The cover features a light blue background with two vertical stripes: a green one on the left and a red one on the right, both bordered by thin olive green lines. The title is positioned in the upper half, with a large olive green 'C' on the left. The text 'THE' is in red, 'LiOMETRIC' is in olive green, and 'SOCIETY' is in red.

# THE LiOMETRIC SOCIETY

Vol.29 No.1  
Summer 2014  
NEWSLETTER

# *The Cliometric Society*

Summer 2014 Vol 29 No. 1

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### **The Newsletter of the Cliometric Society**

**Editor:** Mary Eschelbach Hansen

**Layout and design:** Ben Gregson

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

**Send contributions to** [mhansen@american.edu](mailto:mhansen@american.edu)

# Report on Cliometrics Conference 2014

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The annual Cliometrics Conference for 2014 was held on the weekend of May 16 and 17 at Clemson University. The conference was sponsored by The National Science Foundation and Clemson University's College of Business and Behavioral Science. Thanks in particular go to NSF Grant principal investigators Ann Carlos and Sumner La Croix, Clemson Interim Dean Charles Watt, and the Chair of Economics at Clemson Raymond "Skip" Sauer.

Essential technical support was provided by Wayne Liou, who served as conference coordinator and book editor, Kai Zhou, who served as financial administrator, and Price Fishback and Lana Sooter of EH.net.

Participants very much appreciated the hospitality of Pam Bodenhorn, who hosted a great Friday night party at the Bodenhorn home and who kindly shuttled participants from the airport (which was made particularly repetitive task after bad weather disrupted some flights). Thanks also to Professor Curtis Simon who also retrieved a late arrival from the airport.

Finally, the program and arrangements committee did terrific work selecting exceptional papers for presentation. The committee was composed of Martha Bailey, Howard Bodenhorn, Ann Carlos, Michael Haupt, Sumner La Croix, and Carolyn Moehling.

Costanza Biavaschi (IZA) opened the conference with "The Economic Payoff of Name Americanization." The paper, co-authored with Corrado Giulietti (IZA) and Zahra Siddique (Reading and IZA), evaluates the economic consequences of name alteration during the early 20th century to immigrants assimilating into American society. They exploit data collected from immigrants to the United States during the naturalization process to identify those immigrants who changed their first names to common American names, for example, changing Giovanni to John. They find that migrants who changed their names were more likely to switch into better occupational groups.

Part of the discussion focused on the validity of the identification strategy. Jules Hugot (Sciences-Po), Matthias Morys (York), and Marianne Wanamaker (Tennessee) expressed concern over the use of the Scrabble score of the first name as an instrument for name Americanization. Wanamaker suggested that if

linguistic complexity explains occupational outcomes for those migrants that do not change names, then the exclusion restriction is violated. Brian Beach (Pittsburgh) and Vellore Arthi (Oxford) argued that name complexity or length is often correlated with social status in the country of origin. Another part of the discussion considered the mechanism by which name Americanization caused occupational upgrading. George Boyer (Cornell) questioned whether changing names made it easier for others to say your name thereby making you a more productive worker. Curtis Simon (Clemson) wondered if name Americanization was correlated with ability to speak English. Rob Fleck (Clemson) suggested that changing one's name might be an indicator of assimilation, noting that when he has been abroad long enough he has acquired a local nickname. In a side discussion, Yannay Spitzer (Northwestern) dispelled the myth that names were Americanized by immigration officers at Ellis Island.

Yannay Spitzer and Ariell Zimran (Northwestern) presented "Migrant Self Selection: Anthropometric Evidence from the Mass Migration of Italians to the United States, 1907-1925," which explores the question of whether migrants are positively or negatively self-selected from within their populations of origin. They use Ellis Island arrival records of a random sample of 50,000 Italian passengers and Italian province-birth cohort height distributions. They find negative self-selection on the national level based on height, but they find positive self-selection at the province level. They argue that the difference demonstrates the importance of distinguishing between self-selection from a country as a whole and self-selection from within a particular sub-national region.

One main strand of discussion was about approaching the decision to migrate as a two-stage decision, where the migrant first decides to migrate and then decides where to go. Tim Hatton (Essex) wondered if selection was related to the structure of Italian immigration, where northern Italians emigrated much earlier and went to South America, while southern Italians went later and came to the U.S. He suggested using the share of migrants from each province going to the U.S. as a regressor in the analysis. Jeff Williamson (Harvard and Wisconsin) also wondered about the two-stage decision of migrants and the direction of the estimate bias, if there was one. Sam Williamson (Measuring Worth) and Vincent Bignon

(Banque de France) both wondered if there were differences in cost to emigrate from the north or south of Italy to the U.S. or South America. If yes, they worried that it could mean northerners took more risk than southerners, and that the national self-selection is really the heart of the matter. George Boyer wanted the authors to explore whether they could get a more localized measure of immigration. He thought that using a smaller geographic unit could improve the measure of selection within a population, exclaiming, "I am the tallest person in Lemoine, Pennsylvania! Seems like that is saying something!"

