

Editors' Notes

IN MEMORIAM: HUGH G.J. AITKEN, 1922–1994

FRANK WARD



Hugh G. J. Aitken, George D. Olds Professor of Economics and American Studies at Amherst College, died April 14, 1994, in Northampton, Massachusetts. He was 71 years old. Although he was known to be in fragile health, his passing nevertheless came as a shock to his friends and colleagues.

Born in Deal, England, Aitken grew up in Aberdeen, Scotland, and earned bachelor's and master's degrees at the University of St. Andrews. During World War II, he served in the British Royal Air Force in India. An irrepressible antiauthoritarian streak, a by-product of his strict upbringing, put him on the bad side of his commanding officer. This individual, who remained charitably nameless in Aitken's reminiscences, retaliated by refusing to promote him to officer and pilot rank. The falling-out saved his life: soon after, the entire squadron was shot down in battle. So, instead of flying planes, he repaired and maintained them, a task that no doubt fed his love of mechanical devices. After the war, he briefly considered entering the ordained ministry, but was dissuaded because of his speech impediment. This twist of fate turned him towards academia.

After the war, he went to study economic history with Harold Innes at the University of Toronto. He completed his Ph.D. in economics at Harvard in 1951 and spent four years as a research fellow at Harvard's Entrepreneurial History Center. While at Harvard he married Janice Hunter. They moved west when Hugh landed his first job at the new Riverside campus of the University of California in 1955. In the course of ten years he advanced to full professor, serving as dean and department chair, before coming to Amherst College in 1965, where he spent the rest of his career.

From 1951 to 1955, Aitken was a research fellow at Harvard's Entrepreneurial History Center, then the crucible of scholarly activity in economic history. There Aitken worked directly with Arthur H. Cole, Thomas Cochran, Leland H. Jenks, Joseph H. Schumpeter, Alfred D. Chandler, Fritz Redlich, and others. Together, they defined a new approach to economic history, an approach rooted in the study of enterprise that drew on social theory and social psychology as well as economics. This school of economic history rejected the formal assumptions and methodology of neoclassical economics, and in the process set in motion a chain of events that ultimately divided the field. As Thomas Cochran recalled in a 1985 retrospective on Aitken's work, "An unwanted division within economic history came from the use of empirically based rather than deductive propositions. Hugh grasped this problem at once." And he sought to address it, as both teacher and scholar, by integrating economics with the study of real-world problems—without dodging "factors that couldn't be measured."

For Aitken, the mission of economic historians was to explain the evolution of new phenomena, how they came to be, and how they shaped human action. As it turned out, he was perhaps less affected by the great divide in economic history than others, because his work lay at the cusp of empirical social science and the history of technology. It was in this latter field that he made his reputation. *Syntony and Spark: The Origins of Radio* (1976) and *The Continuous Wave: Technology and American Radio* (1985) redefined not only the history of radio but the broader historical process of

technological invention. Each received the Dexter Prize from the Society for the History of Technology (SHOT), which awarded Aitken its Leonardo da Vinci Medal for lifetime achievement in 1986. The committee's citation noted: "He entered a field already treated by scholars, but, with insight and imaginative analysis, with an understanding of human motivations and institutions, and with an elegance of style, he took us beyond the well-told stories to larger historical questions and new frames of reference." Aitken's earlier work remains just as valuable. In *Taylorism at Watertown Arsenal* (1960), he wove economic history into the history of technology and technological change into the field of economic history. *Canadian Economic History* (1956) remains in print nearly forty years after its publication.

Aitken would have wanted to be remembered as more than a scholar. He was devoted to his family, and his love for and service to Grace Episcopal Church anchored him in the Amherst community. Having no graduate students of his own, he took an uncommon interest in younger scholars. He fostered their careers in numerous ways, by seeking them out at association meetings, corresponding via electronic mail, or scheduling regular lunches to discuss work in progress. This he did not merely as a service to the profession but out of genuine affection. He donated his second Dexter Prize money to endow a fund for graduate students to travel to SHOT meetings, but he refused to permit the fund to be named for him.

