

Insights: Notes From the CCWH

Summer 2019 Vol 50: 2

DEATH, GRIEVING, AND THE NECESSITY OF HISTORY

Sasha Turner, Co-President

"You have been complaining a lot about being cold these days." My dear friend, Deirdre Cooper Owens (Dee-Dee) said to me on one of our daily phone calls. "Oh, you are grieving," she reminded herself, as if also to announce it to me.

I hadn't given much thought to the word grief. In fact, I had not described myself as grieving. When asked how I was doing, I coolly replied, "I am OK, just as long as no one asks me that question." My tried and true method of dealing with life's difficulties, I would recite to my concerned friends, was to compartmentalize.

I told myself I was compartmentalizing because I needed to be productive. I was living in the success of my first book, and I was in demand for talks, conferences, book and manuscript reviews, and contributions to volumes. "I cannot feel now," I would tell myself. I must take advantage of the wave, for this will end soon.

I continued to say yes to almost everything, even though signs that I should retreat were as bellowed as a fire alarm. I broke down crying just before a conference presentation when a dear colleague shared with me news of her pregnancy. I felt cold no matter how many layers I wore, or how high I blasted the heat. I missed more and more deadlines. As I watched January turn into February, March, April, and May, and missed deadlines piled high, I told myself I missed deadlines because I was travelling so much and once I had time to sit still my productive rhythm would return. The deadline for this newsletter came and went, still nothing, and I was still in denial.

On another of our daily phone calls I told Dee-Dee I was wearing one of my favorite yellow – bright and sunny – dresses. "It was a dark, dreary, and cold day in Connecticut," I said, "and I wore sunshine yellow to spread the warmth I brought from home (Jamaica)."

Again, she insisted on a grief diagnosis. But this time she shared with me her recent reading of Joan Didion's *The Year of Magical Thinking*. [1] Didion's inclusion of Emily Post's book of etiquette that prescribed offering something warm – tea, soup, a blanket – to someone experiencing loss, made it apparent to Dee-Dee that my body was grieving even if I refused to acknowledge it. [2]

As I missed two more deadlines, I did the next thing after compartmentalization: find a book. Books always have the answer. I heard the echoes of Dee-Dee's words about Didion's reflections on grief, and so I started there. The first lines in Didion's *The White Album*, "We tell ourselves stories in order to live," brought me to a realization and a mission. I wasn't living at all, I had no story, I needed a story. [3]

DEATH, GRIEVING, AND THE NECESSITY OF HISTORY (CONTINUED)



The story that would come was not what I expected. After reading *The Year of Magical Thinking*, I anticipated writing a journal entry reflecting on the unexpected death of my dearest aunt on December 30, 2018 and the fear of what such news would do to my mother, Mama (in biological terms my father's mother, my grandmother). Mama and my aunt shared an extraordinarily close bond. By April my family and I no longer watched Mama closely. From the unveiling of the terrible news through to the ni-nite (ritual of singing, cooking, and dancing at the home of the deceased to commemorate handing over the departed to the spirit world), funeral, and burial services, Mama appeared strong. [4] My 89-year-old mother/grandmother understood that her beloved daughter had died, suddenly, inexplicably. And, even though she appeared a bit confused as she moved back and forth between understanding there would be no burial because my aunt was cremated, Mama appeared cool and collected. We were all convinced by the coolness with which Mama had taken the news, and her practical (at least what was vocalized) response to the death – “we just have to bury her.” Mama's death on April 10, 2019 came as a shock to us all. Mama was taken to the hospital the previous night due to difficulty breathing. We were not too worried as this seemed a routine emergency room visit, as had been the case on a few occasions several months prior to my aunt's passing. A few hours later, just after mid-night Mama unexpectedly, but expectedly, transitioned. Mama had a lifelong heart disease, and until now, she had long beaten all odds and thrived.

In the midst of processing these deaths, I was contemplating a death of another kind. The death of history, or at least, as the article and discussions to which I was a voyeur, framed it, “the dying discipline.” [5] As I danced to the rhythms of the bands that echoed into the night at the ni-nite for Mama and my aunt, my mind locked onto the songs and their lyrics. The fierce drum beats also awakened in me a fire that burned away my worries, fears, and anxieties, but kindled curiosities. Captivated by the drums' complex beats, I wondered, is this what my ancestors intended?

Despite my compartmentalization, my worlds remain deeply imbricated; for no matter my conscious efforts to turn off my historian brain, I could not help but meditate on histories of death and grieving in the midst of facing (or avoiding) my own grief.

A few years ago, I began researching these topics to throw off the shadows that loomed. I spent almost a decade in the archives confronting death after death after death of enslaved women and children who succumbed to the ravages of their enslavement. My mind remained unsettled as I pieced together ciphers of lives. I told a story of those whose only evidence of existence was tabulations that marked increase and decrease profits. Told as an elegy, I wrestled with the idea that the enslaved celebrated the death of loved ones because death was a passage that transported the departed home. But could one have celebrated such passage knowing that the river now flowed in multiple directions? Mothers and children were born of different worlds: one African, the other, the Americas.

The winds of winter howled in the frozen north (Connecticut), and I remained chilled not by the arctic breeze but by specter of dual separation: separated by death and separation from home (Jamaica). I needed a passage and a vessel from my exile. And there it was, the promise of summer peeping through Sankofa's eyes.

I have known of Haile Gerima's film, *Sankofa* [6] for many years now, but until this semester, I had not conceived of a way or time to include it in my classes. Unavailable for purchase or loan from my university library or local libraries, I could not access the film. But the weekend before I planned to screen it, Dee-Dee brought her copy to loan me while we were unexpectedly working in Philadelphia. I am reminded, trust in the wisdom of the ancestors and those they inhabit to guide the wayward.

Sankofa is an Akan word that means go back and get it. For the African Diaspora, it means commingling the old with the now to create something new. [7] In a version of the ni-nite songs, the commingling becomes apparent. Singers celebrated reuniting with decedent loved ones in a heaven because they never visited an Obeah man or bathed in 'madda's (mother) bathpan' (to take a ritual bath). During the era of British colonial rule and enslavement, colonial authorities forced Christian conversion, and criminalized and prohibited Obeah and other spiritual traditions practiced by the enslaved. Despite criminalization, some practices endured, though not unscathed. Belief in an afterlife persisted in song, but the requirement of shared birth place lost significance in favor of shared beliefs and rituals (Christian). Surely, the British remained implacable colonizers, but the incorporation of Christian beliefs reflected the needs of the subjected population, who turned "sorrow into meaning" by pulling together a phantasmagoria of old and new traditions. [8]

The sun is hottest on the first day of returning home. At nights the drum rhythms bellowed sweeter and the songs echoed more deeply. I floated without a body, taking in myth, ritual, and community. I floated at the crossroads of historian and ritual participant. I marveled at the uses, beauty, and the necessity of history. Reading *The Year of Magical Thinking* led me back to the magic of history. I didn't need to be alone so Mama and my aunt would come back. I needed the community of my kin.