Another main topic of discussion was choice of how selection was measured. John Komlos (Duke) asked how the heights were recorded at Ellis Island. The authors responded that it seemed to them that since the form reporting height in feet and inches, they did not believe the data were self-reported. They claimed it was likely that immigrants stood next to a measuring pole. They still don't know whether the immigrants were wearing shoes, which could change the overall result of positive selection at the country level. Liam Brunt (Norwegian School of Economics) suggested that the authors cluster the people by shipping line or by ship, because the process was probably done the same by each person doing the measuring. Greg Niemesh (Miami of Ohio) asked why the estimates changed after 1917, which led to a discussion regarding the requirements to enter the United States. Numerous participants suggested that a meaningful literacy test would explain the results seen in the paper.

Timothy Hatton (Essex) presented "Health, Height and the Household in Britain at the Turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century," joint work with Roy E. Bailey (Essex) and Kris Inwood (Guelph). The paper improves on previous anthropometric studies by linking height data on military recruits/conscripts in adulthood to detailed census data on these individuals' household circumstances in childhood. It finds that locality effects such as the disease environment have greater influence on adult height than do household-specific characteristics.

Much of the discussion pertained to methodology. For instance, Marianne Wannamaker stated that she idolizes people like Hatton who achieve 85 percent match rates when linking data. Further, Howard Bodenhorn (Clemson) raised the issue of selection, a familiar problem in anthropometrics research. He noted that the paper does not address the issue of

## Prizes Awarded at the 2014 Clio Conference

The Clio Can was awarded to **George Boyer** of Cornell University.

**Brian Beach** got the "Young Cub Award"--A toy Clemson Tiger.

**Ariel Zimran** and **Yanni Spitzer** got the "Price Fish-back Award," which is the booby prize for including a "Roadsign" paragraph in the paper. A "Roadsign" paragraph says (paraphrasing): "We start with an intro, we go over the literature, we present an econometric model, we discuss results and conclude." Two head ornaments were presented.

**Howard Bodenhorn** got a Clemson orange fly swatter for remarking that "Students used to write real dissertations, not just two essays ..." Howard also got a clio T-shirt and book as thanks for his hard work organizing the conference and his perseverance in helping to reschedule airport transportation for the many participants who were subjected to flight cancellations due to weather and airline whims.

**Pam Bodenhorn** received a toy car to thank her for her tireless efforts in picking up participants from the airport (60 miles away) and for hosting a spectacular Friday night reception.

**Marianne Wannamaker** received spectacular blue, flashing glasses to give her a new look on the world beyond the 1940 Census. Using these glasses while reading will cure all problems in most papers.

**Vincent Bignon** received a deck of presidential playing cards (George Washington is a King in the deck) for his admitting that "I know nothing about this period of British history, but would presume the following ...."

**Wayne Liou** received a "magic marker in disguise" for his attempt to go up to the conference room board and present a numerical example to illustrate one of his comments. (The chair, Marianne Wannamaker, rightly told him to sit down.) He also received a Clio T-shirt to thank him for his excellent work as conference coordinator.

**Richard Baker** received confederate money to enable him to raise the pay of Georgia teachers in his 19th century sample.

dynamic selection over time, since those enlisting voluntarily at the beginning of the period of study are likely to be different than those conscripted later on. Hatton replied that the situation in their case was quite unusual since there were huge numbers of soldiers enlisting. Nevertheless, he had tested for the effect of conscription and found that it had only a very small negative effect.

The discussion progressed to issues of analysis and interpretation, Liam Brunt wondered whether the seemingly counterintuitive negative sign found on the number of household earners could be explained by households having to send more people to work in order to care for sickly children. This explanation was pithily coined the “Tiny Tim effect.” Wayne Liou (Hawaii) was curious about the effect of its gender composition, while Curtis Simon suggested the use of twin births as an instrument for sibship size.

Vellore Arthi (Oxford) explores how Dust Bowl exposure during early life affects later-life outcomes in “The Dust was Long in Settling: Human Capital and the Lasting Impact of the American Dust Bowl”. Arthi finds that exposure to the Dust Bowl increased poverty and disability rates in adulthood. It also decreased fertility rates and the likelihood of completing college. These effects were exacerbated for children born into states that rely on agricultural income. Arthi argues that the collapse of farm incomes reduced the opportunity cost of attending school.

The first part of the discussion focused on mechanisms. Greg Niemesh asked if it would be possible to disentangle whether the effect was primarily biological or economic. Marianne Wannamaker volunteered to play the part of the

“grumpy referee” and argued that it is difficult to disentangle the effects because reliance on agricultural income is also an indicator for how much time is spent outside. Yannay Spitzer pointed out that because treatment is measured at the state level, there might not be enough power to disentangle mechanisms.

