

A History of the  
Coordinating Committee on Women  
in the Historical Profession-  
Conference Group on Women's History

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## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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**Berenice A. Carroll** is Director of the Women's Studies Program and Professor of Political Science at Purdue University. The first Chair of CCWHP, she authored *Design for Total War: Arms and Economics in the Third Reich* and edited and co-authored *Liberating Women's History: Theoretical and Critical Essays*. Her current research focuses on the history of women's political thought and the theory of feminism and pacifism. She is active in various branches of the peace movement and the women's movement.

## PREFACE

On the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the Coordinating Committee on Women in the Historical Profession-Conference Group on Women's History (CCWHP-CGWH), we are publishing three essays covering the history of the organization and of developments in the relationship of women to the profession over the past two decades. One of these, by Nupur Chaudhuri, is newly written; the other two, by Hilda Smith and Gerda Lerner, are reprinted. Smith's piece was originally published a decade ago by CCWHP. A version of Lerner's appeared in the *Journal of American History*. We are pleased to be able to reprint it.

The Smith and Chaudhuri articles were both written with the help of and in consultation with past and present officers of CCWHP-CGWH. This pamphlet was produced by Peg Strobel, with the help of Lynn Weiner, Lisa Oppenheim, and Andrea Barrientos.

Peg Strobel  
President, CCWHP  
1989

On the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the CCWHP/CGWH we are reprinting our pamphlet with a new chapter by Berenice A. Carroll, a founding member and first president. Lynn Weiner and Barbara Winslow updated the pamphlet, which was produced by Peg Strobel, with the help of Nupur Chaudhuri, Barbara Winslow, and Mary Todd.

Peg Strobel  
1994



CCWHP:  
The First Decade  
Hilda Smith

The Coordinating Committee on Women in the Historical Profession was founded at the annual meeting of the American Historical Association in Washington, D.C., in December 1969. The organizing meeting was held on the afternoon of December 27, in response to a letter circulated by Berenice A. Carroll. In September 1969, she had drafted a petition addressed to the AHA council, requesting that it take a number of steps to improve the status of women in the historical profession, first of all by the appointment of a Committee on the Status of Women to study the situation and recommend future action by the AHA. At the same time, Carroll wrote to a number of historians suggesting that there was also a need for "an independent Women's Caucus, quite apart from **any official Committee** or resolutions adopted by the AHA, to thrash out all that needs to be done and keep the pressure on, information flowing, etc."

In response to a petition submitted by Carroll to the AHA council in October 1969 with about thirty signatures, including a number of well known historians, at its meeting on October 30, the council decided to appoint a Committee on the Status of Women (CSW), charged with the duties specified in the petition. The remaining items in the petition were referred to this committee. At its meeting of December 27, 1969, the AHA appointed the members of the CSW, namely Hanna Gray, Willie Lee Rose, Carl Schorske, Page Smith, and Mary Wright. Subsequently, in April 1970, the council designated Willie Lee Rose to chair the committee and appointed Patricia Graham to replace Mary Wright.

The women's caucus meeting on December 27, 1969, drew about 25 interested women historians, and in an atmosphere of high energy, a great deal was accomplished in a short time. It was agreed that the purposes of the organization would be "1) to encourage recruitment of women into the historical profession and advance the status of women at all levels; 2) to oppose discrimination against women in the profession; and 3) to encourage and develop research and instruction in the field of women's history." It was decided that the provisions of the petition not yet adopted by the AHA council should be presented as resolutions to the AHA business meeting, with a number of additions and amendments. These resolutions, though not actually presented at the business meeting in 1979, were presented early in 1970 to the CSW and published in the *AHA Newsletter*.<sup>1</sup> They embodied many of the key concerns of the new organization at that time, and indeed throughout the decade that followed. In order to reflect the group's concern with both the status of women in the profession and the development of women's history as a scholarly field, the name adopted for the organization was "Coordinating Committee on Women in the Historical Profession."

Meanwhile, at the initiative of Hilda Smith, a panel discussion on the status of women had been scheduled for December 29. This was not on the regular program of the AHA, but flyers announcing the meeting were widely distributed and the panel, chaired by Emiliana Noether, with Hanna Gray, Jo Tice Bloom, Hilda Smith, and Christopher Lasch as participants, drew a standing-room-only crowd and generated intense discussion. People signed up as interested in CCWHP, and about \$75 was collected to start a treasury for the new organization. At this meeting Gerda Lerner made a strong statement on the importance of women's history and proposed a resolution on the encouragement of work in this field, which was added to the resolutions submitted to the AHA.

At the first meeting of December 27, seven of those present, including five faculty women, one undergraduate, and one graduate student, agreed to serve as members of a temporary steering committee to develop the structure of a more permanent organization. In the first months of 1970, the steering committee agreed, by mail and telephone communication, upon

a temporary structure, with Berenice Carroll and Gerda Lerner as "co-chairmen" (in the those dark days before widespread consciousness of the sexist language), Hilda Smith as secretary-treasurer, and a steering committee whose new members were Jo Tice Bloom, Linda K. Kerber, Edythe Lutzker, Constance A. Myers, and Sherrin M. Wyntjes. At the first annual membership meeting of the new organization, held on December 28, 1970, during the convention of the AHA in Boston, Mass., a committee was elected to propose candidates and election procedures for new officers of CCWHP. Meanwhile, following the resignation of Gerda Lerner, Berenice Carroll continued as chairwoman and Hilda Smith as secretary-treasurer for the year 1971. In 1972, the duly elected officers were: Sandi Cooper and Adele Simmons, co-chairwomen, Joanna Zangrando and Karen M. Offen, co-secretaries, with Hilda Smith continuing as treasurer. Adele Simmons resigned early in 1972 and was replaced in 1973 by Mollie Davis.

Over the years, as the membership grew and new regional groups of women historians were organized, CCWHP meetings were held not only during AHA conventions, but also at meetings of the Organization of American Historians, and, after 1973, at the bi-annual Berkshire Conference on the History of Women. At the time of its founding, a question had been raised as to the relationship between CCWHP and the existing regional organizations, namely the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians (founded in 1926), and the West Coast Historical Conference (founded in 1969; now the West Coast Association of Women Historians). Upon Sandi Cooper's recommendation, it was decided that CCWHP would not seek to affiliate or merge with the regional groups but would cooperate with them and invite representatives of such groups to serve on its steering committee. At present there are eleven regional associations of women historians represented on the steering committee of CCWHP. Thus CCWHP has come to function in part as an umbrella organization reflecting the concerns of the regional groups as well as individual members. The day-to-day operations of CCWHP are carried out by the officers of the organization and through decisions and actions of the steering committee, which holds its own meetings during various national conventions. The direction of the organization conse-



quently reflects both the voting of the membership at national meetings and the wishes of the regional associations.

One of the most vital issues affecting the life of the organization has been the evolution of the Conference Group on Women's History (CGWH). From the early years of the organization, there was some division of responsibilities between the two co-chairpersons as to the emphasis on the questions of status of women within the profession or questions of advancing the field of women's history. The increasing autonomous structure of the CGWH developed gradually, until by 1975 it has its own name, officers, and autonomous status as an AHA-affiliated organization. The formal change was initiated by Sandi Cooper and Renate Bridenthal at the AHA meeting in Chicago in 1974, with a call for a meeting of those who might be interested in forming a Conference Group on Women's History. It was argued that the Conference Group should concern itself with issues related to women's history, while CCWHP would devote itself to questions of professional status, thus dividing the two functions previously subsumed under CCWHP. Subsequent arguments were made, especially by Hilda Smith, that the CGWH should become an entirely separate organization, but the membership voted against this proposal in 1978. Thus the president of the CGWH remains a co-president of CCWHP, and membership is joint in the two organizations, with the newsletters and other functions carried out in cooperation. This represents the conviction of the members, throughout the decade, that there is a close interrelationship between the treatment of women in the profession and the treatment of women's history, that the fate of the two are intertwined, and that the organization should continue to pursue a very strong interest in both.

From its origins and throughout the first decade of its history, CCWHP has been concerned with the establishment and support of the official committees on the status of women of the major historical organizations, the AHA and the OAH. In the spring of 1970, the Organization of American Historians adopted a number of resolutions presented by CCWHP, one which called upon the OAH to establish a committee concerned with the status of women. This committee was indeed appointed in 1970 with Anne F. Scott as first chairwoman. In the AHA, the Rose Committee (CSW) submitted its report to



the members of the association in November 1970. It was an exemplary document, containing selected statistics, references, and thoughtful discussion on the number and percentages of women in the professorial ranks in thirty departments of history from 1959 (in some cases, from 1909) to 1969, on women's participation in the AHA program and in AHA committees from 1939 to 1969, and other aspects of the problem. The committee made recommendations of fundamental position, specific policy, and institutional measures, based on the premise that the "present demand for social justice for women coincides with the permanent interest of the historical profession."<sup>2</sup> Among the institutional measures proposed was the establishment of a standing Committee on Women Historians, with "a paid executive secretary responsible for coordinating and administering on a day-to-day basis the functions with which the committee is charged."<sup>3</sup> The committee's recommendations also embodied a substantial number of the points raised by CCWHP in the original petition and the resolutions drafted in December 1969, concerning the functions of the standing committee and other obligations of the AHA.

At the business meeting of the AHA on December 29, the entire set of CSW recommendations was adopted, with certain amendments proposed by CCWHP. In 1971 the AHA responded to the commitments undertaken by the membership by establishing the new permanent Committee on Women Historians (CWH), first chaired by Patricia Graham. In November 1971, Dorothy Ross was appointed on a full-time basis to serve as special assistant to the CWH. However, the course of the CWH and its staff assistance has not run smoothly over the years since then. After about six months, during which an effective start was made on CWH business, particularly with the creation of a roster of women historians, Dorothy Ross resigned to take a teaching position. The AHA decided to transfer the "routine functions" (especially the handling of the roster) to the AHA staff member already handling certain aspects of the Professional Register, while the appointment of Charlotte Quinn to replace Dorothy Ross in 1972 was made on a half-time basis. Later, with the appointment of Eleanor Straub, responsibility for the special needs of women was subsumed under the full-time post of assistant executive secretary

of the AHA (later, assistant executive director), a position subsequently held by Edmund Worthy, Jr. The debate continued throughout this period over the amount of time and attention the assistant executive director should devote to issues relating either to women's history or to women's status within the profession. Throughout these years, CCWHP consistently pressed for the AHA to meet commitments previously undertaken by the members of the Association. At the 1978 AHA convention, the business meeting adopted a CCWHP resolution to recreate a half-time position to meet the needs of women and minorities. At present both the full-time and the half-time positions (assistant executive director and special assistant for minorities and women's interests) are held by women, Charlotte Quinn and Maureen Nutting, respectively.

CCWHP support for the CWH has sometimes been a serious issue, not only in itself but also with regard to the relationship between the two bodies. In the March 1973 issue of the *CCWHP Newsletter*, co-chairwoman Sandi Cooper commented on the weakening of certain resolutions presented by CCWHP at the December 1972 business meeting of the AHA: "[A] set of objections was raised--largely by persons associated with the AHA Committee on Women Historians--to our request that their own Committee be fully funded and staffed at full complement of members. . . . [T]heir arguments carried the meeting. . . . I am of the opinion that the 'strategy' was far too weak . . . for caucus people to follow. A caucus is NOT an official committee. . . . The vision of an outside pressure group, its needs, and its ultimate conception of realities is basically different from an official committee. . . . We must request the more extreme and the more 'exorbitant' if we are to get anywhere."<sup>4</sup> This issue has remained latent, surfacing from time to time, throughout the years. It arose again, for example, in 1977, with regard to the question of Edmund Worthy's appointment as assistant executive director of the AHA. On the other hand, the concerns of the CWH and CCWHP have converged on many points, and if there has been tension between them, there has also been fruitful cooperation. CCWHP has at times worked jointly with the AHA and OAH women's committees, at times urged them to take action in areas they had not yet adopted as a part of their program. Cooperation has been most cordial on matters relating to

employment of women historians, support for the convention boycott of non-ERA states, and a number of projects in women's history.

Over the years, CCWHP has pursued a variety of specific goals related to the advancement of women's status in the profession. The 1969 resolutions called for increased recruitment of women into the profession at all levels, specially through admissions of larger number of women students, particularly at graduate levels, expanded scholarship and fellowship opportunities, flexible requirements for graduate study, abolition of nepotism restrictions, encouragement of university child care centers, and support of federal tax deductions for child care expenses. They also called for the AHA 1) to increase the representation of women in its own offices, programs and activities, 2) to provide for hearings and publications for both CWH and independent women's groups to disseminate information on the status of women, and 3) to state formally its opposition to discrimination, investigate cases of discrimination, and assist women whose claims of discrimination were judged to be well-founded. In 1970, Gerda Lerner offered an amendment to the Rose Report calling for protection of women from discrimination in cases of pregnancy and maternity, and the provision of non-discriminatory terms for maternity leave. The Rose Report itself also recommended greater flexibility with equity in status and compensation for part-time employment, and CCWHP offered an amendment specifying that this should be "for men and women who desire it," including reduced workload at the request of either a man or a woman "in order to care for infants." In addition, CCWHP introduced a motion urging AHA support for the development of child care centers, a point which the Rose Committee had not adopted, but which the membership of the association supported at the 1970 business meeting. CCWHP also pressed successfully, though at first against resistance and incomprehension, for provision of child care facilities by the AHA during its annual conventions.

Throughout the decade, CCWHP has felt a special concern for the needs and interests of female graduate students. In 1972, CCWHP appointed two Graduate Student Coordinators, Suzanne Lebsock and Joan Irwin. This position has been occupied in subsequent years by D'Ann Campbell, Noralee Frankel,



Meredith Snapp, Mary J. Bularzik, and Sharon Bollinger. CCWHP has worked to see that department admitted and granted financial aid to women on the same criteria that they apply to their male students, while also giving recognition to some special circumstances and needs of female graduate students, particularly with respect to opportunities for part-time study and the need for child care. It has worked also to prevent discrimination against the returning student, who was more apt to be a woman than a man, and it has encouraged the AHA professional division committee to take steps to improve the representation and treatment of graduate students in the profession.

In the course of the decade, CCWHP was confronted with the growing reality of the job crisis. During the presidency of Sandi Cooper, CCWHP began to place this issue at the center of its attention, and was active in supporting general AHA efforts to increase the number and variety of positions open to historians. At the same time, there was a special concern to insure that affirmative action programs, and the few inroads recently made by women in the profession, were not overwhelmed by a "last hired, first fired" mentality in a depressed job market. Special attention was given to the situation of young female faculty members employed at the City University of New York, who were among those hardest hit by large layoffs at that multi-campus institution in 1975. With the establishment of the AHA-initiated National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History, headed until the fall of 1979 by Arnita Jones, CCWHP has been able to assist in its efforts to discover positions for historians outside the normal academic channels. Throughout the 1970s CCWHP has succeeded in getting a number of resolutions passed at the business meetings of the AHA and OAH, pledging these organizations to maintain their opposition to discrimination in employment. With the reorganization of the AHA into the teaching, professional, and research divisions in 1972, CCWHP worked through the relevant committees to press for the inclusion of women's history in the discussions of the teaching division and to encourage the professional division to take up the grievances of individual women faculty members.

Most recently, however, the permanent loss of academic jobs for trained historians has precipitated new functions and directions for CCWHP. In light of drastically altered economic realities, CCWHP is now spearheading a drive within the profession to increase services to all its members, but especially for those who are unemployed or not academically employed. These would include: encouraging institutions to offer faculty library privileges to trained historians doing research in their communities; offering CCWHP institutional affiliation for grant proposals from CCWHP members; establishing regional study groups so that younger and older historians may share their knowledge and research in supportive atmospheres, regardless of their employment status.

Over the course of the decade, issues relating to women's history grew in importance as more departments began to offer courses in the area. It was soon clear that this was not only the most rapidly growing new specialization in the profession, but also, for those who ventured into it, the most challenging in substance, theory, and methodology. In 1970, the field was almost entirely neglected. In its first years, CCWHP was instrumental in giving the initial impetus to growth, arranging sessions in the programs of the historical associations, encouraging writings and publications, and issuing information bulletins on research and teaching in women's history. The first CCWHP bulletins on current research and teaching were issued as supplements to the CCWHP *Newsletter* edited by Berenice Carroll in 1970. Subsequently, a series of separate bulletins was edited by Linda K. Kerber and then by Arnita Jones.

Since 1975, the Conference Group on Women's History has expanded its efforts to serve as a clearinghouse for information on the history of women. The CGWH *Newsletter*, issued on an alternating basis with the CCWHP *Newsletter*, has carried in combined form extensive information on conferences, new publications, individual courses and ongoing research in the area of women's history. The CGWH *Newsletter* was edited first by Marlene Wortman and Peter Tyor; since then it has been edited by Nupur Chaudhuri, who was assisted for a time by members of Newberry Library staff Janice Reiff and David Ruchman. Since 1975, Nupur Chaudhuri has also compiled an annual bibliography of work in women's history, an indispen-



sable research tool today. In 1976, the CGWH was asked by the chair of the AHA program committee to organize a panel on recent doctoral research in women's history. Five young scholars were selected to offer brief presentations of their research, in a format similar to the series of AHA panels on recent doctoral research. At the 1979 OAH meeting another such panel was organized by their Committee on the Status of Women. Under the presidency and at the initiative of Hilda Smith, the CGWH sponsored in November 1977 the first international conference on women's history held in the United States. Three hundred scholars from the United States, Canada, and Western Europe attended the conference, a rare and exciting opportunity to share and compare perspectives among historians with diverse national and international experience.

