

Frona Eunice Wait (Smith Colburn) — “herculean deeds of worthwhile achievement”

by John Maher

Frona as a Footnote

Frona Eunice Wait first entered my consciousness in 2007 as a passing reference in a collection of articles on the wines of the Valencia region in Spain that I was preparing for publication.¹ I felt that I might not be alone in not knowing who she was, and so set about adding a footnote. I discovered that she was the author of a significant nineteenth-century book about Californian wine, *Wines & Vines of California, or a treatise on the ethics of wine drinking* (The Bancroft Company, 1889, repr. Howell-North Books, 1973), a work described by Thomas Pinney in WTQ vol 15, July 20, 2005, p. 13-15, as “full of information and must still be read by anyone with an interest in the history of California winemaking”.² I was also intrigued by the opening lines of a squib by Ambrose Bierce that I came across, “A Competitor”, the opening verse of which is:³

Mrs. Frona Eunice Wait,
My legs are not so very straight;
My spine, I’m sorry to observe,
Maintains a most rebellious curve;
My neck is skinny, and my bust
Would justify a husband’s trust.

I was unable to establish at the time what was behind Bierce’s satirical verse, and surmised that it was something to do with votes for women. In the footnote I vaguely left it as “her involvement in women’s issues”. My curiosity had been pricked, however.

I bought and read a copy of *In Old Vintage Days*, a novel which Frona Eunice Wait (now as Frona Eunice Wait Colburn) had lavishly produced in 1937, by the eminent San Francisco printer John Henry Nash, when she was in her late seventies. The novel is perhaps more interesting for its insights into the agricultural and commercial lives and challenges of the winegrower protagonists than as a work of fiction, but it does convey her lasting interest in, and affection for, the wines of California. The foreword specifically refers to *Wines & Vines of California* and her return “to the scenes of my first attempt at authorship”.

I am almost ashamed to confess in the bibliophile pages of “Wine Tendrils Quarterly” that it was while preparing an ebook edition of *Valencia Land of Wine* that I renewed my acquaintance with the relevant footnote. I had another go at finding out about Frona Eunice Wait, and what lay behind the Bierce poem. There proved to be far more information available four years after I had first struggled to find out about her. As I began to piece together the jigsaw, a picture gradually emerged of a remarkable person and life, in which Californian wine was merely one constant among a dizzying array of enthusiasms, activities and achievements. She seemed, in her epic and multi-faceted career, almost to embody the rise and development of the state of California itself, from rough and ready frontier country to dynamic pacesetter.

Frona Eunice Wait and the Chicago World’s Fair – “Head Venus-herder of the State”

I was finally able to establish the context to Bierce’s lines. It was not about women’s suffrage, though this was a subject on which Frona Wait held characteristically strong

views, but a response to a typically inspired piece of promotion. It transpired that Frona Eunice Wait was “an alternate member of the National Board of Lady Managers” for the Chicago World’s Fair of 1893, in which capacity she was the driving force behind the California Room in the Women’s Building.⁴ “This room had been planned, designed, and exhibits therefor secured, by Mrs. Frona E. Wait, of San Francisco”, was the summing up of the “Final Report of the California World’s Fair commission”. The success of the California Room, variously known as the Redwood Room or the Cactus Room, as it was panelled in redwood and the “coloring and decorative scheme” were inspired by the cactus, was the culmination of an arduous undertaking by Frona Wait. There were the usual personal and financial tensions characteristic of committees of this kind. I think it is also possible to surmise that Frona Wait’s combination of efficiency and verve may have been viewed as high-handedness and limelight-seeking by some of her more staid and socially elevated fellow members. It might be imagined that references such as that in the *Sacramento Daily Union* of 17 February 1893 to the “unaided efforts of Mrs Frona Eunice Wait” may not have been universally well received by the other Lady Managers:

There is one place in the World’s Fair where California will lead and that is in the women’s building. Through the unaided efforts of Mrs Frona Eunice Wait, alternate Lady Manager of the National Commission, this State has secured the first choice of the three reception-rooms on the second floor of the woman’s building, and she has secured contributions to the amount of \$20,000...

The *San Francisco Call* of 11 April 1893 reported that “Mrs Waite (*sic*) said that she was credibly informed that M. H. de Young had stated that he would pay \$10,000, if

necessary, to prevent her from taking charge of the California room in the Woman's Building". Illuminatingly, the same article reported that the fourteen contributors of items for the California room were "enthusiastically in favor of Mrs. Waite (*sic*), and said they wanted her to have complete control and supervision of the exhibit".⁵ The same paper on 18 April 1893 announced that "the long dispute between Mrs. E. Frona Wait and the board of Lady Managers of the World's Fair Commission has been settled at last by the voluntary retirement of Mrs. Wait from all active part in the work".⁶ Frona Eunice Wait did, however, eventually win the day, using the funds she had raised to deliver and set up the California room.

It is perhaps the article in the *San Francisco Call* of 22 February 1893 announcing Frona Eunice Wait's idea of a "highly interesting beauty contest" to find and sculpt the "most perfect type of physical beauty among the native daughters of California" – the competition to find a "California Venus" that inspired Ambrose Bierce's satirical wit (the last verse of "A Competitor" begins "Mrs. Frona Eunice Wait,/ Head Venus-herder of the State") – that best suggests the preeminence that Frona Wait had established among the California members of the Woman's Board of the World's Fair Commission. The article continued:

Mrs. Waite (*sic*) is widely known as an alternate member from California of the Woman's Board of the World's Fair Commission and as the author of the plan of finishing one of the reception-rooms in the Woman's building as a California room. From her plan, by the way, sprang the movements among the women of New York and Ohio to furnish similar rooms, and this plan suggested to Princess Christian of England, Mme. Carnot of France and the Empress of Japan the idea

of furnishing other parts of that building in conjunction with other women of their own countries.

Her name was broadcast far and wide. The *West Coast Times* of Canterbury, New Zealand, wrote on 2 May 1892, “Mrs Frona Wait, one of the lady managers of California, has offered to finish in redwood one of the large reception rooms in the Woman’s Building.”⁷

In addition to the global impact of her plans for the California Room in the Woman’s Building, her idea for a “California Venus” contest apparently caused an immediate frenzy among the young women of California, observed with amused delight by commentators.⁸ All contestants’ photographs and measurements were to be sent to Frona Wait – her views on female beauty were held with characteristic firmness; the ideal woman should measure “Height 5 feet 6 inches, weight 145 pounds, bust 36 inches, waist 24 to 25 inches, hips 46, wrist 6, ankle 8, calf 14; she should wear a 4½ shoe and a 6 glove”.⁹

As I was looking into the fascinating story of the “California Venus”, quite a melodrama in itself, I began to ask myself larger questions about Frona Eunice Wait. Where had she come from to write first a work on California wine and then turn into the force behind the California Room in the Woman’s Building of the Chicago World’s Fair,¹⁰ rendering the cream of Californian female society into frustrated and ineffectual bystanders?

