Mentoring for the Profession
Eileen Boris, President, International Federation for Research in Women’s History

I’d like to stretch our concept of mentoring by addressing what I call, “mentoring for the profession,” a way of thinking about what we do when we review a proposal, critique a manuscript, or even serve as a commentator at a conference. It takes place in conferences, professional societies, in review committees, and as journal editors and peer reviewers. Mentoring takes place anytime we give advice and encouragement, which is what the best evaluation of manuscripts and article submissions represent. Mentoring is the practice of critical engagement when we advance the scholarship we care about by shaping what gets published or presented through the peer review process. So I always ask myself: what kinds of scholarship, must I push, who are the people who should matter because my review can help make their voices heard and their interpretations go public?

Too often, we think about mentoring as something up close and personal. But it can be far away, yet still personal. Going over someone’s writing is an intimate act that can involve stroking, coaxing, but also invasion and even violence. It must be done with attention and care, with seriousness, and with an understanding that the goal is to help the author do what they are intending to do better or figure out what they wish to accomplish in the first place.

At the same time, mentoring for the profession is less personal in so far as the mentee is someone I’ve perhaps never seen and know only what is on the page. Sometimes, I don’t even know who has written a submission. It is easy to be brutally honest, but it is harder to be tactfully constructive. I have to remember that there is someone else in cyberspace who has labored mightily and whose very life – job – and not mere ego is at stake.

But mentoring for the profession does involve contact. A publisher or journal editor may have initiated our relationship by sending me your manuscript, but if we develop a mentoring relationship, it is a chosen relationship, entered into
for different rewards than that between a graduate advisor or committee member and a graduate student. The relation is based less on the credits that faculty gain from having another student file, the power relation differs because the mentee is not tied to me as my own students are: no one is going to say, why don’t you have a letter from Boris to someone whose dissertation I’ve not signed? And I am not obligated to write a letter, so when I do, it is out of conviction alone. I don’t get the kudos, my reputation as a graduate advisor doesn’t soar. You are not beholden to me.

How do we select each other? Sometimes you come to me directly. Other times I sign my name to a review, or we meet at a panel session, where you give a paper. Or your advisor or a mutual acquaintance introduces us.

Still, I gain: reputation as someone who cares about younger scholars, someone who is seen as a go to person by editors, someone who is a gatekeeper. Let me address the advantages of all of these rewards.

The first is cheap and easy. If we are concerned about advancing women and scholars from underrepresented groups, then we should encourage the work of those coming up. The hardest work has come before: I get to engage with the material, get exposed to new ideas and sources, while someone else did the dutiful and difficult work of getting the student into shape – the many drafts, the training in methods, the redlining of papers (ok, I am a line editor of just about everything I read!), the making of an enthusiast into a scholar. My reward is reading the latest research, sometimes the cutting edge, way before it is published.

Oh, it isn’t that I don’t get credit. I get plenty of credit – my reputation as a mentor and a reader, who will listen and play around ideas, discuss sources, situate in the literature, grapple with interpretations, and encourage. Having my own work cited is an outcome (so nothing comes without some exchange). Being thanked in acknowledgements. So you (I) become the go to person and you get: to read all sorts of fascinating work before anyone else does, get paid for it (my political contribution and donation funds – when I was more junior, my shoe money) and get books for free too. And you can waste time with editors in book exhibits and sometimes learn useful things about the landscape of publishing – all from being known as a reliable and good mentor reviewer. This is the second reward.

Third, I get to be a gatekeeper in terms of advancing interpretations and lines of enquiry. In the mid 1990s, I helped to develop all the major works written about gender, race, labor, and policy, especially welfare, not only because I came in contact with vibrant early career scholars (some still PhD students), but also because they were doing the kind of research that I believed in. And more lately, I’ve been doing that with work on domestic and household labor.

But mentoring for the profession involves not merely individual one to ones, though it involves that. It also involves creating community. It is connecting people with similar concerns who should be in dialogue with each other – often by bringing them together through conference panels, citing them together, introducing them to each other at meetings, and publishing them together in collections or special issues. It involves bringing people to the attention of senior scholars and publishers (another good reason to know publishers and to accept invitations for coffee even though I have no intention of publishing with a particular press, but what they are looking for might be just what one of my students needs).

Community isn’t just for community’s sake. Sure, it is nice to have people to go to dinner with. It is to carve out schools of thought. It is to encourage a new generation to take up the hard work of the
learned societies, to transform them, but to make sure that feminist scholars, gender queer people, working class men and women, people of color, and all sorts of those outside of power have a place to make their mark, to mark up the place, and thrive. Also, it is through the creation of our institutions, like the CCWH.

Why do I do it? Keeps me sharp. Learn a lot. Have an impact. Advance an interpretative vision. Pay back those who mentored me. And it is fun: you get to write blurbs, an art like the Haiku.

If I had teaching situations in which I was swamped with students, whether I wanted them or not, then I might not have gotten into the pattern of mentoring for the profession. It isn’t that I haven’t had students, but I was the general US historian on many committees, but few PhD students at my first ladder faculty job were interested in women’s and gender history. I had some great students since then, but better than a school of students is a collective in motion, mentoring each other as we push for scholarship that matters.

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Notes from the Executive Director
Sandra Trudgen Dawson, Executive Director, CCWH

Dear Members,

A few months ago, the CCWH established some new programs for members – a mentoring program, conference liaisons, a host program, and university representatives. Be sure to check out the website for more information at www.theccwh.org. If you have ideas for new programs, please e-mail me at execdir@theccwh.org. As an organization, the CCWH exists because of and for its members so please, let us know what you would like to see.

The CCWH will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2019! How would you like to celebrate this milestone? The CCWH was established as an organization with a dual mission: to promote women’s history and to support women in the historical profession. What should the vision of the CCWH be for the next fifty years? Let us know your ideas!

In October, we will begin our membership renewal. To better represent the diversity of our membership, the CCWH has revised the membership dues schedule based on income rather than academic status. The new schedule for 2017 will look like this:

**One-year Individual Membership:**
- $20 income under $25,000
- $30 income $25,000 - $50,000
- $50 income $50,000 - $75,000
- $75 income $75,000 - $100,000
- $90 income over $100,000

**Three-year Individual Membership:**
- $140 income $50,000 - $75,000
- $215 income $75,000 - $100,000
- $250 income over $100,000

**$80 Institutional Membership**

As always, the Executive Board is very conscious that our organization can only exist and continue to give $23,500 in awards each year with your membership and donations. Please consider donating $10 to $50 (which is tax deductible) so that we can continue for the next fifty years! Please e-mail me at execdir@theccwh.org with any comments, concerns, or ideas.
This month marks the one-hundred-year anniversary of the National Park Service (NPS), an event being commemorated by the NPS, at individual parks, and by the media (for example, a series on NPR). It’s a useful time to consider the state of historical interpretation by the park service. It is generally not well enough recognized that over two-thirds of the over four hundred NPS sites focus on historical themes. Many Americans encounter presentation of historical knowledge by visiting parks as diverse as Civil War battlefields; birthplaces of famous Americans; industrial sites such as Lowell, Massachusetts; sites of national tragedy such as the Flight 93 Memorial in rural Pennsylvania; and, even a plutonium production reactor in Washington state.

Yet, as the 2011 study, *Imperiled Promise: The State of History in the National Park Service* (Bloomington, IN: Organization of American Historians) found, many of these sites lack the resources to fully implement up-to-date historical programs. Many parks have innovative and analytical interpretations, but too often, ongoing budget issues have meant that NPS historical programs have not been able to do all that they could to educate the public. As *Imperiled Promise* found, several issues have limited the effectiveness of NPS’s historical program, including an artificial, and harmful, distinction between natural and historical/cultural sites (that is, too little attention to how historical forces have shaped the environment and parks themselves); a sometimes simplistic presentation of a single historical narrative; and crucially, an imbalance in funding for historical interpretation as opposed to NPS’s other functions. New challenges, including managing and interpreting parks in the face of climate change, lie ahead.

Historians concerned with expanding the public’s historical knowledge should take seriously the issue of historical interpretation within NPS, as this is a significant way the public encounters important questions about the meaning of the past. I encourage readers to check out their local parks, and, if interested in learning more, to look for the forthcoming November special issue of *The Public Historian*, of the past, present, and future of the NPS, guest edited by John Sprinkle of the Park History Program. The issue includes case studies of the founding of individual parks; considerations of current challenges, including the “interpreting backlog” at historic sites; and a study of how the NPS has and has not changed since the publication of *Imperiled Promise* by two of its authors, Anne Whisnant and Marla Miller. The park service, an important national institution, needs the support of both public and academic historians as it embarks upon its second century.
In the Spring 2016, when the CCWH started its new Conference Liaisons Program (http://theccwh.org/resources/conference-liaisons/), I signed up to serve as the CCWH Conference Liaison with the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations, a very prestigious organization and conference whose membership remains mostly male. Prompted by our Executive Director, I am sharing with you the results of my experience at the first conference I attended in this capacity – the SHAFR Annual Meeting held in San Diego at the end of June 2016.

