

Report on the Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society

As we have been in communication several times in the past few months, this report will be a brief review of the outlook for the Journal and a projection of its future in 2023.

Journal's Publication Schedule

The failure of the Journal to arrive at expected intervals at libraries and other institutional subscribers, in addition to individuals, has caused problems and unhappiness among those groups. In cooperation with the University of Illinois Press and its fine production staff, as well as Tim Draper, Special Projects Editor, and Aaron Lisec, Book Review Editor, we developed a program to eliminate this problem during the next calendar year. This involves an accelerated production schedule. I'll be happy to address any questions about that during our Zoom meeting or, if you prefer, via email (rsampson@illinois.edu) at your convenience.

Here is what's happened:

- The combined Fall-Winter 2022 issue went out in early July and should now be in the hands of all subscribers.
- The Spring 2022 issue is now in production at U of I Press with a targeted mailing date of late August to September.
- The combined Summer-Fall 2022 issue is on the verge of production at the Press and is set for a December publication date.
- The Winter 2022 issue is in the works and should go to the Press for copy editing and other production actions by mid-August if not sooner.
- The Spring 2023 issue is next in line and will go to the Press in the next two months.
- This schedule should allow us to have all 2023 issues in subscribers' hands BEFORE the end of that calendar year and, if not, close to that target. If things go as planned, we should be on the regular schedule in 2023 or, at the latest, 2024.

Submissions

Thanks to the work of Mark Hubbard, past Journal editor, along with Bill Furry, Mary Lou Johnsrud, and the guest editors who served after Mark's retirement, a strong backlog of submitted and accepted articles developed. We are working through those articles.

Fortunately, we continue to receive excellent submissions. Thanks to the hard work and quick turnaround of our readers, we have several accepted articles waiting in line. If this rate of submission (usually at least one a month; sometimes more) is the new standard or a temporary blip remains to be seen. I tend to believe it will continue.

Challenges: most submissions continue to deal with Chicago-related topics—all good and representing new directions in historical research. However, one of my priorities is to achieve geographical and topical balance in each issue. I will be working in cooperation with others to find ways to stimulate strong submissions dealing with Illinois history outside Chicago. Let me emphasize that this is NOT a major problem, and the preponderance of Chicago topics is understandable. But we will try to stimulate research and writing about all areas of the state.

Overall

One of the stresses created by the accelerated production schedule is in the book review section of the Journal. Tim Draper accumulated a good backlog of reviews but with issues going to the Press more quickly and two of them double issues, Aaron Lisec is working hard to get the regular number of book reviews in each issue. I have told Aaron that whatever he can get together for each issue will be acceptable. This may mean only a review or two at times. The book reviewers are cooperating, and I believe that this challenge is temporary and will disappear as time passes and reviews begin to accumulate. Tim has exciting ideas for the new Special Projects section, and you'll be reading the results in future issues.

Let me note the indispensable work of Jeff McArdle, the Press editor assigned to the Journal in developing the accelerated production schedule.

If you have any questions or comments at any time, please let me know.

Best,
Bob Sampson