Voices from the AHA
Interviewing, “Alt Ac” Careers, Partner Hires, and Having Children

Rachel G. Fuchs, Co-President

Kudos to the AHA Professional Division and to all the people who participated in the session on “Interviewing in the Job Market in the Twenty-First Century,” which the CCWH co-sponsored. All people on the job market should consider attending a session such as this at the 2016 AHA meeting in Atlanta. The structure was informal. An employed historian who has been involved in the interviewing process sat at a round table with 6–8 places for people seeking information. Each table was devoted to a different type of employment, and people were free to ask questions in a relaxed environment. Roundtables were devoted to interviewing for academic jobs at public and private research universities, liberal-arts colleges, and community colleges as well as for alternative academic (alt ac) employment for History PhDs.

My roundtable was devoted to interviewing for positions at a public research university, which is where my experience lies. The majority of questions revealed that job candidates did not understand the process and were concerned about the lack of transparency. I tried to explain the procedure and also assure jobseekers not to take rejection or the lack of communication personally. Often about 100, and sometimes 200, worthy scholars apply for a single position. Giving each application a careful reading takes time, and committee members need to agree on the top 20, 10, and 3 candidates; this is not an easy or rapid process, and notifying candidates when they have not made the cut gets lost in the process. Furthermore, institutions usually cannot legally notify applicants whom they are not interviewing until they have made a firm hire. This could be as late as

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May. I repeated that the applicant should not take any lack of interest in them personally, or as a negative reflection on the quality of their work, although it is easy to find the process demoralizing, especially if it goes on for several years.

To get an AHA interview, a person’s dossier has to fit the hiring agenda or academic interests of the search committee, or at least of a majority of its members and the department. That agenda is not always in the job ad, which only provides broad parameters, and sometimes committees work out the agenda as the search evolves. If 10 or 20 applicants have AHA interviews and the committee invites another 2 or 3 for campus interviews, this does not mean that the work of others was inferior, just that it did not fit a particular need or niche, or appeal strongly to search committee members.

The most important thing is for job candidates to be themselves at an interview and not try to mold their statements to the job description or play to what they assume is the agenda of the committee. Search committee members can always detect falseness as well as when a candidate is trying too hard to fit the job description or the assumed agenda of the committee. “Just be yourself” is easy to say, but difficult to adopt when one is desperate for a job. Finally, candidates should inform themselves about the institution that they are applying to and look at the programs, mission, current faculty, and course offerings of the department to demonstrate how they fit. Yes, any port in a storm would be fine for most people looking for a job, but it is important for the candidate and institution to know if there is a good fit. This is probably not news to anyone, so I will now address three specific questions that apply to CCWH members.

One person commented that he always saw himself at a major research university and asked how long he should hold out for such a job. My reply was that he might start out at a different type of institution, teach his energetic best, and publish in peer-reviewed venues. Then, he could seek to move to what he thinks might be a better job. Another asked how long she should adjunct before looking for an “alt ac” job. Here, the response must be individual, made after exploring some alternative careers. At a CCWH/AHA roundtable held on the last day of the conference, “Exploring Alternative Academic Careers: How your History PhD. Can Serve You in Diverse Careers beyond Teaching in the Discipline,” the chair, Nancy Dallett (Public Historian, Arizona State University), and the five panelists—Melanie Sturgeon (Arizona State Archives), Anthea Hartig (California Historical Society), Marci Reaven (New York Historical Society), Alisa Plant (Louisiana State University Press) and Stephanie Toothman (National Park Service)—gave their personal professional narratives about how they reached their top-level and rewarding positions. To summarize all too briefly, panelists seemed in agreement that a person needs to show courage, fortitude, and a willingness to start at the bottom of the ladder, to build and use networks, and to allow for a “zig-zag career trajectory.” They must also be at the right place at the right time, be open to new ideas and careers, and be very good at all levels of the job. Being flexible and knowing the kinds of credentials and experience needed for the position are crucial. As hard as it is to do, cold-calling may result in a job—perhaps first as an unsalaried volunteer, which may eventually lead to a career-ladder position. Historians should think of a career outside academia as providing layers of opportunities. As one panelist said, “It has been a career offering opportunities that I never imagined for myself when I was in graduate school.” Panelists agreed that alternative academic careers allow for creativity and the ability
to apply research. They also help shape and mold a field. Clear, cogent, and concise writing is also imperative. A history PhD. enables scholars to conduct and direct primary and secondary research, interview people, formulate interpretive structures and narratives, write well, and explain the history to people of diverse backgrounds.

One person at my table asked when would be the best time to mention a partner hire. “Definitely not at the AHA interview,” I retorted, perhaps too rapidly. The Chronicle of Higher Education reporter who was then at my table was stunned by my answer and she asked me, “Why not?” My reply was that the AHA interview was the place where a person had to present herself as a scholar, teacher, and potentially terrific colleague. The focus is on the candidate’s research and teaching, not the partner. There is a difference of opinion about the best time to bring up a partner hire after the AHA interview. One view is that it should be done with the department chair or dean at the time of the campus interview. Another view is that it should be brought up only when a candidate is offered the job. College and university administrators are attuned to the issue of partner hires in order to recruit faculty whom they want. The first step, however, is for them to want you as the perfect person for the job and make you an offer; then you can mention a partner who would like an academic position at the same institution. Dual career couples are a reality that all institutions must face—some do it better than others. The CCWH would welcome hearing differing opinions on this topic.

Another person asked when during the interviewing process she should inquire about maternity leave policy. I think I replied, “Wait until you’ve been in the job for a while and are approaching the end of your first trimester of pregnancy.” The first step is to look up that institution’s policies on their HR webpage. Then, during the campus interview, if the department has women faculty, a candidate might be able to get hints of the institution’s policy and practice from interactions with those faculty. However, even if an institution has an enlightened maternity leave policy, it doesn’t indicate that it will make allowances for the amount of time a special needs child demands.