Before going to the conference, I contacted the organizers and asked about possible ways to advertise our organization. They promptly offered to print fliers with our membership form on the back and to place them in the conference folders on our behalf. Since there was a fee attached to this service, I contacted the CCWH Executive Board asking for approval. They responded in the affirmative and the plan quickly came to fruition. Once there, it was a joy to see CCWH’s ubiquitous presence and to notice people of all genders reading our materials! Indeed, at least five people joined as a result.

The SHAFR conference organizers also put me in touch with the “Committee on Women in SHAFR” and arranged for me to meet with them. They welcomed me enthusiastically and promptly conveyed to the SHAFR Council our wish to form a relationship with them. I mentioned the possibility of co-sponsoring their traditional “Women in SHAFR Breakfast” or giving a short announcement and/or distributing materials there in the future. They seemed very receptive and later offered me a position on their committee. I was thrilled to accept.

There are a few things that I would do differently. I might contact the organizers in advance and ask them to include in an early email that CCWH members can receive help finding a roommate when they first register. I also volunteered to table at registration for three hours thinking that I could answer questions and also give out brochures (which I requested from the CCWH Board and brought with me). This was not very productive, as people understandably were more concerned about registration itself and did not pay attention to extra opportunities. Also, if somebody asked a question, I did not have time to reply with more than one sentence (perhaps we should come up with a really effective slogan?). While at the conference, I made it a point to talk to as many women as possible and to ask them about what they feel can be improved. Still, I wish I had more opportunities to connect with other women. In the future, I will try to organize a small gathering and propose to have a CCWH dinner sign-up sheet at registration.

Nevertheless, this has been a fulfilling experience. I now feel more confident in my role as CCWH-SHAFR Liaison and member of the Committee on Women in SHAFR, and I am looking forward to giving it another go next year.

People interested in becoming a CCWH Conference Liaison should contact our CCWH Conference Liaisons Coordinator, Dr. Cassia Roth, at conferences@theccwh.org.
CCWH Conference Liaisons

As part of our efforts to increase and retain membership, the CCWH has introduced a new Conference Liaisons Program. The goal is to ensure that CCWH has somebody representing us at as many conferences as possible, large and small, and that women in history receive all the support they deserve.

Here is a list of current CCWH Conference Liaisons:

- **American Historical Association**
  - Kathleen Feeley
  - Kathleen_Feeley@redlands.edu

- **American Historical Association Pacific Coast Branch**
  - Kathleen Feeley
  - Kathleen_Feeley@redlands.edu

- **Organization of American Historians**
  - Anne Gray Fischer
  - anne_gray_fischer@brown.edu

- **Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations (SHAFR)**
  - Ilaria Scaglia
  - scaglia_ilaria@columbusstate.edu

- **Society for the History of Technology (Women in Technological History)**
  - Mark Crowley
  - mark.crowley@whu.edu.cn

- **Association for Theatre in Higher Education and American Society for Theatre Research**
  - Dorothy Chansky
  - dorothychansky@gmail.com

- **Australasian Victorian Studies Association**
  - Jennifer Allen
  - JenniferAllen@dcccd.edu

- **Southern Conference on Slavic Studies**
  - Jeanie Welch
  - Jeaniemwelch@gmail.com

- **Middle Eastern Studies Association**
  - Lucia Carminati
  - lcarminati@email.arizona.edu

- **Southern Historical Association (European History Section)**
  - Jennifer Allen
  - JenniferAllen@dcccd.edu

- **National Women’s Studies Association**
  - Fatemeh Hosseini
  - Fatemehhos@gmail.com

- **Urban History**
  - Marisa Chappell
  - Marissa.Chappell@oregonstate.edu

- **Western Association of Women Historians (WAWH)**
  - Pamela Stewart
  - Pamela.Stewart@asu.edu

- **North American Conference on British History**
  - Sandra Trudgen Dawson
  - dawsonsandra33@gmail.com

We are always looking for volunteers to cover more conferences and/or to help the people serving as liaisons. You could help to make CCWH known (e.g., bringing brochures, or making a short announcement), help other CCWH members who intend to participate (e.g., connect people who are trying to form a panel, or are seeking a roommate), and network with them (e.g., meet for coffee?). In short, as a conference liaison you will be creating a community of women wherever you go. If you are interested, please contact Cassia Roth at conferences@theccwh.org.
Countering Hate Speech on Campus: Graduate Student Activism Revisited

In May 2014, Graduate Representative Beth Hessel wrote a column for the CCWH about the tensions between the activist impulse and the rigid expectations of both graduate school and the job market. The article raised several important questions about balancing our careers and our political commitments. Hessel’s article focused on activism happening outside academia, but recent events on my campus forced me to seriously contemplate the merits of graduate student activism on campus.

The controversy in question started – as controversies so often do – on social media. A fellow graduate student happened upon (and subsequently shared) an advertisement for a campus event that was as crude in its construction as it was in its content. The poster was building up hype for an upcoming visit by Milo Yiannopoulos by reiterating a claim he makes in most of his public appearances: “Feminism is Cancer.”

For those of you who have been lucky enough to avoid him, Milo Yiannopoulos is a political commentator the likes of David Horowitz, the only seeming difference being that he has still less credibility. He writes for Breitbart, but is known primarily for using Twitter (and his army of trolls) as a weapon, usually deployed against women who’ve had the audacity to succeed in non-traditionally feminine pursuits. Less than a month ago, Yiannopoulos finally went too far, leading a racist and sexist campaign against Ghostbusters actress and comedian Leslie Jones that resulted in his being permanently banned from Twitter. While he’s now lost his primary platform, Yiannopoulos – now freshly martyred for the alt-right cause – also makes a very tidy sum touring college campuses.

The quarter Yiannopoulos was scheduled to grace the UC Irvine campus was also the quarter that I taught a seminar on the history of AIDS. So, there I was, a female historian teaching a small, but committed group of students about topics in gender and sexuality, about activism in the face of monumental stigma…all while the posters kept going up. Homophobic, trans slurs, misogyny, the works. Every time a poster was removed, a new, more offensive one took its place. Sadly, it was students writing and posting these materials, and that they did so with the express intention of harming their fellow students. For example, they mocked victims of trauma with “jokes” like “What’s the difference between a feminist and a gun? A gun only has one trigger.” Every time I walked past one of those posters, I felt both attacked by their content and strangely complicit in it. I study AIDS activists. Could I really ignore what was happening and retain a shred of credibility?

My instinct was to jump in head first. Throwing pragmatism to the wind, I joined up with three colleagues – one from the Informatics Department, one from the Philosophy Department, and one recently-minted Ph.D. now on campus for a teaching fellowship. Together, we formed an organization called The Feminist Illuminati of UCI.

In just two short weeks, we published an op-ed in the student newspaper and put together an event called “Feminism in Contemporary Culture.” The evening included a dinner and seven talks by eight people – professors, graduate students (myself included), and UCI graduate alumni – all committed to serious discussion of what it means to be a feminist in the twenty-first century.

We fundraised for the event by selling “Feminist Illuminati” merchandise, which I’m proud to say a number of CCWH members bought during the WAWH conference. Not only did we fund
our event, we raised $1,000 for a non-profit dedicated to supporting men and women living with stage IV breast cancer. We figured if we were going to take the time to problematize the use of cancer as a political metaphor, why not raise money to help the people whose experience such a comparison trivializes?

The event was successful beyond our wildest dreams. So successful, in fact, that we’re probably going to turn The Feminist Illuminati of UCI into an official campus organization. Through critical thought, collaboration, and strategic acts of love, our fledgling group plans to turn hate like that we saw unfold on our campus this year into delicious haterade. Helping build this organization up is going to take time and energy I don’t have, but it’s also going to help me sleep at night.

Equally important: while this was all happening, I told my students what I was up to. Some attended the event, some bought t-shirts, and still others used the power of their mobile phones to capture and report hate speech as it happened. That I felt empowered to respond to what was happening empowered several of them to do the same. It was pedagogically risky, but our class discussions of graduate student activism on campus added a contemporary dimension to our class discussions, and deepened students’ engagement with the course material.

Am I convinced that mine was the correct response to hate speech on campus? No. Do I regret anything I did? No. Many of the best, most challenging conversations I had last year – both as a student and as an educator – were about trying to figure out the right way to respond to oppression on campus.

That is why I am bringing the conversation to you.

I don’t know if I made the right choice, but I do know that hate and anti-intellectualism have gained tremendous ground on college campuses since the rise of Donald Trump. Milo Yiannopoulos, though banned from Twitter, has more real-life followers than ever before. Students who interpret the First Amendment as a blank check are growing bolder, more aggressive. So, I’m curious: how have you responded to social justice issues on your campuses, and how has your response impacted your academic career? Let me know at milnea@uci.edu.

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**JOB POSTING**

Yale University
Women’s Gender, & Sexuality Studies
Assistant Professor, tenure track, in the field of gender & sexuality in the global South

The Yale University Program in Women’s Gender, and Sexuality Studies intends to hire a tenure-track assistant professor in the field of gender and sexuality in the global South. The appointment begins July 1, 2017.