The second part of the discussion focused on endogeneity. Anthony Wray (Northwestern) asked whether areas that over exploited their land were more likely to experience erosion. Carolyn Moehling (Rutgers) and Robert Fleck were concerned about

how the Dust Bowl might have influenced migration. Because the Dust Bowl spanned such a long length of time, they thought it would be important to understand who could leave once the Dust Bowl hit.

Richard B. Baker (Boston) presented “Finding the Fat: The Relative Impact of Budget Fluctuations on African-American Schools.” It is well known that school quality varied substantially by race, and that school boards spent less on African American than on

white pupils. The paper contributes to by asking how school funds were distributed in times of budget cuts, providing additional evidence on the behavior of county school boards after the disenfranchisement of African Americans. Exploiting a discontinuity in school funds allocation, Richard shows that school expenditures responded approximately one to one to adjustment in revenues.

The discussion involved three key points: identification, including a theoretical framework and model specification. Gregory Niemesh asked about anticipation effects of apportionment. Liam Brunt noted that apportionment per pupil was probably endogenous to other economic conditions. Both Marianne Wannamaker and Carolyn Moehling suggested that counties might have been adjusting



*Ariel Zimran, Marianne Wannamaker, and Yannay Spitzer model the prizes awarded to them at the banquet.*



along other dimensions, such as by backlifting or reducing local-level taxation. Baker argued that he sees no increase in local taxes. Carolyn asked whether students or households were likely to respond to budget cuts, for example, recognizing the lower benefits by reducing attendance. To deal with this challenge, Wannamaker and Spitzer suggested using apportionment as an instrument.

A second theme of the comments focused on understanding the political economy behind the results. Rob Fleck wished to have the guidance of a theoretical framework. Leonard Carlson (Emory) mentioned that in 1878 the vote of 2/3 of the registered population was needed to raise local taxes. This requirement was changed with a constitutional amendment in 1905 imposing 2/3 of the voting population, and hence allowing counties to exercise more freedom to raise taxes. He worried that there might therefore be a difference in responses between black and white counties. Sam Williamson wondered whether there were African Americans on school boards, and Richard replied that it did not seem to be the case.

Millions of southern blacks migrated north during the Great Migration, dramatically changing the health environment of their children. Katherine Eriksson (Cal. Poly) and Gregory Niemesh (Miami of Ohio) seek to understand how migrating north affected infant mortality in “The Impact of Migration on Infant Health: Evidence from the Great Migration.” To answer this question, the authors construct a novel dataset linking infant death certificates to parental characteristics. Preliminary results indicate that infant mortality increased following migration.

Many participants were interested to know what the final dataset will look like. Wayne Liou asked about household characteristics that might also affect mortality, for example, age of father and mother, or number of siblings, and Jeff Williamson wanted to know about the reported cause of death. Carolyn Moehling pointed out that most infants at this time died from diarrheal diseases, but that there would be more variation for children aged one to five. Vellore Arthi noted that those causes of death could be used as a proxy for the infant disease environment. Marianne Wannamaker suggested linking to future censuses to better capture the full story of the gains from migration

Anthony Wray was curious to know how fertility

decisions might influence migration, and Richard Baker wanted to know if it would be possible to analyze babies who were in utero were affected. Rui Esteves (Oxford) argued that time since migration might play an important role in understanding the gains from migration.

Nathan Foley-Fisher (Federal Reserve Board) and Eoin McLaughlin (Edinburgh) were first up to bat on the second day of the conference. “Sovereign Default in Ireland, 1932” examines how the allocation of debt to seceding regions impacted future borrowing costs. The secession of Ireland from the United Kingdom in the early 20th century provides a nice quasi-experiment. The authors use structural differences between land bonds guaranteed by the UK (pre-independence) and Ireland (post-independence) to examine the credibility of UK guarantees after the secession of Ireland. The results suggest that uncertainty about the division of fiscal responsibility after secession may be persistent and increase the cost of borrowing in spite of efforts to clearly allocate liabilities.

Some of the discussion focused on how to interpret the results of the paper’s breakpoint analysis. Sumner La Croix (Hawaii) argued that international forces could have differentially influenced debt prices. To rule out this possibility, Curtis Simon suggested testing whether yield spreads were correlated with world economic activity. In other discussion, alternative explanations were given for the UK’s willingness to continue to guarantee the land bonds after the Irish default. Liam Brunt suggested that the UK could have improved its credit rating by making these payments on behalf of Ireland, thus lowering the cost of all of their other debt. Another story—that the UK had an interest in protecting the bond holders—was suggested by Vincent Bignon. Sam Williamson disagreed with comparing the Irish case to that of Newfoundland joining Canada because of huge differences in the political environments.