So when is the best time to have children or even mention them during an interview? “Never!” is not an acceptable response to either question. Indeed, there is no good answer. I had my children after obtaining my MA and was a “part-time temporary instructor” for a few years. When my younger child was in first grade I went back to graduate school for my PhD. By the time he went off to college I went off to my first tenure-track job—one that turned out to be my present and last position. That is not the path for most people in this day and age. Sometimes I tell graduate students that the best time to have a child is after having completed most of the dissertation research and when writing their penultimate or final draft. There’s nothing like having a due date for the baby to provide a due date for the dissertation. Clearly, that timing is not always possible or desirable.

In essence, the decision whether to have children, and the timing, is deeply personal. There’s a risk in waiting for post-tenure because about that time fertility starts to decline. Many institutions now allow a mother to “stop the tenure clock” for having or adopting a child, and I recommend doing that for a year starting with the baby’s birth or adoption. I’ve sat on numerous promotion and tenure committees, and stopping the clock
doesn’t hurt. However, it requires vigilance on the part of tenured faculty to assure that it doesn’t result in greater demands on the woman for more publications. Nevertheless, it is still a person’s responsibility to meet all the requirements for promotion and tenure, even with an infant. The Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) mandates only 12 weeks of unpaid leave annually; this is not even a full semester, so a new parent will have to ask for a one-semester, or one year, unpaid leave. (As a comparison, France provides up to 20 weeks of paid and up to 142 weeks of unpaid maternity leave.) The CCWH will work with the AHA to press institutions to grant a one-semester paid leave, to regularize one-year leaves if a person requests it, and to establish on-campus childcare facilities where none exist.

Is there a “mommy track”? Promotion to full professor may take longer. A woman still has to do all the research, teaching, and service required. That’s the bind, because there is no escaping the fact that mothering involves a huge responsibility, whether in two-mother families or mother-father families. For single mothers the responsibility is enormous, sometimes overwhelmingly great. As wonderful, fulfilling, and loving as children are, they require time, which we want to give them, but that time comes from sleep and a childcare provider. Neither is an ideal solution, unless one’s partner is the primary childcare provider. I wonder to what extent academic institutions have moved beyond considering female faculty members with children as less scholarly and serious than men with children. It undoubtedly depends on the institution, and there is no way of knowing that before actually being there a year or so, but with open ears and eyes the on-campus interview can provide some sense of the culture. We are not superwomen. If and when we have children, we need help from family, friends, and colleagues who understand the complexities of nurturing children while also fully functioning as a faculty member. It helps if a campus is family friendly, but the AHA job interview is not the way to ascertain that, unless a search-committee member brings a sleeping child to the interview, as happened once when I was on the job market. Beth Hessel’s graduate column in this newsletter raises the concerns of a job candidate who already has children. In my opinion, the best time for a mother to broach the subject is still the on-campus interview or after the job offer. The topic of children may arise at social events during the on-campus interview. Then, a candidate can always ask about the local school system. Men do, but is there a level playing field and can women also ask? After the job offer may still be the best time to ask questions about children. Be sure to read Beth’s column for important and excellent comments suggestions. To contribute to further discussion of these topics in a future newsletter, please send your comments to execdir@theccwh.org.

I hope to see you all at the interviewing session of the AHA in January 2016, and please consider putting together a session that the CCWH can co-sponsor. The deadline for session proposals is 15 February 2015.
Executive Director Notes

Sandra Trudgen Dawson

Happy New Year to you all!

The AHA conference in New York was a great experience last month! The CCWH co-sponsored sessions went smoothly, the reception was well attended, and the luncheon speaker was inspiring! Barbara Winslow, academic and activist, challenged us to action with a rousing talk about the Shirley Chisholm Project of Brooklyn Women’s Activism from 1945 to the Present. You can read more about this remarkable project in this newsletter and at www.depthome.brooklyn.cuny.edu/womens/studies/chisholm-project/The_Shirley_Chisholm_Project/Home.html.

We were thrilled to meet two of our 2014 award winners at the Annual Awards Luncheon. Waaseyaa’sin Christine Sy, a PhD candidate at Trent University, Ontario, Canada, received the Catherine Prelinger Memorial Award for her dissertation, “Following the Trees Home: Anishinaabe Women at the Sugar Bush.” And Aiala Levy, a PhD. candidate at the University of Chicago, received the CCWH/Berks Graduate Student Fellowship for her dissertation, “Foraging an Urban Public: Theaters, Audiences, and the City in São Paulo, Brazil, 1854-1930.” Gloria McCahon Whiting, Harvard University, received an honorable mention for the award for her dissertation, “African Families, American Stories: Black Kin and Community in Early New England.” Julie Gallagher, one of the five Prelinger Committee members, was there to present the award to Christine, and Elizabeth Everton, Chair of the CCWH/Berks award, presented the certificate and check to Aiala Levy.


I continue to be amazed at the breadth of scholarship that the CCWH encourages.

The CCWH awards are possible only because of the generosity of its membership. The dues paid each year, as well as tax deductible donations, help keep these awards viable. As an organization, we have been truly blessed by the generosity of an anonymous donor who has given a total of $210,000 since 1998 to support the Prelinger Award. The CCWH sincerely wants to keep this award going for years to come. This is only possible if you, as members, donate to the fund. I am asking all those who can to donate $10–$500 this year for the Prelinger Award fund.

This is what the Prelinger Award Committee wrote in their end-of-year report: “This year’s pool of applicants presented compelling projects and life stories that indicate the ongoing need for the Prelinger Award. The
quality of the applications was outstanding, making for a difficult selection process as we had to discard the applications of so many qualified applicants. In an era of persistent academic insecurity and limited scholarly funding, the Prelinger Award stands as a beacon of hope for scholars of women’s history who have dedicated their lives to scholarship and service. Many of the applicants were adjunct professors attempting to continue their scholarship in spite of receiving little or no institutional support.