We are interested in transnational research in such fields as critical development studies, environment and social justice, migration, indigeneity, human rights, science and technology studies, visual cultures, and performance studies. Scholars in the social and human sciences, humanities, law, environmental studies, as well as those trained in interdisciplinary fields are encouraged to apply. Yale University is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer. Yale values diversity among its students, staff, and faculty and strongly welcomes applications from women and underrepresented minorities.

Ph.D. or equivalent degree at time of hire is expected. A letter of application describing your research, teaching interests, engagement with women’s, gender, and sexuality studies, a CV, a two-page dissertation abstract, chapter-length writing sample, and three letters of reference required. Review of applications will begin October 1, 2016. To ensure full consideration, please submit all materials by September 30, 2016.

For questions, please contact the Yale Program for Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at wgss@yale.edu.
Annual Business Meeting

Pursuant to the CCWH’s governing charter, the CCWH holds a business meeting annually to conduct business on behalf of the organization. The minutes from the most recently meeting held in January 2016 are as follows:

CCWH Annual Business Meeting, Thursday, 7 January 2016: 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m., Room 401, Hilton Atlanta

Those in attendance: Ilaria Scaglia, Sandra Trudgen Dawson, Nupur Chaudhuri, Barbara Molony, Rachel Fuchs, Courtney Campbell, Mary Ann Villarreal, Susan Yohn (guest), and Kathleen Nutter via telephone speaker.

1. The meeting was called to order at 5:34 p.m.

2. The minutes of the January 2015 Annual Business Meeting were approved with corrected spelling.

3. Barbara Molony was introduced as the incoming Co-President, 2016-2019, and thanks was given to Rachel Fuchs for her three years of service.

4. Written annual reports were available for all those board members not present.

5. Sandra’s report highlighted some of the successes and challenges of 2015. The CCWH now has a formal MOU with the AHA concerning the Joan Kelly Award Committee. Barbara Ramussack accepted a position on the committee this year and Rachel Fuchs, a CCWH nominee, was chosen as the AHA nominee. Next year, the CCWH will nominate Barbara Molony and others for the vacancy.

Sandra asked if the CCWH should pay for an add in Perspectives to advertise the new Carol Gold Article Award. Susan Yohn suggested sending the ad to the Berks for them to share on Facebook. The general consensus was to spread the word of the new award via H-Net.

Sandra raised concern about the low number of tickets sold for the annual awards luncheon this year. She also raised concern about the $5,000 shortfall in revenue for 2015 as opposed to 2014.

Sandra also wondered how many of our members opened their e-mails from the CCWH and suggested that we return to Mailchimp to see that percentage.

Sandra’s goal is to redesign the brochure this year as it now contains outdated information.

Sandra also pointed out that the Berks deadline has been extended to February 5th and that will be announced at both the luncheon and the reception.

6. Rachel reported on the results of the CCWH survey. She will be giving more specific information tomorrow at the panel on adjunct faculty. Rachel is working on conclusions that will increase our membership and make the CCWH more relevant to adjunct faculty.

7. Nupur announced that she will be meeting with Lynn Weiner to discuss what the AHA is doing regarding con-
Annual Business Meeting (cont.)

8. Susan Yohn mentioned that the Berks is working to put that on the program.

9. There followed a discussion about writing a statement similar to that sent out by the OAH as well as ways to publicize the results of the CCWH survey. Those present also asked about how the CCWH survey might relate to that done by the AHA.

10. Mary Ann reported on the retreat held earlier in 2015. See written report.

11. Courtney reported that the CCWH had 371 members in 2015, but of that number, only 155 have renewed so far for 2016. The majority of members join for the awards.

Courtney pointed out that we have a 61% retention rate and would like to see this increased to 75% in 2016.

Courtney has sent out “we miss you” e-mails to those members who joined in 2014 but did not renew for 2015. Her goal is to increase membership to 600 by 2019.

A new fee structure that better represents the reality of income was suggested, but as there was no quorum, no decision was made.

Courtney is stepping down as Membership Coordinator, but had some suggestions for the future: A) better data collection as the current Excel sheet is “clunky;” B) Courtney would like a better way to get current membership information to the Newsletter Editor.

12. There followed a discussion about why people did not join organizations like the CCWH and the Berks. One suggestion was to organize a meeting at the next AHA for the Presidents of women’s organizations. Sandra will organize this meeting in Denver in January 2017.

13. Kathleen was unable to present her Treasurer’s report due to technical difficulties. Sandra read the highlights of her written report.

Kathleen will be stepping down from her position as Treasurer in June for personal reasons. Pamela Stewart has agreed to take up this position for the term 2016-2019. Kathleen and Pamela will work together to make this a smooth transition for the organization.

Susan Yohn proposed that the funds for the CCWH/Berks Award be taken back and put into the Berks more aggressive funds.

Discussion followed about the possibility of also placing the Ida B. Wells funds with the Berks.

Sandra proposed a motion that we send to the full board a proposal to move the CCWH/Berks Award funds to the Berks and that the award for the CCWH/Berks and the Ida B. Wells Award be raised to $1,500. The sense of the meeting was to pass this motion, but no quorum was present.

14. New Business: Ideas for fundraising for the Prelinger Award were floated. There was also a discussion about lowering the award amount to $10,000 so that the CCWH can more likely continue this generous award if no further funds come from the anonymous donor. Sandra agreed to contact Mr. Kornblau with this idea.

15. The meeting adjourned at 7:32 p.m.
Editor’s Note: Beginning with this issue, we will interview authors of fiction and non-fiction books of interest to our membership. If you are an author, or would like to nominate an author to be interviewed, contact newsletter@theccwh.org. We inaugurate this new feature by interviewing Lucy Jane Bledsoe about her latest historical fiction novel, A Thin Bright Line.

Lucy Jane Bledsoe

Today, I am interviewing Lucy Jane Bledsoe, author of A Thin Bright Line.

Hi Lucy. Thank you for agreeing to this interview.

Would you like to tell the membership of the CCWH about yourself and your background?

I grew up in Portland, Oregon, and now live in Berkeley, California with my partner of 32 years. I love to read, kayak, bike, and hike.

I’ve been a fiction writer my entire life, having decided at a very early age that I wanted to write novels. I believe that story-telling is a crucial way we humans understand ourselves, interpret our past, and dream our futures.

What I look for most in good fiction is authenticity, truth-telling. I love thinking about how using our imaginations to think deeply about the human experience can, sometimes, lead to truer stories than nonfiction.

How did you become involved with the subject of your book?

In 1966, when I was 9 years old, my aunt and namesake, Lucybelle Bledsoe, died in an apartment fire. I remember her well; she was kind and funny. But details about her life were elusive. My dad, her brother, told me that she studied for and passed the bar exam, without ever going to law school. My mom told me that she was terribly independent and that even in the 1950s and 1960s she wouldn’t let men hold doors open for her. It frustrated me so much that I couldn’t know her better. Yet, when I questioned my parents, I couldn’t get more than these few stories from them.

One day, a few years ago, I was telling a friend about my aunt and she suggested I Google her. Since Lucybelle died in 1966, and was just a farm girl from Arkansas, I didn’t expect to find anything. But I did: two items popped up on the Internet. One was an obituary in the Journal of Glaciology. The other was a three-page entry in a new scholarly volume published by Routledge called The Biographical Dictionary of Women in Science: Pioneering Lives from Ancient Times to the Mid-20th Century.

I was astonished. So was my father. He’d known she was “doing something about ice,” but had no idea she’d been an important player in seminal climate research. In fact, she was part of a team who in 1966 pulled the first ever ice cores from Greenland and Antarctica, resulting in a study that revealed the beginning of climate change. These two online documents told me where she’d worked, and I began contacting and interviewing her co-workers. My research expanded from there into public records and historical records, more interviews and travel to visit the places she had lived and worked.
Author’s Corner (cont.)

I knew that Lucybelle had been my father’s beloved sister (although he knew little about her life) and my beloved aunt and namesake, but I was amazed to hear how much my life paralleled hers. Like me, she wanted to be a novelist. Like me, she made her living as a science writer. Like me, she wrote extensively about the Polar Regions. Like me, she was gay. The more I learned about her extraordinary life – and the ways in which I was almost eerily following in her footsteps – the more I wanted to know.

The research journey was so exciting! Over the years, more and more bits, and sometimes big chunks, of factual information got uncovered. I decided to include a chapter at the end of my novel about the stories and people and discoveries of doing historical research in service of both finding out more about a beloved family member and for writing a novel.

Why did you choose to write in historical fiction? You write in more than one genre, how do you balance them?

I always start with a story I want to tell. Often, it’s only an idea I want to expand upon. I spend a lot of time figuring out the best format and structure and genre for telling that story. Nonfiction? Historical fiction? Screenplay? Which will best serve my story?

Lots of people told me I should write this book as a biography, and I gave that idea much thought. I could have used the biography form to write about LGBT history and the history of climate research, through the lens of what I discovered about my aunt’s life. Truly, though, what interested me most was trying to find out who Lucybelle was, and how it was possible for a remarkable person to simply disappear from sight, leaving so few traces.