The life and vitality of CCWHP has been reflected over the decade in its active presence at the convention of the AHA, the OAH, and other professional organizations, and its steady pressure on these organizations to take action on behalf of women, but perhaps even more significantly on a continuing basis in the pages of the *CCWHP Newsletter*. The newsletter has been edited or distributed by a number of persons over the years, including Berenice Carroll, Hilda Smith, Karen Offen, Joanna Zangrando, Jordy Bell, and at the present time, Adade Wheeler. The newsletter has been the central means of communicating with members, especially since financial constraints in recent years have made it increasingly difficult for members to attend national meetings. The newsletter has served to inform, to stimulate, to provoke, to exchange, and to share the knowledge and experience of our members. In addition to organizational news, the newsletter has carried professional information, affirmative action and other women's issues, listings of jobs available, editorial commentaries, occasional essay supplements, and personal news. Since 1974, under Donna Boutelle's presidency, CCWHP has sent questionnaires to candidates for AHA and OAH positions and published their responses in the *CCWHP Newsletter*. In 1971 the acting executive secretary of the AHA and the assistant executive secretary bore curious witness to the significance of the *CCWHP Newsletter* by attempting to censor its portrayal of AHA actions, an effort quickly repudiated by CCWHP's officers.



Throughout these years, CCWHP has experienced a remarkable growth. The membership grew from less than fifty paid members to over seventy. This growth required a more efficient system, which was achieved through the efforts of Karen Offen, Joanna Zangrando, and Jordy Bell, who worked during their terms as secretaries to develop computerized mailing lists and to collect correspondence and other records in a systematic fashion. CCWHP materials are now being deposited at the Schlesinger Library at Radcliffe College on a continuing basis. The secretaries, because of their central role in the communications networks and day-to-day operations, and because of the length of their tenure, have indeed formed the organizational core of CCWHP. They have also been central to CCWHP's relationships with regional associations of women historians, particularly through the efforts of Jordy Bell, to establish close contact with the regional groups, aid them with their special concerns, and coordinate unified efforts for the needs of women nationwide.

Recently at the national level, the efforts of both the CCWHP and the regional associations have been focused on the issue of the Equal Rights Amendment. This campaign to have both major historical organizations refuse to hold meetings in states that had not ratified the ERA was spearheaded by Barbara Evans Clements, Robert Zangrando, and Joanna Zangrando. Encouraged by the response to their petition campaign under the presidency of Joan Hoff Wilson, CCWHP organized a concerted and ultimately successful effort to encourage the AHA and the OAH to join in the national boycott of non-ERA states. This effort also had the support of the AHA and the OAH committees on women. The OAH agreed earlier than the AHA to boycott non-ratified states, primarily through the efforts of its own Committee on the Status of Women, chaired by D'Ann Campbell. But because of a contract commitment, it held one convention in New Orleans following its passage of a boycott resolution. Women's groups organized informational workshops on the ERA to protest this convention site, but generally praised the OAH for its resolve not to meet again in a non-ERA state.

The AHA delayed action on the issue, and CCWHP collected large numbers of petitions urging the organization to adopt a

boycott. The AHA council did direct the membership to vote on the issue, but after the membership returned a vote which favored boycotting non-ERA states, the council declared it was not binding on the organization since the request for such a vote had come from the council and not from the membership in a general business meeting. The council of the AHA planned to bring up the issue of an ERA boycott at its annual convention in San Francisco in December of 1978. Because of the previous resistance of the organization, CCWHP officers expected the council to reject a boycott proposal. They obtained over a thousand pledges from AHA members not to pay their dues. Instead, the money was to be placed in an escrow fund known as MIFT (Money in Friendly Territory) until the council acted positively on the boycott resolution. CCWHP came prepared to pass a boycott resolution and participate in a debate at the general business meeting. This proved to be unnecessary when the council reversed itself and voted to endorse the boycott of non-ERA states. Much of the credit for this reversal should go to CCWHP and especially to Joan Hoff Wilson for her forceful and skillful handling of the issue. The victory reveals not only CCWHP's well-organized campaign on the issue, but the strength of women's efforts when the AHA's Committee on Women Historians (chaired by Joan W. Scott), CCWHP, and its regional affiliates combine for a cause such as the ERA.

The ten-year history of CCWHP has not always been marked by either ease or success, but there have been a number of changes in the status of women within the historical profession and in the field of women's history during these years. In 1969 there were virtually no women in history departments of elite institutions, especially tenured women. Although the number of women in senior positions is still small today, there has been some improvement in the lower tenured ranks in the last ten years. During the late 1960s, women were seldom hired for regular tenure-track positions in departments of history. Today women are more apt to be hired on the same basis as men; unfortunately, there are fewer jobs available. Since the presidency of Sandi Cooper there has been a substantial increase of women on panels at the various professional meetings, as well as an increase in the number of sessions

devoted to the field of women's history, though the numbers have declined over the last few years, at AHA meetings, but not at OAH meetings. This is an indication of the greater responsiveness of the OAH in general to the concerns of its women members. Traditionally, women have almost never held important posts in professional historical societies; today Gerda Lerner is president of the Organization of American Historians. In 1969 there were only a handful of women's history courses offered in the country, now they number in the hundreds. Before 1970 very few graduate students or faculty were doing research in women's history; today research and publications in the field are proliferating rapidly. In 1978 the Berkshire Conference on the History of Women was the second largest professional gathering of historians--second only to the annual meeting of the American Historical Association.

The advances have indeed been impressive, but it should be remembered they do not represent the total picture. Female faculty members who are also feminist activists or who do research in the area of women's history are apt to have difficulty with tenure or promotion. The numbers of women in History Departments, especially at the "better" schools, are still only at the level of tokenism. Administrators, heads of departments, and officers within the professional societies remain overwhelmingly male. Women have indeed made progress over the decade in which CCWHP has been working in their behalf, but they have not made sufficient progress so that the efforts of the CCWHP are not required for the present and future generations of women historians. CCWHP will continue to serve as an advocate for women and women's history in a profession that has too few of the former and pays too little attention to the latter.

It is clear that from its inception CCWHP has had two primary concerns--women's status in the profession and the advancement of women's history. In addition, however, CCWHP has been dedicated to democratizing the historical professional organizations and to creating a supportive feminist environment within them. Its original goals have been realized in a number of ways: work in getting open listings of all job opportunities; demystification of the process of participating in the annual programs; exchange of information on how to



obtain grants; and general openness about organizational procedures and networks. CCWHP's practice of sending questionnaires to nominees for elected office has helped to make AHA and OAH officers more responsive and accountable to the membership. Its insistence on integrating graduate students into its own structure and on the CWH has gradually led to their increasing participation in the affairs of the professional organizations.

As to the creation of a supportive feminist environment, CCWHP can take justifiable pride in what it has accomplished. No longer need any woman feel isolated and left out of the conventions. The cocktail party, women's meetings, a women's room, childcare facilities, and the many workshops and panels on women's history and professional concerns have created a lively, active, and friendly feminist network. The loose and open structure of CCWHP has permitted individuals and groups to have their concerns put into action. It may be difficult for younger members, who take all this activity for granted, to imagine the kind of alienation and isolation women historians used to experience at conventions before the existence of CCWHP. The organization can even lay claim to having enlivened and democratized the annual AHA business meeting. CCWHP representatives were always there with resolutions and new issues--sometimes they won; sometimes they lost; most of the time CCWHP had to persevere to insure that resolutions were implemented. CCWHP has demonstrated to the profession that it will not be silenced and will be there the next year, usually stronger than the year before.

#### Notes

This article was written in 1979 in collaboration with past officers of the CCWHP. It is reprinted here without substantive changes.

1. 8, no. 5 (June 1970), 12-14.
2. Rose Report, p. 1.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
4. 4, no. 1, pp. 20-21.

# CCWHP-CGWH:

## The Second Decade Nupur Chaudhuri

In her *CCWHP: The First Decade*, Hilda Smith has shown how, during the 1970s, CCWHP became an umbrella organization, which reflected the concerns of different regional groups of women historians as well as individuals. The voices of the membership expressed at national meetings and the wishes of the regional associations set the initial direction of the organization.<sup>1</sup>

During the first decade, the organization helped to achieve some important goals. These included advancing women's history and women's status in the profession, democratizing historical professional organizations, and creating a supportive feminist environment within them. Smith's history provided an important collection of facts for review and reanalysis of the efforts and the achievements of the organization during the second decade and served as a valuable guide for subsequent activities. Some goals were achieved, but the conservative political climate of the 1980s necessitated vigilant monitoring. Other goals were yet to be fully realized or addressed and required continuing attention.

Taken together, the activities and achievements of the second decade are impressive. Recognizing that a substantial number of women historians were working as independent scholars, given the lack of jobs in the field of history, CCWHP began lobbying with the AHA and History Departments in these scholars' interests. It supported the growth of regional women's history groups. CCWHP-CGWH newsletters took on

an added importance and became a more coherent voice to promote the goals of the organization. Through these initiatives, and through increased attention to graduate students, membership first stabilized and then increased. With stronger membership and a more coherent voice, CCWHP-CGWH focused on representation within the AHA and OAH, making significant gains in terms of women in elected office, working closely with the committees and staff of the two groups, increasing the number of panels relevant to our members' interests, and establishing the Joan Kelly Prize in Women's History and Theory. Faced with a conservative backlash reflected in the Reagan and Bush administrations, CCWHP-CGWH joined other groups in mobilizing members to protect funding for entities and projects important to our members and to oppose the appointment to office of persons we deemed unqualified. As an organization and individually as historians, we became involved in the judicial process in two particular cases: the Sears sex discrimination case and the Webster v. Reproductive Health Services pro-choice case. Through the International Federation of Societies for Research in Women's History, we linked up with an international network of scholars to enhance the development of women's history as a field. This is a fine record of achievement for a decade not noted for its forceful advocacy of feminist issues.

It was apparent from the lessons of the first decade that networking would be an essential activity for the fulfillment of the aspirations of women historians. Hence, when CCWHP-CGWH entered its second decade in 1980, networking between CCWHP-CGWH, its members, and various regional associations of women historians became the most important task for the organization.

### **CCWHP and Independent Historians**

At the 1979 business meeting, CCWHP members and representatives of the regional groups suggested that CCWHP offer a support network to independent women historians and find means to strengthen ties between CCWHP and regional organizations of women historians. The membership voted to restructure the Steering Committee to include women representing various sectors of the profession and different regional organizations.<sup>2</sup>



Given the above mandate, Catherine Prelinger, the newly elected CCWHP president, wrote in the April 1980 CCWHP *Newsletter*: "The next year or so will be critical for the CCWHP. We must find ways in which members can voice their opinions more effectively. Lack of funds and geographic dispersion have made democratic decision making difficult. By procuring funds for an expanded newsletter, it may be possible both to reach and to represent a wider audience, to break out of the academic limits some of us have been prisoner to. By restructuring our organizational form, we may be able to achieve diversity and at the same time, act as a more sensitive forum. A major goal should be the continued search for ways in which we can assist independent historians to do their work."<sup>3</sup>

To help independent women historians, Prelinger composed a letter that she sent out, along with Hilda Smith's *The CCWHP: The First Decade*, to university presidents, department chairs, and others in a position to help women historians. Prelinger reviewed the job crisis in the profession and pointed out the increasing feasibility of historians pursuing their research interests independent of their mode of employment. She concluded by arguing that a generation of historians should not be lost to the profession simply because no teaching jobs exist, but that without institutional support--affiliate status, library privileges, and the administration of grant money--research historians would find it very difficult to persevere. She also suggested that universities might find it especially appropriate to grant research associateships to their own graduates. CCWHP also pressed the American Historical Association to exert its influence on institutions to offer research privileges and status to independent historians who were AHA members. In a questionnaire sent to each candidate for different AHA offices, CCWHP asked what services the AHA could provide for unaffiliated and non-academic historians.<sup>4</sup> Answers were published in the September CCWHP *Newsletter* so that the members could be informed of the positions taken by the different candidates. These collective efforts of CCWHP apparently had a positive impact, since by February 1981 26 institutions granted affiliated status to independent historians.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, CCWHP's proposed conference for 1981-1982

on non-academic employment for historians was suspended for lack of funds.<sup>6</sup>

### **Regional Organizations of Women Historians**

From its inception, CCWHP intended to augment rather than supplant the activities of regional organizations. For example, to strengthen ties with the Western Association of Women Historians (WAWH), Prelinger attended the 1981 annual meeting of the WAWH and spoke at the plenary session on "The Future: WAWH and CCWHP." She stressed the importance of maintaining the alliance between CCWHP-CGWH and such affiliated groups across the nation as WAWH. Prelinger suggested that through the united efforts of all groups would come considerable gains on issues crucial to women historians within the professional community. She cited such tangible gains as the nomination of women scholars for various offices in the OAH and the AHA.

In December 1981, the officers and steering committee of the CCWHP-CGWH named Penny Kanner, the former president of the WAWH, to succeed Lois Banner as the president of CGWH.

Networking with the regional groups was additionally established by contributing to cocktail parties at different regional meetings and at the OAH. As a result of our efforts through the years, the number of organizations now affiliated with CCWHP-CGWH stands at fifteen in 1989: Women Historians of the Midwest, Southern Association for Women Historians, Western Association of Women Historians, New York Metropolitan Region CCWHP, Chicago Area Women's History Conference, Upstate New York, Coalition for Western Women's History, Cleveland Area, National Women's History Project, Chesapeake Area Group of Women Historians, New England Area Women Historians, Berkshire Conference of Women Historians, Task Force on Ancient History, Washington DC Area Women Historians, and St. Louis Women Historians.

### **Networking**

Renate Bridenthal, the president of CCWHP in 1974-1975, has succinctly summarized some of the functions of the CCWHP-CGWH: "Enhancing our self-perception through



struggle together and by networking about shared interests in history and otherwise."<sup>8</sup> Networking remained a major function of CCWHP-CGWH throughout the eighties, directed not only at personal development and career enhancement but at broader political goals as well. In listing her goals at the 1982 business meeting, Mollie Davis, newly elected president of CCWHP, suggested "Operation Draw Tight," where the organization would strengthen the then-current network. She emphasized the need for better internal and external communications to improve service to the members.

CCWHP-CGWH reached out to other organizations. The members of the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) had been concerned for some time about the professional progress of women in the field of state and local history. In 1988, the women's committee of the AASLH invited Frances Richardson Keller, president of CCWHP, to speak at their breakfast during the annual meeting of the AASLH. Margaret Bonney, Chair of the Women's Breakfast, AASLH, wrote: "Dr. Keller made it clear that CCWHP-CGWH can easily include historians from both the academic and public arena. Her talk at the annual meeting can be viewed as a step towards strengthening contacts between these groups of historians, a goal of the Common Agenda for History Museums project."<sup>10</sup>

CCWHP-CGWH provided a networking service by acting as a clearinghouse for disseminating information throughout the 1980s. Its secretaries corresponded with hundreds of individuals and organizations, from the League of Women Voters to the National Park Service, about Women's History Week and other topics. Students and teachers from the U.S. and abroad requested bibliographic information on women's history; historians sought information on jobs, grants, and setting up panels for conferences. CCWHP-CGWH corresponded with women historians from countries around the world, including Belgium, England, Ireland, India, Israel, Italy, and Japan.

Reflecting on CCWHP's networking system, Sally Gregory Kohlstedt wrote: "CCWHP performs an important task by maintaining the network to be mobilized."<sup>11</sup> To mobilize CCWHP members, a vehicle was needed; CCWHP-CGWH newsletters provided that vehicle.



### CCWHP-CGWH Newsletters

The newsletters served several functions. They became the vehicle through which presidents exerted their leadership within the organization, in the absence of frequent membership meetings. Particularly in the early years, newsletters put people in contact with others who shared scholarly interests and served, in the case of the CGWH newsletter, as a critical resource on women's history. The newsletters have remained the most important means of networking for our members.

Since 1979, the CCWHP and CGWH newsletters have gone through several changes. During 1980 and 1981, the CCWHP *Newsletter* was published sporadically, although the CGWH *Newsletter* appeared regularly. In 1982, Peg Strobel became the CCWHP *Newsletter* editor, and Michel Dahlin remained the editor of CGWH *Newsletter*. Until December 1982, the CGWH *Newsletter* had separate volume and issue numbers; this created confusion for some members and for libraries. For clarification, the same volume number, which reflected the years of CCWHP's publication, was given to both newsletters. From 1982 the publication of CCWHP-CGWH newsletters became regular; in 1984 the number of newsletters published annually increased from four to six.

CCWHP newsletters publish the annual reports of the AHA Women's Committee, OAH Committee on the Status of Women in the Profession, reports from Page Miller of the National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History (NCC), AHA candidates' responses to the CCWHP questionnaire, reports from affiliated groups, and pending legislative issues which are of interest to our members. In the 1980s, the CCWHP newsletters were edited by Janice Reiff, Peg Strobel, Carole Hicke, Nupur Chaudhuri, Ruth Willard, Mary Rose, and at the present time, Bonnie Gordon.

The work of CCWHP, as printed in the newsletter, received complimentary notice in the "Working in Academe" section of the Winter 1985 report of the Association of American Colleges' Project on the Status and Education of Women.

