

Bringing Research to the General Public

Results of the 2003

Indiana Magazine of History's Readers' Survey

KEITH A. EREKSON

One year ago, subscribers to the *Indiana Magazine of History* received a questionnaire regarding the journal. Its main purpose was to gauge readers' opinions about the magazine's content. Responses poured in; by the time I joined the editorial staff in June more than one thousand of them had piled up in the *IMH* office.¹ What follows is a reflective analysis of the content of those responses. It draws both on numeric data—which reveal significant trends and aggregates—and on hundreds of written comments from individual readers, which highlight their unique interests and suggestions, their views about history publishing, and their thoughts about Indiana and its history. This report was not produced by a committee or a computer. Instead, it represents a personal perspective that I hope can serve as the next installment of an ongoing “conversation” between the readers and editors of the *IMH*. I also hope it will tell you something about yourself as a reader, as a Hoosier, and as a part of a community devoted to carrying Indiana's history into the twenty-first century.

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¹The numeric responses were entered into a computer database. Survey I.D. numbers were assigned to each response, the number being stored electronically with the entered data.

INDIANA MAGAZINE OF HISTORY, 100 (March 2004). © 2004, Trustees of Indiana University.

Figure 1

***Indiana Magazine of History* Readers' Survey**

March 2003

Please help the *Indiana Magazine of History* by taking a few moments to complete the simple questionnaire below. You can return this form to the IMH office, postage-paid. Survey results will be summarized in an upcoming issue.

Please answer each of the following questions on a scale of 1 to 5. Feel free to use the space at the bottom of this form for further comment.

1) agree strongly 4) disagree somewhat	2) agree somewhat 5) disagree strongly
<p>1. I enjoy most of the articles in the IMH. 1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>2. I like reading the reviews in the IMH. 1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>3. I have decided to read (or not read) a book, based on its review in the IMH. 1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>4. I glance through the IMH, but don't usually read it carefully. 1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>5. I enjoy reading the IMH as much as I do <i>Traces of Indiana and Midwestern History</i>. 1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>6. I would like to see the IMH publish more research on present-day Indiana. 1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>(If you checked "1" or "2" on the question above, please rank the following topics in order of your level of interest)</p> <p>____ culture (literature, art, music, film, sports, etc.).</p> <p>____ politics and economics</p> <p>____ environment and science</p> <p>____ other (specify) _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>7. I would be interested in reading more articles about Indiana's neighboring states. 1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>(If you checked "1" or "2" on the question above, please list the cities, states, or topics that most interest you.)</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>8. I would like to learn more about local-history activities around the state. 1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>9. I am particularly interested in the following topics or periods (rank in order of your level of interest):</p> <p>____ Native American and frontier period</p> <p>____ Civil War</p> <p>____ Gilded Age and early 20th century</p> <p>____ Depression through postwar era</p> <p>____ recent/contemporary issues</p> <p>____ other (specify) _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>____ (no particular preference)</p>

Please use the space below to add any further comments or suggestions about the IMH.

THANK YOU!

Fold and seal here

READERS RESPOND TO THE SURVEY

The survey accompanying the March 2003 issue consisted of nine questions and an added space for written comments (see Figure 1). The questions solicited readers' opinions about the articles, book reviews, topics, and time periods covered by the magazine. The majority of the questions asked readers to circle their opinion on a five-point scale ranging from "agree strongly" to "disagree strongly" with "no opinion" in the center. The surveys were sent to 8,142 subscribers; and, in the ensuing months, 1,219 were returned, a response rate of 15 percent.

The responses to the eight numeric questions are compiled in Table 1. Chart 1 summarizes graphically the three questions that received the most uniformly positive response: numbers one, two, and eight. Combining the "strongly agree" and "somewhat agree" responses for these three questions, we see that 82 percent of readers enjoy most of the articles, 74 percent like reading the reviews, and 73 percent would like to learn more about local history activities around the state. Other questions yield more equivocal responses. A slight majority of readers—52 percent—indicated that they usually read the magazine carefully. Just under half—47 percent—agreed that they have decided to read or not read a book based on its review in the magazine. Readers were evenly split on the question of whether they are interested in reading about Indiana's neighboring states.

