

The logo is a large, stylized letter 'C' in a light green color with a dark green outline. It is positioned on the left side of the cover, partially overlapping the green and red vertical stripes.

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Table of Contents

Report on EHA 2016.....	3
Prizes Awarded at EHA 2016.....	7
Interview: Cormac Ó Gráda.....	20
Interview: Knick Harley.....	24

The Newsletter of the Cliometric Society

Editor: Mary Eschelbach Hansen

Graphic Design: Ben Gregson

Photo Credits: Summer LaCroix

Editorial Office: Department of Economics, American University, 4400 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington DC 20016

Send contributions to mhansen@american.edu

Report on EHA 2016

This article is by Matthew Curtis, Kara Dimitruk, Erik Johnson, Oriol Pons Benaiges, Walter Scott, and Joshua Stachura, and it was edited by Mary Eschelbach Hansen.

The 2016 Meetings of the Economic History Association convened in Boulder, Colorado, the weekend of September 16-18, 2016. The Program Committee (Alan Dye, Edwynna Harris, Richard Hornbeck, Gary Libecap, and Noam Yuchtman) organized sixteen exciting sessions.

Thanks were offered to local arrangements committee (Carol Shiue, Murat Iyigun, and Ann Carlos) for making sure there was plenty to do in addition to the meetings. Special thanks go to graduate students Jakub Lonsky, Ethan Schmick, and Xiaoxi Zhao for helping with computer setup and other issues.

The Association thanked the sponsors of the meeting: Univ. of Colorado at Boulder, Indiana Univ. and the Ostrom Workshop, Lee and Mary Alston, the Institute of Behavioral Science (with special thanks to Myron Gutmann and Jane Menken), Global Financial Data, and Cambridge Univ. Press. For their hard work, thanks also went to Cong Liu, Keith Meyers, Lana Sooter, Janice Jeffryes, Jessica LaRue, Melissa Sue Piper, and Maria Oliveras

The first session, “Conflict and the State of Europe,” began with Seth Benzell (Boston Univ.) presenting his paper co-authored with Kevin Cooke (also BU) on “A Network of Thrones: Kinship and Conflict in Europe 1495-1918.” They trace the decline in war in early modern Europe and consider whether kinship ties between monarchs can account for the trend. They use plausibly exogenous variation in the strength of the kinship network: the randomness in the timing of deaths in these networks. Decreases in kinship are associated with increased frequency and duration of war.

Phillip Hoffman (Caltech) began with a discussion of the key assumption of their paper, which is that kinship networks increase the costs of war and rejecting alliances. He asked for a more detailed treatment of the costs and benefits of kinship, such as taxes.

Jordi Vidal-Robert (Univ. of Sydney) then presented

“*Habemus Papam?* Polarization and Conflict in the Papal States.” This work, co-authored with Francisco J. Pino (Univ. of Chile), looks at polarization and fractionalization in the College of Cardinals using randomness in the timing of conclave and the vote to select new popes. Fractionalization has a limited effect on internal conflict, but polarization is associated with increased internal conflict. They argue that polarization leads to weaker popes, which makes later internal conflict among the papal states more likely. The importance of this channel dissipates following reforms to the College of Cardinals between 1586 and 1588, which attenuate the political consequences of divisions among the cardinals.

The discussion began with Álvaro La Parra-Pérez (Weber State Univ.), who suggested that losing faction rebels drive conflict instead. He also noted that, because of the dispersion of elites across space in Europe, internal divides within states may be relevant for understanding conflict among the Papal States.

The final paper of the session was given by Jakob Schneebecher (Yale Univ.). “State Formation and Social Conflict: The Political Economy of the Old Swiss Confederacy” explores whether the unique accession rules in the Old Confederacy in Switzerland from 1291 to 1526 mitigated social conflict between rich city-states and rural communes. He considers the trade-offs between economies of scale leading to larger federations and preference heterogeneity between urban versus rural interests.

Cihan Artunç (Univ. of Arizona) pointed out that one of the unique features of the Old Confederacy in the model is that unanimity restricts expansions to Pareto improvements. He asked for more context on the causes and timing of wars. Particularly, he wondered whether there were any annexations of undesirable territories in order to reach a more desirable one.

Dan Bogart (UC Irvine) opened the session on Transportation and Development with “Structural Change: Railways, Coal and Employment Growth in Nineteenth Century England and Wales.” The paper, co-authored with Leigh Shaw-Taylor and Max Satchell (Univ. of Cambridge), measures the effects of the expansion of the railway network between 1817 and 1881 on population and the share of employment in different sectors of the economy. Since the expansion

of the railway network is likely to be endogenous, the authors use an instrumental variable based on the optimal railway network that would link major cities minimizing elevation. Access to the railway network led to an increase in population and employment in the secondary and tertiary sectors.

The discussant was W. Walker Hanlon (UCLA), who asked the authors to consider whether they could capture economic growth (beyond population growth) separately from the reallocation of resources across space. Audience members suggested that all effects should be added up to make a welfare statement. There were also some concerns about the limitations of the data, since occupational data are only available for men, providing a necessarily partial picture of the structural change in terms of occupations.

Dustin Frye (Vassar College) then presented “Transportation Networks and the Geographic Concentration of Industry.” The paper uses the construction of the Interstate Highway System between 1962 and 1997 to study the effect of new transportation networks on the location of industries. Given that the expansion of the highway network is likely to be endogenous, the author uses an instrumental variable based on the optimal location of highways (according to an older military plan) and the optimal timing of construction (based on the importance of each highway segment). The extension of the highway network caused economic and employment growth around the network, but most of this growth is due to the reallocation of existing population and employment. The paper also finds that the expansion of the highway network led to increased geographic concentration of industries.

Taylor Jaworski (Queen’s Univ.) focused his discussion on the distinction between the short and long run effects of the highway expansion. He wanted to know more about the extent to which changes were simply a short-run stimulus generated by spending on highway construction. Other participants suggested that the paper should consider the roles played by other types of ground transportation, including preexisting roads. It was also suggested that the empirical approach should be embedded in a theoretical framework of agglomeration effects.

The third paper of the session was “Moving to Opportunity: Railroads, Migration and Economic Mobility,” and was presented by Santiago Pérez (Stanford Univ.). The paper studies the rapid

expansion of the railway network in nineteenth-century Argentina to understand its effects on geographic and economic mobility. Given that the expansion of the railway network is likely to be endogenous, the author constructs an instrumental variable (*Dear reader, Are you detecting a pattern?*) based on the optimal railway network that would connect the main cities in Argentina while minimizing the network’s length. The paper finds that the expansion of the railway network led to a significant increase in geographic mobility as well as intergenerational economic mobility.

In the discussion of this paper, James Feigenbaum (Princeton and Boston Univ.) suggested looking into where people move to and from, as opposed to only measuring how many people move. Feigenbaum also noted that the effects of the expansion of the railway network seem very large given the relatively small reduction in transportation costs implied by the expansion of the railway. Richard Hornbeck (Univ. of Chicago) suggested expanding the paper by measuring how much structural change can be attributed to the expansion of the railway network.

The first paper of the session on the long-run impact of the Civil War was “The Effect of Fathers’ Wealth on Sons’ Adult Outcomes in the Nineteenth Century: Evidence from the Civil War.” It was presented by Leah Boustan (UCLA). The paper, co-authored with Philipp Ager (Univ. of Southern Denmark) and Katherine Eriksson (UC Davis), studies how the wealth shock caused by the Civil War was transmitted from fathers to sons. Following 10,000 pairs of fathers and sons from the U.S. South, the authors find that fathers’ real estate wealth before the Civil War predicts their sons’ incomes in 1880, while slave wealth has little predictive power. Moreover, sons of wealthier fathers were more likely to move to the city and were more likely to experience upward occupational mobility.

Joseph P. Ferrie (Northwestern Univ.) praised the paper as a significant contribution that unites two often separate literatures: the literature on intergenerational mobility and the literature on the effects of the Civil War. Ferrie also noted that the paper is likely the first of many to use newly digitized micro data for the United States, which allow linking individuals across censuses during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Allison Shertzer (Univ. of Pittsburgh) then presented

“The Long-Run Effects of Losing the Civil War: Evidence from Border States.” This paper, co-authored with Shari J. Eli (Univ. of Toronto) and Laura Salisbury (York Univ.), examines how migrations caused by the Civil War contributed to the division of communities. The authors follow a sample of soldiers from Kentucky who served in either the Confederate and Union Armies. Using data on pre-war occupation and place of residence, the authors find that Confederate soldiers were, in general, positively selected. The authors uncover very different migration patterns for Confederate and Union soldiers after the war, implying that the decision to serve on one side or the other had long-run economic consequences.

In his discussion, Suresh Naidu (Columbia Univ.) worried about the selection problem that the sample is likely to have, as soldiers were not randomly picked. Naidu also related the findings of the paper to the controversial idea that sorting people across space might be a way to increase welfare by avoiding conflicts between communities.

Jeffrey G. Williamson (Harvard Univ. and Univ. of Wisconsin) and Peter H. Lindert (UC Davis) concluded the session with their presentation of “The Civil War Revisited: Losing World Leadership, Gaining Emancipation, Widening Northern Inequality.” The authors present new estimates of income-side GDP per capita for the U.S. between 1860 and 1870 and use them to draw several conclusions on the economic effects of the Civil War: (1) the Civil War caused the largest redistribution of income and wealth in U.S. history; (2) the high income inequality characteristic of the U.S. North before 1860 carried on during the Civil War; (3) the Civil War caused a decline of about 25 percent of GDP per capita, reversing the advantage that the U.S. had over Great Britain; (4) the Civil War witnessed the end of a long reversal of fortune turning the South into the poorest region of the U.S.; and (5) the income of freed slaves rose by about 30 percent and their labor force participation decreased, converging towards that of whites.

Robert A. Margo (Boston Univ.) praised the paper as a significant addition to the growing literature on income inequality. Margo noted that, although the qualitative results of the paper are in line with previous work, the quantitative results are somewhat at odds with conventional wisdom. Margo also appreciated the contribution of regional estimates of GDP per capita with racial breakdowns.

To start the session on Banking Risk, Policy and Institutions, Anna Grodecka (Sveriges Riksbank) and Antonios Kotidis (Universitat Bonn) presented “Double Liability in a Branch Banking System: Historical Evidence from Canada.” The paper shows that bank leverage decreased after the repeal of double-liability in Canada. The authors conclude that branch banking was an important source of Canadian banking stability.

Discussant Eric Hilt (Wellesley College) noted that the results are very much at odds with the American experience. He was concerned, also, that double-liability was unlikely to be exercised. He worried about high correlations between the independent variables and suggested a different way to capture the treatment effect. Michael Bordo (Rutgers) asked for clarification of the term “loan companies” and suggested that the authors discuss the structure of these companies in greater detail. Eugene White (Rutgers) emphasized the need to control for the many changes during the time period. White also stressed the fact that during WWII the government forced banks to hold government bonds rather than riskier loans, so the causality is not so clean-cut.

