

THE TRILLIUM



Berkshire Conference of Women, Genders and Sexualities, 2023

28 June-2 July 2023

Santa Clara University, California

Oceans, Islands, and Continents:

Reconceptualizing the Spatialization of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Histories

The call for papers for the 2023 Big Berks is now available. Please read the full call on the last page of the newsletter. For more information, see our website!

Little Berks October 23

We are pleased to announce that the 2021 Little Berks will be held virtually on Saturday, October 23rd. The theme is "Inclusive Institution Building & Legacy Making." Over the past few years, various institutions that range from governmental to educational have

emphasized the need for inclusivity on every level. Yet, the organizations remain the same, homogenous with regard to race, gender, and physical ability. As the nation's premier women's history organization, The Little Berks hopes to interrogate inclusivity and also offer up call-to-actions about how to best achieve inclusive excellence.

We will have the following thought leaders and renowned academics serve on roundtables and panels to help us to chart an improved pathway towards "inclusive institution building and legacy making," this year's theme for the Little Berks.

- Holly Hotchner (NWHM)
 - Imara Jones (TransLash)
 - Suzanne Welsh (Bennett College, HBCU)
 - Evelyn Hammonds (Harvard Univ.)
 - Vanessa Northington Gamble (GWU & practicing physician)
 - Elizabeth Russo (Founder of Adyn, birth control company)
- Registration information will be sent to all Berks members soon!

Finding American Women's History with Tangible Resources

by Heather Huyck

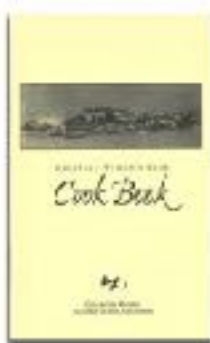
As a community we have spent the last 50 years building an incredible knowledge base of the history of American women, a major intellectual accomplishment which needs more recognition. From 1976 when some major universities assured the Women's History Sources Survey that they had NO materials on American women in their collections to now together we have identified hundreds of thousands of pertinent documents. We have conducted thousands of oral histories, written innumerable journal articles and given thousands of presentations and

Images: Above left: Dangle earrings from Trapani Sicily, Statue of Liberty NM Collection STLI 52295
Above Right: Clara Barton at her desk 1902. Clara Barton National Historic Site, Glen Echo, Maryland. Courtesy National Park Service.

papers at conferences especially at the Berkshire Conference. Those of us who have attended for many years still regret last year's necessary cancellation of the rigorous scholarship/summer camp atmosphere of the Berks. We should stop and celebrate our accomplishments! Together we have reconceptualized American history, developed new intellectual tools and greatly enlarged our definitions and inclusion. We know we are not finished with this massive lifetime project which we want future generations to continue and take still further. We do not want our massive effort to be dismissed and lie forgotten getting dusty or outmoded by newer technology.

We have another major opportunity and challenge. As a public historian I have spent these same years encouraging my academically-based sisters (and occasional brothers) to discover and appreciate the history of American women found in parks, museums, and all kinds of historic sites. These are the places where the public learns American history based on real places, tangible resources and real research. I will quickly say that not every such place meets the standards we

would like. I will also say that with 35,000 museums in this country and 300 million visitors annually to National Parks alone we need to take very seriously the opportunity to more closely work together to ensure that we find ways to fully share our impressive knowledge base.



Alcatraz Women's Club Cook Book (1952)
Museum Collection, Golden Gate
National Recreation Area, San Francisco,
California. Courtesy, National Park

For years NPS historians kept an informal list of those historic parks we believed lacked the history of women. One-by-one historic sites and parks were crossed off our list until only Alcatraz, the infamous federal prison in the middle of San Francisco Bay, remained. Oops. Wives of the wardens lived there; daughters were rowed to school

and the Alcatraz Women's Club published a cookbook. Further, the prison's inmates had women in their lives—and probably some of their victims were women. Certainly, women were some of the American Indian Movement leaders of the 1969-1971 occupation of Alcatraz Island.