From Woodland to Walla Walla

My interest in Frona Eunice Wait had now moved from being essentially wine-related to embrace a broader desire to find out as much as I could about her. Thomas Pinney had written accurately in his WTQ article, “In the course of her long life she did many remarkable things, beginning with her work as the first woman reporter on the *San Francisco Examiner*; later she worked for the *San Francisco Call* and the *San Francisco Chronicle*.” However, the title and tenor of the article rather convey a picture of an imposingly comfortable grande dame – authoress, committee lady and banker’s wife. This is a reflection of an image that Frona Eunice Wait had carefully cultivated since her second marriage in 1900, but it does not reflect the epic dimension of her life. The constructed narrative is well expressed in an article by Agnes Manney Tenney in the *Overland Monthly and Out West Magazine* of February 1926, “Mrs. Frona Eunice Wait Colburn, A Typical Western Woman Yet Different”.¹¹ This piece includes a description of the sixty-six year old Mrs Frederick H. Colburn as “a tall, superbly erect gentlewoman who moved gracefully through the rooms of her obviously cared-for home”. Doubtless as communicated to the author by her subject, the article suggests that this derives from well-born and wealthy parentage. It is stated that her father “James Lafayette Smith, whose ancestors, the Knoles family of Booneville, Tenn., were Huguenot refugees from Provence, France, arriving in America before the Revolution, came to California in 1850, and was an extensive owner of mines and cattle,” while “Mrs. Colburn’s mother was Susan Kelly Norris, daughter of Elizabeth Adams, a descendent of John Quincy Adams, and inherited the ancestral characteristics.” It charts a Whiggish historical narrative in which the subject’s “girlhood was moulded in the direction which later was destined to reflect upon her creations.”

And yet, why would an extensive owner of mines and cattle arrive and settle in rural California in 1850? Eunice Sophronia (“Frona”) Smith was born on 19 August 1859 in Woodland, Yolo County. The first resident, the Kentuckian “Uncle Johnny” Morris, had come to what would later become Woodland in 1851. The town plat of Woodland was not filed until 1863. The local history site states:

A few Americans moved into the lower Sacramento Valley in the early 1840’s, settling on land granted to them by the Mexican government, but none of them came to what is now Woodland until after 1850, the year California became a state and Yolo County was established.¹²

The whole of Yolo County had a population of 4,716 in 1860 according to the census of that year. Frona was born not long after the very inclusion of California as part of the USA. Just as the state itself began with rough and ready immigration, it is fair to assume that Frona Eunice Wait’s early years were not spent idyllically scampering around vineyards. The gold-driven early immigration “stopped short of Yolo County...of all the counties bordering the Sacramento River, Yolo County maintained the slowest population growth”.¹³

That the Smith family did not prosper here can be deduced from the fact that they are next encountered in Dayton, Walla Walla, Washington. Here Eunice Sophronia Smith married John Courtland Wait on 3 August 1875, shortly before her sixteenth birthday.

Dayton was at the time little more than a stop on the stage line, a town of “hardscrabble settlers”.¹⁴

Dayton was nonetheless an uncivilized place of materialist ambition enveloped in dust from never-ending winds. The school closed when residents refused to pay taxes. ‘Young hoodlums,’ the loutish offspring of prosperous farmers, loitered about and ‘soiled doves’ occupied their own well-patronized quarter, separated from respectable folk by an appropriately festering ditch.¹⁵

The population of Dayton was 526 (106 families) by the spring of 1877, according to a report filed by the county assessor. The 1880 United States Census gave Dayton a population of 996.

This same census identified the twenty-year old E. S. Wait as being a housewife with two young children, one daughter, Myretta (“Etta”), aged five and an eleven-month old baby (incorrectly identified as a girl named Bessie, but in fact a son, Sylvester James, known as “Vessie”):

Census Records 1880 Census Dayton, Columbia, Washington. Page 121B¹⁶

Name	Race	Sex	Age	Relat	Mar	Occupation	Self	Place of Birth	
								Father	Mother
WAITES	W	F	20	-----	M	Keeps House	Cal.	Misso.	Tenn.
" Etta	W	F	5	Dau	S	-----	Wash.	Oregon	Cal.
" Bessie S	W	F	11M	Dau	S	-----	Wash.	Oregon	Cal.

John Courtland Wait was the son of grist-mill owner Sylvester Mather Waite. The two children appear to have been named after John Courtland’s sister Myraetta and Frona’s

father-in-law. There seems little in this picture of frontier family life – volunteer militias had been organized in Dayton in 1877 for protection during the Nez Percé War – to suggest the future career of Frona Eunice Wait. Only a couple of months after the census, tragedy struck the Wait household. The infant Vessie died following an accident with hot water:

Died in this city, Oct 18th, 1880, Sylvester James, only son of J.C. and Eunice S. Wait, aged 1y1m20d

Last Saturday evening, Vessie, only son of J.C. and E.S. Wait, fell into a pan of hot water and was severely though not fatally scalded about the head and shoulders. The little fellow had been croupy for several days and in the excitement following the accident caught a little cold which brought on a severe attack of the croup. Never very strong, he was unable to withstand these joint afflictions, and sank peacefully to rest Monday morning. Mr. Wait was at Spangle, Spokane county, but in obedience to a telegram, reached home Tuesday evening. The funeral took place Wednesday, from the M.E. Church, Rev. J.C. Van Patten officiating.¹⁷

Getting on the Staff

With this sad incident, the first part of Frona Eunice Wait Smith's life can be said to have concluded. She is next to be encountered back in California. Her steps can be followed by her autobiographical article "Getting on the Staff" in the November 1923 issue of "Overland Monthly and Out West Magazine",¹⁸ along with the article by Agnes Manney Tenney of February 1926 previously referred to. According to Agnes Manney

Tenney, “at the age of twenty, pecuniary reverses prompted her to seek a future in the writing world. Engaging with the ‘Santa Rosa Republican’...Mrs. Colburn learned the rudiments of construction work as a typesetter”. Frona Eunice Wait Colburn herself refers to this period as follows, “I learned to set type, and worked two years at the case. After that I went to the Bancroft Company”.

Behind these bald terms and mention of “pecuniary reverses” lay the drama of the young Frona Eunice Wait fleeing Washington and her marriage to make her way in the world following the death of her infant son. 1880 was also the year that her parents divorced, having separated in 1878. It was acrimonious. James Lafayette Smith claimed she was having an affair with the town doctor. The night watchman testified that he saw men coming and going all hours of the night to her house. He tells of a conversation with her where she says she could, “part a dozen families inside a half an hour”. There were five children: in descending order of age these were Frona, Lorenzo, James, Norah and Frances May, aged nine. Frances was the only child that had continued living with the mother, but James Lafayette subsequently got custody. In his testimony he stated:

She refuses to dress the child Frances May in a comfortable manner and lets her run neglected about the street. The child is a cripple. Has had her leg amputated above the knee. She has been sick about four years and has needed much attention and care. I have had to buy her clothes. Defendant had some money when we separated. I have paid the child Frances’s doctor bills and medicine in large sums. Got her clothes last winter and given her presents from time to time. As long as I keep my health I am able to take care of my minor children I always have done it.¹⁹

These cannot have been comfortable times for Frona Eunice Wait. It is hard to establish from her subsequent long writing and public career that she had ever spent time in Washington.²⁰ The only fleeting reference I have found is also in “Getting on the Staff”:

With all this preliminary training it is not surprising that the first article I submitted was accepted. It was an account of a love affair I had witnessed among the Nez Perce Indians. The story appeared in a Sunday issue of the Morning Call, and I was paid \$25 for it.

