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# RWSA NEWSLETTER

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Volume 1, Issue 4

January 2009

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## Renewed Call for Papers

**RWSA Triennial Conference, Indiana University, September 24-27, 2009**

The Triennial Conference of the Rural Women's Studies Association will be held at Indiana University at Bloomington, Indiana. The conference theme is "Health, healing, and Rural Life." The RWSA invites proposals for individual papers, panel sessions, workshops, or presentations on this theme, and all manner of interpretations of the theme. Possible topics might include:

- Comparative and/or interdisciplinary frameworks and ethnographic approaches that give space to rural women's voices as forms of agency;
- Research which concerns rural women's involvement in politics as related to health or related initiatives;
- Social/social reform movements; literary movements and interpretations; educational development; social and welfare policy initiatives; agriculture, environment (including policy, production, land use, and the utilization of science and technology) as relating, broadly, to health;
- Sustainability (including population health, environmental concerns, and conservation strategies);
- Health and health education;
- Rural women's sexuality and health;
- Gender, race, ethnicity and rurality as they relate to health and/or healing.

Inter-/trans-/multi-disciplinary proposals are encouraged, as are those that develop connections between rural women's history and present-day social and economic concerns, world-wide.

The RWSA encourages participation of all rural women, from all corners of the globe, whether

working in or outside of academia. Alternative methods of presentation, such as workshops, interactive sessions, posters, performances, readings, and/or audiovisual presentations are encouraged and welcomed. All manner of interpretations of the theme health, healing, and rural life are solicited; indeed, all proposals and abstracts are welcome.

Please send the following in your submission: (1) title of paper/session/workshop/performance; (2) a one-page abstract of paper or brief description of proposed session/workshop, etc.; (3) brief vita/bio of presenters /persons involved, with complete contact information.

Send submissions electronically to: [dstiles@nsac.ca](mailto:dstiles@nsac.ca). If it is not possible to send the proposal electronically, and it is being submitted from the U.S., send by regular mail to: Dr. Carmen V. Harris, Associate Professor of History, University of South Carolina Upstate, 800 University Way, Spartanburg, SC 29303.

Submissions by post from outside the U.S. should be sent to: Dr. Deborah Stiles, Rural Research Centre, Nova Scotia Agricultural College, PO Box 550, Truro, NS Canada B2N 5E3.

For more information, contact Co-Chair Valarie Grim at 812-855-3875 or [vgrim@indiana.edu](mailto:vgrim@indiana.edu); for queries about the RWSA program, contact Deborah Stiles at 902-893-6705 or [dstiles@nsac.ca](mailto:dstiles@nsac.ca).

**The deadline for receipt of proposals is April 1,**

## Help Spread the Word!!

Please circulate the Call for Papers to anyone you think may be interested in presenting at the 2009 meeting in Indiana, and to any professional societies or local organizations whose members may be interested as well. Help us maximize participation and ensure the Triennial Conference is well-attended.

***Please see page four for more information on the conference.***

## ***About the RWSA***

Founded in 1998 as an outgrowth of the Sixth Conference on Rural and Farm Women in Historical Perspective, the Rural Women's Studies Association is an international organization for the advancement and promotion of farm and rural women's gender studies in historical perspective. The Association aims to encourage research, to promote existing and forthcoming scholarship, and to establish and maintain links with contemporary farm and rural women's organizations. The RWSA aims to encourage scholars from different disciplinary backgrounds and countries to communicate about their research and all other activities that are supportive to the Association's goals.

### **Co-Chairs:**

Deborah Stiles, Nova Scotia Agricultural College  
Valerie Grim, Indiana University-Bloomington

### **Secretary:**

Deborah Fink

### **Treasurer:**

Debra Reid, Eastern Illinois University

### **International Membership and Communication Coordinators:**

*Pacific*—Kate Hunter, Victoria Univ. of Wellington

*Canada*—Margaret Kechnie, Laurentian University

*Europe*—Margreet van der Burg, Wageningen Univ.