To establish close communication among affiliates, the CGWH *Newsletter* under Kanner began publishing articles about teaching and research on women's history, information on programs and conferences, and names of resource persons

in different geographical areas for scholarly activities. The CGWH newsletter publishes relevant information on women's history, such as reports on both national and international conferences on women and on women's history, course syllabi in women's history, notices of members' research projects, and reviews of recently published works and articles. Under Lois Banner's presidency, the CGWH newsletters published historiographies of Canadian women's history and South Asian women's history and breakfast speeches delivered by feminist historians at AHA and OAH conferences. At the 1981 business meeting, Penny Kanner, newly-elected president of the CGWH, suggested that we could "expand our knowledge, through CGWH, of hitherto untapped or uncatalogued primary materials, lying in USA depositories, that could help to advance all fields of women's history." She also introduced a new column entitled "Scholars' Exchange" to share information about primary research materials and their locations, resource people, and methodologies.<sup>12</sup> These initiatives increased the newsletters' value as a resource in women's history, as evidenced by requests for extra newsletter copies.

CGWH *Newsletter* editors in the 1980s were Michel Dahlin, Joyce Baker,<sup>13</sup> Phyllis Stock, and, presently, Eileen Boris. Stock, Claire Moses (present president of CGWH), and Boris have added new and innovative items to the newsletter. Boris surveyed both Women's Studies journals and general History journals on their publication of articles and reviews in women's history. Information published in CGWH newsletters is now widely used by women's history scholars and students at home and abroad. Both newsletters also carry job advertisements, professional announcements, and personal news.

### Membership of CCWHP

Membership climbed in the second decade, reaching over 800 by late 1989. Hilda Smith reported CCWHP had over 700 members at the end of 1979, but this number declined to about 611 at the end of 1981. Concerned with the trend of declining membership between 1979 and 1981, the steering committee and officers of CCWHP deliberated on strategies of recruiting more members. The late Adade Wheeler (executive secretary of CCWHP, 1979-1981) suggested to her successor, Nupur



Chaudhuri, that brochures be printed which could be sent out to History Departments and distributed at history conferences. Mollie Davis, newly-elected president of CCWHP, stated at the 1982 business meeting that her first priority was "Operation Outreach," in which the organization would reach out to new constituencies and to old ones previously neglected. Operation Outreach required a membership drive and extensive work among historians not affiliated with institutions of higher education. She emphasized the need of "reaching and serving the younger as well as retired cohorts in academe."<sup>14</sup> To have increased visibility and to increase the membership of CCWHP-CGWH, Mollie Davis and Penny Kanner appointed three representatives for the organization, one for the Public History sector, and two for the High School (both public and private) areas. In 1985 Frances Richardson Keller headed the membership drive, which was later directed by Christie Pope when Keller became CCWHP president in 1986.

These efforts produced increased membership of CCWHP. As of October 1989, the CCWHP-CGWH membership stands at 825. Tables 1 and 2 contain information on membership by region and by status/employment.

These data on membership categories are not easily interpreted. But most likely they indicate that the CCWHP-CGWH membership is largely like it was ten years ago. The dramatic increase in tenured members may well be the result of the tenuring of our membership over the decade. The "untenued faculty" category of 1981 may include independent scholars and "other" (editors, etc.) of the 1989 data. The 1989 data are very preliminary. They are taken from a 20 percent non-random sample of membership forms. The number of graduate students is underrepresented in this sample, according to Lynn Weiner, the present executive director.

In addition to individual membership, 31 different institutions subscribe to CCWHP-CGWH newsletters.<sup>17</sup> Frances Richardson Keller best described the role and function of CCWHP-CGWH in the eighties when she wrote: "As an organization, we represent the very center of a national, now an international, effort to nurture and to explore a broader comprehension of our origins as they contribute to the development of our future."<sup>18</sup>



Table 1: Membership by Regions

Region	1981 <sup>15</sup>	1989 <sup>16</sup>
	%	%
East	49%	38%
South	12%	20%
Midwest	17%	19%
West	20%	20%
Foreign	2%	2%

Table 2: Membership by Status/Employment

Category	1981	1989
	%	%
Students	27%	21%
Untenured faculty	43%	15%
Tenured faculty	27%	39%
Independent scholars	DNA*	9%
Other	DNA*	15%
Institutions	2%	DNA*

\*Data not available.

### CCWHP and Students

In its second decade, CCWHP appointed graduate student coordinators to reach out to the student community. Mary Bularzik and Sharon Bolinger served in this position until 1981. Elizabeth (Beth) Weisz-Buck became the graduate student coordinator in 1982. Until her untimely death from cancer in November 1984, Weisz-Buck worked as much as possible on a project to investigate the status of graduate students regarding admissions, awards, and assistantships in the historical profession. Ruth Alexander succeeded her. In 1987 Melanie Gustafson joined her as graduate student co-representative. In 1988 Alexander resigned and Gustafson served alone as the representative. Stacy Rozek became student co-representative in 1989. At the 1987 Berkshire Conference both Gustafson and Alexander organized a CCWHP-sponsored forum attended by about one hundred graduate students.

Graduate student coordinators were occasionally sponsored by CCWHP-CGWH to attend regional women's history conference to recruit new student members. When the graduate stu-

dent coordinators could not be present at these meetings, other graduate student members would volunteer to represent the organization. Besides representing CCWHP-CGWH at different professional meetings, the graduate student coordinators gathered information on professional and academic matters, which was then published in the newsletters. The issues relevant to graduate students are now regularly brought to the attention of members through the newsletters and at the AHA annual meeting. In 1989 the CCWHP-CGWH transformed its AHA cocktail party into a forum and reception focusing on graduate students and their activities.

At the initiative of Penny Kanner and Frances Richardson Keller, in December 1988 CCWHP-CGWH started a Graduate Student Fund in honor of CCWHP's twentieth anniversary and on the occasion of their past Presidencies. The goal is to raise an endowment of \$20,000, which will provide an annual award of \$1,000. Keller and Kanner co-chair this fundraising committee. To have input from graduate students about how their needs may best be served by such a permanent fund, Melanie Gustafson sent out a questionnaire to more than 100 CCWHP-CGWH graduate student members. The responses indicated that a scholarship for dissertation research was the top priority.

To promote women's history among school children, CCWHP-CGWH in 1989 established a Women's History Day Prize for fifth grade to twelfth grade students who participate in the National History Day competition. The winner is awarded \$100 and a certificate. The first award went to Sharon Crawford, a high school senior from Missouri, in 1989.

### **CCWHP and the AHA in the Eighties**

Lack of women's participation in AHA leadership roles became a major concern for CCWHP in the early eighties. In 1980, the CCWHP president and the president of the Berkshire Conference, expressing their deep disappointment at the selection of Gordon Craig and Lawrence Stone for the presidency of the AHA, jointly wrote to the Chair of AHA Nominating Committee: "Another nominating committee failed to offer a woman scholar as a choice for the office of the President." The letter, describing the dismay at the lack of concerns of the

AHA for its members, pointed out that both gentlemen selected as candidates for AHA president, while noted scholars, were not noted for their sensitivity to the concerns of women and minorities. Thus, "the choice offered for 1980-1981 reflects disdain for the concerns of its majority."<sup>19</sup> Members were urged to write to the chair of the AHA nominating committee. Since the *Directory of American Scholars: History* is habitually used by the nominating committee, Kitty Prelinger and Lois Banner in 1981 asked CCWHP-CGWH members to check to see that their names were in the directory to ensure maximum representation of women historians in this reference work. Since the mid-eighties, the AHA nominating committee has started to ask CCWHP-CGWH officials to suggest names for different AHA offices.<sup>20</sup> The resulting nominations and CCWHP-CGWH voting strength have led to women holding 42.5 percent of AHA elected offices in 1989, while they comprise 25 percent of the AHA membership.<sup>21</sup>

Since 1974, CCWHP has surveyed candidates for AHA positions and published their responses. The questionnaire reflects the needs and concerns of the women historians. In the mid-seventies, only a handful of candidates answered the CCWHP questionnaire, but in the eighties nearly all of them did. The importance of CCWHP-CGWH as a professional organization is apparent from the response of Professor William E. Leuchtenburg, successful candidate for president-elect of the AHA in 1989. He wrote: "I have made a point of reading the CCWHP Newsletter to educate myself on the highest priorities, and I plan to continue to do so." During the decade of the eighties, CCWHP members have been elected to different AHA positions, most notably Natalie Davis, who was elected president of the AHA in 1986.

#### **CCWHP and AHA's Committee on Women Historians (CWH) and OAH Committee on the Status of Women in the Historical Profession (CSW)**

The CWH and the CSW were created in their respective national organizations in the early seventies at the insistence of CCWHP to address issues related to improvement of status of women both within these organizations and in the profession in general. Each year during the eighties the CCWHP news-



letter published the entire report of the CWH and the CSW. The CCWHP often worked in close harmony with these committees, although at times some differences of opinion between CCWHP and the two committees surfaced. Many members of the two committees are also CCWHP members, which has helped CCWHP to maintain good working relations with them. Current CGWH President Claire Moses wrote: "CCWHP's 'outsider' status is very important and must be safeguarded. When everything feels calm, the differences are not great. It's when there are tensions that our capacity to lobby the organizations or distance ourselves from them (remember AHA & ERA) that our position most matters."<sup>22</sup> Reflecting on the different functions and constituencies of the groups, Karen Offen suggested: "The CCWHP can now watchdog the AHA-CWH and OAH-CWH--and intervene when necessary."<sup>23</sup>

Beside CWH, CCWHP has been able to address its concerns to the AHA through the office of the assistant director on women and minorities at the AHA. At present this position is held by Noralee Frankel, who was a CCWHP graduate student representative in the seventies.

### **CCWHP-CGWH and AHA Panels**

Having found that topics related to women's history (especially Third World women's history) or to current political issues were not adequately addressed by the CWH or the program committee of the AHA, CCWHP-CGWH set up panels to fill an intellectual gap as perceived by many women in the profession.

CCWHP and CGWH in alternate years began to co-sponsor a session at the AHA annual conference meeting. The topics, indicated below, reflect a range of intellectual and political concern:

- 1981 "The Impact of Women's History"
- 1982 "Women's Domestic Production and Household Labor: A Workshop with Core Papers"
- 1983 "Narrowing the Gaps: Women Historians and Strategic Necessities"
- 1984 "The Politics of the ERA in the Post-World War II Period"

- 1985 "Studies in Biography and Personal Narrative: Third World Women"
- 1986 "Sex and Gender in Europeans' Interaction with Africans"
- 1987 "Sex, Gender, and the Constitution: The ERA--Elite Proposition vs. Popular Disposition"
- 1988 "Incorporating Women into World History and the Histories of Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America"
- 1989 "Women's History in the Policy Arena: The Reconsideration of Roe v. Wade"

### **CCWHP in the Legislative and Judicial Arenas**

During the second decade, the CCWHP-CGWH, in concert with the regional associations, became involved in legislative issues that concerned women historians. Since 1980 CCWHP worked assiduously for the adoption by the U.S. Congress of the month of March as Women's History Month. In 1987 by Public Law 101-6, Congress declared March as Women's History Month.

Other actions fell into three general categories: 1) defense of institutions or funding for institutions of importance to women historians and testimony against nominations of individuals thought not to be in our best interest; 2) agitation regarding civil rights legislation and the Civil Rights Commission; and 3) involvement as historians in law suits involving evidence drawn from women's history.

CCWHP carried out much of its legislative advocacy work through the National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History (NCC). CCWHP is a charter sponsor of the NCC. In 1982, CCWHP more than doubled its support and now contributes \$500 per year to NCC. To ensure that NCC gets proper support from the AHA, CCWHP continues to ask AHA candidates: "If elected, how would you support the advocacy work of the National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History?"

In the 1980s the announced intention of the Reagan administration to carry out budget cuts at the expense of federally-funded cultural and educational programs of virtually every kind seriously threatened women historians. These programs



not only embodied a kind of intellectual and social integrity that had been absent from much conventional history, they also generated jobs for both women and men.

The proposed federal budget of 1981 contained a 50 percent reduction of funds for the National Endowment for the Humanities and a 25 percent reduction of funds for the National Institute of Education. Total funding for the International Communication Agency which incorporates the Fulbright program and IREX was to be reduced by 17 percent. The program officer of the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE), the agency responsible for funding such programs as the OAH project to integrate women's history into history survey courses, was fired. The NEH received adverse publicity for supporting virtually all of the endeavors that members of CCWHP considered innovative, such as projects in oral history, ethnic history, and the history of women. Perhaps most appalling of all, the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), which has funded or partially funded virtually all of the documentary editing projects related to American history, was targeted for total annihilation as a funding agency. At that time nearly one-tenth of CCWHP members was engaged in documentary editing.<sup>24</sup> Threatened by the prospect of the new administration's eradication of educational and cultural programs that are so vitally important for women historians and the history profession, CCWHP made known in 1981 and 1982 to congressional representatives and to members of appropriate subcommittees its strong opposition to the proposed budget cuts and administrative changes. CCWHP alerted its members of the new threats about to be unveiled by the White House and urged members to write directly to their congressional representatives stressing the values of the programs about to be cut. Providing the names of members of the appropriate subcommittees, CCWHP also urged its members to write directly to these committees asking them to hold hearings on the NHPRC. CCWHP became a member of the Coalition to Save Our Documentary Heritage.

In 1983, CCWHP urged its members to support House Bill HR 3987, which separated the National Archives and Records Service from the General Service Administration, thus thwarting the Reagan administration's initiative to subsume NARS under the GSA.<sup>25</sup>



Since institutions can be crippled or transformed by their leadership, the CCWHP-CGWH paid close attention to Presidential nominees. Reagan appointed seven council members to the NEH during the brief congressional recess in July 1984, thus circumventing the Senate's confirmation process and preventing that body from fulfilling its constitutional responsibility to advise and consent. At the Sixth Berkshire Conference on the History of Women (1984), the CCWHP Steering Committee met and decided to send telegrams to the members of the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee urging them to conduct a hearing to ascertain the appropriateness of the credentials of the nominees.

In order to keep current with these kinds of developments, President Keller created CCWHP's Civil Rights Zap Action Committee (CRZAC) in 1986 and appointed Mollie Davis as the Chair, assisted by Bob Zangrando, Elizabeth Balanoff, and June Patton. In 1986 CRZAC organized members to urge the Senate Judiciary Committee to turn down the nominations of Jefferson B. Sessions to the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Alabama and of Daniel Manion to the 7th District Court of Appeals. CCWHP won on the consideration of the first nominee, but the second was reported out without recommendations. CZRAC also worked on the Senate Government Affairs Committee and also urged the members of CCWHP-CGWH to write to the committee to prevent the approval of John Agresto as National Archivist, successfully supporting Don Wilson instead. Members' 1987 letter-writing campaign to prevent Robert Bork's appointment to the Supreme Court also succeeded.

In addition to these actions, the CCWHP-CGWH closely monitored activities of the Executive and Legislative branches with regard to civil rights. In May 1983, President Reagan sent the Senate three new nominees to replace three members who were then serving on the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (CRC). Because of philosophical differences with members appointed by previous administrations and to curtail criticisms of his administration's policies, the President was attempting to place CRC under Executive Branch control and render it ineffective, particularly regarding affirmative action policies including hiring "quotas" and admissions in higher education.

The issue was the independence and effectiveness of the CRC and not the particular credentials of the nominees, although these too could be questioned from the CCWHP's point of view. Throughout 1983, CCWHP made efforts to ensure that the CRC remained independent. Upholding the view that an independent CRC, not catering to the particular political philosophy that gave only limited opportunities to minorities and women, is important to all women, CCWHP sent letters and telegrams to senators and representatives. Members were also urged to write to their congressional representatives. During this time, CCWHP established a "telephone tree" to facilitate the organization's efforts to keep CRC independent. In November 1983 a compromise was reached with the Congressional creation of a new and enlarged CRC, which comprised six new commissioners who echoed the administration's ideological viewpoints and only two members of the once independent CRC who clearly advocated CRC's "watchdog" position over the federal enforcement of laws. On January 18, 1984, the new CRC in a 6-2 vote opposed affirmative action. CCWHP then asked its members to contact their senators and representatives, urging the abolition of the new CRC.

In 1984, another threat to civil rights came from the Supreme Court. Its Grove City College decision seriously undermined all Title IX protection. Again, CCWHP wrote letters to members of the Congress urging them to introduce legislation which would strengthen Title IX by broadening its coverage. At its 1984 business meeting in Chicago, the CCWHP circulated a petition urging the Congress to pass clarifying legislation to restore Title IX of the Education Act Amendment of 1972 and other civil rights statutes to their scope and coverage prior to the restrictive Grove City College v. Bell decision. CCWHP collected over 225 signatures and, with cover letters, sent the petition to the House and Senate leadership, the Chairpersons of the Senate and House Judiciary Committees, chairpersons of the appropriate subcommittees and members serving them, and to the Executive Director of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights.<sup>26</sup>

As civil rights issues continued to demand responses, women historians began to discuss the appropriate role of historians and of feminists as expert witnesses in legal suits. Affecting

the pay and job opportunities of countless female employees, the Sears sex discrimination case was important to many members of CCWHP during 1985, as two women historians testified on opposite sides (Alice Kessler-Harris, CCWHP member, for the prosecution and Rosalind Rosenberg for Sears' defense) regarding the historical background of women's labor force participation, the sexual division of labor, and sex discrimination.<sup>27</sup> The impact of the sex discrimination case on women historians was best described by President Phyllis Stock when she wrote, "One important lesson to be learned from this experience, received by women historians more in anger than in sorrow, is that we must be aware of the implications of our work for real women in the real world."<sup>28</sup> At the 1985 business meeting, members discussed the CCWHP-CGWH's position in regard to the pending Sears case and the questions of service as an "expert witness" and the use of feminist scholarship in testimony. They passed the resolutions found in Appendix A, which addressed the question of the use of feminist scholarship and the responsibility of scholars of women's history.

