In the introduction to their new book of essays, WITHOUT PRECEDENT: THE LIFE AND CAREER OF ELEANOR ROOSEVELT, Joan Hoff-Wilson and Marjorie Lightman note that for far too long, the focus of attention on Eleanor Roosevelt has been on the almost melodramatic nature of her personal life -- the unhappy childhood in which her mother rejected her and dubbed her "Granny," the early death of both parents, the feeling that she was physically ugly, the surprise marriage to a man who seemed her opposite in temperament, the domineering mother-in-law who made her life miserable, and finally, the infidelity of her husband with Lucy Mercer, which fundamentally altered their relationship after fourteen years of marriage and six children. This is indeed the stuff of soap opera. While it was treated sympathetically by Eleanor's biographer, Joseph Lash, nonetheless, at bottom the implication is that Eleanor Roosevelt's remarkable and unique public career was merely a form of compensation for a loveless and failed personal life.

Current scholarship is moving away from this perspective to render a more complex and accurate picture of ER. Who can say why she threw herself into work within the network of women's organizations in New York in the early 1920s? Perhaps it was, in part, to fill a void. But it is equally clear that the continuation of this activity for 40 years was due to the deep satisfaction it gave her to realize some of the ideals of a social conscience she had developed long before meeting FRD and also due to the elation she felt at the use of her own skills -- at being the politician and not the politician's wife.

In the essays in WITHOUT PRECEDENT there is much debate on subjects rarely raised in the past, such as Eleanor's feminism and the apparent contradictions in her attitudes or positions on some women's and civil rights issues over the long period that she was active, from 1920 until her death in 1962. The fact that she did not support women's suffrage until after her husband's "conversion" and her late endorsement of ERA are often mentioned, along with her role in defeating a strong civil rights plank in the Democratic Party platform in 1952, in raising questions about the depth of her commitment on these issues.

All of this discussion is necessary and useful, and the result will be a far more sophisticated understanding of Eleanor Roosevelt than we have had. Yet as the date for her centennial, October 11, approaches, these debates also seem, in some ways, a little beside the point. It is the total Eleanor Roosevelt who to this day deeply attracts us and acts as a continuing role model. What has struck me most strongly during this period of centennial recollection is how unique her public career remains within the context of American politics.

Most of us probably felt a strong emotional high when Geraldine Ferraro became the first woman vice presidential nominee in July. Eleanor Roosevelt could have held that position way back in 1948 if she had wanted it. She never cared to run for elective office, and she also didn't care in 1948 to be associated with Truman's Cold War policies. But she could have had the
nomination, because it was believed that only she could save the party in that election. No woman before or since has gained such influence or admiration. She not only became a personification of some of America's most important ideals for citizens (symbolized by cartoons like the Forgotten Woman and the Statue of Liberty), but she had real power and influence within the highest reaches of government for 30 years. In that context, I have been reminded strongly not only of ER's hours but of how long has been the hiatus between her and someone of the potential status of Gerry Ferraro.

On the opening day of the Democratic Convention, I attended the reception for the Eleanor Roosevelt Fund -- created by the Democratic Party in 1980 to help elect women candidates. The opening event was a massed group of women political leaders on the stage of the San Francisco Opera House. I was immediately struck by two things -- the comparative youth of the group, and the fact that the important woman leadership of the majority Democratic Party could still be contained on one stage. Certainly both of these things suggest how RECENTLY women have made any significant inroad into serious political power, and how far they still have to go, Gerry Ferraro notwithstanding, and how unique Eleanor Roosevelt's public career was.

The spirit of Eleanor Roosevelt was very much with the audience that day, in many ways. I think it was clear that no hiatus is ever likely to occur again in the long struggle of women to participate fully in their government. And for this we owe not only small thanks to Eleanor Roosevelt, who worked unstintingly to bring women voters into the Democratic party and women into important elective and appointive offices. Was Eleanor Roosevelt a feminist? I don't know. I don't think it matters in the larger view or in the long run. She remains the single greatest inspiration and role model of our era. That should suffice.

I hope that every member of WAWH will have the opportunity to participate in at least one celebration of the Eleanor Roosevelt Centennial during the month of October.
GALL FOR PAPERS!

