

# EDITOR'S CORNER

The 36th annual meeting of the Business History Conference will be held in Baltimore on 23–25 March 1990. The broad theme will be “Organizational Capabilities: Determinants and Impacts.” The conference welcomes the submission of papers that explore the changing characteristics of the organizational capabilities of businesses around the world. Particularly encouraged are comparative studies—across nations, industries, or firms—of how, why, under what conditions, and to what effect business enterprises build organizational capabilities. Papers might examine the educational, financial, governmental, or industrial determinants of organizational capabilities, as well as the impacts of these capabilities on economic performance and social welfare. In addition, papers on any topic in, or related to, business history will be considered. One-page abstracts should be sent to William Lazonick, The Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, NJ 08540 by 1 October 1989. Graduate students who have completed dissertations within the last three calendar years (1987–89) may participate in the dissertation session and are eligible for the biennial Herman Krooss Prize for the best dissertation in business and economic history presented at the conference. A one-page abstract, along with a copy of the dissertation, should be sent to Ross Thomson, Department of Economics, New School for Social Research, 66 W. 12th Street, New York, NY 10011 by 1 October 1989.

The next annual meeting of the Society for the History of Technology (SHOT) will be held 18–21 October 1990 at the Clinic Center Hotel in Cleveland, Ohio. The program committee is seeking early proposals from scholars outside the United States; especially welcome are proposals for full sessions and group or individual proposals that accent the Third World, Latin America, or the Great Lakes region, as well as gender-related and pre-twentieth century topics and comparative studies. The deadline for preliminary proposals is 1 October 1989. Those submitting paper proposals must include 150-word abstracts and a one-page curriculum vitae. Proposers of sessions must provide the theme of the session, an abstract of each paper, and a c.v. for each participant, including chair and commentator(s). Send materials to the program chairperson, Lindy Biggs, Department of History, Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama 36849. She can also be reached by phone at 205-844-6645 or by electronic mail at HIST@AUDUCVAX. Preliminary inquiries are welcome.

David J. Jeremy at Manchester Polytechnic is directing a project on “Managerial Business Strategies in the North West, 1900–1980,” which

has companion projects at the University of Lille and at Osaka City University in Japan focusing on the strategies for survival deployed in declining textile districts in the twentieth century. He would like to locate someone interested in undertaking a similar study of the New England region, specifically in Middlesex and Essex counties for the period 1900–1980. Interested scholars may contact Dr. Jeremy at Manchester Polytechnic, Economics and Economic History Department, Aytoun Street, Manchester M1 3GH, England.

The Association of Cultural Economics will hold its 6th annual conference 8–10 June 1990 in Umea, Sweden. Additional information about the conference, and proposals for papers or complete sessions, can be addressed to Abdul A. Khakee, Center of Regional Research, University of Umea, S-901 87 Umea, Sweden.

The 15th annual meeting of the Economic and Business Historical Society will take place 26–28 April 1990 in Lexington, Kentucky. The society, founded to encourage interdisciplinary scholarship in the areas of business and economic history and the application of historical concepts to business issues, invites submission of paper or session proposals. A two-page abstract of each paper proposal should be submitted by 1 November 1989 to Gilbert Mathis, president and program chair, EBHS, Department of Economics and Finance, Murray State University, Murray, KY 42071; the telephone number is 502-762-4283.

The Missouri Valley Historical Conference will meet 8–10 March 1990 at the University of Nebraska, Omaha. Paper proposals are welcome in any field of history, and should be sent by 1 November 1989 to Jerold Simmons, Program Coordinator, MVHC, Department of History, University of Nebraska, Omaha, Nebraska 68182.

Dr. C. S. Nicholls, an editor of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, writes that Oxford University Press has decided to publish a volume of omissions from the *DNB* for the entire period covered, soon reaching to 1985. This is an important opportunity to make the *DNB* as complete as possible, and Dr. Nicholls therefore encourages any reader who would like to suggest a name or names to be included in the new volume to write to him at Oxford University Press, the Clarendon Building, Bodleian Library, Broad Street, Oxford OX1 3BG, England.

The Harvard Business School and the Newcomen Society of the United States announce a postdoctoral fellowship in business history to support twelve months of residence, study, and research at the Harvard Business School for the academic year 1990–91. The stipend is \$40,000.

The purpose of this award is to enable scholars who have received

the Ph.D. in history, economics, or a related discipline within the past ten years to improve their professional acquaintance with business and economic history, to increase their skills as they relate to this field, and to engage in research that will benefit from the resources of the Harvard Business School and the Boston scholarly community. The successful applicant will participate in the school's business history course, seminar, and case development activities. Those interested should request an application form from:

Professor Thomas K. McCraw  
 Baker Library 215  
 Harvard Business School  
 Soldiers Field  
 Boston, MA 02163

Completed applications for the 1990–91 Newcomen Fellowship must be received no later than 15 March 1990.

