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Editor's Note

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Although digital humanities is among the fastest-growing fields today, American studies' engagement with the digital did not emerge only in the last few years. As the guest editors trace in their introduction, since the mid-1990s scholars of American studies have explored the digital in many ways, as a site for exchange and sharing of resources, a tool for new methods of analysis, and an object of critical inquiry. Innovative works dealing with digital technology and media appeared in *American Quarterly* before the Hawai'i-based team took its editorial helm in 2014. Nonetheless, the rapidly expanding scope and changing nature of "the digital" and the newly emerging methods of both utilizing and interrogating it in our scholarly practice called for a more robust and sustained engagement with it in our journal. One of our first steps in this effort was the launching of the Digital Projects Review. Yet the Board of Managing Editors' relative lack of expertise in digital humanities resulted in an unfortunate stumbling at the initial stage of this endeavor. The critical voices raised by many members of the Digital Humanities Caucus of the American Studies Association were important in orienting the journal's engagement with digital humanities in ways that are reflective of the critical practices in the field.

Out of the discussion between the Digital Humanities Caucus and the *AQ* Board of Managing Editors emerged the proposal for this special issue, "Toward a Critically Engaged Digital Practice: American Studies and the Digital Humanities," which the Board of Managing Editors enthusiastically endorsed. During the editorial process for this special issue, the Board of Managing Editors learned a great deal from the guest editors and the contributors about diverse forms of knowledge production, collaboration, and dissemination as well as engagement with the multiple publics. We are deeply grateful to the guest editors—Lauren Tilton, Amy E. Earhart, Matt Delmont, Susan Garfinkel, Jesse P. Karlsberg, and Angel David Nieves—who have taken on this bold project and worked through the intellectual and logistical complexities of putting together this issue.

While the works represented here build on earlier works in the field, this special issue indeed represents a bold new step for *American Quarterly*, not only in terms of the subject matter and methods but also in the editorial process and the form it takes. This is the first issue of the journal in which a substantial portion of its content exists outside the traditional pages between the covers and takes a form other than scholarly articles. The digital projects illustrate

that rigorous scholarship in American studies is produced in many forms beyond conventional academic prose and point to many promising directions for further excavating, compiling, and analyzing data and communicating the findings to a wide audience. The topics, methods, and ideas showcased in all sections of this special issue—essays, digital projects, forums, and review—are exciting in their diversity and groundbreaking in their interventions. The Board of Managing Editors would like to congratulate the guest editors and the contributors for this exciting compilation and celebrate this important step in the history of the field and the journal.

Mari Yoshihara
Editor