THE WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN HISTORIANS

presents

CONFERENCE XVII

May 10, 11, & 12, 1985

at

MILLS COLLEGE

Oakland, California

Please direct all program suggestions and proposals for papers, panels, and workshops to:

Lorrie O'Dell, Conference Program Chair
602 Calmar Avenue
Oakland, California 94610
(415) 451-8682

The program committee requests that proposals be submitted in duplicate, and that a current curriculum vita for each participant be attached. Se include a brief paragraph abstracted from each c.v. in program notes.

WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN HISTORIANS AWARDS AND PRIZES

CALLS FOR SUBMISSIONS

1. SIERRA PRIZE

WAWH members who have had books published during 1984 and wish to have them considered for the Sierra Prize should send one copy to the following three committee members and one to the WAWH president for our archives. Books should be submitted by January 30, 1985. Announcement of the award will be made at our annual conference banquet in May at Mills College.

Nupur Chaudhuri, Chair
1737 Vaughn Drive
Manhattan, KS 66507

Joyce Appleby
Department of History, UCLA
Los Angeles, CA 90041

Carolyn Lougee
Department of History
Stanford University
Stanford, CA 94305

Jess Flemion
Department of History
San Diego State University
San Diego, CA 92182

2. GRADUATE STUDENT AWARD

Two $150 fellowships will be awarded to WAWH members who are graduate students advanced to candidacy from the new fund created in 1983. Applicants should write to the committee chair for application form and fellowship rules. Deadline for submission is December 1, 1984. Awards will be announced March 1, 1985.

Dr. Jacqueline Barnhart, Committee Chair
Department of History
Chico State University
Chico, CA 95929
3. **GRADUATE STUDENT PAPER AWARD**

All WAWH graduate student members are encouraged to submit article length papers that can be read in 20–25 minutes for our first Graduate Student Paper Prizes. One copy of the paper with complete scholarly citation should be submitted to the members of the prize committee by December 1, 1984. Each paper honored will receive a $50 prize and will be read at a special session of the WAWH conference in May 1985 at Mills College.

Penny Kanner, Chair  
467 Comstock Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90024

Marilyn Boxer, Associate Dean  
College of Arts and Letters  
San Diego State University  
San Diego, CA 92182

Mary Ryan  
Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences  
202 Junipero Serra Blvd.  
Stanford, CA 94305

4. **ARTICLE PRIZE**

An anonymous donor has made possible the start of a $100 annual prize for the best article published by a WAWH member. Articles will be judged on originality of research, excellence of presentation, and contribution to scholarship. Please submit one copy of your 1984 article to each of the following committee members by January 30, 1985:

Alice Wexler, Chair  
11593 Cornell  
Riverside, CA 92507

Judith Hughes  
Department of History  
UC San Diego  
La Jolla, CA 92093

Karen Blair  
Women's Studies GN 45  
University of Washington  
Seattle, WA 98195
NATIONAL PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATING CONVENTIONS

Frances Richardson Keller, an Americanist historian, and Jo Freeman, a political scientist and guest contributor comment on the conventions:

The Democratic Convention:

It surprised us. Not that we didn't know what the platform would contain. Not that we didn't expect runners-up to concur. Not even that we didn't realize the Mondale pre-convention coup as Geraldine Ferraro became vice presidential nominee. The 1984 Democratic Presidential Nominating Convention surprised us because it generated positive emotional responses among the most divergent interests.

The drama didn't start slow, for Governor Cuomo's keynote speech appealed to the participants as to the watching nation. The drama did gain fire as Jesse Jackson, Gary Hart, and Teddy Kennedy successively delivered apologies, responses, exhortations. The drama did rise higher, for Geraldine Ferraro's appearance became a testament. As he accepted nomination, Walter Mondale surpassed expectations. He did this by infusing his speech with a new frankness, a new strength. Strangers joined hands, sang together. One reporter seemed to strike an aloof opposition, yet even he succumbed when a neighbor reached for his hand.

To be sure, PR people had distributed flags, cardboard posters, and banners. They had released balloons. They had selected celebrities for national impact. Yet no way could all of them together have produced the mix of conviction and hope that suffused the air. When the sometimes naive, sometimes jaded, and often fearful Democratic delegates from 1984 America departed from San Francisco, they knew at the least a sense of mission. They believed the justice of their cause.

