

## **Winner of the 2005 Article Prize**

**Erika Rappaport, “‘The Bombay Debt’: Letter Writing, Domestic Economies and Family Conflict in Colonial India,” 16, no. 2 *Gender & History* (2004)**

Erika Rappaport, Associate Professor of History, UC Santa Barbara, received the 2005 PCCBS Article Prize for “‘The Bombay Debt’: Letter Writing, Domestic Economies and Family Conflict in Colonial India,” published in *Gender & History* 16/2 (2004). Her work to date focuses on consumer culture and the history of the family. She is the author of *Shopping for Pleasure: Gender and Public Life in London's West End, 1860-1914* (Princeton University Press, 2000).

Her article examines dozens of letters from India written by Minnie Blaine and her husband, Archibald Wood, to Minnie’s mother in England between 1856 and 1861. These letters and those associated with a military investigation into the couple’s relationship in the 1860s detail the connections between the breakdown of the East India Company’s rule in India and Minnie Blane’s marriage. In particular, this correspondence shows some of the ways in which bourgeois identities were constructed in relationship to money and objects, place and race. It also exposes the fissures between family members, allowing us to see the gender, generational and cultural conflicts within such imperial families. The article raises concerns about the ways in which personal letters have been used as documents in the study of European women’s imperial history.