Subsequently, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* both carried articles and editorials censoring CCWHP for prejudicial action against Rosalind Rosenberg's presentation. Both papers misquoted and incompletely quoted the resolutions, and both failed to describe CCWHP's meeting accurately. Several members and officers of CCWHP wrote letters to both papers noting these actions. Both refused to print any of these letters. However, CCWHP President Keller published an essay discussing our actions and reasons for taking a position on the Sears case in the AHA's Spring 1987 issue of *Perspectives*.

The question of historians' intervention in the legal process continues. At the 1988 business meeting the CCWHP-CGWH Board agreed unanimously to sign a friend-of-the-court (amicus) brief in support of a pro-choice position in the upcoming Supreme Court case *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services*.<sup>29</sup> The brief, signed by 425 historians, was subsequently published in the CGWH newsletter.<sup>30</sup> The 1989 CGWH panel on the topic of "Women's History in the Policy Arena: The Reconsideration of *Roe v. Wade*" enlarged the discussion further.



### **CGWH and International Federation for Research in Women's History (IFRWH)**

Under the Presidency of Phyllis Stock, CGWH joined the IFRWH, an international commission for the International Congress for the Historical Sciences (ICHS). The IFRWH will be permitted to present four sessions during eight to nine days of the ICHS conference in Madrid in late August 1990. CGWH President Claire Moses and an international advisory committee solicited paper proposals from U.S. scholars for this upcoming conference.<sup>31</sup>

### **Memorials**

With our growing maturity as an organization has come the inevitable, though at times premature, loss of key members through death. CCWHP and the regional groups have honored these individuals with memorial funds.

The year 1982 was a period of great sorrow for CCWHP members and the community of women historians. We lost Adade Mitchell Wheeler, a long time CCWHP member and executive secretary of CCWHP-CGWH from 1979-1981, on June 11, 1982. CCWHP contributed \$50 to the Adade Wheeler Memorial Fund established by the Chicago Area Women's History Conference.

On August 15, 1982, we lost Joan Kelly, a founding member of CCWHP and inspiring teacher and scholar. In honor of Kelly, CCWHP-CGWH at its 1982 business meeting approved the establishment of an endowed fund for an award to "an outstanding work in any chronological period, any geographical location, or in an area of feminist theory that incorporates an historical perspective." CCWHP-CGWH officers and the steering committee asked Sandi Cooper to appoint and head a committee to pursue the work necessary for its establishment. On May 21, 1983, the council of the AHA voted to approve the Joan Kelly Prize in Women's History and Theory, with CCWHP-CGWH as its official sponsor. A contribution of \$5,000 was received from the Funding Exchange (in New York City) and from Professor Martin Fleischer, Brooklyn College, CUNY. The CCWHP-CGWH also had to match this sum of \$5,000 through contributions from its members and other sources. CCWHP contributed \$300 from its treasury to the

Joan Kelly Prize Fund and succeeded in raising enough money to award the first prize in 1984. However, at the 1985 business meeting, Gerhard Weinberg pointed out that the drop in the interest rate rendered the Joan Kelly endowed fund incapable of accruing the award money of \$1,000 per year. To rectify the problem, President Keller appointed a fundraising committee with Penny Kanner as chair and Renate Bridenthal, Blanche Cook, and Gerhard Weinberg as members.<sup>32</sup> Abby Kleinbaum also played a major role. By the end of 1987, \$8,996 was added to the principal endowment.

Since 1984 the following awards have been made in Joan Kelly's name: Rosalind Petchesky, *Abortion and Woman's Choice: The State, Sexuality, and Reproductive Freedom* (1984); Claire G. Moses, *French Feminism in the Nineteenth Century* (1985); Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy* (1986); Ruth Milkman, *Gender at Work: The Dynamics of Job Segregation by Sex during World War II* (1987); and Linda Gordon, *Heroes of Their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence* (1988).

### Finances

Publishing newsletters and lobbying for legislative issues and our other activities require funds. The organization operates on a very limited budget, most of which comes from membership dues. In the early 1980s, treasurer Anita Rapone did a wonderful job of stretching the dollars as far as possible. Significant gains were made thanks to Nupur Chaudhuri's careful attention to costs and possible revenue sources. However, the struggle still continues. Although the organization receives some secretarial help from the Women's Studies Program of Kansas State University, CCWHP-CGWH, an international organization in its character, remains basically a kitchen table organization in its operational mode. It depends on volunteer work.

During the past decade the office of secretary was filled by Adade Wheeler (1980-1981) and Nupur Chaudhuri (1982-1988); the office of treasurer, by Anita Rapone (1980-1982) and Chaudhuri (1983-1988). These two positions were formally combined into one and retitled "executive director" when Lynn Weiner succeeded Chaudhuri in December 1988. Offi-

cers give their time, energy, and often money to sustain this organization, because they believe that CCWHP--CGWH makes a difference for the historical profession and for women.

### Conclusion

In the second decade, the organizational character of CCWHP-CGWH has gone through a major change. Without having lost our sense of mission, we are both financially and structurally more stable. In 1989, CCWHP-CGWH became incorporated and received its tax exempt status. We will still be free to lobby for legislation that would affect the community of women historians.

In the first decade, CCWHP spent much of its time lobbying for the advancement of the status of women historians in the profession and the status of women's history. During the second decade, new hostile forces outside the profession threatened to wipe out whatever little the community of women historians achieved. CCWHP-CGWH spent much of its time and energy defending these gains. At the same time, CGWH contributed to the strengthening of the field of women's history. The actions of CCWHP during the second decade were well described by Mollie Davis in the December 1986 CCWHP *Newsletter* as the conscience of the historical profession's stance on women's issues.

### Notes

This article was written with the help of past and present officers of CCWHP-CGWH.

1. Hilda Smith, *The Second Decade*, p. 4.
2. Catherine M. Prelinger, "Letter from the President," *CCWHP Newsletter* (April 1980), pp. 3-4.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *CCWHP-CGWH Newsletter* (Fall 1980), p. 5.
5. See list prepared by Prelinger.
6. Lois Banner, "Report on CCWHP Steering Committee Meeting," *CGWH Newsletter* (August 1981).
7. *CGWH Newsletter* (August 1981).



8. See Bridenthal's answer to CCWHP questionnaire, Spring 1989. In preparation for the twentieth anniversary, a questionnaire was sent to past officers and to those members who had been particularly active.
9. "Message from New President of CCWHP [Delivered at CCWHP business meeting of the AHA]," *CCWHP Newsletter* (February 1983).
10. Margaret A. Bonney [Chair, Women's Breakfast, AASLH], "Report on the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) breakfast meeting," *CCWHP Newsletter* (November/December 1988).
11. See Kohlstedt's response to CCWHP questionnaire, Spring 1989.
12. "Message from New CGWH President," *CGWH Newsletter* (December 1981).
13. CGWH newsletters of 1983 list Dahlin as the editor, while the 1984 CGWH newsletters list Joyce Baker as the editor.
14. "Message from New President of CCWHP [delivered at CCWHP business meeting at the AHA]," *CCWHP Newsletter* (February 1983).
15. "Analysis of CCWHP/CGWH Membership," compiled by Anita Rapone, *CGWH Newsletter* (February 1981).
16. Data compiled by Nupur Chaudhuri and Lynn Weiner.
17. Compiled by Nupur Chaudhuri. Since the present dues structure is based on a sliding income scale, it is not possible to determine the percentage of graduate students, faculty members, and independent scholars.
18. Frances Richardson Keller, "From the President," *CCWHP Newsletter* (February 1988).
19. Copy of this letter published in *CGWH Newsletter* (July 1980), pp. 26-27.
20. See January 14, 1988, letter of Colin A. Palmer, member of the AHA nominating committee, to Nupur Chaudhuri.
21. Peg Strobel, "From the CCWHP President," *CCWHP Newsletter* (September 1989), pp. 4-5.
22. See Claire Moses's response to CCWHP questionnaire, Spring 1989.
23. See Karen Offen's response to CCWHP questionnaire, Spring 1989.

24. Catherine M. Prelinger, "Letter from the President," *CCWHP Newsletter* (April 1981).
25. Minutes of CCWHP business meeting held on December 29, 1983, at the AHA, *CCWHP Newsletter* (February 1984).
26. "Greetings from Mollie Davis, CCWHP President," *CCWHP Newsletter* (March/April 1985).
27. Selections from this testimony, along with commentary, are found in "Women's History Goes to Trial: EEOC v. Sears, Roebuck and Company," *Signs*, 11, no. 4 (Summer 1986), 751-79.
28. Phyllis Stock, "From the Editor," *CGWH Newsletter* (October 1985).
29. "Report from CCWHP President Peg Strobel," *CCWHP Newsletter* (January 1989).
30. 281 signed the published brief; 146 names were added later (of which two were errors), resulting in a total of 425. Published in *CCWHP Newsletter* (May-June 1989 [mistakenly identified on the cover as May-June 1988]).
31. *CCWHP Newsletter* (February 1988), p.6.
32. *CCWHP Newsletter* (May 1986).

# How Women and Their Organizations Changed the Profession of History

Gerda Lerner

On this twentieth anniversary of the founding of the Coordinating Committee on Women in the Historical Profession I would like to briefly survey the way in which women historians' challenges to the traditional mode of operation of our profession have affected the way the profession works, defines itself, and patterns careers. I would like to discuss the subject from the point of view of women's history scholarship and of those struggling for equal status for women in the profession.

The problem women historians faced in regard to the profession in 1969, when we first began to organize, was quite different structurally than that facing radical historians, who challenged the profession at the same time we did. While radical historians may have represented a numerically smaller group than women in the profession, they were mostly male and therefore had equal access with their more conservative cohorts to graduate training and professional networks. Women, like members of minority groups, were severely restricted in access to training, in financial support, in professional networking and within the professional organizations. The most prestigious institutions had unofficial quotas on admitting women, which had been broken only during World War II, when the absence of male students threatened graduate departments' survival. Whether formally or informally institutionalized, discrimination against women historians was obvious in the end results--the marginal position they held in professional employment. While in 1969 women represented



10.4 percent of the Ph.D. degrees awarded, they were so marginally represented in professional activities and conventions as to be virtually excluded. While radical history itself had a recognized history and an international dimension, women's history as a field and a content was unrecognized and even the handful of its practitioners were unaware of its history and of its existence in other parts of the world.

On the other hand, radical history was a chosen viewpoint, based on philosophical, social, and political commitments, whose practitioners saw themselves as a minority of outsiders challenging the majority insiders.' It was different for women historians in the early years: we were always aware of the strength of our numbers. We represented half of the population, nearly half and later, more than half, of the student population. Thus, our sense of entitlement to equality and to insider status was strong and translated readily into a different politics than that of radical historians. Yet, in the advocacy of women's history we faced more severe obstacles and were not even considered legitimate outsiders--we had yet to prove that work in our field had any significance. Besides, women historians were split among themselves along the lines of advocacy of women's history; only a small number among us believed in it and in its potential. Those who identified themselves as "feminist historians" were as yet an even smaller minority among us at the time we began our political struggles within the profession.

Responses to a questionnaire sent in 1970 to members of the Coordinating Committee on Women in the Historical Profession (CCWHP) and answered by 72 of its members showed that 38 percent had joined the organization because they were interested in improving the status of women in the profession; 12 percent because of their interest in women's history and 36 percent because of their interest in both issues. When asked what they wanted to be the focus of the organization's work, 45 percent voted for the professional status of women and only 25 percent for courses on women's history.<sup>1</sup>

CCWHP was organized at the 1969 AHA convention in Washington, D.C., in response to a call issued by Berenice Carroll to several historians. Although only 17 people attended the first meeting, a public meeting held later during the con-

vention drew a large crowd and generated a list of over 100 people who wished to participate in the work of the CCWHP. An indication of the politics of the group was the sharp debate over what to call the organization--the more radical members wanted it to be called "Women's Caucus," while the moderates, among whom I was then counted, wanted to avoid the term because of its radical connotations. I'm afraid I have to admit to the fact that I was an advocate of the somewhat klutzy name that resulted and with which we have ever since been saddled. In fact, we were a women's caucus and acted as such. The stated purposes of the new group were: 1) "to encourage recruitment of women into the historical profession and advance the status of women at all levels; 2) to oppose discrimination against women in the profession and 3) to encourage and develop research and instruction in the field of women's history."<sup>2</sup> The new group elected co-chairs, Berenice Carroll and Gerda Lerner, a treasurer, Hilda Smith, and a steering committee of five members. From the start we attempted to establish cordial relations with the single then-existing group of women historians, the Berkshire Conference group. This small group had formed in the 1920s, largely in order to help female historians overcome the sense of marginality and isolation they experienced at professional conventions. The group met once a year in the Berkshires for a weekend to discuss papers and again at the annual convention, and served as a support group for its members. I functioned as a liaison with the group during our meeting and the next year and tried to convince its leadership that the formation of CCWHP was in the common interest and that we should closely collaborate. As it later turned out, the activities of CCWHP and the spectacular growth of the women's history movement infused new life into the group; after the notable Berkshire Conference on Women's History held in 1974, the successive "Berks" became major social and professional events, attracting over 2000 participants and rivaling the AHA for conference attendance.

The 1969 AHA convention also saw the emergence of the radical history caucus, which offered several controversial resolutions to the business meeting. The resolutions were concerned with discrimination against historians holding unpopu-



lar opinions; with enlarging the composition of the AHA council to fifty members which would include non-tenured professional historians, graduate and undergraduate students, teachers of history, and members of the public at large. Another resolution asked for the setting up of a special fund, which was to receive "not less than one third of all Association income" to train nonprofessional historians, and to support minority, women, and radical historians. The anti-Vietnam resolution was a strongly worded condemnation of "the American Empire" and demanded "the immediate withdrawal of all American troops from Vietnam, the immediate end of all harassment of the Black Panther Party and the release of all political prisoners such as the Chicago 8." Prior to the meeting, the organizers of the radical caucus had already disagreed among themselves over who was to be invited into its membership. The ensuing factionalism was evident in the floor fight at the convention when Eugene Genovese urged fellow historians to vote against the proposed presidential candidacy of Staughton Lynd. All radical caucus resolutions were decisively defeated, as was Lynd's candidacy by a vote of 822 to 493. A moderate substitute resolution against the Vietnam war was defeated by only 36 votes, with many radicals abstaining.<sup>3</sup>

Berenice Carroll and I and other women organizing CCWHP had been invited to participate in the radical caucus. I declined, despite my strong sympathy with the anti-Vietnam position of the caucus and with some of its other programmatic goals, because of my disagreement with the methods of organization and the factionalism. I stated in a personal letter: "Even if all those demands were won, they would change nothing in the writing and teaching of history or the functioning of the profession." In an earlier letter to a different correspondent, Berenice Carroll had commented "one has to choose between guerrilla theater and serious organizing." She went on to explain that while guerrilla theater might have some advantages in dramatizing the situation, she had concluded "that serious organizing would in the present situation make more sense."<sup>4</sup>

CCWHP from the beginning and throughout its existence tried to engage in serious and pragmatic organizing and to avoid factionalism. Many women in CCWHP were active



members of the radical caucus, others were strongly committed to radical feminism, and still others were more traditionalist in their politics. We certainly had our disagreements, which have heightened as the field of women's history has become more respectable. Whenever any disagreements among us were publicly expressed, as in the Sears case, those who all along disparaged our efforts used these to prophesy the downfall of our enterprise. But I think, seen in historical perspective and compared to other radical movements, ours has been characterized by the avoidance of factionalism and an acceptance of differences that still allow for alliances. We have benefitted by the support of male radical historians and they by ours on specific issues in which we shared a common interest, such as the broadening of the base of our professional organizations, opposition to the Vietnam war, the advancement of the status and opportunities of minority scholars, and support for the Equal Rights Amendment.

The approach of women historians has been to work from within and with the professional organizations and to use a broad spectrum of forces to promote change. At the October 1969 council meeting, the AHA received a petition by 22 historians, some of whom would subsequently be among the vanguard of CCWHP, urging that the AHA undertake a formal investigation of the status of women historians. After the December membership meeting the council named Professor Willie Lee Rose of the University of Virginia as chair of an ad hoc Committee on Women Historians. It took another year before this committee became a standing committee of the organization. The report, issued in December 1970, provided the factual basis for setting the agenda for a massive effort to cope with the status of women historians. Soon after, the OAH established its first Committee on the Status of Women in the Historical Profession. The two committees were unusual in that they had a lively constituency that prodded them along and supported their recommendations. Each of the AHA committee's future demands--such as the appointment of a paid executive secretary to deal with women's problems in the professions and the publication of a roster of women historians--was at first resisted by the administration and the council, and it took repeated efforts and membership pressure to get them

passed. Still, persistence paid off and women historians, introducing innumerable resolutions at AHA and OAH conventions, returning after they were beaten and presenting them again, succeeded in initiating a series of dramatic institutional changes within the professional organizations. Some of the most important of these were initiated quite informally by women historians and their allies and were later formally introduced as resolutions at the OAH and AHA conferences. They concerned the conditions under which historians obtained their jobs.