The many facets of Aitken's personality made him something of a mystery to many people. The Reverend James Clark eulogized him as a "dour Scot"—a phrase that came to Al Chandler's mind as well—but beneath the gruff, dignified exterior lay the soul of a gentle man capable of a great depth of feeling. As the news of his death spread over the Internet—he subscribed to several bulletin boards, including one for home beer brewers—many condolences were posted to his account. For a proper, sometimes stiff, man, Aitken moved across social contexts easily and made friends wherever he went. He was as comfortable in a college classroom, in a dean's office, in his radio shack, as he was in the backwoods of down east Maine, sharing a beer with summer neighbors.

After Janice passed away in July, 1993, Hugh's heartbreak was obvious, and his sense of loss invaded everything he did. More than once he plaintively remarked that nothing he wrote seemed finished without Janice there to read and edit. Indeed, her hand had been invisibly present in everything he wrote. The distinguished historian of technology made it clear that his life was not to be extended by technology, and it wasn't. When he was laid to rest on April 18, his daughter Ellen presided at the liturgy that celebrated his life. A tree has been planted on the Amherst College campus in his memory.

VICTORIA SAKER WOESTE

TWELFTH INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC HISTORY CONGRESS

The International Economic History Association will hold its Twelfth World Congress in Seville, Spain, in August or September, 1998. The Association invites proposals from scholars of all nations wishing to organize sessions. Proposals for A- and B-Sessions are due February 1, 1995; proposals for C-Sessions, February 1, 1996; and D-Sessions, February 1, 1997 (tentative). Preference will be given in the selection of A- and B-Sessions to persons who did not organize one of these at the Milan Congress. Proposals should be sent to Professor Joseph Goy, General Secretary, International Economic History Association, Centre de Recherches Historiques, E.H.E.S.S., 54, Boulevard Raspail, 75270 Paris, France. Applicants from North America should first send copies of their applications to (and discuss them with) the two North American members of the IEHA Executive Committee: Professor Richard Sutch, Director, Institute of Business and Economic Research, University of California, Berkeley, CA

94720-1922, USA; and Professor Scott M. Eddie, Department of Economics, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario M5S 1A1, Canada.

FIFTY-FIFTH ANNUAL E.H.A. MEETING

The 1995 Annual Meeting of the Economic History Association will take place in Chicago, Illinois, from September 8 to 10, 1995. The theme of the program will be the "Evolution of the Global Economy," and the program committee consisting of Peter Lindert, Co-Chair, Kenneth Snowden, Co-Chair, Stephen Haber, and Christina Romer, hopes that focus will invite proposals on Third World and comparative history, growth and convergence, and open economy impacts in the long run. Papers relating to other areas of economic history will also be considered. Send two copies of abstracts of papers to each of the Co-Chairs: Peter H. Lindert, Agricultural History Center, University of California—Davis, Davis, CA 95616; and Kenneth Snowden, Department of Economics, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Greensboro, NC 27412-5001. For full consideration, proposals must be received by January 24, 1995. Notices of acceptance will be sent to the individual paper givers by March 12, 1995.

Persons expecting to receive their Ph.D. in the academic year 1994/95 are invited to apply for inclusion in the dissertation session. The convenors are Winifred Rothenberg of Tufts University and Cormac Ó Gráda of University College, Dublin. Dissertations on U.S. or Canadian history that are chosen for presentation at the session are finalists for the Allen Nevins Prize; dissertations on non-U.S. and Canadian history chosen for presentation are finalists for the Alexander Gerschenkron Prize. Applicants must send two copies of completed dissertations to Winifred Rothenberg, Department of Economics, Tufts University, Medford, MA 02155 by June 10, 1995.