Jeff Williamson (Harvard and Wisconsin) presented “American Colonial Incomes, 1650-1774.” The paper, co-authored with Peter Lindert (UC-Davis), explores multiple questions about income levels and income distribution between 1650 and 1774 among the 13 colonies that became the United States. The estimates of nominal GDP are assembled using the personal income methodology, which uses earnings of free laborers, property incomes, and the “retained earnings” of slaves. This approach is new, and it

differs from other pre-1929 American historical estimates that construct GDP from production or expenditure estimates. It allows the authors to challenge previous GDP estimates and to consider the distribution of income among socio-occupational classes, races, and regions. The paper reports four key findings: growth in colonial income per capita was very slow, relative income per capita declined in the South, colonial America was an income per capita leader, and colonial American incomes were relatively equally distributed in 1774.

One part of the discussion focused on the methodology behind the measure of GDP. Ray Cohn (Illinois State) and Sam Williamson both wanted to know more about the comparison between the income method presented and previous estimates which used the production and expenditure approaches. What production was missed in the old estimates? Were trade estimates used? Jamus Jerome Lim (World Bank) also mentioned that using the income method to compute contemporary GDP can give lower estimates than the production method due to underreporting for tax issues, poor recollection, and so on.

A second part of the discussion focused on interpretation. Matthias Morys invoked Bob Allen, who says income is a necessary but not sufficient condition for industrialization. Morys wondered whether the income data in the paper tells us anything about early industrialization in the United States.

The discussion turned to the idea of the comparative advantage, in particular noting that the U.S. had land and forests and so did not have to industrialize to beat Britain in terms of GDP.

Mike Matheis (Arizona) presented “Local Economic Impacts of Coal Mining in the U.S. 1870 to

1970,” a long-run study of the resource curse as it pertains to the growth and economic development of US counties in response to coal mining activity. The author finds negative short- and long-term net impacts of coal mining; for example, there were reductions in county population and manufacturing employment.

Considerable discussion was held on the topic of mobility across counties. Carolyn Moehling mentioned that comparing countries is very different than comparing counties, primarily because of inter-county mobility. In particular, she noted that a county may appear to have suffered a “bust” only because individuals moved on to places where there was more opportunity. Thus, the true victims of the resource curse may be those who could not move. To take this into account, she recommended examining poverty and health. To this end, Greg Niemesh suggested measures of intergenerational mobility would be worthwhile additions to the analysis.

Another area of discussion was the nature of the resource curse. Mike Hauptert (Wisconsin-La Crosse) pointed out that what was being observed could be an “all your eggs in one basket” curse. Eoin McLaughlin (Edinburgh) wondered why the author was only looking at coal, and suggested he also investigate oil and other types of resources including mining other than coal. Sumner La Croix suggested the author should look at the current experimental literature on the resource curse, and particularly to focus on the

differences in regions with renewable versus extractive resources.

Liam Brunt (Norwegian School of Economics) presented “Variations in the Price and Quality of Grain, 1750-1914.” While economists tend to think of prices as reflecting variation in



*First timers included (not in order) Katherine Eriksson, Eoin McLaughlin, Costanza Biavaschi, Ariell Zimran, Brian Beach, Vellore Arthi, Richard Baker, Nathan Foley-Fisher, Pamfili Antipa, and Jamus Jerome Lim.*

availability of homogeneous product, interpretation of historical grain price data is complicated owing to the systematic variation in grain quality. The paper quantifies cross-sectional, long-run variation, inter- and intra-year variation in grain quality. The authors show that especially cross-sectional and long run variation were likely to generate erroneous conclusions on labor market integration and cost of living measures.

In the first part of the discussion several people wondered what quality is and what determines it. Jamus Jerome Lim made a “culinary comment,” noting that while pink Himalayan salt is different from other types of salts, its price depend on demand and preference factors as well. Mike Hauptert asked how quality could be affected, echoed by Marianne Wanamaker who wondered if there were cost differences in producing high or low quality wheat, and Sam Williamson who asked whether quality could depend on the time of harvesting.

The second part of the discussion focused on the interpretation of the results. George Boyer mentioned that the results could be very useful if the authors could construct a time series of quality-adjusted prices that could be used to calculate cost-of-living. Jeff Williamson asked how the results help economists to understand the correlation between quality of grain from poor countries and grain prices. Liam replied that quality differences imply downward bias in price calculations. Additionally, Liam suggested that cross-countries comparisons of grain prices might be misleading even today, as there is substantial variation in quality of wheat.

Brian Beach (University of Pittsburgh) closed the conference with “Do Markets Reward Constitutional Reform? Lessons from America’s State Debt Crisis.” The paper analyzes the US 1840s debt crisis in order to explore how markets respond to institutional innovations designed to promote credibility. In particular, after the default of eight states and the territory of Florida, sixteen states adopted constitutional provisions constraining their ability to tax, borrow, and charter corporations. Using a differences-in-differences methodology, the author finds that bonds issued by defaulting states appreciated by 13 percent following reform, and outstanding debt per capita increased by \$15. These results suggest that sovereigns with tarnished reputations can benefit from adopting constitutional constraints to signal their commitment to a set of policies.

