation. If any readers have comparable data of courses in women's and gender history actually offered at their institution during 2005 and 2015, please send them to: [excedin@theccwh.org](mailto:excedin@theccwh.org) or to me at [fuchs@asu.edu](mailto:fuchs@asu.edu).

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and tenure-track faculty in women's history at each institution changed over the 10-year period created a similar obstacle, with data for 2005 difficult to obtain. Therefore, we only considered 2015. Amy and I examined the current web pages of history departments at 20 major public and private universities across the country, counting the number of faculty who listed women's and/or gender history as part of their scholarly profile of research interests, keeping the categories separate. We noticed that only a scant number of individuals at each institution place gender or women's history first or second, but a very great many included it further down in their list of about 5 research or teaching interests. Where we place women and gender history on our list of interests depends on several factors. Some of us formerly considered ourselves primarily women's historians, but our interests shifted. Although we still consider gender as an essential category of analysis and engage in women's history as part of other projects (e.g. the Second World War, migration, Jewish or urban history), we might prioritize these other research interests on our web page profiles. Some of us may just substitute the term "gender" for "women," thinking that gender is an inclusive category.

What are the numbers women's or gender historians at an idiosyncratic and non-scientific selection of major universities? A large Midwestern university is an outlier with 11 faculty mentioning women's history somewhere on their list of interests. The other history departments span a low of 2 to a high of 8 faculty with an interest in women's history. Including the outlier, the mean number of historians who express an interest in women's history is 5 per institution. In terms of gender history, a different Midwestern university is an outlier with 12 faculty members saying that they have an interest in gender history, and another university comes in a close second with 10. The range for gender historians at other institutions varies from 3 to 7. Factoring in the outliers, the mean is 6.4 faculty per institution who express an interest in gender history. If

faculty put down both women and gender, we counted them only in the "women's history" category, counting each person only once. Therefore, an average of 11.4 faculty

per institution consider themselves historians of either gender or women's history. These figures do not strike me as discouraging for the future of women's and gender history. Rather they indicate the acceptance of those fields of inquiry by a considerable number of faculty. We randomly computed the percentage of faculty at 5 institutions who identified gender or women's history as one of their interests, and that proportion ranges from 25 to 40 percent. We welcome feedback from you with information about your department ([exccdir@theccwh.org](mailto:exccdir@theccwh.org)).

These numbers may seem high or low, depending on our expectations and wishes. Might women's and gender history be so accepted and integrated into our work that everyone who mentions women's activities in their courses considers themselves a historian of women and lists it as one of their subject specialties? Might it just be a category that someone automatically lists as part of their triumvirate of "race, class and gender"? If either of these were true, we would wish for a much higher number. After looking at the profiles of historians whom I personally know, I'm surprised that some whom I consider historians of women listed that interest fourth or fifth on their list, while others whom I have never considered a historian of women or gender listed those interests at about the same level. Because assessing the number of historians of women depends on self-definition, which depends on so many individual and institutional factors, we did not seek the data for 2005, although such a comparison might be culturally revealing.

To discover how many courses were actually offered that had women's or gender history in their title or course descriptions was limited to available schedules of classes for the 2015 calendar year. If courses titles and descriptions included both women and gender, we tallied them only as women's history courses, defining women's history as broadly as possible. Based on data from the history departments of the 11 institutions that I thought had strong women's history programs, the number of undergraduate women's history courses offered in 2015 ranges from 2 to 4, with a mean of 2.9. The number of undergraduate courses that do not claim to be women's history and only mention gender or the history of sexuality range from 1 to 7, over the same spring and fall of 2015. The mean is

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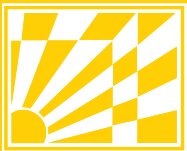
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2.3, insignificantly fewer than the 2.9 women's history courses offered. Faculty may list women's and gender history among their interests, but they are not teaching those classes in any large numbers. Moreover, contingency faculty may be teaching those undergraduate classes. When we looked at graduate courses, the number of those with women or gender history in the title (excluding "special topics," although those may have been taught by a self-defined women's historian) is disturbing. Only 4 out of the 11 institutions offered one specifically women's history course on the graduate level this past year. In terms of gender history, only 3 out of the 11 offered a gender history course in 2015, though one institution actually offered two in one year. I fear that we are not educating future historians of women.

Comparing the general catalogues from 2005 and 2015 reveals that only a small fraction of courses with women's history in the title or description are regularly taught. A range of 3 to 14 women's history courses appear the 2015–2016 general catalogues of these 11 institutions. The mean number of women's history courses in the catalogues is 7, not the 2 or 4 actually offered. But, comparing the mean number of women's history courses in the 2015 catalogue with the mean number of women's history courses in the 2005 catalogues, the mean for 2005 is 7.6. The net loss from 2005 to 2015 is insignificant. Some institutions did suffer a loss while others gained, but in this non-scientific study, I'm focusing on averages.

