

UC Berkeley

Section I: Chronicles - Undergraduate student life, campus experience, organizations, and political movements

Title

Part II: The First Nineteen Women Faculty Members, 1958-1999, Women in the Department of History

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3qb0r1t9>

Author

Berry, Mary Elizabeth

Publication Date

2024-04-26

Part II

The First Nineteen Women Faculty Members, 1958-1999

Adrienne Koch (1958-65)

By David A. Hollinger



Everyone agreed that she was really, really smart, and that she was an excellent historian. But in the 1950s women were almost never hired in leading history departments, no matter how good they were. Yet Adrienne Koch was able to break the gender barrier at Berkeley in 1958. “There was much opposition” to her appointment, one of her champions in the department later wrote. “If we had a woman in the department,” it was said, “we’d never be able to talk among ourselves with mutual understanding and confidentiality.” But it did happen, and Koch was soon promoted to the rank of Professor. She reluctantly left

Berkeley in 1965 to accompany her economist husband, Lawrence Kegan, to Washington, D. C., where she became a professor at the University of Maryland. She remained at Maryland until she died of cancer in 1971, a few weeks prior to what would have been her 59th birthday. By then Koch was sufficiently well known that the *New York Times* published a long obituary with her photograph.

During her seven years among the Berkeley historians Koch was a spectacularly successful teacher, with high-enrollment classes each semester. Students latter recalled that she was noticeably more demanding of women, alerting them that they had to be better than average to succeed in the world beyond the classroom. Koch also published several books that enhanced her reputation as one of the profession’s leading historians of the Revolutionary and Early National eras of American history. She had established her

leadership in that field earlier with her *The Philosophy of Thomas Jefferson* (1943) and with her most enduring book, *Jefferson & Madison: The Great Collaboration* (1950). But at Berkeley she developed the concept of “an American Enlightenment,” arguing that the intellectuals who designed the American political and constitutional order had crafted a distinctive, national variation on the eighteenth-century movement associated with the European *philosophes*. Her most important scholarly works during her Berkeley years were two books, *Power, Morals, and the Founding Fathers: Essays in the Interpretation of the American Enlightenment* (1961) and *The American Enlightenment: The Shaping of the American Experiment and a Free Society* (1965).

Koch was an active participant in national debates about the state of American democracy, contributing opinion pieces and reviews to the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, the *Nation*, and other magazines. She frequently mobilized Jefferson and Madison as ideological resources in contemporary discussions, yet also engaged sympathetically a wide range of twentieth-century thinkers. Her anthology of 1959, *Philosophy for a Time of Crisis*, reprinted selections from Martin Buber, Erich Fromm, Ignacio Silone, Reinhold Niebuhr, Jean-Paul Sartre and other popular voices of that era. Yet she was much more at home with the Cold War liberalism of the 1950s than with the radical left politics that was on the rise at Berkeley during the years immediately prior to her departure. From her later post at Maryland, she wrote with increasing impatience about what in the *New York Times* she once described as “infantile” radicals who in their extreme actions were ignoring what she invariably represented as the balanced wisdom of the country’s founders. She was identified with Sidney Hook, the New York University philosopher whose student she had been as an undergraduate, and whose criticisms of the New Left made him a political lightning rod during the 1960s and 1970s.

By closely identifying the Enlightenment of Jefferson and Madison with anti-radical politics, Koch inadvertently facilitated the relative neglect of her scholarship in the immediately following decades. Later studies often failed to acknowledge how ambitious and well-argued an interpretation of the American Enlightenment Koch had produced. Only in 2016, in *American Enlightenments: Pursuing Happiness in the Age of Reason*, by Stanford historian Caroline Winterer, did Koch regain the importance she once had as a figure to be reckoned with in Enlightenment scholarship. At the time of her death, however, she was embarked on a project which, had she lived, almost certainly would have improved her standing among self-consciously progressive historians. She had begun a study of Sarah and Angelina Grimke, important ante-bellum abolitionists and feminists. The Grimke sisters later became a highly popular topic when the history of women became a recognized field. One can only speculate how Koch’s reputation might have flourished were she to have been recognized as a student of the history of women as well as of the larger American Enlightenment, in which Koch believed correctly the Grimke sisters were creative and courageous participants.