A first part of the discussion was related to the exact content of reforms and the broader historical context. Jessica Hennessey (Furman) wanted to know more about the exact content of reforms. Mathias Morys asked about the relationship between reform announcements, their implementation, and the time it takes credibility to be conveyed to markets. Howard Bodenhorn noted that most states had chartered banks for which they took over liabilities; in that sense it would be important to know what caused state’s banks problems/default in the first place.

The second part of the discussion was involved data availability and the interpretation of results. Vincent Bignon noted that the absence of data for some states could be an issue of self-selection. Howard Bodenhorn said that a lot of the bonds of that period were listed on exchanges so it should be possible to get a great deal of information. Finally, Pamfili Antipa (Banque de France) pointed out that debt levels were influenced by macroeconomic factors that were not related to credibility of public finances; it would be informative to compute yields that reflect default premia more precisely. ■



*Clioms visiting “Old Green Tom,” the weathered bronze statue of the University’s founder. According to legend, students who read the plaque on the base of the statue will never graduate.*



## 2014 Warbler Goes South

CLEMSON, SC—They came from afar. Some from not so far. They enjoyed the barbecue, the weather, the fine southern hospitality, and of course, the Clioms enjoyed the conversation. Always the conversation. It is what brings us together. It is what we carry with us when we leave. Some bits of it more memorable than other bits.

Many, many moons ago the award formerly known as the Mullah was established to recognize the tidbit of conversation that was *most* memorable at the annual gathering. Most memorable is defined as “the observation made during the heat of verbal jousting that is at the same time both profound and universally true.” Only those things said spontaneously and from the heart (certainly not the brain) are considered. No premeditated, planned, or carefully considered contrivances are allowed. The mullah had—and his humble follower, the Warbler has—no interest in statements made with forethought and careful consideration.

It all began with what are now the immortal words uttered by She-who-won thrice-and-is-now-forever-banished-from-winning-again, who warned us: “Never open a can of worms larger than the universe.” As far as the Warbler knows, such a can has never been opened. If nothing else, a good Cliom follows the advice of her intellectual ancestors.

While cans and worms are no longer issues for Clioms, there are other warnings, bits of wisdom, and astounding observations that we have shared with one another and that have been honored over the years.

In the not too distant past The Headcounter soothed our fears by reminding us that “you can fix it with women.” And just last year we were warned by Our Sailor to be wary of the size of our panel regressions because “with each country added a chunk of life goes by.”

Enough of the past. Let us move on to the present. But in doing so, the Warbler recalls a past gathering in which two respected (euphemism for ageing) Clioms engaged in a bit of repartee that has since been dubbed the “Steve Broadberry-Greg Clark Insightful Exchange” award, to recognize the combination of wisdom and insight that only two people are capable of devolving into. This year’s winners were The Young Wildcat who grilled the Boston Baker: “My question is about the salary for teachers. That \$440 is a very high salary.” Replied the Baker: “It’s \$4.40.” Unfazed, the Young Wildcat changed tactics: “Wow, that’s a very little salary. So let me reverse my question.” This kind of thinking on the fly is what makes the Warbler proud and confident that he will never be out of a job.

As a warning to Cliom cubs, the Warbler offers this cautionary lesson: *Do not try to influence him in any way.* The Warbler is too keen to be fooled. Blatant attempts at self-promotion or unseemly vote-mongering will not be tolerated. As an example, an otherwise fine and respectable gentleman hailing from the upstate area of the great state of New York offered up the observation that “naming yourself Jeff signals that you want to work hard.” He mistakenly thought Jeff was the Warbler. An understandable mistake, but an unforgiveable attempt to bribe the judge. (Not that the Warbler is above bribes, mind you, it’s just that he would prefer the bribe be offered to him, not Jeff). Later the man from upstate tried to atone for his mistake by offering that “I’m the tallest person in Le Moyne, PA, that’s got to be worth something.” [Note: it turns out that, in fact, it is not.]

This man was not the only one disqualified from consideration. The Volunteer was also disqualified on a technicality. On eighteen different occasions during the proceedings she



All are in attendance at the Clemson venue.

informed a presenter that his/her problems could be solved by using data from the 1940 census. At first the Warbler was impressed. Not by the Volunteer, but by the wide ranging applicability of the 1940 census to topics ranging from health and heights in Wales to sovereign debt in Ireland. Later, the Warbler learned that the Volunteer had a promotional contract with the 1940 census. He was then less impressed, and wondered if the census even addressed sovereign debt in Ireland at all. All wondering aside, self-promotion of any kind is grounds for automatic disqualification.