One way to actively help the Prelinger is to ask colleagues, graduate students, and your institutional libraries to become members. Graduate students pay only $20 a year, as do retired, low-income, or part-time employees; full-time employees pay $50, and those earning over $75,000 are asked to give $75 for their membership. One hundred new graduate student members would generate $2,000 for the Prelinger award; one hundred new full-time members would generate $5,000, and one hundred new over $75,000 per year members would generate $7,500 for the fund. Please consider donating, recruiting, and spreading the word about our organization and the opportunities that come with membership.

One of the decisions that the board made at the business meeting in New York was to bring the deadline of all the CCWH award applications forward to 15 May 2015. There were a number of reasons for changing the due date including: a) winners can be notified by 1 September so that they can attend the annual awards luncheon at the AHA, b) winners who are on the job market can put the award on their CV, and c) committees have the entire summer to work on the applications. See information regarding the awards below.

Finally, I am delighted to welcome four new board members for 2015: Jenny Thigpen, Chair, Ida B. Wells Award; Karin Huebner, Chair, CCWH/Berks Award; and Lori Flores, Chair, Nupur Chaudhuri First Article Award; and Marshanda Smith, Web Coordinator. Welcome! We are delighted to have you all with us as we move forward into 2015!

Thank you all for your continued commitment to the CCWH and its dual mission to support women in the historical profession and to support and promote the history of women.

CCWH Catherine Prelinger Memorial Award 2015
The CCWH will award $20,000 to a scholar who holds a PhD or who has advanced to candidacy and who has not followed a traditional academic path of uninterrupted and completed secondary, undergraduate, and graduate degrees leading to a tenure-track faculty position. Although the recipient’s degrees do not have to be in history, the recipient’s work should clearly be historical in nature. In accordance with the general goals of CCWH, the award is intended to recognize or to enhance the ability of the recipient to contribute significantly to women in history, whether in the profession in the present or in the study of women in the past. It is not intended that there be any significant restrictions placed on how a given recipient shall spend the award as long as it advances the recipient’s scholarship goals and purposes. All recipients will be required to submit a final paper to CCWH explaining how the award was expended and summarizing the scholarly work completed. The deadline for the award is 15 May 2015.
**CCWH Nupur Chaudhuri First Article Award 2015**
The Coordinating Council for Women in History Nupur Chaudhuri First Article Award is an annual $1000 prize that recognizes the best first article published in the field of history by a CCWH member. Named to honor Nupur Chaudhuri, long-time CCWH board member and former executive director and co-president from 1995–1998, the winning article for 2015 must be published in a refereed journal in either 2013 or 2014. An article may only be submitted once. All fields of history will be considered, and articles must be submitted with full scholarly apparatus. The deadline for the award is 15 May 2015.

**CCWH/Berks Graduate Student Fellowship 2015**
The Coordinating Council for Women in History and the Berkshire Conference of Women's History Graduate Student Fellowship is a $1000 award to a graduate student completing a dissertation in a History Department. The award is intended to support either a crucial stage of research or the final year of writing. The applicant must be a CCWH member; must be a graduate student in history in a U.S. institution; must have passed to ABD status by the time of application; may specialize in any field of history; may hold this award and others simultaneously; and need not attend the award ceremony to receive the award. The deadline for the award is 15 May 2015.

**CCWH Ida B. Wells Graduate Student Fellowship 2015**
The Coordinating Council for Women in History Ida B. Wells Graduate Student Fellowship is an annual award of $1000 given to a graduate student working on a historical dissertation that interrogates race and gender, not necessarily in a history department. The award is intended to support either a crucial stage of research or the final year of writing. The applicant must be a CCWH member; must be a graduate student in any department of a U.S. institution; must have passed to ABD status by the time of application; may specialize in any field of history; may hold this award and others simultaneously; and need not attend the award ceremony to receive the award. The deadline for the award is 15 May 2015.

For online application and membership details, go to www.theccwh.org.

**New Board Members**

**Jennifer Thigpen**, Chair, Ida B. Wells Award

Jennifer Thigpen is Associate Professor of History at Washington State University. She is a US women’s and gender historian whose work has focused on the US West, the American foreign mission movement, and colonialism. Professor Thigpen’s first book, *Island Queens and Mission Wives: How Gender and Empire Remade Hawai’i’s Pacific World*, is published by the University of North Carolina Press (2014). It examines the vital role women played in establishing and maintaining the political and diplomatic alliances that ultimately shaped the islands’ political future. Her 2010 article, “‘You Have Been Very Thoughtful Today’: The Significance of Gratitude and Reciprocity in Missionary-Hawaiian Gift Exchange,” was published in the *Pacific Historical Review* in 2010 and was awarded the WHA’s Jensen-Miller Prize for best article on women and gender in the North American West. She is currently at work on a book-length project that explores the changing nature and
meaning of women’s labor within the context of the American foreign missionary movement of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Karin Huebner, Chair, CCWH/Berks Award
Karin Huebner received her PhD in history from USC in 2009. Her research interests include Native American history, history of the American West, and gender and sexuality. Her current book project traces the history of her own Euro-American-Indian family from 1735 to 1925 as a case study that suggests an alternative narrative of cooperation and coexistence among Native peoples and Euro Americans. Karin received the W. Turrentine Jackson Prize from the *Pacific Historical Review* for the best essay submitted by a graduate student for her article “An Unexpected Alliance: Stella Atwood, the California Clubwomen, John Collier, and the Indians of the Southwest, 1917-1934,” which appeared in the *PHR* August 2009 issue. In 2012, Karin received the USC Remarkable Woman Award, a campus-wide recognition for achievements in scholarship, contributions to USC, commitment to students and women’s issues, community involvement, and professional excellence. She currently serves as the Academic Director of Programs for the USC Sidney Harman Academy for Polymathic Study, an interdisciplinary institute, and is a lecturer on history. Prior to her career as a historian, Karin competed on the Women’s World Tennis Tour and in the US Open, French Open, and Wimbledon.

