

As advisor of the Omicron-Omicron chapter of Phi Alpha Theta, I welcome you to the seminal volume of the *Western Illinois Historical Review*. This historical journal started out with a desire to create a venue in which we could recognize and share the best efforts of our students. Starting a new journal is no small undertaking and it was with some trepidation that I initially approached our chapter officers with this idea several years ago. Colleagues warned me that it was the sort of project that could consume time without reward. True to form, it has taken much time and effort to bring the volume to production, but it has been well worth the endeavor. The journal's mission statement is to publish the best student work from our department every year. In this issue we are limiting the work to full-length articles, but we expect that volumes will eventually include book reviews, editorials and similar shorter works.

The mission of the journal is to promote the best work of the students in the Department of History at Western Illinois University. All the articles included in this volume have been through a rigorous juried procedure including nomination by active faculty and review by peers before being selected, revised, peer-reviewed again, and edited. The content is evenly split between European and American topics, but reflects the department's strengths in modern and regional topics of interest.

We look forward to our next and succeeding volumes with equal enthusiasm and expect you will find the journal to be interesting and enjoyable. Like any new, serial publication this is a work in progress as it grows and matures. Please let us know how we are doing by writing to me. We welcome all comments and suggestions and will respond.

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