Note from the Editor

The historical study of emotions took shape as a distinct pursuit within cultural history around twenty-five years ago. For all the reasons that subfields or trends in research rise and fall, emotional history has seemed to gain attention in recent years. Sophisticated adherents readily admit that one cannot recapture the inner emotional life of people in the past; historians trace styles of emotional expression and attitudes toward and discourses over them. In the pragmatic tradition dating back to William James himself, we assume that historically contingent attitudes and practices with regard to emotional expression do affect the inner feelings themselves. However, one cannot be sure, and there is no reason to worry much about the matter. (The last sentence amounts to an expression of a researcher's subjective mental states.) From the historian's perspective, "Jones expressed," is a more useful, defensible formulation than "Jones felt."

Nevertheless, the essays in this issue provoke the question, "What did so-and-so feel about that?" As Kathryn Jacob and Daniel Crofts explain, the central mystery behind the dramatic, checkered stories of Sam Ward and Henry Hurbert is what they felt about their schemes, triumphs, and failings. These two friends—adventurers in the positive and negative senses connoted by that word in the nineteenth century—took pains to cover up their inner feelings and thoughts or send misleading signals concerning them. Hiding one's feelings and assessments behind hospitality and good nature was, to be sure, essential to Ward's profession of lobbyist and to journalism as practiced by Hurlbert.

Still, both men had other reasons, closer to the heart, for dissimulation and self-fashioning. Ward's life amounted to a Victorian novel's worth of self-inflicted wounds arising from his own congenital irresponsibility. Hurlbert was not much better. One senses—to expand the scope of attention—that it was not only their intelligence and warmth that earned the enduring loyalty of friends and family, who knew their shortcomings all too well. One senses that the many politicians who became personally close to Ward, for example, saw in him a heightened version of the disconnects and compromises that they, too, had made as they left behind people and cast aside feelings in the pursuit of ambition. From these two studies in Gilded Age biography, one senses as well the historian's ambition to come close to a

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deliberately elusive figure from the past, using varied, even novel, techniques available now.

The main theme of Stephen West's study of local politics in post-Reconstruction Greenville surrounds the ways that divisions in local white politics—in this case over temperance—created opportunities for blacks to maintain their political engagement, at least as long as the white divisions endured. However, when imagining the story from the perspective of participants, subjective questions of circumspection, strategy, priorities, and dissimulation come to the fore. At the level of the town, it might have been easier for memories and traditions of political and civic engagement to endure through defeat and exclusion. In this, West's essay supports other recent research that points to continuities across the Nadir between Reconstruction black politics and the resurgence of activism in the early twentieth century. Memory and dedication through the unpromising times are central to the concept of a long civil rights movement.

Robert McGreevey focuses on legal definitions and institutional practices that shaped and limited Puerto Rico's and Puerto Ricans' place within the U.S. system in the decades after annexation. As historians of migration know, behind the cold distinctions drawn between "citizen," "national," and "alien," one can feel the experiences and struggles of the people being classified. Isabel Gonzalez, the twenty-year-old widow whose challenge to her denial of entry at New York helped to establish Puerto Ricans' rights to migrate to North America, had personal sorrows apart from questions over her status. She needed unusual emotional resources to cope with her private circumstances on top of her legal situation. The two hundred unemployed coffee workers who, as McGreevey recounts, found themselves diverted by unscrupulous labor agents to Hawaii for plantation work in 1900 were a group to whom injustice had been done. But they were also two hundred people, anxious and angry over what had happened and determined to gain official attention in order to be sent home.

In Michael Neagle's account of American land operations on Cuba's Isle of Pines, settlers and land companies were gripped by visions of prosperity in tropical paradise so strong that neither admonitions and disavowals from federal officials nor accounts from disillusioned returnees could break through. Neagle's story reinforces familiar themes in the analysis of U.S. expansion and imperialism. The drive for land and the sentiments that animated it often ran broader and deeper in U.S. society than within U.S. government.

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These sentiments could directly contradict strategic assessments pronounced by relevant political and military figures. Moreover, boosterism worked because both promoters and their targets were predisposed to believe in the magnificence of the current new place. Booster visions and claims seemed plausible even in places derided and mostly avoided by local people themselves, which is how Cubans expressed themselves concerning the Isle of Pines.

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