Like so many women of her time, Lucybelle shot off the Arkansas farm under the cover of World War II. She headed straight for Greenwich Village. So, one of the questions that totally intrigues me is, how could she have known that was where she wanted to go? There was no Internet. She was in her young 20s. How did she make that choice? Nonfiction can never answer that question for me. But fiction can. I can interview her childhood friends, her work colleagues, her family, and I can follow the paths of where she went physically, and put together a pretty good answer. I can’t claim my answer as fact, but it’s satisfying to me to put the emotional and factual pieces of the puzzle together and make a story.

As for writing in other genres, the answer is similar. I love science and I love the challenge of writing stories that bring readers into that circle of intrigue. Since I’m not a scientist, I can offer up the awe of a generalist, make the connections between human lives and science that scientists typically don’t make. My favorite compliment is when someone reads a story I’ve written and says, “I don’t usually like anything with science in it [or history in it], but I really liked your novel.” I use fiction to share my passions.

Can you share some stories about people you met while researching this book?

A favorite encounter was with the wife of one of the scientists with whom Lucybelle worked. I spent a lot of time trying to confirm or disavow my suspicions that my aunt was gay. Most of her coworkers said they wouldn’t know anything about that, and a couple of them said I should talk to Marge Gow, the wife of scientist Tony Gow. I emailed her. I called her. She never responded. So, when I was in New Hampshire, doing research about the end of Lucybelle’s life, and in the town where the Gows lived, I thought of calling one last time. They’d already ignored me and I hate to be a pest. I’d already interviewed a few other people in town about my aunt, and I figured I’d leave it at that. But in a moment of courage, I picked up the phone and called. Marge answered, and she said right away, “I’ve been waiting for your call.” She knew I was in town from my other sources. She suggested we have lunch the following day. She and Tony arrived at the appointed hour and before even sitting down, Marge said, “I knew your aunt and her partner well.” I nearly burst into tears. She and Tony had lots of stories about the two of them. I never asked why she hadn’t returned my email or phone messages, but she and her husband
Author’s Corner (cont.)

are in their eighties, and some older people just
don’t do email or return long distance phone calls.

Another story: I’d tried and tried and tried to find
an address for Lucybelle in New York. I’d spent
hours going through microfiche in the New York
Public Library. I could find no proof that she’d
been in that city, although I was told she’d lived
there for 12 years. I’d already finished a couple of
drafts of the novel when I happened to be in New
York again. I went to the Milstein Division where
all the genealogy records are kept. An elderly
librarian, Mr. Rubenstein, helped me. He barely
spoke but for a couple of hours he doggedly tried
different approaches. Then, bingo, in a new
database the library had recently acquired, he
found a Lucybelle Bledsoe at 277 W. 12th Street in
the Village. The best part: in my novel I’d already
housed her one short block away from that
address. Of course, I rewrote that part of the novel
to make it correct.

What was the hardest part of writing this book?

Absolutely, the emotional journey. First off,
having to imagine, in depth, the fire that killed her,
the details of that, and the grief her partner must
have felt, was devastating. Secondly, wishing so
badly that I could have known my aunt. And also
knowing I was too late – and only by a few years –
to know my aunt’s life partner, who died in 2002.
Had I had the maturity and guts and general
wherewithal to begin this research earlier, I might
have learned so much more about my aunt and
namesake.

How are you publishing this book and why? i.e.,
why have you gone with a university press?

When my agent and I started discussing
publishers, she said something I’d been dreading
as I worked on the story. The novel would have
better chances with mainstream publishers if I
gave it a more Cold War thriller bent. I didn’t
want to write a Cold War thriller. I wanted to write
a love story – mine for my aunt, my aunt’s for her
lovers. I wanted to give my aunt back some of the
life that had been erased by sexism and
homophobia. I wanted to show her courage in
living through the McCarthy Era as a queer
woman working in a highly classified government
job. Happily, my agent backed me one hundred
percent.

My editor at University of Wisconsin Press,
Raphael Kadushin, has a reputation for taking on
authentic work. I’m hugely grateful that he and
his colleagues shared my vision for this story.

Who are some of your favorite authors that you
feel were influential in your work? What
impact have they had on your writing?

I love so many writers. Toni Morrison for the
richness of her language and storytelling, the
layers and layers of texture and story and meaning.
I love Alice Munro for the seemingly magical way
she makes the mundane utterly gripping. Sherman
Alexie for his humor, the way his love of
humanity shines through his stories. I just
discovered Thrity Umrigar, and I love the
authenticity of her characters, the way they
grapple with issues of culture and race. I love
Emma Donoghue’s work. Chimamanda Adichie’s
Americanah blew my mind.

Ernest Gaines once said that there are six steps
to becoming a writer: read, read, read, write, write,
write. I subscribe to that approach whole-
heartedly. Rather than being influenced by a
single, or a couple, of writers, I like to immerse
myself in lots of excellent writing.

What do your plans for future projects
include?

I may be working on another historical story
next. In high school, I desperately wanted to play
basketball for my high school, but there was no
team for girls. I had an opportunity to meet Gloria
Steinem in my junior year and learned from her
about Title IX. A year of activism resulted in a
girls’ basketball league in my city of Portland,
Oregon. My team went on to win the state
championship! It’s a story I’ve long wanted to
write. Again, I need to figure out the best form for
the story.
Author’s Corner (cont.)

With many of the members of the CCWH writing their first lengthy manuscript, i.e., their dissertation, do you have any tips on how to get through the dreaded writer’s block?

I do. Showing up is key. Preferably every single day, or at least five days a week. I suggest giving your writing your best hours of the day, whether those are the first ones of the day or mid-afternoon ones. Decide on a doable amount of time you are going to write everyday. It can be half an hour or it can be two hours. But choose an amount you think you can actually do. Then all you have to do is show up. Here’s another key part: if you “fail,” as in write nothing that day, do not punish yourself by adding more time the next day. Let it go. It’s part of the process. Just show up the next day for your time slot. I promise you, the manuscript will get written.

What question do you wish that someone would ask about your book, but nobody has?

Maybe it’s this: Why should we care? As I dug deeper and deeper into Lucybelle’s life, and discovered more and more details, and realized how much she hid from her family, and yet still persevered, still came out and found lovers, still did work she loved, made friends, moved around the country, dreamed, I became more and more grateful. Deeply grateful. So many women have lived so many amazing lives and we don’t know about those lives. If I’d had those examples as a little girl, if others had those examples as little girls, imagine what we could accomplish. Rather than starting over from scratch again. A few other accomplished women make cameo appearances in my book – Djuna Barnes, Lorraine Hansberry, Tiny Davis, and Ruby Lucas – but so many women are lost to obscurity. Understanding how a farm girl from Arkansas made remarkable choices in the midcentury is a powerful tool for women making choices today.

Besides my gratitude for the generations of women before me who accomplished awesome feats of personal, political, and professional courage, I found that writing this novel gave me a renewed admiration for the generations of women coming after me, how each generation is doing the work and defining new parameters. It’s exhilarating. I’m doing a lot of talks for this book and have invited younger women writers to join me “in conversation.” The idea is that Lucybelle, too, will be on the stage, so we’ll be three generations in conversation. Please come to an event! They’re listed here: http://www.lucyjanebledsoe.com/events.htm.

What advice would you give to your younger self?

Be more courageous. Ask more questions. Insist on answers when adults aren’t forthcoming.

What advice would you give to aspiring writers of historical fiction?

One big mistake I made at first was to not interview people in person. I talked to people on the phone and via email, and while I gleaned lots of good information that way, when I showed up in person, people truly opened up to me.

Also, definitely visit the physical locations of your story. So much information can be gathered from setting. The factual information will ring more true, because it will be true. But also, being in the actual setting really launched my imagination about what can happen in the story. I try to always remember that people are animals; our physical settings play a huge part in dictating our behaviors.
Author’s Corner (cont.)

Here’s a tricky one: trust your instincts. Time and again, I found that what I suspected to be true, was true. Of course, the suspicions themselves aren’t enough, they’re not proof. But they’re an impetus for continuing research. Keep digging. It’s so gratifying to finally find the evidence.

How can readers discover more about you and your work?

Please visit my website: www.lucyjanebledsoe.com

The publisher’s press page for A Thin Bright Line: https://uwpress.wisc.edu/books/5408.htm

If you had one day to spend with Lucybelle, what would you do?

Ah, this question pulls at my heartstrings. How I would love to have that day! I would want to listen and listen and listen. I’ve wondered, had she lived, how out she’d be today (she’d be 93). I would find a place where she’s comfortable, sit her down, and ask her every question I can think of about her life. I would tell her about the profound impact she’s had on my life. I’m so glad to have her for my namesake.

Member Spotlight

Editor’s Note: In each issue, we spotlight members of the CCWH to highlight our members’ varied backgrounds, fields of study, experience, and geographic locations. Spotlighting members from across the CCWH spectrum reflects the diversity of our membership.

