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Undergraduate

**THE
UNDERGRADUATE
HISTORICAL
JOURNAL**

At UC Merced

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The Undergraduate Historical Journal
At the University of California, Merced

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Letter from the Chief Editor

It is my great pleasure to present the first issue of the sixth volume of the *Undergraduate Historical Journal at UC Merced*. A fully collaborative effort on the part of authors and editors, this issue marks the culmination of months of hard work on the part of first-generation undergraduates dedicated to becoming published authors.

Covering a wide array of historical topics, this edition of the journal is composed of five articles. These articles span the globe, from farming in the Central Valley to the use of space in Safavid Iran. The journal opens with an article from Omar González, who used extensive archival evidence to highlight the successes of the National Land for People's activism against large landowners in the Westlands Water District in the late twentieth century. Next, we turn to Colonial Africa, where Brandon Stilson interrogates the failure of white colonial governments to provide adequate healthcare for indigenous African populations. This is followed by two articles on late nineteenth-century Merced, California. Madelyn Lara uses newspaper archives and county government records to chart the anti-Chinese intention behind Merced's establishment of a health officer to regulate Chinatown and its inhabitants. Sarah Lee examines racialized policing in 1880s Merced during a District Attorney led campaign of police raids and targeted arrests in Merced's Mexican Quarter and Chinatown. We close this edition with an article by T.R. Salsman, who examines space, race, and gender in the pastoralist society of Iran under the Safavid dynasty.

While the authors of these articles worked tirelessly to find their evidence and make their arguments, this edition would not have been possible without the diligent effort and attention of my editorial board. I am truly thankful that I had the assistance of the best and brightest UC Merced has to offer. This semester's board was staffed by Omar González, Madelyn Lara, Adrian Enwright, Maria Nguyen-Cruz, Tommy Paniagua, Jeremy Paguibitan, and Kevin Ng. I thank each and every one of you for your contributions in making this edition a reality. I would also like to thank Assistant Professor Romina Robles Ruvalcaba for advising the journal. I also would like to announce that this will be the last and final issue of the *Undergraduate Historical Journal at UC Merced*. Following a unanimous vote by the editorial staff, this student led effort will be henceforth known as the *Undergraduate Historical and Critical Race & Ethnic Studies Journal at UC Merced*. As members of a joint department, we feel we cannot best represent the work of our student body without a clear and intentional statement of our commitment to scholarship centered around critical questions of race, class, and gender. I hope you will join us in this endeavor by reading our newly christened journal next spring. Leading the journal this semester has been not just an exciting academic opportunity, but both an honor and a privilege. Without further ado, I proudly present this edition of the journal for your enjoyment.

Sarah Lee
Chief Editor

Faculty Forward

I am very proud to present the Fall 2019 issue of the *UC Merced* based *Undergraduate Historical Journal*. For almost seven years, the *Journal* has steadfastly been a hub for students to submit, critique, edit, and publish each other's work. What makes the *Journal* special is the editorial team, comprised exclusively of students. While faculty and graduate students enjoy access to various venues for publication, it is rare for undergraduate students to have the same opportunity. Such tradition of exclusion misses the centrality of how formative the undergraduate years can be for a historian's training. Having the opportunity to transform a research paper into an article for publication puts our undergraduate students at a great advantage because it constitutes a personal accomplishment and prepares them for graduate school and beyond. Publishing allows students to also value and carry out a side of knowledge production and professionalization that often eludes the classroom experience.

The *Undergraduate Historical Journal* has blossomed into a mainstay and promises to continue to grow in ways that more concertedly express the research interests and interdisciplinary approaches that students value. In this sense, for the Spring 2020 issue we are working to incorporate Critical Race and Ethnic Studies into our *Journal's* title to reflect in name what student's articles have been about from the beginning: works that are concerned with a critical understanding of systems of power and how they shape and affect people's lives. From its inception, the *Journal* has engaged with events and subjects that demonstrate the contradictions, oppressions, and contestations in the past to help move our understanding of the present forward. Such is a mission shared with the Department of History and Critical Race and Ethnic Studies at UC Merced.

This Fall 2019 issue is no exception. We present five analyses that critically examine questions of space, territoriality, agrarian and agricultural development, and public health and medicine: Omar González's "The Fight for Family Farms: Farm Worker Success in the Westlands, 1960-1986," Brandon Stilson's "A Failure to Care: Colonial Power and Healthcare in Africa, 1850-1939," Madelyn Lara's "Chinatown Declared a Nuisance: Creating a Public Health Crisis in Merced, California, 1883-1908," Sarah Lee's "Clean Sweeps and Chain Gangs: Extending the Carceral Net in Merced, California, 1880-1890," and T.R. Salsman's "Constructing Safavid Iran: Space, Pastoralism, Power, and Identity in Safavid Iran 930-1077/1524-1666." These articles help us understand Merced's history of racial segregation and policing in its broader social, political, and economic context, California's agrarian struggles in the face of agribusiness, colonial projects to eradicate indigenous forms of healing and political agency in Africa, and the pastoralist roots of cities in Safavid Iran. Please welcome me in thanking the editors and contributors of the *Journal* for this praiseworthy model of historical rigor and intellectual curiosity.

Romina Robles Ruvalcaba
Assistant Professor of History