

**Tracing the Truth: Adventures in Historical Research Online and In-Person by Taryn Edwards**

*A good part of the Institute membership are seasoned researchers and writers, but if you are like me, I always find it valuable to learn how others work. Moreover, our newsletter is read on our website, likely by a variety of curious folk. Recently Taryn Edwards gave a talk to the Tri-Valley chapter of the California Writers Club on historical research principles and “how to get started” on a project. Since the talk was well received, Taryn offered it for the First Page feature. It is long and will be presented in parts in this and the next couple of issues. (Ed.)*

Part I: How to get started on an historical research project

**1. Identify What Your Project Really Is.** Decide upon the aim of your project and what you want to know in order to tell that story. For example, will your project be a “cradle to grave” biography or are you focusing on a specific event like the 1906 Earthquake and Fire? I have found it helpful to write a few sentences about my project that covers the *what, why* and *how*. What are you writing? A biography? A book of essays? Why are you doing this? To tell the true story? To breathe new life into an old story? How will you accomplish this? Through a chronological account or a “nonfiction novel” like Truman Capote’s *True Crime*? This mission statement will evolve as your research progresses and your concept becomes more refined. It will help you keep on track and will serve as the basis for your book’s elevator pitch (the short, snappy description that you will use when talking to agents, editors, or complete strangers about your book).

**2. Identify Your Audience.** Who are you doing all this work for? Imagine who will pick up your book at a book store or library. Try to envision this person as clearly as possible. You want this person to sit on your shoulder throughout your research and writing and serve as your muse and your censor. Stephen King calls this, in his memoir *On Writing*, the “Ideal Reader.” Remembering your ideal reader will help you with all stages of the writing process.

**3. Set up Your Master File.** There are a lot of methods for organizing research. Some people use index cards or tools like Evernote or Zotero. When I first started working on my projects, however, I had a hard time grasping how my research (the stuff on the notecards) tied into the hard facts of my subject’s life and how I would fold all of that into my eventual narrative. I needed to have a big-picture vision of my project that would show me the holes that I needed to fill with data. The method that I’ve discovered for keeping my research on track and the big picture in focus is to create a “Master File,” similar to what investigative journalists use when working on a case. A Master File is a chronology (of your person, event, or subject) with expository notes (“comments”), and original and secondary source material footnoted.

As I am working on a biography with several supporting characters, I use the Master File as the backbone of my research corpus, but I also have a file for each person or subject on which I do significant research. These files’ footnotes and comments all point to each other, to the bits of data, documents, and further reading as well as to the Master File. To create my Master File, I use a Word document with facts (as I find them) organized by year and footnoted with their sources and where they reside in my files (digital or hard copy). Notes on further reading and details are included in comments; I write my draft narrative in colored text. When I am ready to organize my research and notes into scenes, it will just be a matter of making a copy of the Master File (don’t work off your original) and cutting and pasting blocks of text.

– *continued on the back page*

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**4. Craft a Research Plan.** Now you know what you want to do, who you're doing it for, and you have a method for keeping your research in order. The next step is to draft a research plan. Your research plan is a living document, meaning it is subject to change—and change it will! First find out what has been written, and make a list of books and articles to read that will help you ground yourself in the topic and see where there's room for you to expand, improve, or put your own spin on it. Next make a sequence of tasks and list when you will need to complete them. Estimate the costs and how long your project will take. If you need to travel or take significant time off from your day job, schedule these.

**For more on the Master File concept:** See *Story-Based Inquiry: A Manual for Investigative Journalists*, edited by Mark Lee Hunter (2009); available for free download: [www.storybasedinquiry.com](http://www.storybasedinquiry.com). See also *The Hidden Scenario: Plotting and Outlining Investigative Stories* by Luuk Sengers and Mark Lee Hunter (The Centre for Investigative Journalism, 2012); available for download with a small fee from [www.storybasedinquiry.com](http://www.storybasedinquiry.com) or Amazon.

**Other References:**

*On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft* by Steven King (Scribner, 2010).

*Part II of Taryn's article will cover finding primary sources and what to consider when visiting an archive or special collections and how to talk to a librarian about your project effectively.*

**The Institute for Historical Study**  
**P. O. Box 5743**  
**Berkeley, CA 94708**

# PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

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The death of Ellen Huppert, one of our founders and ever-dedicated leaders, this past fall has left a big hole in the organization and in the hearts of many people (see page 6). We miss her, but she would want us to carry on.