Victoria Barnett Woods

New to CCWH this year is English PhD candidate Victoria (Vicki) Barnett-Woods, in her fourth year at The George Washington University in Washington, D.C. Her dissertation, “Reading the West Indies: Empire, Slavery, and the Rise of the Novel,” considers the cross-pollination of eighteenth century Caribbean history and the novel as a form. Research has taken her to Barbados, Puerto Rico, and most recently, the Bodleian Library at Oxford. And she loves every second of it: it has been an honor and a pleasure for her to read such rich archival material. Vicki hopes to have her dissertation completed by next fall, ambitiously a semester earlier than expected, and is eager to go on the job market. If you have any suggestions for her before she embarks, please email at vab@gwu.edu (seriously).

A recent article, forthcoming in the Fall issue of Women’s Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal, comes form her dissertation’s second chapter in which she argues that imperial notions of femininity and the classic understanding of the Bildungsroman are interrogated when reading works such as The Female American (1767) and The Woman of Colour (1808). In both novels, a mixed-race West Atlantic woman is the heroine of modernity, “writing back” to Eurocentric philosophies of the idealized female citizen-subject. When she is not reading and writing, Vicki takes pleasure in long walks with good friends and family. But, very frequently, she is reading and writing.

Jacqueline-Bethel Mougoué
Member Spotlight (cont.)

As an assistant professor of Modern African History at Baylor University, I teach Modern African History and Women and Gender in Modern Africa. I received my Ph.D. from Purdue University (2013). My research interests include African women’s history, nationalism, and separatist/secessionist movements. I have a forthcoming article in Feminist Africa that focuses on beauty rituals and cultural identity in early postcolonial Anglophone Cameroon. I have several articles under review about gender and recalcitrant behavior in 1960s Anglophone Cameroon. My current manuscript traces the origin of Cameroonian women’s roles in the effort to maintain Anglophone separatism, political identity, and cultural values in a Francophone-dominated federal republic (1961-1972). This role did not take the form of openly criticizing the government in Francophone Cameroon as annexationist and hegemonic; women left this to the men who openly demanded secession. Rather, in this period, women journalists, the wives of state officials, the few female politicians, and other educated urban elite women carved new spaces of socio-political power by using a variety of mass media outlets to monitor women’s behaviors and thus subtly stressed Anglophone Cameroonian separatism and nationalism. Through this regulation, particularly of other urban elite women, they staked a claim for women’s behaviors within domestic, community, and national spaces as the lynchpin to preserving respectability, gender norms, and socio-political identity in English-speaking urban towns in early postcolonial Cameroon. I have shared my research at various academic institutions including Yale University, the University of California-Berkeley, Northwestern University, the University of Texas-Austin, and the University of Buea (Cameroon).

Erika Cornelius Smith

Erika Cornelius Smith has a passion for history and politics. She approaches her research and teaching through an interdisciplinary framework, one that draws from her graduate training in Political Science, History, and Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. This passion led her to immerse herself in the study of citizenship, international organizations, and transnational histories of activists in the United States and Central and Eastern Europe. To support her research, including work in Czech, Slovak, French, and German, Dr. Smith has received funding from the Indian University Russian and East European Institute, the University of Pittsburgh Slavic Language Institute, the American Council of Learned Societies, and the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations. This work has been presented in Budapest, London, Prague, Bratislava, Istanbul, and at national conferences across the United States.

Dr. Smith’s current research interests have shifted as a result of her teaching position at Nichols College, where she is an Assistant Professor of History and Political Science and the chair of the Interdisciplinary Studies program. Her new research focuses on the application of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in post-secondary history classrooms, including its impact on retention and student learning outcomes. Faculty in higher education know that students are incredibly diverse in their learning needs, preparation, and approaches. Dr. Smith hopes that her research on the application of UDL in higher education will engender conversations across the discipline about how instructors can anticipate this learner variability and provide every student with equal opportunities to thrive.

Julie Laut
University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana

Countless pages have been devoted to building and maintaining a shared historical memory of the American Civil War. Most of this work, beginning with first hand accounts in the immediate wake of war, has focused on the masculine experiences of the long, brutal conflict through in-depth analyses of battlefield maneuvers and the men who fought and led the opposing armies. The many fewer words dedicated to women’s Civil War experiences depict victimized women isolated on home fronts away from the battlefield, and render women’s agency virtually invisible. The essays in LeeAnn Whites and Alecia P. Long’s highly accessible edited volume *Occupied Women* seeks to remedy the absence of women in these histories and at the same time bring gender analysis to bear on military policy and the experience of civilians in the occupied regions of the South. Vast regions of the Confederate South were under Union occupation as early as 1861, including a swath of territory in the northern areas of the slaveholding Border States, the eastern seaboard, and other garrisoned towns. Ninety percent of Southern men either enlisted or were drafted into the Confederate Army. Union occupation, therefore, put the Northern Army in direct contact with the civilians left behind: white women, children, and elderly men as well as millions of slaves. The category of “occupation,” then, serves a dual role in the volume, referring not only to the increased labor required of women left behind on the home front, but also emphasizing the experience of women who lived in spaces occupied by enemy men. These occupied spaces – regions, towns, and individual homes – were points of contact ripe for friction between occupier and occupied.

After the introduction, Long’s essay opens the volume with an analysis of Benjamin Butlers infamous General Order No. 28, or “Woman Order,” issued just two weeks after he arrived to oversee the occupation of New Orleans. The need for the order, its symbolic power, and the shaping of historical memory after the fact touch on themes repeated throughout the volume: the occupation of female-dominated spaces posed unique challenges to the Union Army, which was forced to alter its policies and behavior in reaction to local circumstances. Confederate loyalist white women often failed to conform to expected gender norms through their speech and actions during occupation. The Woman Order, though touted as a complete success, was never truly able to end the “low-level insurgency of petty insults and rancorous ridicule” in New Orleans (19). Shaming, loyalty oaths, arrest and even exile could not fully control the more treasonous acts of smuggling, spying, mail-running, and supporting Confederate soldiers in places such as St. Louis as described in White’s essay, and Kentucky, highlighted in Kristen L. Streeter’s piece. As these essays demonstrate, Southern white women refused to be passive victims, instead actively challenging their occupiers, refusing to play by the (gendered) rules of decorum.

Lisa Tendrich Frank’s essay finds many instances in which
writes about the trials of these doubly occupied women who as poor whites already led precarious lives.

As many of these essays attest, whiteness and wealth provided a certain level of respect and protection for women during occupation, but for those already marginalized, such as poor whites, widows, and slaves, occupation proved extremely harsh. Perhaps the most intriguing essay in the volume is Leslie A. Schwalm’s “Between Slavery and Freedom,” which focuses on the humanitarian crisis created by thousands of self-emancipating African American women and children. Schwalm deals deftly with categories of race, gender and the commodification of labor to assess the “potentially liberating but also ambiguous and sometimes dangerous consequences” of Union occupation for slave women who self-emancipated. Thousands were held in miserable “contraband camps” where many died. Others were moved north to fill labor shortages in households and on farms or were put to work on abandoned plantations in the South. “Racism and the specific denigration of enslaved women” (146), Schwalm argues, meant that these strong women, determined to be free, “endured a great deal in order to live to see the day when they might claim the prerogatives that [white women] hoped and expected their gender might secure” (154). Black or white, wealthy or poor, occupied women in the South were in fact part of a reconfigured battlefield, not simply victims, but active participants in resistance and collusion in a conflict that constantly upended borders both physical and gendered as all involved reacted, in the words of Whites and Long, to the “contingent, continuous, and critical war of occupation” (4).


Jeanne Farr McDonnell
Institute for Historical Study

During this contentious presidential election time, Coodley’s biography of Upton Sinclair (1878-1968) is especially notable. His beliefs in women’s equality and socialism have gained credence.

Coodley makes clear how Sinclair’s life affected his beliefs. His knowledge of economic contrast could be traced to his childhood. His mother came
from a well-to-do family, his father was an alcoholic, hardly able to earn a living. He and his parents moved from Baltimore to New York City during his grade and high school days, living in one boarding house after another. His mother sent him to bring home his father from various bars he frequented. The statistic in New York City was that about 10,000 children lived on the streets, either because they were orphans or their parents could not support them.

Coodley describes the way Sinclair worked, what he accomplished, his family and relationships with friends who included U.S. presidents, authors, notable women, and achievers in the field of social well-being, all within the pertinent historical context. In addition to his books and articles, her sources included Sinclair’s vast mail correspondence, acquired and preserved by Indian University archives.

By page 18, Coodley explains that Sinclair’s writing mode began at age 14. He raised birds as a hobby. In his first publication, a bird proved a colored boy innocent who had been wrongly accused of arson. The magazine paid him $25, a hardy sum then and a spur to him to adopt a lifetime as a writer.

Sinclair’s mother encouraged him to become a Protestant Bishop. They attended church regularly and assisted in their parish. He promised her he would never drink. He subsequently supported Prohibition. His abstaining from alcohol probably helped his lifelong adoption of healthful diet and exercise. At one banquet, he refused everything and took out a bowl of brown rice he brought with him. At another time, he lived on ripe, juicy, tasty tomatoes.