### **Graduate Student Coordinator:**

Jenny Barker-Devine, Iowa State University

### **Web Master:**

Kathleen Hilton, University of North Carolina-  
Pembroke

### **Web Site:**

<http://www.uncp.edu/rwsa>

### **Newsletter Editor:**

Rebecca Montgomery, Texas State University

## **2009 Susie Pryor Award Competition**

The Arkansas Women's History Institute announces its call for the 2009 Susie Pryor Award submissions. The award is named in honor of Susie Hampton Newton Pryor—mother, community leader, local historian, and writer from Camden, Arkansas. The award offers a \$1,000 prize annually for the best unpublished essay on topics in Arkansas women's history. Manuscripts are judged on their contributions to knowledge of women in Arkansas's history, use of primary and secondary materials, and analytical and stylistic excellence. The winning paper may be published.

The deadline for submissions is February 15, 2009. The winner will be announced at the 2009 meeting of the Arkansas Historical Association in Magnolia, April 23-25, 2009.

For guidelines, or for more information about the Susie Pryor Award, please contact:

Ellen Compton, Chair  
AWHI Susie Pryor Awards Committee  
Special Collections, University Library  
365 North McIlroy Avenue  
Fayetteville, AR 72701-4002  
479.575.7253  
[ecompton@uark.edu](mailto:ecompton@uark.edu)

Or visit the Arkansas Women's History Institute web site, [www.uarl.edu/awhi](http://www.uarl.edu/awhi)

## **Send Us Your News!**

Please send any information you wished included in future newsletters to: [rm53@txstate.edu](mailto:rm53@txstate.edu). Feel free to do this any time! RWSA members would appreciate hearing of your accomplishments and awards, changes in employment, forthcoming publications, research discoveries or needs, etc. We also welcome all types of announcements from institutions and organizations regarding historical holdings, job openings, activities, and events. The next newsletter is scheduled to be sent out in August.

# Member News

## New Publications New Jensen Articles

Joan Jensen has completed two new articles since the August 2008 newsletter. They are:

- “The World of Theta Mead, County Nurse: Private and Public Health Care in Rural Wisconsin, 1900-1922, in the spring issue of *Wisconsin Magazine of History*.
- “Silver City Health Tourism in the Early-Twentieth Century: A Case Study,” forthcoming in *New Mexico Historical Review*.

## New Publication The Story of the WWI “Farmerettes”

Elaine F. Weiss’s new book, *Fruits of Victory: The Women’s Land Army of America in the Great War*, recently was published by Potomac Books. The following is excerpted from the press release:

From 1917 to 1920 the Woman’s Land Army brought thousands of city workers, society women, artists, business professionals, and college students into rural America to take over the farm work after men were called to wartime service. These women wore military-style uniforms, lived in communal camps, and did what was considered “men’s work”—plowing fields, driving tractors, planting, harvesting, and hauling lumber. The Land Army insisted its “farmerettes” be paid wages equal to male farm laborers and protected by an eight-hour workday. These farmerettes were shocking at first and encountered skeptical farmers’ scorn, but as they proved themselves willing and capable, farmers began to rely upon the women workers and became their loudest champions.

While the Woman’s Land Army was deeply rooted in the great political and social movements of its day—suffrage, urban and rural reform, women’s education, scientific management, and labor rights—it pushed into new, uncharted territory, and ventured into areas considered off-limits. More than any other women’s war work of the time, the Land Army took pleasure in

breaking the rules. It challenged conventional thinking on what was “proper” work for women to do, their role in wartime, how they should be paid, and how they should dress. The WLA’s short but spirited life also foreshadowed some of the most contentious social issues America would face in the twentieth century: women’s changing role in society and the workplace, the problem of social class distinctions in a democracy, the mechanization and urbanization of society, the role of science and technology, and the physiological and psychological differences between men and women.

*Elaine F. Weiss is a journalist whose work has appeared in the New York Times, Atlantic Monthly, Harper’s, Boston Globe, the Philadelphia Inquirer, and on National Public Radio.*

## News from Grey Osterud

Grey Osterud writes: “I am happy to report that, while continuing to edit others’ books, I have resumed my own writing. I made presentations on American rural women’s history at the annual conferences of the UK-based Women’s History Network for the past two years. My presentation, ‘Listening for contradictions in women’s life history narratives,’ was published in the WHN’s widely circulated *Women’s History Magazine*, issue 58 (Spring-Summer 2008), 4-11.

The WHN draws academics, community historians, educators, and researcher-activists from across the UK and Europe, including many from the Scandinavian countries, some participants from the U.S., Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, and a few who study in South Asia and other non-Western societies. Much like the Berks was in its earliest years and like the RWSA is now, it’s an intimate and informal gathering, with lots of time for dialogue. Medieval and early modern historians of women are especially attuned to rural women’s history; it was a delight to discuss land tenure and inheritance in the twentieth century with historians who knew why it mattered. The *Women’s History Review* (UK) is publishing the 2008 conference proceedings as a special issue.

