
Letter from the Editors

Thompson Teasdale and Sarah Millender

We are incredibly pleased to present the inaugural edition of the *Grinnell Historical Review*. This journal has been a long-standing dream for both of us and we are excited to share our vision with you. During the process of making this dream a reality, we were asked to explain why our journal was necessary, why Grinnell College needed a history journal, and we feel addressing these questions is an apt way to begin this edition. Granted, as history majors we cannot claim to be unbiased, but to us the *Grinnell Historical Review* is beneficial because history is unique as a truly interdisciplinary subject. History serves as a vital component not only to the humanities but to a wide variety of subjects by providing the context necessary to understand how these subjects developed and evolved over time. One cannot study philosophy, political science, English, sociology, anthropology, or even economics without understanding how the theories underpinning these subjects developed within a certain historical context.

We do not wish to publish works written by undergraduate historians alone, but instead want the *Grinnell Historical Review* to serve as both an example and a celebration of history's interdisciplinary nature, featuring undergraduate work from a range of subjects and disciplines. It is our firm belief that history provides a unique platform for scholars from across the humanities and other disciplines to conduct integrative debates and discussions, and we sincerely hope that the *Grinnell Historical Review* will serve as one such platform.

With this lofty goal in mind, we are proud to present three thoughtful and engaging pieces of historical research from Grinnell undergraduates. We were privileged to receive a number of outstanding submissions for our inaugural edition. The three papers appearing in this edition were each chosen for their nuanced and persuasive arguments, clear, articulate, and elegant prose, and exemplary research. We are confident that they represent the highest level of scholarship the Grinnell History department can offer. The articles examine a variety of time periods and social identities, spanning from lower and middling-class women in 18th century England to German politicians in Berlin during reunification. We are immensely grateful to all three authors for their hard work and fantastic final products.

Before we move on to briefly preview each of this inaugural edition's articles, we want to briefly touch on the serious issue of Eurocentrism. We believe the *Grinnell Historical Review* best serves as a platform for historical discussion and debate when its articles represent a variety of different perspectives while also showcasing the finest scholarship Grinnell College offers. As the *Grinnell Historical Review* grows and receives greater numbers of submissions we will always strive to recognize outstanding examples of vital scholarship challenging the western historical paradigm. Nonetheless, this year's articles not only represent the best of Grinnell's History department, but highlight the wealth of historical resources and opportunities available to Grinnellians, including the College's extensive collection of primary source documents and close relationship with Queen Mary University in London. We are very pleased with the quality of this year's articles and their valuable challenges to established narratives and theories.

We begin the very first edition of the *Grinnell Historical Review* with a short article by Jeremy Epstein '19 examining Berlin's Holocaust memorial as a *lieu de mémoire* ("site of memory"). Epstein's study utilizes the concept of a *lieu de mémoire* to provide a nuanced narrative of the tension between history, memory, nationalism, and atrocities, ultimately posing the difficult questions: what will people remember when the meaning behind the memorial is lost? and further, does it matter?

Moving back in time, Kate Perry '20 explores how famous German musician Felix Mendelssohn and his contemporaries created a civic identity in Leipzig through their written works about music and their involvement in the city's concert hall. By examining Mendelssohn's role in the creation of this civic identity, Perry's article illustrates how the connection between musical culture and Leipzig allowed its citizens to contrast their community with other major German cities. Perry's argument not only challenges the common belief that Mendelssohn was most important as a composer but also the prevalent theory that German cultural identity in the 19th century was increasingly unified by a sense of nationalism.

We end with Emily Rhodes's '19 exploration of a previously untapped primary source: the state papers of Queen Anne. Her examination of letters dictated by women from a variety of social classes and identities petitioning their sovereign for criminal pardons explores the agency of lower-class women and the power wielded by Queen Anne. Rhodes's article challenges conceptions of Queen Anne as weak and lower-class women in late Stuart England as completely constrained by society, transforming once-forgotten letters into powerful examples of the indispensable role of women in history.

Once again, we would like to express our thankfulness to the authors of these fantastic works. Without their hard work and support we would not have been able to make the *Grinnell Historical Review* a reality. This maiden edition represents a semester's worth of preparation and planning, none of which would have been possible without the dedicated support of the Grinnell College History department. We are deeply indebted in particular to History department chair Sarah Purcell who assisted us at every turn and connected us with the faculty who now make up our advisory board. This board has been an invaluable asset and we are extremely grateful for the assistance of each of its members: Kelly Maynard, department chair of European history, Catherine Chou, assistant professor of early modern European history, and Edward Cohn, assistant professor of Russian history. Lastly, we would like to acknowledge the crucial assistance Grinnell's Student Publication and Radio Committee (SPARC) offered us, providing both the funding necessary to make our dream a reality and the guidance we inevitably needed along the way.

We earnestly hope you enjoy the *Grinnell Historical Review*'s maiden edition as much as we enjoyed seeing it come to fruition.

Sincerely,



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Founder | Editor-in-Chief | *Class of 2020*



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