Put simply, Sinclair was a socialist and a feminist. He believed and promoted by his writing and actions that working people should have reasonable hours, safe healthful conditions in their workplaces, earn enough to support themselves and their families in health and safety. He disapproved of child labor, discrimination against various segments of the population, products that were unhealthful, and extreme wealth gained in ways detrimental to workers.

Coodley’s book led me to read Sinclair’s *The Jungle*, *Boston*, *Dragon’s Teeth*, and many of his articles, and *Women and Economics* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and *California Progressivism Revisited* edited by William Deverell and Tom Sitton.

I remained intrigued on every page of Coodley’s book because of her meticulous research, her understanding of Sinclair’s era and his geographic and cultural surroundings, and her attention to his many friends and associates, including such notables as Jane Addams, Margaret Sangar, Henry Ford, and Jack London.

Sinclair may have been sidetracked in academic circles because colleges depended on wealthy donors and some opposed socialism. In his novels, he created fictional characters within an accurate historical setting. His Pulitzer winner, *Dragon’s Teeth*, studies the drastic situation of approaching warfare and murder of Jewish people by the Nazis instead of focusing mainly on poverty. One character is a wealthy Jewish man. The two central characters manage to convince him to travel with them out of Germany, not by trying to convince him he is unsafe, but by drawing him to visits he would otherwise miss.

The central figure never speaks forcefully of his socialism but uses it. His wife lost half her fortune in the Depression but the rest is sufficient for them to live comfortably and to assist others unobtrusively. The husband sells works of art, earning him “pocket money,” to avoid depending entirely on his wife.

Coodley claims that Sinclair’s long monogamous marriage to his second wife allowed him to have supportive relationships with many women. In an appendix, Coodley lists women Sinclair corresponded with and came to know. The first is Charlotte Perkins Gilman, author of *Women and Economics*, published in 1898 and translated into seven languages, reprinted in multiple editions. She lectured widely and made
two European tours. She writes of the balance of power within the society as a “peculiar sexico-economic relation,” and that the “whole field of human progress has been considered a masculine prerogative.”

Coodley wrote: “In 1937 he published No Pasaran. Intellectuals in America and around the world were aware that the first war against fascism could succeed in neighboring countries. Seattle educator and journalist Anna Louise Strong, wrote him. She’d been at the Spanish battlefront and had recently reported her observations to Eleanor Roosevelt. She proposed to Sinclair that they exchange some of his knowledge of California with some of hers of Spain. She was planning to go to Los Angeles to see Mrs. Barnsdall and Mrs. Gartz...letters reveal Sinclair’s inclusion in the powerful alliances of Depression-era women activists...” (p. 133).

Coodley published in 2004 Land of Orange Groves and Jails: Upton Sinclair’s California, examples of Sinclair’s California writings with introductions by her. He and his wife moved to Southern California, arriving when he was 37. He lived there for fifty years, running unsuccessfully for governor, calling his campaign EPIC, End Poverty in California, because Socialism would have caused him to lose potential votes.

Sinclair wrote The Jungle at age 25, spending six weeks among workers in the Chicago meat packing industry, entering the work premises by carrying a lunch pail and wearing his normal attire, torn, worn, and soiled, like other workers. Coodley points out that his book led to passage of the important Pure Food and Drug Act, but his focus on the workers – child labor, overlong hours, unsafe and dangerous conditions, low pay – long had minimal effect.

The tragic history of the Holocaust in Romania during World War II has sometimes been called the “forgotten Holocaust.” One major reason for the lack of attention given to the Romanian experience, as author Hildrun Glass points out in her introduction, was that much of the important documentation was either unavailable or difficult to access until the fall of Communism in 1989. Until then, the prevalent historical line in Romanian educational institutions and mass media followed this 1983 directive from the Romanian Ministry of Education, that “the lives of many Jews were saved as a result of the democratic traditions and humanistic spirit characteristic of our people” (6). According to Glass, once historians gained complete access to Romanian and Russian state archives in the 1990s, as well as to collected Israeli diaries of Holocaust victims, “that resulted in a delayed shattering of central elements of Romanian self-justification” (6-7).

Jewish immigrants had already settled in Romanian lands in the Middle Ages, the first banishment of Jews began in Moldavia in 1579, on the grounds that Jewish merchants were ruining established local merchants. In the nineteenth century, waves of Jewish refugees entered Romania to escape from pogroms in Russia and elsewhere; anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish legislation followed along as an integral part of that migration. In her doctoral dissertation, Glass exa-
countered difficulties, especially following the German defeat at Stalingrad. German diplomats complained bitterly of Romanian “dilettantism,” delaying tactics, and “lack of discipline.” For Antonescu, Romanian participation in the German invasion of the Soviet Union offered a “historical moment” for Romania to retake provinces which had been lost to the Soviet Union in 1940, simultaneously, to ethnically cleanse those areas of all Jews. Glass insists that these decisions were made in the first flush of early German military victories. In planning the Romanian contribution to the German offensive during the winter of 1941/1942, Antonescu left no doubt about his true intentions: “The Jews must all disappear, down to the last one, just as they arrived, leaving behind all the wealth which they have amassed in this land…so that when we are finally rid of the Jews, we can actually be masters in our own house.” (216).

The crucial test of Romanian resolve came in Bukovina, Bessarabia, and Transnistria – areas not part of the historical Romanian heartland but with large Jewish populations. Several hundred thousand Jews were pushed forward into Ukrainian Transnistria during the winter of 1941/1942, in ragged columns and with no provisions, clothing, or shelter. A few brave Romanians (such as Traian Popovici, the mayor of Cernăuți [Czernowitz]) protested that without skilled Jewish craftsmen, the entire economy would collapse. In order to grasp the full horror of these “death marches,” the reader needs to consult recent studies of “ethnic cleansing” by Benjamin Frommer and Norman Naimark, as well as Vladimir Solonari’s Purifying the Nation (2010), and Dennis Deletant’s superb analysis of Ion Antonescu as Hitler’s Forgotten Ally (2006). Deletant cites Antonescu’s opinion that the Jews were a “disease” and “parasites” from which the Romanian body politic needed cleansing. Solonari refers to Transnistria as “a dumping ground for all kinds of ethnic undesirables from Romania.” He posits a Romanian “racism without race,” inasmuch as the original Romanians themselves were not a pure racial strain. According to Solonari, “ethnicity” became a substitute for “race” as Antonescu’s national idea of a “purified ethnicity” was bolstered with strong whiffs of biology and eugenics.

Tens of thousands of Jews were expelled or killed, thousands more Romanians, Hungarians, and Transylvanian Germans were torn from their ancestral homes and forcibly relocated, all for the sake of what Solonari labels as “ideological fantasies.” Soon after Stalingrad, Antonescu and his key advisors, sensing that the game could soon be over, sought secret contacts with the Western Allies. Glass, like Solonari and Deletant, argues that Antonescu’s notable hesitancy in rounding up Jews in the Romanian heartland as Romania’s contribution to the Final Solution was inspired more by fears of Allied post-
Books Available for Review

The following is a list of books currently available for review. If you are interested in reviewing one of the books below, please contact Whitney Leeson at wleeson@roanoke.edu who will provide submission guidelines.


War military tribunals than by any softening of his innate anti-Semitism. In the end, Ion Antonescu and his foreign minister, Mihai Antonescu, were overthrown in a 1944 palace coup, and on June 1, 1946, both were shot by a Romanian firing squad in a striking foreshadowing of the fate meted out to the Ceaușescus a half-century later.

Glass provides an excellent summary of her main themes, as well as an extensive bibliography, two color maps, and two indexes for names and places. Her habit of abbreviating key institutions and concepts was to this reader an unnecessary distraction, despite a two-page key. After the wary, German/Jewish philologist Victor Klemperer indicted the Third Reich especially for its dehumanization of language. As a corrective, one should turn to the secret diary of Eva Heyman, a prescient thirteen-year-old from Oradea, Transylvania. Her final entry, on May 30, 1944, the very day of her deportation to Auschwitz, reads as follows: “I don’t want to die because I have hardly lived…I can’t write anymore, dear diary, the tears run from my eyes.”
Mary Beth Norton, the Mary Donlon Alger Professor of American History at Cornell University, has been elected president of the American Historical Association (AHA). Her one-year term as president will begin in January 2018 and in the preceding year she will serve as president-elect.

Mary Beth was an early member of the CCWH’s predecessor, the Coordinating Council of Women in the Historical Profession, and has been a long-standing member of the CCWH.


(And it is this Newsletter Editor’s prerogative to publicly congratulate my dissertation committee chair on her election. Well done, Mary Beth!)

Mary Ann Villarreal, Co-President of the CCWH, has accepted a new position as Assistant Vice President, Academic Affairs in the Office of the Provost at California State University Fullerton. Additionally, Mary Ann’s book, *Listening to Rosita: The Business of Tejana Music and Culture, 1930-1955* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2015) has won the Américo Paredes Prize. Awarded by the American Folklore Society’s Committee on Cultural Diversity, Chicana/Chicano Section, and the Folklore Latino, Latinoamericano, y Caribeño Section, the prize recognizes excellence in integrating scholarship and engagement with the people and communities one studies, or in teaching and encouraging scholars and practitioners to work in their own cultures or communities.