In other cases, the pattern of readers' responses revealed interesting variations from one question to the next. When plotted graphically, the responses to question four—which asks if readers only glance through the magazine—and to question five—which inquires as to whether they enjoy the *IMH* as much as they do *Traces of Indiana and Midwestern History*—reveal high levels of both agreement and disagreement, with relatively few responding "no opinion" (Chart 2). On the other hand, responses to questions six and seven, designed to gauge interest in recent history and in neighboring states respectively, form a smooth "bell-curve" pattern, with the largest number of respondents declaring "no opinion" on question six and "somewhat disagree" on seven (Chart 3).

Readers did more than simply circle the numbered responses offered them. They thought about the questions, puzzled over their nuances, and even rewrote them to their liking.² In the spaces provided at the bottom of the

²One respondent questioned the use of the word "most" in question one. Another felt that question five was unclear, while a third rewrote the question. Still another challenged the editors' choice of terms by crossing out "Civil War" and writing in, "The War of Northern Aggression!" Others seemed to believe that "Native Americans" and the "frontier period" should have been separated in question nine. On question nine, a respondent marked "no preference," but wrote in, "just less on war, men, and politicians."

Table 1. IMH Reader Survey Responses, March 2003

	Question 1		Question 2		Question 3		Question 4	
Agree strongly	418	34.3%	398	32.6%	226	18.5%	112	9.2%
Agree somewhat	581	47.7%	504	41.3%	339	27.8%	324	26.6%
No opinion	93	7.6%	176	14.4%	376	30.8%	105	8.6%
Disagree somewhat	97	8.0%	97	8.0%	134	11.0%	319	26.2%
Disagree strongly	17	1.4%	25	2.1%	103	8.4%	318	26.1%
Blank	13	1.1%	19	1.6%	41	3.4%	41	3.4%
Total	1219	100%	1219	100%	1219	100%	1219	100%

	Question 5		Question 6		Question 7		Question 8	
Agree strongly	332	27.2%	131	10.7%	91	7.5%	431	35.4%
Agree somewhat	344	28.2%	269	22.1%	260	21.3%	451	37.0%
No opinion	132	10.8%	316	25.9%	245	20.1%	175	14.4%
Disagree somewhat	280	23.0%	270	22.1%	305	25.0%	66	5.4%
Disagree strongly	103	8.4%	200	16.4%	287	23.5%	21	1.7%
Blank	28	2.3%	33	2.7%	31	2.5%	75	6.2%
Total	1219	100%	1219	100%	1219	100%	1219	100%

Q1: I enjoy most of the articles in the IMH.

Q2: I like reading the reviews in the IMH.

Q3: I have decided to read (or not read) a book, based on its review in the IMH.

Q4: I glance through the IMH, but don't usually read it carefully.

Q5: I enjoy reading the IMH as much as I do *Traces of Indiana and Midwestern History*.

Q6: I would like to see the IMH publish more research on present-day Indiana.