Lori Flores, Chair, Nupur Chaudhuri First Article Award
Lori Flores received her PhD in History from Stanford in 2011. She is Assistant Professor of History at SUNY Stony Brook, where she teaches courses on the histories of Latinos in the United States, labor and immigration, the American working class, the US West, the US-Mexico borderlands, and global borderlands studies and theory. Her forthcoming book, currently titled *Unharvested Dreams: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Making of Agricultural California* (Yale, 2015) provides an in-depth study of the relationships between US-born and immigrant Mexicans in their struggle for labor and civil rights in the world of California farm work. Her article “An Unladylike Strike Fashionably Clothed: Mexican American and Anglo Women Garment Workers Against Tex-Son, 1959-1963” (2009) won the Jensen-Miller Prize from the Western History Association and the W. Turrentine Jackson Prize from the Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association. Her latest article, “A Town Full of Dead Mexicans: The Salinas Valley Bracero Tragedy of 1963, A Collision of Communities, and the End of the Bracero Program” (2013) won the Judith Lee Ridge Prize from the Western Association of Women Historians. Outside of work, Flores enjoys amateur photography, 5K race running, kayaking, and living in Brooklyn.

Marshanda Smith, Web Coordinator
Marshanda Smith is a Research Associate in the Department of African American Studies at Northwestern University. She earned her PhD from Michigan State University in Comparative Black History in December 2012. Her scholarly areas of interest include African American women’s history, gender studies, comparative history, nineteenth-century US history, and the civil right movement. She has four years of extensive Computer Science training and two years Digital Humanities training at Michigan State University. Smith served on the Executive Council of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) as chair of the Technology Taskforce (2003–2004) and created the original website for the organization in 2001. She is

Member News


Sacred Heart University Assistant Professor Anita August’s article “Shaping Presence: Ida B. Wells’ 1892 Testimony of the Untold Story at New York’s Lyric Hall” was published in the Spring/Summer 2014 issue of Peitho: The Journal of the Coalition of Women Scholars in the History of Rhetoric & Composition. You can access the full issue at www.peitho.cwshrc.org/issues/16-2/.


LeAnn Erickson completed The Computer Wore Heels, a follow-up project to her award-winning documentary Top Secret Rosies: The Female Computers of WWII. The Computer Wore Heels is a bookapp that shares the true story of three teenage girls who worked as mathematicians for the US Army during WWII. The iPad bookapp reads as a traditional book but includes documents, letters, photos, videos and audio recordings that enhance the story and reading experience. The bookapp is geared toward a young adult audience but will appeal to adult readers as well. For more information, see www.thecomputerworeheels.com.

Stephanie Moore joins UCSC Art Division as Research Grants Coordinator. As a former journalist, human rights investigator, academic researcher, and Fulbright Fellow, Stephanie Moore brings a wealth of experience to her new position in the Arts Division. Besides having extensive experience in grant writing and development, Moore earned a Ph.D. in History from UC San Diego where she taught East Asian History and Modern
Latin American History. She also has also taught World History, Latin American/Spanish Civilizations and U.S. Immigration/Latino History at Salisbury University, Maryland and has a substantial scholarly publication record.


**Affiliate News**

**Columbus State University Job Listings**
The Department of History and Geography at Columbus State University invites applications for a tenure-track Assistant Professor position in U.S. History, 1865-1945. Specialization within the field of American History is open, but the department is particularly interested in scholars who situate American History in a global or transnational context. Candidates with experience in Digital Humanities are especially encouraged to apply. For more information, see www.columbusstate.peopleadmin.com/postings/1382#.

The Department of History and Geography at Columbus State University invites applications for a tenure-track Assistant Professor position in the history of the Islamic World before 1500. For more information, see www.columbusstate.peopleadmin.com/postings/1384.

**47th Annual Conference of the Western Association of Women Historians**
The 47th annual conference of the Western Association of Women Historians will be held at the Hilton Sacramento Arden West in Sacramento, California, May 14–16, 2015. The Western Association of Women Historians was founded in 1969 to promote the interests of women historians both in academic settings and in the field of history generally. The WAWH is the largest of the regional women’s historical associations in the United States. Although the majority of our members come from the Western United States, we have members from across the United States, Canada, and other countries and encourage people from any geographic area to join and participate in the organization. The annual spring conference features the presentation of scholarly work, new research, and the discussion of teaching methods, writing, and other issues of importance to women scholars. For more information or to register, please visit www.wawh.org.

**International Federation for Research in Women’s History Conference at Jinan, China, 27–29 August 2015**
The next IFRWH conference will be in Jinan, China, from 27–29 August 2015 in conjunction with the Congress of the International Committee of Historical Sciences/Comité International des Sciences Historiques (CISH) (23–29 August). The Federation is an affiliated organization of CISH and hosts a conference during the Congress which is held every five years.
Delegates for the Federation’s conference should:
1. Register with the Congress. The early bird registration ends on 1 March. For further details see the conference website www.congress.ichschina2015.org/dct/page/65554
2. Email the organiser of the Federation’s conference, Vice-President, Uma Chakravarti (umafam@gmail.com) to confirm attendance. This will enable us to monitor the numbers attending the IFRWH conference.
For the programme and more details about the Federation’s conference see the January 2015 issue of the Federation’s newsletter.

WMM Acquires Regarding Susan Sontag for 2015
Women Make Movies is thrilled to announce that we have acquired Regarding Susan Sontag for release beginning March 2015. The film is available for pre-order now. For more information or if interested in organizing a screening or purchasing the film for pre-order, please contact us by email at orders@wmm.com or by phone at 212-925-0606 ext. 360.