Congratulations to Ilaria Scaglia, Membership Coordinator of the CCWH, who has received a Volkswagen-Mellon Postdoctoral Fellowship for Research in Germany. She will be spending the 2016-2017 academic year at the Freie Universität Berlin working on a book manuscript entitled *The Emotions of Internationalism: “Feeling:” International Cooperation on the Mountains in the Interwar Period.*

Through its funding initiative "Postdoctoral Fellowships in the Humanities at Universities and Research Institutes in Germany and the USA" the Volkswagen Foundation aims to strengthen transatlantic academic relations, especially in the field of the Humanities.
Member News (cont.)

Rebecca Jo Plant

Congratulations to CCWH member, Rebecca Jo Plant, an Associate Professor of History at the University of California, San Diego, who won the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians Article Award for an article in the fields of history of women, gender, and/or sexuality. She, along with co-author Frances M. Clarke, highlighted the decline of African American status in the interwar years in an article entitled “The Crowning Insult”: Federal Segregation and the Gold Star Mother and Widow Pilgrimages of the Early 1930s” appearing in the Journal of American History (102:2, September 2015). They focus on the “largely forgotten …discriminatory treatment of mothers and widows of fallen United States soldiers. The federal government-sponsored segregated pilgrimages to Europe from 1930 to 1933 to visit the bodies of their fallen kin became part of an emotionally fraught debate over the limitations of citizenship rights of African Americans, claims of which had pivoted on notions of masculinity. Pressured to boycott the pilgrimages, the “so-called ordinary women” were “forced…to weigh powerful appeals to racial solidarity against deeply felt personal commitments and desires,” which often “signaled their independence from black leaders.” The article prize committee believed that Plant and Clarke compellingly gave historical voice to African American women seldom heard from and whose perspectives “harbor[ed] dreams of a radically transformed society.”

Mary Klann

The CCWH/Berks Graduate Student Fellowship has been announced. This year’s winner is Mary Klann, a PhD candidate from the University of California, San Diego. Her dissertation is entitled “Citizens with Reservations: Race, Colonialism, and Native American Citizenship in the Mid-Twentieth Century American West.” Klann’s dissertation looks at the impact of the mid-twentieth century expansion of the U.S. welfare state on Native Americans. Although Native Americans were universally declared American citizens in 1924, Klann examines how the continued use of the language of “wardship” to describe the state’s obligation to Native Americans created ambiguities in their status as citizens and questions about whether or not they were a racial minority that deserved access to state and federal welfare benefits. Examining the period from the 1930s to the 1970s, Klann shows that Native Americans drew on the rhetoric of both citizenship and wardship to negotiate with the federal government and gain access to state resources and services. In doing so, she shows that Native Americans’ trajectory from wards to citizens was anything but linear or complete by the late twentieth century.

Mary plans to defend her dissertation in June 2017.

Kathryn Lawton

The Honorable Mention recipient of the CCWH/Berks Graduate Student Fellowship is Kathryn Lawton, a PhD candidate from SUNY Buffalo. Her dissertation is entitled “Deinstitutionalization and Disability Rights: Policy and Activism in New York State.” Lawton’s dissertation exa-
Patricia Schechter, Professor of History at Portland State University in Oregon, just completed research for a book on a French mining village in Andalucia during her sabbatical in Cordoba, Spain in 2015-2016. With the working title *El Terrible: Peñarroya-Pueblonuevo, 1914-1934*, this book takes a fresh look at labor organizing and community building in a model town for the worker housing movement and women’s church-based activism in the region. Patricia wrote a blog during her sabbatical research in Spain. Check it out at [Spanish research blog](#).

Deborah Dinner writes that she has moved to Emory University School of Law where she is an Associate Professor. She is working with the Vulnerability and Human Condition Initiative directed by Martha Fineman ([http://web.gs.emory.edu/vulnerability/](http://web.gs.emory.edu/vulnerability/)). She has also published an article titled “The Divorce Bargain: The Fathers’ Rights Movement and Family Inequalities” in the *Virginia Law Review*, Volume 72 (2016). The article shows how fathers’ rights activists forged a “divorce bargain,” by which middle-class divorced fathers promised ongoing support for dependent children in exchange for sex-neutrality in family law. Deborah argues that this bargain helped to support father-child relationships in middle-class families, but undermined these relationships in poor families.

Courtney Campbell writes that she has accepted a new position as Lecturer in Latin American History at the University of Birmingham in the United Kingdom. She was most recently a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow at Tougaloo College in Mississippi. Additionally, Courtney is also director of a British Library Endangered Archives Programme Project that is near completion and co-director of another that is just beginning. These two-year projects are digitizing the oldest, most endangered historical documents in the Brazilian state of Paraíba, which will then be made available online at [www.vanderbilt.edu/esss](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/esss).
Member News (cont.)

Lucia Carminati

You may remember in our last issue, Ilaria Scaglia, Membership Coordinator wrote about a new initiative for the CCWH in setting up a network of Conference Liaisons. The idea is to have a CCWH member advertising our organization at as many conferences as possible. This person would help to connect CCWH members with one another as they are putting together panels or as they are looking for a roommate to defray costs. A Liaison might also inquire into the possibility of sponsoring a panel or set up a time for all CCWH attendees to meet in person.

This fall, Lucia Carminati, a PhD candidate in History at the University of Arizona will be serving as a Conference Liaison for the Middle East Studies Association meeting in Boston in November. She is reaching out to other CCWH members who will be attending the conference and would like to meet and get to know each other on Saturday, November 19th. For further details, contact Lucia at lcarminati@email.arizona.edu.

Arica Coleman has been featured as a contributing expert to this year’s “25 Moments that Changed America List,” an annual feature in Time. The magazine asked 25 historians to nominate 25 moments that changed the nation. The selections had to be “moments” rather than a broader social movement and they had to have happened during the span of the 20th century.

Arica nominated the 1978 Supreme Court case, Santa Clara Pueblo v. Martinez. At issue in the case were the rights of an individual against the sovereignty of tribal government. The Supreme Court held that suits against the tribe under the Indian Civil Rights Act of 1968 were barred by the tribe’s sovereign immunity from suit, since nothing in the Indian Civil Rights Act subjected tribes to the jurisdiction of federal courts in civil actions for declaratory or injunctive relief. As a consequence of the court’s holding, the impact of the Indian Civil Rights Act of 1968 was greatly limited and the decision “was used as justification for the wholesale disenrollment of large groups of people...from the tribes to which they had belonged.”

Coming Soon to the CCWH

A member wiki forum for panelists seeking other panelists for conference panels. This will be a great opportunity to bring together innovative and creative scholarship for many of the leading conferences. Look for the member wiki forum at www.theccwh.org under Resources.
Announcements

Cléo Visualizing History announces the launch of a free-access, ad-free online historical exhibit titled *Click! The Ongoing Feminist Revolution*. CCWH member, Susan Ware, has served as head writer for the project.

The exhibit was developed by a team of historians and educators in collaboration with technical advisors, filmmakers, artists, and website designers. It features 46 film clips taken from 27 documentary films, extensive interactive timelines, in-depth essays supported by primary documents, photos, and other resources.

Click! The Ongoing Feminist Revolution highlights the collective action and individual achievements of women from the 1940s to the present. In the spirit of 1970s consciousness-raising, the name refers to the “click” moment when women discovered the powerful ideas of contemporary feminism. The name also refers to the computer keystroke that connects us all to the Internet.

Other members of the creative team for this project included: Lola Van Wagenen, Melanie Gustafson, Amy Morsman, and Lyn Blackwell.

The exhibit may be accessed via: [http://www.cliohistory.org/click](http://www.cliohistory.org/click).

Women and Social Movements in Modern Empires

This past July saw the first release of a new online archive and database, *Women and Social Movements in Modern Empires*, co-edited by long-time CCWH members, Kathryn Kish Sklar and Thomas Dublin, and co-published by the Center for the Historical Study of Women & Gender and the online publisher, Alexander Street. Available by library subscription or purchase, the first release includes about 18,000 pages of primary sources and four scholarly essays, but will eventually grow to some 70,000 pages, 80 oral history interviews, and 35 scholarly essays. Thematically organized around document clusters, the database permits students and scholars to explore such dimensions of colonial and post-colonial societies as: Women and the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa; Filipino Women and American Empire; anti-imperialist writings of Cuban Feminists; Native Women in North America; French feminists and empire; women shape politics in post-colonial India; the French empire in North Africa; and the anti-imperialist activism of Indonesian women.

For a fuller description of the database’s editorial team and content, go to [http://chswg.binghamton.edu/WASM-ModernEmpires/description.html](http://chswg.binghamton.edu/WASM-ModernEmpires/description.html). Ask your acquisitions librarian to request a free trial of the database from Alexander Street to enable you to become better acquainted with this new resource.

