

EDITORS' NOTE

In his recent book, *The Republic for Which it Stands*, Richard White asserts that “Historians often write of Reconstruction and the Gilded Age as if they were separate and consecutive eras, but the two gestated together” (2). Indeed, *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* has long held this view, seeking to publish the best scholarly work in the entire period between 1865 and 1920. And with the editorial transition underway, we hope even more to reclaim Reconstruction as part of the period and to highlight and push at the established chronological boundaries of this era in U.S. history.

This issue features a powerful example of the scholarship that is possible when an author reaches across our traditional periodization. In “The Sequel,” Liette Gidlow argues that by pairing the Reconstruction Amendments with the 19th Amendment, African American suffragists and their allies saw connections “between generations, between races, and between women and men” that scholars of voting and voting rights later lost. And while her conclusion appears disheartening—that the 19th Amendment failed African American women in similar ways that the 15th had failed African American men—Gidlow masterfully notes that Southern black activist women in the 1920s laid the groundwork for the Supreme Court’s decision in the pioneering 1944 voting rights case *Smith v. Allwright* as well as the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Kathy Cooke also bridges gaps in the GAPE in her exploration of congressional seed distribution. She follows the federal program from its early years during the Civil War and Reconstruction when savvy politicians in the Republican Party hoped to use free seed distribution to win favor with voters through its demise in the 1920s in the face of progressive reform. Ultimately, Cooke finds that rather than a simple product of interest-group politics, seed distribution represented real concerns and arguments about American independence and character in the face of a changing agricultural industry and science.

In certain ways, Jessica Derleth’s “Kneading Politics” brings together some of the themes in both Gidlow’s and Cooke’s articles, especially in the way that she interweaves an emerging academic/scientific field with suffrage activism. In her case, the focus turns to suffragists’ use of home economics, pure food reform, and municipal housekeeping as a means to combat arguments that they were “unwomanly women.” She argues that suffrage cookbooks, recipes, and bazaars were key campaign tactics that softened the women’s political image, making suffrage itself more palatable to male voters and politicians.

Rounding out the articles in this issue are a pair that juxtapose the local and the global in the Gilded Age. On the local level, Jeffrey Trask argues in “Constructing the Frame of New York” that business and civic leaders sided with mercantile interests in condemning Thirteenth Avenue and building the Chelsea Piers. These Beaux-Arts piers served as an aesthetic frame for New York City, but also, as the author asserts, reflected conflicts within the arena of municipal planning and politics at the turn of the twentieth century. Pushing outward, Nathan Alexander provides the first in-depth examination of atheist and freethinker responses to imperialism in “Unclasping the Eagle’s

Talons.” Focusing primarily on Mark Twain and Robert Ingersoll, as well as popular freethought periodicals, Alexander argues that our studies of anti-imperialism must take more seriously the influence of non-Protestant and/or nonreligious thinking.

Finally, in this issue, we present Marisa Chappell’s retrospective on Theda Skocpol’s *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers*, which commemorates the 25th anniversary of its publication. Perhaps it is fitting to close out this note by commenting on Skocpol’s work. Her state-centered study of the origins of American welfare policy revolutionized the field, influenced a generation of scholars to “bring the state back in,” and continues to encourage debate and discussion today. We began this note by applauding Liette Gidlow’s reach across traditional periodization and the insights that such a move provides. Chappell’s retrospective reminds us that scholars working in and around the GAPE have done this, and done this well, for many years. We can’t wait to see more.

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