

# EDITOR'S CORNER

We are pleased to announce the winners of the two prizes offered by the Newcomen Society of the United States for the best articles published in the *Business History Review* in 1983. The prize for the best article goes to William Lazoniak for his article, "Industrial Organization and Technological Change: The Decline of the British Cotton Industry," which appeared in the summer issue. The prize consists of \$300 and a scroll. The prize for the best article written by a recent Ph.D. who has not yet published a book in business history goes to Thomas M. Doerflinger for his article, "Commercial Specialization in Philadelphia's Merchant Community, 1750-1791," which appeared in the spring issue. The prize for this award consists of \$150 and a scroll. Both of these prizes are awarded on the basis of a vote taken by the *Review* editorial advisory board.

The 1985 meeting of the Business History Conference will take place on 14-16 March 1985 in New York City. The topic will be structure and change in banking and finance. Proposals dealing with other topics will be considered, especially if the proposer is able to suggest an entire panel. All proposals should be addressed to Professor Morton Rothstein, Agricultural History Center, University of California, Davis, CA 95616. The 1985 meetings are scheduled to begin with a formal session at 10 A.M. on Thursday, 14 March, followed by an afternoon trip to Wall Street, and a reception hosted by the New York Stock Exchange. Dinner that evening will be at Frances Tavern. Sessions will also be held all day Friday and on Saturday morning. The local arrangements are being handled by Barbara Kohn and H. Peers Brewer of Manufacturers Hanover Trust. Manufacturers Hanover Trust will be our host. Accommodations are at the Roosevelt Hotel on Madison Avenue at 45th Street.

The 1984 annual meeting of the Society for the History of Technology will be held in Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1-4 November 1984. The meeting will be hosted by MIT's Program in Science, Technology and Society. Persons desiring registration materials or other information should contact Gayle Fitzgerald, Campus Information Services, Room 7-111, MIT, Cambridge, MA 02139. Registration materials will be available on 1 September.

The Agricultural History Society presented the 1983 Saloutos Book Award to Michael Wayne for his book *The Reshaping of Plantation Society: The Natchez District, 1860-1880*. The annual \$500 award was established in memory of historian Theodore Saloutos, a past president of the Agricultural History Society.

The 1984 Award will be presented to the author of a book on any aspect of the agricultural history of the United States, broadly interpreted. To be eligible, a book must be copyrighted in 1984, based on substantial primary research, and offer a major new interpretation of a topic in agricultural history. Books may be nominated by their author, their publisher, or a member of the Agricultural History Society. Nominations should be submitted to the editor of *Agricultural History*. Inquiries should be addressed to editorial office, *Agri-*

*cultural History*, Agricultural History Center, University of California, Davis, CA 95616.

The James Jerome Hill Reference Library will award a number of fellowships of up to \$2,000 to support research in the James J. Hill Papers. The deadline for applications is 1 December 1984. Grants may be awarded for any time in calendar year 1985. For more information, contact W. Thomas White, curator, James Jerome Hill Reference Library, Fourth & Market Streets, St. Paul, MN 55102.

Richard P. Gillespie, a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of History and Sociology of Science at the University of Pennsylvania, has been selected as the first recipient of the AT&T Fellowship in Telephone History. The \$10,000 award will support his research into "Management, the Worker, and Social Scientists: A History of the Hawthorne Experiments" during the 1984–85 academic year.

The Springfield City Library has recently published a *Guide to the Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company Archival Collection*. The collection, which the library and archival staff spent over six months organizing, consists of some 100,000 documents in addition to 3,000 photographs.

The fourth Citadel Conference on the South will be held in Charleston, South Carolina, on 11, 12, and 13 April 1985. Persons interested in presenting papers or serving as commentators on aspects of Southern history from the colonial era to the 1980s are invited to submit proposals and a vita by 1 October 1984. Final invitations to participate will be issued by 1 November 1984. Past conferences have produced two volumes of essays published by the Greenwood Press. A similar volume, encompassing the best papers from the 1985 conference, is anticipated. Please direct all correspondence to Winfred B. Moore, Jr., Lyon G. Tyler, or Joseph F. Tripp, department of history, The Citadel, Charleston, SC 29409.

Letters to the editor are published verbatim and at the editors' discretion. If the letter writer takes issue with a specific book review, the author of the review will be invited to respond.

To the editor:

Professor Saul's narrowly conceived review of my essay, *Paradoxical Harvest*, requires a comment. For all the impressive research, there were important things about British history that were not well known when I wrote this essay. One was that Great Britain effectively decelerated into a kind of energetic "steady state" during the half century prior to 1910 and remained in that state until the Second World War. While economic historians examined many aspects of this process, they failed to note that it was happening. It was revealed by Humphrey and Stanislaw (*Energy Policy* 7 (1979): 29–42). Historians probably ignored this event because they take "energy" to be merely one factor of production, no more important than cash, credit, prices, gold, income, labor, investment, etc. "Energy," however, is central because it is the only process

common to, and that can provide a common measure of, all these human and nonhuman activities.

The essay examined late Victorian British history because the extensive research available promised the chance of identifying what led to this “steady state.” My concern was not the “development of the British economy . . . in the context of the use of energy,” as stated by Professor Saul, but rather why British energy consumption declined into a “steady state.” This focus stemmed not from idle curiosity. Human society will have to find ways to cope with steady states if it is to survive. Studies of critical historical cases might throw light on alternatives for the future.

This note cannot set forth the theoretical arguments of the study. The essay provided a working sense of them. While it was clearly not enough for Professor Saul, I see no reason to evaluate the “success” of my “experiment” in terms of a reviewer who admittedly found the basic concepts (i.e., “energetics,” “dissipative structure,” “trigger”) obscure.

A competent book review would have at least ventured to characterize what the “new scheme of thought” was trying to do, and then provided some examples of how it failed — if indeed it did. “However, I fear that such a line of thought is beyond the level of sophistication of this strange” review. One hopes that it is not beyond that of its distinguished author.

Richard N. Adams  
University of Texas, Austin

Professor Saul responds:

Professor Adams’ letter illustrates only too well the problems I had with his book. He tackles questions relating to the state of the British economy in the late nineteenth century with an inadequate knowledge of the basic concepts of economic analysis and only the vaguest definitions of his own concepts. What is one to make of the sentence in his first paragraph, for example, which seems to define cash, credit, prices, gold, income as factors of production? He takes on board Humphrey and Stanislaw’s extraordinary measurement of a wide range of human and nonhuman endeavours in terms of coal equivalent without telling us how it is done or assessing its value and yet expects us to take it seriously. His definition of “trigger,” is “the multitude of intellectual and technological capabilities that human beings have to manipulate the elements around them.”

How can an economic historian possibly make sense of an analysis of the British economy framed in terms such as these?

Professor S. B. Saul  
York University