In the official version, hers is a story of smooth and inexorable advancement. Again, in “Getting on the Staff”, she wrote, “My first salary was \$1.75 a week the only time in my life I was ever overpaid. Eighteen years later when I quit the newspaper game, I was earning \$300 a month.” She referred to her time at the Bancroft Company as being where she “learned the mechanics of book-making. I also learned the division of words, capitalization, punctuation and the other niceties of composition. I handled a great deal of manuscript and noted the style of well known writers.”²¹

It seems probable that it was in her apprenticeship in typesetting and book production that Frona Eunice Wait began to gain the education, indeed erudition, that would stand her in such good stead as journalist, author, lecturer, debater and prominent Californian. Her autodidactic opportunities rose further when she began working at The Bancroft Company. This publishing company had been passed on by the historian and ethnologist Hubert Howe Bancroft to his brother A.L. Bancroft in 1868. Hubert H. Bancroft dedicated himself to a great history of California and other works focusing on the native

American traditions of the Pacific coast. He worked with a team of researchers to enable his great output, and it is probable that Frona Eunice Wait came under his wing. She stated herself that

she owes much to the association and personal guidance of Mr. Hubert Howe Bancroft, when in the early part of her career she was in constant contact with men of similar importance in the literary field.²²

The Bancroft Company commissioned and published *Wines & Vines of California*, as well as ensuring its commercial success by preselling to the relevant wineries the print run of 500 copies. The publication of Frona Eunice Wait's first book in 1889 marked the culmination of an extraordinary personal journey in that decade. Over its course she had moved from the production side to the editorial side in the male-dominated worlds of printing, journalism and publishing. This required cunning as well as ability:

and only the other day a bright young woman, Frona Eunice Waite, who had worked her way, step by step, from the type-font to the editing of a department, said to me: "Oh, yes! I find that the more obscure that I make myself the better it is for me. Men don't like to feel that a woman is around when they are busy at their work, and so I dress plainly and keep all the rustle out of my skirts that I possibly can."²³

She also wrote vividly of the various ruses she deployed in getting her big break in journalism, the covering of Governor Bartlett's inaugural ball in Sacramento. Since Bartlett was inaugurated and also died in 1887, that helps to ascertain when she was

finally put on the staff of the *San Francisco Examiner* (having received offers from the *San Francisco Call* and the *San Francisco Chronicle* in the wake of her Bartlett scoop). She thus became in 1887 one of only two female staff journalists in San Francisco,²⁴ having been on a \$5 retainer previously, supplemented according to the space her copy occupied in the paper. 1887 was also the year that George Hearst, after being elected to the Senate, gave the *Examiner* to his son William Randolph.

She had previously impressed her male colleagues with her grasp of international affairs, having proved herself the only correspondent equipped to editorialize on the Panjdeh Incident in the “Great Game” of cloak and dagger rivalry over the control of Central Asia that was played by Britain and Russia throughout the nineteenth century. The Panjdeh Scare brought the two countries to the brink of war in 1885. Frona Eunice Wait went on to write anonymous editorials on world affairs to a readership that would not have credited that a woman could do so:

If the great unwashed had known the sources of some of the comments on foreign affairs they would have gone up in the air, every prejudiced man among them. It will take a long time to make the public understand that a woman can think in terms of world consciousness.²⁵

By 1890, then, Frona Eunice Wait had achieved professional success. It was in this year that she was appointed a Lady Alternate to the Board of Lady Managers for California of the World’s Columbian Commission.²⁶ The *San Francisco Call* of 8 July 1890 included in its list of “some of the local 400” who attended the glittering first night of the play “Captain Swift” at the Baldwin Theatre, as the occupiers of Box 3, “E. J.

Baldwin, the Misses Anita and Bertha Baldwin, Mrs. Frona E. Waite (*sic*), Miss Waite (*sic*), Baroness von Wrede, Kuhne Beveridge and daughter”. This is also a rare instance of Frona Eunice Wait being seen in public with her daughter, indeed the only reference to them jointly that I have come across.

Wine, World’s Fairs, Women, Writing and More

The 1890s saw Frona Eunice Wait active on a dizzying array of fronts. There is a sense of someone straining every sinew to make a good living and a good name for herself. As we have seen, she was at the forefront of all aspects of the California Room in the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair between 1890 and 1893. *Wines & Vines of California* saw her increasingly recognized as a significant defender and promoter of the wines of the state. The “Pacific wine and spirit review” of January 26 1891 includes this reference:

An article in the ‘Argonaut’ of a recent date, descriptive of the Inglenook vineyard has been widely read by the wine producers and merchants of this State. The excellence of the Inglenook wines, the beauties of the vineyard and the completeness of the vaults were all described in an exceedingly apt and convincing manner. The article in question was written by Frona E. Waite (*sic*)...²⁷

At the same time, she was becoming a spokeswoman for women’s issues. She was appointed a “Special agent of the Labor Bureau to inquire into the condition of the working girls and women of this city”.²⁸ The quality of her work was as sterling as ever. The “Biennial report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of California for the years 1891–92” stated:

In conclusion, I desire to make public acknowledgment of indebtedness to Deputy Charles W. Adams for faithful and untiring devotion to duty, and to special agents T. B. O'Brien for aid in important work and for data gathered, and Mrs. Frona E. Wait for valuable services and intelligent assistance in both field and office²⁹

In 1893, on the back of her achievements in that years Chicago World's Fair, she was appointed by Mayor Ellert as "temporary chairman of the Woman's Auxiliary of the proposed midwinter Fair".³⁰ She must have been gratified that the Midwinter Fair contained a Viticulture Palace that was "without doubt the most harmonious and effective exhibit of wines and brandies ever made in California or in any other Exposition."³¹

From the mid-1890s she was active in the Free Silver Movement.³² In a brief aside conveying Frona Eunice Wait's characteristic all-embracing range, the *San Francisco Call* of 22 August 1895 reported that "Mrs Frona Eunice Waite (*sic*) was presented and spoke briefly about European finances and the indemnity settlement between China and Japan".³³ On 5 October 1896 the *San Francisco Call* informed that "Mrs Frona Eunice Waite (*sic*) [has been] authorized by the campaign committee of the Silver Party to organize the women of San Francisco into auxiliary clubs to assist in the work of distributing literature and securing votes for silver." In between these reports, on 18 July 1896, the same paper told its readers that Frona Eunice Wait "will lecture on Health and Beauty". On 22 December 1896, the *Call* had "Mrs. Frona Eunice Waite signifying her desire to speak again for the cause of Cuba". The Mechanics' Institute Report for

January 1897 referred to Frona Eunice Waite (*sic*) giving an illustrated lecture on “Cuba and the Cubans”.

As if all that were not enough, 1897 was also the year of Frona Eunice Wait’s very different second book, *Yermah, the Dorado*, dedicated to “the memory of my dear father, James Lafayette Smith”.³⁴ Alongside Frona Eunice Wait’s energy and efficiency there was a mystical, spiritual dimension not unusual for the time, which this novel, with its mystical Dorado that she published three separate books around, represents. The Dorado concept derives from the notion of a lost, ancient, idealized Californian people come from Atlantis. A review in “The Bookman” in 1898 began:

The first impression of the book is the enormous amount of study it represents. Every page is laden with the fruits of the author’s research into antiquities, gathered even from sources as remote and as elusive as the origin of symbolism in religion. It is, however, the history and the tradition of California which furnish the leading motive of the work.

The reviewer finished the assessment with the statement, “But it is hardly as a story that Mrs. Wait’s work will claim serious attention. It must be rather by reason of its learning, its mysticism, and its poetic quality.”³⁵ Others were less kind. Another reviewer wrote, “It is saying little to say that this is the most absurd volume ever printed on the Coast.”³⁶

Even in this, it might be said that Frona Eunice Wait was quintessentially Californian. Her researches into Native American myth under Hubert H. Bancroft had channelled a

fin-de-siècle mythopoetic sensibility that it is all too easy to overlook in the committee lady and future banker's wife. Her recollections of the literary scene of this period show her to have been an active participant.³⁷

Meanwhile, Frona Eunice Wait continued to promote Californian wine in the eastern states. The *San Francisco Call* of 28 December 1898 reported under "Californians in New York" that "Mrs Frona Eunice Wait is at the Waldorf, where she will make her headquarters while lecturing in this city for the Californian State Board of Horticulture". In February 1899 she explained to the House Commerce Committee the interest of the wine-growers of the Pacific coast in the construction of the Nicaragua canal, in order to enable Californian wines to compete with Spanish wines in the French import market.³⁸

At the same time she was involving herself and the women of California in the planning of the state's Golden Jubilee celebration:

The Women Will Work

Mrs. Frona Eunice Wait Pledges the Efficient Support of the Sisterhood.

