Introduction to the Journal

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Editor

As the JGAPE's first editor, I would like to welcome you, our readers, and to acquaint you with what you may expect from this and coming issues. In the first several issues, we intend to publish a mix of original research essays and historiographical pieces. The historiographical pieces are meant to draw together the past literature with the most current work to reassess basic themes and questions of the scholarship of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era. We begin this reassessment here by considering one of the crucial fields of study for this time period: political history. Elisabeth Israels Perry, in a revised and expanded version of her Presidential lecture delivered to the Society for Historians of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era in 2000, asks us to rethink the issues and periodization of the GAPE by making gender more central to our thinking. In doing so, she poses the question of what constitutes “politics” and suggests how our ideas about politics might change if we include gender. Worth Robert Miller and Robert Johnston then take us back to the worlds of Gilded Age and Progressive Era politics. They remind us of the political vitality of both eras and ask us to consider what we may have lost as democratic citizens as the country turned away from mass political participation. They also challenge scholars to balance their contemporary emphasis on the shortcomings of these eras with an appreciation of the lessons about democratic government that we might learn from them. Kriste Lindenmeyer rounds out this issue by reviewing three books that challenge our conceptions of politics and citizenship by making gender central to these developments in U.S. cities.

Although the history of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era is largely that of the United States, in coming issues we will also publish essays that push us to consider more comparative, transnational contexts. Issue 4 of volume 1 will include essays on how GAPE history is taught and researched by scholars outside of the U.S.

Early issues of the JGAPE will contain review essays treating multiple books. In future issues we hope to add shorter reviews of single books along with these longer essays so that the JGAPE can
become an authoritative venue for reviewing the best current scholarship in the field.

The JGAPE is the official journal of the Society for Historians of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era. The President of SHGAGE serves for two years, at the end of which term, she or he delivers a Presidential lecture at that spring’s meeting of the Organization of American Historians. In alternate years, SHGAGE invites a distinguished scholar in Gilded Age and Progressive Era history to deliver a lecture. The JGAPE will publish these lectures also.

Finally, to introduce the JGAPE and SHGAGE to our readers, this issue opens with welcome pieces from three members of the Society who have played central roles in giving life to the JGAPE.