Part of Koch’s distinction as a historian was the philosophical sophistication she brought into the field of American intellectual history. She earned her Ph.D. in philosophy at Columbia University, and had been a Guggenheim Fellow as a philosopher based on her study of Jefferson’s political ideas. “She could teach Charles Peirce with an expertise that the rest of us could not,” remarked one of the colleagues who recruited her into the Berkeley Department of History.

Koch kept her birth name professionally, but was also known as Mrs. Lawrence Kegan. Both Kegans had grown up in Jewish families in New York City, but had decided—in keeping with the anti-particularist ideology then popular on the liberal-left—not to identify as Jews. They presented themselves as Americans, full stop. Koch’s parents emigrated from Hungary shortly before her birth in 1912. Koch’s brother, Sigmund Koch, became a prominent psychologist and University Professor at Boston University. Her sister Vivienne Koch was a literary critic distinguished enough to have an article devoted to her—like Adrienne Koch—in *American National Biography*.

Koch and her husband lived in a spacious, Spanish-style home on Grizzly Peak Boulevard. The Kegans were the parents of twins who were in elementary and middle school during the family’s Berkeley years. Koch and her husband were regulars on an active dinner party circuit within and beyond the Department. Koch had a vivacious, vibrant personality. She dyed her hair blond and dressed impeccably in the fashionable styles of the era, wearing high heels and flaring circle skirts. There was nothing unusual about this cluster of traits other than being found in a distinguished professor of history.

In the early 1960s, Berkeley was the only major history department with a woman at the rank of Professor in the field of United States history. Yet it would be a mistake to suppose that Koch had an easy time of it with the Berkeley historians. Her no-nonsense manner made some colleagues uncomfortable. Her photographs show a woman unafraid to look you in the eye without a smile. She could be intimidating. Although she developed warm, collegial relationships with several of the junior men in the department, these individuals now recall that the senior men kept her at a greater distance and may have been frightened by her. Koch was always at the margins of governance decisions. She was not encouraged to supervise doctoral dissertations. Some of the senior faculty wives—then a social force of real consequence in the departmental community—always remained cool to her.

That Koch broke the gender line at Berkeley says much about her, but it also says something about Berkeley. Despite widespread reluctance and amid plenty of grouching, the Berkeley historians actually did it. They did what their counterparts at Princeton, Yale, Harvard, and other leading departments did not do until some years later. They hired and promoted to Professor a highly qualified, creative, independent woman in the field of American history.

What did Koch herself think about this? How did she feel about gender and its effect on her and on other women? Fortunately for us, we have a speech of 1963, “Two Cheers for Equality,” which she delivered at a UC-wide forum on “The Potential of Woman” held in San Francisco. It was a ringing demand for the full equality of women in academia and beyond. Written three years before the founding of the National Organization of Women and in the very year of Betty Friedan’s epoch-making *The Feminine Mystique*, this lecture mocked as wrongheaded the still popular notion that women were only “civilizers,” the guardians of “life, morality, and human compassion,” and not also able to “administer” and “solve practical public problems.” Invoking Simone de Beauvoir, Margaret Fuller, and the Grimke sisters, Koch declared that there should be “no prior restraint on seeing what, with proper training, women actually make themselves competent to do.” She complained that the nepotism rules then widely in effect in academia greatly limited the opportunities for women to be hired where their husbands were employed. At a time when pregnancy and motherhood were often treated as disqualifications, Koch called on campuses to provide

maternity leaves and security of employment. Although she voiced a measure of confidence that things were getting better for women, she expected it to be a long haul. “The ideal of equal rights is heavily compromised,” she said, and warned that women are often welcomed with so many strings attached—you can join our club if you never get pregnant, e.g.—that many women find it hard to proceed. The invitation that women too often receive is of the kind she quoted R. H. Tawney as describing in a different context: “the impertinent courtesy of an invitation offered to unwelcome guests, in the certainty that circumstances will prevent them from accepting it.”

Adrienne Koch was proud to be a member of the Berkeley faculty, and she seems to have done her best to get along with her male colleagues. But she was not afraid to say what was wrong with the gendered system those men kept largely in place.

