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*To all lovers of history:
Laeta Lectio!*

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FROM THE EDITORS

Welcome to the Seventh Volume of the *Virginia Tech Undergraduate Historical Review*! Our team of undergraduate and graduate editors work to present the best available original undergraduate historical research from Virginia Tech and institutions across the East Coast. The *Review* seeks to provide undergraduate researchers with opportunities to improve their historical skills, experience the publishing process and, ultimately, to know the joy of seeing their hard work appear in print. Our board of undergraduate editors employs a blind review process, scoring each work according to a standardized rubric which emphasizes the author's engagement with the secondary literature on their topic, ability to create an argument from their primary source base and ability to clearly articulate their ideas. The excellence of the articles included in this volume stems from our author's hard work, dedication and willingness to accept and employ constructive feedback, as well as the long hours of analysis, proof-reading and effort on the part of our undergraduate, graduate and faculty editors.

For volume Seven we have expanded the scope of the *Review* in exciting new directions. This marks the first year that the *Review* will include historiographic articles in addition to pieces of original research. This represents an exciting opportunity to help undergraduates engage in and write about historical conversations. We have also included the winners of the Department's awards for Best Paper and Best Digital History Project.

Volume Seven begins with Courtney Ebersohl's "We Believed it to be honorable before God:" Religion in Enslaved Communities." Ebersohl adds to the growing body of literature on slave agency and argues that slaves used religious services and ideas to develop identities and communities that gave them a sense of value and equality. In "America Rock's Education: National Narratives and Historiographical Trends" Talia Brenner explores the connections between popular narratives, academic history and the popular children's show. Brenner argues that America Rock was largely representative of popular historical narratives of the 1970s, embracing a populist ethos but largely ignoring the perspectives of women and minorities. Genevieve Keillor adds to the conversation about representations of women in art in her article "Her beauty captivated his mind and the sword severed his neck!": The Changing Depiction of Judith Beheading Holofernes as a Reflection of the Role of Women in Society from the Pre-Renaissance to Contemporary Society." Keillor analyzes paintings of Judith Beheading Holofernes, describing the ways in which these paintings represent the gender norms of their creators and exploring how these norms and their incorporation into art changed over time. The History Department's 2017 Best Paper Award winner is Nala Chehade. In "Paint and

Politics: Analyzing the 2011 Egyptian Revolution through Graffiti” she explores the use of Graffiti during and after the 2011 Egyptian Revolution. Chehade argues that various Egyptians used the public forum of graffiti to create a plethora of alternative national narratives. The winner of the History Department’s award for the best digital history project is John Mark Mastakas. The *Review* contains a stable hyperlink to his blog, “The Kremlin Kronicle,” as well as a reflection where Mastakas discusses the ways in which a digital platform enhanced his work.

Our new historiography section features an article by Andrew Kapinos, entitled “Dismantling the Myths of the Eastern Front: The Role of the Wehrmacht in the War of Annihilation.” Kapinos notes that early historians of the Eastern Front in World War II tended to see the German Wehrmacht as separated from the atrocities associated with the war, largely because the political context of the Cold War limited the availability of non-German sources. He goes on to explore the development of a historical conversation in which more recent historians have taken advantage of an expanding source base and employed psychological and sociological concepts to understand the behavior of soldiers and demonstrated the complicity of the Wehrmacht in atrocities. Finally, the *Review* concludes with an interview that Andrew Kapinos and Grace Hemmingson conducted with renowned historian Geoffrey Megargee. Megargee was one of the scholars Kapinos mentioned in his essay for this volume, and when the opportunity came for us to interview him we could not pass it up! After a brief reflection by Kapinos, we have included the transcript of our conversation on his research on the Eastern front and war crimes, how he sees his work fitting into a larger conversation, and advice for young historians.

We wish to thank the faculty of the history department for their unwavering support, especially our faculty editor, Dr. Heather Gumbert, for her tireless work and careful eye. Thanks also go out to the chair of the department, Dr. Mark Barrow, as well as the founder of the VTUHR, Dr. Robert Stephens. This volume would not have been possible without the diligent work of our undergraduate editors and the many undergraduates who choose to submit their work to our publication. Special thanks are due to both the undergraduate editors and the faculty for sticking with us as we expand the educational mission the *Review* in exhilarating ways. Thanks also go out to you, dear reader, for without you we would be speaking to an empty room. Your support of undergraduate historical research gives us the heart to go on.

GRACE HEMMINGSON AND HEATH FURROW

Managing Editors