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Kristin Hoganson, President, Society for the History of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era

VALEDICTORY NOTE

Looking back at the last five years of *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, it seems that although the outgoing co-editors, Robert D. Johnston and Benjamin H. Johnson, have published plenty of Gilded Age content, their term as editors has been a thoroughly progressive era.

Their first issue, in January 2015, brought Jay-Z to the pages of *JGAPE*. That spirit of innovation has carried forward to this, their last issue. While following in their predecessors' footsteps in the basic format of the journal, the high standards for scholarly excellence, the inclusion of a wide range of work, and the occasional themed issue with guest editorial assistance, Robert and Ben have also introduced several new features.

Venturing beyond the core of the journal—the articles chosen from the submissions that landed on their desks (or laptops) and the book reviews ably edited by Elaine Frantz—Ben and Robert arranged a historiographical intervention feature, aimed at reflecting on classic books. They orchestrated special fora, including one on Indigenous histories that launched its guest editors, Boyd Cothran and C. Joseph Genetin-Pilawa, on the journey that has now placed them at the helm of *JGAPE* as Robert and Ben's successors. They launched special issues, roundtables, a primary source reflection, and a feature labeled "Public Commemoration" that featured a critical assessment of *The Birth of a Nation* a century after its release. As debates over migration, borders, and diversity played out in headlines and news feeds, with significant consequences on the ground, they published a forum on immigration, structured as a conversation among six historians of migration and borders.

Their commitment to teaching—and to valuing the particular expertises of teachers—have been palpable in the pages of *JGAPE.* Among the prompts for the forum on immigration were questions on teaching immigration history in a tense political environment. In the January 2015 issue, they published an essay on teaching *The Great Gatsby* in the high school classroom by a high school teacher who wrote from experience. The "teaching forum" on John Green's "Crash Course U.S. History" videos also merits note, as do the fora on the revised Advanced Placement U.S. History exam and the Reacting to the Past educational games.

Editing can be persnickety, meticulous work, but editing a journal such as *JGAPE* also requires the ability to think widely and imaginatively; to see the potential in novel, half-baked ideas; and to grasp the importance of new lines of thought. Robert and Ben have excelled not only in the hedgehog aspects of editing, but also in the fox-like parts of the job. And they have consistently done so with an eye on the larger stakes of historical

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research and the connections between the years encompassed by the journal and our own time.

Their editorial voice has come across not only in the journal's tables of contents but also in the introductions they have written for each issue. These have done more than signpost what lies ahead; they have also reflected on the meaning of the past for the present. As their comments on Woodrow Wilson's legacy, the labor movement, electoral politics, and recent Klan activity suggest, they saw their work as editors as a way to sharpen our understanding of the world we live in today. They have invited readers to continue the conversation, signaling that they meant it by providing email addresses.

Shortly after assuming the editorship, they wrote of their hope that the journal would speak "in a multivoiced register, eschewing respectability when necessary and taking seriously all kinds of scholarship, sources, and seemingly strange subjects" (Editors' Note, April 2015). Although they never really managed to ditch respectability, they did expose their readers to a whole chorus of voices. And even as they strove to jazz things up, clearly delighting in fresh approaches and intellectual discovery, they also took the enterprise seriously, as the best of editors do. Knowing that our work matters, they never lost sight of the importance of their own.

The care they haven taken in soliciting peer reviewers, the attention they have given to honing arguments and prose, and the thought they have put into producing each issue can be seen on every page they edited. On behalf of SHGAPE and the many readers who have turned to *JGAPE* to better understand the backstory to the present, thank you and well done.

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