One way to think about these formally-recognized places of history is to see their key elements: significance, knowledge base, tangible resources, and of course those of us who are its visitors. Significance, simply the importance of a place, is increasingly recognized as the history of American women gains public attention. Knowledge base is comprised of the documentation about that history although there is a twist here. In addition to the primary and secondary sources we historians so treasure, historic sites have tertiary sources—all the reports and plans necessary for managing them professionally. The National Park Service jokes that it does planning by the pound. Every one of its historic sites or parks is undergirded and guided by a series of management documents, reports and plans that identify historic conditions and direct current actions. Few academically-based historians suspect how much research and planning goes into professionally managed historic sites. Many academically-based historians would probably be surprised at the quantity and quality of the historic resource studies or interpretive plans. People may know about Environmental Impact Statements but not Historic Resource Studies, National Historic Landmark Theme Studies, Furnishing Plans or Long-Range Interpretive Plans. These inform and guide management and are often full of intriguing information. Further, National Historic Register nominations now

Letter from the Editor

This quarter we are thrilled to feature the first of three guest articles by Berks member Heather Huyck, a public historian who has extensive experience working at public history sites and museums. In addition, we have the call for papers for the 2023 Big Berks and the announcement of the program committee members. We also share the information about the 2021 Little Berks. This is a busy and exciting time for the organization and we are excited to be working to plan for the future. 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

being digitized by the National Archives Records Administration are treasure troves of information. Some 88,000 records, dating through to 2012 are digitally available. Our intellectual cross pollination should go both ways.

NPS while best known for its “natural resources” from the Grand Canyon to grizzly bears nonchalantly catching salmon in Katmai also preserves our history from Saint Gauden’s home and studio to Tumacácori Mission that capture our imaginations. Its 424 sites also preserve considerable history of American women. Havasupai women still live at the base of the Grand Canyon; rangers’ wives protected Yellowstone during World War II. Actually, the 424 national park units are replete with cultural resources, the history of American women, Blacks, Indigenous peoples, and other “minority” groups. Cultural resources reflect human activities whether ancient yucca sandals worn by Anasazi women or Cold War missile silos staffed by them. Parks that seem unlikely to preserve the history of American women turn out to be full of it—think Springfield Armory where women working precision tools made munitions during both world wars.

Tangible resources combine natural and cultural ones because the line between them is wobbly; it recognizes their physicality whether of rocks or wood, whether the sandstone of Fort Larned or the desk of Eleanor Roosevelt. Consider Chimney Rock on the westward trails, stone metates grinding corn, and elegant gold filigree Sicilian dangle earrings at the Statue of Liberty. Natural resources include geological formations and all kinds of biology-- plants, animals, birds, sea life, etc. As humans use and

interact with natural resources, they become cultural resources as a tree becomes a table and a mountain, a sacred site. Using “tangible resources” recognizes their intermixture.

Cultural resources include landscapes, architecture, and objects all of which can provide particular insights into our foremother’s lives. Being able to walk into a one-room schoolhouse helps us feel the relationship between young women teachers and their students beyond reading about it. We should use these tangible resources in our research-- and infuse the sites with our research so that we all benefit. When Mary Beth Norton researched the Seventh Tea Ship, she found going to Cape Cod and studying its seascape helpful in analyzing that event. I gained deep insights into Clara Barton as I lived in the basement apartment of her American Red Cross Headquarters. That building was simultaneously her home and office, boarding house for the ARC volunteers, and supply warehouse. It brought home insights unavailable in written sources by or about her. I understood how profoundly intertwined her personal and professional life was—a melding that her successor used to tarnish her reputation. The ten thousand square foot building had walls so thin I could hear all over it; the layout of its rooms and disaster supply closets demonstrated her practicality. She placed her desk a few feet from the dining room table where the staff met for meals in front of a south facing window and positioned herself to command meals, office and the entire building.

We’ve all experienced landscapes, architecture, and objects. We need to think of these tangible resources as sources to do the history of

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](#).

American women and to appreciate the lives of more American women through them. Tangible resources both provide information to build a knowledge base and to make visible to us and the public key aspects of women’s lives. Go to Mary McLeod Bethune’s Council House and the combination of office building meeting space and safe lodging during American Apartheid immediately tells us of the National Council of Negro Women. Step inside an adobe home at Mesa Verde and appreciate how those women lived, farmed, cooked and raised their children. Go places where women seem absent and you will find

them. The longtime assertion that there were no women on battlefields has been thoroughly discredited. Although few women were shooting, many women's lives were directly impacted-- hiding in their cellars, seeing sawed-off limbs piled in their front yards-- or freeing themselves.