It may be hard for graduate students today to imagine the closed and mystified system of access to employment that prevailed only twenty years ago. Our shattering of this system was one of the best and most useful things we did for everyone in the profession, not just for women and minorities. In 1969 many jobs were not advertised and access to jobs was made mostly through the old boys' network. A mentor would tell his favorite students of an available job and introduce him personally to the search committee chair. Less favored students or those whose professors were not well established in the network simply lost out. This process also tended to reinforce discrimination against women and minorities. The ways for graduate students to become professionally known, by participating in conference sessions, offering papers or commentary, and getting articles published were deep mysteries that students found accessible only through their mentors. CCWHP members and the OAH and AHA committees on the status of women demanded the setting up of an employment roster and the open advertising of jobs. We set out systematically to demystify the process of becoming a professional. A few of us found out how the professional organizations worked, how program committees formed their programs, how one got to suggest a panel proposal, how one got appointed to a committee, and whatever we found we immediately shared with everyone. We organized graduate students' workshops, issued survival manuals, wrote how-to instruction sheets, organized and proposed our own panels, and fought to get them accepted. We supported all efforts to make the hiring process open, equitable, and accessible to all and, with some support from government affirmative action rules, we succeeded. We also lobbied



for the appointment of women to the advisory boards of the two journals and as members of program committees. We met resistance each step of the way, but we prevailed.

Those of us involved in the early years of the women's movement and of the women's studies movement also tried hard to redefine our roles as professionals. We tried to avoid the harsh competitiveness of traditional academic life and to practice a more feminist style of teaching. For most of us this meant, "Wherever you go, take another woman with you." Since many of us were put in the position of being the first woman or the first feminist woman or the first woman's history specialist in a department, we had to fight a lot of individual battles to create space and opportunities for other women. The issue of how to function in a feminist way as a professional historian is by no means settled, and we keep working at it and talking about it. But it did affect the way in which we organized and socialized within the profession and the way in which we tried to create a broad range of support groups among ourselves and for our students. This has been reflected in the considerable growth of women's history groups across the country. Since the formation of CCWHP there are now seventeen such regional or local groups affiliated with the organization, meeting regularly and performing a variety of services for their members.

How far have women historians come in the past twenty years and what has been our impact on the profession? I would like to discuss this by separating women's status in the profession and the development of women's history.

The employment situation of women historians was surveyed over a 22 year span in 1986 by Patricia Albjerg Graham, the chair of the Committee on Women Historians (CWH), in a report to AHA. In 1950-1959 women had represented 10.4 percent of the Ph.D.'s in history, while in 1980-1984 they represented 32.6 percent.

While the overall employment percentages of women have increased, women historians are still clustered in the lower ranks. The 1982 Report of the CWH of the AHA summarized the employment situation of women historians in 1981: Women constituted only 7 percent of full professors, 13 percent of associate professors and 24 percent of assistant professors,



which means that at the entry level something approaching parity in hiring had been achieved. But women, once hired, faced a segmented labor market and clustered in the lower ranks and among the nontenured positions. Women held 12 percent of all full time positions, 10 percent of all tenured positions and only 6 percent of them were counted among those receiving the highest salaries. On the other hand women constituted 38 percent of those in non-tenured positions which were not renewed. "Women historians," the report stated, "may be entering the academy in greater numbers, but mainly by the revolving door."<sup>6</sup>

In a 1982 survey conducted by the AHA approximately 600 departments responded by filling out a questionnaire. From the data it provided on promotions and salaries, it became clear that women lag behind their male colleagues in rank and salary. The progress made in women's employment in the past twenty years has not altered the pervasive pattern of women in every cohort (by date of receipt of Ph.D.) failing to keep pace with men at the professor rank, at tenure, and in the higher income brackets. In 1980 the salary differential between men and women was \$3,000 more for men than women in the professorial rank. The salary differential was \$1500 among associate professors and still smaller at lower ranks. The structural inequity that characterizes women's position in the entire field of education has not been affected in the past twenty years by women's organizing, by goodwill conversions of liberal men, by affirmative action, or by any other means. Then, as now, the lower the rank, the lower the pay, the less the security, the more women one finds.

The greatest and most positive changes have occurred in the two major professional organizations. In 1969 there were no women officers in both organizations. The presidency of both OAH and AHA had been filled by males throughout the entire period of its existence, with the exception in each case of one woman president in the period between 1930 and 1945. By 1982 women constituted 34 percent of the elected officers of the AHA, 36 percent of the members of standing committees. My election to the presidency of OAH in 1982 was followed by that of Anne Firor Scott in 1984 and that of Natalie Zemon Davis to the presidency of AHA in 1987. Since then women

have been fairly represented in the elections of both organizations. Whereas women at the 1969 AHA convention had represented 4 percent of all program participants, they numbered 25 percent in 1982. In both organizations the conference participation of women has vastly increased and with it their access to professional exposure and scholarly exchange. The figures in regard to panels and sessions on women's history are not quite so encouraging. Thus, the impressive gain in AHA from 3 sessions (out of 100) in 1970 to 10 (out of 108) in 1988 cannot be regarded as a trend, since the numbers fluctuated considerably in the intervening years and are down from the high point of 14 (out of 99) in 1975.<sup>9</sup>

While the number of women reviewers and articles written by women in both the *Journal of American History* and the *American Historical Review* have greatly increased in the past twenty years, progress has been slower than it should have been. For example, in 1981 a mere 8 percent of the reviewers in the *Journal* were women. It should be stated for the record that the gains in equal access and in representation for women's history did not come without considerable organizational effort on the part of women historians.

In the space allotted me I cannot do justice to the development and growth of women's history in the past twenty years. All I can do is to highlight the major developments. In 1970 in response to a CCWHP survey, 22 people across the country reported that they taught at least one women's history course.<sup>10</sup> In 1972, when Sarah Lawrence College offered an M.A. Program in Women's History, no other such programs existed anywhere. By contrast, when Kathryn Sklar and I organized an NEH-sponsored conference on Graduate Training in Women's History in 1988, we learned that 60 institutions of higher education now offer M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in women's history.<sup>11</sup> The number of courses in the subject annually offered runs into the hundreds. A questionnaire circulated to 67 participants in the conference elicited the information that 35 of them had directed or were completing the direction of 351 dissertations in women's history. The major historical journals now regularly feature articles in women's history in their pages, while two new U.S. journals entirely devoted to this field are appearing this year.<sup>12</sup>

In the first ten years of our organized effort women historians decisively affected the accessibility of primary sources. This was accomplished by our organizing and getting grant support for the state-by-state survey of women's history sources in U.S. archives and libraries, published as *Women's History Sources*. This not only resulted in an invaluable research guide, but promoted the reorganization of headings and the reconceptualization of cataloging, which would make it possible to "find" women and not subsume them under their male family member's name. An equally far-reaching movement of bibliographic reconceptualization and reorganization began with the publication of the major biographical source for women, *Notable American Women*.<sup>13</sup> Hundreds of women historians amassed, collected, and created subject bibliographies and shared them with others. Publishers, at first resisting the field and refusing to publish source materials in it, now flood the market with monographs, source materials, and primary source reprints.

It will take a much more detailed account to do justice to the monumental collective effort by which women's history not only became established in academe, but has become part of the education system at all levels. The fact that women's history questions now appear on college entrance tests in many states is the result of organizational effort by women and pressure by educators. Textbooks at all levels have begun to reflect the growth and impact of this intellectual transformation, which is at last bringing the history of the majority into the mainstream.

Finally, a word should be said about one of the biggest mass movements concerned with the spread of history--the national celebration of Women's History Month. It began with modest local celebrations of March 8 as Women's History Day, then became nationalized in 1980 as the result of the organizing effort of a group of leaders of women's organizations, who had attended a seminar on women's history at Sarah Lawrence College and took this as their "group project."<sup>14</sup> To establish Women's History Week on a national basis required the annual passing of resolutions in both houses of Congress, co-sponsored by hundreds of members of Congress. The enthusiastic national response to this movement has spread women's



history into tens of thousands of communities and led to what are now annual Women's History Month celebrations on a grassroots level. At a time when conservatives bemoan the popular decline in interest in history this unprecedented mass support for an educational effort by historians should be noted by our profession. It represents the celebration and practice of history on a grassroots level on an unprecedented scale. Is it impatient, after twenty years of hard work by feminist historians and teachers, to ask why the profession fails to celebrate this particular achievement? The dynamic and energy of the movements on the grass roots level for the history of minority groups, as well as for women's history, need to be recognized by academic historians and seen as a hopeful sign of the vital interest in history that exists in every community.

To do full justice to the complexity and richness of the subject one would need to write another article longer than this one on women's history scholarship and its implications for changing the paradigm of traditional history. While we have made a great beginning, it is in this arena we have met the greatest resistance. What it amounts to is that the profession can stand reforms and it can stand opening up and losing some of its exclusiveness, but when it comes to challenges to the basic paradigm and to the traditional values by which history is organized, the defenses go up. The current debate about "the crisis in history" is merely a symptom of this backlash reaction. When we first began to assert the existence of women's history, we were everywhere met with the objection that this was merely a passing fad. The passing fad is here to stay and our profession is much the better for it.

#### Notes

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I am grateful to Professors Linda Kerber, Patricia Albjerg Graham and Berenice Carroll for their shared memories and their helpful criticism of this article.

1. CCWHP *Newsletter* (Summer 1970), p. 6.
2. *Ibid.* (Spring 1970), p. 2.
3. The references to the 1969 meeting are based upon convention resolutions and correspondence in my personal papers: Gerda Lerner Papers (Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Mass.).
4. Gerda Lerner to Christopher Lasch, December 6, 1969, *ibid.* Berenice Carroll to Arthur Waskow, December 5, 1969, *ibid.*
5. Excerpted from Patricia Albjerg Graham's presentation at the Women's Committee Breakfast Meeting, December 29, 1986, reprinted as Patricia Albjerg Graham, "Revisiting the Rose Report," *CCWHP Newsletter* (February 1987), pp. 7-10.
6. "CWH 1982 Annual Report," *AHA Perspectives*, 21 (March 1983), 3-4.
7. *Ibid.*, 3. Comparable figures for the Organization of American Historians are not available.
8. *Ibid.*
9. The figures are: 1975-14 (99); 1976-6 (111); 1977-4 (99); 1978-6 (161); 1979-4 (127); 1980-5 (125); 1981-10 (128); 1982-10 (111); 1983-12 (155); 1984-5 (127); 1985-18 (139); 1986-10 (123); 1987-16 (135); 1988-11 (108). Figures in parenthesis represent total number of sessions. These figures were compiled from AHA programs by my project assistant, Elizabeth Williams.
10. CCWHP *Newsletter* (Summer 1970).
11. Conference on Graduate Training in Women's History, sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Johnson Foundation, at Wingspread, Racine, Wis., October 21-23, 1988. Conference records will be on deposit at the Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College.
12. *The Journal of Women's History and Gender and History*.
13. Andrea Hinding, ed., *Women's History Sources: A Guide to Archives and Manuscript Collections in the United States* (2 vols., New York, 1979); Edward T. James, Janet Wilson James, and Paul S. Boyer, eds., *Notable American Women, 1607-1950: A Biographical Dictionary* (3 vols., Cambridge, Mass., 1971); Barbara Sicherman and Carol Hurd Green, eds.,

*Notable American Women, the Modern Period: A Biographical Dictionary* (Cambridge, Mass., 1980).

14. Summer Institute in Women's History for Leaders of Women's Organizations, sponsored by Women's Action Alliance, Smithsonian Institution, and Sarah Lawrence College, under a Lilly Foundation grant, held at Sarah Lawrence College, summer 1979.



The Twenty-fifth Anniversary of CCWHP:  
Reflections on Scholarship and Action,  
Diversity and Difference  
Berenice A. Carroll

As we approach the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Coordinating Committee on Women in the Historical Profession, I look back with awe, recalling all those among us who have brought the vitality of their anger and hope, indignation and optimism, knowledge and theory, criticism and support, to this group in its struggles to change history--to change the profession of history, to change historical scholarship, and to change the direction of our own history.

There is so much to be said that my mind has been filled with confusion for months over the choice of focus for these remarks. Fortunately, a great deal of what we need to remember has already been recorded and assessed by the authors of the preceding essays in this history, Hilda L. Smith, Nupur Chaudhuri, and Gerda Lerner, with the special authority and clarity of personal and scholarly knowledge joined. Looking back to our founding in 1969, then, I would like only to offer some reflections on that history, bearing on the relationships between "scholarship" and "action," and the current debates about "diversity" and "difference" in the academy.

I

Perhaps we should begin by noting that as we celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of our founding, we stand close also to the twenty-fifth anniversary of that landmark year, 1970, that saw the appearance of many generative works of contemporary feminism, among them, to name only some that were especially formative in my own consciousness: Cellestine Ware, *Woman Power: The Movement for Women's Liberation*

(New York: Tower Publications); Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday); Robin Morgan, *Sisterhood is Powerful: An Anthology of Writings from the Women's Liberation Movement* (New York: Vintage); Toni Cade, *The Black Woman* (New York: Signet); Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution* (New York, Bantam); and Leslie Tanner, *Voices from Women's Liberation* (New York: Signet).

I recall these works to remind us of the history of our relationship to the broader women's movement, and as historians, to recognize the significant intellectual contributions of the activist movement itself. While our founding meeting in 1969 immediately preceded the publication of these works, all were manifestations of the ideas and momentum of the multifaceted movement that grew rapidly throughout the 1960s, and many of the essays and manifestos published in the 1970 anthologies were already in circulation in women's groups and journals.<sup>1</sup> It is also worthy of note that two of the six books I have just mentioned were by African American women (Ware and Cade), and that both Cade and Tanner included in their anthologies versions of the essay by Pat Robinson "and group" entitled: "A Historical and Critical Essay for Black women in the Cities," a work whose theoretical importance is too seldom remembered today. In our efforts to acknowledge racism among white women in the history of feminism, we often speak of "the women's movement" as a "white women's movement"; but this phrase, a just criticism in some contexts, erases the leading roles Black women and other women of color have actually played in shaping the ideas of contemporary feminism.

I look back happily to that time--the turn of a decade, the end of the 1960s, the beginning of the 1970s. It was certainly glorious, not only for us but for a broad-ranging, loose coalition of scholars and activists seeking major changes in our society. On our tenth anniversary I remembered that time as one of "astounding and exhilarating successes"--crowded sessions, electric atmosphere, our resolutions adopted with ease (Carroll, *CGWH Newsletter*, 5, 3, July 1980: 3). In recollections for the twentieth anniversary, Christie Farnham [Pope] wrote: "I am sure that my experience was not unique in being both thrilled and excited--it really sent my adrenalin racing . . . to see such



articulate and self-possessed women historians as those who spoke at our meetings in the early seventies" (CCWHP *Newsletter*, 20, 6: 13). "Those years were energizing, exciting, and promising," wrote Sandi Cooper (*ibid.*: 8), describing a time filled with organizing, networking, pressuring AHA and OAH and the regional associations, working for change on our own campuses. Like so much of the history of women's political action in many arenas, the keynote was "joy in the struggle." Our indignation and anger drove us, our shared labor and laughter sustained us.

Some of the excitement derived, of course, from the widespread ferment of the 1960s--the student free speech movement, the Black civil rights movement, the peace movement, and the women's liberation movement in all its activist and theoretical diversity. Two thousand historians flocked to the business meeting of the American Historical Association that year of 1969, to deal with a host of resolutions about the profession and the war in Vietnam that seemed to threaten the "Gentlemen's protection society," as Jesse Lemisch called it, which had ruled the association until then, openly supporting practices of sexism, racism, classism, heterosexism, and anti-semitism.<sup>2</sup>

In the midst of this ferment, twenty-five years ago, CCWHP set out with an activist stance to win changes both in the profession of history and in the substance of historical scholarship. But while our stance was activist enough to appear alarming or even "unprofessional" to some historians, and our interest in women's history was greeted initially with widespread skepticism concerning its scholarly merit, our activism was consciously circumscribed in form. As Gerda Lerner notes in her 1989 memoir on our history, the "klutzy name" we chose reflected not only the dual nature of our commitment but also the doubts of some concerning the "radical connotations" of calling ourselves a "caucus," like the Radical Historians' Caucus or the Women's Caucus for Political Science.<sup>3</sup>

In an exchange of correspondence with Arthur Waskow prior to that extraordinary AHA convention in 1969, I had set down some of my thoughts on the courses of action open to us then. In those days, as Gerda has reminded us, I argued that "one has to choose between guerrilla theater and serious organizing," and opted for "serious organizing" (Lerner, *ibid.*,



46). Having done a good deal of what could be called "guerrilla theater" since then, and having studied and written on the history and impact of women's nonviolent direct action--of which "guerrilla theater" is certainly one prominent form--it seems strange today to find myself painting it then as opposed to "serious organizing."<sup>4</sup>

But as I look back at that letter, I see more continuity with my later views than might be suggested by this remark alone. For I also wrote then:

[I]f one wants to be "radical," it may be that guerrilla theater is the only course open *within* the associations and universities and other established institutions, because I don't believe that it is possible at present (ever?) to *radicalize* the institutions themselves.<sup>5</sup>

This acknowledges the appropriateness of "guerrilla theater" for *radical* action, as well as the probable imperviousness of established academic institutions to radical transformation. In 1969 CCWHP chose to work through "serious organizing" within the established historical institutions, not in the hope or expectation of transforming them radically, but with a vision of initiating changes that might eventually have more broad-ranging implications.

It is important to recall that from the outset we saw our "activism" for women in the profession as closely tied to scholarship in women's history. As we move away from our beginnings, there has been a tendency to think of CCWHP as primarily "activist" rather than "scholarly" in character, a conceptual dichotomy partially institutionalized by the establishment of the Conference Group on Women's History in 1975.<sup>6</sup> Though the two groups have repeatedly declined to separate entirely, the very existence of CGWH as a distinct entity is generally seen as both proof and consequence of the presumed fact that "scholarship" and "activism" are inherently different in character.