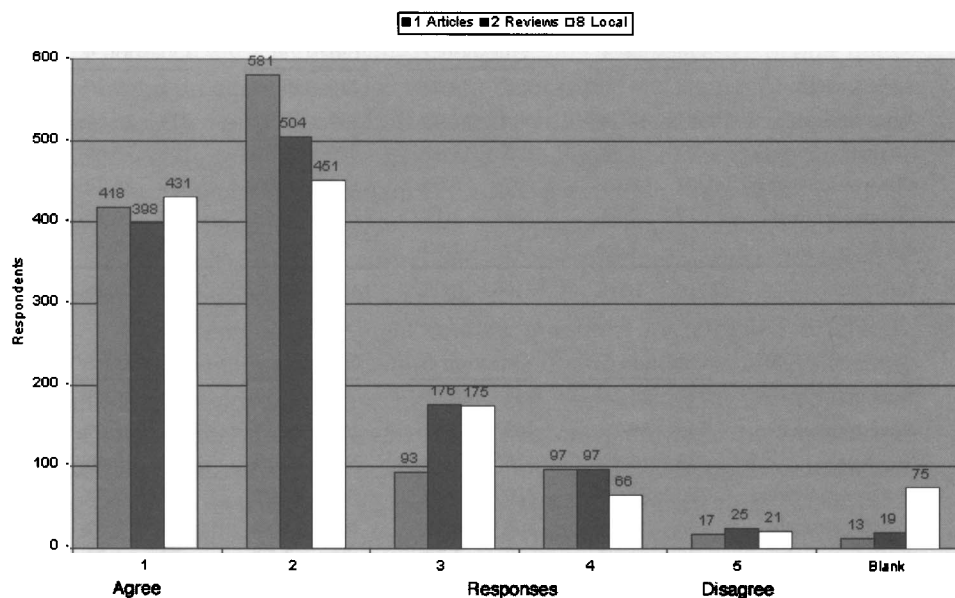
Q7: I would be interested in reading more articles about Indiana's neighboring states.

Q8: I would like to learn more about local-history activities around the state.

questionnaire and in questions six, seven, and nine, 711 respondents (58.3 percent) wrote more than one thousand comments.³ Their responses add a depth and complexity to the numeric answers, highlighting the interests, tensions, concerns, and values that readers bring to the *IMH*. While readers often agreed, they were just as likely to contradict and challenge one another.

³Of the 1,219 surveys returned, 177 (14.5 percent) included a written comment after question six, 359 (29.5 percent) after question seven, 160 (13.1 percent) after question nine, and 365 (29.9 percent) added comments at the bottom. Many readers wrote comments in more than one space, so that the total number of comments, 1,061, exceeded the number of respondents who made comments, 711 (58.3 percent).

Chart 1. Responses to Questions 1, 2, and 8



“A TREASURE OF RESEARCH”

As I stated earlier, most readers expressed their approval of the *IMH*. They described the magazine as “excellent,” “a treasure of research,” or a “great asset to the state,” thanking the editorial staff for its “good work” and urging them to “continue [their] high standards.”

Most readers responded positively, as well, to the *IMH*’s articles, commenting that they “marvel at the time and effort that go into these articles”; that they are “quite pleased with the articles & the variety of subjects chosen”; and that they find the articles “well written” and “always educational and worthwhile.” On the other hand, we received a much higher comment rate from those who disapproved of the articles. As a rule, this minority felt the articles are too long. One reader equated brevity and interest: “Some articles are too long and, thus, boring.” Other readers found the articles “dull,” “dry & technical,” or “uneven—sometimes stodgy.”

Critics of the *IMH*’s book reviews—while also in the minority—reflected a range of opinion. “Too many book reviews,” wrote one, while another wished