“Stealing Deposits: Deposit Insurance, Risk-Taking and the Removal of Market Discipline in Early Twentieth Century Banks,” by Charles Calomiris (Columbia Univ.) and Matthew Jaremski (Colgate Univ.), examines the state banking precursor to the FDIC. This early form of deposit insurance caused banks to compete aggressively for deposits of uninsured banks. Ultimately, the state banking experiment in deposit insurance collapsed.

Discussant David Wheelock (St. Louis Fed) began with the funny comment that “deposit insurance is popular with everyone except economists.” He went on to praise the data set gathered by the authors and stressed the need to differentiate between adverse selection and moral hazard: Did deposit insurance encourage greater risk taking, or did deposit insurance simply keep poorly-managed banks in business?

In the Q&A session, Claire Brennecke’s (FDIC) self-introduction to the audience generated some laughter, given her employer. She emphasized the need to differentiate between the different state deposit insurance schemes.

Geoffrey Williams (Transylvania Univ.) – sporting a BoE tie – presented the final paper of the session,

“‘Lending Money to People Across the Water’: The British Joint Stock Banking Acts of 1826 and 1833, and the Panic of 1837.” This paper examines the American bullion accumulation of the 1830s, but from the British perspective. The author demonstrates how the Bank of England (“BoE”) raised interest rates in an attempt to retain bullion.

Larry Neal (Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) served as the discussant. Neal thought that this was a great paper, particularly because it showed the learning process of the BoE. Neal commented that he thought Andrew Jackson was the worst President in American history and wanted Williams to talk more about his role in the Bank War. Michael Bordo (Rutgers) twice asked about silver flows from Mexico.

Ellora Derenoncourt (Harvard Univ.) opened the session on Trade and Migration with “Atlantic Slavery’s Impact on European Economic Development.” The paper examines trans-Atlantic slavery’s contribution to European city population growth from 1514 to 1866. She notes that, though we know a great deal about the adverse long-run effects of slavery on Africa and South America, we know little about its effects on European development. Using British port books that she collected from the National Archives, she constructs an instrument for slave voyages. A 10 percent increase in slave voyages corresponds with a 1.2 percent increase in city population. Her results are robust to the inclusion of controls for all overseas trade, showing that overall trade did not drive both population growth and slave voyages from European cities participating in the slave trade.

The official discussant was unavailable, but EHA members stepped in to fill the void. The first part of the discussion, initiated by Robert Wright (Augustana Univ.), focused on concerns about the policy implications of research: morally wrong activity can have positive economic effects, which was reminiscent of critiques levied against Fogel and Engerman’s *Time on the Cross*. Another part of the discussion provided ideas to help Derenoncourt. Specifically, Mark Koyama (George Mason Univ.) suggested looking at variation in British naval control over the period as a possible source of exogenous variation in the costs of sending slave ships. Dan Bogart pointed out that port log records may vary both in the quantity and diversity of trade in a port, so adjusting for both of these factors could strengthen the main results.

Jenny Guardado (Georgetown Univ.) then presented her co-authored work with Daphne Álvarez Villa (Oxford) on “The Long-Run Influence of Institutions Governing Trade: The Case of Colonial and Pirates’ Ports in Mexico.” The paper describes the effects of colonial and illicit trade in Colonial Mexico from 1521 to 1810 on poverty and state-capacity as measured by tax revenues in contemporary municipalities. They aim to identify separately the channels of state capacity and the volume of trade on long-run economic development. Using historical records of smuggling and piracy on the Mexican coasts between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, they find that increases in both illegal and colonial trade leads to significantly better development outcomes today. The results are robust to instrumenting for trade using the occurrence of natural harbors and other geographic features. They argue that the relationship between smuggling trade activity and improved contemporary outcomes suggests that the positive benefits of trade outweigh the negative consequences of reduced state-capacity in these locations.

Luz Marina Arias (CIDE, Mexico) began the discussion by suggesting that there may have been other factors driving the limited ports distribution in Colonial Mexico. Specifically, uncertainty over trade in this period contributed to development of monopolies that provided both trade and security in concert. Moreover, she suggested there was evidence of corruption and bribes in colonial ports, which could indicate that the observed effects shown in the paper are size of trade effects as opposed to distinctly identifying both state capacity and the volume of trade channels. She also brought up that legal trade appears to have a robust negative relationship with tax-revenues today, which she argued weakened the authors narrative and was worthy of further investigation. Hoyt Bleakley (Univ. of Michigan) suggested that the authors look at the size of the upstream market from their identified ports. Finally, Anne McCants (MIT) turned the conversation to the pirates themselves. She wondered whether it mattered if the smugglers were local or foreign.

For the third paper of the session, Edward Kosack (Xavier Univ.), presented “The Long-Run Development Impacts of a Guest Worker Program: Evidence from the Bracero Program.” He argues that previous research often characterizes migrant worker programs in terms of either the harm to native workers or migrant workers. Using household survey data from the Mexican Migration Project he finds

Prizes Awarded at EHA 2016

Allan Nevins Prize for the best dissertation
in U.S. or Canadian economic history

James Feigenbaum for “Essays on Intergenerational Mobility and Inequality in Economic History,” completed at Harvard University

Alexander Gerschenkron Prize for the best dissertation
in non-U.S./Canadian economic history

Reka Juhasz for “Temporary Protection, Technology Adoption and Economic Development,” completed at London School of Economics (Advisor: Silvana Tenreyro)

Jonathan Hughes Prize for excellence in teaching economic history

Frank Lewis, Queen’s University

Cole Prize for best article in the previous year’s volume of the *Journal of Economic History*
Werner Troesken, Brian Beach, Joe Ferrie, and Martin Saavedrawere for “Typhoid Fever, Water Quality, and Human Capital Formation,” March 2016

Larry Neal Prize for best article in previous year’s *Explorations in Economic History*
John Parman for “Childhood Health and Sibling Outcomes: Nurture Reinforcing Nature during the 1918 Influenza pandemic,” October 2015

Alice Hanson Jones Prize for outstanding book on North American economic history
Barry Eichengreen for *Hall of Mirrors: The Great Depression, The Great Recession, and the Uses-and Misuses-of History* (Oxford University Press 2015)



Sumner LaCroix was awarded the Clío Can in May 2016, but this photo was accidentally omitted from the last Newsletter. Belated congratulations, Sumner!

that a father's participation in the Bracero program increases the educational attainment of their children born after their first migration episode. His results use within-family variation comparing children born prior to their father's participation in the Bracero program with those born after. He plans to use the location of recruiting centers to estimate intent-to-treat effects of the program.

Leticia Arroyo-Abad (Middlebury College) kicked off the discussion by emphasizing that remittances, the benefits of temporary migration, or human capital accumulation could all be potential stories behind the observed results. She noted that, currently, the paper does not distinguish among them. She also suggested that the author could do more to consider the duration of immigration under the program. Hoyt Bleakley pointed out that the analysis does not account for inputs these children received after the migration episode. Relatedly, Craig Palsson (Yale Univ.) suggested that the results could be capturing the effects of having a father at home. The last part of the discussion touched on selection issues. Jared Rubin (Chapman Univ.) pointed out that families who had multiple children may be different than those that who did not. Dan Bogart followed up, suggesting it would be useful to compare the likelihood of having children based on participation in the Bracero program.

The Plenary Session featured Gustavo Franco, former President of the Brazilian Central Bank. The presentation was titled "Money, Institutions and Development: Brazil's Experience in the Late Twentieth Century." He began with the quote: "Policy reform is war," and he proceeded to tell the inside story of the battles to curb Brazil's runaway inflation before the *Real* plan. Franco emphasized that "you shift the Phillips Curve, not ride it, to fight hyperinflation." He talked about the importance of offering the "right incentives" and mentioned the Basel requirements were a "cornerstone."

Katie Genadek (Minnesota Population Center) opened up the Science and Innovation session with "Women in the Scientific Workplace: Life Course Experiences of Female Scientists in the Early Twentieth Century," which is co-authored paper with Margaret Charleroy (Univ. of Warwick). Though they study a period of rising female labor force participation, the one percent census sub-samples previously available, contained too few observations for research on rare occupations for women. They use the 1940 full count census to study women in STEM fields and find that women in

those fields tended to be younger, were more likely to have four to five years of post-secondary education, and were less likely to have children, compared to other working women. They explore the pathways into these fields by linking their 1940 sample to the 1930 census. Proximity to metro areas was positively associated with STEM entry, while number of siblings was negatively correlated with being in a STEM career in 1940. The authors plan to look at the relationship between the distance to a women's college and STEM entry as a source of exogenous variation.

Claudia Goldin (Harvard) suggested that it may be productive to look inward to our own discipline to find the "hidden women" of science. She pointed out that at the National Bureau of Economic Research, female contributors to reports and research in the 1930s and 40s were rarely listed on the front cover of publications. By finding such contributors and looking them up in the census for their occupation classification she felt they could improve the quality of their sample. Along the same lines, Alex Field (Santa Clara Univ.) thought that the National Research Project from the 1930s might be another useful data source. The last part of the discussion turned to how the analysis would compare to a similar analysis of men. Petra Moser (NYU) wondered if the same covariates would predict men's entry of STEM fields at the time.

Alice Kuegler (Cambridge) presented "The Responsiveness of Inventing: Evidence from a Patent Fee Reform." Her research considers the effects of financial incentives on innovation using the 1884 patent fee reform in Britain as a natural experiment. She digitized data on 54,000 British inventors, including renewal information for each patent, and she finds that patenting increased after the reform because of higher inventor effort. The proportion of high-quality patents increased just prior to the reform and fell after the reform. The patent reform had stronger effects on inventors with lower wealth, suggesting that credit constraints may have been important.

Elisabeth Perlman (U.S. Census Bureau) kicked off the discussion with praise for the author's contribution to research on innovation. She thought, however, that the paper could do more to distinguish between invention value and the intellectual property value. Phillip Hoffman wondered whether the author had explored any of the political incentives for patent reform. Fabian Waldering (Univ. of Warwick) asked whether more could be known about how the reform

affected patents by individuals compared to firms. He thought this would provide evidence on the extent to which credit constraints mattered for patenting in the pre-reform regime.

The final paper of the session was given by Petra Moser, who presented a paper co-authored with Barbara Biasi (Stanford) on the “Effects of Copyrights on Science: Evidence from the World War II Book Republication Program.” During World War II the copyright of German-owned scientific books was rescinded. The right to publish was licensed to U.S. publishers, who sold the books at low costs. The program increased the citations of these books by English authors. The effects are larger in magnitude for scientific disciplines with lower setup costs, such as mathematics. Books with the larger price reductions were the most widely distributed across space. The program led to an increase in innovation in the U.S., as measured in patent data.

Fabian Waldinger (Univ. of Warwick) found the main results convincing, but wanted the authors to better distinguish between increased citations and true innovation. He suggested showing yearly trends in citations and considering the change in number of new PhDs granted near libraries that had the largest increase in information through republished books. The remaining discussion dealt with concerns over how to account for inter-library loan programs.