Recipient of a Special Jury Mention at the 2014 Tribeca Film Festival and screened at 30 festivals globally, Regarding Susan Sontag is an intimate and nuanced investigation into the life of one of the most influential and provocative thinkers of the 20th Century. Endlessly curious, passionate, and gracefully outspoken throughout her career, Susan Sontag became one of the most important literary, political, and feminist icons of her generation. This beautifully constructed documentary, which the New York Times calls “compelling” and “perceptive,” tracks Sontag’s life through evocative experimental images, archival materials, accounts from friends, family, colleagues, and lovers, as well as her own words as read by Patricia Clarkson. From her early infatuation with books to her first experience in a gay bar, from her early marriage to her 15-year relationship with legendary photographer Annie Leibovitz, Regarding Susan Sontag is a fascinating look at a towering cultural critic and writer whose works on photography, war, illness, and terrorism continue to resonate today.

Trailer:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=iZ5PW-dvNWs

Regarding Susan Sontag Catalog Page:
www.wmm.com/filmcatalog/pages/c888.shtml

Regarding Susan Sontag official website:
www.sontagfilm.org

Southern Association for Women Historians Awards
2014 Anne Firor Scott Mid-Career Fellowship
Winner: Shannon Frystak, in order to complete her book The Women of Cross Keys Plantation
2014 A. Elizabeth Taylor Prize for Best Article in Southern Women’s History

2014 Willie Lee Rose Prize for Best Book Published in Southern History

2014 Julia Spruill Prize for Best Book Published in Southern Women’s History
Winner: Katy Simpson Smith for *We Have Raised All of You: Motherhood in the South, 1750-1835* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2013)

**Coalition for Western Women’s History Prize Calls**

2015 Armitage-Jameson Prize Call for Applications
The CWWH is pleased to announce the fifth annual Armitage-Jameson Prize for the most outstanding monograph or edited volume published in western women’s and gender history in 2014. The prize is named in honor of Susan Armitage and Elizabeth Jameson for their pioneering work in the field of western women’s history. To be eligible, the book must be published in 2014 and address women and gender in the North American West, which includes the relevant geographic regions of Canada and Mexico, as well as U.S. territories, past and present. The award recipient will receive $1,000 and the publishing press will receive a certificate. The award will be presented at the CWWH Breakfast at the 2015 Western History Association annual conference in Portland, Oregon, on Friday, October 23, 2015. For more information visit the CWWH website, [www.westernwomenshistory.org](http://www.westernwomenshistory.org). Deadline for the 2015 prize submission is May 15, 2015.

2015 Irene Ledesma Prize Call for Applications
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 PhD program at the time of application. The Coalition will award the prize at the CWWH Breakfast at the Western History Association annual conference in Portland, Oregon, on October 23, 2015. The recipient will also be awarded a one-year complimentary membership in the CWWH. For more information visit the CWWH website, [www.westernwomenshistory.org](http://www.westernwomenshistory.org). Deadline for the 2015 prize submission is May 15, 2015.
2014 Prelinger Award Report

Donna Sinclair

Being a recipient of the Catherine Prelinger award has inspired me from the moment I applied. The application process pushed me to think about the centrality of women in my work and to closely examine understanding the past shifts with gender as a central category. I started the year by flying to D.C. where I accepted the award, engaged with the supportive network of women historians in CCWH, conducted additional interviews, and obtained materials for my dissertation, “Multicultural Mandates: Transforming the U.S.D.A Forest Service in the Civil Rights Era.” The Prelinger Award has helped me to hire out some transcription and to write over the summer and fall to complete my dissertation this spring.

My work has also benefited intellectually from the award. I have included women throughout, but two chapters attend specifically to women. In “Re-gendering the Forest Service,” I examine the Pacific Northwest workforce of the 1970s, identifying how a small group of women drew from existing structures, tested policies, and created new programs to effect changes that strengthened the status of women agency-wide and in natural resources at large. In “Go West Young Woman,” I illustrate the role of the Northwest as a training ground and destination for female leadership, arguing that traditional “women’s work” in areas like Public Affairs provided valuable preparation for leadership in the agency. This chapter provides the foundation for a paper accepted for the Western History Association meeting in Portland this fall, and for an article I will submit to Western Historical Quarterly. I am also writing an entry based on women in the Forest Service for blogwest, http://blogwest.org/.

The Prelinger Award allowed me to purchase a good recorder which I’ve used in conducting additional interviews for one of the best outcomes this year, partnering on a co-written memoir of the nation’s first African American female forest supervisor. Gloria Brown started in the Washington, D.C., office of the Forest Service as a dictation transcriber in 1974. When her husband died in 1981, the thirty-year-old mother of three had to move her family to an unsafe neighborhood and take her children out of private school. Her wit, tenacity, and desire for advancement eventually brought her West, where by 1999 she became the first black woman to manage a national forest. How Gloria overcame the challenges she faced as an urban black woman in the rural West and a white male agency will inspire excellence in women of all races and occupations. We are in the process of writing a book proposal now.

I have remained at once grateful and incredulous to be a Prelinger Award recipient. It is because women like Catherine Prelinger courageously challenged social norms that I am a historian. These women acted as role models, encouraging me to navigate single parenthood to obtain first a master’s degree and now a PhD. They engendered confidence that my contributions are worthwhile, and because of the Prelinger Award and its sustenance by CCWH I now consider myself a part of a larger community of women historians. This award
and the women behind it have prompted me to mentor others in the spirit of Catherine Prelinger’s intellectual and social legacy—to enhance women’s history and the female historians who do it.

