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Title Page, Table of Contents, & From the Editor

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Psi Sigma Siren

The Journal of the UNLV Chapter of Phi Alpha Theta: Spring 2015





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From the Editor

This semester's edition of the *Psi Sigma Siren* showcases the hard work of several graduate students from the UNLV History program, and I believe their tireless dedication to the historian's craft is reflected by their articles and book reviews. We received numerous submissions, and I am proud of the projects that were accepted for this issue.

The *Siren* chose two articles written by graduate students for publication, and both offer compelling arguments about cultural structures that seek to control various forms of sexuality. Franklin Howard's essay about twentieth-century gay art contends that artistic representations of white and black men's bodies affirmed a sexualized racial hierarchy. Shannon Nutt's paper about sacred Mormon undergarments recounts efforts by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to define and limit the sexuality of female Mormons. In each case, cultural narratives about purity pervade the discourses surrounding sexuality, and each author carefully explicates how developments in the twentieth century reinforced structures of racism and sexism.

I am also pleased to present six book reviews written by students whose interest in environmental history was piqued during a recent colloquium. These students grappled with a relatively new sub-field of history, a sub-field which is rapidly evolving and diversifying. As a whole, their book reviews illustrate the shifting nature of environmental history and the theoretical, methodological, and historiographical debates that dominate current discussions about the role of the environment in history.

I would like to thank the authors not only for their submissions, but also for their enthusiasm about this issue of the *Siren*, which was born from a desire to demonstrate the outstanding work being done by graduate students at UNLV. I would also like to thank Dr. Marcia Gallo for continuously providing support and guidance for Phi Alpha Theta and all of its projects. Lastly, I'd like to thank Dr. Jeff Schauer for agreeing to become a faculty advisor for our chapter and for the help he provided in selecting submissions for the *Siren*.

– Lindsay Oden, July 2015