Chart 2. Polarized Responses to Questions 4 and 5

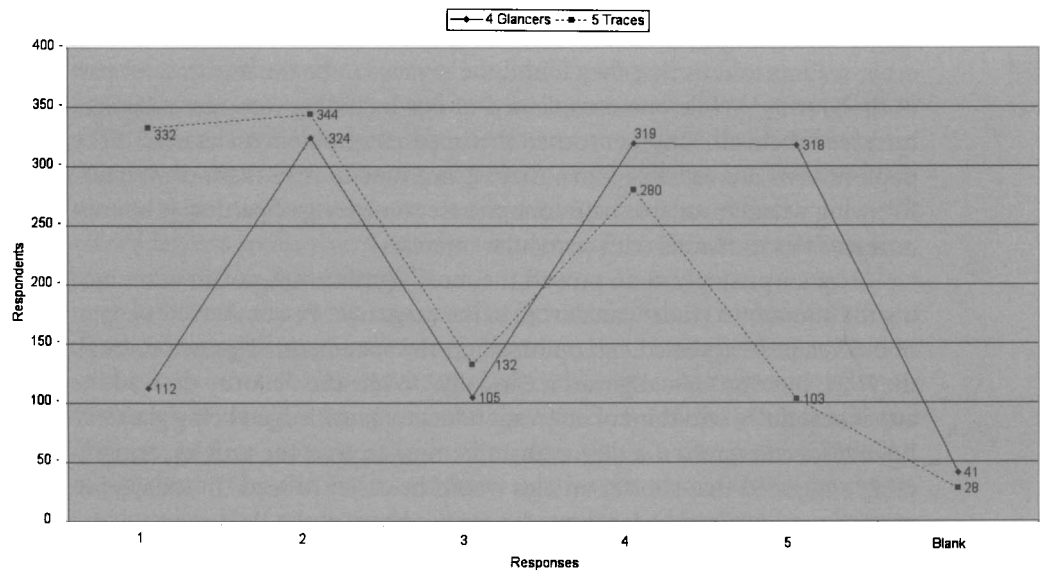
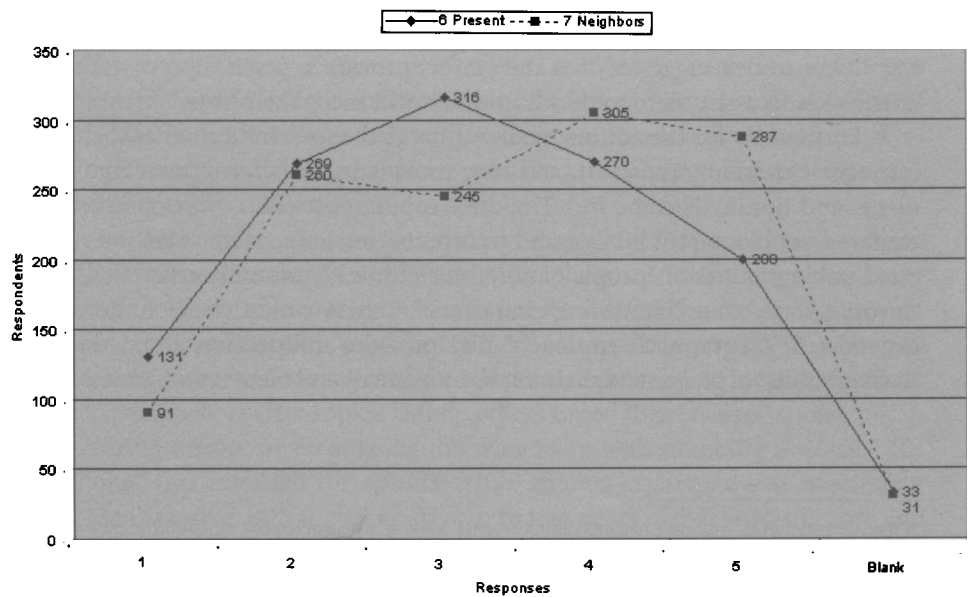


Chart 3. Responses to Questions 6 and 7



the editors “would cut down on the reviews and have more feature articles.” One respondent found the reviews “so short & superficial as to be of little value,” and another called for “more books about Indiana.” At the same time, other readers told us that they found the reviews to be the most useful part of the journal. While one complained of our including “too many books I can’t read them all,” another turned this apparent problem on its head: “The book reviews are valuable when there is not time to read them completely. Knowing what is available helps one choose something of particular interest or refer titles to friends with particular interests.”

Not surprisingly, time proved the most significant factor in determining the attention a reader can devote to the magazine. Fewer than 10 percent of our readers expressed “no opinion” on the statement, “I glance through the *IMH*, but don’t usually read it carefully.” While the majority do read the articles carefully, one-third of our respondents acknowledged being glancers. Four readers expressed a desire for more time to read the articles, and another suggested that shorter articles would be easier to read “in today’s fast pace[d] world.” One reader skims “to see what’s up in the *IMH*, even when I don’t read a whole article,” and another notes, similarly, that “If I see an article that catches my interest, I read it . . . otherwise I skim through.” Such selective glancing evidently has its payoffs: “Glancing thru the last issue and not interested in “Bonds’ Fraud” article [volume 99] when on p. 28 the name of my Great Grandfather, James Cravens, jumped out. I knew he was in Congress from Washington Co. but didn’t realize he was a state agent in NY for a short period. Thank you!” Finding time to read the *IMH* is also related to the reader’s interest in the topic. “Articles appeal to our personal interests.” One reader suggested that the editors provide a description of each article to help assist them in deciding which will merit their time.

