

Undergraduate

Research

Newsletter

Last Wednesday Luncheon!
Dietary Restrictions? Email
urc@oxy.edu!

Dr. Regina Freer, Politics

Lost in the Archives: Charlotta Bass and the Development of Black Los Angeles

Professor Freer will take us on a journey through the archives to uncover the story of Charlotta Bass, the pioneering owner and editor of one of Los Angeles' first Black newspapers, the California Eagle, from 1912-1951. Despite being a central figure in the development of Black LA and even running for vice president of the United States, Bass is a relatively obscure figure. The trip through the archives will reveal how research, even when it seems tedious, presents triumphant opportunities to expand scholarly and personal horizons.



Will Holmes: Literary Sleuth in the Oxy Library

Will Holmes may have helped found Issaquah based band "Great Waves" but lately he's been spending all his time in the Occidental archives. In an age when periodicals are going online and the library is switching to digital, Holmes has found a way to make use of Oxy's extensive magazine archives while they still exist. "I'm researching these old magazines in the Oxy library called McClure's which was a muckraking periodical based in New York that was really popular around the turn of the century." Holmes is not researching the magazine but rather the involvement of Willa Cather, famed author of "My Ántonia," at McClure's.

"There's sort of this myth in the 'Cather community' that she had to distance herself from the muckraking journalist to find her voice as a naturalist or regionalist author," Holmes said. "Because of that myth a lot of people have ignored her work at McClure's." Pinpointing Cather's contributions to the magazine presents a unique challenge to Holmes due to her position as editor and prolific use of pseudonyms. Articles written by Cather are hard to find, so Holmes is also looking for anything that may have influenced her work during her time at the magazine. "About a month after I began researching, I found an article called 'The Problems of Suicide' which was written by another staff writer," said Holmes. "[Cather] put her own poem opposite this article." Suicide featured in much of Cather's work which indicated the importance of this article to Holmes.

Holmes' advisor Professor Swift encouraged him to present at the Willa Cather Seminar at Smith College this summer. "My comps will definitely be about Willa Cather and probably incorporate this research somehow," Holmes said. Like most seniors, his future plans are still undecided, but in the short term Holmes is thinking of applying for a grant to study music in Japan after graduation.

Conference

Wednesday, Aug. 3rd

Go to the URC website to check out presentation times and locations!