A new member of the Institute recently indicated in her application that she was hoping to break into the field of public history. That got me wondering about the definition of public history and how many of us are involved in it. (See further on page 4.) Lately we have a confluence of several of us working on museum exhibits, which I would call public history.

Oliver Pollak has spent more than a year on the planning committee for an exhibit which opened this month at the Richmond Museum of History, “Pioneers to the Present: Jews of Richmond and Contra Costa County.” The exhibit continues through June 30.

Jeanne Farr McDonnell, a longtime member of the Institute and author of *Juana Briones of 19th-Century California*, was involved in the creation of the exhibit “Juana Briones y su California ~ Pionera, Fundadora, Curandera” at the California Historical Society in 2013 and with the current exhibit at the Los Altos History Museum, “Inspired by Juana: La Doña de la Frontera.” The latter exhibit continues through March 31; please contact me if you’d like to arrange a group visit to see it.

You can read about Richard Hurley’s recent history exhibition project on page 8 and hear more from him at our annual meeting on February 23. His afternoon presentation will be “Digital Tools for the Presentation of History.” Perusing the member biographies on our website yields a number of other past and present connections between Institute members and historical societies and museums, including my own role as president and newsletter editor of the Berkeley Historical Society.

Wishing you all the best in your endeavors in 2019, whatever they may be.

– *Ann Harlow*

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Maria Sakovich

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## ADDRESS:

P. O. Box 5743  
Berkeley, CA 94705

[www.instituteforhistoricalstudy.org](http://www.instituteforhistoricalstudy.org)

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### “Beloved Freedom: Secret on the Capitol Dome”

“Nineteen thousand pounds of the most misunderstood woman in America”—as the *New York Times* characterized the statue of Freedom atop the United States Capitol—was the topic of new member Katya Miller’s presentation at the home of Nancy Zinn on December 2. It was the 155th birthday of Lady Freedom’s muted consecration in the middle of the Civil War. Katya’s planned book, “Beloved Freedom: Secret on the US Capitol Dome,” aims to reveal the history of her iconography and her creation by the American sculptor Thomas Crawford.

Crawford drew on European classical art and Native American imagery. Drapery folds echo the classical sculptures that Crawford studied in Rome; fur fringes on Freedom’s garment and her eagle headdress reflect Native culture. Katya’s research included not only documents and books in the Capitol Archives and Library of Congress, but also interviews with a number of Native authorities. Alice Papineau, the Onondaga clan mother, for example, taught her about matriarchy in Native culture. Other authorities taught her about the Onondaga Peace Tree, with its eagle on top. Peace is one theme in Lady Freedom, represented by a shield in her left hand; a sword in her right hand indicates protection from threats. European representations of “America” as a native person, a staple of iconography from the time of exploration onward, also lie behind the final product.

Designs for the statue underwent three stages, beginning with Freedom Triumphant in War and Peace. Highlighting war was uncomfortable during a time of war, and the successor design—“Armed Liberty with a Liberty Cap”—merited rejection for that reason and also because the classical “liberty” or Phrygian cap originally denoted a freed slave—anathema to Jefferson Davis, one of the two commissioners

of the statue. (Crawford did include a liberty cap in his frieze on the pediment of the Capitol.)

A specific Native emblem is the medallion reading “US” worn by Lady Freedom. It echoes peace medallions given by the Department of the Interior to Native leaders summoned to Washington. Katya noted the irony that during their visit the leaders also signed treaties disposing of their lands, treaties that they could not read.

“E pluribus unum,” inscribed on the statue’s pedestal, suggests more irony, reinforced by the fact that the statue was cast in bronze by a slave. The original plaster cast, restored at the instigation of a Native Hawai’ian woman, is now exhibited in the Capitol Visitors Center (<https://www.visitthecapitol.gov/exhibitions/tour>).

– *Carol Sicherman*

### Writers Group

Our group was deeply saddened by the passing of our beloved member, Ellen Huppert, after a long illness. She was one of the founding members of the Institute, a stalwart in the organization, but her role in the Writers Group was especially vital. She was a careful reader of all the work presented by other members and her comments were marked by both critical acumen and kindness. We will all miss her very much.

At our October meeting, held at Jim Gasperini’s home, we discussed two works currently in progress. The first was Marilyn Geary’s study of Italian-Swiss emigration to California and Australia. The selection she presented represented a kind of coda to the work as a whole, tracing the last days of some of her subjects and their descendants. The general feeling was that she had told her tale very well, although some readers were concerned about the

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extensive block quotations from letters and other primary sources. In the end the group thought that this would have to be a matter for the author's consideration and the decision of her publisher.