And now on to our finalists. There were many worthy candidates. Among those comments that were certainly universally true, but were found to be lacking in profundity, was the observation from the Once and Future Badger who noted that “the good folks go North. The dregs go to New York.” The Warbler, having himself headed north from St. Louis long ago, could not have agreed more. Surely this is true. But just as surely, it is so obvious that it cannot be profound.

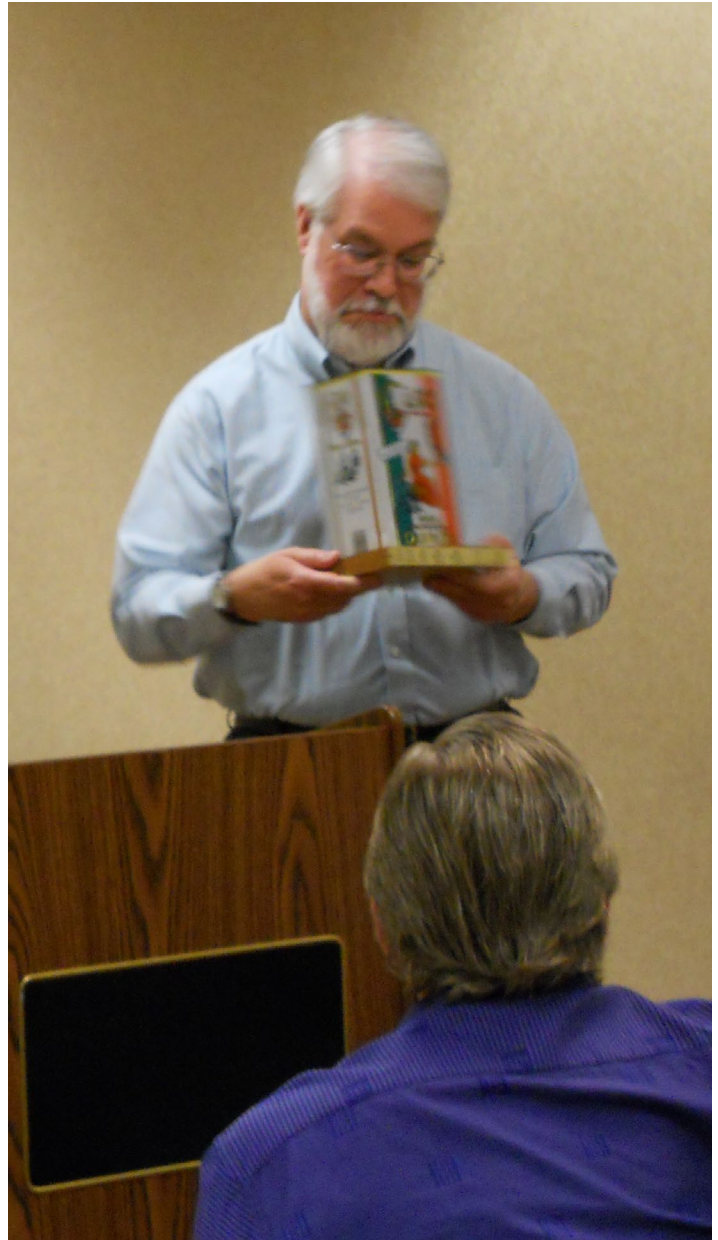
Then there was Pittbull, who reminded us that “eight is eight times more than one.” A quick check of the calculator function on the phone showed the Warbler that this was indeed true. But profound? No. To be profound it would have had to have been three. Three is profound. Eight is merely true.

Profundity was not lacking at the conference. The Young Don revealed that “God makes me virtuous, but just not yet.” This struck the Warbler immediately as profound, but given the indefinite timing, it could not be proven to be universally true. Perhaps in a year or two, if the Young Don is still not virtuous, it will be true.

And then there was the Last Wildcat who revealed that “those who are meeting an immediate family member are shorter.” Given his stature, the Warbler perked up immediately. This might explain something. He racked his brain, had he ever met a family member? Then his hopes were dashed. Of course this was not universally true. The Up-stater, the tallest man in Le Moyne, had met a family member. And his stature did not diminish. Alas.

Finally, the winner. The False Floridian revealed that “if you’re alive on April 1<sup>st</sup>, we know you didn’t die.” It was what the Warbler was looking for. Profound to be sure, and after checking the 1940 census, the Warbler confirmed that it was indeed universally true.