# Member News

## Publications

### *25 Years of Scholarship*

RWSA member Suzanne L. Bunkers is a Distinguished Scholar and Professor of English at Minnesota State University. In addition to an impressive record of teaching, she has produced the following interdisciplinary works, many of which focus on theory and interpretive analysis of diaries:

- *Diaries of Girls and Women: A Midwestern Sampler* (2001) is based on a study of unpublished diaries by 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century girls and women in Minnesota, Iowa, and Wisconsin. It includes a critical introduction and excerpts from forty-seven diaries written from 1840 to the present.
- *In Search of Susanna* (1996) is the intergenerational story of Bunkers and her great-great-grandmother Susanna Simmer Youngblut. It traces Bunkers' process of unraveling family secrets & tracing ancestral lines, both in Luxembourg and in the U.S.
- *Inscribing the Daily: Critical Essays on Women's Diaries* (1996) is a collection of fifteen essays co-edited by Bunkers (who also authored its essay on "Diaries and Dysfunctional Families") that explores aspects of studying diaries written by women.
- *"All Will Yet Be Well": The Diary of Sarah Gillespie Hufstalen, 1873-1952* (1993) tells the story of a woman who grew up on a farm outside Manchester, Iowa, and taught for over fifty years in Iowa's rural schools.
- *The Diary of Caroline Seabury, 1854-1863* (1991) is the account of a Massachusetts schoolteacher who moved to Columbus, Mississippi, in 1854 to teach at Columbus Female Academy, and had to escape north after the Civil War began.
- *Good Earth, Black Soil* (1981) was co-authored with Frank W. Klein and tells the story of the Klein family, who emigrated from Luxembourg to the U.S. during the mid-1800s and settled in northwest Iowa.

## 2009 Triennial Conference

### *Donations for Silent Auction*

The RWSA will be holding its usual fundraiser during this year's meeting, a silent auction of items donated by members. If you are planning on attending the conference, please begin to collect items for the auction. Handicrafts and other items produced by rural women or of local interest from your region are especially welcome. For more information, please contact Cindy Prescott at [Cynthia.culver@gmail.com](mailto:Cynthia.culver@gmail.com). More details on the September meeting will be forthcoming, either via email or through a special edition of the newsletter.

## 2009-2010 Research Grants

### *Call for Applications*

The State Historical Society of Iowa announces a grant program for the 2009/2010 academic year. SHSI will award up to ten stipends of \$1,000 each to support original research and interpretive writing related to the history of Iowa or Iowa and the Midwest. Preference will be given to applicants proposing to pursue previously neglected topics or new approaches to or interpretations of previously treated topics. SHSI invites applicants from a variety of backgrounds, including academic and public historians, graduate students, and independent researchers and writers. Applications will be judged on the basis of their potential for producing work appropriate for publication in *The Annals of Iowa*, SHSI's scholarly journal.

Applications for the 2009/2010 awards must be postmarked by April 15, 2009. Application guidelines may be downloaded from the web site, <http://www.iowahistory.org/publications/the-annals-of-iowa/research-grants-for-authors.html>.

Or request guidelines & further information from:

Research Grants

State Historical Society of Iowa

402 Iowa Avenue

Iowa City, IA 52240-1806

Phone: 319.335.3931

RURAL WOMEN'S STUDIES ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP FORM

MEMBER INFORMATION

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FIRST NAME

LAST NAME

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AFFILIATION

---

MAILING ADDRESS

---

CITY

STATE

ZIP

COUNTRY

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E-MAIL

PHONE

FAX

MEMBERSHIP AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO RWSA

Annual dues are \$10.00; if you would like to secure membership for the entire three-year inter-conference period (2007-2009), please send \$30.00.

We also encourage contributions to the Joan Jensen Fund (to help with registration fees for graduate students and international participants).

(RWSA is a 501C-3 non-profit organization and all donations are tax deductible.)

CONTRIBUTION TO THE JENSEN FUND \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail a personal check or international money order made out to RWSA to:

Debra Reid, RWSA Treasurer  
Dept. of History, Eastern Illinois University  
600 Lincoln Ave.  
Charleston, IL 61920

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