To begin the session on Water Quality and Economic Development, Francisca Antman (Univ. of Colorado, Boulder) argued that the introduction of tea is a natural experiment. Tea requires boiled water, so it increases access to high quality water. Because it was introduced before the germ theory of disease, it seems likely that the beneficiaries of this cleaner water were just trying to enjoy a nice cup of tea. Antman considers the relationship between local water quality, proxied by elevation, population density, and tea trade data from the East India Company for 1761-1834, and deaths from waterborne illness in London. When tariffs fell from 119 percent to 12.5 percent in 1785, the increase in tea consumption decreased mortality significantly.

Discussing the paper, Martin Saavedra (Oberlin College) suggested that the assumption of parallel pre-trends needed for a difference-in-difference approach ought to be formally tested. Saavedra also was concerned that the window around the discontinuity – over 140 years – was too large.

Gisella Anne Kagy (Vassar College) presented a paper on the effects of childhood lead exposure on educational achievement. She links lead data from a 1900 Massachusetts Board of Health study and 22 town archives to the 1905 and 1940 censuses. Higher levels of lead were associated with a lower probability of attending school in 1900 and a lower level of completed education in 1940.

Discussant Werner Troesken (Univ. of Pittsburgh) found the paper exciting, but he suggested that there might be a selection effect: Would lead-poisoned children get more remedial education or just drop out? Troesken also wondered if the effect of lead was properly specified as linear. Finally, he suggested Kagy expand the data to include more children and earlier dates.

Anthony Wray (Hitotsubashi Univ.) presented his paper estimating the impact of water chlorination on typhoid fever mortality and morbidity. Wray argues that the staggered introduction of chlorine during World War I provides a natural experiment. Coal filtration was standard way to process water, but wartime coal shortages caused a switch to chlorine. He argues that the switch was driven by relative costs and not perceived effectiveness. Estimating a difference-in-difference model, Wray finds that chlorination reduced mortality from typhoid fever by 0.78 deaths per 100,000, 16 percent of the overall decline in the early twentieth century.

Discussing the paper, Conor Lennon (Univ. of Louisville) pointed out that the model implies that full chlorination would reduce deaths by a very large number, so he wondered if linear effects were an appropriate assumption. He also wondered why boroughs staggered their chlorination. Was the timing of chlorine introduction really random?

Miroslav Zajicek (Vysoka Skola Ekonomicka v Praze) opened the session on Religion, Institutions and Economic Growth with “The Making of a Liberal Education: Political Economy of the Austrian School Reform, 1865-1875.” The paper, co-authored with Tomas Cvrcek (Univ. College London), studies the emergence of mass schooling by considering a large school reform that took place in the Austrian Empire in 1869. The reform secularized schools, shifted the curriculum towards more science-based subjects, expanded the age of compulsory schooling, and gave communities the responsibility to finance

local schools. The authors use parliamentary voting records to understand the political economy behind the emergence of the reform. Contrary to what would normally be expected, they find that representatives from rural populations largely opposed mass schooling.

Mara Squicciarini (Northwestern Univ. and KU Leuven) noted that it is difficult to know if the rural areas opposed the expansion of public schooling or its secularization. Squicciarini suggested taking into account additional costs and benefits from the reform, such as the opportunity costs of having more children attend school (as opposed to work).

The second paper, “Jewish Communities and City Growth in Preindustrial Europe,” was presented by Noel Johnson (George Mason Univ.). The paper, co-authored with Mark Koyama, studies the effects that Jewish communities had on the growth of cities between 1400 and 1850. Because Jewish communities might choose to locate in cities with growth prospects, the authors use as an instrument the shortest travel path to other Jewish communities. Cities with larger Jewish communities grew faster than other cities, particularly after 1600.

Discussant Claudia Rei (Vanderbilt Univ.) wanted the authors to consider the truncation of the sample resulting from matching the data on Jewish communities with the data on city population. Rei mentioned the literature on the “Blue Banana,” a historically prosperous region in Western Europe, and suggested that the prosperity of the Blue Banana might be caused by some other underlying factor and not by the presence of Jewish communities. Rei was also concerned about the validity of the exclusion restriction.

The last paper of the session, “State Capacity and Public Goods: Institutional Change, Human Capital, and Growth in Early Modern Germany,” was presented by Ralf R. Meisenzahl (Federal Reserve Board). The paper, co-authored with Jeremiah E. Dittmar (LSE), considers when and why governments started providing public goods. The authors focus on the consequences of the Protestant Reformation in Germany, which introduced ideological competition and emphasized the development of state capacity for the provision of public goods. They use a combination of difference-in-differences (comparing cities that underwent reform with cities that did not) and instrumental variables (using local plagues as a source

of exogenous variation). Cities suffering the plague were more likely to reform, and were therefore more likely to provide public goods, which attracted human capital and generated economic growth.

In his discussion of the paper, Noam Yuchtman (UC Berkeley) highlighted the importance of the question. Yuchtman wanted more clarity about why the unrest generated by the plague led to political reform during the period studied, but not before.

The plenary roundtable, “Economic History and Economic Development,” brought together four distinguished experts. Gillian Hadfield (U.S.C) started the session. She incorporated some “shameless book self-promotion” into her talk, which the audience greeted with laughter. Hadfield discussed the fact that government is older than law, and that the rule of law is about controlling the government. Hadfield emphasized that western nations should not simply dictate that developing nations adopt their rules and codes as a shortcut.

Nathan Nunn (Harvard) emphasized that understanding economic history is essential to understanding economic development. He provided examples refuting four common arguments as to why economic history is meaningless to the profession. At the end of his talk, Nunn gave a plug for two graduate students about to go onto the job market, to which the audience laughed.

Christopher Udry (Yale) began by saying that he “can make no claim to be a historian.” He is a conventional development economist. Udry talked about “two constellations of institutions in West Africa” and requested help from economic historians in explaining modern outcomes.

Richard Hornbeck was the final speaker. Hornbeck suggested that the profession should use history to push the discipline of economics ahead. People mistakenly assume that economies operated the same in the past as they do today. History provides a broad range of examples of successes and failures of similar problems faced today. Although people claim to care only about today, what they actually care about is the future, according to Hornbeck. Today is only one snapshot; history provides many snapshots.

At the start of the Health and Innovation session, the health of the projector was brought into question; Ethan Schmick (Univ. of Pittsburgh) had to wait

20 minutes to present “Nutrition and Southern Welfare: Evidence from the Boll Weevil and State Level Fortification Laws,” which is co-authored with Karen Clay (Carnegie Mellon) and Werner Toresken (Univ. of Pittsburgh). The authors study the effects of Pellagra on the American South using county level data covering 1915 to 1950. Cotton often displaced local corn production, which was a better source of niacin than heavily processed imported corn. Consequently, variation in exposure to Pellagra is captured by the variation in intensity of cotton production. When the the Boll Weevil arrived in the Carolinas, corn production increased. As a result, nutrition improved, as measured by heights of draftee into World War II. Similarly, fortification laws had a lasting impact on mortality.

Hoyt Bleakley started the discussion by asking the authors to re-think whether Pellagra was truly “epidemic,” pointing to data on defects of draftees that shows only 252 confirmed cases among over 2.5 million men. He suggested that the authors refine the specification of the exposure function. Alan Olmstead (UC Davis) asked about whether migration matters to the measurement of the long-run effects of Pellagra. Jacob Bastian (Univ. of Michigan) asked if other outcomes, such as educational attainment, may have been affected by Pellagra.

Erik Hornung (Univ. of Bayreuth) presented “Bismarck’s Health Insurance and the Mortality Decline.” Co-authored with Stefan Bauernschuster (Univ. of Passau) and Anastasia Driva (LMU Munich), the paper uses Prussian administrative data to study the effects of the 1884 introduction of mandatory blue collar public health insurance on mortality rates. A large reduction of blue collar workers’ mortality coincided with the policy change. The reduction in mortality is more closely related to increased doctor visits than to the amount of sick-pay provided under the program.

Andrew Goodman-Bacon (Vanderbilt Univ.) found the results for Prussia convincing but was concerned that other programs described in the paper, such as one in Denmark, were less effective. He suggested that the results would be improved if the authors accounted for the share of workers in the covered sectors before the reform. Hoyt Bleakley expressed concern about inaccuracies the occupations listed on death certificates, which were key source of data.

The third paper was “Sweet Blood: A New Peril of

Rapid Economic Development” by Richard Steckel (Ohio State Univ.). His paper considers the link between rapid economic development and the rise in type-2 diabetes using evidence from the American South and cross-country comparisons. He finds that diabetes incidence is greater in places where long-lived poverty is followed by sharp economic growth. While in the American South there are clear delineations in type-2 diabetes incidence rates across ethnic groups these differences do not extend to the cross-country results.

Dora L. Costa (UCLA) wanted to know more about underlying mechanisms and suggested that Steckel consider a more sophisticated treatment of “mis-match theory,” as it is referred to in evolutionary biology. She also believed panel data for states and countries, or even individual data, was a feasible approach for the next version of the paper.

To begin the session on Financial Crisis: Causes and Consequences, Fabio Braggion (Tillberg Univ.) presented. In his paper, he uses the 1930s U.S. silver repurchase program as a natural experiment to see how reserves affect bank lending in China. The contraction in money supply hurt banks with lower reserves more than those with higher reserves. Using data on loans, he finds that banks in the top decile of silver reserves loaned 25 percent more than those on the bottom. Braggion also finds more labor unrest and more communist activity in the firms that borrowed from the banks.

Discussant Christopher Meissner (UC Davis) pointed out that loans were usually backed by collateral and that the silver repurchase program corresponded with an increase in the real value of silver. There was only a slight decrease in aggregate activity. Therefore, while the paper shows interesting distributional effects, it shows no significant aggregate effects.

Erin McGuire (Univ. of Arizona) presented on how childhood experiences of regional macroeconomic fluctuations affects preferences in adulthood. Exposure to macroeconomic shocks reduced money held in savings accounts, increased homeownership, and decreased self-employment. These effects were strongest for shocks experienced during the teenage years.

Discussant Kenneth Snowden (UNC Greensboro) asked how families played into the memory of shocks. Do parents or spouses matter? He further asked if

McGuire could distinguish between the channels of changing risk preferences and the updating of beliefs about the distribution of risks.

Eugene White's (Rutgers Univ.) presentation looked at the 1890s Baring Crisis as a case study for how a banking panic can be prevented by a timely policy response. White combines new evidence on lending by the Bank of England and on the market for British consols. To these he adds qualitative evidence, including letters between members of the Rothschild family and French newspapers. White argues that it was not a pseudo-crisis but a potentially major crisis that was prevented by the creative use of policy resulting in the formation of a syndicate to save the bank.

In her comments, Kirsten Wandschneider (Occidental College) stressed that the reason this was a success story was that the Bank of England recognized that Barings was systemically important and bailed it out, while at the same time "bailing in" the partners. It worked because everyone had skin in the game, but the key to this working was noticing that Barings was systemically important. Wandschneider wanted to know more about how the Bank of England managed to do so.