We collectively burrowed our way through the cruel and heavy fog of death by narrating stories of a future reunion, threaded by a knowing of the past handed down through singing and dancing, drumming and storytelling. The warmth of home travelled with me and cracked the ice to which I returned. My body now warms from shared ritual but burns from anger of history's predicament as a dying discipline. Interpretations of the past are a necessity for living. From an artist's muse "to construct meaning in the face of chaos," [9] to chronicles that tell of a nation's building and greatness, a community's struggle for self-understanding and understanding their relationship with other communities, and an individual's search for meaning, "we tell ourselves stories in order to live." [10] History is the story and the foundation of the stories we tell.

1. Joan Didion, *The Year of Magical Thinking* (New York: Alfred A. Knoff) 2005.

2. Didion, *Magical Thinking*, p. 56

3. Didion, *The White Album* (New York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1979), p.11

4. Ni-Nite (in some writings nine-nights) practices vary across Jamaica. In some sections of the island, the first eight days after death are marked by Dinki Mini singing and dancing, and the ninth night is concluded with a religious observation. In other parts of the island, the ni-nite, also known as the set-up, is the only gathering of singing, music, and cooking following death. Despite differences, they all intend to convey the handing over of the dead to the spirit world. For descriptive accounts of see, Edith Clarke *My Mother who Fathered me: A Study of the Family in Three Selected Communities in Jamaica* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1966), p. and Laura Tanna, *Jamaican Folk Tales and Oral Histories* (Kingston: Institute of Jamaica Publications), p. 46.

Bridget Brereton, "History in Decline?" *Trinidad Express.com*, May 8, 2019 https://www.trinidadexpress.com/opinion/columnists/history-in-decline/article_ef69a372-7206-11e9-a6da-8743b4c0c1d5.html (accessed May 22, 2019)

5. Haile Gerima, *Sankofa*, 1993.

6. Christel Temple, "The Emergence of Sankofa Practice in the United States: A Modern History" *Journal of Black Studies* 41, no. 1 (September 2010) pp. 127-150

7. Toni Morrison, *PEN/Borders Literary Service Award Remarks*, April 28, 2008, <https://pen.org/multimedia/2008-penborders-literary-service-award-toni-morrison/> Accessed May 22, 2019.

8. Morrison, *PEN/Borders Remarks*; Toni Morrison's inspiration from Margaret Garner's life in the creation of *Beloved* is one of the best examples of this. For Morrison's reflection on her wrestling with larger questions of Garner's life and the time and place in which she lived, see Christine Yohe, "Enslaved Women's Resistance and Survival Strategies in Francis Ellen Watkins Harper's 'The Slave Mother: A Tale of the Ohio and Toni Morrison's *Beloved* and Margaret Garner" in *Gendered Resistance: Women, Slavery, and*

Women, Slavery, and the Legacy of Margaret Garner edited by Mary E. Frederickson and Delores M. Walters (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2013), p.108-110.

10. Arthur Marwick, *The Nature of History* (London: Macmillan, 1989), p.14-15.

Didion, *The White Album*, p.11

Notes from the Executive Director

Sandra Trudgen Dawson, Executive Director, CCWH

Dear CCWH Members,

The university that I have been teaching at for the past five semesters recently “rebranded itself.” The University now welcomes visitors to “our community of inquiring minds.”

Catchy tagline. Attractive branding. The hope, of course, is to attract more students because the students are who make our profession what it is—we are educators.

We are also human as Sasha’s column reminds us. Very human. Grief is a very powerful emotion. There have been times in my life where I have felt the need to “rebrand” myself after a time of loss.

My most recent loss is that of institutional affiliation. I will not be teaching at the “re-branded” University. Rather, I have “rebranded” myself as an Independent Scholar and Researcher. I feel as though I have transitioned from the anonymity of contingent labor to the extraordinary world of independent scholarship!

This summer I hope to complete the research and writing for my forthcoming monograph (with Lexington Books) *Midwives and Mothers Under Fire: Reproductive Labour in Interwar and Wartime Britain*.

I feel privileged to be a part of a community of inquiring minds—the women (and men) of the CCWH who educate, mentor, research and write about the histories that can sometimes make us feel uncomfortable. As Sasha has written, we can only fully understand ourselves by telling the stories that are the foundation of our histories.

I want to share with you some of the amazing histories that our members have written. Go to <https://theccwh.org/category/member-publications/> to read more:

Jacqueline-Bethel Tchouta Mougoué, *Gender, Separatist Politics, and Embodied Nationalism in Cameroon*, (University of Michigan Press, 2019)

Jill E. Kelly, *To Swim with Crocodiles: Land, Violence, and Belonging in South Africa, 1800-1996* (Michigan State University Press, 2018).

Diane M. T. North, *California at War: The State and the People during World War I* (University of Kansas Press, 2018).

Farina King, *The Earth Memory Compass: Diné Landscapes and Education in the Twentieth Century* (University of Kansas Press, 2018).

Karen Offen and Chen Yan, eds., *Women’s History at the Cutting Edge* (Routledge, 2019).

Karen Offen, *The Woman Question in France, 1400-1870* (Cambridge University Press, 2018); paperback (March 2019)

Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, *Sisters and Rebels: A Struggle for the Soul of America* (W.W. Norton & Company, 2019)

Deanna Ferree Womack, *Protestants, Gender and the Arab Renaissance in Late Ottoman Syria* (Edinburgh University Press, 2019)

Katherine M. Marino, *Feminism for the Americas: The Making of an International Human Rights Movement* (University of North Carolina Press, 2019).

Keira V. Williams, *Amazons in America: Matriarchs, Utopians, and Wonder Women in U.S. Popular Culture* (LSU Press, 2019).

And so many more books by our community of inquiring minds!

In Sisterhood--Sandra



Membership Programs & Opportunities

Ilaria Scaglia, Membership Coordinator

The Revolution's Humble Bricks

In the season of spring-cleaning Excel spreadsheets and re-staffing committees, I was reminded once more of the humble, yet essential work required by an organization like ours. I know from experience that writing newsletter columns and moderating e-mentorship sessions is fun; data entering is not always as enthralling. I hear that sitting on award committees and learning about other members' work is inspiring, but also hard work. I have the pleasure of knowing in person some of the incredible people who quietly and eminently fulfill these tasks, and I want to use this column to commend their labors. I also seek to recruit some more volunteers to ensure the smooth running of our beloved organization in the years to come.

To all who might be considering stepping in, here are some defining characteristics and skills that in my mind make all the difference. Even if they reflect only my view, I hope you will find them useful as you embark on this adventure!