The numbers for gender history also reveal a small fraction of catalogue courses actually offered. For 2015, the number of those with "gender" or "sexuality" in the catalogue title or description range from 2 to 11, with a mean

of 7.5 listed in the catalogue compared to a mean of 2.3 actually offered. This is unsurprising because at some institutions in order for a course to remain in the catalogue a faculty member just has to offer it once every 3 or 4 years. Comparing 2005 with 2015, however, indicates that the number of gender courses in catalogues has increased threefold from 2005 to 2015. Is gender history fashionable? And do so many courses find it necessary to include at least one of the categories of race, class, ethnicity, or gender in their description? Graduate courses focusing specifically on women's or gender history are sparse, and many graduate courses are not listed by title, but refer only to "general topics."

Call me an optimist, but I am not yet worried about the demise of women's history. Rather, there appears to be considerable acknowledgment of women's and/or gender history in faculty profiles and catalogue course descriptions. Three things, however, concern me: 1) we need to be sure that our universities continue to offer women's history regularly; 2) we still need to train graduate students in women's history; 3) institutions should replace women's historians who are retiring. To a large extent, this is all up to us. Please send us information ([exccdir@theccwh.org](mailto:exccdir@theccwh.org) or [fuchs@asu.edu](mailto:fuchs@asu.edu)) about what is happening in your history department so we can have a better picture. In a few months, we will have a CCWH members-only forum for continuing discussions and sharing information on key issues, and in the next newsletter, Mary Ann Villarreal and I will provide you with the results of our CCWH survey about contingency faculty. Stay tuned and invite your colleagues to join the CCWH.

# NOTES FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*By Sandra Trudgen Dawson*

Happy summer! I would like to give a special welcome to all our new members! Welcome to the organization and know that we only exist because of the support of our members. With membership comes the opportunity to apply for awards each year; to serve on committees or on the Executive Board of a national organization; to propose CCWH-sponsored panels at the AHA (even after the AHA deadline); to network with some of the leading scholars in a variety of fields at the annual awards luncheon or the reception held at the AHA; to publish book or film reviews in our newsletters; and to share your member news with this wonderful community. Again, welcome to the CCWH!

I have two exciting announcements to make: the CCWH has established a new award and the CCWH has started an online members' forum! These are just two of the new benefits of membership in the CCWH.

The new award will be given for the first time in 2016 for the best article published in a peer-reviewed journal the previous year (2015) by a current CCWH member who is at the Associate Professor level.

The award is named to honor longtime CCWH member Carol Gold. We decided to name the award in honor of Carol because she is not only a staunch supporter of the CCWH, but also because she represents some of the best and most significant aspects of our membership. Carol is an outstanding scholar of early modern European women's history. Carol is an unflinching advocate for women's rights and for women in the historical profession. Carol is a former Prelinger Award chair and a steadfast supporter of the CCWH and other women's organizations. I first met Carol when she was the President of the Western Association of Women Historians and I served as secretary. Carol exhibited fine leadership skills and left an indelible mark on my memory. We are very excited to announce this new award in Carol's honor.

Our second announcement is about a new online members' forum. This forum will be open to all CCWH members and will take a similar form to that used by the AHA. Liz Everton, former chair of the CCWH/Berks graduate student award, will take responsibility for the forum. We hope this will be a space for members to ask questions; to put together conference panel programs; to find members to share hotel rooms or travel costs for conferences or other events; or to advertise jobs, conferences and

other events. This will be your forum and will only be successful if you use it!

I would like to extend a warm welcome to two new Executive Board members: Andrea Milne and Sunu Kodumthara. Andrea Milne will replace Beth Hessel as one of our graduate student representatives. We say goodbye, good luck, and thank you to Beth as she starts her new job! We also welcome Sunu Kodumthara as our new Outreach Coordinator. Sunu replaces Camesha Scruggs who is off to a Ph.D adventure at Amhurst! Thank you so much for your service, Camesha, and welcome, Sunu!

Finally, thank you to everyone who completed the survey on adjunct and contingent faculty. Our co-presidents will publish the results and their analysis soon.

## NEW GRADUATE REPRESENTATIVE

Andrea Milne is a Ph.D. candidate in modern U.S. history at the University of California, Irvine, specializing in the history of the body, gender, and sexuality. More specifically, she writes about patient advocacy during the first twenty years of the HIV/AIDS crisis. Her dissertation focuses on the political and affective labor of the nurses who constructed San Francisco General Hospital's Ward 5B, the first AIDS ward in the world. Andrea believes that the best scholarship is accessible and public-facing, and has, accordingly, worked throughout her career to engage non-academics in the humanities through social media, blogging, and freelance writing. She is also currently serving as a UC Irvine Teaching, Learning, and Technology Center Pedagogical Fellow. You can learn more about Andrea and her work at [www.andreamilne.com](http://www.andreamilne.com). You can also follow her on Twitter at @MyPenHistorical.

## NEW OUTREACH COORDINATOR

Sunu Kodumthara earned her PhD from the University of Oklahoma in 2011, and she is currently an assistant professor at Southwestern Oklahoma State University. Her workload includes teaching everything from the survey of American history to the history of



American Indians and the capstone courses for the major. Sunu is also working on completing her book manuscript, which addresses the women's suffrage movement in the American West and its impact on the national anti-suffrage movement. Additionally, Sunu serves as the Digital Communications Coordinator for the Western

Association of Women Historians.