The Shirley Chisholm Project
Five Years On

Barbara Winslow

In 2010, the CCWH newsletter published an article about the creation, methodology, and activities of the Shirley Chisholm Project of Brooklyn Women’s Activism, 1945 to the present (chisholmproject.com). In the past five years, the activities of the Project have expanded. The Project was founded in 2006 originally to be a repository of women’s grassroots social activism in Brooklyn since 1945 and ongoing into the present. In the spirit of Chisholm’s legacy as a path breaking community and political activist, the archive follow the many paths she pioneered, by including materials representing the wide range of women’s grassroots activism throughout the borough. It continues to be a resource for K–12 students, college students, community activists, public policy experts, scholars, and the general public, expanding our understanding of women’s place in history and of the significance of social activism itself. I refer to this project as interactive because, like so many academic and activist endeavors, it involves a wide range of participants—Brooklyn institutions and activists working together with academics and scholars. As of right now the Project has the largest collection of archival materials related to Shirley Chisholm, including CCWH member Julie Gallagher’s research materials for her book Black Women and Politics in New York City (University of Illinois Press, 2012). (www.dewey.brooklyn.cuny.edu/pages/archives/findaid/Chisholm/)

We find more materials every day. I find that almost everywhere I speak someone in the audience knew Chisolm or worked on a Chisholm campaign. Even at the most recent CCWH luncheon, Lyn Weiner, former ED of the CCWH, contributed a rare Shirley Chisholm for President button. I am also donating all of my research materials for the book I wrote, Shirley Chisholm: Catalyst for Change (Westview Press, 2013). Along with collecting the physical archive, I continue to interview Chisholm’s friends and colleagues.

What is particularly satisfying is that it is the most used archive in the library’s entire collection, even surpassing Alan Dershowitz’s papers. Scholars, Brooklyn College students, journalists, screenwriters, and the general public visit the archive. A family from Australia came specifically to look at the papers. Every November we curate a public exhibition from the archive. This year, we commemorated Chisholm’s tenure as a New York State legislator, highlighting her role in the passage of the SEEK (Seek Empowerment, Enlightenment Knowledge) legislation which created greater opportunities for students of color to enter and graduate from the city and state universities of New York (CUNY and SUNY).
The Project has made possible ongoing partnerships with Brooklyn institutions such as the Brooklyn Public Library, the Brooklyn Historical Society, the Elizabeth Sackler Feminist Art Wing of the Brooklyn Museum of Art, the Weeksville Heritage Center, the Museum of the Contemporary African Diaspora (MOCADA), Medgar Evers College, and a number of middle and high schools. In addition, since Shirley Chisholm was a member of the prestigious Delta Sigma Theta sorority, we work closely with the Brooklyn College and Brooklyn Borough Delta Chapters. They have created a number of Shirley Chisholm scholarships for Brooklyn College women students. Finally, since Chisholm was a political figure, our project works with a number of elected officials including the borough president’s office and borough, state, and national elected officials. All this means that the Project is imbedded (an almost tainted word) in the social and political life of the borough.

As a result of our partnerships, our public events become borough events. In 2012, we hosted a conference celebrating and commemorating the 40th anniversary of Chisholm’s historic presidential run. Over 1,000 people came to hear leading historians of the period including Brian Purnell, Joshua Guild, Zinga Fraser, Anastasia Curwood, our own Julie Gallagher, Premilla Nadasen, Jeanne Theoharis, Barbara Ransby, Kim Phillips-Fein, Beverley Guy Sheftall, and Melissa Harris Perry speak about Chisholm’s lifelong legacy. Since 2005, November 30, Shirley Chisholm’s birthday, has been designated Shirley Chisholm Day throughout New York state. Again, prominent speakers such as Gloria Steinem, Donna Brazile, Loretta Ross, and Anita Hill spoke to 400 Brooklyn College students, faculty, and staff, middle and high school students, members of the Delta Sigma Theta sorority as well as elected officials. In 2013, the year the Project was dedicated to Shirley Chisholm, the teacher, Karen Lewis, president of the Chicago Teachers’ Union, was our keynote speaker. In 2014, the Project was dedicated to the struggle for voting rights. The Reverend Al Sharpton, who had been Chisholm’s New York City youth organizer when she ran for president in 1972, was scheduled to be the keynote speaker. He had to cancel at the last minute due to the Ferguson protests, but sent a moving video tribute. It is on our website. Replacing Sharpton was a panel speaking about the meaning of Ferguson. Over 500 students, from the schools as well as the college, heard professors speak about racial and gender injustice in the schools, the streets, and communities. Shirley Chisholm Day took place a week before the Staten Island New York Grand Jury refused to indict the police officer whose illegal chokehold ended with the death of Earl Garner, and as a result our students had a chance to participate in discussions about how Ferguson matters. In 2015, the Project is dedicated to the concept that “Black Lives Matter.”

The Project’s success has made raising money a bit easier. I was able to secure a generous gift from a consortium of anonymous women donors, with the proviso that they would match whatever I raised through other grants, private and public. This money not only allows the Project to host public events but to pay for grant writers, a videographer, a web designer, and a project manager. Along with everything else, the prestige of the Project has enabled many to go on to become curators and archivists as well as graduate students in prestigious history departments.

Historians working on projects like this one, think about the past. But at the same time we must plan for the future. How do we ensure that our projects will continue after we retire? How do we inspire and enthuse the next generation of scholars? How does one insure that the Chisholm project’s mission of presenting the
history of social justice activism to the next generation is both protected and continued? How do those of us affiliated with academic institutions prove to our administrations, especially in this economically troubled time, that our work is valuable to the institution, to scholarship and to the communities we hope to serve? How do we keep the community actively involved in the workings of the project? One obvious and perhaps too easy answer is that this will depend on our ability to raise money, to produce new forms of scholarship, and to create and maintain effective partnerships with the public. Another obvious and again too easy answer will depend on the existence of social justice movements outside the academies, the libraries, and the archives, which will demand the archives be maintained. These public history projects are still too new and too close to too many of us for academic assessment and reflection. I look forward to the judgment of the next generation of activists and historians—both academic and independent.

