

## Editors' Note

Boyd Cothran and Rosanne Currarino

The articles in this issue each describe efforts to redefine the United States in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era, efforts that had unexpected and far-reaching consequences. Examining new demarcations of urban space, regional belonging, and national comity, these articles show Americans constructing new ideas about land use, regional distinctiveness, and national identity while also reshaping urban life, racial categories, and commercial imperialism.

Steven Gallo's work examines New Orleans mayor Joseph A. Shakspeare's efforts to prevent cattle from wandering off suburban farms and into the city itself. Shakspeare established an urban parks system to keep the cattle out of city streets. In the process of controlling errant cattle, these newly developed parks restructured the city for New Orleans's residents, separating urban and rural life, making park land the site of leisure rather than production, and opening up former dairy land to residential development. Michell Chreshfield's article reveals the unexpected implications of Progressive Era reformers' studies of Appalachia's "peculiar" regional resistance to modernity, exemplified above all by racially mixed families. Reformers relied on strict racial categorization and eugenics to "explain" Appalachian. Through their work, they inadvertently challenged legal monoracialism and created the idea of multiracialism. Alys Beverton turns our attention from region to nation, and then the world. In the divisive decade after the Civil War, politicians, journalists, and pundits feared the United States would dissolve once more into sections. Determined to reunite the country, they urged Americans to unite behind expanding American commercial reach into Mexico. This combination of commercial ambition and sectional reconciliation laid the foundation for late nineteenth-century American imperialism. We conclude the issue, as always, with a wide-ranging collection of book reviews.

Finally, we would like to take a moment to remember Walter Nugent who passed away on September 8, 2021. Walter was a historian of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era, one of the founders of SHGAPE, and a leading force behind the creation of this Journal. Most of all, he was a generous, kind scholar, committed to encouraging and spreading the voices of others. We aspire to follow his example everyday.

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