New for 2015: Online Members' Forum

New for 2016: Carol Gold Article Award (\$500)

## AFFILIATE NEWS

- The Organization of American Historians is now accepting applications for the 2016 Lerner-Scott Prize, given annually 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. All applications are due by October 1, 2015. For more information, visit [www.oah.org/programs/awards/lernerp-scott-prize](http://www.oah.org/programs/awards/lernerp-scott-prize).
- Rutgers University's Digital Blackness Conference, to be held on April 22–23, 2016, will bring together scholars, students, activists, and artists from a range of fields and disciplines to interrogate the many new modes, customs, and arrangements of racial identity as they are mediated through digital technologies. The organizers welcome paper and panel proposals, due on November 15, 2015, that address a broad range of areas. For more information, visit [www.rutgersdigitalblackness.com](http://www.rutgersdigitalblackness.com).
- The Department of History at the University of California, Santa Barbara, invites applications for a tenure-track assistant professorship in Modern European history, ca. 1750-1914, excluding Russia, to begin July 1, 2016. The department particularly welcome scholars whose work builds on cross-cultural, transnational, or interregional topics or whose work contributes to campus and department strengths in one or more of the following areas: capitalism and consumer culture; imperialism; popular memory and public history; war, revolution and political culture; nationalism, ethnicity and migration; or gender and sexualities. All application materials are due by November 1, 2015. For more information, visit [www.history.ucsb.edu/news/news.php?new\\_id=256](http://www.history.ucsb.edu/news/news.php?new_id=256).
- The seven women's colleges once known as the "Seven Sisters"—Barnard, Bryn Mawr, Mount Holyoke, Smith, Vassar, Wellesley, and Radcliffe—have launched *College Women: Documenting the History of Women in Higher Education*, a digital initiative featuring letters, diaries, scrapbooks, and photographs of women who attended the seven partner institutions. For more, see [www.collegewomen.org](http://www.collegewomen.org).
- Program co-chairs Judith Byfield (Cornell University), Annelise Orleck (Dartmouth College), and Susan Yohn (Hofstra University) are delighted to issue the Call for Papers for the 17th Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, Genders, and Sexualities, to be held June 1-4, 2017 at Hofstra University in Hempstead, NY (25 miles East of New York City on Long Island). The theme for the 2017 conference is *Difficult Conversations: Thinking and Talking About Women, Genders, and Sexualities Inside and Outside the Academy*. The co-chairs interpret this overarching theme broadly, inviting submissions for an array of engaging and interactive presentations intended to generate conversations across time, fields, methodologies, and geographic borders; across races, classes, sexualities and gender identities; between academic and public historians, activists, artists and performers. For more information, see [2017berkshireconference.hofstra.edu](http://2017berkshireconference.hofstra.edu).

# NCWHS MEMBER NEWS

*Submitted by Nupur Chaudhuri on Behalf of the NCWHS Board*

- The American Association for State and Local History's annual meeting is in Louisville, KY from September 16th–19th. There are three women's history sessions, including a roundtable discussion hosted by the newly formed AASLH Women's History Affinity Group and a "Louisville Women's Suffrage Tour," co-sponsored by NCWHS on Friday, September 18, 1–5 pm. If you plan to attend, be sure to register for the Suffrage Tour. Following the tour, in preparation for the 2020 suffrage anniversary, NCWHS board member Marsha Weinstein will host a discussion of plans of NCWHS to mark the places where women's suffrage and other progressive activism took place.
- The Sewall-Belmont House and Museum in Washington, D.C., has been given a favorable report from the National Park Service regarding its feasibility as a stand-alone NPS site. For more information, see [goo.gl/JztDY6](http://goo.gl/JztDY6).
- NCWHS members have submitted a session to the NCPH/Society for History in the Federal Government 2016 Baltimore Meeting: *Re-interpreting Relevance: Preservation, Herstory, and the Challenge to the Traditional Narrative*.
- NCWHS has sent the National Park Service an official "Letter of Inquiry" requesting to proceed with nominating the Rev. Dr. Pauli Murray homesite in Raleigh, NC, as a National Historic Landmark.
- Save the date for the celebration of the 200th anniversary of Elizabeth Cady Stanton's birth (and kick-off 100 years of women voting nationwide) in New York City on Thursday, November 12, 2015. To keep up-to-date on the effort to place a statue of Stanton and Susan B. Anthony in Central Park, see [www.centralparkwherearethewomen.org](http://www.centralparkwherearethewomen.org).
- Curious about some amazing women in Alaskan history? Denali National Park has produced 5 brief biographies, see [www.nps.gov/subjects/akwomenmakinghistory/women.htm](http://www.nps.gov/subjects/akwomenmakinghistory/women.htm).

## MEMBER NEWS

- Courtney J. Campbell has accepted a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellowship at Tougaloo College beginning in Fall 2015.
- Heather Huyck, President of the National Collaborative for Women's History Sites, and Karen Nickless, National Historic Preservation Trust Field Officer, have created preservation tips and tools for putting women back in history. To learn more, visit Preservation Nation at [goo.gl/9hvhGb](http://goo.gl/9hvhGb).
- Melissa A. McEuen published an article entitled "Nancy Newsom Mahaffey: Preserving Heritage Foods in the 'Ham Heartland'" in *Kentucky Women: Their Lives and Times* (2015), a collection of original essays that she co-edited with Thomas H. Appleton, Jr. *Kentucky Women* is one of several volumes in the University of Georgia Press series *Southern Women: Their Lives and Times*.

