

Note from the Editor

At the end of this issue, we reprint an announcement published over the summer in various venues introducing the next editors of this journal. After two terms, I have made it as far as possible with goals specified upon my becoming editor in 2004. The journal's founding editor, Maureen Flanagan, did the organizational and professional work needed to establish the journal. My background in business history made me define the job as *institutionalizing* what Maureen set in motion. This task had two dimensions. First, the journal needed a reliable administrative structure and a steady financial basis. We struggled with this—as one can trace in the journal's annual reports to SHGAPE—until 2011, when we had the good fortune to join Cambridge University Press's list of journals. This move changed us from a rickety, overextended operation to a stable, manageable one. Equally important, we needed to build on the substantive start made by Maureen by securing and expanding the journal's intellectual reputation and its visibility and respect within the profession. Whether the journal has an adequate professional profile and has fulfilled its potential as a venue for thoughtful, vivid, and varied writing about the Gilded Age and Progressive Era, readers may judge for themselves.

For me, editing and producing the journal has not simply been an intellectual and professional enterprise. It has been a physical, aesthetic pleasure, an ongoing, collective artisan project with a shifting set of partners. As a teenager, I spent a lot of time in pre-digital-age print shops and newspaper offices, atmospheres that sank into those who experienced them. In each issue, I sought for that sense of craft to come across to readers without being pretentious about it.

At some point, everyone becomes an obstacle to new thinking and initiatives. Over the years, I have witnessed numerous situations that illustrated the wisdom of different versions of the adage that one should leave before people want you to go. In board and council meetings when I mentioned not standing for a third term, colleagues and friends expressed heartfelt regrets. Then after a few minutes, they began raising possible new directions for the journal, never articulating that new editors might be necessary to implement these or even apparently thinking this to themselves. That ratified my decision. All professors have plenty of stored-up projects into which they can throw themselves.

For a number of practical reasons, we begin listing Robert D. Johnston and Benjamin H. Johnson as co-editors starting with this issue, even though I remain responsible for issues through October 2014, the planned end of my term. Like most history journals, we have an article backlog of well over a year. Ben and Robert needed to be involved as soon as possible in reviewing submissions and sketching out issues that will appear in 2015 and beyond. In their statement, Ben and Robert explain their preliminary ideas; undoubtedly more initiatives and changes will emerge as they spend more time in the role and have opportunities to try this and that. Over the next months, the term of my long-standing collaborator, book review editor Nancy Unger, will also end. Elaine Frantz Parsons of Duquesne University will serve as book review editor on an interim basis until Robert and Ben have a chance to conduct a search.

On an intellectual and scholarly level, Ben and Robert represent an evolution from what we attempted during the last decade. Perhaps the most liberating changes over the last thirty years in how historians deal with the Progressive Era have been the emergence of an imaginative intellectual history of progressivism and a related enhanced ability to write about the varieties of progressivism in a flexible, empathetic way. This countered the older quest for an essence of progressivism, which often ended up being whatever the historian was inclined to praise or damn about twentieth-century reform politics altogether. Robert has been a key figure in this newer tendency, and his January 2002 essay in this journal, "Re-Democratizing the Progressive Era," an oft-cited fixture in the discussion. In our 2007 retrospective forum on Richard Hofstadter's *Age of Reform*, Robert treated with equal empathy the book that one might most blame for the practice of reducing populism and progressivism to the historian's theories and preoccupations. All who know Robert admire his endless generosity.

Robert, Ben, and I share a dedication to transforming U.S. history in the journal's era by expanding spatial understanding of it, especially by treating the West (and by implication the South) as integral to the whole, rather than as regional variants on a mainstream defined from the East and Midwest. For that reason, Katherine Moran's essay in this issue on the West Coast and Philippine context of U.S. Protestant attitudes toward Catholicism is an appropriate place to begin our lengthy editor transition. People versed in the history of California, the Southwest, and the Philippines under U.S. rule are already familiar with the trends and mindsets that Moran discusses. Her innovation here is in stressing that discourses,

historical narratives, and idealizations generated in California or the Philippines worked their way into Protestant-Catholic interactions all over the United States. Her essay helps, for example, in understanding divisions that emerged within the country's Protestant, eastern-based political and professional establishment over the era's simmering anti-Catholicism, which found elite backing in Boston or Chicago. Such essays undermine authors' preconceptions that at times frustrated me as editor concerning the perspective and subject matter of a proper "Gilded Age" or "Progressive Era" essay. With Ben and Robert as editors, these delimiting preconceptions should go out the window entirely.

Alan Lessoff