The session on Human Capital and Industrialization was opened by Alexandra de Pleijt (LSE and Utrecht Univ.). "Human Capital Formation During the First Industrial Revolution: Evidence From the Use of Steam Engines," co-authored with Alessandro Nuvolari (Sant' Anna School of Advanced Studies) and Jacob Weisdorf (Univ. of Southern Denmark and CEPR), examines the relationship between the adoption of steam engines and the formation of human capital in Britain. The adoption of steam engines (instrumented by the location of coal deposits) led to an increase in the skills related to industrial work, but the adoption of steam engines also led to lower school enrollment, literacy and numeracy.

Alexander J. Field (Santa Clara Univ.) suggested looking at the skill composition of the economy as a whole, instead of only the industrial sector, in order to make it possible to distinguish between reallocation of old skills and accumulation of new skills. Dan Bogart was concerned about the validity of the exclusion restriction for coal deposits (as an IV, of course) since coal is likely to be correlated with sources of structural change other than the adoption of steam engines.

Anton Howes (King's College London) then presented "The Relevance of Skills to Innovation during the British Industrial Revolution, 1651-1851." To understand the incentives behind innovation, this paper examines the relationship between the personal backgrounds of innovators and the fields in which they innovate. Howes uses information on 677 innovators between 1651 and 1851, including their education, jobs, and their particular innovations. Most innovations are not related to the innovator's field of education or work. Instead, innovators seem to share an attitude towards experimentation that leads them to innovate. Many innovators in his sample are related to each other through apprenticeship, which highlights the importance of personal networks to promote innovation.

Margaret Levenstein (Univ. of Michigan) noted that the results imply that accumulation of general human capital might generate innovation, without the need to target accumulation in specific areas. She emphasized that the finding that human capital needs to be complemented by an attitude favorable to experimentation. Levenstein added that the paper would benefit from an explicit theory about the emergence of a favorable attitude towards experimentation, and whether such attitude is developed at the level of the individual or the society.

William Maloney (World Bank) presented a paper co-authored with Felipe Valencia (Bonn Univ.) titled "Engineers, Innovative Capacity and Development in the Americas." The paper explores the importance of engineers in enhancing the capacity of countries to adopt new technologies. Using data on engineer density, patents, and income since the Second Industrial Revolution, the authors find that the number of engineers in 1900 is a very good predictor of subsequent growth of income per capita. The paper emphasizes the importance of the upper tail of the distribution human capital for economic growth, both for those countries that grow through innovation and those that grow through adaptation.

Aldo Musacchio (Brandeis Univ.) remarked the importance of understanding what kind of human capital leads to economic growth. However, Musacchio wanted more discussion of the mechanism through which engineers contribute to innovation or adaptation of technologies. Other audience members were worried about the problems of measuring engineer density using engineering graduates,

since many engineers in poor countries are trained elsewhere.

In his Presidential Address, Lee Alston (Indiana Univ.) urged economic historians to “go beyond institutions” in their analysis of long-run political and economic development. Reflecting on Douglass North’s 1973 presidential address, in which he called upon economic historians to go beyond the new economic history, Alston encouraged us to consider six concepts in our analyses of the stability and persistence of institutions in history and today: (1) institutions themselves, (2) core beliefs, (3) leadership, (4) shocks, (5) windows of opportunity, and (6) critical transitions. A case study of Brazil in transition (1975 to 1994) from his new book (*Brazil in Transition: Beliefs, Leadership, and Institutional Change* (Princeton Univ. Press, 2016)) and a case study of the Constitutional Congress in the United States (1781-1787) illustrated how the six concepts can be used to understand processes underlying development. Alston also emphasized the need to incorporate case studies and circumstantial evidence into our research.

The Gerschenkron dissertation panel began with Shameel Ahmad’s (Yale Univ., now Brandeis Univ.) presentation of “Demography and Economic Development in Colonial South Asia.” He argues that economic history could do more to harness population data to measure economic development in places and eras not yet exposed to the forces of modern economic growth. Using district-level population data that he constructed, he finds that there are evident fertility and age-specific mortality responses to economic shocks in both the short and long run in Colonial India. Malthusian economic forces can be useful for understanding economic growth in a variety of historical contexts.

The next speaker was Johannes Buggle (Sciences Po, now Univ. of Lausanne), who talked about “Essays on Culture, Institutions, and Long-Term Development.” His dissertation covers widely unrelated periods of human history, but all of the essays address persistence in economic development. He studies the long-lasting relationship between institutions and economic development in Russian Serfdom, the introduction of the civil code in nineteenth century Germany, pre-industrial agricultural production and irrigation, and the connection between historical climatic variability and the social cooperation in Europe.

The third speaker was Réka Juhász (LSE, now



President Lee Alston (uninjured!)

Columbia Univ.), who presented her thesis on “Temporary Protection, Technology Adoption and Economic Development.” She uses new data on French cotton manufacturing and studies the plausibly exogenous trade protection provided by the operation of the Napoleonic Blockade against Britain. Trade protection increases mechanized cotton capacity in France compared to regions that remained more exposed to British trade during the Blockade. Her research shows that infant-industry protection can have long-lasting positive effects on industrial development.

Petra Moser reflected on the connection between the prize finalists. All of the new PhDs were born in the places that they study, and, like Thomas Henry Huxley, they are unafraid to slay beautiful hypotheses with ugly facts.

For a change of pace, Hoyt Bleakley introduced the Nevins prize nominees, rather than summarizing their work at the end of the session. He noted that all of

the senior economic historians he spoke with said that they remembered distinctly who was nominated for the prize in the year they competed for it. More importantly, they remember who won.

James Feigenbaum (Harvard, now Princeton and Boston Univ.) was first to present his dissertation “Essays on Intergenerational Mobility and Inequality in Economic History.” He uses of machine-learning techniques to link census records, and he uses the linked census records to study intergenerational mobility during the Great Depression. The Great Depression reduced mobility among young men. Family assets enabled more well-off young men to migrate to less economically depressed areas during the 1930s.

Timothy Larsen (Univ. of Colorado, now Berry College) then presented his thesis on “Confederate Deaths and Development in the American South.” Using military company records from the Civil War, he compiled county-level mortality rates during the war covering eight of the eleven Confederate states. He argues that differences in death rates across counties are driven by military decisions and not economic forces. He uses this plausibly exogenous variation to show that in high death counties—where more freedmen worked—lynching was less common.

The final dissertation presentation was given by Elisabeth Perlman (Boston Univ., now U.S. Census Bureau) who presented “Connecting the Periphery: Three Papers on the Developments Caused by Spreading Transportation and Information Networks in the Nineteenth Century United States.” Her essays explore the connection between shocks to transportation, the spread of information and economic outcomes. The essays cover the impact of Rural Free Delivery on voting behavior in the twentieth century and the geographic dispersion of patenting following century railroad development in the nineteenth century.

The EHA Presidential Banquet, emceed by Price Fishback (Univ. of Arizona), interwove a roasting of President Lee Alston between a lovely meal and awards ceremony. Complementing our new perspectives on the conference’s theme of economic history and economic development, we also learned about Alston’s long-run accident-prone history from a distinguished group of his former students. They gave us various types of circumstantial evidence to argue how this accident-filled history has contributed

to U.S. and global economic activity. Fishback also tested our logical and intuitive prowess, as well as our capacity to know countless facts, by quizzing us about Alston’s history of injuries and many hobbies (wine collecting!). Petra Moser, Kirsten Wandschneider (Occidental), and Elisabeth (Betsy) Perlman (BU, now U.S. Census Bureau) all rose to the occasion on Alston Trivia and took home some of the most coveted prizes of the evening: Colorado-themed stuffed animals.

John C. Brown (Clark Univ.) opened the session titled “Long-run Economic Growth: Macro and Micro Perspectives” with “Understanding the Gains from Trade through the Window of Japan during the Nineteenth-Century Globalization: Analysis of a Natural Experiment.” The paper is co-authored with Daniel Bernhofen (American Univ.) and measures the static gains from trade experienced by Japan after it was forced to abandon autarky in the nineteenth century. To measure gains from trade, the authors calculate the amount of inputs that Japan would need under autarky to produce the basket of goods and services that Japan consumed under free trade. The authors separate gains coming from technological differences from gains coming from endowment differences, and find that the overall effect of opening up to trade was an increase of around 25 percent of Japan’s GDP per capita.

The discussant was John Tang (Australian National Univ.), who praised the data for both prices and quantities. Tang’s main concern about the paper was that the calculation of gains from trade depends on the prices used, and since this was a period of great instability, choosing the right prices is problematic. A related concern is caused by the fact that some products that were imported into Japan were never produced there, so their prices under autarky cannot be known.

The second paper of the session was presented by Steven Pennings (World Bank). The paper is titled “A Long History of a Short Block: Four Centuries of Development Surprises on a Single Stretch of a New York City Street” and is co-authored with William Easterly (NYU) and Laura Freschi (NYU). The authors study economic development at the micro level by following the changing economic activities on a block in New York City over 400 years. The authors find that the market value of the properties on the block went up over time, although there were many episodes of decline. These ups and downs were driven mainly by changes in the economic activities

on the block, which were dependent on comparative advantage, which was itself dependent on the time period. The case study suggests that development is a volatile process of unanticipated changes that might be caused by external factors. Development strategies should have flexibility to adapt to changes that are, for the most part, unpredictable.

Daniel Fetter (Wellesley College) noted that it is difficult to draw conclusions about how countries do or should develop based on the successes or failures of a particular block in New York City. The ups and downs of small regions can be the result of spatial reallocation of economic activities without much effect at the country level.

Stephen Broadberry (Oxford Univ.) presented “Shrink Theory: The Nature of Long Run and Short Run Economic Performance,” a paper co-authored with John Wallis (Univ. of Maryland). The paper examines the relative importance of short-run periods of growth and shrinkage in shaping long run growth. When poor countries grow, they tend to grow faster than rich ones, but poor countries also tend to shrink faster when they shrink. It is important not only to foster periods of growth but also to avoid periods of shrinkage.

In his discussion, Charles Calomiris agreed on the importance of taking into account the rate and frequency of shrinkage. However, Calomiris wanted the authors to do more to explain how shrinkage is related to good or bad institutions. He suggested exploring the interaction between good institutions and other drivers of economic shrinkage and growth, such as trade, war, total factor productivity, and human capital accumulation.

To start the session on Patronage and Administrative Capacity, Morgan Henderson (Univ. of Michigan) presented a paper on the economic consequences of immigrant disenfranchisement. Henderson exploits variation in the timing of the repealing of non-citizen immigration voting in 23 U.S. states and territories between 1864 and 1926. Using a difference-in-differences approach, he finds that repealing voting laws reduced vote totals for mayoral and gubernatorial elections. Disenfranchisement also leads to a decrease in spending on education. He suggests two mechanisms: targeted spending cuts against immigrants and increased assimilation rates.