IN MEMORIAM

# SUSAN GROAG BELL

January 25, 1926–June 24, 2015

By Barbara Gelpi



Susan Groag Bell, historian, author, scholar and longtime friend of the Clayman Institute, died at her Palo Alto home on June 24, 2015. She leaves behind a legacy of groundbreaking research and scholarly publications that enrich our understanding of women's lives throughout history.

Susan Bell, whose work as a scholar broke new ground not once but several times, and whose gift for friendship means that many hundreds mourn her

both in the United States and abroad, died at her Palo Alto residence on June 24. Her 1991 memoir, *Between Worlds*, begins with a description of her childhood years in the town of Troppau, in the Sudetenland near the northern border of Czechoslovakia, where her father practiced law. Her parents, both of Jewish descent, numbered among the many Austrian German speakers in this area, which had been sheared off from the Austro-Hungarian Empire after World War I, and Susan's happy and sheltered childhood took place in a cultural milieu that stemmed from Vienna rather than Prague.

Hitler's annexation of the Sudetenland on October 1, 1938 brought fear and uncertainty into the Groags' life. Susan was informed that she could no longer attend school, and even being seen on the street became dangerous. England offered asylum to Jews, on the condition that adults be willing to perform domestic labor. Susan's mother felt that she could accept those terms, while her father, who was much older and spoke no English, decided to ensure the safety of his wife and daughter but to remain himself in Czechoslovakia, with the hope that he might follow them in time. They never saw him again after he brought them to the Prague train station in January 1939. He was among the more than 33,000 who died in Theresienstadt concentration camp.

In England Susan's mother suffered both the

emotional pain of separation from her husband and homeland and the physical stress of her work as a servant. Susan herself fared better in that she received both care and understanding from the headmistress, staff, and students of a girls' boarding school in Haywards Heath.

Then in 1943 she accepted an invitation from the Czechoslovakian government-in-exile to join other young Czechs at a high school in Wales, where they were given the knowledge and skills needed to rebuild their shattered country once the war was over. As at the Haywards Heath school, Susan's gift for friendship and her academic prowess made for happy years in Wales, and in 1945 she returned, as planned, with her schoolmates to her homeland. But to her distress, she found herself a stranger there, not only because England now seemed like home to her but because, as she explains in her memoir, the Czechs, having suffered German domination for years, tended to view a German-speaker as an oppressor, forgetting that she was one among the most oppressed.

Through her mother's efforts, Susan after a year made her way back to England. There her mother surprised her on arrival by bringing her to a charming flat in a building on Chelsea Manor Street called Meriden Court. It was to be her mother's comfortable home for the forty years until she died, and when Susan inherited it, #18 Meriden Court was a London base not only for her but also for the many friends and tenants who had the joy of staying there.

A further severe trial awaited her, however: soon after her return, Susan was diagnosed as having osseous tuberculosis in her foot. She was put on total bed rest in a hospital for a year, followed by a prolonged period of convalescence, and fully regained her health only in 1950. A marriage shortly thereafter ended a few years later in divorce, and in 1959 she married the physicist Ronald Bell, who worked at Varian and whose home was in Woodside.

Proximity to Stanford made possible the fulfillment of her long-held desire for university education. Although now in her mid-thirties and so a generation

older than her classmates, she immersed herself joyfully in her studies, became a history major, and attained her A.B. in 1964. Then came a setback: when she applied to the History Department's Ph.D. program in 1965, she was informed that entrance into the program after the age of 35 was not allowed under any circumstances. Although the term "consciousness raising" had not yet been coined, Susan as a consequence was in the vanguard of those becoming actively aware of the difficulties endured by older students and particularly by older women students. She joined a group of faculty wives led by Yvette Gurley and Jing Lyman who were seeking to liberalize Stanford's policies; when Santa Clara University accepted her into its M.A. program, she chose as her topic four women who had made major contributions to learning and letters despite their late start and without the benefit of academic

created a program within the Center for independent women scholars, Susan became one of the first to be appointed as an affiliated scholar, and in recognition of her signal contributions she would in time become a permanently appointed Senior Scholar.

Important among those contributions was the two-volume *Women, the Family, and Freedom: The Debate in the Documents: 1750-1950*, co-edited with Karen Offen and published in 1983. This monumental work presented, explicated, and in many cases translated documents related to the debate on "the Woman Question" that engaged and often enraged participants in Europe, England, and the United States. It was a tour de force of scholarship that created a major textbook for the flourishing new field of feminist studies. On the strength of it, she and Karen received two NEH grants in the early 1980s to co-direct Summer

institutions: Caroline Herschel, Mary Somerville, Frances Trollope, and Elizabeth Gaskell.

Susan steadily extended the range and increased the depth of her knowledge in the field of women's history that she was helping to create. She became a sought after lecturer in the Bay Area and in 1971 gave a course at Cañada College. Since there were no textbooks on women's history, Susan put together a reader for the course; revised and enlarged, it was published in 1973 (re-published in 1980) under the title *Women, from the Greeks to the French Revolution* and was a milestone in the growing feminist movement.

