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Editor's Note

Brian M. Ingrassia

This issue of *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* reminds us of the power of the written word, especially in Justin Gage's "Wolf Chief the 'Irrepressible Letter Writer': Native American Activism Through Correspondence in the Early Reservation Years." Wolf Chief was a Hidatsa man (though not a chief) who learned to read at age twenty-eight and used his newfound literacy to advocate tirelessly and persistently for himself and for his people. Wolf Chief wrote to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs; he wrote to the President of the United States; he wrote to the local newspaper. He certainly seemed irrepressible, as one Dakota Territory newspaper labeled him. Wolf Chief wrote to remove corrupt Indian agents; he wrote to stop white people from stealing his people's timber; he wrote to protest sexual assaults. And he was not alone. Wolf Chief was one of dozens, if not hundreds, of Native Americans who were "talking back" to Progressive Era America, to borrow a phrase from historian Frederick Hoxie. In highlighting Wolf Chief's indomitable epistolary efforts, this article builds on Gage's previous work, which foregrounds modernity and Indian agency in telling the story of the spread of the Ghost Dance—via railroads as well as letters sent through the U.S. postal system—during the late nineteenth century. For Native Americans, writing was an act of protest, not necessarily a means of assimilation.

The second article in this issue, Ella Hadacek's "Doubly Intolerable: Gender, Union Busting, and the Fear of Catholic Power in the Loeb Affair, 1915–1917," revisits the Loeb Affair in 1910s Chicago, wherein the board of Chicago's public school system prohibited teachers from joining labor unions. Previous historians have used the Loeb Affair to illustrate gendered attacks on women's labor, especially among schoolteachers, but Hadacek analyzes the prevalence of anti-Catholicism within the debates. For publications like *The Menace*, a periodical based in southwestern Missouri, the Loeb affair augured the seemingly frightening notion that Catholics were taking over America's teachers' unions and, in turn, its public schools. These attacks were so prevalent that even publications otherwise supportive of labor, especially *The Day Book*, based in Chicago, portrayed the Loeb Affair as heavily focused on the issue of religion.

In "Sexual Racism in the Ranks: The Impact of Sexual Stereotypes on the Placement of African American Soldiers During the First World War," Eric Wycoff Rogers draws our attention to Black soldiers in the wartime U.S. Army. American psychologists and reformers developed the idea of morale theory in the 1910s and 1920s. In books like William Ernest Hocking's *Morale and Its Enemies* (1918) and G. Stanley Hall's *Morale: The Supreme Standard of Life and Conduct* (1920), thinkers postulated that sexuality motivated soldiers to fight. By harnessing young men's desire for sex, presumably in tension with their self-control, the U.S. military might be able to help win the war for the Allies. But these morale theorists did not believe that Black men possessed self-control, and so that meant that Black military personnel, presumably, could not be motivated by what can be called *parasexual* means. As the result of morale theorizing and its

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implementation, African American soldiers were limited mostly to labor, rather than combat, during the war. Similarly circumscribed was their ability to garner both the short-term and long-term benefits of service, including full citizenship rights.

In addition to these three fine articles, this issue also features a roundtable on a classic work of Gilded Age historiography, Lawrence C. Goodwyn's *Democratic Promise: The Populist Moment in America*, published by Oxford University Press in 1976. As the roundtable contributors note, this was a book about Populism but it was also a book about the meanings of American democracy. Certainly, a generation or more of historians have questioned Goodwyn's interpretation—especially his notion of a "shadow movement" that corrupted a truly democratic spirit of cooperation that had emerged from Texas Populism in the 1870s and 1880s—yet few doubt the impact of this pathbreaking work of scholarship. Similar in this way to Richard Hofstadter's *The Age of Reform* (1955), a Pulitzer Prize-winning book that offered a big interpretation that launched dozens of significant analyses of the Populists, scholars have had to contend with Goodwyn's sweeping argument and, in some cases, push back against it. We thank editorial board member Gregg Cantrell—another important historian of the Texas Populists and their long-reaching influence—for organizing this retrospective roundtable and convening the five outstanding historians who offer herein their insightful perspectives on Goodwyn and *Democratic Promise*: Robert C. McMath Jr., Connie Lester, Charles Postel, Matthew Hild, and Michael J. Lansing. We hope to continue, in future issues of the journal, publishing retrospective pieces on classic and significant works in Gilded Age and Progressive Era history.

This issue closes with nine reviews of recently published books, on topics including the making of the Fourteenth Amendment, Civil War memory in New York City, and Theodore Roosevelt's foreign policy; socialist Laurence Gronlund, Gilded Age capitalist Albert Pullman (the less-famous yet still significant Pullman brother), and cosmetics mogul Elizabeth Arden; as well as pop-up welfare programs for refugees in the American West, California's first cult scare, and the origins of Baltimore's police state. Words are powerful, and so is our study of the American past, in all of its messiness and complexity. As always, we invite you to read and to learn.

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