This sketch of Adrienne Koch is based on a number of sources. These include the oral histories of Delmer Brown, Beverly Bouwsma, Richard Herr, Henry May, and Kenneth Stamp. Important, too, have been conversations with Koch's daughter, Nancy Kegan Smith, and with several of Koch's former colleagues at Berkeley, especially Robert Middlekauff and Sheldon Rothblatt. Others who knew her and have been helpful to me are James Gilbert, Daniel Howe, and Thomas Leonard. The Spring 1972 issue of Maryland Historian contains appreciations of Koch on the occasion of her death by philosopher Sidney Hook, historian Julian Boyd (a former president of the American Historical Association) and several others. The New York Times published an informative obituary, April 23, 1971. I, myself, have vivid memories of her as a presence in Dwinelle Hall when I was a graduate student. I did not really know her, but I did read her books. I still appreciate their analytic power. –DH

See the [Documents](#) section of this Web site for the obituary in the New York Times, a full citation and link to Koch's essay, “Two Cheers for Equality,” and a link to the oral histories.

Natalie Zemon Davis (1971-1978)



Natalie Zemon Davis began as a social and cultural historian of early modern Europe, and has now extended her research to North Africa and the Caribbean. She has tried to add anthropological and literary perspectives to the study of working people of the past. While at UCB in the 1970s, she founded a course on the history of women (Society and the Sexes in Early Modern Europe) and published her first book, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France*. At least two of her subsequent publications, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (1983) and *Women on the*

Margins: Three Seventeenth-Century Lives (1996) grew from ideas initially developed at Berkeley. Interested in reaching a wider audience, she served as historical consultant for the film *Le Retour de Martin Guerre* (1982) and for Wajdi Mouawad's play *Tous des Oiseaux* (2017), which is linked to her book *Trickster Travels: A Sixteenth-Century Muslim Between Worlds* (2006). She served as President of the American Historical Association in 1987. In 2010, she was awarded the Ludwig Holberg International Prize in the Humanities.

Diane Shaver Clemens (1972-2006)



Diane Clemens came to Berkeley from MIT, where she taught from 1966 to 1972 and completed *Yalta* (Oxford, 1970), the most detailed study to date of the negotiations there and one of the first to make use of Russian sources. A.J.P. Taylor welcomed the book as “a breath of cool fresh air after the stuffy rhetoric of the politicians” and “an outstanding contribution to historical scholarship.” Clemens subsequently completed “Averell Harriman, John Deane, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the

‘Reversal of Co-operation’ with the Soviet Union in April 1945,” which examines the turn from Allied wartime cooperation to Cold War conflict. She also assembled a large trove of primary sources and images for students, published in part by McGraw-Hill in *The Forging of America: 1492-1904, A Cultural Diversity Reader* (1993, edited with Richard Francis Allen). At Berkeley Clemens continued a lifetime of political activism against militarism and in support of civil rights. She served on the Academic Senate’s Sub-Committee on the Status of Women and Ethnic Minorities and as Faculty Assistant to the Chancellor on the Status of Women. She supported her students’ unionization efforts in the Association of Graduate Student Employees and their demonstrations urging the university to divest funds from the apartheid regime in South Africa.

Paula S. Fass (1974-2010)



Paula Fass joined the History Department as an Assistant Professor in 1974 and retired as Margaret Byrne Professor in 2010. She had previously held the Chancellor's Chair and the Preston Hotchkiss Chair of History. She is the author of 10 books of social and cultural history in areas ranging from American education and immigration to youth culture in the 1920s, childhood in the western world, and the cultural consequences of globalization. She edited the first and

widely acclaimed three volume *Encyclopedia of Childhood in History and Society* (2004). Her most recent book is *The End of American Childhood: A History of Parenting from Life on the Frontier to the Managed Child*(2016). Fass also published a family memoir, *Inheriting the Holocaust*. She was faculty mentor to over 40 graduate students during her Berkeley career, students currently on the faculty of, among many other places, the University of Paris, Harvard University, Tel Aviv University, and the University of Victoria. Paula Fass was Distinguished Visiting Professor at Rutgers University, Kerstin Hesselgren Professor at Linkoping University in Sweden, and State Department Lecturer in Italy, and has also lectured widely in Turkey, France, Canada, Germany, and Israel. She is often interviewed on the radio, television, and in the press on matters of children and family, culture and media. A member of the American Philosophical Society and a Guggenheim Fellow, Fass was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Philosophy degree from the Linkoping University (Sweden) and is a past President of the Society for History of Children and Youth, which she helped to found.