The other work discussed was Jim Gasperini's cultural history of fire. At a previous gathering, group members had requested an outline of the study as a whole. Jim supplied this, and the group was suitably impressed with the range and boldness of this scholarly venture.

The group held its November meeting at the home of Cathy and Rob Robbins. Cathy presented what will be the fourth chapter of her projected book, "A Torrid Splendor," a work about Calabria that will combine history, family memoir, and an examination of the region's current problems. The chapter discussed is focused on Cathy's ancestral village Sant'Andrea Apostolo dello Ionio, moving from past to present as the author weaves in her family story with a description of the town's history and its present condition. The group's response was largely positive, but members recognized the complexity of the story and suggested a number of ways that things might be simplified and made clearer.

– **Rob Robbins**

### World History Group

At the October meeting, Lyn Reese presented the book *The Fate of Rome: Climate, Disease, and the End of an Empire* by Kyle Harper. She discussed the new interdisciplinary scholarship in these areas as well the benefits and unintentional drawbacks of Rome's far-flung empire. Lyn then focused on the third century with illustrations of some dramatic blows to the empire caused by climate changes and the lesser-known Cyprian pandemic. A lively group discussion followed, noting some of the similarities of the empire's problems to our globalized world.

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The next World History meeting has not yet been set. We encourage interested members to let us know if your participation works best for weekend or weekday gatherings. We also are looking for members who would enjoy talking about something of interest to them. Examples: a book or books, an exhibit, a television series, historical sites visited, research in a world history topic. Contact Lyn Reese with either times and/or possible presentation ideas (lynreese@aol.com).

The death of Ellen Huppert, long-term member of our formerly-named Medieval Studies Group, is a profound loss not only to those who have known her well but to all members of our scholarly community, which she helped to found nearly forty years ago and cared about so greatly.

– **Lyn Reese**

### More on Public History from Ann Harlow

It turns out there's a Wikipedia article on the subject, which says that definitions vary and points to, among other things, the National Council on Public History:

*The name of the NCPH blog—History@Work—offers a handy distillation: public history describes the many and diverse ways in which history is put to work in the world. In this sense, it is history that is applied to real-world issues. In fact, applied history was a term used synonymously and interchangeably with public history for a number of years. Although public history has gained ascendancy in recent years as the preferred nomenclature, especially in the academic world, applied history probably remains the more intuitive and self-defining term.*

(It seems the Council plans to stick with the "Public History" name anyway.) The NCPH was founded in 1979, the same year our organization

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was formed (we incorporated the following year), and it emerged for some of the same reasons: there were many more history PhDs looking for work than there were teaching positions available in universities. Also, “the social justice movements of the 1960s and 1970s had sparked an interest in the histories of nondominant people and groups—for example, women, working-class people, ethnic and racial minorities—rather than the ‘great men’ who had traditionally been the focus of many historical narratives.” Many of our early members were involved in women’s history, labor history, and the kind of interdisciplinary approaches that are often seen to be characteristic of public history.

There are now numerous graduate programs offering MA and PhD degrees in public history; how well their alumni are doing out in the working world I don’t know, but the increasing professionalization of history museums has led to more demand for advanced degrees. Students interested in public history can face a bewildering set of options, including programs in museum studies and programs labeled “public history” as well as traditional history PhD programs. Independent history scholars sometimes get “gigs” as consultants or curators of exhibits and projects, as have several Institute members, but I wouldn’t recommend it as a way to make a living.

### **Joe Miller’s Current Research**

I am continuing to research how suffragists acquired the reputation of being sex radicals, especially in the 1870s. According to Horace Greeley (and others who had supported suffrage until Victoria Woodhull emerged as a leader), the suffragists’ only goal was to destroy marriage and replace it with unrestrained Free Love. Only some suffragists deserved this radical reputation; but when a few prominent leaders, including Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, allied themselves with Woodhull and with the murderer Laura Fair, the

accusation that they supported Free Love became hard to deny. Once the suffrage movement acquired a scandalous reputation in the 1870s membership plummeted, greatly frustrating mainstream leaders like Lucy Stone. (Textbooks euphemistically say that the National Woman Suffrage Association was more “radical” than Stone’s American Woman Suffrage Association, without explaining what this meant: the two associations disagreed on whether or not to repudiate Victoria Woodhull and Free Love.)