Discussing the paper, Shawn Kantor (Florida State Univ.) noted that the Median Voter Theorem would

suggest a shift in political outcomes only if the disenfranchised group was different than average in the policy space. Other useful information would be the incentives of the local employers, governments, and immigrants. As the time frame is so long, the reforms might be due to structural changes resulting in less demand for immigrant labor; these structural changes could be the real reason for the long run changes.

In his paper, Andrea Papadia (LSE) uses data from the inter war period to investigate the role that fiscal capacity plays in the evolution of government revenues. Papadia uses natural disasters and wars between 1816-1913 as instruments for fiscal capacity, arguing that higher local capacity in response to a disaster is an obstacle to national capacity. He finds that fiscal capacity reduces volatility of government revenues through allowing an increase in borrowing.

Discussing the paper, Hugh Rockoff (Rutgers Univ.) put his “misspent youth at the Univ. of Chicago” to work by suggesting that some of the outliers and fixed effects could be explained by monetary policy. He also wondered if right-left extremist politics could explain some outliers, given the time period in question.

Jared Rubin (Chapman Univ.) took the “bold step” of presenting a theory paper he co-authored with Debin Ma (LSE). “Even bolder,” he did not show the audience the theory itself, merely the conclusions. The paper tries to explain the puzzle of how more absolutist states such as China and the Ottoman Empire had lower fiscal capacity than countries like Britain or the Netherlands. The authors suggest that absolutists tie their own hands by not investing in “administrative capacity” so their agents do not fear confiscations in times of crisis. This lowers the amount of taxes they can raise but solves the principal-agent problem. On the other hand, limited governments are prevented from confiscations of resources so they do not need to avoid administrative capacity.

Discussing the paper, Phil Hoffman suggested that, while not much was at risk without empirical evidence, he had a few suggestions about the model. First, absolutist governments are not the same as despotic governments; they had significantly less power over revenue. Secondly, while the model focuses on tax collectors fearing confiscation, the peasantry probably played an important role as well. Finally, Louis XIV’s reforms presents an interesting contrast to the absolutist states mentioned in the

presentation. In the resulting discussion, the issue of controlling for the size of countries was brought up, but the authors argued that size was endogenous to administrative and fiscal capacity.

In the session on Culture and Social Norms, Andrew Dickens (York Univ.) presented “Ethnolinguistic Favoritism in African Politics.” The paper uses some by-now familiar methods to investigate whether African political leaders bestow greater economic benefits on members of their own ethnic group: night-sky luminosity from satellite data proxies for economic activity, while arbitrary colonial borders and the timing of regime changes provide randomization. An innovation in this paper is the use of a lexicostatistical index to measure the similarity between the language of a local population or an individual to that of the national leader. The author finds that regions linguistically similar to the leader show more economic growth; but there is no effect on linguistically similar *individuals* (tracked using survey waves of the DHS) separate from their region.

Discussant James Fenske (Oxford Univ.) and audience questioners appreciated the use of triple difference estimation where both country and time fixed effects could be included, as well as the comparison of regional versus individual outcomes. Some concern was expressed about measurement error and comparability of satellite data between years. (The satellites get periodically replaced.) Fenske noted that the mechanism of the apparent economic favoritism demonstrated by the study remains unknown.

Sarah Lowes (Harvard Univ.) presented “The Evolution of Culture and Institutions: Evidence from the Kuba Kingdom,” which is co-authored with Nathan Nunn (also Harvard), James Robinson (Univ. of Chicago), and Jonathan Weigel (Harvard Univ.). The researchers travelled to Kananga (Democratic Republic of Congo) and recruited 500 subjects of various ethnic subgroups to play the resource allocation game. Members of one group (the Kuba) were far more likely to cheat or steal during the game than others. The authors relate this to an historic event in which the Kuba were conquered by an outside group which established a regime with an elaborate legal and judicial system. They conclude that exposure to formal institutions crowded out and weakened internal behavioral norms within this group.

Discussant Belinda Archibong (Barnard College) and audience members responded with a fair amount of

skepticism (and even some snarkiness). While the initial separation of the Kuba from co-tribesmen may have been a random event, there have been centuries of history, including the entire Belgian colonial period, in which intervening events may have also differentially affected the Kuba and their social norms.

The final paper of the session was “Friends from Aar: Migration, Cultural Proximity and Primary Schooling in the Lower Yangzi, 1850-1949,” which is co-authored by Yu Hao (Peking Univ.) and Melanie Meng Xue (UCLA). To study migration, the authors exploit a quasi-natural experiment. The Taiping Rebellion wiped out half the population in parts of the Lower Yangzi. In each locality, Mandarin-speaking immigrants replaced the native population to varying extents. The authors create an index of linguistic and cultural difference between migrants and natives that is found to affect local variation in support for Western-style public schools in the early twentieth century.

Discussant Cong Liu (Shanghai Univ.) and audience members were impressed by the scope and ingenuity of data collection, which spanned surname analysis of pre 1850 title holders, military records from both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and college attendance from 1906-49. There was a concern about endogeneity due to the broad time span of the records being used, and about intervening events between the mid-nineteenth century migrations and the early twentieth century public education campaign.

To begin the session on Political Disorder and Revolution, Mathias Iwanowsky (Institute for International Economic Studies) presented a paper he co-authored with Andreas Madestam (Stockholm Univ.) on the long term consequences of the Khmer Rouge regime. They argue that, since the Khmer Rouge wanted to create an agrarian empire, genocidal violence was targeted at higher productivity areas. Using rainfall as an instrument for productivity and thus killings, they showed that areas more exposed to the violence had higher voter turnout, lower trust in government, and more competitive elections.

Discussing the paper, Eduardo Montero (Harvard Univ.) took issue with some of the terminology. Voter turnout and outcomes are not the same as nation building or state capacity. He suggested that “exposure to violence” would be a better term for the independent variable than “indirect violence.” Montero also wanted the authors to consider

alternative channels of causation; for example, he wondered if the population displacement from the killing fields caused urbanization.

John Nye (George Mason Univ. and NRU-HSE) presented a paper he co-authored with several colleagues from NRU-HSE including Maxym Bryukhanov, Sergiy Polyachenko, and Vasily Rusanov. The paper applies the surname methodology developed by Gregory Clark (UC Davis) to study social mobility in Russia from 1850-2015. They tie German, Jewish, and noble Russian last names to measures of elite social status such enrollment in Moscow State Univ. and chess mastership. There was an increase in social mobility after the Russian Revolution.

Discussing the paper, Steven Nafziger (Williams College) suggested that using Russian POW records as a source of names might have some issues due to selection into the military. Similarly, using chess as a sample of the elite faces selection bias. Because categories of names were looked at instead of specific names, they missed out on within-group mobility. He also wanted some evidence that elite groups had similar standard deviations in statuses to the overall population as assumed by the model used. Finally, he suggested that the Table of Ranks might provide useful data.

Craig Ogden Palsson presented on how institutions in Haiti were an obstacle to growth. Palsson explains the strange occurrence of vacant rental land and emigration of farm workers in Haiti by local institutions. Instead of colonial institutions, these were imposed after the revolution to prevent large land holdings, which created high transaction costs for consolidating land. The population shock caused by the unexpected 1937 Trujillo Massacre led to more demand for public land but did not lead to larger farms.

Discussing the paper, Noel Maurer (George Washington Univ.) suggested that the author try to eliminate two alternative hypotheses. The first is that the institutions created high setup costs instead of high transaction costs. The second is that the U.S. was incompetent, either through not wanting to set up big plantations or setting the fixed rents of land too high.

The first paper of the session on Infrastructure and Development was presented by Andrew J. Seltzer (Royal Holloway, London). In “The Impact of

Commuting and Mass Transport on the London Labor Market: Evidence from the New Survey of London Life and Labor,” Seltzer and co-authors Jessica Bean (Denison Univ.) and Jonathan Wadsworth (Royal Holloway, London) study the impact of commuting and mass transportation on the earnings of the working class in London around 1930. The authors use data on the residence and workplace of a two percent sample of London’s working class commuters and find a positive relationship between commuting distance and earnings: an extra kilometer of commute is associated with an increase in earnings of between 0.4 and 0.9 percent.

Discussant Rob Gillezeau (Univ. of Victoria) wanted an explicit link between this paper and the literature on spatial mismatch. Gillezeau suggested drawing upon the literature on transportation and using an identification strategy based on optimal transportation networks. Other discussants suggested looking at the other side of the labor market: how do commuting costs and the expansion of mass transportation affect the optimal location of firms?

Joshua Lewis (Univ. of Montreal) and Edson Severnini (Carnegie Mellon Univ.) presented “The Value of Rural Electricity: Evidence from the Rollout of the U.S. Power Grid.” The paper considers the effects of rural electrification, measured as gains in productivity and better access to amenities. The authors exploit the variation provided by the Red Wing Rural Electrification Project of 1923-1928 and use distance to power plants as their measure of access to the power grid. Electrification of rural areas led to increases in farm employment, farm population, and farm land value, but also led to decreases in farm wages. Rural electrification had large net benefits, which were mainly driven by increases in productivity and in housing quality. In the long-run effects, early and late adopters look similar after electrification.

Carl Kitchens (Florida State Univ.) pointed out that the authors should consider whether small power plants are taken into account. Perhaps distance to the power grid, as opposed to distance to big power plants, would improve the measure of access to electricity. However, the power grid is likely to be more endogenous than power plants, which creates other estimation problems.

Eric Edwards (Utah State Univ.) and Steven M. Smith (Haverford College) presented “The Role of Irrigation in the Development of American Agriculture.” The

paper addresses the apparent puzzle of stagnant agricultural productivity between 1900-1935 and the role of irrigation in the subsequent growth of agricultural productivity from 1950-2000. Better irrigation led to increases in the value of farm land and crop value per acre, and it contributed to structural change, reducing employment. Access to groundwater had the largest effects on productivity growth, although farm land with access to surface water remained more productive.

Zeynep Hansen (Boise State Univ.) praised the detailed and comprehensive dataset gathered by the authors. Hansen suggested that the paper would benefit from more attention to the potential interaction between groundwater and surface water, since groundwater is usually replenished by surface water. Hansen also suggested focusing on the role of institutions and property rights over water to understand its effects on economic growth and to draw policy conclusions.

The next meeting of the Economic History Association will be September 15-17, 2017, in San Jose, California. President Michael Bordo chose the theme “Macroeconomic Regimes and Policies: The Question for Economic and Financial Stability and Growth.”

Submit your paper proposal at <http://eh.net/eha/2017-eha-meeting-proposal/> by January 31, 2017. ■



Autumn in Colorado

An Interview with Cormac Ó Gráda

Cormac Ó Gráda is Professor Emeritus of economics at University College Dublin. He has also held visiting positions at, among other places, Northwestern University, University of British Columbia and Princeton.

He has served on the editorial boards of the Journal of Economic History, Explorations in Economic History and the Agricultural History Review and is a past co-editor of the European Review of Economic History. He is a former trustee and a fellow of the Cliometric Society.

His most recent book, Eating People is Wrong, and Other Essays on Famine, Its Past, and Its Future, was published by Princeton University Press in 2015. This interview was conducted by Alan de Bromhead in October 2016 through telephone and email correspondence and has been lightly edited.