Reliability, delivering what you promised you would. In the age of "ghosting" in all realms of life, this is key. The size of the commitment you take on does not matter (I will list at the end some small, yet crucial tasks that take only minutes yet are vital for CCWH). Big or small, however, these tasks need to be completed (or notice needs to be given if something arises and somebody else needs to step in).

A marathon-like mentality. Activism—and academia in general, as our e-mentors often reminded us—resembles a 42 km-haul more than a 100 meter-sprint. Results are rarely immediate, and pacing is a must. The good news is that CCWH is a relay staffed by an army of enthusiastic volunteers. Yet it is not practical to change runners at every turn. During my term on the membership committee, I noticed that the happiest and most successful individuals are usually people who are really good at "compartmentalizing" bits of activism into their schedule (doing CCWH emails during breaks; artfully constructing their schedule so that CCWH tasks do not distract or drain from other obligations but fit—and sometimes even enrich—their career and wellbeing). I try to learn from them.

Some specific technical skills. This is more relevant to some tasks than to others; yet, in general, CCWH is always looking for people who are proficient in Word Press as this is the software that it uses for both website and newsletter. Familiarity with Excel is also helpful for a number of posts.

A broad and open conception of activism. Most often the term activism evokes sounds of chants and images of demonstrations; the term “political” also immediately comes to mind. But, as one of our e-mentors reminded us in a recent session on this topic, a simple act of kindness towards a student or a colleague counts as activism, as do empathy and support for people who are in a temporary or uncertain job situations. I will add some more items to this list: checking emails, tallying names, filtering and sorting cells, designing and paginating pages, making charts for a yearly report in an organization who concretely helps women in history thrive. These humble bricks are essential for any form of long-lasting activism, and for a true and substantial revolution for women in history. They provide the structure that supports it and the strength that makes it endure. Please do consider serving as one of such bricks in whatever capacity and measure you see fit. We will all be stronger as a result. Here are some of the tasks big and small that you may want to undertake:

Have an extra couch and a sunny disposition? Join the CCWH Host program! <https://theccwh.org/ccwh-resources/host-program/>

Time only for hanging a CCWH brochure on your office door? Or for sending out an email to your students and/or peers? Become a CCWH University Representative! <https://theccwh.org/ccwh-resources/university-representatives/>

Up for a couple more emails and maybe organizing a small event? Become a CCWH Conference Liaison! <https://theccwh.org/ccwh-resources/conference-liaisons/>

Open for a skype chat once in a while? You can serve as a CCWH mentor! Or, if you are more into “admin,” you can join the mentorship committee. <https://theccwh.org/ccwh-resources/mentorship-program/>

Willing to put in a bit more? Maybe serve on an award committee, or as a graduate rep, or to help with the newsletter or the webpage? Email excedir@theccwh.org



Ilaria Scaglia

Congrats are in order!

Please join me in congratulating Kelly McCormick as she takes up her position in the History Department at the University of British Columbia in a tenure track position teaching modern Japanese history.

Kelly says, “I am so grateful to the CCWH for providing both professionalization support as well as being an inspiring network of women!”

Public History Forum

Elyssa Ford Public History Coordinator

National Council on Public History 2019 Conference Round-Up

It is that time of year for the annual report from the NCPH conference, held March 27-30 in Hartford, Connecticut. With the theme of “Repair Work,” Hartford’s history in gun manufacturing with the Colt factory, and the increasingly frequent school shootings, including the devastating Sandy Hook shooting in nearby Newton, the conference touched on timely, complex, and emotional topics.

To address these different issues, conference sessions were centered around the following sets of questions:

- *Repair work and time*: How do we assess the success of repair projects, is repair always positive, and can repair work be visionary and generative rather than fixing what is broken?
- *Repair work and collaboration*: Does the language of repair matter (i.e. restoration, reparation, renovation, etc.)?
- What can be repaired and how does the in/tangible play a role in this?
- *Repair work and equity*: Who decides what is worth repairing, how do we repair ourselves, and what repair work needs to be done within our own field?

As an organization that brings together students, academics, and professionals from the field, the NCPH has continued to embrace a diversity of participants and session formats. In addition to the traditional panels and roundtables, the NCPH conference includes structured conversations that are audience-driven discussions, point-counterpoint debates, workshops and skill labs, pop-ups, working groups, and community view-points. The full program can be seen at <https://ncph.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/2019-Annual-Meeting-Preliminary-Program-Web.pdf>.

Some of the most important and well-attended formats have been the “On the Fly” sessions because they allow for discussion on more current issues and debates that have taken place in the interim between the regular proposal deadline and the conference itself. At the 2018 conference, “On the Fly” sessions focused on responsive contextualization in the public history field, gun violence/safety/rights, and sexual harassment and discrimination in the public history field. The discussions on gun violence were expanded at the Hartford conference in 2019 with a presentation and public discussion “Coltsville on Context” held at a local church, a workshop on digital documentation and mass gun violence, a panel on interpreting firearms in museums today, advice on working with family and friends of gun violence victims to document tragedy, and a walking tour of the Coltsville National Historical Park

Other innovative sessions included pop-ups that focused on exhibits, activities, and skill labs in a less formal environment. These were first introduced in at the 2017 conference and were expanded and better attended in 2019. Several focused on advice and skills. For instance, you could ask advice from a Library of Congress librarian, learn how to work with television news producers on tv segments, and take the opportunity to meet *The Public Historian* journal editors. There even was a session on bystander intervention training to help prevent sexual harassment and assault in the places we work. The exhibits made for a nice addition to the exhibit hall and allowed for deeper engagement and entertainment than often is available in those

conference spaces. Pop-up exhibits this year included the LGBTQ experience in Connecticut, created by students at Central Connecticut State University; the Atlantic City Trump Museum; an artistic display called Death Beauty, and Colt's Firearms; and one that asked attendees to become the exhibit themselves by sharing their thoughts on what NCPH has meant to them. This final pop-up acted as a tie between the 2019 conference and that of 2020 when the NCPH will be celebrating the 40th anniversary of its founding. To further mark that occasion, the organization is in the midst of an endowment campaign, and this conference pop-up was intended to support the campaign and help develop programming for the 2020 conference.

In addition to the discussion that always plays a central role at any conference, an important part of the NCPH annual event is to recognize outstanding work and contributions to the field. In 2019 the NCPH bestowed the Outstanding Public History Award to *We are Roots: Black Settlers and their Experiences with Discrimination on the Canadian Plains* by a collaborative group of scholars and public history institutions in Canada. The documentary film uses the stories from nineteen descendants of original African American settlers who came to Canada between 1905-1912.

The NCPH Book Award went to Chip Colwell at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science for *Plundered Skulls and Stolen Spirits: Inside the Fight to Reclaim Native America's Culture*. The award for best consulting work went to members of Historical Research Associates, Inc., for their administrative history of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail.



