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Introduction

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Introduction

Every year, the Phi Alpha Theta chapter at Santa Clara University publishes a selection of outstanding essays in the History Department's journal, *Historical Perspectives*. Written by students in advanced seminars and who have completed research projects, these essays represent the highest levels of achievement in the department. This year, a number of excellent research papers were submitted for review. We would like to express our gratitude to all the students who submitted their work for consideration as well as to the faculty members who helped them with their projects. We are pleased to present to you the 2016 edition of *Historical Perspectives*.

This edition includes several essays that explore themes of ethnic and racial discrimination, post-World War II international relations, and sexual identity. These works demonstrate that our student writers utilize critical interpretation, insight, and creativity not only to analyze the past, but also to help us understand the world today. In their research, the authors challenge traditional narratives that have been oversimplified or sanitized in popular historiography.

The presentations begin with the work by Andrew Clem, who makes a compelling case that the Philippine-American War (1899-1902) constituted the first ethnic genocide of the twentieth century. In his essay, Clem debunks President Teddy Roosevelt's famous but misleading foreign policy mantra, "speak softly, and carry a big stick." Examining a more local history of ethnic discrimination, Roshan Rama analyzes San Francisco's anti-immigrant past, looking at how Asian American and LGBT communities endured intolerance and shaped what is now considered a tolerant city. Emma Chen examines the Harlem Renaissance through a gender lens, illustrating how lesbian, African American singers were able to subtly express themselves through performance and social interaction offered by the blues and jazz entertainment world. Her paper provides a new perspective on a cultural movement that is often depicted as male dominated. Another writer who discusses gender and sexual identity is Julia Shaffer in an essay that covers Japan's nineteenth and early twentieth century New Woman movement, which rattled long-standing, patriarchal traditions.

Sharissa Staples focuses on how the U.S. Reconstruction era, specifically after the passing of the Fifteenth Amendment and the creation of the Freedmen's Bureau, did not promote racial equality as is commonly believed. Instead, as she points out, Reconstruction legislation justified separation between the white and black population, laying the legal

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foundations for racial segregation in education and community life. Like African Americans, Native Americans have also struggled to achieve equality as well as political recognition, and Amanda Dahl highlights the overlooked role that Navajo “code talkers” played in World War II. Dahl writes about how the American press and public did not receive returning Navajo soldiers positively as they did whites, underscoring the racial and political dynamics of World War II that silenced minority communities in the U.S.

Kyra McComas evaluates the activity of the Swiss National Bank during and after World War II, noting how it laundered money for the Third Reich and covertly furthered its anti-Semitic project. Taking into consideration Switzerland’s interaction with world powers, McComas calls into question the conventional wisdom that holds this small country as a neutral actor in global politics. In today’s political atmosphere, Ryan Polito’s work is relevant, as it relates to this year’s presidential election. His essay traces how a socially conservative, populist movement that rose out of the Dust Bowl has evolved into today’s Republican Party. Drawing parallels to the Barry Goldwater campaign of 1964, Polito provides some valuable insights that can help explain how Donald Trump, a controversial right wing candidate, won the White House.