

Editors' Preface

As we reflect on the United States' 250th anniversary, we are mindful of the people who shaped this country; their dreams, beliefs, and struggles; their creative expressions, technological achievements, and intellectual endeavors—in short, what it means to be "Americans" in a global context. Echoing this, our colleague Oscar Flores's original cover illustration of this year's *Welebaethan*, titled "A Living Legacy: Honoring the Past, Cultivating the Future," pays homage to the organic roots and digital pathways that impact how scholars develop questions, conduct research, and formulate their historical interpretations.

We are pleased to present volume 53 (2026) of our journal, which features fifteen articles and essays by scholars from California State University, Fullerton (CSUF), as well as other universities across the country, including California State University, Sacramento; Lewis University in Illinois; and Troy University in Alabama. These exciting, imaginative, and comprehensive works include Michael Westfall's inquiry into "Saint or Witch? Douceline of Digne in Thirteenth-Century France;" Arjun Kraft's "deep dive" into "Watery Discourses in Seventeenth-Century England: Fishing, Society, and Divinity in Izaak Walton's 'The Compleat Angler';" Rielly Orrell's study of "Lady Rachel Russell's Beloved, Seditious Husband: Letter-Writing and Advocacy in Seventeenth-Century England;" Grace Engelking's analysis of "More than Canned Meat: The Rise of SPAM in World War II America;" and Bryan D. Eisenbise's exploration of "Mormonism and Constitutional Conflict: The Legal Evolution of an American Religion." The opinions expressed in this volume's articles, essays, editions, and reviews belong, of course, to the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the journal's editors.

Keeping with tradition, our volume also features first-time editions of primary sources from CSUF's University Archives and Special Collections as well as the Lawrence de Graaf Center for Oral and Public History. "Every—Last—Line: An Indenture of Dr. Peter Shoenberger's Real Estate Legacy in Pittsburgh (1859)" pertains to a Gilded Age aristocrat and his numerous heirs; "Got Seeds? Letters from Jens Pedersen to Edwin Haven, Cultivating the U.S. Midwest and Denmark (1875–1878)" highlights agricultural experiments and transatlantic exchange. "North America's Hepatics Fanatics: Alfred H. Brinkman's Letters to Fay A. MacFadden (1932–1944)" showcases botanical taxonomies and personal hardships.

Establishing a dialogue between the United States Semiquincentennial (2026) and Bicentennial (1976), all three oral histories edited here were recorded fifty years ago. Those interested in Southern California's rich mining history may appreciate "Robert Harris Talkin' Rocks in 1976: An Interview with a Southern California Miner, Metallurgist, and World War I Veteran." "Digesting Oriental-Occidental Fusion in 1976: Ching Wah Lee's Memories of San Francisco's Chinatown" reviews local changes over time and Lee's acting career. Meanwhile, "A New Yorker, Communist, and Admirer of C. L. R. James: Walter Goldwater's Candid Recollections in 1976" covers Cold War politics and James's impact on regional Marxists.

Reviews offered in this year's *Welebaethan* address a wide range of topics portrayed in books; exhibitions; films, documentaries, and television shows; as well as video games. They comprise Kolin McVeigh's meticulous assessment of Peter Pomerantsev's monograph *How To Win an Information War: The Propagandist Who Outwitted Hitler*; Jeffrey McMurry's enthusiastic look at CSUF's very own Heritage House; Christine Hoo's glowing review of the television series *When Life Gives You Tangerines*, a Korean 1960s–1990s period drama; and Nathaniel Valenzuela's captivating evaluation of *Assassin's Creed Shadows*, an action-adventure game set during Japan's Sengoku era.

The publication of this year's volume would not have been possible without the tremendous support and guidance from so many people. For that, we extend our thanks and appreciation to—

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- Oscar Flores, CSUF History major and creator of this volume's original cover art;
- CSUF's Theta-Pi Chapter of Phi Alpha Theta (History Honor Society); as well as
- all participants (faculty members and alumni) in our journal's triple-blind review process.

We extend our utmost gratitude to all the scholars whose articles, essays, editions, and reviews appear in this volume; without their hard work, this publication would not be possible. Finally, we extend our thanks to you, our readers: Enjoy!

Fullerton, in the summer of 2026

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