Fortunately for the editors, readers provided ample indication of their interests. Questions six, seven, and nine provided spaces for written comments and hundreds came in.⁴ The three topics most often mentioned by readers were biography, history, and transportation. Some readers are interested in biographies of “people of note,” “celebrities,” “prominent families,” “favorite sons,” and “interesting characters.” Others would prefer a more generalized “biographical approach” that provides information about the “backgrounds” of people and their role as individuals and members of groups.

⁴Questions six, seven, and nine inquired about readers’ interest in recent history, neighboring states, and time periods.

Many indicated an interest in “common people,” “everyday unsung people,” “man on the street stories” about daily life, and the ways in which people met the demands of situations at hand. In general, readers’ interests are summed up by the comment of one respondent who wrote, simply, “People—past and present.” Although I will save for later a discussion of people’s interest in history, I will note here that the interests mentioned within this broad category included historic sites, museums, and preservation. The third major category, transportation, was represented in frequent requests for work on wilderness trails, river and lake travel, canals, railroads (including electric interurbans), and aviation.

A second, somewhat less requested cluster of topics includes the areas of religion, migration, local history, genealogy, and military history. Readers called for studies of religious institutions, ideologies, and preachers; for information on specific groups such as the Quakers, Amish, Mennonites, and Shakers; and for more on religion’s broader influence on politics, literature, and society. They also expressed interest in learning more about the migration patterns that contributed to Hoosier society, and in seeing more material on specific communities, towns, and counties. Genealogy remains a popular topic, as does military history including especially the Civil War, although readers are interested in twentieth-century conflicts as well.

Finally, some topics attracted the interest of small numbers of readers. These include: pioneers and settlers, education, colleges and universities, business, industry, manufacturing and labor, Native Americans, women, African Americans, agriculture, architecture, literature, the environment, cities, science and medicine, politics, geography, and archaeology. Several readers who “enjoy coverage (exposure to) topics” encouraged editors to continue to present “a good variety” and to “rotate all of them.” One reader appreciates the *IMH*’s “editorial creativity and willingness to address a broad range of topics and cultures,” and another remarked that the “quality of research & writing is more important than topic.”

IMH readers expressed as wide a range of ideas about how they want their interests packaged as they did about those interests themselves. Some readers “find the unchanged character of the *IMH* to be comforting,” appreciate its “predictability,” or “like *IMH* as it is” and “hope you don’t make any drastic changes.” Some warned the editors against “trending toward superficial or politically correct topics,” while others urged them not to “equate popularizing history or broadening the readership with dumbing it down.” “Be bold,” one exhorted the editors, while another counseled just as strongly, “Don’t tamper with it after nearly a hundred years of a defined purpose and excellent record.”

Readers calling for change made a wide variety of suggestions. Some asked for interviews, autobiography, personal or family history; others for transcriptions and annotations of diaries, journals, letters, and documents; others for review essays that place new books in the context of past scholarship; and still others for more themed issues. One recommended an annual article on Indiana historiography, featuring “themes, trends, philosophy, interpretations, leading thinkers, schools of history, and needs and opportunities for research.” High school teachers expressed interest in reading reviews of textbooks with Indiana content and in finding suggestions for using the magazine in the classroom. One reader thought “it might be interesting to many of your readers to learn about how an article is researched and written—the process of studying history.” There were two requests to involve more Indiana residents in writing articles and reviewing books, and one request to form local interest groups to discuss history. Other suggestions included making the magazine available as a talking book, and in online form.

