

# THE TRILLIUM



## Tending our Gardens

For most of our members, the long, hard year of 2020-21 is now over and we are turning our attentions to our summer work. For many of us, this means a return to scholarship, planning late summer archival trips as research centers reopen, reworking classes for fall and tending to other things that have fallen by the wayside (like this newsletter).

Faculty at institutions across the country have been asked to do the impossible in the past eighteen months: to pivot to online learning nearly overnight and to continue to provide high-quality instruction through an academic year where we are often trying to balance work and life without childcare, technical challenges and health issues.

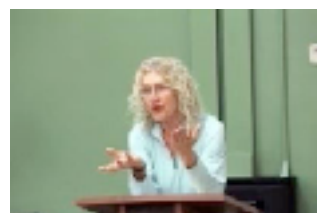
Universities have spent a lot of time and resources focusing on student well-being, but little attention has been paid to faculty mental health.

This summer, we encourage our members to tend their own gardens by focusing on rest, reconnecting to those parts of our lives that have been set aside during the pandemic and developing boundaries between ourselves and our work. One of the many past times that academics have taken up in the last year is gardening. Like the early pandemic excitement over baking bread, gardening is a hobby that was often difficult for academics with busy summer travel schedules to maintain. It is also a hobby with strong class and racial overtones. But gardening also has a long history in working-class and African American communities. The banner image for this issue contains two images that speak to the long history of black women’s gardening expertise. In the 1930s, during the Great Depression one of the few WPA projects to hire black women was

## In Memoriam

### Jean Quataert (1945-2021)

Jean Quataert, distinguished professor of history at Binghamton University and long-time editor of the *Journal of Women’s History* left us on May 25, 2021. Jean was a regular presence at Berkshire Conference meetings and the Big Berks and a good friend to the organization and its membership. She mentored many of our members through publishing their articles in the *JWH*, led us on walks and hikes, and laughed with us through meals. Donations can be made in Jean’s name to Planned Parenthood or to the Don and Jean Quataert Research Grant at Binghamton University through the Binghamton University Foundation, P.O. Box 6005, Binghamton, NY 13902-6005.



a project to construct a public Botanical Garden in Norfolk, Virginia. The gardens, which features dozens of species of azaleas, were planted by over 200 African American women gardeners who not only planted the flowering shrubs but also built a levee, paths and cleared brush and trees. Some of the women hired by the garden project likely had belonged to one of Norfolk’s many black garden clubs before the Depression and brought their own knowledge and considerable skills to the project.

I share these images of women doing hard work to both create a beautiful space for the city, but also to feed their families to remind us that tending to our own gardens is an important legacy. Our students, children, neighbors and university communities will see how we set our own boundaries, tend to our own needs as well as sacrifice for others. Boundaries are important and the importance of cultivating

them as we do our gardens has been a lesson that the pandemic has reinforced.

**2019 Book Prizes Awarded at the Little Berks**

The committee’s blurbs for the two prize winners are included below.

**For a first book in any field of history that does not focus on the history of women, gender, and/or sexuality:** Sarah A. Seo

*Policing the Open Road: How Cars Transformed American Freedom* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019)

This incredibly thorough, rich study describes how automobiles changed, enhanced, and offered dangerous new scope to the practice of law enforcement in modern America. *Policing the Open Road* is a lucidly-written, accessible book, in which Seo meticulously tracks the rise of the automobile within modern

**#SAYHERNAME**

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

American society, and demonstrates how laws governing car stops changed the ways that many modern Americans navigated space, fought for freedom of movement, and attempted to live their lives despite increasingly dangerous strictures. As Seo demonstrates, the popularity and use of automobiles in the early twentieth century caused judges to redraw the “boundaries of legitimate policing,” as law enforcement officers worked to curb dangerous and hazardous driving. But these new practices permitted individual police officers to use their own discretion to enforce traffic laws against otherwise law-abiding citizens. The unintended result of these procedures – decades later – was discriminatory policing against people of color, with policing manuals instructing officers on how to turn routine traffic stops into major drug convictions. The sources which help Seo to tell this story are wide-ranging and revealing: in addition to scrutinizing Supreme Court decisions, the author explores the files of organizations such as the ACLU and the NAACP, documentation from chiefs of police, municipal data, advertisements, and revealing pieces of modern popular culture, like Jay-Z’s “99 Problems.” Woven deftly together, these offer a unique, ground-level view of the

**Letter from the Editor**

I hope you all have finished your teaching for the academic year and are healthy and safe as you begin your summers. This last academic year has been exceptionally challenging, which is why this issue is later than I had hoped. Teaching virtually, managing health issues and working to maintain shared governance at our institutions has distracted me and the rest of the Berkshire Conference team from sending out regular updates.

We all hope that the upcoming academic year will be a return to something approaching normal and allow us more space to write, think and come together.

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

stakes of the Supreme Court's Fourth Amendment decisions. Offering a fresh and insightful look into police power, mobility, and civil rights, *Policing the Open Road* demonstrates that histories of the law have never been so pressing and so timely.

Finalist for this award: Amy C. Offner, *Sorting Out the Mixed Economy: The Rise and Fall of the Welfare and Developmental State in the Americas* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019).

**For a first book that deals substantially with the history of women, gender, and/or sexuality:**

Lauren Jae Gutterman, *Her Neighbor's Wife: A History of Lesbian Desire Within Marriage* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019) *Her Neighbor's Wife* is a gripping read which will make a lasting impact on our understandings of same-sex relationships and American society in the late twentieth century. Offering a convincing, impressive counterpoint to a preponderance of scholarship which has focused upon radical, urban, and especially male queer cultures and experiences, *Her Neighbor's Wife* challenges and changes some of the familiar paradigms of modern American queer history to tell the story of lesbian sexuality, desire, and culture, all of which existed within

frameworks of seemingly-traditional heterosexual marriage. Throughout the book, Gutterman pays careful attention to differences between rural, suburban, and urban areas; distinctions of race and class; and the experiences of women throughout the various stages of their lives and their marriages. This strong sample allows the author to create a book which becomes increasingly complex in its arguments, as well as its historiographical and theoretical contributions and interventions, all while retaining clarity, style and impeccable composition. A stunning addition to histories of gender, query theory, LGBT culture, and post-1945 US history, the book is original in scope, well research and argued, and beautifully written. This book offers us the opportunity to consider the pervasive queerness of heterosexual marriage, family, and power.

Finalist for this award: Katie L. Jarvis, *Politics in the Marketplace: Work, Gender, and Citizenship in Revolutionary France* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).

## Membership Options

Forgot to renew your membership for 2021? We have added a 3 year membership option to ensure that you don't have to remember to renew between Big Berks!. The fees for an Annual Membership are as follows:

- \$100 if your income is above \$100,000
- \$75 if your income is between \$75,000 – \$100,000
- \$50 if your income is between \$50,000 – \$75,000
- \$25 if your income is between \$25,000 – \$50,000
- \$10 if your income is below \$25,000

The fees for a **Three Year Membership** are as follows:

- \$280 if your income is above \$100,000
- \$210 if your income is between \$75,000 – \$100,000
- \$140 if your income is between \$50,000 – \$75,000
- \$70 if your income is between \$25,000 – \$50,000
- \$25 if your income is below \$25,000

To join the Berks or renew your membership, please fill out our secure online [membership form](#).

## Call for Co-Editor

The Trillium needs a co-editor to assist in writing and publishing the quarterly newsletter. Please send a statement of interest to [execadmin@berksconference.org](mailto:execadmin@berksconference.org). Questions about the position can be emailed to [newsletter@berksconference.org](mailto:newsletter@berksconference.org)