Mrs. Frona Eunice Wait, a thoroughly representative California woman, who has had much experience in matters of this kind, she having been one of the National Commissioners of the late World's Fair at Chicago, is thoroughly pleased with the grand project in view to celebrate California's golden jubilee as a sovereign State of the Union. When seen on this subject yesterday she said: "It is a brilliant conception, and there is no reason why it should not be carried out to a most successful conclusion. In such an undertaking, of course, the women of the State will be expected to do their share to contribute to the success of the enterprise, and

you may take my word for it that the women of California will not be found wanting when it becomes time for them to do their part in making a creditable showing for their beloved State.³⁹

From Frona Eunice Wait to Mrs Frederick H. Colburn

The arrival of the new century saw her involved in another World's Fair, the 1900 Paris Exposition Universelle, but that year saw a far more significant moment in the trajectory of Frona Eunice Wait. She became Mrs Frederick H. Colburn on marrying for a second time on 31 October 1900. Mr Colburn is the banker referred to in the title of Thomas Pinney's "The Junior Enologist & the Banker's Wife". That profession lay some time in the future at the time of the marriage. At twenty-nine, having been born on 21 June 1871 in New Hampshire, Frederick H. Colburn was considerably younger than his forty-one year old bride, and was just five years older than her daughter. He had been to high school in Brattleboro, Vermont, and at the age of sixteen entered the employ of the Springfield Printing & Binding Company of Springfield, Massachusetts. He worked there for a decade, and then in 1898 headed to Alaska, before arriving in San Francisco. He was still struggling to make his way in the world. It was not until 1905 that he became assistant secretary of the California Bankers Association. At the time of the marriage, it was his wife who had the greater material means and reputation. The marriage should be seen as reflecting Frona Eunice Wait's adventurous, poetical side rather than consolidating her social ascent. The wedding itself was by no means conventional, as the reference below to a second wedding ceremony performed by a medium indicates. The following is the affectionate tribute "'Frona Eunice' a Bride" in, "The Pacific Wine and Spirit Review" of 30 November 1900:

The Winemen of the State will read with interest the announcement, that their old time energetic and enterprising friend of the Viticultural industry of California, Mrs. Frona Eunice Waite (*sic*), has changed her name and again become a blushing bride. The fortunate captor of her heart is Frederick Henry Colburn, of Springfield, Mass., who is managerially connected with an English Syndicate doing business in Mexico and Central America.

With the exception of the lamented Kate Field, the former Mrs. Waite (*sic*) has done more to attract the attention of the people of the East to the vinous products of California than any other one woman. For a long period she traveled throughout the Eastern States representing the Board of Horticulture delivering illustrated lectures on the Wines and Vines of the Golden State. There is no doubt her work was of considerable value in arousing interest in the subject in fallow fields. The couple were married twice — first by a Civil Judge after which there was a spiritual service, performed by Mrs. Colby, a medium. The function was highly interesting and brilliant, surpassing anything of the kind ever seen in this city.

We shall all miss “Frona Eunice” from her chosen work, but we cannot afford to be selfish, so she is bidden Godspeed to enjoy many years of happiness.⁴⁰

Perhaps it was a shared background in printing alongside their rather different interests in Mexico and Central America that brought the couple together. Or they may have been conscious of a mutual psychological dependency. It is interesting to read from a short story by Frona Eunice Wait, published many years later in 1928, the sentence “He

had a mother complex, and would, if he ever married, select a woman older than himself.”⁴¹ This gives pause for thought coming from a mother who had lost one child in infancy and had a distant relationship with her surviving daughter, as discussed below.

The newlyweds had a dramatic honeymoon:

On the author’s wedding tour with Mr. Frederick H. Colburn, into the tropics of Mexico and Guatamala, 350 miles of which was on mule-back into the interior, they spent a night on the actual spot where the wonderful white king of her legend was said to have built a temple. Her stay in these regions permitted the continuation of her research which extended over all the important Museums of America, including the famous collection of the Duc de Loubat in the Museum of Natural History, New York, containing Pre-historic American antiquities and books on the subject.⁴²

The trip neatly merged Frona Eunice’s interest in Native American mythology, and her vision of Dorado and the white king Yermah, with the more commercial interests of her husband. Though a biographical note states that “during the period between 1901 and 1903 he was engaged in the exporting of fine hard woods from Mexico and Central America and also served as manager of the Tabasco Agriculture Company”,⁴³ these are the years when the rubber boom was at its peak. After the honeymoon a slim volume of twenty-eight pages by Mr and Mrs Frederick H. Colburn (illustrated with photographs taken by the authors) was published by Planting Company Publications, *La Zacualpa (the beautiful forest) of Soconusco. An Interesting and Authentic Description of a Mule*

*back Ride through the Quaint, Little Known Department of Soconusco, Mexico.*⁴⁴

Despite these efforts, it would appear that Frederick H. Colburn's Central American speculations did not prosper. The *San Francisco Call* of 28 January 1903 included the announcement that "Frederick H. Colburn, a clerk of this city, filed notice of bankruptcy in the United States District Court yesterday. His assets are \$220 and his liabilities \$724."⁴⁵ These first few years of Frona Eunice Wait's second marriage were far from providing financial security, though she is on record as stating that she earned \$300 a month as a journalist at around this time. In 1902 she was still engaged in journalism. There appeared an article signed by Frona Eunice Wait, and not Mrs Frederick H. Colburn as subsequently, titled "The New Fashion Leaders" in *Club Life*, "a paper worthy to breathe through its pages to the public the greatness of woman's work in the Woman's Clubs of San Francisco and Alameda County".⁴⁶ The journal's New Year's greeting is a verse by Frona Eunice Wait which, while lacking any merit as poetry, is included here on account of the passing mention to the vine:

Fair of face is she who sits
'Neath vine-clad bowers in this sundown land.
Eager and ready and willing to give
To every woman a helping hand.
She gayly kisses her finger-tips, too.
And says from her heart,
"Here's my love to you!"⁴⁷

Returning to the fortunes of Mr Colburn, it would be interesting to know how he went from bankruptcy in 1903 to assistant secretary of the California Bankers

Association in 1905, before going on to hold the position of secretary to the California Bankers Association from 1911 to 1925. He also held the position of assistant secretary of the Associated Savings Banks of San Francisco from 1907. In 1911 he was made assistant manager of the San Francisco Clearing House, of which he was subsequently appointed manager in 1915.⁴⁸ He was also a charter member of the “Law and Order” Group. His most dramatic public moment was a murky intervention with a sledgehammer to exaggerate minor bomb damage at the outset of what would become the celebrated “Tom Mooney case”.⁴⁹

Yet, in 1904 he was Assistant Secretary and manager of the San Francisco Exhibit at the St Louis World’s Fair.⁵⁰ It is hard not to see the hand of Mrs Frederick H. Colburn in this appointment, and quite possibly in the efficient undertaking of the responsibilities.

