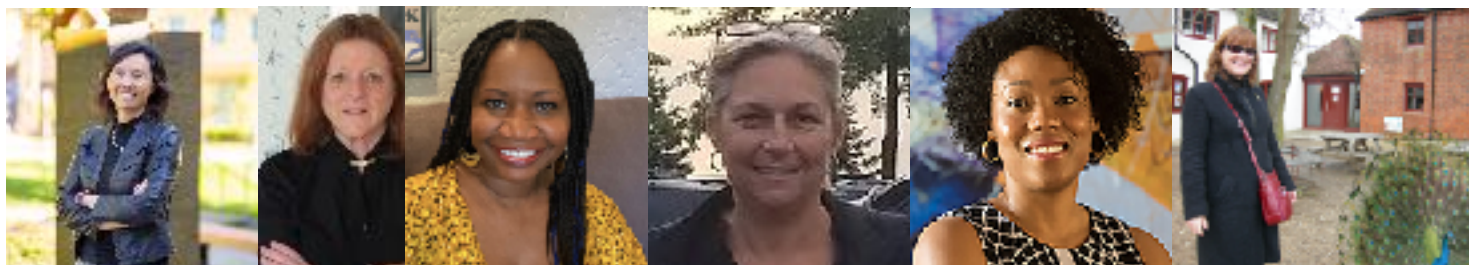


THE TRILLIUM



Meet the Officers

Co-President Judy Tzu-Chen Wu

I am deeply honored to serve as co-President of the Berks. My graduate school mentor, Estelle Freedman, first introduced me to the Big Berks. It was so exciting to attend talks and possibly run into the stellar scholars whose works I was reading. And, I loved the feel and idea of the conference, even if I didn't play softball or attend the dance.

I look forward to working with Barbara Molony to bring the Berks back to California. I remembered attending the Scripps Conference in 2005 (with morning orange juice and yoga classes). Vicki Ruiz has long served as a mentor, and now we are colleagues at the University of California, Irvine. My scholarship has primarily focused on Modern U.S. and Asian American Women's History. These inquiries inevitably raise questions of how militarism, empire, and settler colonialism across the Pacific shaped migration, racialization, and sexualization. These

questions, in turn, inspired the proposed 2023 Berks conference theme of "Oceans, Islands, and Continents." (More to come, soon!)

The opportunity to respatialize women's, gender, and sexuality histories beyond nation-states is particularly relevant in our pandemic times. Also, a focus on race, migration, and Indigeneity is absolutely crucial given what we are witnessing, experiencing, and protesting. It is readily apparent that COVID-19 is having a disproportionate impact on already marginalized communities. Simultaneously, there is renewed visibility of persistent racialized and sexualized violence. We need to offer the much-needed intellectual tools to help us understand our past and our present. In doing so, we might chart a better future.

I look forward to embarking on this endeavor with you.

Co-President Barbara Molony

Greetings to all our Berkshire Conference friends. We're

Little Berks 2020

The Little Berks 2020 will be held virtually on Saturday, October 24, 2020 from 12-5pm EST/9am-2pm PST. Please join us for a fascinating and important series of speakers, a business meeting and an optional paper workshop. Registration is free and open to all. Please register by Thursday, October 22nd at <https://berksconference.org/little-berks/>

heading into our three-year countdown to the next Big Berks in June 2023 in novel times. Our anticipation of a wonderful, beautifully planned on-site Big Berks at Johns Hopkins last spring was quashed by Covid-19; nevertheless, we thank the remarkable officers whose term preceded ours for developing a conference that promised to lift our hearts and minds before it had to be cancelled. We were saddened that our larger and more global Berks community would have to wait another three years to reunite.

But we are heartened that we will indeed reunite, in beautiful California, on the edge of the Pacific. We hope the 2023 Berks will continue to build on the growing inclusion of people of diverse backgrounds and nationalities and represent a wide variety of scholarship. To that end, we developed a program theme tentatively entitled “Oceans, Islands, and Continents: Reconceptualizing the Spatialization of Women’s, Gender and Sexuality History.” We’ve selected exceptional program committee co-chairs, and the program committee and the themes will be fleshed out in the next few months. We believe that travel difficulties due to illness and diplomatic

issues should no longer plague us by then, but we are also working to have digital access to the Big Berks linked to our face-to-face meetings. Personal contacts at in-person meetings, nurtured over the years for the Berks veterans among us and starting up in a spirit of collegiality for our newest participants, are as important to most of us as the sharing of scholarship. And 2023 is the 50th anniversary of the Big Berks, so we especially hope to bring together veterans and first-timers from every continent.