Everyone enjoys a good origin story so let's begin with that: What first got you interested in Cliometrics and economic history?

I was always interested in the past, as Irish people tend to be. Here I enter a caveat about autobiographical memory, but I am sure the undergraduate lectures on economic history in University College Dublin, my *alma mater* (near where I grew up and where I still live), were a factor, nudging me gently towards economic history as a graduate student in Columbia in the early 1970s. The course taught by Michael Edelstein, my dissertation supervisor and a great friend since, certainly had something to do with it.

Can you recall the title of the course? Did it provide the inspiration for your dissertation?

The course was in European economic history and although my memory on the details fails me now I am sure this was my first exposure to the 'new economic history.' The dissertation consisted of a series of essays on the Irish economy before and after the Great Famine. I wrote it in a big hurry, and it showed, but I was keen to get back to the job awaiting me at UCD. UCD had offered me tenured employment conditional on my completing a PhD abroad: bait which lured me away from the Irish public service. I chose Columbia because, of the few places offering me a scholarship, it was closest to JFK and Dublin. It all seems a bit naïve and haphazard now.



Well, haphazard or not, the Irish public service's loss was economic history's gain! So what were your first impressions of the community of economic historians in those early years?

My first encounters with senior quantitative economic historians were in England, not in the U.S. I remember being invited by the late Charles Feinstein to give a talk in Cambridge soon after my return from the U.S.; Charles was always helpful and supportive, as was Tony Wrigley. I did not begin to get to know North American Cliometricians until after I met Joel Mokyr in mid-1977. Joel had just become interested in Irish economic history and Michael Edelstein suggested he contact me. That led to a visiting position in Northwestern in 1979-80 –followed by a year at UBC when I got to know Bob Allen—and the beginnings of a friendship and academic collaborations with Joel that have endured. It was at that time that I attended my first Clio, in Chicago. Through Joel I soon got to meet Paul David, D. McCloskey, and several other “big names.” That was a kind of beginning.

Who would you say had had the greatest influence on your work as an academic?

I suppose it would have to be Joel. You never come away from a session with Joel without learning something and maybe even changing your mind on something. I have also learned a great deal over the years from Peter Solar, Tim Guinnane, Gunnar Persson (greatly missed), John McManus (ditto), Deirdre McCloskey, Greg Clark, Bob Allen, Jeff Williamson, Eugene White—and others—and in Ireland from Louis Cullen, David Dickson, Liam Kennedy, Morgan Kelly, the late Brendan Walsh, and Kevin O'Rourke. They all influenced me. And I made some great friends.

Since then you have made numerous contributions to the study of the Great Irish Famine and its aftermath. What are the most interesting or important conclusions that you have drawn from your work?

I began to work on the Great Famine in the 1980s; the spur was an invitation from Leslie Clarkson to do a short monograph on the topic for the Economic History Society. At that time there was very little written on the economic history of the Famine. I focused on issues like the proximate causes of the disaster and on its short- and longer-run impact; the role of the potato; the demography of the famine; the functioning of markets; the role of policy; migration. Then I wrote long chapters on the famine in both *Ireland Before and After the Famine* (1988; 2nd edition, 1993) and in *Ireland: A New Economic History* (1994). The monographs *Black 47 and Beyond* (1999) and *Ireland's Great Famine* (2006) followed.

Can you say something about the insights you have gained from your study of the Famine? Any particular conclusions that challenged/confirmed existing views of the Famine? Anything especially surprising?

The Great Famine was a controversial topic in the 1970s and 1980s; it still is, to some extent. Some nationalists saw what happened as downright genocide, while some revisionist historians tried to have it both ways: either downplaying its dimensions or else describing it as a catastrophe that no government could have contained. I suppose my work fell somewhere in-between, highlighting the relative backwardness of the economy and the size of the shock, on the one hand, and the inadequacies of public action, on the other. I tried to show that policy options which would have saved lives were articulated at the time, and that they were rejected for doctrinaire reasons, not simply because they would have broken budgetary constraints. And I had some new things to

say about the demography of the Famine, its place in the broader history of famines, the conduct of relief policy, the role of markets for food and credit, what caused people to die, and so on.

And this led to the study of famines more generally?

Yes. In order to learn more about famine in Ireland I read a lot about famines elsewhere, and that led eventually to published work on both individual famines in France, Finland, and Bengal and about the history of famine more generally. *Famine: A Short History* (1999) and *Eating People is Wrong* (2015) and several associated papers were the culmination. I also co-edited *When the Potato Failed*, a book on the European famines of the 1840s, with Eric Vanhaute and Richard Paping.

So what, in your view, are the big questions that remain to be answered in relation to the Great Irish Famine?

Here are a few: How many lives would alternative relief regimes have saved? What does the experience of Irish immigrants in the U.S. tell us about the effects of subsidizing famine emigration? What difference would an earlier resolution of Ireland's land tenure system have made? What were the political ramifications of the famine in the long run? Can the implications of the fetal origins hypothesis for the health and wellbeing of those who were born during the famine be measured?

Graduate students take note! So why is Ireland an interesting place to look at from the point of view of economic history point?

I didn't give this question any deep thought at the outset. It seemed natural to build on one's comparative advantage. But obviously Ireland has an interesting economic history for myriad reasons: ex-colony; peripheral location; demographic outlier; pursuer of botched policies in the wake of independence; place of religious discrimination and sectarian tension. So I became a jack-of-all-trades Irish economic historian.

What also stands out to me from your publication record is that you have published in history journals, economics journals and economic history journals. How do you go about writing for these different audiences?

Publishing in economic history and economics

journals is our bread and butter; getting the one or two papers into a Top Five journal is a bonus. Much of what I published in journals has been joint work, whereas my monographs have been solo efforts. On the whole, the latter tend to get read and cited more.

I love Cliometrics but I have a soft spot too for straight history and for story-telling, as reflected in, say, a paper on the early history of the old age pension in Ireland (*Past & Present* 2002), the monograph on the economic history of Irish Jewry (2006), and a related piece I wrote about James Joyce's Leopold Bloom (*Journal of Modern Literature* 2004). That is perhaps why I have focused on books more than most Cliometricians. I have a rather wayward imagination—on a good day! I get away with this in UCD, but in the more competitive academic environment of North America I might not have.

Aoibhinn Beatha an Scoláire! (Sweet is the scholar's life in Gaelic.) So what about the future then? In which directions do you see your research going?

Well, hopefully there is a bit more in the tank. Most of my research over the last decade or so has been with my UCD colleague Morgan Kelly, much of it English economic history. That work is ongoing; one chunk, on the origins of the Industrial Revolution, is with Joel Mokyr. Morgan and I also hope to write papers in the near future with Neil Cummins (on apprenticeship in watchmaking) and Alan Fernihough (on the Great Famine). I am proud to say that both Neil and Alan are former students of mine.

I am also involved in a project with Tyler Anbinder (GWU) and Simone Wegge (CUNY) on the New York Emigrant Savings Bank in the 1850s. I did some work on the Emigrant in the 1990s, alone and with Morgan and also with Eugene White, but Tyler has put together a new, much richer database, which has already generated some striking maps. I am enjoying this collaboration, which brings back good memories of New York. An edited book on European famines with Guido Alfani is due out in 2017, and there is also a book of essays on Irish economic history that I'll wrap up one of these years.

Plenty for us to look forward to then! Moving on to your thoughts on teaching: If you could teach all undergraduate economics students one course on economic history what would it be?

The question is purely academic at this stage since I

stopped teaching a few years ago. But I am not sure that one jacket fits all. If I were teaching that one course in Ireland I would include lectures on lessons to be learned from the economic history of both the pre- and post-independence periods. More broadly, I would want such a course to focus on what history tells us about "the wealth of nations," *i.e.*, why some countries are so much richer than others, and also on what it tells us about inequality *within* societies; and on how such divisions might be ameliorated. And I would enrich the analysis with stories.

In what way has your teaching shaped your research and vice versa?

As far as undergraduate teaching went they were mostly orthogonal, although I do remember including bits about co-operative creameries and free banking on students when I was working on those topics long ago. I could get away with imposing more of my research preoccupations on graduate students, and some of the material I read when preparing courses helped my research to some extent. I would single out what I taught about medieval economic history and historical demography.

Have you any advice for a young Cliometrician embarking on a career today?

That is a tough one. Quantitative economic historians, apart from a small (and declining?) number of history appointments, have to market themselves as something else – as economists, business historians, or management specialists – to gain a foothold in the academy. That is a nuisance. Don't expect to write as many papers as some of your colleagues: good economic history just takes longer. But bear in mind that as an economic historian you will encounter and make friends with people who have broader interests and are more fun to be with than most economists.

I'm feeling much more optimistic after hearing that answer! So how do you feel about the current position of economic history within economics?

For as far back as I can remember, economic historians have been on the back foot, engaging in *apologiae pro vitae suae*. There seems to be no end to it. Quantitative economic history, being an inherently interdisciplinary field, will always be under some pressure in both economics and history departments. But it will survive as long as the quality of the output is good.

And finally some crystal ball gazing... What impact do you think the “big data” revolution will have on economic history? What are the opportunities and potential problems?

Part of me says I was born too early! The data that I (and others like Joanna Bourke, Tim Guinnane, Mary Daly, and David Fitzpatrick) laboriously copied for days (weeks?) on end from the manuscript census forms of 1901 and 1911 in the National Archives in Dublin can now be reproduced by a few taps on a keyboard. And one can do things with the census data that could not be done before, for example, build a database of Italian immigrants or analyse literacy and numeracy by occupation and religion. The “big data” revolution has shifted the balance of research from deductive (generating or finding data specifically to test a hypothesis) to inductive (what can I do with these data?).

And yes, it has affected my own recent work. In the case of the paper Bruce Campbell and I wrote a few years ago using his medieval yields database (*JEH* 2013) the data preceded the questions. The free lunch of the whole 1911 Irish census in a convenient database led to a paper on mixed marriages with Alan Fernihough and Brendan Walsh (*EEH* 2015). We were looking for a question that couldn't realistically be addressed in any other way and mixed marriages was one candidate. The same goes for the paper that Morgan, Neil, and I wrote on the last outbreaks of bubonic plague in London (*EHR* 2015): the manna of masses of data came first, courtesy of a genealogical search website.

Big data are a boon, but maybe they are now coming too cheap; surely there is more to true economic history than fiddling with a succession of big databases.

Selected publications of Cormac O'Grada

BOOKS

- Ireland: A New Economic History 1780-1939* (Oxford, 1994)
Black '47 and Beyond: the Great Irish Famine in History, Economy and Memory (Princeton, 1999)
Jewish Ireland in the Age of Joyce: A Social Science History (Princeton, 2006)
Famine: A Short History (Princeton, 2009).
Eating People is Wrong: Essays on the History and Future of Famine (Princeton, 2015).

