“The historian sets himself a dangerous, even an impossible, task,” writes the historian Daniel J. Boorstin. Far removed from the event being examined, the historian must piece together stories using imperfect sources. Rather than uncover history, she creates it from little more than relics—fragments—of the past. The sources she uses may or may not represent a sample of the experiences people really had. If “survival [of sources] is chancy, whimsical and unpredictable,” as Boorstin argues, assessing the provenance, representation, and significance of sources is that much more essential. The historian cannot perfectly succeed in telling history “as it really happened,” as the nineteenth-century German historian Leo- pond Von Ranke suggested could be done. Yet by evaluating, scrutinizing, and questioning remaining evidence, she can hope to capture the essence of lives and experiences once lived.

The essays in this issue represent fine examples of current practitioners working with varied sources. Archaeological artifacts as historical sources, for instance, are rarely represented in the pages of UHQ. However, our lead article shows how artifacts have given us a more complete understanding of past logging operations in the Uinta Mountains. Decaying cabins, flumes, and crib structures remain as tangible reminders of this unique chapter in Utah and western history. These and many other artifacts reveal much about how tie cutters for the railroad industry worked, and they also give sometimes surprising insight into the social history of the men, women, and children who lived in logging camps. This article is also a reminder that sometimes local actions—in this case, the harvesting of trees in a forgotten corner of the state—served national purposes.

Through court proceedings, press coverage, and personal interviews, our second piece reconstructs a story that is both sensational and familiar—how, in 1908, a teenage boy from a respected family murdered a pregnant young woman with whom he was keeping company on the sly. This piece of intrigue occurred in what might seem the most unlikely place: Orderville, Utah, whose residents had lived communally in the 1870s and 1880s. Yet this case involved more than the relationship between two teenagers. A scaffolding of social expectations, history, and law surrounded the young people and played some part—however minimal—in Alvin Heaton Jr.’s decision to murder Mary Stevens.

Our third essay brings us to a little-known episode in the life of a familiar Utah and Mormon figure, James E. Talmage. Readers see a different side to the university president and theologian—a man obsessed with scouting geologic formations in the peaks and canyons of southern Utah and northern Arizona. If he did not have the precision or expertise of his contemporaries Clarence Dutton and Grove Karl Gilbert, who both authored geological monographs, Talmage had the determination to fulfill the expedition’s objectives. This essay, based primarily on Talmage’s record of his travels, is a fine example of narrative-driven history tuned to the finer details.

Newspaper accounts and especially oral histories reconstruct a different kind of encounter. The next article examines the cultural outcomes of a “peaceful invasion” of southeastern Utah by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). Of course, that New Deal program brought economic and environmental changes to Utah, but its members—the “Cs”—also participated in a host of cultural exchanges with the people of San Juan and Grand counties. Young men from gritty eastern cities taught boxing, baseball, and the Lindy Hop to the people of Blanding and Monticello, even as they learned about American Indian culture, small-town entertainment, and the ways of local girls.

The spring issue concludes with an homage to an unlikely landmark, a horse-barn-turned-art-studio on the Utah State University campus. In this short piece, Emily Wheeler recounts a few of the memories associated with this structure, from its raising in 1919 to its razing in 2015, showing how multifaceted and deep the memory of a place can be.