Whatever the outcome in November, make no mistake. Fully half the San Francisco Democratic delegates were women and minority representatives. With their concurrence in San Francisco, the Democrats turned a page in the political history of this country. They placed a woman -- a feminist woman from the most constructive tradition -- in line to occupy the highest office of the land.

by Frances Richardson Keller

The Republican Convention:

Feminist Republicans may have been in hiding during the 1984 Republican National Convention, but the influence of the women's movement was pervasive. This influence was not seen in the content of the convention so much as in the quantity of attention paid to women. Although the Republican Party does not require that half of the delegates be women, as the Democrats do, 48 percent of the delegates and 52 percent of the alternates were female.

One-third of the major speakers were women, including keynoter Katherine Ortega. With the exception of Jeanne Kirkpatrick, their message was highly consistent. Each extolled President Reagan for appointing the "first woman to..." and then went on to say that she had not achieved her position because she was a woman but because of her exertions and her merit. The implication was that in the last four years the Republican Party has sprouted a lot of qualified women where none existed before.

For the first time, the Republican Convention had a large booth in the press area solely to provide information on women...Delegate surveys indicated that by and large, Republican women delegates took the same positions as did men...Although the content was not what feminists would prefer, women and women's issues occupied a larger portion of the platform than at any time since women got the vote.

The Equal Rights Amendment was not mentioned in either the draft or the final version of the platform. Mary Louise Smith, former chair of the Republican National Committee, and Mary Stanley, head of the Republican Women's Task Force of the National Women's Political Caucus, made plaintive appeals that the ERA not be excluded, but proposals in support were defeated. All motions to soften the hard-line, pro-life language and the anti-comparable worth plank in the platform met similar fates.

Jo Freeman

(Due to the length of Professor Freeman's report, we have published only excerpts from it.---Editor)
NEWS OF MEMBERS

Penny Kanner has been appointed Visiting Scholar at UCLA during the completion of the final stages of her book.

Elizabeth L. Furdell, U. of North Florida, read a paper on Queen Anne's medical and obstetrical history at the Western British Studies Association Conference in Boulder and is working on a study of Stuart court physicians.

Dorothy Hewes, San Diego State U., Graduate Coordinator for School of Family Studies, presented a paper at the International Standing Working Group for the History of Early Childhood Education, University of Bambers, FRG. After a sabbatical in England, she will chair a history buffs network meeting and present a paper for the National Association for the Education of Young Children, Anaheim.

Anne Holmes, doctoral candidate at UC Berkeley, would like to connect with anyone working on women in the ancient world, particularly in the neolithic and bronze ages, in any part of the world.


Laetitia Argenteri, UCLA, is writing on the role of nationalists and their merge with Fascists in Italy in the 1920s.


Nerys Williams-Levy, London University, was appointed to the anthropology department, UCSD.

Sandra Schackel, U. of New Mexico, is Assistant Editor of NEW MEXICO HISTORICAL REVIEW.

Martha Ellis, U. of New Mexico, is working in the field of the U.S. West and Indians in the 19th century.

Eugenia Odell, CSULB, is working on American Women.

Alice Hill, Cornell U., is studying industrial and labor relations.

Amy Louise Eric, UC Berkeley, is working on women's legal and social history, 17th century England, Europe, and America.

Eunice Cook Konold, UCSD, is Administrative Assistant at the School of Medicine.

MEMBERSHIP

We invite your membership in our Association. Membership is open to those who share our interests and goals. Dues and donations are tax-deductible.

Name: 
Address: 

Dues:  
Fully employed: $15  
Part-time employed: $10  
Graduate students and independent scholars: $5

Donations:  
Sierra Award Fund  
Grad Student Fellowship

SEND TO: Joyce Baker  
514 Peregrina Rd.  
Santa Barbara, CA 93105
WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Bernadette V. Wehrly, CSU Los Angeles, American History

Shirley Stuelpnagel, CSU Long Beach, women's history

Joan Louise Jolly, UC Santa Barbara, medieval, church history, Anglo-Saxon

Manzor Foroohar, UCLA, American history, political science

Joan Dilley, CSU Long Beach, US Political, women, 1920s

Joan Kullmann Puz, Historical Institute of southern California; researching for a book on Victoria C. Woodhull Martin

Jean B. Wilkinson, Institute for Historical Study, family, England, women

Adler Catherine Ann Curry, Graduate Theological Union; education

Susan Marie Meyer, Claremont Graduate School, Europe, feminist

Elizabeth L. Furdell, U. of N. Florida, history of medicine

Ann Holmes, UC Berkeley, women in Chinese neolithic and bronze age. Would like to hear from women interested in her field.