But it was CCWHP which initiated the current wave of academic work in women's history, not only by "demands" or "pressure," but by direct scholarly activities beginning in our first year, 1970. Those of us who came together to found the organization, including both historians who were already

engaged in research on women's history on an individual basis and historians whose research was primarily in other areas, recognized at once the central importance of the new teaching and scholarship on women. We were urged forward in part by the hunger for women's history expressed by the women's liberation movement slogan--"Our history has been stolen from us!"<sup>7</sup>--and in part by the persistence of the young radical women (then mainly graduate students) who were already exploring the intellectual challenges of that history.<sup>8</sup>

CCWHP immediately began the process of creating the institutional forums for exchange of information on research and teaching in women's history. It must be emphasized that none of these existed at that time.<sup>9</sup> We dealt with our own structure and tasks simultaneous with our engagement in scholarly issues. For several months after the founding meeting we operated as an informal steering committee, whose members were: Berenice Carroll, Betty Chmaj, Gerda Lerner, Edythe Lutzker, Constance Ashton Myers, Susan Resnick (undergraduate student) and Hilda Smith (graduate student). After consultations about the nature and scope of what we hoped to do, how it could be done and by whom, we established the temporary structure announced in March 1970 in our first newsletter: "Co-Chairmen," Berenice Carroll and Gerda Lerner; Secretary-Treasurer, Hilda Smith; Steering Committee members, Jo Tice Bloom, Linda K. Kerber, Edythe Lutzker, Constance Myers, and Sherrin Wyntjes. Gerda Lerner resigned that fall but continued to take an active interest, particularly in the formulation and presentation of CCWHP resolutions on the status of women at the December 1970 AHA business meeting.

Among our earliest actions (simultaneously "action" and "scholarship") was the creation of a bulletin of courses and of research in progress in women's history, issued as a supplement to the *CCWHP Newsletter*. The first issue of this bulletin was compiled, edited and issued by myself, with the help of Sally Kohlstedt (then a graduate student at the University of Illinois); later in 1970 Linda Kerber took responsibility for the CCWHP bulletins of courses and research. Our bulletins were the vehicle through which we began to shape the field of women's history, gaining a sense of the range of work already under way, the gaps and needs of the field, the excitement of a process of collective creation of new knowledge.



Another of our earliest actions was the development of sessions in women's history for the programs of the American Historical Association and the Organization of American Historians.<sup>10</sup> On January 28, 1970, I wrote to Raymond Grew, chair of the AHA Program Committee, to inform him that CCWHP "would probably not propose a session on the status of women in the profession," since the AHA's Committee was charged to do so, "but rather something in or about the field of women's history, historical writings on women (or their omission from historical writings)." On March 13, 1970, I sent Grew three CCWHP panel proposals on teaching and research in women's history, of which two appeared eventually on the 1970 AHA conference program, with some changes in character and participants. One of these, "Feminism--Past, Present, and Future," was organized by Gerda Lerner, who reported that she had found Grew very cooperative. The panel was chaired by Ann Firor Scott, with papers by Gerda Lerner, Jo Freeman, Alice Rossi, and William O'Neill.<sup>11</sup>

CCWHP also organized a preconference workshop on "Women's History: Possibilities for and Problems of Research and Teaching," held on December 27, 1970. This event became the focus of some intense debate about generational and political differences in approaching women's history, reported by Tasha Tenenbaum in the "Communications" supplement to the CCWHP *Newsletter* (2, 1, Spring 1971: 9-11). The debate included a heated exchange about the dismissal of Kate Millett from Barnard, and her characterization as "a polemicist, not a scholar." Initially we felt some chagrin that the structure and conduct of the session--more formal than expected by many participants--had created feelings of frustration and conflict, particularly among the younger women historians. But on further consideration I commented: "had the meeting been conducted differently, the disagreements in outlook between those present would not have come to the surface, [but it seemed doubtful that] that would have been to the benefit of women's history as a field of study" (*ibid.*, 12). Our open disagreements and debates were indeed a key element of the energy and vitality with which we plunged into the new scholarship.

In early September 1970, dissatisfied with the number and composition of the panels accepted for the AHA program, I



urged Raymond Grew to accept another panel entitled "Why Women's History?" On September 7, 1970, referring to an earlier telephone conversation in which Grew had expressed doubts about whether women's history was "intellectually interesting," I wrote:

[I]t is absolutely essential to open the question up for discussion *at this convention*. One of the reasons is . . . that proposals for introducing courses in women's history are coming up at many places, and I think it would be very bad for the underlying contempt--or even indulgent toleration--for the field to be ignored or swept under the rug and allowed to go unchallenged.<sup>12</sup>

Grew was not persuaded, but I organized and chaired the panel, "Why Women's History?" which was held on December 29, 1969, not on the regular AHA program but as a "CCWHP Colloquium." It featured presentations by I. Linda Gordon, Juliet Mitchell, Adele Simmons, and Hilda L. Smith, raising many issues pursued in women's history in later years.<sup>13</sup> In offering us a place off the regular program for this panel, Grew seems to have suggested that we needed to discuss these issues among ourselves before addressing the wider audience of historians, to which I responded:

[W]hile there may be need for serious internal discussion, there is even more urgent need for bringing to the attention of historians in general these new ideas which have been developing recently, which are not vague and unformed and which do confront the main issues. . . . The panel would address itself not only to the need for women's history from the viewpoint of creating "identity," "consciousness," and "role models" for women . . . but also basic historiographical and philosophical questions: how the writing of history, and even what historians conceive as "history" has been affected by the devaluation and neglect of women and what they have done, written and thought; how the study of women's history alters the conception of what constitutes history (Carroll to Grew, September 7, 1970: 2).

These words reflected our early awareness of some of the major questions to be explored in the development of research and theory in women's history in the subsequent years and decades. I do not claim ownership of the ideas, though I wrote these particular words. As I have argued elsewhere,<sup>14</sup> ideas are collective products, and certainly I learned these ideas from many sources, particularly from many courageous women who were already struggling against great odds to teach and write women's history. What I want to emphasize here is that it was the "activist" CCWHP that initiated the struggle around these scholarly issues in the major professional associations.

Thus a few months later, at the New Orleans meeting of the Organization of American Historians in April 1971, CCWHP organized and sponsored a session on "New Perspectives on Women's History," designed to bring together "activists" and "scholars" to examine the intellectual and political issues of women's history; the panel was chaired by Blanche Wiesen Cook and featured Robin Morgan, Jean Christie, Louise Dalby, Mari Jo Buhle, and Ellen DuBois. At the same 1971 convention, CCWHP also sponsored the first full session examining the work of a major historian of women, Mary Beard, again emphasizing the juncture of activism and scholarship, with a paper by Loretta Zimmerman on "Mary Beard: An Activist of the Progressive Era," and my own paper, "*Woman as Force in History: A Critique.*"<sup>15</sup> The session was chaired by Carol Bleser, with comment by Samuel Haber, Gerda Lerner, and Sarah Paretsky. In organizing this session and presenting this critique, I was concerned to address the extraordinary intellectual contributions of Mary Beard, both as "activist" and scholar, to correct the appalling neglect of *Woman as Force in History* that had prevailed for over two decades, to analyze seriously the reasons for the depreciation it had suffered and to accord it recognition for what it was: a monumental contribution to historical theory and reshaping historical scholarship.

In subsequent years, as recounted in other essays in this collection and elsewhere, conferences, journals, and books in women's history expanded exponentially into one of the primary fields in historical scholarship. In this process, so many people and groups participated that I could not even begin to name them all, much less give due credit to their contributions.<sup>16</sup> In recalling the above events of 1970 and 1971, my

purpose is not to claim the kind of priority which I have elsewhere called in question (as noted above), but to recall that the initiative in the "scholarly" field of women's history was taken by the "activist" CCWHP and took impetus from the women's movement outside the academy. The line between "activism" and "scholarship," if there is such a line at all, is difficult to discern in this history, and perhaps it would be better to use instead an image favored by the women's peace movement, the web. Our activism and our scholarship were woven together to create the strength of both action and intellect that we brought to history.

## II

Many of those who sent comments for our twentieth anniversary sounded a common theme--we have flourished, but the struggle continues. The early 1970s remained years of high energy, but soon we settled in for the long haul--the steady, day-to-day struggle to implement the changes envisioned in resolutions and policy statements, the unrelenting vigilance needed to monitor progress--or its absence. Our very successes, such as the creation of the official committees on women historians in the AHA and OAH,<sup>17</sup> placed us in a more difficult situation. On the one hand it was important to work in cooperation with those committees, on the other hand it was necessary to serve, as Eileen Boris and others put it, as "the 'bad girls' who raise the uncomfortable issues so that the 'good girls' (and our male allies) on the AHA and OAH Committees on the Status of Women can get concessions from the professional organizations." As Boris has suggested, "Such an inside/outside strategy replicates the politics of women's organizations and women in government in the U.S. in the past . . . [and] is one that works well as long as we all continue planning together" (CCWHP *Newsletter*, 20, 6, Nov./Dec. 1989: 6). We can never thank enough those who have had to follow this difficult course and have maintained our work so faithfully and effectively over the intervening years, so that as Eileen concluded: "we've flourished to struggle again!"

Our gains have been real, but modest, and continually threatened by "backlash" and external political, social, and economic forces. Gerda Lerner has summarized and assessed some of the data available in her twentieth-anniversary essay



(above). More recent data have been cited by Christie Farnham, Joan Hoff, and Judith Zinsser.<sup>18</sup> Visible to us all have been encouraging changes in representation in the offices of the major historical associations, the AHA and the OAH, with women filling substantial percentages of significant offices. We may note Joan Hoff's term as Executive Director of the OAH, the election of Gerda Lerner, Ann Firor Scott, and Mary Frances Berry to the presidency of the OAH, and of Natalie Davis and Louise Tilly to the presidency of the AHA. The most remarkable change may be seen in the representation of women in elected offices of the AHA. In 1969 there were no women elected as officers of the AHA, but in 1992 women constituted 51% of the elected officers of the association.<sup>19</sup>

Our gains in representation on panels of the American Historical Association Conferences have also been substantial. In 1969 there were only 15 women on the AHA conference program, 4% of the total. Almost all were paper presenters, none being accorded the honorific role of chair and only one serving as commentator. In 1992 the number of women participants had risen to 282, or 38% of the total, distributed fairly equally among paper presenters, chairs and commentators.

Until 1988, as Gerda Lerner observed, the numbers of sessions on women's history in the AHA program were quite variable, with a high of 14 sessions out of a total of 99 in 1975, dropping to 10 women's history sessions out of 108 in 1988. By 1989, we had reached a level of 17 out of 140 sessions, or about 12%, but seven of these were sessions on "gender" rather than on "women." In 1994, the program shows a significant increase in number of sessions on women, gender and sexuality to 33 out of 142 sessions, or 23%. But of that number, 11 are sessions on gender, eight are on sex and sexuality, and three are on men or masculinity. Thus the great increases are in sessions on gender and sexuality. This is not the place to enter into debate on whether "gender history" is "women's history" (or vice versa), but when we are counting, it seems appropriate to note the difference and assess the direction in which we appear to be moving. One noteworthy development is the fact that seven sessions in 1994 deal explicitly with Black women or with issues of race in its connections with gender or sexuality.

Gains in recruitment and academic employment of women historians have been mixed and unstable. The latest data available are for 1988.<sup>20</sup> The number of women Ph.D.s in history rose more than three-fold from the 1950s, reaching 38% in 1988. However, the gains that have been made have been uneven by race and ethnicity. The increases in Ph.D.s among African American, American Indian, Hispanic and Asian women historians have not kept pace with increases among white women. On the other hand, there has been a growing sense of community and shared history among African American women historians, who have worked through the Association of Black Women Historians to present sessions at the historical association conferences and to raise issues of concern with both the Committee on Women Historians and the Committee on Minority Historians. In November 1986 the *OAH Newsletter* published an illuminating analysis of five generations of black women historians and their work, "Generational Differences and the Crisis of Professionalism," by Juliet E. K. Walker.

Representation of women in history department faculties at research universities rose nearly ten-fold, from 1.3% to 12.1% between 1969 and 1986, though the initial numbers were so small that the increase is not as great as it might appear. Representation in departments in liberal arts colleges more than tripled, from 5.5% to 18.7%. There seems to be an ominous gap between increases in the percentage of women receiving Ph.D.s in history, and the growth in employment in history departments, especially in the upper ranks. As Gerda Lerner noted, "The progress made in women's employment in the past twenty years has not altered the pervasive pattern of women in every cohort (by date of receipt of Ph.D.) failing to keep pace with men at the professor rank, at tenure, and in the higher income brackets" (Lerner, "How Women," 50).

There can be little doubt that our most spectacular successes over the two decades have been in the growth of women's history as a field of scholarship and the vitality of the theoretical debates in the field, triumphantly reflected in the two journals launched in our twentieth-anniversary year: *The Journal of Women's History* and *Gender and History*. The number of periodical articles in the field has grown so rapidly that the *Journal of Women's History Guide to Periodical Literature*, covering



articles on women's history published in the period 1980-1990, could not encompass all the relevant publications in 450 pages of listings under hundreds of subject headings. The journal continues to publish bibliographies in each issue.

However, the range of impact of our gains seems open to question. In particular, their impact on general works in history and on the content of major historical journals appears to be less than might be expected. The number of women who appear as authors and reviewers of books reviewed in the *American Historical Review* has indeed increased dramatically. The number of books reviewed that were authored or edited by women increased more than five-fold between 1969 and 1992 (53 in 1968-69; 286 in 1992). The number of women reviewers of books also increased nearly five-fold (46 in 1968-69; 222 in 1992). The increase in women authors of articles in the *AHR* is also significant, from 1 co-author in 1969 to 13 authors of articles in 1992. The increase in number of books on women reviewed has also been marked, though perhaps more variable. In 1968-69, 17 works on women were reviewed (including biographies). In 1991, the number increased nearly seven-fold, to 116; but in 1992, the number dropped to 76, a very sharp decline, though still over four times the 1969 level. Less encouraging is the number of articles about women published by the *AHR*. We do not find it surprising that in 1969 there were none. But in 1991, there were again none (though previous years had seen some). In 1992, there were 6 articles dealing with women and gender in the *AHR*, or about 16%; it remains to be assessed how much transformation this represents in the substance of historical scholarship.<sup>21</sup>

### III

One of the most extraordinary events of recent years in the profession of history was the great debate at the 1988 AHA meetings on "The Old History and the New," published in the June 1989 issue of the *American Historical Review*, in which the protagonists in a major debate on the character and direction of historical scholarship were two men (Theodore Hamerow and Lawrence Levine) and two women (Gertrude Hoffmann and Joan Scott). To my regret, I missed the session itself, but I read the published versions with care, and con-



cluded from my reading, as well as from reports of the event by others who were present, that the intellectual sparks flew between the two women, the contributions of the two men seeming pallid by comparison.

This event was an impressive signal of the professional recognition of women historians today. Yet viewed from another perspective, women were still absent from the debate--that is, the ideas and writings of women historians remained absent as subjects worthy of sustained consideration in this series of major papers on the theory and practice of history. This is true also of other significant articles on historiography published in 1989 in the *American Historical Review*. Thus in the same issue of the *AHR* we have David Harlan's article on "Intellectual History and the Return of Literature," the exchange between David Hollinger and David Harlan, and another article on historiography by Allan Megill. We may add to this the similar omission of women from James Kloppenberg's article "Objectivity and Historicism: A Century of American Historical Writing," in the October 1989 *AHR*. In some 125 pages of articles, commentaries, and debates on historiography, a handful of women are mentioned only in passing. Not a single woman is given sustained attention as having made any major contribution to intellectual history, historical knowing, "description, explanation, and narrative in historiography," or for that matter, to either "the old history" or "the new history." Joan Scott does at least address directly the arguments of Gertrude Himmelfarb, but Himmelfarb appears simply as an antagonist in the immediate debate. Thus even Scott, who has written elsewhere on women historians, omits them as significant figures in historiography--figures comparable, for example, to Carl Bridenbaugh on the one hand, or Charles Beard on the other. Mary Beard is absent, as are Nellie Nielson and Natalie Davis.<sup>22</sup> Despite Davis' careful attention to the contributions of Catharine Macaulay and Eileen Power in her presidential address a year earlier,<sup>23</sup> in the recent great debates on historical knowledge and interpretation, no women appear as authorities to be critically examined, whether with reproach or approval.

I raise this point because I want to argue that the issues of women's status in the profession are inseparably tied to the continued devaluation of women's intellect--that is, of all

women, perhaps especially women of color and poor women--and also of men of excluded groups. From this perspective, the arena of struggle today and for the future in CCWHP is the wider arena of transformation of higher education and scholarship. The debates over "the crisis in history" are part of a larger debate over transformation of the curriculum in higher education.

In 1969, those of us engaged in launching CCWHP, or struggling to build programs in Afro-American studies, non-Western studies, peace studies or women's studies would have been very surprised to learn that less than two decades later, the United States Secretary of Education, William Bennett, would feel so threatened by our successes as to launch a major offensive against efforts to integrate such studies into traditional curricula. In a famous--or infamous--speech in 1988 at Stanford University, Bennett excoriated the university's faculty for its decision to revise its required "Western Culture" course to make room for works by "women, minorities, and persons of color"--that is, to promote diversity in the core requirements for undergraduate students. To Bennett, this was so offensive that he declared that education at Stanford University had been "brought low by the very forces which modern universities came into being to oppose: ignorance, irrationality, and intimidation."<sup>24</sup> "Brought low"--meaning: reduced in level, quality, and value, degraded--and this by the inclusion of works by women, minorities, and people of color!