It was an exhausting affair. Not the conference proceedings, but the Warbler’s commitment to sampling the widest variety of barbecue possible. He is still not decided whether the Georgia, South Carolina, or North Carolina variety is best. Several more observations will be needed. But that will have to wait. Next year the Warbler will be much closer to home, when he travels to Michigan. While there won’t be good southern barbecue, but there will be Clioms, and the Warbler always feels at home in their company. ■



*George Boyer accepts the Clio Can in recognition of his contributions to Cliometrics.*

# An Interview with Paul Hohenberg

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*Paul M. Hohenberg was born Paris, France. As an undergraduate he studied Chemical Engineering at Cornell. He earned the MA from the Fletcher School at Tufts and the PhD in Economics at MIT. He served on the faculties of Stanford, Cornell, Concordia (Montreal) and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. He served as editor of the Journal of Economic History and as president of the Economic History Association, and he was an active member of the Social Science History Association and the Cliometric Society. This interview was conducted by Theresa Gutberlet following lunch at the Whistling Kettle in Troy, NY, on April 9 2014, and edited via email.*

*Let's go back to the beginning. You worked as an engineer for a couple of years before starting graduate school. How did you get started in economics?*

As it happened, I did five years of chemical engineering without a single real economics course. I realized pretty quickly that I wanted to do something else than plastics research, so I started to study economics textbooks and to apply to grad school—easier then than now. I applied to MIT, but I initially chose the Fletcher School at Tufts which would give me an MA in one year. But then I learned that MIT needed people to teach non-credit reading courses in languages, because the PhD required two language exams. So I began teaching so-called “Scientific” German and French, eventually including the sections in Economics, a topic where the other language teachers struggled with vocabulary. I gained respect for MIT in that they had no bureaucratic hang-ups when I joined them as a grad student a year after I started teaching.

*How did you decide on your first research area and dissertation topic?*

At Tufts I took two courses from Charles Kindleberger—who was moonlighting from MIT—in economic development and comparative growth between England and France. I then took more European economic history with Walt Rostow at MIT. That and my background (Europe and chemistry) pushed me toward a dissertation on the development of the chemical industry in France, Germany, and Switzerland. The governing hypothesis was that “knowledge-intensive” industries could have important effects on technological change in (larger)

supplier or client industries. This did not make much noise at the time, but is a common theme today in the literature on entrepreneurship and technological change.

*How did your research interests evolve from this starting point?*

First let me say that I completely, or largely, failed to climb on the Cliometric bandwagon that was getting rolling, notably in the Gerschenkron workshop at Harvard. I was, and remained, a methodological maverick, which has not proved great from a career point of view, though you can find bits of modeling and economic reasoning in my work, I think. Even demography and statistics, if you look hard enough! But in substantive terms, I followed chemicals (fertilizers) out to French farms and published three papers on agriculture. Then I followed some of the French rural folk in their migration to the city with a paper published in the *Annales*, again using some home-grown demographic and statistical techniques. Finally, I took an interest in cities, both from a historical and a theoretical perspective.

*Your best-known work is perhaps The Making of Urban Europe, 1000-1994. How did this book come about?*

As I said, cities were beginning to interest me, as was collaboration with people in other social science fields. Collaboration was something Cornell (where I was teaching at the time) was good at encouraging, though it was not good for getting tenure. I also got involved with a program in European studies funded, if I remember rightly, by the Social Science Research Council. There I met Lynn Hollen Lees, a social historian just joining Penn. Her mentor, Charles Tilly, was editor of a series on urban history at the Harvard University Press and wanted a survey kind of book to offset hard-to-sell monographs. It took us ten years to finish the original edition, which came out in 1985. The after-effects (presentations, book chapters, conferences, and an updating for the paperback edition) consumed many more years. In fact, my aim of switching focus and doing a serious economic history of the Hudson Valley—I moved to Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in 1974 after a short *intermezzo* in Montreal—never materialized.



*Can you tell us something about your EHA presidency?*

I was asked to serve in that capacity after I had been retired for several years. Once I got over the surprise, and figured it was real, I put the request down to my earlier service as editor of the *Journal of Economic History*, a demanding but rewarding assignment. (If I may offer advice to aging colleagues: remember that so long as you remain active, your professional friends do not care whether you are still teaching.) Of course, the real work of a president is finding people to do the big jobs associated with the annual meeting, from dissertation conveners to program chairs and beyond, as well as to fill the seats on standing committees. I was very fortunate that good people agreed to serve and then did their jobs! But things were not all easy. The Austin venue had been chosen for me and there were problems finding a local arrangements committee. Again, Alex Field (then Executive Director of EHA) and I found kind people to help, notably Professor James Galbraith, Mrs. Elspeth Rostow, Walt's widow, and the staff at the LBJ Library and Museum. The construction going on at the hotel did not help, but that was offset, for everyone I hope, by the fine speakers at the plenary sessions: Christina Romer, Michael Bernstein, and Dick Easterlin.