This is the first of several pieces written to encourage you to discover these amazing and knowledgeable historic places-- to find and research and teach American women of all backgrounds. Having spent a lifetime visiting such places, initially dragged to them by my freelance journalist mother Dorothy Boyle Huyck and later finding it my career, I spent the past five years developing a framework and compendium of sources as Doing Women's History in Public: A Handbook for Interpretation at Museums and Historic Sites which can be used by anyone seeking to find more about the women who preceded us and the tangible evidence that remains. The next blog will consider several places in more detail. We have such opportunities to share our scholarship with the larger public and places to learn ourselves.

1. NEH funded to University of Minnesota, published as Andrea Hinding and Ames Sheldon Bower, eds., *Women's History Sources* (New York: A. A. Bowker, 1979).

2. The IMLS at [imls.gov](https://www.imls.gov) identified 35,000 active museums in 2014, with 48% being history related; the NPS tracked 325 million visitors in 2019 and 235 million in pandemic year 2020. The American Alliance of Museums AAM estimates 850 million museum visitors annually, www.statista.com/topics/1509/museums/

3. Richard Frear, ed., *Alcatraz Women's Club Cookbook* (San Francisco: Golden Gate National Park Association, 1952).

4. See: "A Preservation Partnership: Digitizing the National Register of

Historic Places and National Historic Landmark Records" (U.S. National Park Service, [nps.gov](https://www.nps.gov)).

5. Earring, Statue of Liberty, STLI 52295; <https://museum.nps.gov/ParkObjdet.aspx?rID=STLI%20%20%-2052295%26db%3Dobjects%26dir%3DCFR%20AAW%26page%3D14>

6. Mary Beth Norton. "The Seventh Tea Ship." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 73, no. 4 (2016): 681-710.

7. Heather Huyck, *Doing Women's History in Public: A Handbook for Interpretation at Museums and Historic Sites* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers / AASLH, 2020).

Announcing the Program Committee for the 2023 Big Berks

Program Co-Chairs: Maile Arvin (University of Utah), Miroslava Chavez-Garcia (University of California, Santa Barbara), Karen Leong (Arizona State University), Sasha Turner (John Hopkins University)

Activism, Resistance and Feminisms: Takkara Brunson (Texas A&M University), May Chazan (Trent University), Tiffany Nicole Florvil (University of New Mexico), Chelsea Szendi Schieder (Aoyama Gakuin University)

Affective Geographies of the Sacred, Religious, and the Secular: Gabeba Baderoon (Pennsylvania State University), Hyaewool Choi (University of Iowa), Elizabeth DePalma Digeser (University of California, Santa Barbara), Heather Miyano Kopelson (University of Alabama)

Bodies, Health and (Dis)Ability: Susan Burch (Middlebury College), Jules Gill-Peterson (Johns Hopkins University), Stefanie Hunt-Kennedy (University of New Brunswick), Sonja M. Kim (Binghamton University, SUNY), Nicole Pacino (University of Alabama, Huntsville)

Childhood, Family and Reproduction: Robin P. Chapdelaine (Duquesne University), Aneeka Ayanna Henderon (Amherst College), Rachel Hynson (independent scholar), Brianna Theobald (University of Rochester)

Decolonizing the Environment and the Post-Human: Thera Edwards (University of West Indies), Kimberly Fields (University of Virginia), Adele Perry (University of Manitoba), Traci Brynne Marante (University of Oklahoma)

Disaster Capitalism, Social Death, and Femicide: Cynthia Bejarano (New Mexico State University), Natasha Lightfoot (Columbia University), Hilda Lloréns (University of Rhode Island), Lina-Maria Murillo (University of Iowa)

Economies, Work, and Labor: Eileen Boris (University of California, Santa Barbara), April Haynes (University of Wisconsin, Madison), Erika Rappaport (University of California, Santa Barbara), Priyanka Srivastava (University of Massachusetts)

Imperialism, Militarism, and Pacifism: Laura Briggs (University of Massachusetts), Sungyun Lim (University of Colorado, Boulder), Jacqueline-Bethel Mougoué (University of Wisconsin, Madison), Lorelle D. Semley (Holy Cross College)

Indigeneity, Colonialism, and Revitalization: Jolan Hsieh (National Dong Hwa University), Juliana Hu Pegues (Cornell University), Melanie Newton (University of Toronto), Judy Rohrer (Eastern Washington University)

Migrations, Diasporas, Refugees, and Borderlands: Alanna Kamp (Western Sydney University), Myriam Moïse (University of the Antilles), Ana Rosas (University of California, Irvine), Ma Vang (University of California, Merced)

Queering and Querying Intimacies, Desire, and the Erotic: Sandibel Borges (Loyola Marymount University), Francisco Galarte (University of New Mexico), Rosamond S. King (Brooklyn College, CUNY), Emily Skidmore (Texas Tech University)

Racial Justice, Abolition and Decolonization: Vanessa Holden (University of Kentucky), Durba Mitra (Harvard University), Danielle R. Olden (University of Utah), Emily Thuma (University of Washington)

Berkshire Conference of Women, Genders and Sexualities, 2023 Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Big Berks!