It has not been possible to ascertain how the “ever-popular” Mr Colburn began his lengthy career in banking.⁵¹ Mrs Frederick H. Colburn relinquished her journalistic activities, in favour of lecturing and broader cultural matters, as she adopted the “Club Woman” persona that increasingly came to define her. Wine remained a feature of her life. As seen above, just before her wedding she had been involved in the 1900 Paris Exposition Universelle:

In 1900 [she] was employed by the California Commissioners to assist in the collection of the State Exhibit at the Paris International Exposition, and at her urgent request, the California wine makers sent exhibits to compete with the

ordinary wines of the world. The result was six gold medals and the establishment of the precedent of California wines being the best made for table use.⁵²

Despite the personal and professional challenges posed by her becoming Mrs Frederick H. Colburn, these were triumphantly overcome. Perhaps the apogee of her literary career was the “Frona Eunice Wait Colburn Day” celebrated by the Pacific Coast’s women’s press association on 11 October 1909.⁵³ This took the form of the reading and discussion of “the works of this California author”. The proceedings opened with “Getting on the ‘Local Staff’ (a personal experience)” by Frona Eunice Wait herself, no doubt an early version of her 1923 article. This was followed by “Financial and Other Editorials” presented by James K. Lynch, vice-president of the First National Bank of San Francisco, read by Miss Nevada Heffron. Then came a reading of “With the California Wine Makers” by Cavalier Andrea Sbarboro, president of the California Grape Growers’ association and president of the Italian-Swiss colony. There was also music and readings from Frona Eunice Wait’s verses, as well as from her “Dorado” stories. It must have been a grand moment for the fifty-year old protagonist.

Wine, Suffrage, Temperance and Prohibition

As was shown by the involvement of the eminent Andrea Sbarboro in the tribute paid that day, wine was still very much part of Frona Eunice Wait’s professional life. Despite having become accustomed to Frona Eunice Wait’s unflagging energy, it was a surprise to come across a report in New Zealand’s *Ohinemuri Gazette* for 10 June 1908 under the title “Woman’s Curious Profession”. The article reported that “Mrs Wait was making a tour of the country on a commission to lecture in every [New Zealand] State regarding the wine industry of California. The Commission came to her unasked from

the Governor of that State".⁵⁴ Perhaps throwing caution to the winds on finding herself so far from home, we learn more about her attitude to and involvement in this brief snippet that in virtually any other publication of hers beyond *Wines & Vines of California*. It is worth quoting at length:

To be a professional wine-taster and yet a strong advocate and follower of the strictest temperance principles; to take wine into the mouth all day long and day after day, and yet never swallow it—this is the paradox which Mrs Frona Eunice Wait, of California, has presented steadily for a period of ten years.

That she sees nothing at all paradoxical in this unusual state of affairs furnishes a fresh element of interest in regard to her peculiar work.

Mrs Wait, who is one of the professional wine tasters in the world, was originally a journalist, and slipped into the work of critically tasting the wine which she had always held before in abhorrence, if not contempt, quite by accident, visiting near some vineyards she was asked to write a book about wines and wine making.

Pleading her entire ignorance of the subject as reason for her refusal, which she did not wish to seem ungracious, she was surprised by an opportunity to spend six months in the vineyards studying the matter and at terms so advantageous that she hesitated to persist in her refusal. By the time the period of study had expired and the book had been written she was a recognized authority upon wines and wine flavours.

The work of professional wine-tasting came gradually to her after that.

At the present time Mrs Wait, whose technical opinion is highly valued by wine students all over America, is making a tour of the country on a commission to

lecture in every State regarding the wine industry in California. The commission came to her unasked from the Governor of that State.

“Wine as a Temperance Agent” is the title of chapter five of *Wines & Vines of California*. The civilizing aspect of wine consumption, especially at home, as opposed to the ravages caused to health and home by saloons and their wares, was a key aspect of the promotion of wine at this time, as being associated with moderate consumption as compared to spirits. Prohibition and the women’s suffrage movement were making great headway across the USA, California becoming the sixth state to extend the vote to women in 1911. Frona Eunice Wait was firmly opposed to both causes. Anne Myra Goodman Benjamin writes in *A History of the Anti-Suffrage Movement in the United States from 1895–1920* in a sentence the first word of which conveys the neglect to which Frona Eunice Wait has been subject outside the world of Californian wine:

A Mrs. Frederick H. Colburn, press chairman of the San Francisco district of the Federation of Women’s Clubs, wrote an article entitled, “80% of the Women in California Do Not Want the Vote.”⁵⁵

She is extensively quoted in the *Journal and Republican* of Lowville, New York, in October 1915.⁵⁶ What she says is intriguing. Having described Mrs Frederick H. Colburn as being “widely known as a lecturer and an archaeologist” and having “written several books”, the article quotes her as saying:

If we had a referendum now I would vote against suffrage, based on actual experience.

You have only to consider the position of women before and since equal suffrage. Take their legal status: Before a widow could file a homestead on her husband's estate and exempt \$5,000 from any debt whatever. Today a wife may be sued for alimony; she must assume responsibility and pay rent and house bills if her husband fails to do so. It is possible for a husband to run her into debt. He may even buy a ring for another woman and make his wife pay for it. A wife cannot exempt a single cent. And if her husband dies she is liable for his debts...

The effect on the individual woman has been marked. It has put lines in her face; sharpened her temper; given her a hawk-like expression, and lowered the whole tone of the public relationship of men and women...

The thing that hurts me most is the silent, stunned attitude of men toward women today. They look at women as though wondering what she would do next. You see it in the attitude of employers of women, who no longer show them deference, since they now insist on taking care of themselves.

One wonders whether her first marriage as a young girl to the unreliable John Courtland Wait,⁵⁷ as well as her second husband's bankruptcy in the early years of their marriage, may not underlie to some extent her heartfelt comments.

Though, as we have seen, her views were based on more than concern at the powerful strand of support for the prohibition of alcohol that ran through the long fight for women's right to vote, the two may well have been connected. Could the arrival of Prohibition have been the subject referred to in her account of the end of her friendship with the pioneering lawyer, Clara Foltz:

Mrs. Clara Shortridge Foltz, Madge Morris Wagner and I were young women together. We were life-long friends and often met and exchanged views on life in general. Seldom did we agree, but we allowed each other elbow room good naturedly. For example Mrs Foltz was an ardent suffragist. I was not in favor of woman suffrage at all. Mrs. Foltz said: 'Frona Wait, you are one of the brightest women I know, but you are all wrong on woman suffrage. All right, Clara Foltz, wait and see,' I always replied.

The last time I saw Mrs. Foltz, she asked me to come and dine with her at the Palace Hotel, a spot we both loved. I took her a handful of LaFrance roses. After dinner, upstairs in her room, I said: 'Well, now Clara Foltz, what do you think of woman suffrage?' She put her hands over her face and answered. 'Frona Wait, I am ashamed!' My answer was, 'Clara Foltz, I thought you would be,' and so ended a beautiful friendship.⁵⁸

New Woman(hood) and White Knights

It is interesting to read that "Foltz often used the phrase 'new woman'. She is recorded as having commented "that the reason there was so much talk about the new woman after 1893 is that the [Chicago World's] Fair had stirred 'unusual activity in thought'."⁵⁹ Despite her views on women's suffrage, Frona Eunice Wait's forceful physical and intellectual presence can be seen as quintessentially representative of the "new woman".

Barbara Babcock's *Woman Lawyer: The Trials of Clara* refers to Jack London's "heroines and their strong adventurous natures", recommending Andrew J. Furer's article "Jack London's New Woman: A Little Lady With a Big Stick". Furer posits that London was "an ardent feminist". He further explains that the heroine of his first novel,

A Daughter of the Snows (1902) was named Frona, and “Frona Wait was said to be the model for an independent, physically strong woman”. Frona Eunice Wait did give a talk to a convention of the League of Western Writers in 1929 on her “close friend” Jack London.⁶⁰ Frona Welse certainly shares Frona Eunice Wait’s views on women and politics, “I am no woman’s right’s creature; and I stand, not for the new woman, but for the new womanhood.”