ARTICLES

- “The Beginnings of the Irish Creamery System, 1880-1914,” *Economic History Review*, 25(1977), 284-305.
“New Evidence on the Fertility Transition in Ireland,” *Demography*, 28(1991), 535-48.
“Heights and Living Standards in the United Kingdom, 1815-1860,” *Explorations in Economic History*, 33(1996), 1-27 (with Joel Mokyr).
“Market Contagion: Evidence from the Panics of 1854 and 1857,” *American Economic Review*, 90(2000), 1110-1120 (with Morgan Kelly).
“Intermarriage in Ireland before 1911,” *Explorations in Economic History*, 56(2015), 1-14 (with Alan Fernihough and Brendan Walsh).
“Adam Smith, Watch Prices, and the Industrial Revolution,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 131(2016), 1727-1752 (with Morgan Kelly).■

An Interview with Knick Harley



C. Knick Harley is retired Professor of Economic History at the University of Oxford. Prior to his appointment as Professor at Oxford, he was Professor of Economics at the University of Western Ontario. He also taught at the John F. Kennedy Center for North American Studies at the Free University of Berlin, at UC-Davis, and at several other excellent universities.

He served as co-editor of the Journal of Economic History from 2002 to 2006; he had served on the editorial board of that journal earlier in his career. He also served on the editorial boards of Explorations in Economic History and the European Review of Economic History.

In 1999 he was awarded the Clio Can in recognition of exceptional support of Cliometrics. His won best article prizes for papers in Maritime History and the Journal of Economic History.

This interview was conducted by Mary Eschelbach Hansen on September 8, 2016, on Skype, and has been lightly edited.

Where did you grow up? Did your childhood have an influence on your career path?

Well that's an interesting question. I think it should explain some of my idiosyncrasies. I grew up, more or less, in the Washington, D.C., area. But also, and in

an important way, I grew up in England, in London. My father went to the American Embassy in London in 1948, when I was five, as the Assistant Marshall Plan Representative. He served a three-year term. We came back to the States for a year, which was not a great year for me, and then we went back to England for three more years. From the time I was five until the time I was 12, I pretty much lived in London. When we went back to the States permanently, it was to Bethesda, Maryland, where I went to high school.

You went to College of Wooster and studied both economics and history?

Yes, that's right.

That's a pretty early start. How did you come to that combination of studies at such a young age?

I was always interested in history, but I felt that history was a little, how should I say, *dilettantish*? Economics seemed a more serious sort of activity. And I enjoyed the discipline of economics. But I think I've always found history more interesting. I say to people sometimes that it feels like, when you spend a lot of time with both historians and economists, you come away with the feeling that economists think that questions are answers and that historians don't know what the questions are.

How did you come to study at Wooster?

My father's father was a Presbyterian minister. He went to Wooster, and his brother went to Wooster, and so did a number of other relatives. An older cousin was there when I was there. Two more of my cousins were there later. So it was a family connection.

You went from Wooster to Harvard. Did you plan to do economic history?

No, I thought I'd probably do development economics, which (again) seemed to be more socially redeeming than history. But at that time it seemed to be there were two things you could do in development economics. You could work on overarching theory, or you could do detailed case studies. The latter seemed to me to be more valid, but neither of them seemed to be quite right. And, at that point, Gerschenkron had his economic history workshop, and he also had some money from one of the big foundations. He was

supporting a group of people, including Paul David and Al Fishlow, who had been there just before. I was also influenced by D. McCloskey [who was a student in my class], who had already decided he was going to be an economic historian. And, it also turns out that my father had worked with Gerschenkron at the Federal Reserve during the war, so economic history seemed to be the sensible place to be.

Over the years, I've come to believe it was the right decision, in that to me it seems that the socially responsible bit is to work on the big questions about why some of us, but not all of us, are now rich. What are the long-term forces and processes involved? And economic history also provides the opportunity to combine the some of the disciplined work of economics with the detailed work, the attention to evidence, which seems to me is the historian's principal trait, principal professional skill. The combination fits with what I find interesting, and, perhaps, what I can do reasonably well.

You started to list all the people who were around Harvard while you were there. That list seems pretty amazing.

It was sort of unbelievable. During the four years or so while I was in Gerschenkron's seminar I got to know Peter McClellan and Lars Sandberg, both of whom were assistant professors at that time. Dick Sylla and Stefano Fenoaltea were a year ahead of me. They had an office next door to the one I shared with McCloskey. Richard Sutch was also a regular at the seminar for most of the time; he was at MIT working with Modigliani, but he was in the process of making himself an economic historian. Barbara Solow was there for a couple of years, and Patrick O'Brien was there as well one year. That list of names would make a pretty good workshop almost anywhere! We were meeting on a weekly basis.

Were you all friends outside of the seminar? And did you comment much on each other's work?

We were pretty all friendly. Gerschenkron's grant had made it possible for him to get a couple of offices that were located in an old house downtown, so we sort of hung out there together. The seminar was a very much a give-and-take. And there was more than a little bit of one-upmanship. Gerschenkron himself never said anything in the seminar until the very last five minutes or so. We were allowed to make fools of ourselves, and it was a pretty rambunctious group. In

fact, Barbara Solow has a comment in her book on agriculture in Ireland, which she was working on at that time,¹ that goes something like, "This frail vessel was launched in the shark-infested environment of the seminar."

There have been a lot of colorful stories in these interviews about those early experiences. And right about the time you were finishing up at Harvard, there were big fights happening.

When I first started, there was still a bit of discussion about Fogel's railroad work, although the talk about it was dying down. I remember that Gerschenkron required Dick Sutch to do a presentation comparing and contrasting Fogel and Fishlow in order for him to be admitted to the seminar. The controversies over *Time on the Cross* were beginning.

As you know, one of the audiences for the Newsletter is our grad students, who are trying to figure out what it is they're going to do for their dissertations, and how they're going to do it. Tell me about your dissertation. How did the idea come to be?

My dissertation started differently than it ended up. I started out working on the reasons why mass production started in America. I published a paper a few years after I finished the Ph.D. that pulls together some of that.² But Gerschenkron thought that Nate Rosenberg, and the people he was working with at that time, were doing the same sort of thing and were a bit ahead of me.

Because I was also interested in doing something that was international and with a British angle to it, he suggested that there had never been a good history of British shipbuilding. In retrospect, I think that he may have been interested in ships because he had worked – or at least the story is that he had worked – in the Kaiser shipyards in the Bay Area during the war. So I started working on shipbuilding and technological change in shipbuilding.

I went to England for a year. McCloskey was in England at that point as well, as was Michael Edelstein. We three, sort of brash, Americans were hanging out, going to the LSE seminars, and things.

¹ *The Land Question and the Irish Economy, 1870-1903* (Harvard University Press, 1971).

² "Skilled Labour and the Choice of Technique in Edwardian Industry," *Explorations in Economic History* 11:4 (Summer 1974), pp. 391-414.

I did quite a lot of archival work; I had quite a lot of bits and pieces. I gave a little workshop on the bits and pieces. Patrick O'Brien commented he that, it seemed to him, the theme that unified it all was the persistence of old techniques and the process by which new techniques supplant old techniques. And that became the focus of my dissertation. It's been a topic that I've found interesting ever since.

That's not unrelated to what Paul [David] and D. [McCloskey] were thinking about at the same time. Were there an unusually large number of positive spillovers?

I don't know that I knew it at the time, but certainly over the years it's become clearer, yes. My work is connected a bit to the work on learning-by-doing, directed technological change, network processes, and so on. These are all things that I find very interesting, and that I think are amongst the most interesting stuff that's around now.

I was certainly influenced by McCloskey. In some ways my work was quite different, though. It may be a sort of hedgehog and fox sort of thing. I admire D.'s work, for example, for its breadth of vision and willingness to take broad positions. But I've really enjoyed the archival work, the details, trying to figure things out to get the historical details more or less right.

Triangulating truth from a bunch of somewhat randomly preserved facts is a challenge. Perhaps we can return to that in a bit. While you were participating in the seminar did you also go to the Clio meetings?

I think the first Clio meeting I went to was the first one held in Madison.³ I went pretty regularly for a long time. I wasn't one of the original trustees, but I was one of the first replacement trustees.

Perhaps we can talk about those early years of your career. We are doing this interview because you're one of the most distinguished economic historians among us, but it wasn't all smooth sailing for you. Would you mind talking about it?

There were difficult times, yes. I was denied tenure at the University of British Columbia.

But you stuck with it.

I did. I've thought about this quite a lot over the years. We were a big cohort: eight or ten of us were hired together at UBC. Several were put forward for promotion the year before the tenure decisions were made; they were actually all turned down by the senior committee that year, but they had been sort of selected out and were tenured later. There were two or three who hadn't finished the dissertation, so they were selected out, in the other direction. And there were two of us left in the middle. I had gone to UBC in '69 without my dissertation finished, and I didn't get my degree till '72. At least a year of that I can blame on Gershenkron — he went on sabbatical and refused to read the final draft that I sent!

Anyway, in the end, my reading of it is that department decided that it would have been very difficult for them to split the two cases in the middle, to give tenure to one of us but not both. They decided that it was worthwhile sacrificing me rather than going with the two of us.

When the decision was being made, I was not on campus. Gavin Wright had a sabbatical, and had asked me if I'd be interested in teaching a semester in Michigan. I went back to UBC for the three smester remaining on my contract. Then I went to the University of Toronto on a visiting position, and then to Penn. For a while I was commuting from Philadelphia to Vancouver, where my wife was, and we had two small children. That was not a lot of fun. But that I hung in there. I managed to get more stuff published and was hired on at Western Ontario.

These days, a lot of people do two or three visiting jobs before they land a tenure track job. It's helpful for new Ph.D.s to know have a sense that that's not the end of the world, that your career can recover. Let's turn to your post-dissertation work. By an order of magnitude, your most-cited work is the 1992 paper with Nick Crafts.⁴ How did that paper, and the several related ones, come about?

It's interesting. I still think of myself, principally, as a scholar of the nineteenth century international economy, and I feel a little bit like the Industrial Revolution hijacked my career. Not that have real regrets. *(Laughs.)*

⁴ "Output Growth and the British Industrial Revolution: a Restatement of the Crafts-Harley View." *Economic History Review*, 45 (Nov. 1992), 703-730.

³ The Clio meetings were held in Madison from 1969 through 1974; see <http://cliometrics.org/about.htm> for a brief history.

I met Nick, I think, at a conference. We got on well. By the time we wrote that paper, I knew him well because during that period I was managing to go to England for research, spending several weeks or a month in the summer.

My first Industrial Revolution paper in 1982 was conceived while I was teaching. You've probably encountered this. There are topics you go through in class, and every so often there are bits and pieces in the literature that don't seem to quite fit together. In class you just run fast over those and hope nobody notices. Well, when teaching the literature on the Industrial Revolution, I noticed that the Deane and Cole national income figures, the industrial production stuff, was really hard to reconcile with the data from the standards of living debate, which was pretty big at that time.

I started thinking: If the standard of living was going down, while industrial production was going up, where was all this industrial production being sold? And so I started doing some back-of-the-envelope calculations. Then I went back and started looking at the underlying estimates.