Zoom has contributed to defining our lives, not just our planning efforts and conference meetings. For

#SAYHERNAME

The Berks stands with Black women as scholars, as activists and as individuals.

many of us who are doing collaborative research and scholarship, Zoom meetings have emerged as a pleasant enhancement to email discussions. I, for one, didn’t realize the benefits of virtual facetime for collaborative work until I had used it consistently for teaching. And while some of my colleagues at Santa Clara University spent massive amounts of time trying to conquer the bells and whistles of Zoom (and often failing), I decided to keep it simple and make Zoom work as if I were in a regular classroom. (This worked for students located fewer than three time zones away; I made alternate arrangements to teach the not insignificant number of students I have who live in Asia). What has emerged in my Zoomed classrooms is an empowering of students. No longer is the teacher at the head of the classroom with students facing her, but now I am just one tile on page of 25 tiles (our classes are, fortunately, capped at 25), and we all, students and teacher alike, share the same stage. I hadn’t achieved this balance in spring when we first started Zoom-teaching, but this is what has now evolved in my teaching. Yes, I miss the in-person classroom—though not exposure to Covid—but something positive and more egalitarian has grown in this brave new setting.

Recent years have shown us the critical need for us to come together in empathy and

Letter from the Editor

I am so honored and thrilled to be continuing to serve the Berks in a new role. After four years as treasurer, I was happy to hand over the banking and bookkeeping to Traci Parker and take on the task of reviving the Berks newsletter.

COVID-19 has impacted my life greatly, from moving to teaching fully online to having my toddler home full-time for four months. To cope with the changes in my life and new stresses, I’ve turned to my hobbies: knitting, spinning and embroidery. My summer research project reflected this attention to the role of crafting in women’s lives. I started stitching an embroidery sampler inspired by those stitched by abolitionist women and girls and listed for sale in the antislavery bazaars in Boston and Philadelphia. I read letters and appeals from women who “plied their needles for the slave” and thought about the camaraderie their stitching brought them, much like the camaraderie of the Berks meetings where knitting circles are a common occurrence.

Despite the pandemic and the terrible uncertainties and injustices we face in 2020, I hope the Berkshire Conference can continue to provide women historians and their allies with a safe space for mutual support, collaboration and scholarship.

In solidarity,

Stephanie J. Richmond, Editor



“Women belong in all places where decisions are being made. It shouldn't be that women are the exception.” - Ruth Bader Ginsburg

love—and in defeating those who champion systemically embedded and murderous racism, sexism, hatred of non-binary sexuality, destruction of the environment, and economic and classist inequality. This has been no more evident, though certainly not new, than in the past year, with the intersection of multiple pandemics of diseases and injustices. But flowers peek through the snow and through fire-ravaged forest floors, and I know the Berks community will help to nourish these sprouts.

Vice President Deirdre Cooper-Owens

Like so many academics, my life was a steady blur of teaching classes, serving on committees, traveling to conferences, speaking gigs, and oh yeah, visiting my spouse who lived over 1,000 miles away in New York while I labored and kinda-sorta lived in Nebraska. March 10th changed everything. My husband dropped me off at LaGuardia airport, I flew into Lincoln, taught my class five hours later and learned that the U.S. was officially living through a pandemic. Within two days my university reverted to distance learning via Zoom. Whether I wanted to or not, I was forced to slow down. The sad fact I was actually forced to accept and admit was I did not quite know how to slow down.

I have worked since I was thirteen years old. My life was defined by my work. And here I was having to reconsider everything about “work.” I was working from home and hated

it. Home was to be my escape and sanctuary but it had become another worksite. I also had to buy a new home for when my partner and cat joined me in July because I was renting a home. And not one person told my colleagues that they should slow down with their service work requests and deadlines. So I returned to what I knew always centered me. I practice Theravada Buddhism and I began meditating again. I got in touch with my body and took dance classes (and began physical training with a friend who refuses to charge me). I started walking the nature trails again. I also perfected the perfect grind for my morning coffee ritual. I learned that for those folks like me who have prioritized labor in sometimes unhealthy ways, self-care is the freedom to indulge in luxuriating ourselves with the practices that feed us. I will always love movement, adore my morning coffee, and count myself lucky for being able to walk in spaces that allows me to get lost in my thoughts, be present with my breath, and listen to really raunchy trap music on my smartphone without anybody’s judgment. Engaging in these acts has not made me less work-centered but have provided me with the clarity to know that I do not have to finish every task immediately. I can also say no and the world will continue to move ahead. Pandemics are stressful and working in a pandemic is even more anxiety-inducing but returning to what motivates us and brings joy is always an option.