To the modern reader, the most startling words that London put in the mouth of Frona Welse are her lengthy and impassioned declamations on the subject of race. It is worth remembering that such beliefs were common currency at the time, however untenable subsequently. Here is one of Frona Welse’s speeches:

We are a race of doers and fighters, of globe-encirclers and zone-conquerors. We toil and struggle, and stand by the toil and struggle no matter how hopeless it may be. While we are persistent and resistant, we are so made that we fit ourselves to the most diverse conditions. Will the Indian, the Negro, or the Mongol ever conquer the Teuton? Surely not! The Indian has persistence without variability; if he does not modify he dies, if he does try to modify he dies anyway. The Negro has adaptability, but he is servile and must be led. As for the Chinese, they are permanent. All that the other races are not, the Anglo-Saxon, or Teuton if you please, is. All that the other races have not, the Teuton has. What race is to rise up and overwhelm us?

There is more in similar vein. One wonders whether the young Jack London may not have heard Frona Eunice Wait speaking along these lines in literary circles. Her

“Dorado” books are replete with passages of this sort. These were beliefs that she clung to. Here she is in 1930 writing about Kaiser Wilhelm:

And in the United States are there no representatives of that great secret brotherhood which has held the Kaiser in their best constructive and sustaining thought?...Aside from the consolation of a devout religious belief, the Kaiser must subconsciously feel the impact of commiseration and understanding sympathy of thousands of unseen friends. In the darkest hours little groups of men and women in every State in the Union sent waves of helpful thoughts to the Kaiser and his advisors. None of these silent workers were Germans. They are not politicians, self-seekers, or even Pacifists. They only ask that right shall prevail, that truth shall triumph and the on-going of the race shall proceed unhindered...This is the toast these mental workers give to the Kaiser: “Here’s to the great White Knight of this Dispensation Leader of the White Race the Kaiser, Wilhelm II of Germany, God bless him!”

Frona again expounded her mystic racial beliefs in the *New Overland Trail* in 1930, when referring to the imminent engagement of the West with the East:

The westward sweep of empire paused at the water’s edge, but the lap and swish of the Pacific beckons onward. Off out yonder in the inscrutable land of the Lotus Eaters is the cradle of the Aryans, and the urge to return to it comes like an insistent clarion call to the youth of the race.⁶¹

The possibilities of heading “off out yonder” had no doubt been given concrete expression by a flight in 1928 to Los Angeles in a Western Air Express Fokker Trimotor, after which she commented, “the buzz and whirr of the motors reduced us all to sign language.”⁶² But more significantly, it is clear that Frona Eunice Wait was steeped in Madam Blavatsky’s theosophical beliefs relating to “root races”, the “Golden Age of Atlantis”, and how the current fifth root race, the Aryan, had emerged from Atlantis.⁶³ The notion suffuses her “Dorado” writings, and can also be seen as underlying her interest in Native American myths and artefacts, Mount Lassen volcano, and even wine. These are also blended with a knowledge of American mythology probably first acquired during her time working for Hubert Howe Bancroft. Bancroft writes of the Atlantis myth and the Toltec Aztlan.

Race mother and real mother

In the same article of July 1928, Frona Eunice Wait refers repeatedly to the “race mother”, and to how the “mothers of men have always molded the civilization and progress of any period of history”. Frona Eunice Wait, following the death of her baby son in 1880, was mother to one daughter Myretta, born in 1876. Without entering into too many details, it would seem that Myretta did not fit easily into Frona Eunice Wait’s image of herself, her professional trajectory or her general enthusiasms.

Jacque Madison, a descendant of Myretta’s father from his third marriage, has done excellent research on matters relating to the family. I quote the following from our correspondence:

From an application to enter Northfield School for Girls in Massachusetts, it reads, “What schools has she attended and how long? Convent in Santa Rosa, Cal from 5½ yrs to 7. Public schools San Fransisco, Mills Seminary, CAL Girls High School, San Francisco, Long Island Hospital 2 yrs and graduated”.

We can see from this that Frona brought the five-year old Myretta with her when she went to Santa Rosa in late 1880. Her California schooling appears conventional enough, but there is some mystery about her time at Northfield School for Girls, which she attended from 1899 to 1904, between the ages of twenty-two and twenty-five, rather old to be a schoolgirl.⁶⁴ A letter accompanying the application that Myretta join the school refers to her being poor, and she describes herself in her application letter as “making her own way”. Perhaps Myretta’s presence was not convenient once Frederick H. Colburn entered the scene. She graduated from Syracuse University in 1908. She had a child at the age of forty in 1917, fathered by a Mr Jennings who employed her as nanny in New York. She was sent to Seattle by Mr Jennings to have the baby, subsequently returning to California where she worked as a nurse, and brought up her son. Frona Eunice Wait does not appear to be visibly present in Myretta’s adult life, and according to the latter’s granddaughter “she didn’t get along with her mom, Frona”.⁶⁵

This is not the place to engage directly with Frona Eunice Wait’s family relationships, but it is worth mentioning the contrast between the constructed genteel life of Mr and Mrs Frederick H. Colburn in the 1920s and 1930s and the messier background.

“Herculean deeds of worth-while achievement”

On the surface, the last twenty-five years or so of Frona Eunice Wait's life are as described in the foreword to the 1973 edition of *Wines & Vines of California* and in the article by Thomas Pinney in *Wayward Tendrils Quarterly*, as a now quite venerable cultural presence. A quick recap of her activities conveys something of her social and intellectual profile.

In 1922 she published "The Kingship of Mount Lassen" (the publisher, Nemo Publishing Company, has the same business address as Frederick H. Colburn), an interesting book on the volcano that combines popular geology (somewhat predictably, she was president of the Woman's Auxiliary of the Mt. Lassen Research Society) with her now familiar cosmic side:

Here the Master plans for a civilization higher than all that has gone before it.

Here, too, is the urge to herculean deeds of worth-while achievement. Here is the obligation to live up to California's opportunity for supreme leadership.⁶⁶

Further conveying the continuity in her interest, and a certain forgivable self-regard, towards the end of the book a section from *Yermah, the Dorado* is included, describing an imaginary eruption 10,000 years ago. In a brief final parenthesis the author adds:

When "Yermah, the Dorado" first appeared, Mr. Edmund Gosse, in the London "Atheneum," pronounced this description of a catastrophe as equaling Bulwer-Lytton's "Last Days of Pompeii", which he cited as one of the great classics in the English language. Edmund Gosse ranks as the greatest living literary critic in England.

Frona Eunice Wait Colburn continued indefatigably to write, to lecture, to organize prize essay competitions and more throughout the 1920s and 1930s. In 1926, in her capacity as president of the San Francisco branch of the League of American Pen Women, she gave the first North American reading of the Peruvian epic poem “Ollantay”, she established the Frona Wait Colburn prizes “to be awarded the three best stories concerning the cultural life of Northern California from 1870 to 1890”, and to quote Thomas Pinney again, she “had a brief career as a radio broadcaster on literary topics, and served as president of the Western Authors’ League and the League of American Penwomen”. From 1927 to 1929 she set up and personally oversaw the highly successful San Francisco Book Fair. The third edition of 1929 attracted over 200,000 visitors. In 1932 she lectured to the California Historical Society on “The Wives of ‘the Big Four’”. No doubt invigorated by the repeal of Prohibition in 1933, we know from Maynard A. Amerine and Thomas Pinney that, having published her novel *On Vintage Days* in 1937, she lectured students at Davis in 1938, despite the death of her husband while in New York in November 1937. In 1939 “Mrs. Frederick Henry Colburn...gave her basket collection of approximately 400 pieces to the Interior Museum.” She was also a major donor to the Native American Collection of the Leland Stanford Jr Museum (now Cantor Center for Visual Arts).