Elyssa Ford

The 2020 NCPH conference is scheduled for March 18-21 in Atlanta, Georgia. The theme "Threads of Change" calls for proposals that examine historical meaning and cultural memory, both that which is tangible and elements that are intangible. Submitters are asked to consider the following questions: What are our common threads, and how can we ensure their strength and durability? How are anniversary occasions and watershed moments catalysts for change? How does the work of public historians support generation and regeneration for our country, communities, and ourselves? Proposals are due by July 15, and more information can be found at <https://ncph.org/conference/2020-annual-meeting/calls-for-proposals/>.

Even if you do not plan to participate on the program, the 2020 conference will offer many opportunities to explore the Atlanta area and to engage more deeply in its complicated history. It also will be an exciting conference, filled with celebration, introspection, and questions for the future, as the NCPH will be celebrating its 40th anniversary. I invite all of you to join us for this momentous occasion in public history and for an engaging and stimulating conference.

Call for Papers

Global Food History-2020 Special Issue

WWII Food Rationing in Britain, the Empire and the Commonwealth

Before World War II, Britain occupied the center of a vast food network, stretching from Asia to the Americas. However, the start of the war signaled alterations in the interdependence of this food system, creating new patterns as well as ruptures in the links between Britain, the Empire and the Commonwealth. German U-boat activities, and tonnage losses, shifts in shipping space to accommodate military hardware and personnel, and alterations in agricultural production led to the redirection, reduction and reconfiguration of consumables and foodways throughout the Empire and the Commonwealth. Each nation in this intricate, global web experienced the altered food situation differently. Many countries, including Britain, instituted food rationing to combat fluctuating food levels and food insecurity, while other parts of the Empire had rationing thrust upon it by enemy occupiers.

Next year, 2020, will mark the 80th anniversary of the introduction of food rationing on the British home front during the Second World War. In recognition of this historic event, *Global Food History* is putting out a call for papers to construct a special journal issue which will explore the complexities of food rationing in Britain and the countries of the Empire and Commonwealth during WWII. We are interested in examining this issue from national and personal perspectives. We invite abstracts for articles covering any topic related to the theme of food rationing in Britain, the Empire and Commonwealth including, but not limited to, the following:

- Gender, Race, Class
- Food insecurity, inequality and exploitation
- Memory
- Propaganda
- Alterations in food rituals and customs
- Negotiation and ways of resistance
-

Proposals should be submitted to **Kelly Spring** (kaspring2@gmail.com) by **June 1st, 2019** and include the following:

- Title of proposed article
- Abstract with approximate word count of article (maximum 500 words)
- Biographical information (short CV)
- Contact information (e-mail, telephone and postal address)

Applicants will be notified about the journal's decision by June 15th, 2019.

Accepted articles for the special issue will be due by January 1st, 2020.

The special issue will be published in February 2020.

*Note that a typical paper for this journal should be no more than 8,000 words, inclusive of tables, references, figure captions, endnotes.

Global Food History is a peer-reviewed, academic journal with an international scope, presenting new research in food history from the foremost scholars in the field. The journal welcomes original articles covering any period from prehistory to the present and any geographical area, including transnational and world histories of food. Submissions on subjects relating to and from contributors outside of Europe and North America are particularly welcomed.

A Call for Volunteers to Research and Write Biographical Sketches of Woman Suffrage Activists

Thomas Dublin, Distinguished Professor Emeritus at the State University of New York at Binghamton has sent along the following request to our members.

Since March 2015, the online journal and database, Women and Social Movements in the United States (WASM), has been engaged in successive efforts to create an Online Biographical Dictionary of the Woman Suffrage Movement in the United States. The project began with the submission by Alice Paul biographer, Jill D. Zahniser, of a database of 224 women who picketed the White House in 1917-1919. Over time we identified more NWP activists, so that the total group now numbers 400.

As that first effort gathered steam, we realized that biographical sketches would nicely complement a project we'd been pursuing at WASM for a number of years, our collection of writings by and about Black Women Suffragists. In the past four years, we have posted on our database more than 1,900 writings by and about Black women suffragists. We have now identified 280 activists and are soliciting bio sketches for the remaining 70 who do not have bio sketches in major reference works.

We are particularly eager for new volunteers to join the project. We hope that you would like to write one or two bio sketches and thus contribute to the construction of this new reference tool. We are also looking for volunteers to copyedit and fact check completed sketches. Lastly, we can use people skilled in genealogy to find birth, marriage, and death information on woman suffragists for whom we already have sketches. If you would like to contribute to the project, please get in touch with Tom Dublin, who is coordinating the work of the project. You may email him at tdublin@binghamton.edu.

Graduate News

Kelly McCormick, Graduate Student Representative

Each new stage of the academic career would be exponentially more difficult to negotiate without the knowledge of those who have recently experienced the challenges of that phase. Last August, Jane S. Halonen and Dana S. Dunn wrote in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* that "an assistant professor's first year on the tenure track — with its vastly heightened demands — will be a panoply of emotion: terror, confusion, irritation, exhilaration, and, last but not least, hope." Anticipating moving from graduate school to the next exciting chapter of a tenure track job, I have been thinking about the psychological transition that is necessary in going from being a graduate student to considering yourself a peer in a department of distinguished scholars. I turned to CCWH member Nicole Pacino at the University of Alabama in Huntsville for advice on approaches to this transformation and to hear her perspective on how to have a successful first few years on the job.

Kelly McCormick: Can you speak to the challenges of transitioning from graduate school to starting a tenure track job?

Nicole Pacino: It takes time and you have to be gentle with yourself. Just remember that the confidence comes with time. Give yourself space and support to experience the transition. I think it's really important to try to mentally extract yourself from your PhD granting institution and throw yourself into the new institution where you are. To do that you have to embrace the new and strange as much as possible. That said, it's possible for imposter syndrome to reach a new level when you become an assistant professor. In some

ways you feel happy these people wanted to invest in you and on the other hand you might think: “Why me? I am going to make a mistake and lose their confidence.” That is why it is really important to ask for a mentor in this early period. Your goal for the first semester is to figure out who has a similar approach as you do and who you trust and feel like you can go to when you have questions after a department meeting. Find allies and mentors you can ask questions to that you might be afraid will make you look dumb. Part of it is trying to shift your mindset. You have a title. You have a Ph.D. You know things about history. Embrace this. Also, don’t underestimate how important little pep talks can be.

KM: What helped the most in your first few years on the job? What/who were the best resources?

NP: It will fly by but going into your second year you will have a sense of how things operate and what the students are like. I was in a small department, so I had immediate mentors in my department, but I made fast friendships with people in other departments. Finding mentors in other departments can be really helpful because you might be more comfortable with speaking to them. Definitely use professional networks like CCWH. This is our job. As part of the CCWH I don’t have to know you personally to want you to succeed! Finally try to develop a health work life balance. Make friends outside the university! That way your job doesn’t become all-encompassing for you.