AWARDS AT THE 1994 E.H.A. MEETING

The following prizes were awarded at the fifty-fourth annual meeting of the Economic History Association, held in Cincinnati, Ohio, from October 7 to 9, 1994.

The Arthur H. Cole Prize for the outstanding article published in this JOURNAL in the September 1993 through June 1994 issues, to Joseph P. Ferrie of Northwestern University, for his article "The Wealth Accumulation of Antebellum European Immigrants to the U.S., 1840–60," which appeared in the March 1994 issue. The Cole Prize recipient is selected each year by this JOURNAL's editorial board.

The Allen Nevins Prize for the outstanding dissertation in U.S. or Canadian economic history during 1993/94, to Dora Costa of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, for her "Health, Income, and Retirement: Evidence from 19th Century America," completed at the University of Chicago under the guidance of Robert Fogel.

The Alexander Gerschenkron Prize for the outstanding dissertation in non-U.S. or Canadian economic history during 1993/94, to Va Nee Van Vleck of Grinnell College, for her "Reassessing Technological Backwardness: Absolving the 'Silly Little Bob-tailed' Coal Car," completed at the University of Iowa under the guidance of Donald McCloskey.

The Alic Hanson Jones Prize for the best book in North American economic history published in 1991 or 1992, to Louis Green Carr of the Historic St. Mary's City Commission, Russell Menard of the University of Minnesota, and Lorena Walsh of the Colonial Williamsburg Research Foundation, for their *Robert Cole's World: Agriculture and Society in Early Maryland*, published by the University of North Carolina Press in 1991.

The Gyory Ranki Prize for the best book in European economic history published in English in 1992 or 1993, to Robert C. Allen of the University of British Columbia, for his

Enclosure and the Yeoman: The Agricultural Development of the South Midlands, 1450–1850, published by Oxford University Press in 1992.

The Jonathan Hughes Prize for 1994 for excellence in teaching economic history, to Douglass C. North of Washington University.

UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE-HAGLEY FELLOWSHIPS

The Department of History at the University of Delaware offers two- and four-year fellowships for a course of study leading to an M.A. or Ph.D. degree for students interested in careers as college teachers or as professionals in museums, historical agencies, and archives. The University of Delaware-Hagley Program's focus is the history of industrialization, broadly defined. Historically, most students in the program have been interested in American industrial history, but the program also covers the industrialization of Europe and non-Western societies. For students pursuing careers as museum professionals, the University of Delaware sponsors a certificate program in museum studies.

Hagley Fellowships cover tuition for courses at the University of Delaware and provide a yearly stipend of \$9,750 for master's candidates and \$10,820 for doctoral candidates. Fellowships may be renewed once for those seeking a terminal master's degree and three times beyond the initial year for those seeking the doctorate. Hagley Fellows also receive support for travel to conferences, archives, and museums. Application for a Hagley Fellowship can be made through the Coordinator, University of Delaware-Hagley Program, Department of History, University of Delaware, Newark, DE 19716, (302) 831-8226. The deadline for receipt of complete applications is January 30.

INGENUITY AND ENTERPRISE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

The Ingenuity and Enterprise Center at the Rhode Island Historical Society, a research center dedicated to the study of innovation and entrepreneurship in business and technology, offers short-term Research Fellowships for scholars interested in using the resources of the Society and other institutions in the Providence area in a project related to the mission of the Center. The Research Fellowships will provide an honorarium of \$500 and a stipend for expenses up to an additional \$1,500. Applications are welcomed from academics, doctoral students, and independent scholars working in a field related to history, business, or technology.

Applications must be postmarked by February 15, 1995. For further information of an application, contact: Ingenuity and Enterprise Center at the Rhode Island Historical Society, 110 Benevolent Street, Providence, RI 02906, phone (401) 331-8575, fax (401) 331-0127, e-mail KEVINGU@DSL.RHILINET.GOV.