

## A Note From the Founders

*Ezra's Archives* was born over dessert crepes in San Francisco's Marina district in the summer of 2010. San Francisco seems like an odd, serendipitous place for a distinctly Cornell adventure to begin, and it was. But, it is also fair to say that the journal and its parent organization, The Cornell Historical Society, really began several months earlier in a classroom on the fourth floor of Uris Hall, in a seminar on the 19th century Russian intelligentsia. For it was in that very small, very full room that we encountered the professors who later became our faculty advisors and connected with the students who later dedicated their time and efforts to our academic endeavor. It was in that seminar that we, the co-founders, met each other for the first time. In San Francisco half a year later, we began to develop our vision for a journal.

Since that summer dinner, there have certainly been ups and downs. We were woefully inexperienced when we set out to produce the first issue of *Ezra's Archives*, but we learned as we worked and our confidence as editors and historians grew as the journal grew. Eventually, when we moved on from Cornell, the journal continued to thrive in the capable hands of another generation of editors, as we hope it will continue to do for years to come. However, this particular issue of *Ezra's Archives* is especially meaningful as it marks an important moment--the 5th anniversary of our very first published issue, which coincides with Cornell's sesquicentennial celebration. As such, we would like to take the time to reflect back on what we have achieved so far with *Ezra's Archives*, what it has meant to the Cornell history department and wider undergraduate community, and our hopes for the journal's future.

After outlining our goals over the summer, we returned to Ithaca in the fall of 2010 intent on recruiting a group of likeminded students to take our vision from the abstract to the concrete. Over the course of the next four months, we were joined by several incredibly talented and committed individuals, including two of CHS and *Ezra's Archives'* earliest and most ardent faculty supporters: Claudia Verhoeven and Holly Case. It is not enough to say that Professor Verhoeven and Professor Case were mere advisers to our experiment-- the time, advice and insight they provided to us were crucial to the success of the journal. Simply put, without them, it is unlikely that *Ezra's Archives* would exist. The road from theory to practice was not a simple one. It was a long and difficult journey from October of 2010, when we unanimously decided to

name the journal *Ezra's Archives* in honor of the university's founder, Ezra Cornell, to the spring of 2011 when the first issue finally lay printed and bound before us. We learned how to think ahead, problem solve, and delegate, but also to have faith in each other, our project, and ourselves. Walking up the steps of McGraw Hall together in a freak April snowstorm carrying boxes heavy with two hundred copies of the first issue is a moment we will never forget.

The journal grew with each subsequent issue. We expanded our selection process to solicit submissions from universities across the country, engaging Cornell students with historical scholarship on a national level. We also extended the reach of CHS through social events, dinners with faculty and the History Peer Advisor program. Recently, new leaders have developed their own initiatives and shaped the Cornell Historical Society and *Ezra's Archives* into the vibrant and dynamic organization it is today. The current editors-in-chief's introduction to this issue describes some of the exciting changes that have come to CHS over the past year. Overall however, the biggest success of *Ezra's Archives* has always been the supportive academic community it inspired. With each successive issue of *Ezra's Archives*, we did together what none of us could have done alone and shaped Cornell legacy we hoped to leave behind.

The community that we built with *Ezra's Archives* has continued to flourish at Cornell with the next generation of editors and around the country through our growing network of alumni. CHS alumni are literary agents, graduate students in history and other fields, circus performers, medical students, law students, and high school teachers in areas of high need. We have gone on to study at Yale, Loyola, Oxford, Johns Hopkins, Brown, and Duke and have worked everywhere from small businesses to non-profits to nationwide companies to the National Institutes of Health. Even though we've dispersed, we will all always feel at home on the hill.

This past winter brought the two of us full circle back to San Francisco. Naturally, the conversation turned to *Ezra's Archives*, and the first time that we met in the same place to discuss a goal which at the time seemed almost out of reach. Looking back almost five years later, we have not only achieved that goal -- the publication of a volume of peer-reviewed undergraduate historical scholarship -- but far surpassed it. What we started, and what others have carried forward and developed, is a unique Cornell community, a group of people who are passionate about the myriad of ways in which history can be studied and written, but also a group truly committed to supporting one another as scholars and individuals. We hope that *Ezra's Archives* continues to flourish and grow over the years ahead. *Ezra's Archives* is important because it represents the

best of our field -- a community of scholars that is young, bold, creative, brilliant, and collaborative -- and gestures towards a bright future for history.

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Co-Founders of *Ezra's Archives* and The Cornell Historical Society