Meanwhile Karen Offen, a recent history Ph.D. from Stanford, invited her to present the findings of her research to the Western Association of Women Historians and suggested also that the two of them, along with Stanford's early modern historian, Carolyn Lougee, present a panel at the 1973 American Historical Association. Susan's topic, Christine de Pizan's ideas on education, was to engage her for decades to come. Thus when Marilyn Yalom, as Associate Director of Stanford's newly established Center for Research on Women,

Seminars for College Teachers at Stanford. Also in 1986 Susan and Barbara Gelpi team-taught a summer program at Stanford-in-Oxford created and led by Diane Middlebrook: three related courses, each from a different academic field, on the topic of "Gender in Britain."

Following the 1986 conference on "Autobiography and Biography" sponsored by the Institute for Research on Women and Gender (since renamed the Clayman Institute for Gender Research), Susan and Marilyn Yalom edited a collection of essays published in 1990 under the title *Revealing Lives: Autobiography, Biography, and Gender*. Essays by Stanford faculty members (Barbara Babcock, John Felstiner, Regenia Gagnier, Diane Middlebrook) and affiliated Institute scholars (Susan Bell, Mary Felstiner, Marilyn Yalom), as well as other academics from a variety of disciplines, considered nineteenth and twentieth century life-writing from Europe, Britain, and America through the lens of



gender. In the 1990's, Susan and Marilyn also taught courses together on autobiography under the auspices of Stanford's Continuing Studies program.

Related to Susan's interest in all that could be learned about women's lives through history was her fascination with the many forgotten or nearly forgotten autobiographies by nineteenth-century women writers in England and the United States. Aware that insights drawn from them could be useful to scholars from many disciplines, Susan, along with the historian Penny Kanner, discovered hundreds of titles and then engaged a whole cohort of Susan's many friends and acquaintances in the United States and abroad in reading them. Her readers so differed in their assessment of events and personalities in these works that their answers could not be transferred into an objective database, but long before there were any on-line courses, the process itself engaged its many wide-flung participants in a "chat room" created by Susan's imaginative scholarship.

Along with all these projects, Susan never ceased to work personally on the one closest to her heart, one that turned upon her early and ongoing work on Christine de Pizan's *Book of the City of Ladies*. In an inventory of Elizabeth I's possessions, Susan found

a set of tapestries described, and on the hunch that each one in the series was drawn from a different scene in the *City of Ladies*, she began a scholarly sleuthing that took her to libraries and museums in the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, and areas once part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. She needed all her fluency in four languages, all her knowledge of scholarly method, and all her wide-ranging knowledge of history, particularly women's history, to produce in 2004 *The Lost Tapestries of the City of Ladies*. The book itself is as elegant, intricate, and finely spun as any product from the looms of Aubusson. Susan's biographical roots, her scholarly career and interests, and her joyful appreciation of the fine arts are all enshrined in it.

Susan is survived by her stepson and stepdaughter-in-law, Robert and Yvonne Bell; their sons, Matthew and Michael; her stepdaughter, Clare Bell; and her close friend, Peter Stansky. A program to celebrate her life and work will be presented at the Clayman Institute for Gender Research on what would have been her ninetieth birthday: January 25, 2016.

## PUBLIC HISTORY COLUMN

# PUBLIC HISTORY TODAY

By Sarah Case

Although public history has become increasingly prominent in our profession, several conversations that I've had recently or overheard at conferences have demonstrated that many have an incomplete understanding of the field. In order to address this, I've outlined some key aspects of current public history practice below.

- **Collaboration:** Public history is sometimes viewed as "history for a public audience," but this is a misleading characterization of most

public history projects. More accurately, current best practices view public history as created *with* a public. Public historians take seriously input from communities, amateur local historians, genealogists, and others who are sometimes overlooked (or dismissed) by academic historians. "Shared authority" and "collaboration" are among the most common phrases appearing in current articles discussing public history projects.

- **Scholarship:** Some view public history as

historical scholarship “translated” (or more disparagingly, “dumbed down”) for a nonacademic audience. Responding to this misconception, several recent articles have argued that public history is in fact scholarship in its own right—that historians who interpret artifacts for a museum exhibit, design a walking tour, or engage in research on behalf of a client are expanding our knowledge about the past and contributing to historiography in ways that would be impossible if limited to the traditional monograph. Nontraditional sources and questions open up new ways of understanding and interpreting the past. Public history is not “watered-down” academic history; rather, it plays an active role in creating (not just publicizing) historical knowledge.

- **Interdisciplinary:** Public history freely enters into conversations with anthropology, archaeology, sociology, political science, museum studies, media studies, communications, film studies, material culture studies, and many other fields, including the “hard” sciences. Much more so than most traditional academic history departments, where interdisciplinary (and jointly authored) work is the exception, public history institutions collaborate across disciplinary boundaries.
- **Digital:** Many public historians have embraced digital media. Many blog actively, post on

Twitter, or have created engaging websites on a wide variety of topics. The National Council on Public History (NCPH) maintains an informative and thoughtfully edited blog, *History@Work* ([publichistorycommons.org](http://publichistorycommons.org))—a good place to learn about new questions and trends in public history.

