

If you drive north up Columbia Bottom Road from St. Louis and turn into the park, you can end up on a handsome platform that overlooks the place where the Missouri and Mississippi rivers meet. When a friend and I ride our bicycles up there, we always stop and take a break to watch the rivers, look around, and think.

It's a contemplative place. It is a modern and new space, yet somehow ancient. The forested strip of land in St. Charles County contrasts with barges carrying industrial products and raw materials. The two dozen miles from my home to that point constitute a blending of our entire region: an urban, industrial, and crowded environment juxtaposed with farmland, eagles, and turkeys. Ultimately, the route to the confluence is a microcosm of all the history, nature, economy, policy, and built environment that converge to make up our region. It is, well, a "confluence."

Hence, the name of this publication, *The Confluence*. We want to bring together the best scholarship about our region in lively and interesting ways. We want to mix past and present, old and new, science and art, history and current affairs. Every issue of *The Confluence* will offer a journey through new parts of our region that you will find compelling, interesting, and worthy of discussion.

Consider our first issue. Mark Abbott's article brings up interesting questions about regional governance and planning for progress in a changing world, whether it is because of the advent of the automobile and suburb or the rise of the "new urbanism" and the electronic world. Mark Alan Neels' work on anti-German sentiment can't help but remind us of the efforts to politicize immigration in our own age. David Straight's look at the use of the mail to sell a patent medicine painkiller and government's efforts to regulate it comes to mind whenever we receive an unwanted email touting the benefits of new "miracle meds." Paige Mettler-Cherry and Marian Smith document not just the impact of our actions on the environment and its plants, but on our ability to change it as well. William Glankler's writing on Frank Ricks suggests much about emerging race relations today by studying a seminal moment in American history at the close of the Civil War. At a deeper level, these are articles that connect us not only to our past, but also to one another in a shared experience.

With *The Confluence*, we want to build and advance the notions of thinking, questioning, and analyzing the world around us, to navigate our way back to common shores. We hope you enjoy this premier issue of *The Confluence*, and write to us with your thoughts at confluence@lindenwood.edu.

Jeffrey Smith, Ph.D.
Editor