KM: How did you approach writing lectures and also finding time for your own research?

NP: Every time you teach a new class it will take over your life. The first class you teach will take as much time as you let it so put limits on the time you take. If you teach a class others have taught before don’t reinvent the wheel, ask them to share materials. You can then edit it to your style but having the template already there will be immensely helpful. The first semester I taught world history it took me four hours to prep a class. Once you figure out how long it takes you just have to budget your time and allocate it. I dedicate the first part of the day to my own writing and research and then the last part for teaching prep.

KM: How did you find ways to advocate for yourself or feel more comfortable with being strategic about what you say yes to and what you politely decline agreeing to do?

NP: Hopefully your department will protect you in your first few years. It will be good if they can help you participate in only strategic service opportunities that will help you build toward your tenure portfolio. Have a meeting with the chair early on to nail down what the expectations are and as much transparency as you can have the better. That gets me to the fact that you need to learn how to be judicious with the word no.

KM: That seems like a major shift to me. I am so accustomed to the graduate student mentality of seizing every opportunity that comes my way that getting myself to turn down offers seems particularly difficult.

NP: The minefield is in the professional realm: you need to prioritize peer-reviewed articles and the book. If you get requests that sound interesting but won’t help with your tenure portfolio you need to say no. Have the conversation with your department where you clarify how they will consider edited volumes, book reviews, and other types of publications. You don’t want to say yes to something that might be in a nebulous category.

KM: Thank you for sharing your perspective and advice.

NP: Just remember that nobody navigates the world alone, reach out and make allies!

Nicole Pacino is a current CCWH Executive Board Member and is the 2019 Chair of the Nupur Chaudhuri Best First Article Award Committee.

WOODROW WILSON FOUNDATION NAMES 2019 WOMEN'S STUDIES FELLOWS

PRINCETON, NJ (Wednesday, May 1, 2019)—The Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation has selected 10 Ph.D. candidates as Woodrow Wilson Dissertation Fellows in Women's Studies for 2019.

WW DISSERTATION FELLOWS IN WOMEN'S STUDIES, 2019

Bayan Abusneineh • University of California, San Diego, ethnic studies
Chosen and Imagined: Racial and Gendered Politics of Reproduction in Israel/Palestine

Samina Ali • University of Miami, English
Bad Women and the Politics of Recognition in Post-9/11 American Literature

Hillary Ash • University of Pittsburgh, communication
A Rhetoric of Terminologies: Names, Definitions, Classifications and the Production of Ignorance in the Early HIV/AIDS Epidemic

Lizbett Benge • Arizona State University, gender studies
Sensing the State and Strategizing Survival: Art, Ethnography, and the Lived Experiences of Foster Care Alumni

Hannah Frydman • Rutgers University-New Brunswick, history
Between the Lines: Sex, Work, and Business in the Parisian Classifieds, 1881-1940

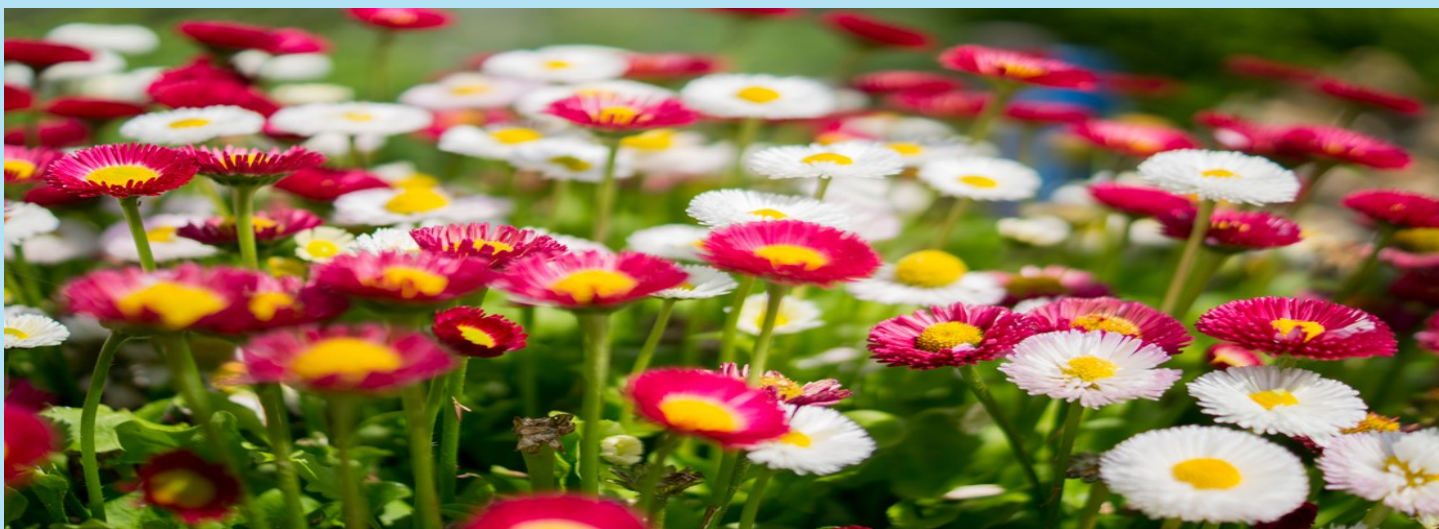
Elizabeth Kinnamon • University of Arizona, gender and women's studies
Attention as Method: Marxism, Feminism, and The Politics of Presence

Michaela Kleber • College of William & Mary, history
Gendered Societies, Sexual Empires: Early French Colonization among the Illinois

Isabel Pike • University of Wisconsin-Madison, sociology
Looking for Future: Gender, Work, and Social Change in Kenya

Virginia Thomas • Brown University, American studies
Dark Albums: Regions of Racial Violence, Family Feeling, and Temporal Intimacies in the U.S. South

Hannah Frydman and Michaela Kleber are CCWH members!



Irene Ledesma Prize

The Irene Ledesma Prize is awarded to a Ph.D. graduate student and intended to support research in western women's and gender history. The \$1,000 Prize supports travel to collections or other research expenses related to the histories of women and gender in the North American West. Applicants must be enrolled in a Ph.D. program at the time of application. The Coalition for Western Women's History (CWWH) will award the Prize at the CWWH Breakfast during the Western History Association annual conference in October 2019 in Las Vegas, NV. The recipient will also be awarded a one-year complimentary membership in the CWWH.

For more information visit the CWWH website: <http://www.westernwomenshistory.org>.