*Finally, I wanted to ask what you think about the new work in urban, regional, and transportation economics, notably by the young researchers in the current generation?*

As a long-time advocate of more attention to space in economics, I welcome the work of the so-called New Economic Geography. (It should really be called Geographical Economics). As for methodology, I am probably the last person to ask about it, since I have notoriously failed to follow the fashions of the day and pursue methodological virtuosity. I understand why people do it, of course. After all, a lot of the impetus for Cliometrics was to convince hard-core economists to give a fair hearing to economic historians. I am glad to note that the profession seems to be moving away from excessive abstraction and is taking economic historians more seriously (*vide* Claudia Goldin's election to the presidency of AEA) as a result. I should mention that I have been a bit of a skeptic regarding other fashions, from the human heights approach to the so-called New Institutional Economic History. But on a more positive note, let me say that I was impressed at the few Clio meetings I attended, both by the format that dispensed with

presentation, and by the focus of the discussion on substance rather than minutiae of technique.

### Selected works by Paul M. Hohenberg

#### **Books**

Hohenberg, Paul M., and Lynn Hollen Lees. 1985. *The Making of Urban Europe, 1000-1994*. Harvard University Press (second edition 1995).

#### **Articles**

Hohenberg, P. M. (1977). Maize in French Agriculture. *Journal of European Economic History*, 6(1), 63-101.

Hohenberg, P. (1972). "Change in Rural France in the Period of Industrialization, 1830-1914." *Journal of Economic History*, 32(1), 219-240.

Hohenberg, Paul M. (2004). "The Historical Geography of European Cities: An Interpretive Essay." *Handbook of Regional and Urban Economics* 4 (2004), 3021-3052.

Hohenberg, P. M. (2008). "Toward a More Useful Economic History." *Journal of Economic History*, 68(2), 339-354. ■



*Confederate money was awarded as a prize at the banquet.*



# In Memory of Stanley Reiter

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Stanley Reiter (1925-2014)

*The man who gave “Cliometrics” its name*

By Lou Cain and Sam Williamson

It is with considerable sadness that we note the passing of Stanley Reiter. Stan was not an economic historian; he was a pioneer in the application of mathematical methods to studying operations and a leader in the field of mechanism design. And yet, he was a major contributor to the formation of Cliometrics.

Stan majored in economics at Queens College, then went on to do his graduate work at the University of Chicago. In 1954, he was one of the bright young men hired into the economics department at Purdue by Dean Emanuel Weiler. He worked there until 1967 when he followed his friend and colleague Jonathan Hughes to Northwestern.

In 1958, Reiter and Hughes published “The First 1,945 British Steamships” in the *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, a paper that has been termed a major milestone. Hughes and Reiter, making use of Purdue’s new mainframe computer and untold numbers of computer cards, applied relationships from marine engineering to data concerning British steamships. They argued that the carrying capacity of the steam fleet had been significantly underestimated and, overturning the then current historiography, they argued steam was the dominant maritime technology by the 1850s.

That and other collaborative research underway at Purdue led Reiter, Hughes and Lance Davis to be invited to present a paper describing the school’s work at the annual meeting of the Economic History Association. That paper, “Aspects of Quantitative Research in Economic History,” appeared in the December 1960 *Journal of Economic History*. On their way to the meeting, the three were having a jocular conversation in an airport lounge. Reiter

flippantly joined “Clio,” the muse of history, and “metrics,” the latter part of econometrics, to produce a name for their efforts. A quarter century later, Stan commented that in grad school he and his fellow students had joked about a field they called “theometrics,” the measuring of such theological variables as how many angels could dance on the head of a pin. The airport conversation struck a chord with the three, and the JEH paper contains the first published appearance of the word “Cliometrics.”

In brief, the logical structure necessary to make historical reconstructions from the surviving debris of past economic life essentially involves ideas of history, economics and statistics. The offspring of such an act of interdisciplinary miscegenation calls for a name worthy of it; at Purdue the resulting discipline has been labeled “Cliometrics.” (540)

Hughes and Davis were anxious to build on the enthusiasm their EHA presentation engendered. Reiter had been successful in obtaining money for a conference that brought several leading young mathematical economists to Purdue. With Reiter’s help, Hughes and Davis applied for and received funds to bring about a dozen young economic historians to Purdue. The first Cliometrics Conference took place in December 1960, just as the paper was being published. It became an annual event which retained its initial title (Conference on the Application of Economic Theory and Quantitative Techniques to the Study of Problems in Economic History) into the 1970s, but, from the start, has been known familiarly as Clio thanks to Stan Reiter.

Reiter and Hughes had one additional joint research venture at Northwestern. “A Preface on Modeling the Regulated United States Economy” appeared in the Summer 1981 *Hofstra Law Review*. Conversations between the two friends during Hughes’ research on *The Governmental Habit* led Reiter once again to apply his mathematical methods to understand the past.

While few cliometricians knew Stan Reiter personally, he exerted a great influence on our discipline. Jon Hughes described the early Clio meetings as filled with “candor, warmth, enthusiasm, intellectual generosity, and comradeship.” For those of us fortunate enough to have known him, these were the qualities of Stan Reiter. He will be missed. ■