The last years and beyond

One cannot but imagine that the Second World War, and the genocidal distortion of the race theories that she had been so interested in, must have been a grim backdrop to her ninth decade. I have been unable to find any information regarding the activities of our protagonist during 1940s up to her death in 1946. As Thomas Pinney noted, there

appear to have been no obituaries. There is a final mystery. According to a quote from Myretta Wait Smith's granddaughter on the Wait family genealogy website that has been so useful in furnishing personal information, "Frona had left instructions and money for expenses for my father after she died. She was cremated and then my father took a train to Washington, DC with her ashes and spread them on the Potomac River." What lies behind the choice of Washington, DC, as the final resting place for her remains, rather than her beloved California? As ever, the remarkable Frona Eunice Wait remains uncategorizable to the end.

Rather than finish with her death, perhaps a last nod to her mystical beliefs might be allowed. There are many New Age websites devoted to the notion of San Francisco as the site of Tiamco and related Atlantis myths, identifying the locations of key temples and sites, at which devotees gather. These are based on the map and locations created by Frona Eunice Wait for her "Yermah" books. She might have been gratified that though she was forgotten at the time of her death, her name and her study of Californian wine live on among wine bibliophiles, and her treasured mystical novel and beliefs (and occasionally her name, misspelled as "Fiona") echo among cosmic visionaries.⁶⁷ All in all, not bad going for a footnote.

¹ *Valencia Land of Wine* (Anaconda Editions, 2007).

² Thomas Pinney "The Junior Enologist & the Banker's Wife: Maynard Amerine & Frona Eunice Wait," WTQ vol 15, July 20, 2005, p. 13–15.

³ The entire poem is now available online in Google Books in *The Collected Works of Ambrose Bierce, Volume V* (The Neale Publishing Company, 1911, repr. Wildside Press, 2008), p. 170–1. Back in 2007 I could not find the full poem on the internet, and was grateful to have my enquiry promptly responded to, and the full poem sent, by Lloyd Busch at the Reference Department of Woodruff Library, Emory University.

⁴ For a description of the Women's Building see, in addition to "The Book of the Fair, Chapter the Eleventh: Woman's Department" (<http://columbus.iit.edu/bookfair/ch11.html>), also "Final Report of the

California World's Fair commission"

(http://www.archive.org/stream/finalreportcali01commgoog/finalreportcali01commgoog_djvu.txt)

⁵ *San Francisco Call*, "Warring Women. Mrs Waite Again Charges the Enemy. That Fine California Room. The Hustling Lady Alternate Gets Exhibitors to Protest, but the Enemy Holds the Fort", 11 April 1893 (<http://cdnc.ucr.edu/cdnc/cgi-bin/cdnc?a=d&cl=search&d=SFC18930411.2.45&srpos=22&e=01-01-1882-31-12-1900--en-Logical-20-SFC-21-byDA---frona-all--->)

⁶ *San Francisco Call*, "Mrs. Wait Retires. She Deserts Her World's Fair Room," 18 April 1893.

⁷ *West Coast Times*, 2 May 1892, p 4 (<http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast?a=d&d=WCT18920502.2.19&e=-----10--1----0-->).

⁸ See the *Sacramento Daily Union*, 25 February 1893, "A Beauty Contest that is Interesting Our Girls".

⁹ *San Francisco Call*, "A Perfect Woman", 16 February 1896.

¹⁰ A photograph of the Woman's Building at the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, can be found at

http://digital.hagley.org/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/p268001coll8&CISOPTR=3622&DMSCALE=25.00000&DMWIDTH=750&DMHEIGHT=750&DMMODE=viewer&DMFULL=0&DMOLDSCALE=7.84519&DMX=0&DMY=0&DMTEXT=&DMTHUMB=1&REC=19&DMROTATE=0&x=79&y=69

¹¹ Agnes Manney Tenney, "Mrs. Frona Eunice Wait Colburn, A Typical Western Woman Yet Different", "Overland Monthly and Out West Magazine", February 1926. See

http://www.archive.org/stream/overlandmonthlyo87sanfrich/overlandmonthlyo87sanfrich_djvu.txt

¹² <http://www.strollthroughhistory.com/history.html>

¹³ See "The History Of Yolo County: The Gold Rush and the Advent of Agriculture"

(<http://stason.org/TULARC/travel/yolo-county/4-3-The-History-Of-Yolo-County-The-Gold-Rush-and-the-Adven.html>)

¹⁴ See http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=9588e.

¹⁵ Robert E. Ficken, *Washington Territory* (Washington State University, 2002), p. 120.

¹⁶ This census record is provided in the genealogy pages devoted to "Descendants of Richard Waite and Lucy Marvin Griswold" at <http://www.our-genealogy.com/waite/dec-3rd-gen/john-c-waite.html>.

¹⁷ *Columbia Chronicle*, Saturday, October 23 1880, as cited at

<http://www.test.lifequarters.com/johncourtlandwait.wqt>.

¹⁸ Frona Eunice Wait Colburn, "Getting on the Staff", "Overland Monthly and Out West Magazine", November 1923. See <http://www.ebooksread.com/authors-eng/outdoor-advertising-association-of-america/overland-monthly-and-out-west-magazine-volume-81-hci/page-63-overland-monthly-and-out-west-magazine-volume-81-hci.shtml>.

¹⁹ The author of this article would like to express his gratitude to Jacqueline Madison for providing this and much other useful information relating to the family.

²⁰ I am grateful to Jacqueline Madison for the information that she did return for at least one visit, and that "there is a newspaper report that 'May 24 1890, Mrs. Frona Wait has recently been visiting her father, J.L. Smith at Pasco. She left for San Francisco, Sunday.'

²¹ This knowledge of and admiration for the craft of book-making shines through an article of hers that appeared in "Out West Magazine" in March 1928, Frona Eunice Wait Colburn, "What Constitutes the Fine Art of Bookmaking".

(http://www.archive.org/stream/overlandmonthlyo86sanfrich/overlandmonthlyo86sanfrich_djvu.txt)

²² Agnes Manney Tenney, "Mrs. Frona Eunice Wait Colburn".

²³ Ella Sterling Cummins (ed.), *The Story of the Files: A Review of Californian Writers and Literature* (Cooperative Printing Company, Issued under the Auspices of the World's Fair Commission of California, Columbian Exposition, San Francisco, 1893), p. 375–6.

²⁴ See Gayle Ann Gullett, *Becoming Citizens: The Emergence and Development of the California Women's Movement, 1880–1911* (University of Illinois Press, 2000), p. 56.

²⁵ Frona Eunice Wait Colburn, "Getting on the Staff".

²⁶ See "Official manual of the Board of Lady Managers of the World's Columbian Commission"

(http://www.archive.org/stream/officialmanualof00worl/officialmanualof00worl_djvu.txt)

²⁷ "Pacific wine and spirit review", January 26 1891

(http://www.archive.org/stream/pacificwinespiri26sanfrich/pacificwinespiri26sanfrich_djvu.txt)

²⁸ She is extensively and impressively quoted in an article, "The City Working Girls," in the *San Francisco Call*, 18 October 1892.

²⁹ See the "Biennial report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of California for the years 1891–92"

(http://cdm15024.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/p178601ccp2&CISOPTR=607&CISOBX=1&REC=1).

³⁰ *San Francisco Call*, 28 June 1893.

³¹ There is a vivid description of the Viticulture Palace in “Pacific wine and spirits review”, vol. XXXII, No. 6, 1894, p. 14–16. There are photographs in the “Souvenir of the California Midwinter International Exposition, 1894 Collection” in The Bancroft Library, viewable online at

<http://www.oac.cdlib.org/view?docId=tf6f59p63d&doc.view=items&style=oac4&item.position=41>

³² For information on the Free Silver Movement see “Free Silver Movement” (2011), in *Encyclopædia Britannica* (<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/218360/Free-Silver-Movement>).