Deadline for applications is JUNE 15, 2019

Application Procedure: To apply, submit one copy of the following (as a single PDF file) to each member of the committee:

1. Cover sheet with your name, contact information, project title, name of reference
2. Curriculum Vitae
3. A brief description of the research project and an explanation of how the prize funds would support the research (not exceeding three double-spaced pages, addressing the above criteria).
4. A line-item budget
5. Letter of support from the student's dissertation advisor (to be sent separately)

Irene Ledesma Prize Committee:

Katherine Morrissey (chair)
University of Arizona
kmorris@email.arizona.edu

Margie Brown-Coronel
California State University-Fullerton
mbrown-coronel@fullerton.edu

Traci Brynne Voyles
Loyola Marymount University
tvoyles@lmu.edu

Books Available for Review

Interested in writing a book review for an upcoming issue of the Newsletter? The following books are available for review. Contact Whitney Leeson if you are interested (wleeson@roanoke.edu).

Gallagher, Julie A. and Barbara Winslow, eds. *Reshaping Women's History: Voices of Nontraditional Women Historians*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2018.

Gallagher, Noelle. *Itch, Clap, Pox: Venereal Disease in the Eighteenth-Century Imagination*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018.

Little, Ann M. *The Many Captivities of Esther Wheelwright*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016.

Newman, Brooke N. *A Dark Inheritance: Blood, Race, and Sex in Colonial Jamaica*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018.

Ware, Susan. *Why They Marched: Untold Stories of the Women Who Fought for the Right to Vote*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2019.

Book Reviews

Children of Paradise: The Struggle for the Soul of Iran. Secor, Laura. New York: Riverhead Books, 2016. 508 pp. \$30.00. ISBN 978-1-59448-710-1.

Malek Abisaab,
McGill University

Laura Secor's *Children of Paradise* offers us an excellent overview of the liberal experience in Iran during and after the Islamic Revolution in 1978. She captures the reader's attention with her lucid language and vivid narrative that resembles John Reed's, *Ten Days that Shook the World*. She was a child when she became intrigued by the political developments that engulfed Iran, leading up to the hostage crisis, which erupted on November 1979. Her desire to explore the country grew stronger when the reformist Mohammad Khatami became the president of Iran in 1997. As a journalist, her odyssey commenced when her editor at *Lingua Franca* asked her to write, what she termed, the "dream story," on Iran (XII). She read a myriad of books and articles on Iran before she visited it for the first time in 2004. She conducted many interviews "through elaborate chains of in-person contacts" and held meetings with women and men who were struggling to bring democratic change in the post-revolutionary political institutions (XIII). Secor, however, does not account for many of the sources she used during these meetings and interviews, which were difficult to hold, given the severe restrictions and intimidations that the activists in this anti-systemic movement faced. Despite these circumstances, Secor managed to write a profound book of the way in which reform had come together then fell apart. She captured the aspirations and discourses of diverse actors in cultural salons and prisons, and their emotional and intellectual transformations (XIII-XIV).

The book is directed to a wide readership, and as such, it does not carry a formal academic style. In terms of format, it does not offer the kind of citations expected in academic books. She provides a section for notes that resembles an endnote section. The map of Iran helps readers locate the major Iranian cities and towns mentioned in the book. The thematic organization of the book starts with the tumult years of the revolution (3-21), and the birth of the Islamic Republic (22-50), then moves to cover what she describes as the "Period of Constant Contemplation" (50-81), and "Baptism of Blood" (82-103).

Major spokespersons and emblematic figures of the liberal movement were too numerous to cover. Secor provided a thoughtful account for some of them. She noted that all of these figures emerged from one of the following three circles. The first, was a monthly anti-systemic magazine co-founded by the leading intellectual, Abdolkarim Soroush (b. 1945), called *Kiyan*. The second, was the Center for Strategic Research. The third, was the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance (*Vezerat-e Ershad*). *Kiyan* was free from the state's control and was closely identified with a leading intellectual, namely, Soroush. Eventually, it became the mouthpiece of the reformist movement (81). Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani (1934-2017) founded the Center for Strategic Research initially to assemble Islamic Leftists and co-opt them. Rafsanjani presided over the Center even though, according to Secor, he never consulted with its members on any major question. Despite Rafsanjani's attempts to silence these reformists, the Center managed to become a forum for the Islamic Left and argued for "participatory democracy within Iran's Islamic Republic" (140). In its turn, *Vezerat-e Ershad* helped print thousands of books (130). Secor argued that ideologues and politicians who were shaped by either one of these institutions questioned the role of religion in state bureaucracy and advocated a republican state against the *velayat-e faqih* (the rule of the jurist as representative of the Hidden Imam, and hence the rule of the ulama (Islamic clergy)) authoritarian model. She was keen on asserting that they did not abandon religion or advocate a secular path for change but favored a regenerative understanding of religion that would address, "the needs and realities of modern people in a modern state." They considered themselves loyal to the Islamic Republic and believed in peaceful and democratic means to cause reform in Iran (145-146).

The book delineates the significant role that revolutionary ideas of iconic ideologues like Ali Shariati (1933-1977) played in the pre-revolutionary era and how it was recast in the "liberal strain of revolutionary thought" (50). The next generation of reformists, or the "children of Shariati," as Secor identifies them, were

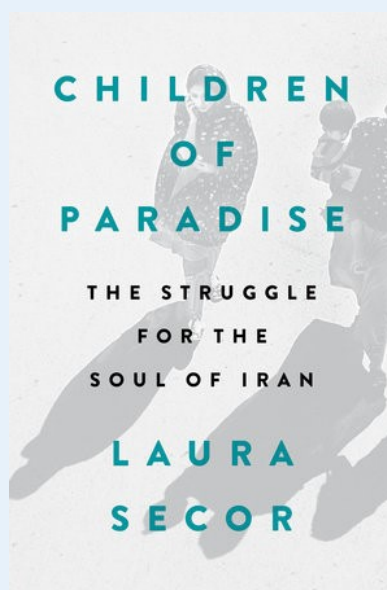
were utopians, enthusiastic, and extremists, adhered to the Shi'ism of Imam 'Ali (599 AD-662 AD) and to concepts of "universal social justice and emancipation through Islam" (50).

Secor sheds light on AbdolKarim Soroush, who envisioned an Islam detached from the ulama, one which removes "politics from religion, faith from prejudice, rational debate and criticism from theological dogmatism" (114). Soroush pointed to the weakness in the theological foundations of *velayat-e-faqih* and called for evaluating its social and political functions and their consequences. He argued that democracy cannot be derived from Islam but Muslim politicians should enjoy and maintain good Muslim values (117). The utopian ideals of Soroush attracted a wider audience after the death of Ayatollah Khomeini (1902-1989), which aroused the suspicions of state officials who ordered his arrest in 1995. He challenged totalitarian rule in Iran and proposed, "religious pluralism and philosophical moderation as antidotes" (143).