Graduate Corner

Keeping Mum?: The Politics of Talking about Motherhood during Interviews

Beth Hessel

As a bright-eyed undergrad looking toward graduate school and hoping my life would also include a partner and children, I sat with trepidation in the office of my highly-accomplished faculty advisor and queried her about how she managed the work-life balance I craved. “If I want to have children,” I asked, “when is the best time to have them?” My professor smiled and suggested her own route: she had her first child while writing her dissertation. The plus, she said, was that no one saw you while you were holed away writing, so you didn’t have to worry about spending money on a wardrobe. What the conversation missed, what I as an inexperienced twenty year old did not know to ask, was the fact that women’s procreative decisions remain a contested topic in academic realms. Most of us have heard derisive comments from other academics about women (and men) who decide to have children while in grad school or while climbing the tenure ladder. Colleagues in graduate programs have with trepidation shared news about their pregnancies or approaching adoptions with their advisors. Their own joy has not always met with approval; often advisors are concerned about how a baby will affect a student’s ability to make progress in her program. Occasionally, an advisor might doubt the commitment of a student to her degree.

Because I started my doctoral program with two children in tow, I understand the worries expressed by other students who have confided in me about their struggles to start a family and finish a degree, to be a good parent while pleasing their advisors. I also felt I had to work extra diligently to prove my commitment to the academic life. I have foregone sleep in order to finish assignments after my children are in bed and printed them out right before waking my children for their own school day, combined research trips with family vacations, and brought a sick child with me to classes I taught when I lacked childcare. Faithfully showing up at department events with my children in hand made a strong statement about my desire to participate fully in the life of the department while also declaring my status as a parent. I have been lucky that my gamble has
paid off and my department remains supportive of me even as I have transitioned to the rigor of single-parent-hood while dissertating.

Yet even if our departments support us as mother–scholars while we pursue our doctorates, we face another audience when we enter the job market. We do not know how the departments to which we apply view the mix of academia and family. Will they frown on us and dismiss us as “mommy track” material if we admit that we have children? Do they have a department supportive of work-life balance and cognizant of the challenges parents face? Federal law prohibits search committees from inquiring about our marital status or family status. We have every right to politely refrain from answering questions committee members might let slip. We can artfully redirect the conversation. We can tenaciously make our children a non-issue in the interview process by remaining tight-lipped about them. Federal law backs us up in this decision.

On the other hand, we might want to test the waters. Both academia and parenting are consuming and demanding vocations. Neither is a job we can effectively do “part-time.” We may want to know if the department is a good fit for us. Is the department predominantly made up of faculty who had spouses who did the child-rearing or who did not have children and thus have a specific timeline for how quickly we should push out research and publications? Will they frown on us if our winter break is spent in family activities instead of at the archives? Are there other parents in the department from whom we can inquire about local schools, neighborhoods, child care? We may have questions about programs for special needs children in the area, or tuition remission programs for faculty dependents. Can we safely ask these questions without derailing our interview?

I have asked this question at almost every panel about entering the job market I have attended. Overwhelmingly, the response has been positive. Of course, the panels tend to be made up of women, but they largely feel that it is okay to mention children in the on-campus interview. I get the sense from these conversations that history departments are becoming more open to parent-scholars. This may arise as much from the rise in male faculty who are sharing in parenting responsibilities as in the decision of more female academics to pursue parenthood while seeking tenure. One suggestion I have received is to ask for the committee to set up a meeting for you with a female assistant professor in another department who isn’t connected with the search. At an off-the-record meeting, you can ask her questions about campus atmosphere, tenure issues, and about raising a family at that institution and in that town.

I have been privileged to participate in quite a few job searches at my own institution while a grad student. While this is anecdotal, I have noticed that the female candidates for tenure-track positions have been much less likely to mention their partner or family situations than the male candidates. Their reticence suggests to me that in spite of the encouragement I have received from the panels I attend, concern about mentioning children in the interview process exists. I will admit I remain up in the air about how to approach this topic during interviews. How about you? What advice have you received? How have you seen mother-scholars handle the issue? What is your department like? We encourage you to share your insights and experiences with us! Send your comments to execdir@theccwh.org.
Book Reviews


Brittany Lehman, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Demonstrating how “German” identity influenced immigrant advocacy for emancipation and suffrage, Alison Clark Efford’s German Immigrants, Race, and Citizenship in the Civil War Era provides important contributions that cross the Atlantic. In this cultural-political migration history, Efford, an Assistant Professor of History at Marquette University, demonstrates how German Americans’ identification as an ethnic minority impacted their understanding of citizenship and arguments for African American emancipation. Highlighting the international nature of migration, Efford shows how foreign political movements and wars abroad influenced German Americans’ view of emancipation, women’s rights, and the local politics of citizenship.

Using German newspapers, political campaigns, and activist groups’ correspondence, Efford’s book interrogates the meaning of “Germanness” and the relationship of identity to politics. The book covers the years 1848–1877, from pre-war politics and citizenship debates through Reconstruction. The first half of the book demonstrates how the 1848 revolutions in Europe informed immigrant politics in the United States, leading to German immigrants’ enthusiastic support for abolition. After all, according to the ‘48ers, race was just a marker of ethnic identity and all ethnic groups should be free. Yet, as Efford shows in the second half of the book, opinions changed. Looking at how Reconstruction and the Franco-Prussian War reshaped German Americans’ perception of what it meant to be German, Efford illustrates how a flexible understanding of ethnicity turning into an essentialized version of Volk. As their perception of identity shifted, German Americans “edged away from African American rights” (178), looking instead to workers’ rights and emphasizing the reunion of white men. By the end of the century, German Americans differentiated between white and black workers, pushing the “white immigrant man as the archetypal new citizen” (236).