- **Sensory:** Engaging with senses other than sight is emerging as a new trend in historical scholarship. Although written scholarship can describe sounds and smells, historical exhibits and other public history scholarship can more directly engage the senses and create an immersive experience. Sound especially is being used in museum exhibits, websites, and oral history interviews. Please see the forthcoming November 2015 special issue of *The Public Historian* on auditory history and innovative work on sound and public history, guest edited by Karin Bijsterveld of the University of Amsterdam.

Although this is just a brief introduction to a very diverse field, I hope that those less familiar with the state of the field of public history might find it useful. Again, I encourage readers to check out the *History@Work* blog and *The Public Historian* to learn more about current conversations, questions, and directions in public history scholarship.

#### GRADUATE CORNER

# WOMEN, GRAD STUDENTS & TWITTER

By Andrea Milne

I ended up on the board of the CCWH for one reason: Twitter.

Kathryn Kish Sklar and Thomas Dublin had just given a wonderful keynote address at the Western Association of Women Historians annual conference, after which our collective attention turned to public engagement. At that point, a distinguished historian

in the audience casually suggested that “historians aren’t good at Twitter.”

I shared exasperated glances with those who, like me, were live-tweeting the event. I love to disagree, *especially* publicly, so I rose to my feet to announce our collective presence. Not only are #twitterstorians here, we're darned good at what we do! And we think you should do it too!

After the keynote, I got caught up in a whirlwind of conversations about academic Twitter, initiated mostly by senior faculty and curious members of the CCWH board. For a brief moment in time, I played the social media guru, which was strange because, truth be told, technology isn't really my thing. I became a graduate student representative to the CCWH because I unknowingly tapped a rich vein in a room full of women who, in addition to being potential #twitterstorians themselves, will almost certainly be mentoring graduate-student #twitterstorians in the future. So why not let that conversation bleed into the newsletter?

For the uninitiated, #Twitterstorians was conceived in 2009 by Katrina Gulliver. It began as a list of historians on Twitter, but quickly became a major forum for academic networking, intellectual exchange, and public engagement. There are myriad practical benefits to being a #Twitterstorian. Without even trying, you will read more widely. People you follow share articles, blog posts, and reading lists on topics you might not otherwise encounter. You can also solicit suggestions; when I'm looking into a new subject area, one of the first things I do is ask my Twitter colleagues for guidance. It is also a great space to collaborate on syllabi, assemble conference panels, and connect with scholars across disciplines. Your writing might also improve. A 140-character restriction teaches you to prioritize clarity over fancy four-syllable words, and to accept that you won't always say what you want to say perfectly. In a discipline that, rightly, values contemplation, tweeting is also a reminder that some of the most exciting writing is writing that allows the reader to watch ideas evolve in real time. Writing on Twitter also keeps issues of audience and professionalism front-of-mind.

The practical benefits of using Twitter are nothing to sneeze at, but they aren't the only reason I'm proud to ride this bandwagon. Upon entering the Twitterverse, I quickly noticed something: female academics, academics of color, academics with disabilities, adjuncts, and **ESPECIALLY** graduate students drive a lot of important conversations on the platform. Twitter hierarchy

is not based on age or station, but on the quality and clarity of one's ideas. When I tweet with senior scholars, I feel more like a peer than a grad student. I've lost count of the professional and intellectual opportunities that have come my way as a result of 140-character dialogues. Twitter allows women in academia, especially early-career women in academia, to take up space in ways we cannot on most campuses. Unsurprisingly, this is only becoming truer with time, given the larger sociocultural context: a world where social media is increasingly creating and narrating social change, à la #BlackLivesMatter.

As Eric Anthony Grollman—sociologist and founder of the blog *Conditionally Accepted*—so aptly put it in a recent post, “self-promotion is community promotion.” Marginalized populations haven't made their way into the academy by sitting quietly, hands raised, waiting for recognition. Kathryn Kish Sklar and Thomas Dublin did a great job explaining this in the context of women's history at WAWH 2015: the field emerged through individual acts of creative disruption, by building communities and spaces and habits of mind that didn't exist before, and by speaking out of turn. Sklar and Dublin, among others, walked right past the gatekeepers, and kept on going. Today, as we continue to push for a more accessible, not-so-ivory tower, it is important that we build and claim online academic communities as our terrain. Twitter is a space where passion projects are born, where affective labor is validated, where pedagogy matters, and current events meet the past in real time. That's why it is vital that historians continue to enter and cultivate these spaces.

Megan Kate Nelson, who blogs at [Historista.com](http://Historista.com), is doing just that. She recently wrote a post about sexism in social media, inspired by the revelation that she retweeted far more men than women. She is not unique in this regard: per her post on the subject, two-thirds of retweeted material is originally produced by men even though female users are a slight majority. She argued that these statistics suggest “a pervasive sexism in social media that historians are contributing to, even if they are not aware of it. And in the academic context, social media sexism creates structures of power that directly impact community building and networking.”