Ideologues of the Islamic Left, Secor explained, adopted an anti-American worldview, supported the Palestinian cause, and attacked the American bias toward Israel. The Islamic Republic would stand for nothing if it did not stand against American hegemony. The Islamic Students' Association formed by radical Islamist students was vociferous in that regard (131-133). Another Islamic Leftist figure is the scholar Hossein Bashiriyeh (b. 1953) who found resonance in the theories on the state by two prominent Marxist thinkers, Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) and Nicos Poulantzas (1936-1979). Like them, Bashiriyeh believed that the state is not a tool manipulated by a particular class. Rather, it represents a coalition of several capitalist groups whose vital interests and alliances create a hegemonic power, which mislead the working classes and make them defend the bourgeois system (138).

Finally, Secor sheds light on the significance of the ideas of Saeed Hajjarian (b. 1954) and Mohsen Kadivar (b. 1959) two leading scholars at the Center for Strategic Research. Hajjarian and Kadivar are presented as critical of the theories of Shariati and Khomeini and of their influence on the course of Islamic rule in Iran. They argued that they legitimized, "a new despotism from which both Islam and the political establishment needed to be extricated" (141). Kadivar, following the death of Khomeini, questioned the doctrine of *velayat-e faqih* and believed that it was an "Islamized theory of monarchy, which owed more to Plato and the follies of Persian history than to Shiism." Moreover, he believed that the ulama should not have political authority and called for a political system premised on representative democracy (42).

Overall, this is a profound, well-written book, which offers important insights into the dynamics of the Islamic Revolution and the struggles of its liberal offshoots. My critique of this work, however, relates to Secor's emphasis on "liberalism" as the source of the resistance movements against the Iranian government and the fathers of the revolution. In the rich intellectual ambience of Iran, where diverse pietistic and secular elements converge it would have been important to account for the local Iranian-Islamic traditions, from where such a resistance emerged, and which cannot be easily described as liberal.



Book Reviews Continued

Experiences of Japanese American Women During and After World War II: Living in Internment Camps and Rebuilding Life Afterwards. Yamaguchi, Precious. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2014. 101pp. \$39.99. ISBN: 978-0-7391-9242-9.

Elizabeth Ann Bryant,
Houston Community College.

Precious Yamaguchi, in her 2014 work *Experiences of Japanese American Women During and After World War II: Living in Internment Camps and Rebuilding Life Afterwards*, tackles the history of Japanese-Americans after President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942. This gave the Secretary of War, Henry Stimson, the ability to forcibly relocate people considered a threat to American security from the west coast into the interior of the country. Approximately 120,000 Japanese-Americans, the majority of whom held United States citizenship, including the author's grandparents, were forced to leave their homes and most of their possessions behind. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 largely as a security measure because Japanese and Japanese Americans living along the west coast were thought to be potential enemy collaborators especially in the aftermath of the Pearl Harbor attack that had occurred only a few months earlier on December 7, 1941. Anti-Japanese prejudice was rampant throughout the country, but much of this sentiment was eradicated from public memory in the aftermath of World War II when the United States and Japan quickly became close allies. This was due to the Cold War when much of Asia—including China—had “fallen” to Communism, and the United States needed friends in the region

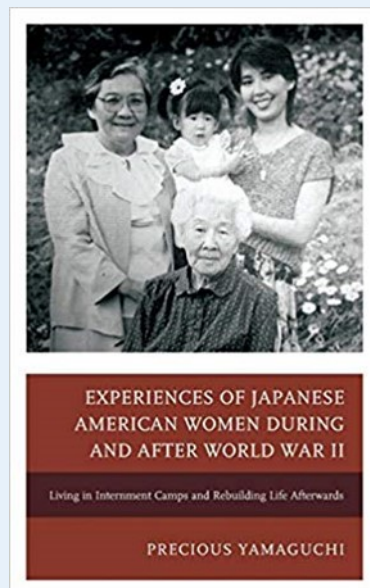
Therefore, many descendants of the men and women sent to these internment camps had little idea of what their families had experienced during America's participation in World War II. This was true for Yamaguchi who noted that when she “took Ethnic Studies courses in college and started to see the photographs of White business owners hanging signs saying “No Japs Allowed” or viewed hurtful or racist caricatures of Japanese-Americans during World War II” it impacted her deeply because she did not realize how bad conditions were during the war. As she continued doing research, Yamaguchi found that the lives of women sent to these internment camps were irrevocably changed. Yamaguchi decided to write this book partially as an autoethnography looking at the experiences of her own family, but also decided to interview other Japanese American women about their own struggles that came about due to internment.

One of the biggest strengths of this work comes from Yamaguchi's discussion of identity. Japanese-American women occupied a unique place in the United States during World War II. Due to the so-called Gentlemen's Agreement signed between the United States and Japan in 1908 under President Theodore Roosevelt, Japanese male immigration to the United States essentially stopped. Yet, under the terms of this deal, Japanese women were still allowed into the country and through the 1950s, 86% of the Japanese American population was female. Yet, as Yamaguchi shows, we hear very little about the wartime experiences of these women as women, but rather try and group all Japanese-Americans together. Yamaguchi recognizes the importance of listening to their unique perspective as women during and after the war. Most of the women who were interviewed for this work identified as *Niseis* (a second-generation Japanese-American) and *Sanseis* (third-generation Japanese-Americans.) Both groups of women were born in the United States, but had been taught not to speak of the past and, as Yamaguchi demonstrates, often “... internment camp victims used silence as a way of coping....” (17). As shown in Chapter Five, her interviews often took longer than expected due to “...Japanese American communication skills (were) influenced by the Japanese communication values of modesty, harmony, and holding back” (41). Therefore, the author often had to read between the lines looking at gestures, facial expressions, and the tone in which the interviewee

was responding to see if there was more that was not being said, and address that within this work. As someone who grew up in this culture, Yamaguchi feels well equipped to notice these nuances in a way that an outsider could not.

The other major strength of this work is the author's decision to look at the post-war years. Yamaguchi demonstrates that even after the War Relocation Authority closed the internment camps on June 30, 1945, the experiences these women faced during wartime continued to shape them. This is not surprising because the United States government made no provisions to help the internees. They came out of the camps with no homes and no businesses, both of which they were forced to sell under the provisions of Executive Order 9066, and had no where to go. Anti-Japanese prejudice did not end with the war, so the climate was still harsh for the people exiting the camps and looking to rebuild their lives. Most of the women interviewed for *Experiences of Japanese American Women During and After World War II* were only teenagers when released from the camps, and had to travel across the United States looking for work. Throughout their travels, they found support from other women in the Japanese-American community, and Yamaguchi argues that these relationships are still remembered fondly. As difficult as these times were, the friendships formed seemed to make life sustainable.

In this work, Yamaguchi makes some interesting points about the experiences of Japanese-American women in the United States during and after the Second World War, and to some extent fills a gap in the historiography as the topic has previously received little attention. Yet, this book is too short to go into enough depth to answer the questions that readers might raise. The primary focus is on the author's family, and while other Japanese American women are interviewed, their backgrounds and experiences do not drive this work. While *Experiences of Japanese American Women During and After World War II* would be a solid read for an undergraduate history or gender studies course, the material is a bit too repetitive for graduate level classes or career scholars. However, there is much potential for Yamaguchi and other scholars to build on the ideas presented throughout this narrative.