Lynn Avery Hunt (1974-1987)



Although Lynn Hunt's main research focus has been eighteenth-century France, especially the French Revolution of 1789, she has also written about the Atlantic origins of human rights, the visual sources of religious toleration, and the methods and perspectives of history writing more generally. The most concise example of the latter is *History: Why It Matters* (Polity, 2018). Her current research concerns the links between consumption, women's roles, new financial instruments, and military tactics in the late eighteenth

century. Personal reflections on her career as a historian can be found in her [Charles Homer Haskins Prize Lecture of 2019](#).

President of the American Historical Association in 2002, Hunt is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, member of the American Philosophical Society, and corresponding fellow of the British Academy.

Mary Elizabeth Berry (1978-2017)



The work of Mary Elizabeth Berry, which focuses on Japan from around 1500 to 1700, explores the experience of prolonged civil war, the making of a durable peacetime polity, the creation of a vibrant print culture, and the widespread turn to stem family formation. She is now writing about economic culture and consumption in the 17th century. A representative and easily accessible publication is *Japan in Print: Information and Nation in the Early Modern Period* (UC Press, 2006). The

first woman to chair the history department (2007-12), Berry chaired three other UCB departments as well. She is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, a former president of the Association for Asian Studies, and a recipient of the Award for Scholarly Distinction from the American Historical Association.

Paula Fredriksen (1981-1986)



Paula Fredriksen, the Aurelio Professor of Scripture emerita at Boston University, since 2009 has been Distinguished Visiting Professor of Comparative Religion at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem. She is also a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and holds honorary doctorates from universities in the USA (Iona), Sweden (Lund), and Israel (Hebrew University). In 2020, her Shaffer Lectures at Yale University focused on “Christian Identity, Paul’s Letters, and Thinking with ‘Jews’”.

. She has published widely on the social and intellectual history of ancient Christianity, and on pagan-Jewish-Christian relations in the Roman Empire. Her study Paul: The Pagans’ Apostle was recognized with the 2018 Prose Award by the American Publishers Association.

Susanna I. Barrows (1981-2010)



Susanna Barrows, who taught at Mount Holyoke College (1974-1981) before joining the Berkeley faculty, first authored *Distorting Mirrors: Visions of the Crowd in Late Nineteenth-Century France* (Yale, 1981), which explores the rise of crowd psychology in late nineteenth-century France as a response to bourgeois anxieties about urban life, class conflict, and the status of women. She subsequently edited (with Robin Room) two volumes on the cultural history of drinking: *The Social History of Alcohol* (1988)

and *Drinking, Behavior and Belief in Modern History* (1991). Until the time of her death she continued to work on a comprehensive study of café life in nineteenth-century France. A celebrated academic salonnière, Barrows hosted monthly dinners with graduate students as well as the Bay Area French History Group, both of them nationally famous venues where scholarly community was made over three decades. She had an uncanny ability to help students find their voices in congenial circumstances and supervised almost 30 dissertations, at least 27 of which have resulted in published books.

Linda Lewin (1982-2011)

As a social historian of Brazil, Linda Lewin has examined early republican political organization in Brazil's Northeast in terms of its underlying alliances constructed around family networks. Her two-volume analysis of inheritance law from colony to empire took the legal position of individuals born out of wedlock as the central focus, assessing a new family dynamic that eventually persuaded Brazilian legislators to restrict historic inheritance rights. Currently, she is finishing a book entitled "Slavery, Color, and Memory in Brazilian Popular Culture: *The Desafio of Romano and Inacio in Patos* (1874)." The letters of a German governess in Brazil, for which she has written an introduction and supplied historical notes, is intended as an undergraduate text that will be published next year. Lewin has been an active member of both the Latin American Studies Association and the Brazilian Studies Association since their founding, as well as a productive member of the Conference on Latin American History and the American Historical Association.