Big Berks 2023

The 2023 Big Berks will be held in June 2023 in California! The call for papers and exact location are forthcoming, but the conference theme of “Oceans, Islands and Continents.”

Judy has hired an administrative assistant to assist with conference planning. Stephanie Narrow is a history PhD candidate at the University of California, Irvine, and currently serves as the Program Officer for the UCI History Department’s Career Development for Historians Program. Stephanie is also an avid public historian and digital humanist. She has contributed to several museum installations in the Los Angeles area—including the Autry Museum of the American West, the California Historical Society, and El Pueblo de Los Angeles—and is the host of the Krieger Hall Chronicles podcast. Her research focuses on Chinese immigration, Indigenous sovereignty, and trans-imperialism in the 19th-century Pacific World.

Secretary Julie Gallagher

Julie Gallagher is an Associate Professor of History and American Studies with affiliate status in Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Penn State Brandywine.

Her book, *Reshaping Women’s History: Voices on Nontraditional Women Historians*, co-edited with Barbara Winslow, was published by University of

Illinois Press in 2018. The book presents autobiographical essays by eighteen accomplished scholar-activists who persevered through poverty or abuse, medical malpractice or family disownment, and civil war. As they illuminate their own unique circumstances, the authors also address issues all too familiar to women in the academy: financial instability, the need for mentors, explaining gaps in resumes, and coping with gendered family demands, biases, and expectations. Her book, *Black Women and Politics in New York City*, was published by the University of Illinois Press in 2012 (reprinted in paperback in 2014). Party politics, American liberalism, the civil rights movement, and the women's rights movement all look different when considered from the perspective of the women documented in this book. Gallagher's current book project, "Frontline Battles for Justice in an Age of Universal Human Rights: A Comparative Gender History," offers new and important insights into the gendered

Why the trillium?

We chose the name for the newsletter based on a tradition in the Berks that dates back to the earliest meetings in the 1930s. Attendees of the Little Berks, held in the spring, would take a nature walk on Saturday afternoons and look for the first trillium flowers of the season. The winner would get a glass of bourbon with dinner that night.

history of civil society organizing from the founding of the United Nations through the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security in 2000.

Treasurer Traci Parker

Traci Parker is an Associate Professor of Afro-American Studies at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. She holds a Ph.D. in History from the University of Chicago. Parker is the author of *Department Stores and the Black Freedom Movement: Workers, Consumers, and Civil Rights* (University of North Carolina Press, 2019). She is currently working on her second book, *Beyond Loving: Black Love, Sex, and Marriage in the Twentieth Century*.

Parker's research has received support from the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, among others. She teaches courses on African American women's history, nineteenth and twentieth century U.S. history, race and racism, class, labor, capitalism, and consumer culture.

Executive Administrator Sandra Dawson

I have been working as the Executive Administrator of the Berks since 1 July 2016. I am a former midwife and labor and delivery nurse who came to study history later in life. I received a PhD in history from the University of California, Santa Barbara in 2007. My first book, *Holiday Camps in Twentieth Century Britain: Packaging Pleasure*

Have an idea for the newsletter? Want to write a piece on an issue that is important to you? Contact Stephanie Richmond at stephaniejrichmond@gmail.com

(Manchester, 2011) was based on my dissertation that looked at the development and consumption of working-class leisure in Britain. I am currently finishing a second monograph, *Midwives and Mothers Under Fire: Reproductive Labours in Interwar and Wartime Britain* (forthcoming, Lexington). I recently had the opportunity and honor of co-editing, with Barbara Molony and Eileen Boris, a collection of essays, *Engendering Transnational Transgressions: From the Intimate to the Global* (Routledge, November 2020).

I found the first few months of the coronavirus lockdown intellectually paralyzing. I spent most of my time texting family members, reading news articles and watching British comedies. I found I could not read books or articles or concentrate on writing. Something changed when my friend and I decided to set goals for ourselves to read or write x number of books, articles, pages each week. We updated each other every Saturday. For the past several weeks it seems to have broken the paralysis and we are both reading and writing again. Just one person can make so much difference in our intellectual lives!