I continue to research fine points, like the question of whether Catharine Beecher always opposed suffrage, or turned against it when the Free Love issue generated controversy. (I believe the latter, and disagree with historians who have called Beecher ultraconservative.) Few people today realize the intensity of women’s opposition to their own right to vote. In the mid 1880s, 250,000 women signed a petition to take the vote away from the women of Utah, and Congress responded by passing the Edmunds-Tucker Act. Women who opposed their own right to vote made so many different arguments against it, that we might wonder which reasons they actually cared about. I believe that the suffragists’ reputation as sex radicals who aimed to eliminate marriage made the movement seem disreputable, and turned many reasonable women and men into opponents.

I have learned a lot from participating in the Institute’s Writers Group and also from working with a professional academic history editor. I am still weighing the pros and cons of publishing an academic article versus a mainstream book or article. I would welcome suggestions re any mainstream magazines that might publish a long article on this. Please email me with any suggestions (JoeMiller1@gmail.com).

## IN MEMORIAM

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### Autumn Stanley

A long illness prevented Autumn Stanley from remaining active in the Institute in recent times, but her contributions will long be remembered. She received her undergraduate degree in literature from Transylvania College (now University) in Lexington, Kentucky in 1955. After completing a master's degree in English literature at Stanford University in 1967, she worked as an editor at Stanford University Press and Wadsworth Publishing Company. From 1984 to 1988 she was an affiliated scholar at the Center for Research on Women and Gender at Stanford. There she researched the material for her monumental study of women inventors, *Mothers and Daughters of Invention* (Rutgers University Press, 1995). Institute members followed the progress of her book with great interest, commiserating with her when its original title, "Mothers of Invention," was co-opted by another author for a very different subject. *Mothers and Daughters of Invention* is still a principal work in its field.

In her next book, *Raising More Hell and Fewer Dahlias: The Public Life of Charlotte Smith, 1840-1917* (Lehigh University Press, 2009), Autumn brought public attention to the life and work of a long-forgotten woman—crusading magazine owner and editor and tireless advocate for working women. In later years, Autumn wrote charming books for children.

A number of Institute friends have shared comments and memories. **Taryn Edwards** particularly enjoyed *Mothers and Daughters of Invention*. **Cornelia Levine** and **Ann Harlow** remember Autumn's work as book review editor for the newsletter, a position that has not been filled since she retired some time ago. Rose Marie Cleese, who knew Autumn when they worked at Wadsworth in Belmont back in the 1970s, shared the information that "in addition to being a developmental editor at Wadsworth, Autumn was "an incurable inventor of recipes"

and "author of articles for magazines as diverse as *Sunset*, *California Living*, *Womensports* and the *Journal of English Linguistics*." **Rob Robbins** commented on her "dry sense of humor" and noted that "she was a wonderful writer, and I enjoyed the memoir that she shared with the writers group. She was also an attentive and careful editor. My book greatly benefitted from the touch of her "red pencil." For **Leslie Friedman**, who had the privilege of working with Autumn on the Institute newsletter, there are "bright memories." **Bonda Lewis** remembers Autumn writing "totally unexpected material and was a surprise and delight." For **Ellen Huppert**, "Autumn was a commanding presence in the writers group and elsewhere." **Karen Offen** regrets that she had not seen Autumn in recent years but commented that "*Mothers of Invention* is indeed a remarkable book." In addition to knowing Autumn as "a vital member of the writers, group," **Elizabeth Thacker-Estrada** remembers the presentation that Autumn gave at the November 2009 Arts & Culture Salon at the Excelsior Branch of the San Francisco Public Library, where Elizabeth was Branch Manager.

Everyone who knew Autumn felt lucky to have been her friend and colleague.

– *Joanne Lafler*

### Ellen Huppert

For nearly forty years Ellen was so deeply embedded in the life and work of the Institute that it's difficult to imagine the Institute without her and to know where to begin this remembrance.

Some of us knew her from her early years in the Bay Area, as a doctoral student in modern European history at UC Berkeley and later as a faculty member in history departments at San Francisco State University and Holy Names University. Many of us knew her from the very

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beginnings of the Institute in the summer and fall of 1979. Over the years others came to know her at work-in-progress meetings (she rarely missed one); in one of the three study groups in which she was active; at public events that she organized; and in her home in San Francisco—the site of countless Institute gatherings. Others met her more recently, after she had contracted the pulmonary condition that took her life but never diminished her commitment to Institute members and their work.

