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Introduction

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Introduction

Cover Page Footnote

Developing an undergraduate journal from the ground up sounds much more entertaining in the preliminary stages of development. This process has elucidated the terribly long road that editors go through, and I move forward with a newfound sense of respect for those professionals. The Department of History at the University of Windsor has supported the Journal from the very beginning, and for this I am forever grateful. Professorial support is one of the most cherished things for students, and theirs was plentiful and always well received. Further, I want to thank the faculty advisors that took time to edit and revise essays, this validated the project entirely. It is my hope that we have represented the department to their expectations, and that they will continue to support the Journal in its future.

INTRODUCTION

Often in the humanities, undergraduate work is overlooked and deemed immature or inconsequential. I considered that there was something missing in the undergraduate experience at many universities in Ontario - a lack of recognition for outstanding written work. While it is true that on the whole undergraduate work does not “join the conversation,” as some might say, a number of undergraduate students deserve to be recognized. This is the reason we began this project. In the same vein, the reasons for studying and *doing* history have been covered and reiterated by our instructors, and as such I will not waste any time in rehashing their thoughts. I am however, inviting you to read the following collection of undergraduate essays and collectively recognize history *done right*. I sincerely hope that in your journey through this compilation, you will stumble across something unique and strangely inviting - perhaps a statement, a thesis, a question, or a viewpoint - that will kindle a fire within you that will grab hold of your investigative nature. I am in agreement with Alan Bennett when he notes that the very best moments in reading, fiction or otherwise, are when the author’s “hands come out, and take yours.” After all, we are historians, and our narratives are meant to entertain just as much as they are crafted to educate.

Jessica Knapp argues in her 2013 Botsford Scholar Award winning article that the largely accepted notion, which suggests that Canada was an accepting “safe haven” for black Americans, is overstated. It seems that racial prejudice was institutional in the education system present in Windsor and Sandwich in the nineteenth century, and Knapp argues that this “negrophobia” was furthered by a systemic, reactionary response towards the influx of black Americans fleeing a hostile United States.

Utilizing an interdisciplinary approach, Sheilagh Quaille explores the cultural implications of the “black dog” motif in modern English literature and folklore. By tracing the evolution of the “black dog” from antiquity to modern Western Europe through a literary study, Quaille tracks the progression of the “black dog” and its un-

avoidably negative associations to omens and violent crime.

Sharon Hanna asserts that sixteenth and seventeenth century witch hunts in the territory that is now modern Germany transformed into a “gendered power-struggle,” in which the male hierarchy, threatened by shifting cultural norms, attempted to resituate themselves as superior by couching their actions in a religious context. Effectively, apprehensive males reinforced conservative female paradigms, such as traditional domestic ideals and notions of femininity, by portraying ambitious women as witches, heretics, and deviants.

In her close study of Scottish born Adam Fergusson, Emily Tyschenko argues that the town of Fergus, located in Upper Canada, had a resounding impact on nineteenth century provincial agricultural development. Tyschenko suggests that Fergusson, who had established the locality of Fergus in 1833 in the Niagara Region, promoted a culture of advancement and ingenuity in his largely Scottish community, which in turn shaped the discourse of agriculture, technology and emigration.

Lastly, Heather MacDonald analyses commemorative bicentennial events of popular heroes of the War of 1812, and asserts that the federal initiative to unite Canadians using antiquated heroes as common denominators is “an impossible” task. She argues that the multicultural nature of Canadians today, as opposed to its relative homogeneity in the past, and the headstrong attempt at crafting a universal narrative to unite all Canadians under one “banner” has not proved to be successful.

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The Student Life Enhancement Fund's mandate to enhance the undergraduate experience at the University of Windsor through financial support is a lifeline for developing projects. For their continued support of undergraduate initiatives, and generous financial contribution to the Journal, I thank them wholeheartedly.

I move on with an increased sense of respect and gratitude towards my colleagues at the University of Windsor. This project could not have flourished as it has without countless volunteer hours spent editing, debating and revising. I can only say that if I am fortunate enough to work with a dedicated group of individuals such as them in the future, retirement will never be a consideration. I thank them for helping *me* realize an idea that had been germinating for a very long time. We are no longer just cohorts, but friends, and for that I am thankful.

Lastly, thank *you* so very much for reading.

Calin Murgu
Editor-in-Chief
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