In response, she created #FollowWomenWednesday a hashtag designed to promote female scholars across disciplines. According to Nelson, within the first 24 hours of this grand experiment, #FollowWomenWednesday posts

made it onto the Twitter feeds of more than 1.7 million users, myself included. This is just one example of social media amplifying the voices of scholars on the margins of the academy. Other campaigns that have produced this effect include #ScholarSunday, #FergusonSyllabus, #ThankAPublicScholar, and #CharlestonSyllabus . . . the list goes on. Can Twitter be a silly and superficial waste of time? Sure. It's also changing the way we relate to our peers, our home-institutions, our discipline, and the wider world.

It feels strange to write about the benefits of Twitter in 2015; after all, it is no longer a new technology. Yet my recent experience at WAWH convinced me that too many

historians are unaware of the impact the platform is having on our discipline. Academic scholarship and engagement are no longer limited to campuses, conferences, monographs, and journals. This new(er) medium isn't for everybody, but it IS a big-time game changer, especially for women in academia. Join us in the Twitterverse, and I'll be sure to welcome you on #FollowWomenWednesday!

*Do you have questions? You can reach Andrea Milne through her website, [www.andreamilne.com](http://www.andreamilne.com), or tweet her at @MyPenHistorical.*

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Anna Howard Shaw: The Work of Woman Suffrage.* Franzen, Trisha. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2014. 263 pp. \$30.00. ISBN 978-0-252-03815-0.

*Tracey Hanshew, Oklahoma State University*

The longest running president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) was Anna Howard Shaw; who won “more converts to the suffrage movement” than any other single suffragist (2). Trisha Franzen asks how has a woman who gave her life to this cause been “ignored, denigrated, or marginalized during the resurgence” of women's history (2)? In her book *Anna Howard Shaw: The Work of Woman Suffrage*, Franzen takes to task scholars who have adopted such positions. Franzen seeks to explain where Shaw, a working-class immigrant, fit into the realm of primarily upper- and middle-class suffragists; to dispute claims that Shaw's presidency was ineffective; and to assess the internal conflicts of Shaw's presidency. Franzen investigates and challenges these issues in an eloquent narrative that provides a critical insight into Shaw's life and her contributions to the movement.

In this biography, Franzen traces the early hardships of Shaw's life and her awareness of how “patriarchal power” made women vulnerable. Derived from her father's lack of effort to provide for the family, Shaw's cognizance of the dangerous consequences of patriarchal power came at a young age when she was forced to do men's chores on the frontier. This contrast to gender norms in the East resulted in her greater awareness that men were rarely “bodily and intellectually more robust than women,” therefore by necessity

women had to be strong (26). Determined to make more of herself, she became a teacher and then attended Albion College. Called to the ministry, she studied at the Boston University School of Theology, resulting in her first experience as an activist as she pushed for ordination. From her ministry to the poor, she realized women's problems stemmed from a social structure prompting her to join the “‘great battles’ of suffrage, temperance, and social purity” (55). She became a lecturer with the Massachusetts Woman Suffrage Association (MWSA), for which she earned a salary. Shaw's career changed when she met Susan B. Anthony in 1887. Her association with Anthony led Shaw to the International Council of Women, the love of her partner Lucy E. Anthony, and the Presidency of the NAWSA.

Lecturing professionally, Shaw traveled extensively with a rigorous schedule that would several times affect her health. Her class, rather than her talent as a skilled orator, set her apart from many within the suffrage movement because Shaw had to financially support herself. Franzen probes the extent to which Shaw's lack of wealth complicated “relationships” with other suffragists throughout her “entire suffrage career” (60). The initial proposal to pay salaries to officers in a volunteer organization was off-putting for many NAWSA members, but Franzen suggests that because Shaw was the first to receive a salary, and was popular, many others were jealous. Additional conflict arose on the issue of race because



two of the financial backers were southern delegates seeking to exclude minorities.

Another concern Franzen addresses is that of labeling Shaw as a “racist” and “white supremacist” (71). Franzen explains this stems from Shaw’s speech during the 1890 campaign in South Dakota, “Indians versus Women,” in which she first mentioned race. Identified as “the most recognized and discussed Shaw address in feminist studies,” it is also, Franzen explains, a “strong example of the strange twists evident in much scholarship concerning Shaw” (71). Franzen details how Shaw’s work directly contradicts those labels and makes a case for how this misconstrued speech, which she admits was not “the most coherent” of Shaw’s addresses, clearly indicates her support and plea for “justice for all” (72). She also argues the more significant result of the speech was publicly bringing attention to race and to Shaw’s support of “universal equal rights,” which “put her at odds with increasing numbers of her sister suffragists” (72–3).

Franzen counters the “many historians” who reject Shaw’s successes as president of NAWSA by detailing events during her administration such as the breaking of the over ten-year-long drought of state suffrage gains and President Wilson calling her out of retirement to “head the first governmental entity that was by, for, and about women” (180, 188). Controversy surrounding Shaw stemmed not simply from “personality clashes or the results of incompetent leadership,”

but rather from her effort to “exert her power as NAWSA president, challenge the status quo, and change the organization” (188–9). Franzen makes her case for revisiting the politics of NAWSA at that time to clarify the role of class as it intersected with women’s roles in this movement. Shaw’s rural and impoverished background made her into an influential figure in the history of women’s rights and her status as “a working woman...can’t be ignored in evaluating her suffrage contribution” (186).