Finally, readers advised editors on the physical packaging of the magazine. One counseled editors to “dump the stodgy old red cover and get a new, lively design!” Another reminded, “We do judge our reading materials by their covers.” Others called for “a little pizzazz,” a “face lift,” or a “more dynamic design.” To enliven the “almost textbook” layout, several readers called for more pictures, maps, and illustrations to “highlight” and “enhance” text. One respondent was thankful for the inclusion of maps “so I can travel to visit locations.” Others called for larger fonts because, as one reader put it, “This is the perfect reading for seniors but who can see it? I am 60 & can’t see it. What about my mother who is 95?” Another reader wrote: “I really appreciate your placing the footnotes/reference notes at the bottom of each page rather than at the end of the article. Your method allows for faster reading with better comprehension.” One reader indicated that external characteristics do not make the magazine: “Don’t try to ‘fix’ it by making it more ‘reader friendly,’ i.e. pictures, color, fancy fonts, slick paper. Leave it. Keep the contents interesting and factual and provable. That is the essence of a history magazine.”

“LIKE APPLES AND ORANGES”

In addition to thinking about the *Indiana Magazine of History*, the survey also asked readers to compare the magazine to the Indiana Historical Society’s companion magazine, *Traces of Indiana and Midwestern History*. When asked if they enjoy reading one as much as the other, more than half (55.4

percent) answered affirmatively, while just under a third (31.4 percent) indicated a preference, and 10.8 percent had no opinion. However, the written comments discourage drawing conclusions from the numeric data for this question, as readers who selected the same numeric response wrote conflicting comments.⁵

Some readers took the opportunity to express their high opinion of *Traces*: “I love *Traces*,” wrote one; “*Traces* is a superb magazine,” said another. But just as interestingly, question five served as a prompt for readers to size up their interest in history publications in general, and to comment in particular on the relationship of the *IMH* and *Traces*. Dozens of written comments indicate that readers have a sophisticated and integrated approach to their reading of history. One reader indicated that preference depends on the issue, “some months one way some another.” Another said that his ideal magazine “would fall between *Traces* & the *IMH* but my having to look to both doesn’t seem a bad thing.” From another, “I enjoy reading both for different reasons—they don’t compete and should not be compared.” One reader left the question blank and wrote, “the comparison with *Traces* is like apples and oranges.”

While many readers explicitly preferred one magazine to the other, they agreed that they like having both. One wrote that the complementary magazines well serve readers’ “intellectual sophistication and diversity of complex historical experiences.” “If you are considering diverting your format to include that of *Traces*,” another warned, “you should consider ceasing. *Traces* established itself precisely against your format. . . . [S]erve the audience for which *IMH* is founded.”

“BECAUSE IT IS ABOUT INDIANA AND ABOUT HISTORY”

Readers’ comments reveal a variety of responses to the two words that anchor the magazine’s name: Indiana and history. Of those readers who volunteered an opinion on the statement that they “would be interested in reading more about Indiana’s neighboring states,” 62.8 percent disagreed while

⁵Readers who selected “strongly agree” also wrote in comments indicating different interpretations of the question. One wrote, “love both”; another wrote, “more,” next to the reference to *Traces*; others rewrote the question to read “more than,” or “much more,” or “better than *Traces*.” A reader who responded negatively to the question chose “no opinion,” and then wrote in “enjoy *Traces* the most.”

37.2 percent agreed. "Do not do this!," one wrote, "Seems like an Indiana History publication should confine itself to Indiana." Other readers mentioned that they "would read a different publication" or "join that state's society if interested," reminding editors, "It's not their history we're paying to read about." One in five respondents listed no opinion or left the question unanswered.

Still, a significant minority of respondents expressed an interest in reading about the history of other states—with conditions. Nearly three hundred do want to read about other states in the Midwest, states that border Indiana or are within driving distance. Some felt that any state once part of Indiana or the Old Northwest was acceptable. More than two dozen respondents emphasized that, while the magazine's focus should remain on Indiana, there was value to discussing issues in the context of the larger region. But there were definite limits. "We belong, and read," one reader emphasized, "to get INDIANA history."