Nor was Bennett alone in this reaction. He has been joined by a chorus of eminent and not-so-eminent voices, inside and outside the academy, all raised with a very unbecoming shrillness (as they like to say of feminists), accusing us of everything from abandoning the search for excellence (the most moderate charge) to promoting the restoration of slavery, the harem, widow-burning and despotism.<sup>25</sup> Another major theme struck by these voices is that the search for truth, beauty, and excellence in academia is being undermined by "anti-intellectualism" and "politicization" from the left, even, indeed, the establishment of a reign of "political correctness" through cadres of "feminazis" and other "thought police."

Setting aside the particular terminology in use today, these charges are nothing new; they are easily found in arguments that have been used for decades to defend "the classics"



against those who find many of their teachings unacceptable. For example, Lincoln Diamant, in a college edition of Aristotle's *Politics and Poetics* first published in 1952, felt obliged to respond to the debate about Aristotle's "acceptance of the 'expediency and rightness' of slave and master classes as a necessary foundation for any social structure," arguing as follows:

The modern reader properly resolves the dilemma by recalling that only slavery made possible the flowering of Hellenism in the ancient world. Without slavery there would have been no Greek state; no Greek art or science (Aristotle himself owned two hundred slaves); no Roman Empire. And without Hellenism and the Roman Empire, there could have been no modern civilization. Without the slavery of antiquity, as necessary as it was universally recognized, you could not sit here comfortably today, reading this page. Slavery in that period actually represented a great social step forward--a barbaric and almost bestial means, whereby man extricated himself from among the beasts.<sup>26</sup>

Ironically, such judgments are represented as factual and "objective"; to dispute them, or to select readings with alternative viewpoints on the history of civilization and culture, is represented as "politicization" of education.

What makes this irony still more acute is that the discussion of slavery in the *Politics* begins with the remark that: "Others affirm that the rule of a master over slaves is contrary to nature,<sup>27</sup> and being an interference with nature is therefore unjust."<sup>27</sup> But these "others" are not named, and over many centuries their names and works have been eradicated from the canon. So today we read Aristotle, rather than the Greek critics of slavery, to represent the hallowed tradition of "Western culture."<sup>28</sup>

The stridency of the attacks on current efforts to revise the curriculum seems most strange in light of the fact that "diversity," in whose name these changes have been introduced, has been on the whole a highly acceptable concept in higher education in this country. The nation and the states pride themselves on the diversity of types of institutions of higher education they support, the great universities pride themselves on



the diversity of disciplines and programs they encompass, the disciplines pride themselves on the diversity of specializations they encourage, and ordinarily students are required to diversify their fields of study, whether as undergraduates or as graduates, in order to broaden their education. Thus a general education requirement at a major university may include a statement such as: "In a constantly changing world, graduates must have some understanding of cultures and traditions different from their own." This is hardly a revolutionary manifesto.

Why, then, the intense furor over the revision of Stanford's course in "Western Culture"? And why should it have merited such hostile attention from the former Secretary of Education? Indeed, the pages of the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, the *New York Times*, and other academic news sources seem filled with articles and correspondence focusing on the new great debate, whether on diversification of the curriculum, or on diversification of the faculty (that is, affirmative action). The headline on one opinion piece in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* announces: "It is time to stop apologizing for western civilization and to start analyzing why it defines world culture."<sup>29</sup> The assault has been carried lately to the visual media, with a recent PBS television series on "The Culture Wars" (supported by such right-wing funders as the Olin Foundation), in which one of the programs offers a highly distorted representation of African American Studies and Women's Studies on university campuses.

What then are the issues at stake? Or perhaps first, what exactly is taking place that seems to some so dangerous, to others so promising? What was it in the Stanford case that elicited such excitement about an undergraduate requirement where elsewhere undergraduate requirements tend to elicit mainly boredom? What the Stanford faculty did was to make certain changes in a course in "Western Culture" required of all undergraduate students. What the course covered was primarily a group of 15 selected works deemed to be classics or great works of Western Culture. It is pertinent to note what works were included: selections from the Old Testament and the New Testament; Plato's *Republic*; Homer's *Iliad* or *Odyssey*; one Greek tragedy; the *Confessions of Augustine*; Dante, the *Inferno*; More, the *Utopia*; Machiavelli, *The Prince*; Luther,

*On Christian Liberty*, selections from Galileo; Voltaire's *Candide*; Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*; two works by Freud; and selections from Darwin. In addition, there were recommended supplements including works by Thucydides, Aristotle, Cicero, Vergil, Tacitus, Boethius, Aquinas, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Descartes, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Hume, Goethe, John Stuart Mill, Nietzsche, and "a 19th-century novel." With the possible exception of the last, all the authors of these works are presumed to be white males (though the race of Augustine and Marx, at least, might be debated, as has been the sex of some Biblical authors, Homer and Shakespeare). It is important to consider these names because they do reflect quite well what the system of higher education in this country today still regards as representative works of the "common core" of "great classics" of "Western culture." The list deserves to be read over--studied, perhaps?--for what it tells us about what those who chose it know or believe about "our common culture," and their ignorance of the participation and contributions of women, people of color, and other minorities to "our common culture."

The specific change at Stanford called upon faculty in a particular option in the program to substitute, for a number of the classics previously required, their own selections of works by women, minorities, and non-Western peoples. Was this change really so monumental? Does it justify, for example, the headline on a front-page story of the *Chronicle of Higher Education*: "Sweeping curricular change is under way at Stanford as University phases out its 'Western Culture' Program"? (December 14, 1988, A1) Of course, Stanford is a highly prestigious private university, one of those regarded as a leader and a pacesetter in an educational status system in which prestige is one of the prime determinants of both policy and rewards. That Stanford, then, should undertake to revise the traditional curriculum commands attention. The Stanford requirement was also somewhat more regulated and centralized than the distribution requirement of a course in "other cultures and traditions" at many other institutions, which leaves the choice and content of the course essentially open to the students and faculty. Thus the nature of the change adopted by Stanford forced a *centralized and public choice* between the recognized "Western classics" and the alternative readings. Moreover,



the revision of the core course at Stanford specifically called for the inclusion of works by women, minorities, and people of color--i.e., not necessarily works of "another culture" in the sense of a geographically distant culture, but works by those situated in this society whose cultural traditions have been poorly represented or totally excluded from the "traditional canons" of "great works" usually taught. This raises a set of serious issues.

To begin with, despite the hostility to requiring study of non-western cultures expressed in some of the recent polemics, it is at least generally recognized that other cultures such as Chinese, Japanese, Indian and Arabic have their own "classics" and that these qualify as "great works of world literature" and constitute a number of separate traditional canons. Works from these canons, in English translation, can often be accepted in making a shift from "Western culture" to "world culture." But most works by women, people of color, and other minorities in this society are not at present recognized as "classics" or "great works" of authority, value, and importance comparable to those currently accepted in those canons--for example, those listed above.

To urge that students be required to read such works in preference to the "classics," whether western or otherwise, brings us immediately into confrontation with fundamental questions of value. These alternative readings are perceived at the outset as by definition of lesser value. They appear not to be works that have "stood the test of time," either because they are too recent or because they were too long ignored or lost. They have not acquired a following. They have not been recognized as "influential." There is little or no laudatory or critical literature telling us what to think and feel about them, why they are important, why they are wrong, where they are right, how they compare to others, etc. They have not been read over and savored thousands of times by thousands of readers, quoted and discussed by hundreds or thousands, loved or hated by hundreds of thousands, or perhaps millions, attacked and defended. They have not acquired the aura, the accumulated weight, that we expect of "classics."

Another difficult problem that this choice raises is that it requires us--both faculty and students--to educate ourselves in a literature and culture in which we are at present ignorant--in



which, in fact, we are as ignorant and disoriented as those of other cultures--and those of our own culture with what we call lesser "qualifications"--are in our high culture and academic disciplines. This is as true for most white women in women's history and women's studies as it is for most white men and women in any discipline. In this world of other cultures, we are not experts, we are not sophisticated, we do not talk a language that others must learn--in short, the tables are turned. We are forced to confront a new world of experience and language in which we, not the others, are the illiterates.

This forces us to face the real necessity for a *diversified faculty* and a *diversified student body*, that is, for genuine affirmative action to raise the levels of diversification by sex, race, class, culture, and other experience (such as sexual preference, disability, age, and other differences) to the point at which there will be a truly informed and expert faculty and a truly well-prepared student body available for an education encompassing the wide range of diversity that is the reality in our global society. Yet neither history nor women's studies have been much more successful--if at all so--in diversifying our own faculty and student bodies than other areas of higher education. The CWH has recently tried to address the issues (see the 1992 report by Rosalyn Terborg-Penn for the Committee on Women Historians, *AHA Perspectives*, March 1993: 15). But the figures are not encouraging. One of the foremost tasks before us must be to examine more closely why this is so, and what can be done to reverse the downslide and achieve positive changes at an accelerated pace.

At the same time, we find ourselves confronted by thorny problems arising from our mutual ignorance of each other's cultures. Can men teach women's literature and history? Can white women teach Black women's literature and history? Can nonlesbians teach lesbian literature and history? At one level, these may seem to be ridiculous questions--the answer seems to be, "of course."<sup>30</sup> Indeed, that is one of the main grounds on which we call for diversification of the curriculum. And yet, are we not uneasy about the ingrained sexism of men teaching women's literature, the ingrained racism of whites teaching Black literature? the ingrained heterosexism of straights teaching gay and lesbian literature? I raise these questions for us to think about, as a part of the debate that has been going on, but I have no easy answers.

In this context, I would like to offer some comments about the relationship between "diversity" and "difference." At the heart of the problem that higher education in the U.S. has to confront in this regard is that "diversity" really does imply *difference*. "Diversity" seems desirable, but the academic world does not know how to deal with differences except to put them in boxes (that is, schools, categories and specializations), or build walls around them (that is, disciplines, departments, or programs), or keep them out of the academy (that is, declare them "unqualified").

This should not surprise us, since in our world differences are very threatening, even terrifying. The so-called American Dream of the "melting pot" is a symbolic expression of that terror--it represents the urgent need to erase differences by swallowing up those who are different or assimilating ourselves into a seemingly homogeneous dominant culture. At the same time there are often real grounds for terror--the racism, misogyny, and multiple other hostilities that hold most of us in constant fear of insult, injury, rape, or even death.

In the recent debates about curriculum change this intense fear of difference is manifested in the widespread insistence on *some* "common core curriculum" or canon, as though our society, or our culture, would fall apart if we didn't all teach and learn the same "classics" or "great works"--the teachings of a long line of patriarchal masters--but rather taught and learned a much more diversified canon. Let us not be too quick to deride this notion. Indeed, perhaps the culture which has weighed on so many of us for so long would fall apart if we didn't all teach and learn the same "classics" or "great works," or rather--if we all taught and learned a much more diversified canon.

In recent years, there has emerged an extensive literature on "difference" and otherness in feminist scholarship, critical theory, and other areas. This literature has grown increasingly abstruse with the intervention of deconstructionism and poststructuralism, with consequences which seem to me rather mixed.<sup>31</sup> Difference has been used by those in privileged positions to oppress or exploit others, and there is always real danger that sex differences, race differences, class differences, ethnic differences, age differences, physical differences and differences in sexual preference will be used against us again and again. Feminists therefore sometimes view with fear and



alarm any emphasis on difference, preferring to stress the similarities and commonalities both between women and men and among women of diverse backgrounds.

Yet we may also look to difference as a source of creativity and strength. Audre Lorde says: "The failure of the academic feminists to recognize difference as a crucial strength is a failure to reach beyond the first patriarchal lesson. Divide and conquer, in our world, must become define and empower. . . . I urge each one of us here to reach down into that deep place of knowledge inside herself and touch that terror and loathing of ny difference that lives there. See whose face it wears."<sup>32</sup>

That injunction is startling and illuminating. "See whose face it wears." We may interpret that in many ways, and I would not presume to say what Lorde herself intended. But to me it suggests that loathing of difference may not in fact wear the face of either of those confronting each other in the mutual terror of otherness, but perhaps rather the face of those Fathers, whose own fear and loathing of difference has been conveyed to us for generations, even for millenia, through those very works of the traditional canons that we have revered for too long.

#### IV

What has all this to do with the history and future of CCWHP? To begin with, I believe that activist/scholarly women historians and historians of women have played major roles in the intellectual and curricular changes and challenges that have brought us today to "the culture wars." And I believe we must not turn away from those roles. It is now our responsibility, and our opportunity, to consider more thoroughly the issues of diversity and difference, and of scholarship and action, in the context of helping to determine the future course of education in our society. Education has been heavily complicit in many of the ills of our time. Despite the limits of our progress in place, position and rewards in our profession--or perhaps in part because of those limits--we are today in a position to have increasing impact on the direction and consequences of scholarship and curriculum in higher education. We must open our minds, and the minds of our colleagues and students, to a more thoroughgoing transformation of knowledge and education.



Two hundred years ago, Mary Wollstonecraft ventured to propose a national system of free public education for girls and boys of all classes, a daring proposal that is not yet fully realized today. I will take courage from her example, and use this opportunity to urge that we consider a campaign for a national system of free or low-cost, multicultural public "higher" education for women and men of all classes and cultures, races and abilities, ideologies and sexualities. We may find some partial models in other countries that already have such systems alongside national health care, but I believe we will have to go beyond those models. I would suggest that the crisis in education today, though less visible than the crisis in health care, is already as acute--or more so--in its short-term and long-term real consequences, and that we must not fail to address that crisis.

Reflections on the limited character of the gains we had made, and signs of impending backlash, led me in 1979, on our tenth anniversary, to paint a rather somber picture of our prospects when I participated in a panel assessing the first decade of our work. What I argued in 1979 echoed my remarks in 1969 on the imperviousness of the academic institutions to radical transformation, as well as some of the ideas spelled out in my analysis of the political thought of Virginia Woolf:

We must be clear that ultimately there is no meeting ground between feminism and the professions as they are presently constituted. In their origins and their essential character, the professions are exclusionary, competitive, male controlled, and infused with patriarchal bigotry. Feminism must be opposed to all these. Moreover, feminism is dedicated to certain moral and intellectual purposes--to justice, to equality, to a new vision of truth. But the universities, the centers and training-grounds of the professions, have lost not only all sense of moral purpose but even whatever sense of intellectual purpose they once had. They have become giant corporations, in the service of greater giants of private and international business and government. Their mouthings about "excellence," which they use as weapons against the excluded, grow increasingly hollow and

devoid of genuine content; what they worship, unashamedly, is money, prestige, and dominance.<sup>33</sup>

Nearly fifteen years later, I find these words still valid. Yet I also continue to believe that there is a place for "serious organizing" in the professions, not with the illusion of achieving radical transformation, but with the obligation, and the hope, of initiating changes that may eventually have more broad-ranging impact. I am proud and happy to look back and find that we have already initiated such changes. The magnitude and intensity of the current attacks on our work are actually a significant measure of its importance. And we have not been stopped nor turned around. Notwithstanding our differences and divisions, notwithstanding our disappointments, notwithstanding our sometime weariness, and notwithstanding our fears for an uncertain future, we continue to work together, we continue to "flourish to struggle again."

#### Notes

Portions of this essay were presented at the CCWHP luncheon in San Francisco in December 1989, on the occasion of the CCWHP twentieth anniversary celebration.

1. For example, in Tanner's anthology: Shulamith Firestone's historical critique, "The Women's Rights Movement in the U.S.: A New View" (1968); Linda Gordon, "Functions of the Family" (1969); Kathy MacAfee and Myrna Wood, "Bread and Roses" (1969); or in Morgan's anthology: Frances M. Beal, "Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female" (1969); Marge Piercy, "The Grand Coolie Damn" (1969); Martha Shelly, "Notes of A Radical Lesbian" (1969); Naomi Weisstein, "'Kinder, Küche, Kirche' As Scientific Law: Psychology Constructs the Female" (1968/1969).

Weisstein's essay (which was widely reprinted, e.g., an expanded version in Vivian Gornick and Barbara K. Moran, eds., *Woman in Sexist Society*, New York: Mentor, 1971) is a particularly striking example of the fact that "activist" feminists were theorizing the social construction of the sexes, sexuality and science well before academics appropriated the notion of "deconstruction" and it became fashionable under the aegis

of male authorities and in the guise of an alienating language and philosophy. (On the latter, see Joan Hoff, "The Pernicious Effects of Poststructuralism on Women's History," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 20, 1993: B1-2.)

2. Jesse Lemisch, "Radicals, Marxists, and Gentlemen: A Memoir of Twenty Years Ago," *Radical Historians Newsletter*, Number 59, November 1989: 6-8. See also Joan Scott, "History in Crisis? The Others' Side of the Story," *American Historical Review* 94, 3, (June 1989): 680-692.

3. Gerda Lerner, "How Women and Their Organizations Changed the Profession of History," in *A History of the Coordinating Committee on Women in the Historical Profession-Conference Group on Women's History*, published by the CCWHP-CGWH, 1989: 45.

4. I am indebted to Gerda Lerner for recalling to my mind this correspondence between myself and Arthur Waskow in late 1969, of which copies are deposited in the Gerda Lerner papers at the Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College. Some of my own engagement, research, and views on women's nonviolent direct action, including "guerrilla theater," are reflected in: Berenice A. Carroll, "Direct action and constitutional rights: The case of the ERA," in Joan Hoff-Wilson, ed., *Rights of Passage: The past and future of the ERA* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986): 63-75; and "'Women Take Action!' Women's Direct Action and Social Change," *Women's Studies International Forum*, 12, 1 (1989): 3-24.