Deane and Cole's industrial production for the 18th century is *really* back-of-the-envelope stuff. They decided they really didn't like Hoffman's work,⁵ although, I think, in the end they were happy that what they did ended up looking a lot like Hoffman. Anyway, they had sort of said, for those domestic industries that had some data, we'll use that. And the export industries, which are the Industrial Revolution industries, we'll say production is proportional to trade in those industries. And that didn't seem to be altogether right to me, and so I went back and looked at how Hoffman made his index. What he did was to inflate the series [of available data] by the proportion of total output that the covered sectors represented. About half of industrial production was covered by his data. Effectively this meant that he assumed that there were other industries, roughly the size of the cotton textile industry, that had the same experience as the cotton textile industry.⁶ Which didn't seem right. So I started working on that.

⁵ Phyllis Deane and W.A. Cole, *British Economic Growth, 1688-1959* (Cambridge University Press, 1962); Walther G. Hoffman, *British Industry, 1700-1950* (Oxford University Press, 1955).

⁶ "British Industrialization before 1841: Evidence of Slower Growth During the Industrial Revolution," *Journal of Economic History* XLII:2 (June 1982), pp. 267-289.

At the same time, Nick was working on the stuff that, I guess, started out as his dissertation and became the book that came out in '85.⁷ He had published a few papers based on the work, and from those it was clear that he was coming up with lower estimates of growth as well.

Then I had my first sabbatical, and I spent six months in Oxford. Nick was there, teaching at University College in Oxford at that time. We talked quite a bit, although our work remained pretty much independent at first. He did adopt my modifications of the series for the iron sector because the previous estimates had not made any allowance for the fact that, towards the end of the eighteenth century, a lot of the inputs, the intermediate products for the iron industry, were imported, but then quite a lot of value added was going on afterwards. So Hoffman's use of domestic pig iron production for an index was going to misstate iron production. As we worked, it became clear that we were both saying, "Look, the changes during the Industrial Revolution, in aggregate, were less than we had been thinking."

There was a bit of a reaction to our estimates of lower growth and we decided that we probably would have more influence if we responded in a joint paper. From there we continued to do Industrial Revolution papers as joint work. We worked well together. We did four or five papers in which we pursued our ideas. And, you know, it's nice to be able to have "A New View" associated with your name. I think Nick may deserve more of [the accolades] than I do, but...

Your New View of industrialization came from your intuition as a trade economist?

Yes, Nick and I both have trade backgrounds, and trade influences my view on this and on lots of things. And I've done a fair amount of computable general equilibrium stuff, which, like most economists, I learned from trade theory.

Indeed. And that leads right to my next question. You were one of the small group of people in economic history using those kinds of models at that time. Did you guys talk to each other?

Jeff [Williamson] and Peter [Lindert] had done some things by that time. But no, we didn't talk to each other. I got into it partly because I was at Western

⁷ *British Economic Growth During the Industrial Revolution* (Oxford University Press, 1985).

[Ontario] and John Whalley was doing CGE, and a younger colleague, Tom Rutherford, had put together a user-friendly model, which is actually the same model, the calculations, that people like Kevin O'Rourke and I now use.

At the time it seemed sensible to do a little model—I think it was maybe in a chapter in the Industrial Revolution book that Joel Mokyr put together⁸—to try to highlight the interactions. It also had become very clear to me as I was doing the industrial production stuff that there was an index number problem that you really needed to pay attention to. In fact, what happens to cotton textiles is that, as the volume goes up, the price goes down, more or less together. The size of the industry doesn't get a whole lot bigger. If you don't pay some attention to that, you miss stuff.

Outside of the work you did with Nick, which of those papers stands out to you as being, what you view as the most important contribution? Citation counts aside.

While there's no question that the Industrial Revolution stuff is my most important contribution, my favorite paper actually doesn't get a lot of citations. It's about the prisoner's dilemma breaking down in the oligopoly in American railroad construction.⁹ It originally had the title, "Why were all the railroads in Kansas built in 1887?" The referees thought that sounded very parochial. I like the paper because it has both a lot of data pulled together and, I think, a clever idea.

It's an interesting paper that, I agree, people see as correct, so it doesn't get challenged. Therefore, it doesn't get that many citations. And a lot of times the most cited paper is not always—

Some of the most-cited papers are wrong, well, partially wrong.

I have one more question about your collaboration with Nick. The topic of how to collaborate effectively is prominent in the mentoring sessions that, these days, I'm sometimes asked to comment on. So now whenever I talk to anybody who's had really

⁸ "Reassessing the Industrial Revolution: A Macro View" in Joel Mokyr (editor), *The British Industrial Revolution: An Economic Perspective*, 2nd edition (Westview Press, 1999), pp. 160-205.

⁹ "Oligopoly Strategy and the Timing of American Railroad Construction," *Journal of Economic History* XLII:4 (December 1982), pp. 797-823.

productive and important collaboration, I ask, "What made it work?"

That's a very interesting question because I'm not really a collaborator, with the exception of Nick. I think, for me, collaborating with Nick worked out so well because we had talked a lot—about economics, economic issues, economic history issues—the majority of it in pubs. And our ideas were generally quite close, but also complementary. In fact, once I gave a seminar somewhere in England, at which I was introduced as "the person that Nick Crafts sends to the archives." I think that was intended to insult both of us. But, Nick, I think, is very good at presenting arguments and following them through. I am, I think, good at the details. The most important thing is that we both really respected each other very much. We found that we could divide the work up between us and be generally quite happy with what the other person came up with.

When I was looking at your CV, I thought that it was really great that you list the Ph.D. students you supervised, and you do it in a way that makes it clear that you see mentoring as an important contribution. Of course, you were mentor to two of the most distinguished women in economic history, Ann Carlos and Angela Redish. So that is a huge contribution to our profession. What, do you think, is the key to advising successful Ph.D. students? What advice do you have for mentoring students, especially students who belong to an underrepresented group?

That's a hard question. Angela and Ann are the only PhD students I had at Western, though I supervised six while I was at Oxford before I retired. I think some people approach supervision as a sort of apprenticeship, in which you want your students to do something you want to do, or something that's associated with what you want to do. So you sort of train them so they can write the papers that you want to write. That never had struck me as the way to approach it. It seemed it was much more important to try to listen, and to help the student figure out how to write the paper she wanted to write, in as disciplined and successful way as possible. That means reacting to things that are going on, both within the work and also how the student is reacting, and deciding what sort of things would be most helpful. It requires quite a lot of listening. I'm a kind of quiet guy, and I'm a pretty good listener, or at least I think so.

Ann was already working on her Ph.D. when I got to

Western, but she was working with somebody who was not really an economic historian. She found me and I found her.

If you were to talk to Ann and Angela about me as a supervisor, I think you would get a bit of a Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde story. I thought that Ann seemed to need encouragement. She had married to Jim Markusen, already a distinguished trade economist in the Department. Because of that, at that the time, some faculty didn't think she should be taken really seriously. So I tried to be very encouraging, and it seemed to work.

Angela is a much more forceful person than Ann. Angie actually scared me a bit. She didn't quite know how smart she is. She had gone for a year to Papua New Guinea to help set up a central bank, and [when she returned] I think Ann convinced her that she should work with me on an economic history topic. With Angie I was more challenging. I would ask Angie the *Gershenkron question*: "Well, that's very interesting, but why should I care? What's the point of this?" I felt that she would respond to that. Years later she did tell me she used to go home and cry after she had sessions with me. I'm not sure how much that's embellished, but...

I found also while I was supervising at Oxford, for me it was important to get to know the student, to engage with the student, and to work *with* the student, rather than to try to get the student to do what you wanted them to do.

Why so many students at Oxford?

The difference between Western and Oxford may be that economic history was not required at Western. It's important that history not disappear from economics education. Looking at the English programs, there are a number of places that have enough mass to support a big economic history program. These programs are able to generate a lot of activity. Though, in the British context, we worry: "What do people with an economic history degree do?" Quite a lot of them actually go to the City of London, where employers are quite happy with them. The success of the discipline, it seems to me, depends on individual practitioners being able to bridge the two disciplines with skills that are appreciated in both.

Three of the students [that I supervised at Oxford] were in the Economics department, and three were in

Economic and Social history, which is with the history faculty. Sarah Cochran(econ) worked on pre-World War I Britain and was interested in increasing returns and neighborhood effects. Katrina Galani (hist) did a dissertation on shipping in the eastern Mediterranean during the Napoleonic era. Mark Koyama (econ) wanted to do history and worked on principal-agent, game-theoretic stuff. Richard Lee (history) who did quite an interesting dissertation on the early U.S. stock exchange. Alan Tepper (econ) did a model of the Industrial Revolution and a paper on financial market volatility.

You've been working a lot with young people recently, so maybe you've been thinking about this next question. What is your advice to the young, ambitious Cliometrician?

The first thing, of course, is make sure you can do good economics so your economist colleagues won't look down their noses at you. But I would say, perhaps, more important, if you're going to be an economic historian, take the history seriously. Think about the evidence, work on the evidence, try to get it right. That evidence matters. Interestingly, over the years, I've discovered that within economics, the econometricians are often the most appreciative when you spend time to figure out what the data generating process is, where the evidence is coming from, and what it means. I guess if you can go on and figure out what that means for the nature of the error term, then that's good, too. I've never gotten quite that far...

The Historian's Craft is something that we could pay more attention to in graduate programs in economics and business generally.¹⁰ It seems to me that it is often in my economic history course that students begin to understand where GDP comes from!

One of the most influential teachers I had was Simon Kuznets. You know, a father of national income accounting, and he really didn't believe in that the number. Or at least he felt that you had to use GDP numbers only for what they are.

What's your view on the current relationship between the overlapping disciplines of economic history, economics, and history? In particular, do you think there are still differences between the way economic history is viewed in the U.S., the way it's viewed in Canada, and the way it's viewed in the U.K.?

¹⁰ Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft*. New York: Vintage Books, 1953.

I think there is a difference in the U.K. Canada certainly used to be a little bit in between. In the U.K. there may be a bigger mass, but it's certainly a mass in which more traditional historical disciplines are represented, are weighted. I think some of the most interesting stuff that's going on there is the continuing work of the Cambridge demography group, and the stuff they're now doing about economic structure in early modern Europe. Some of that kind of work is being done on the Continent, too; think of Jan van Zandin's work, particularly, in the Netherlands. In the States, I worry a little bit that the Historian's Craft gets a little bit slighted and that sometimes the history looks like it's tacked onto the model. I think there's some danger of going that direction. But I am encouraged by the fact that most of the prizes that are given in Economic History go to papers that combine the two and have an important historical context.

Recent history is probably a boon for us. To get all those Yankee's minds thinking about the Great Depression there for eighteen months or so, that was good luck. ■

BOOKS

The Integration of the World Economy, 1850-1914
(Edward Elgar, 1995), 2 volumes.

SELECTED ARTICLES

"Was technological change in the early Industrial Revolution Schumpeterian? Evidence of cotton textile profitability" *Explorations in Economic History* 49 (Oct. 2012), 516-527.

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