If there was one question on the survey that most divided readers it was question six, which asked readers to agree or disagree with the statement: "I would like to see the *IMH* publish more research on present-day Indiana." One in four readers registered no opinion or left the question unanswered, while 38.5 percent disagreed and 32.5 percent agreed. Several readers reminded editors that "H" stands for "History" and that the present is not history. One reader asked if it was a "joke question," while another wrote simply, "no, No, NO." These readers felt the editors should "leave recent topics to magazines and newspapers," that recent events are "interesting but should be in *Traces* or similar journal," and "if I wanted to find out about current events I would not be taking the IM of History!"

Since readers express (and pay money for) their interest in history, it might be appropriate to ask them to define history and "the past." One reader wrote, "This question is perplexing," and dozens of others felt similarly provoked to state their views about what is too recent and what constitutes the past. From their comments emerge some common themes about how we define the past and distinguish it from the present.

One adjective used by readers to describe the past is that it is "pure" but could be "diluted" by "interpretation" or "articles on other states that don't include Indiana." Other readers described the past as a place of truth, of substance, a place where "facts" reside and have "lasting importance." Good history is, therefore, "factual and provable." This past can be "corrupted" by "partisan politics," by "propaganda," or by the "slanted bias in contemporary media and academia." When the pure past is diluted or the true past is corrupted, it becomes "what we have lost."

For these respondents, the past is clearly distinct from the present. It is a different place, a foreign place, a place that people in the present do not fully understand. Because “I can’t step into a time machine and go back,” implored one reader, “let someone who was there tell me!” “Let the people talk, they know more than present day researchers,” wrote another. One reader insisted that contemporary concerns and ways of thinking are “esoteric” and have no place in a historical journal. From the perspective of such readers, the past is made of “nonsociological stuff,” is “less social, economical, and political,” and is, well, just “more historical.”

Many of our readers are eager to read stories about real people who “met the demands of the situation at hand” and helped to “provide the needs of the community.” These stories can be “brought to life” and “kept alive” by historians who are “fun,” or “interesting and engaging.” This living past centers on places that can be visited, on objects in museums, and in documents in libraries.

Readers recommended several ways to distinguish “past” from “recent.” Some distinguished the two by date or event, although they disagreed on the appropriate cut-off point. “Remember history is about the past,” wrote one, “not last month or last year.” When does the past become history? For one respondent, events that happened before the Vietnam War are historical. Others specified a quarter of a century, a third, one hundred years ago or more, while a fourth reader set the standard at “prior to 1900.” Other readers were not so strict, arguing that history should explore “much [of the] twentieth century,” should “not stop at World War II,” or should include “the 1960s onward.”

Obviously, distinguishing past from present is a dicey business, and readers puzzled over its complexities. One felt that the years from the 1950s through the 1970s are “recent,” but allowed that readers too young to have experienced the time period, and even those a little older, needed help “to refresh memories.” Another added that “it takes time and distance to create an historical perspective—time for documentation to become available—time to assess real significance, time to put some distance to contemporary political & cultural pressures & prejudices.” Still others saw this shifting perspective as further reason to include recent events: “Some contemporary issues should be included because in the future they could be more reliable than research writers. Time tends to temper or drastically change events. Somewhat like the game of telling stories and how the story changes as it goes around a circle of people.”

Generally speaking, readers felt safest pushing the past farther back in time. Question nine listed a handful of loosely defined time periods—Native

Table 2. Responses to Question Nine
 “Rank in order of your level of interest”

	Native American and frontier period		Civil War		Gilded Age and early 20th century		Depression through postwar era	
1	357	29.3%	223	18.3%	155	12.7%	103	8.4%
2	200	16.4%	326	26.7%	174	14.3%	156	12.8%
3	104	8.5%	145	11.9%	306	25.1%	192	15.8%
4	105	8.6%	101	8.3%	144	11.8%	312	25.6%
5	57	4.7%	39	3.2%	35	2.9%	37	3.0%
6	4	0.3%	4	0.3%	1	0.1%	1	0.1%
Check	153	12.6%	157	12.9%	107	8.8%	103	8.4%
Blank	239	19.6%	224	18.4%	297	24.4%	315	25.8%
	1219	100%	1219	100%	1219	100%	1219	100%