Harvard University is an equal opportunity, affirmative action employer.

The general editor of the *Encyclopedia of American Business History and Biography (EABH&B)*, William H. Becker, has provided the journal with the following announcement about this major publishing series in business history.

Biography is one of the most accessible forms of history. This belief animates the *Encyclopedia of American Business History and Biography*, which will be a reference series of approximately fifty volumes published as a joint venture by Bruccoli Clark Layman, Inc., and Facts on File. The publication of the first volumes of this series prompts this short introduction to announce the project formally to the scholarly community of business historians, many of whom in the next decade will be asked by volume editors to prepare entries. Beyond offering a role as contributors to the project, we envision the *EABH&B* as serving scholars and graduate students by suggesting new topics for research and by identifying new sources. Scholars are thus clearly among the cross-section of users—students, teachers, researchers, librarians, and government and corporate officials—that we hope to reach.

Individual volumes or groups of volumes will cover a particular industry during a defined period. The first volume, *The Railroads in the Age of Regulation*, edited by Keith L. Bryant, covers railroads in the twentieth century. A companion volume, edited by Robert L. Frey, tells the story for the nineteenth century. Each *EABH&B* volume, however, will be free-standing, providing a history expressed primarily through biographies, supplemented by a range of nonbiographical entries. In some cases a single volume will be sufficient to treat an industry, but certain industries may require two or more volumes.

Each volume of the *EABH&B* will place business figures in their economic, political, legal, and social contexts. Timing, and the times, are crucial to notable business careers. Taken as a whole, this project will be more than a history of business. It is a chronicle of American civilization expressed through the ambitions and achievements of its business leaders. We will produce a record of successes and failures, since the defeats are often as instructive about an individual, firm, or, indeed, civilization as the achievements. We ask our contributors to produce balanced biographies, to portray reversal as well as success, personal shortcomings as well as admirable characteristics. Emphatically, the *EABH&B* is not to be an exercise in hagiography. It will be, finally, a history of the impact of business on American life.

The project began in 1983. Working together, the general editor, the publishers (Matthew Bruccoli and Richard Layman), and the editorial board (Keith Bryant, Vincent Carosso, Linda Edgerly, William Emerson, Albro Martin, and Glenn Porter) fashioned a format for volumes and individual entries. Preparation of the contributors' manual was supported by a planning grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Each volume will contain about 300,000 words, plus illustrations. Biographies are the core of the work and will be supplemented as necessary by background entries on companies, inventions, legal decisions, marketing innovations, or other topics. Each editor will prepare an introductory essay of 10-20,000 words, outlining the history of the industry in the period covered by his or her volume.

Individual entries are to be written for the intelligent nonspecialist in jargon-free prose. The biographical level will be that of any serious work of biography, although the level of technical material may be comparatively elementary. In writing about business figures, contributors will focus on character and goals. Major entries, reserved for such giants of business and industry as Henry Ford, J. P. Morgan, Andrew Carnegie, James J. Hill, and Pierre du Pont, will require about 10,000 words. Most of the biographies will be standard length, in the range of 3-5,000 words. Short entries of some 1,000 words will be reserved for lesser figures who require inclusion and for significant figures about whom little material is available.

Approximately 30 percent of each volume will be devoted to the historical overview and to the concise background entries supporting and elucidating the biographies. These entries will not be fully developed essays, but will provide basic information about the industry or field covered in the volume. Histories of companies will necessarily be brief (normally fewer than 1,000 words) and limited to key events. Most nonbiographical entries will be under 300 words.

Bibliographical material will enhance the scholarly value of these biographies. Each essay will conclude with a section devoted to bibliographic

information. This will include the subject's published works, if any, along with a list indicating the location of significant unpublished documents, such as speeches or reports. Standard book and article references will follow. For recent business figures, the bibliography will identify interviews about the subject and his company. The final part of the bibliography will include brief notes about company archives, personal papers, and other materials, such as unpublished autobiographical notes.

In addition to the two railroad volumes already mentioned, two volumes on the automobile industry are being edited by George F. May and two on banking by Larry Schweikart. Paul Paskoff is editing the volume on the nineteenth-century iron and steel industry, and Bruce E. Seely is editing the one on the twentieth-century industry. Two volumes on the chemical industry are being edited by John K. Smith. Several other one-volume treatments are under way: William M. Leary on airlines; Arthur L. Norberg on computers; Susan Douglas on radio; and Douglas Gomery on film making.

Those interested in more information about the project may have a copy of the contributors' manual by writing to the general editor, William H. Becker, Department of History, George Washington University, Washington, D.C. 20052.

The editors would like to express their thanks to the many people who assisted the review in 1988 by serving as referees for manuscripts. The readers listed below are those, in addition to the members of our Editorial Advisory Board, who undertook the unpaid, anonymous task that is crucial to the maintenance of the journal's quality.

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