

February 17, 2021

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Dear Dean Clement and Board of Trustees members:

The American Historical Association is alarmed to learn that the University Press of Kansas is facing financial cuts or perhaps even elimination. Since its founding in 1946, the press has developed one of the most renowned lists in the discipline of US history, especially in the fields of political history, legal history, military history, and western and midwestern history. Historians, including many of the AHA's 11,000+ members, view the press as a distinguished, efficiently run organization that punches well above its weight in intellectual rigor and scholarly import—a shining example of the impact a press can make on the historical discipline even with limited resources. While we are aware of the challenges facing any university administrator in the face of budget constraints, the University Press of Kansas is a vital shepherd of historical knowledge and should not be sacrificed to short-term exigencies or abandoned to the calculations of profitability. The accomplishments in this case offer a model for how a small subsidy can yield great benefits to the university, the scholarly community, and the reading public.

Despite its small budget and staff, the press has consistently published groundbreaking works by some of the leading scholars in US history. Its enviable list of authors reads like a Who's Who of significant American historians: Beth Bailey, Paula Baker, John Morton Blum, Albert Broussard, Donald Critchlow, Philip Deloria, Robert Ferrell, Lawrence Friedman, Jennifer Frost, Lewis Gould, Harold Holzer, Bruce Kuklick, Michelle Mart, Char Miller, Allen Matusow, Alan Nadel, Peter Onuf, W. J. Rorabaugh, Virginia Scharff, Joel Silbey, Brooks Simpson, David Trask, Melvin Urofsky, R. Hal Williams, David Wrobel, and Nancy Beck Young. Maria Montoya consistently publishes field-defining works that both advance the scholarly conversation and serve the public good. Series such as The American Presidency, American Presidential Elections, and Modern War Studies have featured some of the leading works of history in their respective areas.

The press has also developed a reputation for acquiring and publishing important first books by promising historians; examples include Kelly Baker's *Gospel According to the Klan: The KKK's Appeal to Protestant America, 1915–1930*; Edward Gutiérrez's *Doughboys on the Great War: How American Soldiers Viewed Their Military Experience*; Farina King's *The Earth Memory Compass: Diné Landscapes and Education in the Twentieth Century*; Brian Ingrassia's *The Rise of Gridiron America: Higher Education's Uneasy Alliance with Big-Time Football*; and C. J. Janovy's *No Place Like Home: Lessons in Activism from LGBT Kansas*. The press serves as a crucial venue for these emerging scholars and writers.

As academic publishing has evolved over the past century, the world's great universities have embraced the responsibility to support their presses and thereby to sustain scholarship and scholarly communication and to contribute to public culture and the creation of new knowledge. Over the past 75 years, few presses have done so much to burnish their home institution's reputation, to advance the careers of promising scholars, and to make vital contributions to historical knowledge as the University Press of Kansas. Its demise would be an incalculable loss for the historical discipline and for generations of American historians yet to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James Grossman".

James Grossman
Executive Director