

Preface to the Dissertation Abstracts

Jeremy Atack
University of Illinois

I was co-opted at short notice by Herman Freudenberger to fill in as the dissertation session chairman. As a consequence I barely had a chance to meet these latest entrants to the field of business and economic history, let alone read their theses and make some intelligent comments upon them, as has been the custom in the past. Besides as one who has himself so recently passed the test, I hardly feel qualified to pass out driving permits and so must demur on this to my more senior colleagues, though I am sure that all three candidates who present their credentials here will be deemed to have passed and will be welcomed into the family.

I would like, however, to take this opportunity to introduce our three newest members.

Bruce Dalgaard's thesis, "South Africa's Impact on Britain's Return to Gold, 1925," was written at the University of Illinois and was directed by Donald Kemmerer. This study is based on the private papers of Professor Edwin Kemmerer of Princeton University released to Professor Dalgaard by Professor Donald Kemmerer. The thesis therefore draws upon an original source and should shed new light upon Britain's disastrous return to gold in 1925 at the prewar level of parity. Bruce Dalgaard is now assistant professor of economics at Lehigh University.

J. Larry Deaton's thesis, "The Adoption and Diffusion of the combined Harvester-Thresher: A Study in Economic History," was written under the direction of Richard Sylla at North Carolina State University. The dissertation analyzes the factors that explain the slow rate of diffusion and adoption of the combined harvester-thresher from the start of commercial production in 1880 and its use in the San Joaquin Valley to 1950 when the diffusion process was essentially complete. In keeping with the topic of the thesis, Mr. Deaton is currently employed by the United States Department of Agriculture in Washington.

Martha Moore Trescott's thesis, "The Rise of the American Electrochemicals Industry, 1880-1910" was begun at Southern Meth-

odist University under the direction of Thomas Hughes, but Paul Uselding of the University of Illinois has made a substantial contribution. This work deals with at least three neglected areas of business history. First, Ms. Trescott examines the rise of the electrochemical industry itself, based, to a large extent, upon the exploitation of the electric power potential of Niagara Falls. Second, as a study in technological history she analyzes the application of those scientific methods and the growth of the industry.

Having introduced them, I will now produce their brief abstracts that cannot hope to do justice to the complete works.