Beginning with the pre-Civil War years in Europe, Efford succinctly explains the development of European socialism. Following the ‘48ers to the United States, the author shows how their political background influenced a unique “German language of American citizenship” (17). Coming from a Europe torn by revolutions that emphasized workers’ rights and enfranchisement, Efford shows how “freedom-loving Germans” (53) backed emancipation while continuing to view suffrage and citizenship as a specifically male right. Viewing race as a marker of ethnic identity (i.e. according to German immigrants African Americans were an ethnic group), many German Americans viewed the plight of African Americans in terms of immigrant and workers’ rights, making them fellow travelers in the struggle for freedom. Most male members of the German American community viewed women, however, as cultural bearers. They could work the fields and raise children, but their role was not to vote.
Efford then skips the Civil War and explores German Americans’ understanding of citizenship and the campaign for African-American suffrage first through a case study of Missouri and then by exploring German Americans’ perception of and involvement in the development of the Fifteenth Amendment. Within both discussions, Efford draws out Republican and Democratic Germans’ differing views on what citizenship rights should entail and the possibility of prerequisites (i.e. literacy) for voting. Yet, reminded of the importance of American pluralism by seemingly unrelated efforts within the Anglo-American community (and Women's Suffrage movements) to restrict drinking (seen as a threat to German cultural practices), German men argued that ethnicity should not influence citizenship. Treating ethnic and racial prejudice of a piece, many German Americans equated African American suffrage with immigrant rights and championed universal male suffrage. Other former advocates of emancipation withdrew support for racial equality, campaigning instead for workers' rights. Nonetheless, through her exploration of German American's political involvement in Reconstruction, Efford argues that the development of the Fifteenth Amendment was a conformation of the liberal nationalism of the ‘48ers.

In the second half of the book, looking at 1870-1877, Efford shows how the Franco-Prussian War reshaped the German American community's perception of Volk and how disillusionment with Reconstruction-era politics influenced German-American advocacy. As the new borders of the German Empire solidified, German Americans’ sense of Volk lost its flexibility, becoming exclusive. Celebrating victory abroad, Democratic and Republican Germans alike lauded the newly defined particularities of Germanness, especially the Prussian military and education systems. Efford traces those new ideological perceptions and political leanings into US politics, illustrating the “Liberal Republican Transition” between 1870 and 1872. Disillusioned by what they saw as the rampant corruption in Reconstruction and post-war politics, German Americans pushed for social reform—particularly in the work place—over voting rights.

Looking at social reform and the connection to citizenship, Efford examines the split among German Americans over cultural rights and attention to workers' rights. Responding to US economic decline, in the early 1870s socialists began pushing for an international (instead of national) workers' movement. As part of that movement, many German Americans emphasized industrial “wage-slavery” over equal rights. Despite and because most African Americans were workers too, German Americans contributed to turning social injustice into a “white” problem. But “whites” were hardly a unified group. The resurgence of other international groups, like the Roman Catholics, led to splits between German Americans over cultural rights, which Efford illustrates through arguments over public and parochial education and the connection of schooling to citizenship. Efford shows how, despite diverse German American groups' claims, their support for equal rights was only "lip service" (223). Refusing to actually pass laws or regulations to ensure equality, they actually undermined it.

Appropriate for scholarly and undergraduate audiences, Efford's book contributes to multiple fields in history. For American historians, she demonstrates how European political and social ideas were transplanted to the US and played a role in the political engagement of the German community. German historians will benefit from Efford’s depiction of how the development of the German Empire influenced the self-identification and
politics of Germans abroad. Finally, for historians of migration, Efford shows how a migrant group develops a
new sense of identity informed by their country of origin, but explicitly rooted in their new home.

The Queen of America: Mary Cutts's Life of Dolley Madison. Allgor, Catherine, ed. Charlottesville: University

Nora Doyle, Salem College

In 1886, Lucia Beverly Cutts published The Memoirs and Letters of Dolly Madison, the first published biogra-
phy of the First Lady. What is little known about this text is that Cutts took large portions of her narrative from
an unpublished memoir written in the early 1850s by her aunt, Mary Estelle Elizabeth Cutts, a favorite niece of
Dolley Madison. The Queen of America sets the record straight by making the life and work of Mary Cutts its
central focus. In the first section of this work, Catherine Allgor, Holly Cowan Shulman, and Elizabeth Dowling
Taylor offer three essays that explore Mary Cutts’s life and the significance of her writings; the second section
presents transcriptions of Cutts’s two manuscripts. The manuscripts have been skillfully transcribed by Allgor,
Lee Langston-Harrison, and James T. Connolly to show the many deletions and additions made by Mary Cutts
and, later, by her niece Lucia Cutts, allowing readers to follow the evolution of the biography as it was shaped
over time.

Mary Cutts’s manuscripts are rife with inaccuracies and omissions and thus offer readers limited insight into
the life of Dolley Madison. Indeed, errors even in such straightforward details as the year of Madison’s birth
(in Cutts’s memoir she is made to be four years younger than her actual age) should make scholars wary of
relying on these texts for “the facts.” Yet Allgor makes a compelling case for the value of Cutts’s work, arguing
that her calculated portrayal of Madison reveals much about the gendered expectations of the time. As Allgor
shows, Cutts’s text exposes the challenges of writing women’s history in a pre-feminist era, for she sought to
celebrate the significance of her aunt as an historical figure while still depicting her as an example of ideal
womanhood, a goal that forced Cutts to omit a number of important issues and to present the past in creative
ways.

Shulman’s essay tackles some of the significant omissions in Cutts’s narrative, exploring in particular her
silence with respect to Madison’s fraught relationships with her parents and siblings, her in-laws, and her
slaves. Putting the biography in dialogue with family letters and records, Shulman reveals a number of ten-
sions in Madison’s life that Cutts managed to evade or reshape. Taylor’s biographical essay about Mary Cutts’s
life helps us understand these omissions by disclosing the close and affectionate relationship that bound
Mary Cutts to her celebrated aunt. It is hardly surprising then that Cutts chose to remember Madison as an
exemplary and universally beloved figure, and readers can learn a great deal by exploring the ways in which
she shaped her narrative to accomplish this goal.

Taken together, the essays and transcriptions presented in this volume offer an exciting new look both at the
lives of Dolley Madison and her first biographer and at the complex practices and politics of life-writing in
nineteenth-century America.
Books Available for Review

The CCWH relies on and is grateful for our members’ contributions to the book review section of this newsletter.

The following is a list of books available to review for the CCWH. Members interested in writing a review for the newsletter or members who have a recent publication they would like reviewed for the newsletter should contact Whitney Leeson at wleeson@roanoke.edu.


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