³³ *San Francisco Call*, Thursday morning, August 22 1895

(<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85066387/1895-08-22/ed-1/seq-1.pdf>)

³⁴ Frona Eunice Wait, *Yermah, the Dorado* (William Doxey, At the Sign of the Lark, 1897). William Doxey’s bookstore and publishing imprint were at the centre of the San Francisco literary scene in the mid-1890s, publishing “obscure, macabre, (and sometimes decadent) authors”. At the Sign of the Lark went bankrupt in 1899.

³⁵ “The Bookman An Illustrated Literary Journal”, Volume VII. March, 1898–August, 1898

(http://www.archive.org/stream/bookman24unkngoog/bookman24unkngoog_djvu.txt)

³⁶ “Land of Sunshine”, *The Magazine of California and the West*, Vol. IX, June–Nov. 1898, p. 202, available online at http://www.archive.org/stream/outwestland09archrich/outwestland09archrich_djvu.txt.

³⁷ See, for example, Frona Eunice Wait, “The Passing of Ina Coolbrith”, “*Overland Monthly*”, April 1928

³⁸ *San Francisco Call*, 7 February 1899, “Wine Growers Want the Nicaragua Canal”.

³⁹ See “The Women Will Work. Mrs. Frona Eunice Wait Pledges the Efficient Support of the Sisterhood”, *San Francisco Call*, 18 February 1898.

⁴⁰ “Frona Eunice’ a Bride” in “Pacific wine and spirit review”, Vol XLIII, 30 November 1900 (

http://www.archive.org/stream/pacificwinespiri43sanfrich/pacificwinespiri43sanfrich_djvu.txt).

⁴¹ Frona Eunice Wait Colburn, “The Kelp Girl”, in “*Out West Magazine*”, February 1928

(http://www.archive.org/stream/overlandmonthlyo86sanfrich/overlandmonthlyo86sanfrich_djvu.txt)

⁴² Agnes Manney Tenney, “Mrs. Frona Eunice Wait Colburn”.

⁴³ See Lewis Francis Byington, *History of San Francisco*, 3 vols. (S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1931), Vol. 3 p. 172–5.

⁴⁴ Mr. and Mrs. Frederick H. Colburn, *La Zacualpa (the beautiful forest) of Soconusco. An Interesting and Authentic Description of a Mule back Ride through the Quaint, Little Known Department of Soconusco, Mexico* (La Zacualpa Rubber Plantation Co., 1901). For more on the rubber-producing activities of La Zacualpa see “The India Rubber World”, 1 April 1901

(http://www.archive.org/stream/indiarubberworld24phil/indiarubberworld24phil_djvu.txt)

⁴⁵ “Claims Insolvency”, *San Francisco Call*, 25 January 1903.

⁴⁶ Frona Eunice Wait, “The New Fashion Leaders”, *The Clubwoman’s Guild*, 1902

(http://www.archive.org/stream/clublife01calirich/clublife01calirich_djvu.txt).

⁴⁷ Frona Eunice Wait, “Club Life’s New Year Greeting”

(http://www.archive.org/stream/clublife01calirich/clublife01calirich_djvu.txt).

⁴⁸ See Ira Brown Cross et al., *Financing an Empire: history of banking in Illinois* (S.J. Clarke, 1927), p. 250.

⁴⁹ See Philip S. Foner, *Labor and World War I, 1914–1918* (International Publishers Co., 1987), chapter 4 “Prelude to a Frame-Up”, p. 78. See also *San Francisco Examiner*, 23 July 1916.

⁵⁰ *San Francisco Call*, 24 January 1904.

⁵¹ *Journal of the American Bankers Association*, Vol. 4, 1920, p. 62, refers to “Frederick H. Colburn, the ever-popular Secretary of the California Bankers’ Association...”

⁵² Agnes Manney Tenney, “Mrs. Frona Eunice Wait Colburn”.

⁵³ Mary Ashe Miller, “Club Women and their Work”, *San Francisco Call*, 11 October 1909.

⁵⁴ “Woman’s Curious Profession. Wine-Taster but Temperance Advocate”, *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 10 June 1908 (<http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast?a=d&d=OG19080610.1.4&e=-----10--1----0-->)

⁵⁵ Anne Myra Goodman Benjamin, *A History of the Anti-Suffrage Movement in the United States from 1895–1920: Women Against Equality* (Edwin Mellen Press, 1991), p. 96.

⁵⁶ The relevant article, “Women Suffrage in California” can be found online at

[http://www.fultonhistory.com/Process%20small/Newspapers/Lowville%20NY%20Republican/1915/Newspaper%20Lowville%20NY%20Journal%20Republican%201915%20-%20\(356\).PDF](http://www.fultonhistory.com/Process%20small/Newspapers/Lowville%20NY%20Republican/1915/Newspaper%20Lowville%20NY%20Journal%20Republican%201915%20-%20(356).PDF)

⁵⁷ John Courtland Wait was living apart from his family, in Lewiston, Idaho, according to the 1880 census. There was an insanity case in 1885, “the people vs JC Wait”, in Alturas County, Idaho (Now Hailey, Idaho), and in 1886 he was divorced from a second wife. There was a third marriage (1890) and divorce (c. 1895) to the great great grandmother of the source of this information, Jacque Madison. She also informs me that, “According to family tradition he was an alcoholic”.

⁵⁸ Colburn Manuscript Collection, California State Library, outgoing correspondence folder (Box 1066, Folder 30), dated 2 October 1942. See “San Francisco Social Life and Clara Foltz’s Circle” at http://wlh-wiki.law.stanford.edu/index.php/San_Francisco_Social_Life_and_Clara_Foltz%27s_Circle

⁵⁹ See the index to *Woman Lawyer: The Trials of Clara Foltz* (Stanford University Press, 2011), also available on the website of the Stanford University Press. “The New Woman”, http://wlh-wiki.law.stanford.edu/index.php/The_New_Woman.

⁶⁰ “The Overland Monthly and Outwest Magazine”, Vol. 88, January to December, 1930, p. 16. Available online at

http://www.archive.org/stream/overlandmonthlyo88sanfrich/overlandmonthlyo88sanfrich_djvu.txt

⁶¹ Frona Eunice Wait Colburn, “The New Overland Trail”, in *Out West Magazine*, July 1928

(http://www.archive.org/stream/overlandmonthlyo86sanfrich/overlandmonthlyo86sanfrich_djvu.txt)

⁶² See Merritt Ierley, *Wondrous Contrivances: Technology at the Threshold* (Clarkson Potter, 2002), p. 88.

⁶³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Root_Race

⁶⁴ There is a photograph of Myretta at Northfield at Brian and Jacque Madison’s Wait family genealogy (<http://www.test.lifequarters.com/myrettawaitsmith.wq>).

⁶⁵ Personal correspondence with Jacque Madison.

⁶⁶ Mrs Frederick H. Colburn (Frona Eunice Wait), *The Kingship of Mt. Lassen* (Nemo Publishing Company, 1922), p. 4.

⁶⁷ See, among others, “The Death Temple of Tlamco”

(<http://home.earthlink.net/~pgonyea/death%20temple.htm>); “Tlamco: mystical solar temple of ancient time” (<http://www.manataka.org/page1668.html>); “Outcast Earth: Of Myth and Mist, Part I”

(<http://www.outcastearth.com/sanfrancisco.htm>); “Nature Spirit Friendly”

(<http://thekove.tripod.com/Cards/NatureSpirits.html>); “Power Sites in the USA”

(http://reid_j.tripod.com/POWER.HTML)