

Note from the Editor

Here is the new format we have been talking about. We hope people like it. We also hope that subscribers notice quickly the changes in operations that our new relationship with Cambridge University Press will bring about.

In this issue, meanwhile, Jack Blocker, in a revised version of his presidential address from April 2010, provides a broad perspective on a fundamental methodological challenge to social and demographic historians, which is that migration is easy to trace in a general way but hard to research in detail and explain with precision. Self-contained in terms of sources, the community-based case study is the simplest genre of social history to organize, but by definition it gives insufficient emphasis to migration. The earliest scholars of post-Reconstruction African American migrations, starting with W. E. B. Du Bois and his Philadelphia studies, attempted to develop methodologies that would connect people to their origins, document the multiple factors behind decisions to migrate, evoke the manifold experiences of migrants, and compare migrants to non-migrants. For reasons that Blocker considers, insights and methodological innovations of that earlier generation of social scientists inconsistently informed research over the next century. As a result, models used to explain the Great Migrations are still probably too rough and analyses still tentative. Nevertheless, historians have helped in fixing in people's minds the reality that these migrations played an immense role in forming modern American society. Blocker's own research underscores the need to pay attention to the experiences of black people who migrated to small cities throughout the country, at times even from larger ones in defiance of simplistic versions of the social-science model of step migration. County historical societies throughout the Midwest, for example, regularly include small-city black oral history projects, in which people describe their decisions, perceptions, and lives.

Cornelius Bynum's essay on the social-democratic dimensions of New Negro thought provides a new perspective on an old theme in studies of black migration: how the crossroads and exchange functions of cities made them centers for intellectual innovation. Florida-born A. Philip Randolph and his friend and collaborator, the Virgin Islands migrant Frank Crosswaith, shared an interest in socialist thought and its relevance to the African American working class. In the vibrant but competitive environment of New York, however, they encountered firsthand the implications of the socialist tendency to treat racism as a subset of class subordination, along with the indifference and at times outright bigotry of many white socialists. These circumstances inspired their search for

a synthesis between socialism and the various race-conscious intellectual trends associated with the Harlem Renaissance. They also came forcefully to argue that historical experience made black culture something more than a branch of working-class culture and that black people could make distinctive contributions to socialist thought overall.

For most readers of this journal, Progressive Era academics such as Frederick Jackson Turner, Thorstein Veblen, and W.I. Thomas survive mainly through their scholarship and sometimes their activism. Brian Ingrassia's subtle essay considers these figures in their roles as professors, engaged with their institutions and wrestling with threats to its educational and scholarly mission, in this case from college football, demonstrably a riotous, corrupting, and dangerous phenomenon. In most cases, the historiographic concept of progressivism as a "search for order" is too hopelessly catch-all and abstract to bring to life progressive thought and action in its diverse manifestations. But in this case, tellingly when disorder confronted progressive intellectuals in their own bailiwicks, the concept is relevant, as Ingrassia shows. Progressives explicitly defined their task as bringing order to college football, and they perceived organization and professionalism—which is to say the NCAA and paid coaching staffs—as the route to a solution. With nearly a century's hindsight, educators as well as football fans among the journal's readers can assess for themselves whether this direction for American college sports was the appropriate one.

Finally, Matthew Oyo presents a portion of his years of research on the military reforms of the Theodore Roosevelt years. Oyo's study gives strong support to what seems to be the current consensus concerning Roosevelt as an administrator and governmental reformer. Roosevelt was undeniably a strong advocate of an upgraded civil service, and he was open to new ideas about professionalism and system in government. Even so, he retained a faith in the Victorian ideal of character. Effective leadership, in his view, depended at least as much on personal qualities of leaders as on administrative structure and expertise. As a result, he failed to adopt a consistent and defensible policy of army promotions. Sometimes, as in the case of John Pershing, Roosevelt's personal preferences showed insight, but other efforts to promote younger officers quickly to the top ranks proved not worth the jealousies they caused. This gave credence to the common criticisms that as president, Roosevelt could be willful and erratic and that his own behavior undercut his initiatives, even with regard to one of his administration's highest priorities.

Alan Lessoff