

A Letter from the Editors-in-Chief

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Dear Reader,

It is our great pleasure to introduce to you the first issue of the *Chicago Journal of History*. Primarily a student run publication, the journal was conceived as a platform for the publication of rigorous undergraduate scholarship in history. It aims at bringing together students from different fields and creating interdisciplinary dialogue. Papers included in this issue focus on a diverse set of scholarly debates and seek to navigate through historiographical complexities. It is our hope that you will find the ideas here interesting if not absolutely convincing.

Richard Deulofeut-Manzur's essay, "American Interior Design: How a new American sense of style changed class relations," looks at the transformation of interior design during late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He argues that gradually nearly all households moved from the baroque, European design to a new uniquely American style characterized by simplicity and utility. To this end, he analyzes contemporary advertisements and weekly magazines, challenging the idea that opulent and ornate interiors were the only choice of high and middle -income households.

The next essay is Amber Bailey's "Chicago's Engine Company 21: An Interracial vision in an Era of Reconstructions, 1872-1900." Amber examines an unexplored chapter in Chicago's turbulent history and shows how the first all African-American firefighting company reconfigured race relations in an era marked by interracial hostility. Examining newspaper reports and speeches of prominent officials, she demonstrates how the members of the firefighting company challenged the dominant perception that they were less capable than their white counterparts.

Lilliana Paratore's, "The History of What Was Once Unspoken: Legitimizing Female Experiences of Sexual Harassment through Language and Law," surveys how Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, despite never explicitly referencing sexual harassment, became the basis for arbitration in cases dealing with sexual harassment as a form of workplace discrimination. She traces the growth of the feminist movement during the 1970s and explores its contributions to a new legal lexicon.

Last in this issue is Ricardo Alvarez Pimentel's "Adopting the American Racial Lens: A History of Mexican Migration to Chicago from the Town of Arandas, Jalisco." Based on original study of the Paul S. Taylor Manuscript at the University of California, Berkeley, the essay argues that Mexican migrants were unfamiliar with the American black-white racial binary. It was only after coming to Chicago and experiencing racial prejudice that they adopted this attitude towards race. They sought to identify themselves with their white counterparts in an effort to avoid discrimination and advance socially and economically.

We hope that you will enjoy reading these essays and look forward to receiving your feedback. Please direct your questions and/or feedback to ughistoryjournal@gmail.com.

Sincerely,
Thomas Prendergast and Pranav Jain