Ellen served on the founding board of directors, became our second president in 1982, and served as president twice more, as well as in many other board positions throughout the years. She did this not out of a sense of duty but because it was impossible for her not to be involved. Earlier this year she was a co-creator of one of our history film programs at the San Francisco Public Library; most recently, she served on the nominating committee for elections to the 2019-2021 board.

What Ellen especially appreciated as an independent scholar and Institute member was the freedom to explore subjects outside of her academic field of nineteenth-century French intellectual history. Family papers and archival material in the Bentley Historical Library at the University of Michigan led her through two centuries of her paternal family history in New York State, Michigan, and Montana. Later she explored the very different history of her husband Peter, a descendant of assimilated Jews in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. She shared this work at professional conferences and with members of the writers group. We look forward to its publication.

Institute members, long-time and more recent, shared comments and memories.\* **Dick Herr** knew her first when she was a graduate student at UC Berkeley. “Very clear in my mind is her coming to my office to keep an appointment and having to dodge police and tear gas outside

Dwinelle Hall during a student manifestation. It was the 1960s. I saw much of her when IHS was in its early days. A lovely warm person and a fine scholar. All of us who knew Ellen have lost a piece of value out of our lives.” **Stephanie McCoy** writes that “Ellen was not only kind to me, she was supportive of my work—writing and research. I am so thankful that she came to my recent talk in August.” For **Anne Maclachlan** Ellen was “a wonderful source of support and encouragement to me when I was very unsure of my footing academically. Her wisdom and warmth will always be treasured by me as well as her openness to new ideas.”

**Celeste MacLeod** first met Ellen at a potluck supper. “She was cordial and welcoming. But her most salient quality, to me, was her interest in members’ projects and her willingness to help. She read chapters of two of my books and offered useful comments. In turn I read portions of her writing about interesting 19th-century relatives in Michigan and, more recently, her late husband Peter’s European roots.” **Margaret Simmons** met Ellen when they were early participants in the Memory and Aging Program at UCSF. As “healthy volunteers” they were “the base line against whom aging contributors are measured—but seldom judged.” Later, Margaret was “happy to see her again when I joined the Institute. Ellen’s wry and wise comments on proceedings were always welcome and to the point.” **Edee Piness** remembers Ellen as “an important person in our lives, an inspiration as a scholar and a person.” **Carol Sicherman** found Ellen “such a bright spirit” and will always “remember the happiness and liveliness that she gave all around her.” **Ann Harlow** and **Maria Sakovich** find it “hard to imagine the Institute without Ellen.” For **Cornelia Levine**, “she was a strong presence, ever intellectually engaged and inquisitive as

\*These comments have been condensed for reasons of space, and it may be that some have accidentally been left out.



well as committed to pitching in on anything.” **Lyn Reese** admired “Ellen’s intelligence, love of adventure, and willingness to always show up! Ellen also suffered no fools, moving our discussions along when we were rambling and generally off point.” Although **Peter Meyerhof** knew Ellen only in her later years, to him “she meant a great deal as the embodiment of the IHS. She was always welcoming and truly interested in learning in a wide range of historical topics. I appreciated her common sense and will miss her very much.” Because Ellen often offered **Bonda Lewis** a place to stay when she was in the area, “many of the leaps in our friendship took place at her kitchen table, the place where work really happens. I learned that in addition to being a capable, intelligent human being and a fine historical scholar, she was funny and inventive.” I think of Ellen as the Institute’s gift to me: a friend, an inspiration, a fellow adventurer in the life of the mind.

**Institute members** are invited to attend the memorial for Ellen to be held at St. Aidan’s Episcopal Church in San Francisco on Sunday afternoon, February 17. For further information about directions to the church and the specific time, e-mail: [ellenhuppertmemorial@gmail.com](mailto:ellenhuppertmemorial@gmail.com).

– *Joanne Lafler*

### Other Member News

Over the summer **Richard Hurley** designed and helped curate an exhibit entitled “Wake Up, America! Nevada County’s Experience of the First World War,” which was displayed in the lobby of the Nevada County Government Center in November and December 2018. The show was developed in cooperation with the local historical society and funded by a grant from California Humanities. The goal was to reacquaint Nevada County residents with the dramatic events that transformed their remote foothill community a hundred years ago. As

Nevada County’s young men marched off to war, they were joined by local doctors and nurses, who ended up serving all over the world. At home, vigilantism made life miserable for immigrants from the Central Powers and for skeptics and shirkers who questioned the war. The nation’s first sophisticated propaganda campaign reached deep into the remote farming and mining community and transformed a reluctant populace into fervent supporters of the war.