Book Reviews Continued

The Drunken Duchess of Vassar: Grace Harriet Macurdy Pioneering Feminist Classical Scholar. McManus, Barbara. Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 2017. 281 pp. \$99.95. ISBN 978-0-8142-1327-8.

Amy Helene Forss, Metropolitan Community College, Omaha, Nebraska

By naming her recent monograph “The Drunken Duchess of Vassar,” which was actually a nickname bestowed on Professor Grace Harriet Macurdy by her college students, Barbara J. McManus adroitly hinted at her tale of a quirky, brilliant nineteenth-twentieth-century female scholar. The value of *The Drunken Duchess* resided in Macurdy challenging and ultimately redefining the classical scholar as a man or a woman. A deep sense of empathy pervaded the pages of this enjoyable text. McManus, who had much in common with Macurdy, portrayed the legendary scholar on several occasions. They both earned degrees from Harvard, valued family above all else, and worked at a feverish pace throughout their lifetimes. McManus, an established author of two books, completed revising the manuscript an hour before succumbing to cancer.

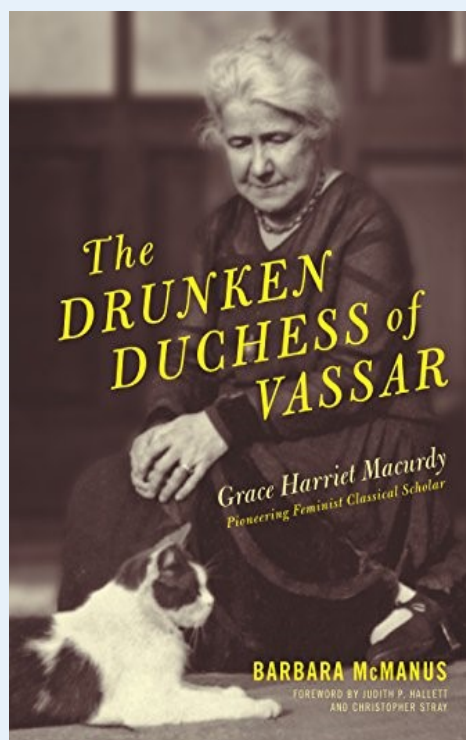
Contextualized reflective visualizations throughout this volume fulfilled the author’s initial title promise by providing an in-depth study of Macurdy, her family members, students, and contemporary colleagues. McManus framed her monograph into chapter and sub-chapter vignettes. She began the manuscript with an engaging story of Macurdy being born into a large Canadian farming family recently immigrated to Maine. Grace Harriett was the first McCurdy born in America. Unfortunately, the family was greeted with a decided lack of warmth. Viewed by their xenophobic neighbors as “dirty Irish” (despite their modern Canadian roots), McCurdy’s father and uncle changed the ancient Emerald Isle spelling of their surname to Macurdy. McManus delighted by recounting how this reconfigured name gave them a more favorable Scottish pronunciation credibility (15). As their citizenship status improved Macurdy rose to prominence through education. She favored middle class adornments of over-sized hats and accessorized jewelry. Macurdy would eventually earn her doctorate and dress according to her professor position. But, invariably she managed to present a slightly disheveled appearance, hence her students’ term of endearment.

It was apparent throughout the text how much Macurdy’s pupils adored the seemingly absent-minded professor and how much senior professor Abby Leach disliked her. Although Macurdy spent 44 years teaching at Vassar, several of these years were miserable. In Chapter 7, McManus minutely examined the power struggle between Macurdy and her Greek department mentor Leach. It was shocking to read about the senior professor’s vindictiveness towards Macurdy. These were two female educators teaching at Vassar, one of the few institutes of higher education available to women wishing to attend college in the 1890s and early 1900s. Leach’s professional jealousy of Macurdy fueled her smear campaign. McManus thoroughly explored Macurdy’s graceful handling of Leach by using a handful of students’ letters to the administration and documenting which courses Macurdy was and was not allowed to teach. Regardless of the bleak situation, Macurdy’s students and the college president remained steadfast in her defense. Macurdy’s almost saintly behavior during these years proved remarkable although McManus lets us know the classical Greek scholar was not above pettiness either. Macurdy’s official 1921-1922 Report of the Greek Department, filed as the new senior professor of the department, emphasized the curriculum’s growth under her tutelage: “much has been gained in the study of Greek in shifting the emphasis from the purely grammatical to the cultural side” (119).

The author’s ingenious descriptions of Macurdy’s actions evolved in the text, the footnotes, and

the bibliography. The depth of McManus' research remained apparent throughout the text but her insistence on providing sketches of Macurdy's family ranging from paragraphs to lengthy pages, occasionally diluted instead of enhanced the volume. Corresponding stories involving Macurdy's parents, her seven siblings, and longtime although not live-in partner J.A.K. Thomson. Readers were treated to several images of Macurdy, a family photograph album including her cat Jason, and an image of her nemesis Leach. The book's appendix offered a catalogue of Macurdy's work begging for an addendum volume and a further exploration of her Victorian support for women's rights. McManus' documentation of Macurdy insisting on her doctorate dissertation bearing her full name instead of her initials lest someone believe she was a man, was telling of the era and necessitates a future monograph. While the footnotes were inconsistent in supplying additional information to the text and the bibliography included primary, secondary, and archival sources under one heading, it was most likely because of the author's ill health and the lack of time prior to McManus' death. Even these omissions were a tiny shortcoming of the book, it by no means detracted from the depth of research.

McManus's *The Drunken Duchess of Vassar* adds another volume on women classical scholars during the Victorian age. Her commitment to crafting an excellent biography filled with analytical historical observations make it appropriate for women's history, gender studies, and early twentieth-century literature courses.



Research Travel Grant

The Susan Bulkeley Butler Women's Archives at the Purdue University Archives announces Research Travel Grants for those planning to travel in order to use materials at the Archives in 2019/2020. Grants of up to \$2,000 will be awarded to individual scholars.

The Susan Bulkeley Butler Women's Archives was established to proactively document and preserve the legacy of women who helped shape Purdue and Indiana history. Notable collections include the Frank and Lillian Gilbreth personal papers as well as their Library of Management; various collections documenting the history of the Deans of Women at Purdue; the Sisters for Health Education (S.H.E.) records; and the Paulina T. Merritt papers on the Indiana Women's Suffrage Movement, among many others. More information about the Women's Archives can be found at: <http://collections.lib.purdue.edu/womens-archives/>

Information about eligibility, criteria, and the application process is available at: <https://www.lib.purdue.edu/spcol/research-travel-grants>

The deadline for applications is July 7, 2019.

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