Mary P. Ryan (1987-2004)



Photo by John Dean Photography

Mary P. Ryan is a professor of history emerita at John Hopkins University and the University of California, Berkeley. She has spent her career interrogating the history of the United States in order to address a range of issues, among them the difference gender makes, the formation of the middle class, and the democracy of public space. Much of her historical research has been situated in American cities: New York, New Orleans, Los Angeles, and the two subjects of her last book, *Taking the Land to Make the City*, Baltimore and San Francisco. She is now extending her study of city

formation by tracing the Mexican and Indigenous American origins of the first settlers of San Francisco. Her lifetime had been stocked full of urban pleasure and civic engagement, be it in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin or Paris, France, and from Baltimore to Oakland. She now resides in Berkeley, California.

Wen-hsin Yeh (1987-Present)



Wen-hsin Yeh's work, which focuses on China from around 1795 to 1949, explores the experience of wars and revolutions, the reorientation of the educated, the making of a new culture of print, the reconstruction of the nation and the people, and Chinese rethinking about China's place in the world. A much cited publication is *Shanghai Splendor: Economic Sentiments and the Making of Modern China* (UC Press, 2007). The first non-white woman to chair the Center for Chinese Studies (1994-2000) and to serve as

Director of the Institute of East Asian Studies (2007-2013), Yeh raised millions for the campus and was recognized as a Builder of Berkeley. Internationally she was a recipient of the senior scholar distinction awards from the Humboldt Foundation and the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation.

Susanna Elm (1988-Present)



Susanna Elm seeks to understand the transformation of the later Roman Empire into a Christian Empire through what she calls a social history of ideas. To that end she has published on topics such as the emergence of female asceticism and monasticism (*Virgins of God*, Oxford 1992, 2006); Christianity's role in the transformation of ancient medicine; the impact of administrative exigencies in the formulation of orthodoxy; the significance of tattoos (*stigmata*) in the lives of early

Christian clergy; and the role of education in the intense debates leading to a Christian vision of Rome's eternal universality (*Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church*, UC Press 2012, 2015; winner of the Society of Classical Studies Goodwin Award 2013). Her current research focuses on gender and imperial representation (*New Romans*, UC Press forthcoming), and on slavery and the economy in the work of Augustine of Hippo. She is past president of the North American Patristics Association.

Robin L. Einhorn (1988-2018)



Robin Einhorn has used taxation as a lens with which to understand the history of American politics after discovering its centrality through the archival research that culminated in her first book, *Property Rules: Municipal Government in Chicago, 1833-1872* (1991). She applied this insight more broadly to the Age of Slavery (previously known as the colonial era, the early republic, and the antebellum era) in her second book, *American Taxation, American Slavery* (2006), which was one of

the first studies to demonstrate the comprehensive and formative influence of slavery in shaping American political institutions. She has been following the tax story into the 20th century in her current work on the federal income tax. At Cal, her heart was always in the teaching. Because, well, Cal students.

Carla Hesse (1989-Present)



Carla Hesse is Peder Sather Professor of History, and served as the first woman Dean of Social Sciences from 2009-2019, and as Executive Dean of the College of Letters and Science from 2014-2019. A Berkeley native, she received her B.A. degree from the University of California, Santa Cruz ('79), her M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from Princeton University ('82, '86), and has been a member of the Berkeley faculty for thirty years. Hesse is a specialist in the history of modern Europe, with particular expertise in 18th century and Revolutionary France. She is the author and editor of numerous books and articles, including *Publishing and Cultural Politics in Revolutionary Paris* (UC Press, 1991) and *The Other Enlightenment* (Princeton UP, 2001). Hesse is the recipient of notable awards and prizes, including a Guggenheim Fellowship and the prestigious Aby Warburg Prize. She was inducted as a *Chevalier de l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques* in 1993 and was elected as a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2010. She is currently completing a book about the French revolutionary terror and writing about the publishing history of Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

Margaret Lavinia Anderson (1989-2010)