Since Franzen’s position challenges much of the established historiography, she weaves in major works at each key juncture of her argument rather than including an introductory essay. Finally, her annotations on sources and process prove not only helpful but also especially important because her thesis is so contrary to mainstream views of Shaw. Overall, Franzen’s work addresses the major differences that she believes set Shaw apart from her contemporaries at NAWSA. Franzen’s book provides an important addition to the historiography because not only is it informative, but it will greatly enrich discourse on this topic.

*The Boy Problem: Educating Boys in Urban America, 1870-1970.* Grant, Julia. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014. 230 pp. \$34.95. ISBN 978-1-4214-1259-7.

*Susan Wladaver-Morgan, Pacific Historical Review*

Julia Grant clearly demonstrates that finding effective and appropriate ways to educate boys—especially “bad boys”—in urban America has confounded educators and social reformers since at least the early nineteenth century, when immigration and urbanization in Northern cities presented the problem of assimilating the “dangerous classes.” The problem continues to stymie experts today. As recently as March 2015, the *New York Times* published a forum on why education still seems to be failing boys, from elementary schools on, where girls consistently outperform them. Some of the modern solutions were even suggested over 100 years ago—single-sex classes, more physical activity for boys, more male teachers, and so forth.

Some have claimed that the problem lies with the women’s movement, which supposedly has benefited girls at the expense of boys. This is not so different from the earlier argument that boys could not function effectively in the increasingly feminized

atmosphere of schools staffed with female teachers. Grant rejects these arguments out of hand, persuasively focusing instead on questions of race, ethnicity, and class. But reformers considered finding means to educate boys who did not fit the white, middle-class mold far more urgent than educating girls for at least two reasons. First, they saw boys as having a wider range of career paths than girls and consequently more ways that they could either get into trouble or make trouble for the wider society. By contrast, they saw girls as having only two main options: respectable domesticity or sexual deviancy; so long as girls could be saved from the latter, all would be well. Second, up until 1920, only boys would grow into voting citizens, so they needed to learn at least the bare minimum of responsible citizenship.

Both thematically and chronologically, Grant examines the strategies deployed to corral and tame the deviant behavior of urban boys. If boys encountered too many urban temptations in cities, perhaps

the solution lay in removing them from that environment, sending them west on “orphan trains” so they could provide cheap labor on farms in America’s heartland. If boys spent too much time roaming the streets and getting into mischief, then perhaps the solution was compulsory education. By making school attendance mandatory, however, reformers invented the “crime” of truancy, making boys who still refused to go to school subject to a term in a reformatory. This approach clearly shows the overlap between the public schools and the emerging juvenile justice movement. Over time, this punitive model of boys’ education would take many forms with the goal of separating “problem boys,” who were nearly always poor, immigrant, or African American, from more easily educated boys. Interestingly, the initiative for these approaches did not always come from either the schools or the courts, but from the boys’ own parents. As much as immigrant parents might resent the way schools undermined traditional family authority, they felt at a loss to deal with their sons’ involvement in gangs and crimes like vandalism and petty theft. Such parents often applied to the courts for help in making their sons behave.

Among the more benign approaches involved providing boys with wholesome outlets for their energy and inherent “boy nature” in the form of organized sports, recreation centers, and clubs. This reflected new understandings of both adolescence and masculinity. In particular, nineteenth-century notions of middle-class manliness were giving way to twentieth-century ideas of masculinity, characterized by strenuous physical activity and a rejection of anything seen as feminine or sissy. This approach had two problems: the facilities in poorer neighborhoods were not as good as those in more middle-class locales, and reformers insisted that such activity be supervised by adults, which was the last thing boys wanted.

More invasive were so-called “parental schools”—residential facilities for boys who did not quite merit placement in a reformatory—where they might receive a more

positive, if controlled, upbringing than what their parents could provide. Those who set up such institutions intended them as means of guiding wayward boys to responsible manhood, not as punishment, but boys experienced them as a harsh and punitive environment, mostly reflecting the approaches of individual administrators.

Around the turn of the twentieth century, reformers began perceiving the boy problem less in terms of individual moral failings, whether on the part of boys or their parents, and more in terms of boys’ intellectual deficiency. This reflected the rise of intelligence testing and the classification regimes that accompanied it. Instead of trying to remedy the boys’ inadequate social backgrounds, the problem now became educating boys classified as having substandard intellectual abilities, leading to the rise of “special education.” Unfortunately, since the boys in such classes or programs had been scientifically classified as having intellectual deficiencies, experts expected them to have little capacity to learn and hence provided them with minimal education. As a result, special education became, in large part, a dumping ground for students whom the schools did not know how to handle. Yet again, the majority of students in such classes were boys from poor and minority, especially African American, backgrounds. This pattern persists into the present.

Despite the book’s more or less chronological approach, sometimes it is difficult to tell exactly when certain patterns emerged or how one approach influenced the development of another, so an appendix with a chronological listing of when certain approaches were implemented or discontinued in various places would have been helpful. The book would also have benefited from a bibliography that included both the original dates of publication and the dates of the editions used. But overall, this book is an innovative and welcome addition to the literature on the history of youth and education.



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