

## Letter from the Editor on this Special Issue

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The core of our mission at *Footnotes: A Journal of History* is to showcase student research. In this special issue, we are highlighting some of the compelling, primary source driven work that emerged from the first Arizona Undergraduate History Research Symposium held at the University of Arizona (UA) in April 2024. Through this, we are excited to affirm a shared commitment to undergraduate historical scholarship through this publication.

The 2024 Arizona Undergraduate History Research Symposium included forty-one participants who presented their research to an audience of their peers, university faculty, and their friends and families. This professional conference offered undergraduates a chance to participate in interdisciplinary conversations that pushed them to reflect more deeply on their own work and the work of others with the guidance of their panel chairs. The research presented included regional case studies, addressed global historical themes, and utilized creative, nontraditional formats to engage academically with a variety of topics. Additionally, these projects highlighted the innovation of UA's undergraduate students and reflected the rigor of the classes in which they developed and grappled with complex historical questions. As a further boon to the event, guest scholar and keynote speaker Dr. Trevor Getz used his own research on African history to encourage student researchers to connect with broader audiences and to consider their role in democratizing historical knowledge.

Just as the symposium fostered collaboration across disciplines and modeled historical thinking as a versatile tool, through submitting to *Footnotes*, the contributing authors had the opportunity to further develop skills related to analytical thinking and reasoning that will hopefully continue to be useful to them throughout their professional lives. Participants in this special issue come from a wide range of academic and professional backgrounds, including majors in Library and Information Science; Arabic; Middle Eastern and North African Studies; Global Studies; Nursing; East Asian Studies; Environmental Science; English; Education; Southwest Studies; Business Administration; and, of course, History. This issue's authors, representing their diverse disciplines, have gained a unique opportunity to go through the process of having their original work edited by fellow students and complete the reflection and revision necessary to take that work over the publication "finish line."

The breadth of student research featured in this issue of *Footnotes* reflects the same diversity and creativity that shaped the symposium itself. Here we will be elevating some of the best undergraduate research coming from the event, with theses that include: scientific research and environmental colonialism connecting China to the U.S. and Europe; Indigenous resistance and autonomy in the Southwest; feminism in rock music; U.S. imperialism in Latin America during the Cold War period; ethnic enclave economies in Tucson; mercenaries in the Italian city-

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states; myths surrounding the U.S. Civil War; and the complexities of religious colonialism and resistance in the Southern Levant. We aim to inspire undergraduates to see themselves as contributors to ongoing historical conversations, and we are excited to offer the authors here a space to engage with scholarly publishing and present a diverse collection of public-facing academic work.

Looking to the future, this publication reflects an ever-strengthening commitment to showcasing all forms of historical student research and to making both historical research and the publication experience accessible to junior scholars. We hope that the undergraduate history symposium continues to grow and that this issue will encourage more students to share their work through both the conference and the journal. As the managing editor of the 2025 issue, I personally invite readers to explore the range of student contributions here and to reflect on the ways in which these undergraduate voices are engaging with and honing their skills in the practice of “doing history.”

Finally, we at *Footnotes* want to celebrate all those who are featured in this issue for their hard work and commitment to reaching this point, as well as to thank all those involved. Some of the authors within have already graduated from the University of Arizona and have moved into their professional careers, while still others are continuing to graduate school. We have confidence that the abilities they showcased here will continue to serve them regardless of where life takes them. We are also deeply appreciative of the many others whose efforts helped shape this issue, including symposium chair Dr. David Pietz and all involved with the 2024 Arizona Undergraduate History Research Symposium; our 2025 *Footnotes* peer reviewers; our faculty affiliate and department chair, Dr. Katherine Morrissey; the UA History Department; the faculty mentors who supported the student research herein; and the broader UA community that continues to make this work possible.