

FROM THE EDITOR, MARC JASON GILBERT

## Brief Summary of the Issue

The content of this issue of *World History Connected* ranges from food history to teaching trans-regional trade and cultural diffusion in the post-classical and early modern world. It offers a very short paragraph on the subject of this issue's Forum or section of topical articles, which is devoted to innovative research and teaching about the environment and ecology in world history. This is followed by summaries of the Forum's constituent articles, of the related special feature offering a survey of the course of, and discourse over the Earth Day movement; and of the two individual articles that take the reader to a globalizing China and Italy. It then shares the issue's table of contents, a list of the issues' book reviews, and information about the journal, including its guide for submissions.

### The Forum: Environment and Ecology in the World History

As a new biography reminds us, the former American "First Lady" known as Ladybird Johnson, was an avid botanist and environmentalist during and after she left the White House in 1969. She is credited with coining one of the earliest, simplest and most universal of modern environmentalist aphorisms: "The environment is where we all meet; where we all have a mutual interest; it is the one thing all of us share." It has taken some time for the literal truth of that statement to strike home to the movers and shakers of humankind, but strike home it did this spring, when it was acknowledged by the smallest first steps between China and the United States to formally recognize just how fragile that environment has become and, by association, how much farther we have to go in terms of the study of ecology.<sup>1</sup>

As will be noted elsewhere in this issue, ten years ago Micah Muscolino guest edited *World History Connected's* first Forum on the environment in world history. In that Forum he referenced historian John R. McNeill,<sup>2</sup> and included an article by Richard Tucker,<sup>3</sup> that became part of a process in which world historians have joined in work once the sole domain of environmental historians: studying and teaching about the "interaction between humans and the natural environment, and assessing how the earth's environments have conditioned human history and how human action has affected ecological relationships."<sup>4</sup>

This issue's Forum, guest-edited by Brian Holstrom with the blessings of Muscolino, McNeill, and Tucker, includes nine articles that offer rich archival work and innovative teaching methods. The focus of the first two articles by Holstrom, and by Elizabeth Drummond and Amy Woodson-Boulton writing jointly, provides insight into the challenges and rewards of enriching or restructuring a world history survey around the environment and ecology. Cynthia Ross and Marsha Robinson offer original research and lively discussion to the growing number of studies exploring the relationship between colonialism ecology and the environment, while also providing materials necessary to bring their analyses into the classroom. Mathew Herbst demonstrates how any environment can serve as a basis for experiential learning of historical perspectives on a climate zone many tend to just ignore or avoid, the desert. His article is followed by Chris Tiegreen and Beth Petitjean's articles which offer case studies of late medieval and early modern Italian environmental policies and water management with world history ramifications, one heavenly and the other material. Petitjean provides student group activities as part of a 5 option package that includes online learning exercises. John Maunu's database of digital resources supporting the Forum includes material for teaching and learning about the current debates surrounding environmental movements and ecological concerns.

## Special Feature

The Forum is followed by a related Special Feature, a public lecture by world and environmental historian Sarah Hamilton, "Earth Day 2021: Reflecting on the Past, Looking to the Future" in which she briefly traces the evolution of the Earth Day, its growth and its critics.

## Individual Articles

Thomas Mounkhal's article is related to the Forum articles by Tiegreen and Petitjean in that they all focus on Italy, with Mounkhal contributing to the extensive section of Petitjean's classroom approaches and exercises. Mounkhal uses his own dramatic photographs of local architecture and related classroom activities to identify the influence of trans-regional linkages in world history from trade to cultural diffusion that connected northern Italy and Venice to the rest of the world.

China historian Thomas David DuBois revisits and updates anthropologist James Watson's classic study, "Golden Arches East: McDonald's in East Asia," with an exuberance for the study and teaching of food and world history familiar to those readers of *World History Connected* from past articles by Candice Goucher, Jonathan Reynolds and Rick Warner.

## About the Journal and Author's Submissions

Throughout its fifteen-year history *World History Connected* (ISSN 1931-8642) has been devoted to research and the scholarship of teaching history. Its title reflects the journal's commitment to assisting both scholars and practitioners to invigorate and expand the reach of research and the teaching of world history and global studies. Its guest editors and editorial staff include past (and now in-coming) presidents of the World History Association and award-winning history educators at all levels of instruction.

The journal's publisher, the University of Illinois Press, estimates that it currently serves 1.85 million discrete readers of at least two articles annually and receives 6 million visitors to its website. The journal welcomes submissions of articles and book reviews on any subject germane to world history including (a) essays on the state of the field; (b) case studies, or topical overviews that cross regional boundaries to examine such issues as gender, technology, demography, social structure, or political legitimacy; and (c) the evaluation of curriculum and innovative instructional methodology. The journal also seeks peer reviewers to analyze recently published titles in the field of world history. The journal is open-sourced (free): its staff and contributors are not compensated for their work, and it is funded by individual contributions and organizations committed to advancing its goals. It accepts no paid advertising.

Prospective authors should read, and incorporate into their submissions, the guidelines provided at <https://worldhistoryconnected.press.uillinois.edu/submissions.html>. The journal is normally published 3 times annually (February–March, June–July, and October–November). To submit an article, please send an abstract, draft, and/or completed essay with full contact information to the editor-in-chief, Marc Jason Gilbert, at [mgilbert@hpu.edu](mailto:mgilbert@hpu.edu). Book review correspondence should be directed to Cynthia Ross, the journal's Book Review Editor, at [Cynthia.Ross@tamuc.edu](mailto:Cynthia.Ross@tamuc.edu).

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Steven Le Myers, "Despite Tensions, U.S. and China Agree to Work Together on Climate Change," April 18, 2021, *New York Times*, April 18, 2021, A, 17, accessed April 12, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/17/world/asia/china-us-emissions.html>.

<sup>2</sup> J. R. McNeill, Jose Augusto Padua, and Mahesh Rangarajan, eds. *Environmental History: As if Nature Existed* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

<sup>3</sup> Richard P. Tucker, "World History Connected," 8.2 (June 2011), accessed April 12, 2021, [https://worldhistoryconnected.press.uillinois.edu/8.2/forum\\_tucker.html](https://worldhistoryconnected.press.uillinois.edu/8.2/forum_tucker.html).

<sup>4</sup> Micah Muscolino, "Forum Introduction: Reading and Using the Forum on the Environment in World History," *World History Connected*, 8.2 (June 2011), accessed April 12, 2021, [https://worldhistoryconnected.press.uillinois.edu/8.2/forum\\_muscolino.html](https://worldhistoryconnected.press.uillinois.edu/8.2/forum_muscolino.html).