5. Carroll to Waskow, December 5, 1989 (Gerda Lerner Papers, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, MA).

6. Thus for example, Christie Farnham writes: "The Coordinating Committee of [sic] Women in the Historical Profession was initially cochaired by Carroll and Gerda Lerner. Their custom of dividing responsibilities led to the creation of the Conference Group on Women's History, which became an autonomous affiliate of the AHA in 1975" (Foreword, *Journal of Women's History Guide to Periodical Literature*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992: 6, n.4). This comment reflects a widespread myth about our history, casting myself and Gerda in archetypal roles of "activist" and "scholar" and apparently presuming that from the outset Gerda held responsibility for the development of women's history and, ulti-



mately, for the creation of the CGWH. This is not at all what took place. My concern is not only to correct a detail of our history, but to challenge a reified dichotomy between action and scholarship in our history.

7. Poster slogan of the Women's History Research Center Library, founded in 1968 by Laura X (Laura Murra) in Berkeley, CA.

8. For example, among then graduate students already working in women's history who were present at the founding meeting of CCWHP on December 27, 1969, and/or the open meeting we sponsored on December 29, 1969, I recall particularly: Hilda Smith, Ellen DuBois, and Mary Roth Walsh. Among others who I believe were then graduate students, already working in the field but not present at those meetings, I recall also: Mary Jo Buhle, Ann D. Gordon, I. Linda Gordon, Amy Hackett, Persis Hunt, Elizabeth Pleck, Rochelle Ziegler [Goldberg Ruthchild], Nancy Schrom [Dye], and Marcia Scott (my apologies to those I may have erroneously listed or omitted here by faulty memory of their student or faculty status in 1969).

9. The Berkshire Conference of Women Historians was an important network of support among certain professional women historians, and some of its members, such as Emiliana Noether, were receptive to the formation of CCWHP, but as Judith Zinsser reports, women's history "was not the primary interest of most members" of the Berkshire Conference and the group had not engaged in promoting teaching or scholarship in women's history until some of the younger members in 1972 proposed and undertook the planning of the First Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, held at Douglass College in March 1973 (see J. Zinsser, *History and Feminism: A Glass Half Full*, New York: Twayne, 1993, 93).

10. The following information is drawn from correspondence and documents in the personal papers of Berenice Carroll.

11. The other panel, entitled "Women's Experience in History: A Teaching Problem," though initially proposed by CCWHP, was not constituted by us. In September, I expressed to Grew our doubts that the participants who had been placed on the panel were not "themselves engaged in teaching women's history much (if at all)" (Carroll to Grew, September 7, 1969: 1).

12. Correspondence in personal files of Berenice A. Carroll.

13. At this session on December 29, 1970, for example, Hilda Smith presented her paper on "Problems in Researching Women's History," subsequently published as "Feminism and the Methodology of Women's History" in B. A. Carroll, ed., *Liberating Women's History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976); Juliet Mitchell presented a portion of the analysis which had first appeared in "Women: The Longest Revolution," *New Left Review*, no. 40, 1966, subsequently reprinted and expanded in *Woman's Estate* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1971). Adele Simmons dealt with the power of ideologies of women's roles in the history of women's education, and Linda Gordon addressed issues of linking research and activism. At another session on the following day, Linda Gordon, Persis Hunt, Elizabeth Pleck, Rochelle Ruthchild, and Marcia Scott presented their co-authored paper, "Sexism in American Historiography." Revised versions of this paper were published in *Women's Studies*, 1, 1 (1972) and in Carroll, *Liberating Women's History*, under the title "Historical Phallacies: Sexism in American Historical Writing."

14. Berenice A. Carroll, "The Politics of 'Originality': Women and the Class System of the Intellect," *Journal of Women's History*, 2, 2 (Fall 1990): 136-163.

15. This paper was first published in a special issue of the *Massachusetts Review* (Winter/Spring, 1971/1972), which was reprinted by Bobbs-Merrill as *Woman: An Issue* (Indianapolis, 1972); also reprinted in Carroll, *Liberating Women's History*.

16. Much of this history is reviewed in the preceding essays in this CCWHP-CGWH collection. Judith P. Zinsser has provided more extensive treatment in her recent book, *History and Feminism: A Glass Half Full* (New York: Twayne, 1993). Despite whatever disagreements we may have with her presentation of our history, or errors or omissions we may find in it, we owe Zinsser a great debt of gratitude for the enormous amount of work and thought that went into this study. See also Christie Farnham, "Foreword," and Joan Hoff, "Introduction: An Overview of Women's History in the United States," in Gayle V. Fischer, compiler, *Journal of Women's History Guide to Periodical Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992); also Karen Offen, Ruth Roach Pierson, and Jane Rendall, *Writing Women's History: International Perspectives* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991). Farnham is in error in writing of the field of women's history that its "beginning was



marked by the First Berkshire Conference on the History of Women in 1973."

17. These successes are recounted in other essays in this collection, and by Judith Zinsser in *Feminism and History* (Ch. 7 and passim).

18. Farnham and Hoff, in *Journal of Women's History Guide to Periodical Literature*, 2-11; Zinsser, *History and Feminism*, 68-69, 73, 89-91, 96-98, 106-107. Additional data and analysis may be found in the "Twenty Year Report of the Committee on Women Historians, 1970-1990," by Joan M. Jensen, Chair, Committee on Women Historians, and the annual reports of 1991 and 1992 by Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, Chair, Committee on Women Historians, published in the *AHA Perspectives*. Rosalyn Terborg-Penn's reports reflect increased attention of the CWH to issues of race, class, and sexual diversity among historians and in the practice of history.

19. 1992 data given here and below on offices held and conference participation by women has been provided by Noralee Frankel, American Historical Association, 1993.

20. See note 17 for sources of data to 1988. More recent data are not readily available, perhaps because of Reagan-Bush era cutbacks in support for relevant data collection and publication by U.S. government agencies. The AHA is planning a statistical study of minorities and women in history, but the data collection had not begun as of October 1993. The *Chronicle of Higher Education*, in its August 1993 "Almanac Issue," conspicuously fails to disaggregate data on faculty rank and salary by sex; the table of earned degrees does show a breakdown by sex, but the field of history is not separately listed. The AHA last year published data on salary increases in history, 1988-1992, with no breakdown by sex (*Perspectives*, November 1992, 6).

21. I am indebted to Yasmin Lodi and Clinton F. Fink for assistance in counting authors and titles in the indexes of the *American Historical Review* for volumes 74, 96, and 97. We did not attempt to calculate the percentages of total books reviewed, reviewers, articles, and authors, which would have required resources not available. We omitted from the counts some "indeterminate" names that could be either male or female, such as "Robin"; these constituted 21 names in 1968-69, 44 in 1991, and 34 in 1992.



22. When I made this point in my luncheon address for the 20th Anniversary of CCWHP in December 1989, I was told that I had misread or misstated Joan Scott's argument, and that she had not dealt with women because she was focusing on AHA presidential addresses. I think not. Scott states she was drawing on "the records of the American Historical Association since its founding in 1884" ( *AHR* 94, 3, June 1989, 481), "especially" presidential addresses. In fact, she devotes three of twelve pages to presidential addresses, calling on a variety of other sources, and by no means exclusively the records of the association. But there is no mention of the presidential addresses of either Nellie Nielson or Natalie Davis, and only one footnote reference to Davis' "eloquent discussion of history as an interpretive practice" in an article of June 1988, without attention to the substance. In any case, have we not learned in women's history that to choose sources likely to exclude the voices of women is a choice open to challenge? In a discussion of the history of "contests . . . about the substance, uses, and meanings of the knowledge that we call history" (Scott, *ibid.*), the ideas of women historians have a place.
23. Natalie Zemon Davis, "History's Two Bodies," *American Historical Review*, 93, 1 (February 1988): 1-30.
24. Stephen R. Graubard, "Bennett misreads Stanford's 'classics'," Op-Ed, *New York Times*, May 2, 1988.
25. See e.g., John H. Bunzel, "Affirmative Action must not result in lower standards or discrimination against the most competent students," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 1, 1989: B1-2; Gertrude Himmelfarb, "Stanford and Duke undercut classical values," *New York Times*, May 5, 1988; Bernard Lewis, "Western Culture Must Go," *Wall Street Journal*, May 2, 1988.
26. Diamant also remarks in passing that Aristotle's acceptance of slavery "unsettles most modern critics who profess the proper contemporary abhorrence of the institution of bodily servitude," suggesting that he views this abhorrence as a sort of modern fad, or a manifestation of what is now attacked as "political correctness" (Lincoln Diamant, Introduction, *Aristotle's Politics and Poetics*. New York: Viking Press, 1957: ix, emphasis added).
27. *Ibid.*, 7.

28. How deeply ingrained are the dehumanizing attitudes perpetuated by this heritage even today is evidenced by the widespread usage of the term "slavish" to denote mindless imitation or grovelling obedience--a usage clearly reflecting the viewpoint of the slavemaster, not the slave. See, for example, the unselfcritical usage of this language even by the advocates of curriculum change, such as the authors of the American Council of Learned Societies report, "Speaking for the Humanities" (*Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 11, 1989: A16). Similarly, the phrase "slavish respect for tradition" appears in many works advocating progressive or radical change (e.g., A. Belden Fields, "For a global, but not a totalistic, political science," Paper present at the XIVth World Congress of the International Political Science Association, Washington, D.C., August 1988:3). For the same usage among the defenders of the traditional canon, see e.g., "slavish obeisance" in Linda Seebach's letter to the editor of the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (February 15, 1989: B4).

29. Jacob Neusner writes: ". . . the West has in fact made the world we know. . . . [E]verybody wants what we have: science and technology, prosperity, and democracy. . . . [A]ll other social systems measure themselves by Western civilization's capacity to afford people both the goods of material wealth and the services of political power. . . . [The] essentially Western and quintessentially American values are now universal. And they define what there is to know about everyone, everywhere--beginning, of course, with ourselves" (Opinion, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 15, 1989: B1-2).

30. To answer otherwise might suggest that women, after all, are not competent to teach "men's" science and literature, and do not belong in the academy. This does not necessarily follow. Indeed, there is substantial evidence that members of subordinate groups live in a "dual culture," in which they are required to be familiar with both their own language and culture and those of the dominant group(s) in their society, whereas it is one of the privileges of members of the dominant group(s) to be required to learn only their own language and culture, despising those of the subordinate group(s) as inferior and irrelevant. (See e.g., Cheri Kramarae, *Women and Men Speaking*, Rowley, MA: Newbury House, 1981, 9; Jack Winkler, "Gardens of nymphs: Public and private in Sappho's lyrics," in: Helene P.

Foley, ed., *Reflections of Women in Antiquity*, New York: Gordon and Breach, 1981, 68-69.)

31. This is not the place for an extended discussion of this point. Briefly, however: Deconstruction and post-structuralist theory have provided new insights in feminist scholarship, and have been used with brilliant effect by feminist scholars in elite academic circles. But their works are often couched in an exclusionary language that contradicts its own politics. And they betray, ignore, and suppress their indebtedness to the deconstructions of discourse provided earlier by many feminists in language either plainer or more playful (e.g., Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father, Gyn/ecology*, and other works).

32. Audre Lorde, "The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house," in: Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, eds., *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by radical women of color*, New York: Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, 1983, 101).

33. Berenice A. Carroll, "Feminism and the Professions: Ten Years Later," presented at the annual meeting of the American Historical Association in New York, December 27, 1989, *CGWH Newsletter*, vol. V, no. 3 (July 1980): 3.



## CCWHP-CGWH: 1990-1994

Lynn Weiner and Barbara Winslow

Our twentieth anniversary in 1989 was an occasion of celebration, reflection, and the publication of a pamphlet commemorating the history of CCWHP-CGWH. During the next five years, the newsletters and the sponsored activities at the AHA and Berkshire Conference remained the major way in which we served our growing constituency. Additionally, we increased our emphasis on graduate student needs, coordinating a national directory of graduate students, sponsoring graduate student events at the AHA and the Berkshire Conference, and promoting a graduate student dissertation award, which was first offered in 1991. In these years, too, we funded an annual prize in women's history for secondary students at the National History Day competition, cooperated with the International Federation for Research in Women's History, were active in various civil rights activities, and continued to correspond with people across the country and the world who were seeking information about women's history and women historians.

## Appendix A

### Original CCWHP Members

Berenice Carroll  
Betty Chmaj  
Bernice Rosenthal  
Susan Resnick  
Barbara Morgan  
Mimi Lowinger  
Hilda Smith  
Edith Lutzker  
Natalie Zemon Davis  
Constance Ashton Myers  
Lucille O'Connell  
Jane de Hart Matthews  
Joan Tyce Bloom  
Gillian Townshend Cell  
Sandra Keen  
Phyllis Stabble  
Ellen DuBois  
Gerda Lerner  
Carol Blesser  
Elizabeth Israels  
Charmarie J. Webb  
Marian A. Lowe  
Nancy Roelker  
Blanche Cook

## Appendix B

### Resolutions Passed at 1985 Business Meeting

I. We, the members of the Coordinating Committee of [sic] Women in the Historical Profession (CCWHP) and the Conference Group on Women's History (CGWH) assembled at the 100th Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association (AHA) are deeply concerned by certain circumstances and issues raised in the 1984-1985 trial of a 1979 Equal Economic Opportunity Commission (EEOC) case against Sears and Roebuck. In this trial a number of women's history experts were asked to testify on Sears' behalf, but only one accepted. Thus, a respected scholar buttressed Sears' defense against charges of sex discrimination under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. We urge the members of CCWHP and CGWH, as well as other women's historians and women's studies scholars, to inform themselves about the details of this case and to consider the responsibilities we have incurred by virtue of the growing achievements and recognition of feminist scholarship. Therefore we urge attention to the following questions:

1. What responsibility do feminist scholars bear to the women's movement?
2. Would it be appropriate to seek to define a set of ethical principles for feminist scholarship and its use similar to those accepted by other professional organizations?
3. What is the relationship of the ideology of domesticity to women's position in the paid labor force?

II. We believe that as scholars we may have many differing interpretations of the sources in women's history and we reject the claims of anyone to be representing a "true interpretation" of women's history.

III. We believe as feminist scholars we have a responsibility not to allow our scholarship to be used against the interests of women struggling for equity in our society.



## Appendix C

### Officers

#### **CCWHP Chairs and Presidents**

- 1969-1970 Berenice Carroll and Gerda Lerner, Co-chairs
- 1970-1971 Berenice Carroll, Chair
- 1972-1974 Sandi Cooper, President
- 1974-1976 Donna Boutelle, President
- 1976-1977 Mary Maples Dunn, President
- 1977-1979 Joan Hoff Wilson, President
- 1979-1982 Catherine Prelinger, President\*
- 1983-1985 Mollie C. Davis, President
- 1986-1988 Frances Richardson Keller, President
- 1989-1991 Margaret (Peg) Strobel, President
- 1992-1994 Mary Elizabeth (Betsy) Perry, President

#### **CGWH Chairs and Presidents**

- 1972-1973 Adele Simmons and Mollie Davis,  
Chairs for women's history
- 1974-1975 Renate Bridenthal, Chair for women's  
history and subsequently President of CGWH
- 1976-1978 Hilda Smith, President
- 1979-1981 Lois Banner, President
- 1982-1984 S. Barbara (Penny) Kanner, President
- 1985-1987 Phyllis Stock, President
- 1988-1990 Claire G. Moses, President
- 1991-1993 Nancy Hewitt, President

#### **Secretaries, Treasurers, Executive Directors**

- 1969-1971 Hilda Smith, Secretary-Treasurer
- 1972-1973 Joanna Zangrando and Karen Offen,  
Co-secretaries
- 1973-1979 Jordy Bell, Joanna Zangrando, Karen Offen,  
Co-secretaries
- 1975 Karen Offen, Secretary-Treasurer
- 1976 Barbara Dubins, Treasurer

1975-1977 Karen Offen, Treasurer  
1977-1982 Anita Rapone, Treasurer  
1980-1981 Adade Wheeler, Secretary  
1982-1988 Nupur Chaudhuri, Treasurer (1983-1988,  
Secretary)  
1989-1991 Lynn Weiner, Executive Director  
1989- Barbara Winslow, Executive Director

#### **Newsletter Editors**

1971-1973 Linda Kerber, Bulletin  
1974-1976 Arnita Jones, Bulletin  
1976 Nupur Chaudhuri, Newsletter and Bulletin  
1980-1983 Michel Dahlin, CGWH Newsletter  
1981 Janice Reiff, CCWHP Newsletter  
1982 Peg Strobel, CCWHP Newsletter  
1983-1984 Carole Hicke, CCWHP Newsletter  
1984 Joyce Baker, CGWH Newsletter  
1985 Nupur Chaudhuri, CCWHP Newsletter  
1985-1987 Phyllis Stock, CGWH Newsletter  
1986-1987 Ruth Willard, CCWHP Newsletter  
1988 Mary Rose, CCWHP Newsletter  
1988- Eileen Boris, CGWH Newsletter  
1989-1991 Bonnie Gordon, CCWHP Newsletter\*  
1992- Patty Seleski, CCWHP Newsletter

#### **Graduate Student Representative**

1983-1984 Elizabeth (Beth) Weisz-Buck\*  
1984-1987 Ruth M. Alexander  
1987-1989 Melanie Gustafson  
1989-1991 Stacy Rozek  
1992- Rosemarie Pegueros  
1992- Phyllis Hunter

\*Deceased