In November under the auspices of the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation and Stanford University’s Asian American Student Association **Maria Sakovich** participated in a panel presentation “Refugees and Asylum Seekers: From Angel Island to Now.”

**Monica Clyde** was interviewed by a reporter for German national radio about the history of Germans who came to San Francisco at the time of the gold rush. He had learned about Monica’s article, “Building a Civil Society in San Francisco: The German Contribution from 1850 to World War I,” published in *The Argonaut* in 2013. The resulting radio program, which covered the entire history of Germans in San Francisco and the Bay Area to the present time, was aired on German radio on December 29. Monica is quoted in the program about the founder of the Gundlach Bundschu winery in Sonoma, which is still owned by the family of the original founders. Monica later reported that she listened to the broadcast while in Germany for the Christmas-New Year’s holidays.

**Jody/Judith Offer** is organizing a “concert reading” of her new musical, “The Beauty Myth,” for September. Since the piece is set in San Francisco’s Mission District, the producer is arranging for use of the Mission Cultural Center for Latino Arts. While the piece was not written as an “historic” piece, it has a number of Latino characters, and with the current changes

in the demographics of the Mission District, it promises to be “historic” soon. A table reading and discussion of “The Beauty Myth” will take place on January 27th, 2-4 p.m. at Brooklyn Preserve, 1433 -12th Avenue, Oakland. Check her website ([www.JudithOffer.com](http://www.JudithOffer.com)) for updates.

Jody also has revised “Scenes from the Life of Julia Morgan,” including two new scenes, and is looking for living rooms, libraries, and especially Julia Morgan buildings, where a group could gather and read.

The year 2018 was a very special year for **Gretta Mitchell**. She writes: “On October 28th, after 20 years as a couple, Sim and I were married! Please see the announcement in the *New York Times* that spread the news across the country! [www.nytimes.com/2018/10/28/fashion/weddings/margaretta-mitchell-sim-warkov.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/28/fashion/weddings/margaretta-mitchell-sim-warkov.html). We have been surprised and delighted by the many wonderful responses to the news. So we are eager to share the announcement to the members of the Institute!”

### **The Institute Wants You!**

We need members to cover our booth at this year’s **San Francisco History Days** at the Old Mint on 5th Street (at Mission), Saturday and Sunday, March 2nd and 3rd. Two-hour time slots are available between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. on Saturday and from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday. If you can spare a couple of hours that weekend, please contact Taryn Edwards at [tedwards@milibrary.org](mailto:tedwards@milibrary.org) to let her know which time slot(s) you can fill. Thanks so much!

### **Book Review**

***The Sweet Life: Cherry Stories from Butler Ranch*, compiled and edited by Dot Brovarney (Landcestry, 2016)**

*The Sweet Life* is a compilation of stories about the Butler Ranch near Ukiah in Mendocino

County, California and the community heritage that evolved from the ranch and its owners. It is also the story of an earlier time in California history, beginning with the purchase of the ranch in the 1930s and culminating with an altogether different legacy for the cherry trees.

As I am the child of Sonoma County farmers with experiences similar to those encountered in the book, I read with nostalgia of the time when California was a land of diverse small farms that were worked by families making their living from the land.

*The Sweet Life* is a good read that captures the essence of rural farming as it changed. The story tellers were recent transplants from urban areas looking for a different way of life. The Butlers were doing what farmers have always done to preserve their farms, ultimately changing to a u-pick farm to sell their fruit.

This is the extraordinary story of Ella and George Butler, and the gift they gave to the many people that they encountered. Their gift was more than fun on warm, summer days though. It was the sharing of their own joyful personalities and the rich experience of rural life, not only for the children who came to pick and eat cherries with their parents (jumping into a pond afterwards to clean themselves of the ripe cherry juice), but also for the friends that they made—friends that created a community not just of cherry pickers—but of a caring, supportive, extended family.

The story is illustrated with historic and contemporary photos that bring life to the Butlers and many of the people who had the opportunity to know Ella and George Butler.

– **Patricia Cullinan**

*The Sweet Life* (\$18 plus tax/shipping) is available through [MendocinoBookCompany.com](http://MendocinoBookCompany.com) or from the author, [Dot@Landcestry.com](mailto:Dot@Landcestry.com). Some of the proceeds supports Mendocino County fire recovery projects.