28 June-2 July 2023, Santa Clara University, California

Oceans, Islands, and Continents: Reconceptualizing the Spatialization of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Histories

What does it mean to gather on the Ohlone peoples' ancestral homeland, situated next to the San Francisco Bay, a gateway to the Pacific Ocean and Pacific Islands? What does it mean to convene, craft, share, and celebrate feminist histories in the ongoing contexts of climate change-fueled hurricanes and storm surges, sea level rise and coastal flooding, fires, and marine life extinction? What does it mean to celebrate fifty years of promoting and exploring histories of women, genders, and sexualities when immigrants, refugees, Indigenous and Black people, queer and trans communities are marginalized and subject to violence; political and individual freedoms are eroded; and growing autocratic and totalitarian regimes embolden racial nationalism?

We invite you—national and international scholars of all persuasions, and especially graduate students and early career colleagues—to collaborate with us in framing histories within broadly expansive configurations across time, space, and place. We seek to develop conversations across our interconnected yet disparate social, political, economic, and cultural worlds and to consider the transitions, transformations, and spatializations that keep them in constant flux. We solicit panels, papers, and workshops that help us consider what histories emerge when relations are formed and linkages are drawn that transcend traditional national borders and reference instead, for example, oceans, islands, or continents? What innovative or timeless feminist methodologies help us conceptualize and engage in conversations at new depths, attentive to the vastness of the oceans, lands, and islands we traverse and inhabit, as well as the importance of the care we give to a loved one, a garden, or a forest? What are the affective geographies and histories of spaces of refuge, resistance, and renewal? What are the gendered histories of water, rain, and rivers that move us into new understandings of the relationships among plants, animals, and humans? What are the specific histories of organizing against nuclear testing, deep sea drilling, rainforest destruction, political prisoners, femicide, human and sex trafficking, forced labor, state-based, anti-gay, lesbian, and trans legislation, and religious persecution that center women's leadership as activists as well as mothers, daughters, sisters, partners, and friends? How do we illuminate the depths of connective organizing across Asia, North and South America, the Pacific and Caribbean Islands, Africa, Europe, and the Middle East? What are the ways these efforts transcend temporal and spatial boundaries?

As the Big Berks contemplates its fiftieth year of triennial conferences and plans for the future, we invite you to explore these questions through gendered analyses in addition to more spatially and temporally focused approaches.

We encourage submissions to engage activism and resistance, the local, global, and transnational, the biopolitical and necropolitical, as well as geographies that transcend the continental and the human. We also welcome submissions that explore interdisciplinary methodological, pedagogical, and digital humanities approaches that engage up to three of the themes listed below. Please begin by selecting the format of your proposal. You can choose to submit a single paper, traditional panel, roundtables, interactive workshop, lightning session, curriculum discussion/workshop, or other formats. Once you begin your submission you will be required to select 1-3 of the following themes in order of relevance.

CONFERENCE SUBTHEMES:

- Activism, Resistance, and Feminisms
- Affective Geographies of the Sacred, Religious, and the Secular
- Bodies, Health, and (Dis)ability
- Childhood, Family, and Reproduction
- Decolonizing the Environment and the Post-Human
- Disaster Capitalism, Social Death, and Femicide
- Economies, Work, and Labor
- Imperialism, Militarism, and Pacifism
- Indigeneity, Colonialism, and Revitalization
- Migrations, Diasporas, Refugees, and Borderlands
- Queering and Querying Intimacies, Desire, and the Erotic
- Racial Justice, Abolition, and Decolonization

The 2023 Berkshire conference will have a small theater setting for the ongoing screening of films submitted for viewing at the conference. To submit a film to be included as part of the screening, we offer a separate form on the submission site to provide required information for the film along with information for the format required to be included in the screening. Note that this venue does not allow for post-screening discussion nor responses and is distinct from submitting a panel or roundtable about a film.

Submissions for the 2023 conference opened on on 1 September and end on 31 December 2021. Submit your proposals at <https://berks.confex.com/berks/berks23/cfp.cgi>