

NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

For ten years, Alan Lessoff has guided this journal as its editor. Drawing on the same sensibilities that undergird his work on urbanization, politics, public space, and historical memory, he made this journal an outlet for wide-ranging and probing historical scholarship. The authors included eminent scholars and graduate students, Americans and (in a particularly innovative fashion) those writing about the U.S. past from abroad. Their studies addressed the built environment as well as politics and economics. Alan not only selected their work for publication, but consistently made it much better. Many recall the hands-on guidance that he provided, along with his gentle insistence that they learn from the readers' reports even as he refused to act simply as an inbox for outside critics. He also played the lead role in negotiating a contract with Cambridge University Press, which for the last four years has been the journal's publisher. This arrangement brought steadily increasing exposure to the journal and much-needed financial and institutional stability to the Society for the History of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era.

This is the first issue to be published under our editorship, and so it seems appropriate to begin by expressing appreciation for Alan Lessoff's work, especially during the editorial transition. This process began under challenging circumstances, but Alan has been a model of patience, generosity, organization—and, almost hidden under his geniality—tenacity and perseverance. We have learned much from him during our recent editorial apprenticeship and wish to thank him for his hard work during the journal's transition. We look forward to seeing much more of Alan the writer as he enters this new phase of his career, and in fact we are honored that one of his typically impressive book reviews appears in this issue.

Alan cares deeply about the pastness of the past, but he also has recognized the strong congruences between the present and the Gilded Age and Progressive Era. The contents of this issue, particularly, well address these connections between past and present. In an extension of his Distinguished Scholar address to SHGAPE at the 2014 Organization of American Historians meeting, Philip Deloria analyzes the difficulty of fitting American Indian peoples into the overarching narratives of American history. The Society of American Indians seems to embody the ways in which marginalized groups struggled for the rights of citizenship, but in Deloria's careful explication, Indian citizenship claims were more paradoxical and complicated than uniformly redemptive. In a roundtable commemorating the 25th anniversary of Eric Foner's *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877*, contributors (including Foner) revisit both the historical moment in which the United States first came to grips with the destruction of slavery and, arguably, the seminal study of this period.

We live in an age of considerable struggles over financial capitalism. Wyatt Wells brings a revisionist spirit to one of the classic battles over such matters from the Gilded Age – the chestnut of gold- vs. silver-based monetary policies. Walter Nugent, in turn, engages Wells in a spirited historiographical battle, with Wells offering a pointed rejoinder. Brian Greenwald and John Vickrey Van Cleve put forward just as

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strong a revisionist impulse, inviting us to rehabilitate Alexander Graham Bell's ideas about deafness in a way that matters considerably in thinking through contemporary debates in disability studies. And Nancy Rosenbloom offers an intriguing portrait of someone not nearly as well-known—Sonya Levien—arguing that it was figures such as Levien who contributed (and, implicitly, continue to contribute) to the vitality of American democratic culture.

As per custom, we conclude with a set of book reviews, shepherded to publication by the journal's new book review editor, Elaine Frantz Parsons. Elaine takes over from Nancy Unger, whose outstanding work made the book review section one of the most intellectually stimulating in the discipline. We plan to keep in place the journal's relatively long reviews, hoping that they continue to inspire broad historiographical reflection. At the same time, we also will be moving in new directions in the review section. This issue, for example, includes a forum of scholars and teachers reviewing Baz Luhrmann's 2013 film *The Great Gatsby*—bringing, among other things, Jay-Z to the pages of JGAPE.

Benjamin H. Johnson and Robert D. Johnston