

EDITOR'S NOTE

Studying history connects us to our past. Such was the thinking that led to the creation of this magazine ninety-nine years ago. Editor George Cottman and his contributors believed themselves engaged in a vital battle against forgetfulness and aimless change—a battle to rescue obscure documents and preserve fading memories. Around them industry, large-scale agriculture, urbanization, and a growing population of immigrants threatened the rural and small-town Indiana that they and other longtime Hoosiers recalled. With their artistic and literary contemporaries, the new generation of Indiana historians crafted a picture of a bygone place of self-sufficient craftsmen and farmers, of simple folk wisdom, and shared moral values.

One of the ironies of studying history is that it opens our eyes to the inconsistency of the record of the past—a record that is for the most part one of change and disagreement. Things—to modify the old cliché—never were what they used to be. In the years since our first issue in 1905, the changes that turn-of-the-century Indianans lamented have themselves become the subject of historical analysis, even of sentimental longing.

The journal itself—established as a bulwark against the ravages of time—has inevitably changed in the century since its first appearance. Our familiar red cover, introduced by editor James Madison in 1987, now joins its predecessors (see facing page) as evidence of that steady change. Beloved as was the previous design, we have chosen to honor the journal's pending centennial by offering a new cover, reflecting our commitment to bring fresh perspectives to our traditional mission. The new design, by Mary Blizzard of AB Graphics in Bloomington, draws on type and illustrations developed by

Hoosier artist Gustave Baumann for James Whitcomb Riley's *All the Year Round*, published in 1912. With its strong sense of place and its focus on the passage of the seasons, Riley and Baumann's book seems an apt source of inspiration for a journal dedicated to examining the effects of time upon Indiana's culture.

For further thoughts on change, continuity, and the role of the *IMH*, you may wish to visit Editorial Assistant Keith Erikson's analysis, in this issue, of last year's reader survey. As Erikson shows, our readers did not shy from expressing their vigorous (and often conflicting) opinions about the journal, its contents, and even the meaning of "history" itself. Your survey comments, coupled with the high rate at which you responded, help to confirm our feeling that this publication can and should remain vital for its readers today—that our mission must not stop at only preserving evidence of the past. If history is to connect us to the past, then it must also connect us to the same passion and controversy that consumed George Cottman and his readers.