



Constructing the Past

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Editor's Note

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Editor's Note

The faculty and students of the Illinois Wesleyan University (IWU) History Department are proud to publish the first volume of *Constructing the Past*, a journal of the Nu-Gamma Chapter of Phi Alpha Theta and the IWU History Department. The articles in this first volume reflect the Department's interest in historical debates about evidence, issues of truth, and perspective. The student authors of these articles recognize that any construction of the past is fragmentary. For in relation to all historical subjects, historians might discover new and different kinds of evidence, rely on alternative methods for presenting and organizing evidence, and incorporate new perspectives on historical events and issues. These authors therefore question old historical interpretations and construct new arguments about those interpretations and about the historical issues surrounding them.

The Senior Seminar papers written by Sara Scobell and Tim Mealiff represent two upper-division students' attempts to grapple with the evidence related to two important individuals' lives and with how generations of historians have interpreted the significance of their lives. The other papers in this volume were written by lower-division students enrolled in the Department's Seminar in the Theory and Writing of History. These students—Lynn Seago, Kate Miles and Shawn Buhr—reflect on the problems associated with constructing the past while they simultaneously endeavor to compose their own narratives about the past.

Future volumes of *Constructing the Past* will include papers by students enrolled in all levels and types of history courses at IWU. Two Phi Alpha Theta members, Erika Rozinek and Lauren Olds, have volunteered to act as editor and assistant editor for volume two and work with the faculty advisor to select and edit papers for that volume. By the time volume three appears, *Constructing the Past* will be a journal whose articles are selected, compiled and edited entirely by IWU students.

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