	Recent/ contemporary issues		Other		No preference	
1	37	3.0%	27	2.2%	45	3.7%
2	35	2.9%	5	0.4%		
3	68	5.6%	9	0.7%		
4	69	5.7%	1	0.1%		
5	408	33.5%	8	0.7%		
6	13	1.1%	8	0.7%		
Check	24	2.0%	71	5.8%		
Blank	565	46.3%	1090	89.4%	1174	96.3%
	1219	100%	1219	100%	1219	100%

American and frontier period, Civil War, the Gilded Age and early twentieth century, the Great Depression and the postwar era, and the recent past—and asked readers to rank them in order of interest. There is a direct correlation between distance from the present and number of votes, as well as a direct correspondence between recentness and number of unselected periods. In other words, the longer ago the time period, the more likely it was to get a vote (Table 2).

The comments of a number of readers taken together suggest three strategies for connecting the distant past with recent years and with the

present. The first is to view the present as “history in the making” and to learn about “today’s history makers.” Another approach is to draw comparisons between the past and present in order to show progress or growth. Such comparisons might be educational if drawn “between historical events and current events—like the anti-German attitudes of the world wars compared to the current anti-Middle East attitudes.” A third strategy would, more generally, highlight “the impact and contemporary relevance” of the past by examining contemporary issues “from a historical standpoint” and “trac[ing] how Indiana evolved into the twenty-first century”; such an approach might answer such questions as how the “past affect[s] current state policy,” or why Hoosiers are “so conservative.”

Finally, readers expressed a natural interest in relating their own lives, and the lives of their families, to the past. When asked if they would like to learn more about local history activities, nearly three-quarters of the respondents said yes, while 14 percent had no opinion. Dozens of written comments listed the names of the respondent’s ancestors and asked that something be written about them. One respondent wrote, “History begins with [my ancestor]!” Others shared tidbits about their families and offered their family papers for historical research. A few requested articles guiding readers to “resources available to do genealogical and historical research,” or “that deal with the historic events that impact the study of genealogy.”

From this perspective it comes as no surprise that a reader in Gary wants more articles on cities, that a reader in Fort Wayne would like to see a greater emphasis on the history of northern Indiana, that an Indianapolis resident requests more on Marion County, or that Hoosiers collectively ask for more about “my home state.” Perhaps these connections can be explored in sophisticated and scholarly ways that avoid what one reader described as “a tendency during the last few years of reverting to the type of ‘this is what my granddaddy or other illustrious ancestor did in the old days’ article.” One respondent summed up the attitude of countless others by writing, “Please remember that we request *Indiana Magazine of History* because it is about Indiana and about History.”

What is it, then, that unites the vastly different points of view that *IMH* readers bring to the magazine? Perhaps it is a shared sense that the *IMH* is “scholarly,” “academic,” “detailed,” and “documented,” that it is “educational and worthwhile,” that it helps them “to understand what shaped our getting to where we are,” and that “it brings research to the general public.” The *IMH*, most seem to agree, “serves an important role in publishing well-researched scholarly papers,” and “is an excellent source of information,” “a stimulus” for those who are interested in learning about, connecting with,

and sharing Indiana's past. Some readers "keep every copy forever" while others, perhaps drawing on this sense of the journal's public value, donate their copies to libraries or schools for wider circulation. Respondents recommended that the magazine be placed "in every city or county library" in the state, and that it be read and appreciated by "younger busy people" who might otherwise lose touch with their past. Perhaps the ultimate expression of Hoosier pride came from the reader whose comment serves, as well as any, to summarize the results of our inquiry: "not perfect, but better than other states'." It is, wrote another reader, an "important record of Indiana's past."

