

EDITORS' NOTE

Since the late colonial period, Europeans and Euro-Americans have been prophesying the disappearance of Native peoples. Because Indians were stuck in a primitive past, whites reasoned, dramatic social changes and progress would surely spell their doom. Never were these prophecies uttered with greater certitude than the early twentieth century. Americans now lived in cities, worked in factories and skyscrapers, read news from the world over, moved around by railroad and automobile, and were even learning how to build flying machines. The past was receding behind them, dragging down the small number of remaining Natives with it into oblivion. Sculptor James Earle Fraser's *The End of the Trail*, a depiction of an exhausted Native man slouched on his equally worn horse, peering off a precipice, epitomized this certainty.

As Mark Twain might have observed, rumors of Indian extinction have been greatly exaggerated. Our students who have taken Native language classes, gone to Indian casinos, or read about or even participated in demonstrations for hunting and fishing rights know this. Persistence and militancy in the midst of great adversity are nothing new. As the contributors to this issue's forum, "Indigenous Histories of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era," point out, if we look closely enough we can see Indians almost everywhere we look in the fin-de-siècle United States. Some were complaining about federal Indian policy, while others worked for the very agencies implementing those policies. The federal government used the promise of citizenship—emancipatory in some contexts—as a justification to break treaty obligations, even as Natives alternatively denied and invoked their rights as citizens to grasp what little aid the Progressive state might offer. Many Natives remained in their homelands, while others traveled across continents and oceans, bringing the new forms of their music to ears that may not have recognized its Indigenous roots. The often complicated and ambiguous racial status of Native peoples defied easy categorization in an age where segregation was premised on the existence of discrete races.

In short, as forum guest editors Boyd Cothran and C. Joseph Genetin-Pilawa argue, merging Native history and the history of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era benefits scholars of both fields. Doing so can lead scholars of the Indigenous experience to place the stories that they tell at the heart of larger narratives of U.S. development, much as Native Americanists have dramatically altered narratives of colonial history in the past generation. Paying greater attention to Natives might lead scholars of the period in general to see new angles to old questions about race, citizenship, and mass culture.

Native activists in the Progressive Era such as the founders of the Society of American Indians envisioned a dramatically different world. So too did the members of Fountaingrove, a California utopian colony founded by a multiracial new religious movement. Joshua Paddison's article discusses the 1890s attack on the colony launched by reformer Alzire Chevallier, which attracted broad national press attention. Chevallier succeeded in Orientalizing the new movement, portraying its adherents as the feminized dupes of a predatory leader. Her victory demonstrated both some of the dangers of violating the

era's racial norms as well as the authority that middle-class white women could gain by enforcing newly restrictive codes of sexual and racial morality. Yet Paddison shows how the debates over Fountaingrove also reflected the gradual emergence of more modern notions of sexuality, heteronormative and as committed to pleasure as to reproduction. His account suggests that repression and liberation could make good bedfellows.

The creation of the de jure Jim Crow system proved to be a more lasting accomplishment than did the establishment of Fountaingrove. This system is one of the most important legacies of the period this journal covers, one which to contemporary ears lends a bitterly ironic twist to the term "Progressive" Era. D. W. Griffith's iconic 1915 film *The Birth of a Nation* served as both a marker of this caste system and a disturbingly powerful brief for it. We mark the centennial of this unfortunate contribution to American culture with a forum that explains why the film and the Ku Klux Klan that it helped to revive came to occupy such a central position in the culture of white supremacy. By adopting older tropes from minstrelsy and Reconstruction Era racial violence, Griffith played a key role in the creation of a modern white public intent on maintaining its own supremacy. By prompting African American protests and mobilizations, he also inadvertently helped to create a national black public and consciousness. The recent spectacles of police violence and popular protest, conveyed by the new technology of cell phone videos, remind us that this too is unfinished business.

Effective teaching can lead students to reflect on such resonances between our time and the past. The roundtable "Gaming the GAPE: the Pedagogy of *Reacting to the Past*" explores how historical gaming does this. Mary Jane Treacy's *Greenwich Village, 1913: Suffrage, Labor, and the New Woman*, marks the advent of a fully elaborated "Reacting to the Past" Game for the Gilded Age and Progressive Era. *Greenwich Village* equips students to participate in an in-class game in which they will play characters from bohemian Manhattan. The characters must decide whether to join a suffragist march in Washington, DC, or to promote a pageant in support of the IWW's garment strike in Patterson, New Jersey. The contributors to the forum praise the game for its immersion of students into rich and demanding primary sources and offer their thoughts on the benefits and challenges of this form of teaching. As Mark Carnes concludes, "students learned that the past could speak to them—and in a powerful way."

From the fate of Indigenes now vastly outnumbered in their Native lands, experiments in racial and sexual equality, to the disturbingly effective *The Birth of a Nation*, the past covered by this issue still speaks to us.