

Editors' Note

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This quarter's issue of *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* highlights a point that scholars and educators working on the later nineteenth century often make: our survey textbook chapters tend to create arbitrary dividing lines between events and developments that individuals living through the period did not. Take, for example, this chapter list from the middle of Alan Brinkley's *The Unfinished Nation: A Concise History of the American People, Vols. 1–2* (this is not a commentary on the quality of this particular textbook):

- Chapter 14: The Civil War
- Chapter 15: Reconstruction and the New South
- Chapter 16: The Conquest of the Far West
- Chapter 17: Industrial Supremacy
- Chapter 18: The Age of the City
- Chapter 19: From Crisis to Empire

For undergraduates and those of us teaching them, breaking the period down in this way makes complex and complicated moments easier to learn about and understand. But we also miss out on the opportunity to make critical connections between the peoples, events, stories, and ideas that we too often slot into a single, arbitrary chapter. The authors in this issue drive home this point as each of their studies crosses traditional textbook chapter divides in multiple ways.

Khal Schneider's exploration of the 1917 *Anderson v. Mathews* Supreme Court decision in his article, "A Square Deal in Lake County," could rightly fit in the textbook chapter on the Far West because it focuses on a California Pomo Native, named Ethan Anderson, and the question of Indian citizenship in the United States. But, it could also fit within the chapter on Reconstruction as questions of voting rights for Indigenous peoples (though debated earlier) were a focus of federal policy makers in the Office of Indian Affairs in the 1870s surrounding the passage of the 14th Amendment. For Schneider, Anderson's case is most significant because it illustrates how, when federal authorities offered him "confused and often contradictory ways to make claims on the state," he and other Native people "struggled to turn them into something useful."

Frances Davey's "Disguised beyond any recognition," an article that examines Coney Island's beaches as a liminal space where "loosened gender and social strictures became less shocking and even socially acceptable," in the late 1800s would certainly fit in the textbook chapter on the "Age of the City." Yet, it also illuminates some of the room that existed within the increasingly rigidified class system (and essentializing notions of gender) rising out of earlier manufacturing developments and advancing at hyper speed in the age of "Industrial Supremacy." As Davey argues, the "beach's natural elements exposed the fallacy that well-off women were naturally cleaner, both physically and morally, than not just men, but also working-class women."

In “A New West in Mindanao,” Oliver Charbonneau focuses on how, following the Spanish-American War, fortune seekers attempted to create a “white man’s country” in Muslim-majority Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago in the Southern Philippines. This study fits perfectly well within a textbook chapter on U.S. interventions and imperialism in the Pacific (chapter 19 on the list above), but by framing the region as an exploitable “transoceanic frontier,” Charbonneau argues that settlers looked to “diverse sources in the American West” for inspiration. In so doing, he draws direct connections to the post-Civil War conquest of the continent as well (chapter 16 above).

In 1889, Confederate General Jefferson Davis passed away and Southerners, Robert Cook asserts, used the moment to reaffirm their devotion to the Lost Cause that Davis created and embodied. It is easy to see how these events fit within textbook chapters on the Civil War and Reconstruction. But, Cook also argues that while Northerners were outraged at the southern response to Davis’s death in 1889, by the time he was reinterred in 1893 and throughout the last decade of the nineteenth century, their “opposition to the Lost Cause waned rapidly” as “[f]ull-blown sectional reconciliation occurred.” More so than any other event, the Civil War reminds us not to create arbitrary dividing lines in our textbooks (or elsewhere), as again and always, it casts a long shadow and the politics of national reconstruction and reconciliation undergirded and influenced many of the events surveyed in the subsequent four chapters listed above.

Finally, we are pleased to introduce our “Note from the Field” series this quarter with Ben Wright’s fascinating essay “Confederate Statues and their Dirty Laundry.” We hope this series will highlight some of the best and most exciting work in public history (broadly defined) connected to the Gilded Age and Progressive Era. In his piece, Wright charts the history of four, early twentieth-century statues of Southern figures at the University of Texas-Austin and their removal in the 2010s. As a public historian and curator at the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, Wright participated in the creation of an exhibit to re-contextualize one of the statues, Confederate President Jefferson Davis. We are excited to start the series off with this essay and hope to publish more notes from the field in the near future.