Mary Murphy, U. of N. Carolina, women in American West, oral history, labor history, documentary photography

Dorothy Hewes, San Diego State U., history of education

Rebecca Kugel, UCLA, U.S., native American

Kathy Brown, San Francisco State U., 20th century Britain

Jacqueline K. Greb, U. of New Mexico, western history, women

Patricia S. Seleski, Stanford U., Britain, social, labor, women, family and sexuality

Alex Owen, Del Mar, women and 19th century spiritualism

Ruth B. Moynihan, Lewis & Clark College

Joan T. Casale, San Diego, women, U.S.; writing a play about a Hispanic woman

Jo Ellen Heil, Ventura librarian, women's history

Tanis C. Thorne, Cal State Fullerton, Women's History, American West, Indian

Laetitia Argenteri—Sun, UCLA, modern European, intellectual, women

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CALL FOR PAPERS:


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WAHW OFFICERS

Jess Flemion, President
Department of History
San Diego State University
San Diego, CA 92182

Joyce Baker, Secretary—Treasurer
514 Peregrina Road
Santa Barbara, 93105

Carole Hicke
Ellen Huppert
Penny Kanner
Frances Richardson Keller
Dorothy Ludlow
Francesca Miller
Lorrie O'Dell
Linda Popofsky
Carolyn Roy
June Stephenson
The annual meeting of the Renaissance Society of America will be held March 21-23, 1985 at The Huntington Library, Art Gallery, and Botanical Gardens, San Marino. For information and registration, write Professor Wendy Furman, Secretary-Treasurer, Renaissance Conference of Southern California, Whittier College, Whittier, CA 90608. (213) 693-0771 or (213) 262-2819.

The Huntington Library in San Marino, CA has established a seminar series in women's studies. It is intended to further scholarly research on women and to foster awareness and increase use of the resources in the library. It seeks also to encourage a continuing dialogue on women's studies in the form of a collegial association of persons from many disciplines. The seminar will provide opportunities to discuss research in progress, past scholarship and issues, the state of the art in various disciplines, and The Huntington's materials and resources.

The first seminar is called "The State of the Art in Women's Studies: History, Political Science, and English Literature." The first meeting will be at The Huntington September 29, 1984. Other topics will be discussed December 1, 1984, and February 2, April 13, and June 1, 1985. WAWH members on the Steering Committee are Penny Kanner, Betsy Perry, and Maryanne Horowitz. For further information, call The Huntington, (213) 405-2100.

The UCLA HISTORICAL JOURNAL, published annually, accepts papers from any field of history or related disciplines. Manuscripts should be double spaced, typed, and submitted in triplicate by April 15 to: Editor, UCLA HISTORICAL JOURNAL, Department of History, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA 90024. The Theodore Saloutos Award is offered annually for an outstanding article submission.

FROM THE AHA COMMITTEE ON WOMEN HISTORIANS:

The June 1984 issue of the AMERICAN HISTORICAL REVIEW has made history: five articles in women's history by five women historians. Yes, count them: five and five.

To insure that this is not the sole -- or last -- occasion of this sort to celebrate, we urge women historians to submit their articles to the AHR and to the other "big journals" in their fields. Editors tell us that the reason they don't publish more work by women historians is that they don't receive manuscripts from them. Why this should be so is puzzling. We know there is an enormous amount of worthy work being done by women historians, not only in women's history but in every field, and of the sort that has broader implications for the direction of historical scholarship as a whole.

The AHR guidelines are spelled out in the October 1970 issue of the review, pp. 1577-80. Procedures for submission are discussed in the April 1982 issue of AHA PERSPECTIVES. Other journals also publish their guidelines concerning the type of articles they seek. We urge you to consult those guidelines and to submit your work, if not in 1984, then in 1985. The editors are waiting -- and so are the readers. Let's show our stuff!

The UCLA HISTORICAL JOURNAL accepts papers from any field of history or related disciplines. Manuscripts should be double spaced, typed, and submitted in triplicate by April 15 to: Editor, UCLA HISTORICAL JOURNAL, Department of History, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA 90024. The Theodore Saloutos Award is offered annually for an outstanding article submission.

CLIP AND RETURN! Please write a few lines about your present activities -- or any other news -- on the lines below and mail to Carole Hicke, 57 Coronado Avenue, San Carlos, CA 94070.
CONFERENCE XVII
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Oakland, California

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