Women and Social Movements in the United States

For a year now, the editors of *Women and Social Movements in the United States* have been coordinating a new crowdsourcing project to produce the Online Biographical Dictionary of the Woman Suffrage Movement in the United States. Tom Dublin is directing the project. To date, volunteers have signed on to prepare more than 300 biographical sketches of militant suffragists who supported the National Woman’s Party picketing for woman suffrage, 1917-1919. We are now expanding our reach to include more than 2,000 activists affiliated with the National American Woman Suffrage Association between 1900 and 1920. Would you be interested in writing one to two biographical sketches to be published online in this reference work? Do you teach a women’s history class in which you might make writing biographical sketches an assignment for your students? We are seeking sketches over the next two years, 2016-2018, and plan to publish the sketches on WASM in 2019 and 2020, with author credit to students and other sketch authors. If you would be interested in participating in the project, please contact Tom Dublin at tdublin@binghamton.edu.
Call for Papers

“Transnationalism, Transgressions, Translations”

The 12th Conference of the International Federation for Research on Women’s History/ Federation Internationale Pour la Recherche en Histoire des Femmes (IFRWH/FIRHF) will be held August 12-15, 2018 at the University of California, Santa Barbara, USA, the home of the current President, Eileen Boris. This will be the first time that this international gathering of historians of women and gender will assemble in the United States.

The theme, “Transnationalisms, Transgressions, Translations: Conversations and Controversies,” probes the meanings of boundaries and frameworks, narratives and epistemologies, analytic terms and foundational categories, global, national and local understandings, interactions and power relations across time and space. We are open to proposals for complete panels (chair, commentator, three papers) as well as individual papers, roundtables, conversations, workshops, and non-traditional forms of presentation.

Transnationalisms: This sub-theme reflects the international turn in this era of globalization and the commitment of IFRWH/FIRHF to international histories and comparative panels in such areas as women’s and gendered movements, transnational organizations and global governance, state socialist and third world/global South manifestations, settler societies and empires, imperialisms and colonialisms, anti-imperialism and anti-imperial uprisings, global labor, individual life trajectories, the traveling across space (and time) of ideas and objects, labor and sex trafficking, mobilities and immigration/migration, and related areas.

Transgressions: This sub-theme considers the ways various peoples over time and space define the transgressive from dominant and accepted norms of being, identity, and behavior as well as the self-conscious transgressions against hegemonic gender in relation to other social factors. Papers might consider outlaws and criminalization, deviancy, rebelliousness, genderqueer and trans*gender identities and practices, witches, “bad” mothers, gender bending dress or labor, crossing race/ethnic or class/caste lines revolutions, and social movements.

Translations: How do terms of analysis travel across languages, disciplines, and time and space? What is lost in translation and how can we forge a transnational praxis when we cannot always speak well to each other? We are especially interested in the place of orality and how national historiographies and cultures of intellectual life (including the place of women’s and gender history and feminist and gender studies/theory) address concepts like gender, race/ethnicity, class, sexualities, agency, identity, power, (post)colonialism, globalization, feminisms, and development.

Founded in 1987, IFRWH is affiliated with the International Congress of Historical Sciences/ Comité Internationale des Sciences Historiques and consists of national affiliates from across the globe, which link scholars together in a transnational network. Beginning in 2020, it will award the Ida Bloom-Karen Offen Book Prize in Transnational Women’s and Gender History (named after two of the most active founders of the organization). Though the language of the conference is English, and the languages of the organization are French and English, we will seek to have plenaries with translation into Spanish and from French and Spanish into English. But we want to problematize this issue and invite suggestions on how to make this component of the conference accessible. In addition, as funding permits, we will plan on having modest subventions for graduate students, and scholars from areas of the world or institutions without resources. Our submission link will go live by November 1, 2016; we will accept proposals until March 15, 2017. Send inquiries to: ifrwh18@gmail.com.
Call for Papers

Western Association of Women Historians

49th Annual Conference
San Diego
April 27-29, 2017

The Western Association of Women Historians (WAWH) invites proposals for panels, roundtables, posters, workshops, and individual papers in ALL fields, regions, and periods of history. The program committee especially invites proposals with gender, generational, geographic, racial, and institutional diversity in regard to panel content and/or panel composition. This year we are particularly interested in panels that focus on women and public life, including women’s engagement in politics, reform movements, and other efforts to spur social change, as well as women’s ever-evolving place in the workforce. We also welcome panels on public history, academic publishing, and alternative career paths for historians, as well as panels on issues relevant to women and adjuncts in academia today. Finally, we would especially like to encourage Canadian and Mexican historians to apply, as we hope in coming years to become more representative of Western North America as a whole. Priority will be given to proposals for complete sessions, but individual papers, or two papers submitted with a suggested theme, will be incorporated where possible.

Scholars may self-nominate as commentators or panel chairs by providing a short curriculum vitae and submitting a brief statement outlining their areas of expertise and topics of special interest. Please specify whether you are willing to serve as commentator, chair, or both.

WAWH welcomes scholars at all career stages (from students to senior faculty), as well as independent scholars and teachers. We award a prize for the best conference paper presented by a graduate student and another for the best poster presented by a graduate student, as well as a number of other awards for articles, monographs, dissertations, and electronic publications by WAWH members.

The submission deadline is Friday, September 23 2016. Submission guidelines and required forms can be found at www.wawh.org.

Call for Submissions

Berkshire Conference of Women Historians

Annual Book Prize

The Berkshire Conference of Women Historians awards two annual book prizes in the following categories: 1) A first book that deals substantially with the history of women, gender, and/or sexuality; 2) A first book in any field of history that does not focus on the history of women, gender, and/or sexuality.

Eligibility Guidelines: A nominated book must be written by a woman normally resident in North America. Awards are for a first book so the author may not have previously published any other book-length work. Submissions must be published between January 1, 2016 and December 31, 2016. Textbooks, juvenile literature, documentary collections, fiction, poetry, and collections of essays are not eligible for either prize.

Deadline for submission for the prizes is November 1, 2016. For books published after November 1, 2016 and before January 1, 2017, please submit bound page proofs by the deadline and a copy of the book by January 15, 2017.

Further submission guidelines may be found at: http://tinyurl.com/zwxn75u.

Questions may be directed to the Chair of the Berkshire Conference Book Prize Committee, Dr. Terri Snyder at: Snyder@exchange.fullerton.edu.
Welcome to the Newest Members of the CCWH in 2016!

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Individual Members:</th>
<th>Institutional Members:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Lois Banner</td>
<td>Arizona State University, Public History at the School of Historical, Philosophical and Religious Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stefania Benini</td>
<td>Clio Visualizing History</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miya Carey</td>
<td>Yale University: Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program</td>
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<td>Elizabeth Cobbs</td>
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<td>Suzanne Dunai</td>
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<td>Aysegul Kayagil</td>
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<td>Theresa Keeley</td>
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<td>Aimee Loiselle</td>
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<td>Marisela Martinez-Cola</td>
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<td>Rachel Mittelman</td>
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<td>Megan Piorko</td>
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<td>Amy Sayward</td>
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<td>Daisy Vargas</td>
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COORDINATING COUNCIL FOR WOMEN IN HISTORY
MEMBERSHIP FORM

1) ____ new membership  2) ___ membership renewal  3) ____ gift membership

Name: __________________________________________________________________________________ ______________________________

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This is a (circle one) HOME or WORK address

Telephone: _________________________________ Email address: _________________________________

Do you wish to receive emails from the CCWH membership email list? (circle one) YES or NO
Do you wish to receive the CCWH newsletter as a PDF file sent to your email? (circle one) YES or NO

Current position and institutional affiliation, or independent scholar

___________________________________________________________________________

Research and professional fields (up to three):

___________________________________________________________________________

___ I am willing to serve on CCWH committees or the CCWH Board.

Membership in the CCWH runs from 1 January to 31 December each calendar year

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<th>Dues</th>
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<td>Joan Kelly Memorial Prize in Women’s History (CCWH Sponsored, AHA administered)</td>
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Please make check or money order (in U.S. funds) payable to CCWH. Print and mail to:
Dr. Pamela Stewart
Arizona State University
455 N. 3rd St. #380
Phoenix, AZ 85004-1601

$____ TOTAL PAYMENT
**Insights: Notes from the CCWH** is published four times a year. Our publication dates are Spring (March 1st), Summer (June 1st), Fall (September 1st), and Winter (December 1st).

We invite members of the CCWH to share your professional news with colleagues. Submit announcements about recent awards, appointments, achievements, publications, and other news. If you wish to submit material for inclusion in the newsletter, please send material to the Newsletter Editor no later than two weeks prior to publication (e.g., for the Spring issue, no later than February 15th). Material should be sent to newsletter@theccwh.org. If you have any questions about whether material would be appropriate for the newsletter please email the editor.

The history of all times, and of today especially, teaches that… women will be forgotten if they forget to think about themselves.”

- Louise Otto, (Luise Otto-Peters), German feminist, 1849

**INSIGHTS: NOTES FROM THE CCWH**

6042 Blue Point Court

Clarksville, MD 21209