Margaret Lavinia Anderson came to Berkeley after 19 years teaching undergraduates at Swarthmore College. Her scholarship had focused on the intertwining of political and confessional conflict in Germany, beginning with a biography of the leader of the opposition in the Bismarckian Reichstag. At Berkeley she extended these interests to institutions and voting behavior

(*Practicing Democracy: Elections and Political Culture in Imperial Germany*, Princeton UP 2000; German trans., Steiner Verlag 2009) and to comparative studies that contested the view that Germany's practices and trajectory had, before 1933, diverged disastrously from the West's. Recently she's been investigating Germany's relations with the Ottoman Empire, from the decade of Armenian massacres in the 1890s through the genocide of World War I, and co-edited a volume entitled *End of The Ottomans: The Genocide of 1915 and the Politics of Turkish Nationalism* (I.B. Tauris, 2019). Her greatest challenge, however, and greatest joy, was teaching the undergraduate survey, History 5 "[The Making of Modern Europe, 1453 to the Present](#) (link is external)," originally podcast by the university.

Tabitha Kanogo (1991-Present)



Tabitha Kanogo works in the field of African History with a research and publication focus on Kenya, colonialism, nationalism, women and gender, and childhood and youth. Her current book project is about various conditions of child and youth endangerment in Kenya. Her publications include *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau, 1905-1950* (Ohio University Press, 1987), *African Womanhood in Colonial Kenya, 1900-1950* (Ohio University Press, 2005) and *Wangari Maathai* (Ohio University Press, 2020).

Kanogo has served on the Board of Directors of the African Studies Association, the Advisory Board of the *Journal of Eastern African Studies* (2007-2018), and the Editorial Board of the *African Studies Review*. She was a Rhodes Fellow at Somerville College, Oxford University in 1982-1985, and a Fulbright Fellow at UC Berkeley in spring 1990.

Margaret Chowning (1992-Present)



Margaret Chowning's work has taken different paths to understanding the impacts of big political transitions in late colonial and nineteenth-century Mexico on social structures and institutions. Her first book was a social/economic history of rich people in the state of Michoacán; her second was a story of a "troubled" Mexican convent from its foundation in 1754 to the beginning of the twentieth century; her third, due out in 2021, explores the historical origins of Mexican women's devotion to the Catholic

church (and by extension, how they came to serve as a bulwark of the Mexican right); and her fourth book, in its early stages, is on gender and urban space. It will examine how liberal city planning and reformism in the middle of the nineteenth century transformed some neighborhoods from feminine spaces anchored by convents to masculine spaces centered on army barracks and the new homes of military officers. Chowning was a member of the UC Press Editorial Committee for five years and chaired the committee in 2018-19.

Cathryn Carson (1996-Present)



Cathryn Carson works on the history of modern science, looking at the interplay between intellectual trajectories and institutional settings. She came to history through philosophy, physics, and science, technology, and society (STS). Along with historical works, including her book *Heisenberg in the Atomic Age: Science and the Public Sphere* (2010, Cambridge), she has published in continental philosophy and computational condensed matter physics. She has brought a historian's mindset to

administrative service, leading or co-leading campus efforts to create Berkeley's undergraduate data science major, with its strong interdisciplinary flavor, and its Division of Computing, Data Science, and Society, established in 2019. She served for a decade as the Director of the Office for History of Science and Technology, and then as associate dean in both the Division of Social Sciences and the new Division of CDSS.

Leslie Peirce (1998-2007)



Leslie Peirce began her career as an academic historian in 1988, after working as a teacher of English as a foreign language at Bosphorus University in Istanbul and then as a test writer at Educational Testing Service. It was during the latter occupation that she received her Ph.D. at Princeton; and it was the writing of the dissertation that persuaded her to become an academic. She taught at Cornell for ten years, Berkeley for eight wonderful years, and finally NYU, until retirement in 2018. Her field is early modern

Ottoman history, with a focus on gender relations and women as they appear in both royal and provincial contexts. Two books are concerned with the dynamics of the imperial harem (1993, 2018), while another explores the workings of a provincial law court (2003). A short book on Ottoman slavery is forthcoming in Central European University's series *The Natalie Zemon Davis Annual Lectures*