by lauren marshall

Two acknowledged book prizes, David W. Blight's "Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory," won by Mrs. Alice Kessler-Harris's "In Pursuit of Equity: Women, Men and the Quest for Economic Citizenship in 20th-Century America," have been awarded Bancroft Prizes for 2002. Of the most prestigious awards in the field of history, the Bancroft is presented annually to the authors of books of exceptional merit and distinction in the fields of American history, biography or diplomacy by the Trustees of Columbia.

The recipients will be honored at a formal dinner hosted by Columbia's libraries and the department of special collections and rare books on April 24 at 7:00 p.m. in the Faculty Room of Low Library. Professors Patricia S. Enright will present the awards, and Alan Brinkley, Allan Nevins Professor of History and chair of the department and James Neale, vice president for information service, will preside. Both recipients will deliver remarks.

"In Pursuit of Equity: Women, Men and the Quest for Economic Citizenship in 20th-Century America" is written by one of the nation's leading scholars of gender, the economy and public policy. Kessler-Harris is professor Alice Kessler-Harris (American history, biography or diplomacy by the Trustees of Columbia.

The collection also includes a variety of people, especially his favorite nieces: "The habit of correspondence has held one of the 32 letters in his hands, not-..."

Alice Kessler-Harris

Gordon Hoxie Professor of American History, traces and analyzes 20th century U.S. social policies such as Social Security, unemployment insurance and fair labor practices and introduces different access to resources for men and women. Kessler-Harris' critical analysis shows how a deeply embedded set of beliefs, what she calls "racial ideologies," distorted seemingly neutral social legislation to further limit the freedom and equality of women, especially regarding their rights to full economic citizenship.

"In one of the most brilliant books of recent years, Alice Kessler-Harris explains how modern feminism has been grounded in the changing meanings of work. Formidable research and eloquent writing make it clear why gender difference as a rationale for distributing jobs, taxes, and entitlements came to a screeching crash in our own lifetimes," said Linda K. Kerber, professor at the University of Iowa and author of "No Constitutional Right to Be Ladies: Women and the Obligations of Citizenship" (Hill and Wang, 1998).

Kessler-Harris is a specialist in the history of American labor and the comparative and interdisciplinary exploration of women and gender. She has been a featured speaker at the White House, a guest expert on the PBS documentary "The Measured Century," and a leading advocate of women's history work from Frankfort to the United States. "In Pursuit of Equity" is the fourth book she has written on the issues of women, work and wages.

"Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory," published by Harvard University Press, won the 2001 Frederick Douglass Prize for outstanding book on slavery, resistance, and abolition and the 2002 Lincoln Prize for the best work on Lincoln and the Civil War era. Blight is the Charles J. Goodwin Professor of History and Black Studies at Amherst College. A distillation of his fourth book, the book clearly describes how Americans—black and white, from North and South, soldiers and politicians, writers and editors—reconstructed the devastation of the Civil War and the impact that memory had on the political struggles of Reconstruction, including race relations and America's national memory.

"This book effectively traces both the growth and development of what became, by the turn of the twentieth century and the debut of 'The Birth of a Nation,' the dynamic world of memory of the Civil War. A major work of American history, this volume's active and exceedingly articulate voices of protest against this inaccurate and unjust imagining of just one of its accomplishments," wrote Publishers Weekly in a review. Blight, a pioneer of the emerging field of memory studies, is also the author of the award-winning Frederick Douglass's Civil War: Louisiana State University Press, 1998, among other books and articles.

The Bancroft Prizes (www.columbia.edu/ccomms/amerihist/bancroft) were established at Columbia in 1948 with a bequest from Frederick Douglass's great niece, the University of Connecticut. The Bancroft, the historian, author and librarian of the Department of State, to provide steady development of library resources, to support instruction and research in American history and diplomacy and to recognize exceptional books in the field. Books eligible for Bancroft are published the preceding year and published in 2001. The prize includes an award of $4,000.

Ninety-Two Years After His Death, Mark Twain's Voice Still Heard in Collection of Letters

by jo kauleck

In 1907, one of America's most beloved authors penned a letter to his niece, Twain's "..."

Samuel Clemens, also known as Mark Twain and Uncle Mark.

"I don't generally get anything right when there is a chance to get it wrong..."

—Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain) in a letter to his niece.

When he died 92 years ago this month—April 21—Twain had secured his place in the canon of American literature. This past January, when Ken Burns aired his PBS documentary, "Mark Twain," he stirred a new, more contemporary interest in the American author. Book sales of Burns' biography and Twain's books themselves have since soared, and once again, Americans are curious about the man "Publishers Weekly" called "..."

"..."

Beyond his books, however, researchers have been discovering another side of Twain for the past several decades by accessing his personal letters in Columbia's Rare Book and Manuscript Library. Many of Twain's original letters were given to the University in 1953 by that same favorite niece, Mrs. I.H. Rogers. Ever since, countless biographers, documentary, and literary scholar's have held one of the 32 letters written by Clemens to Rogers in his hands, not..."

Samuel Clemens, also known as Mark Twain and Uncle Mark.

"..."

"..."

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