

BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC HISTORY
PAPERS PRESENTED AT
THE TWENTY-THIRD ANNUAL MEETING OF
THE BUSINESS HISTORY CONFERENCE

Paul Uselding, ed.

BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC HISTORY

SECOND SERIES, VOLUME SIX

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THE TWENTY-THIRD ANNUAL MEETING OF
THE BUSINESS HISTORY CONFERENCE

25-26 FEBRUARY 1977

edited by Paul Uselding

PROFESSOR OF ECONOMICS

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

Bureau of Economic and Business Research
College of Commerce and Business Administration
University of Illinois
Urbana, Illinois 61801

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Library of Congress Catalog No. 77-84597
Manufactured in the United States of America

Preface

On 25 and 26 February 1977, the 23rd annual meeting of the Business History Conference was held in Columbus, Ohio, with conference facilities and local arrangements being generously supplied by the Colleges of Humanities and Administrative Science and the Graduate School of Ohio State University; and a private firm, the Nationwide Insurance Company. The superb local arrangements were the product of the diligent efforts of Mansel Blackford and K. Austin Kerr. On behalf of the membership and trustees of the Business History Conference I would like to thank all the individuals and institutions involved for making our 23rd annual meeting both professionally successful and personally enjoyable.

Professor Alfred D. Chandler, our president-elect for the Columbus program, deserves the most unsparing applause for the excellent program. After several years of broadening the scope and definition of business history by virtue of the structure and content of BHC programs, Professor Chandler has returned our attention to business history as a concise discipline. This was accomplished by taking great care to select excellent topics and speakers, whose efforts comprise the contents of this volume. Above all else we owe Professor Chandler a debt of special, collegial gratitude for demonstrating so vividly and forcefully how really exciting and vital a subject business history can be.

Our organization owes a debt of continuing gratitude to past presidents and trustees who have helped to shape the BHC into its present dynamic form, and have done so much to "pass the torch" from the founding generation of Cole, Gay, and Gras to the present. The formal organization has done, and is doing its work; but as Chester I. Barnard in *Functions of the Executive* first pointed out, the informal organization is often where an enterprise draws its energy and sustenance. Our informal organization is constituted of individuals working, often without portfolio and recognition, on behalf of the BHC in a variety of operating and policy tasks. While Fred Bateman is legally our secretary-treasurer, he has continued to function as minister extraordinary; and I, for one, cannot say too many good things about his commitment and execution. Special thanks are also due to trustees Albro Martin and Glenn

Porter, who have provided invaluable counsel and assistance on many problems pertaining to the BHC.

Each year's *Proceedings* contains a presidential address. This issue of BEH contains a double feature: Donald Kemmerer's Columbus address, and the Moline address of Ross Robertson (deceased). Don's contribution displays the urbanity and sophistication of a continental traveller, a student of world history, and confidant of and adviser to leading business and government executives. Ross's offering is pure Robertsonia, a unique, distinctive and -- most of all -- colorful genre. Ross will be long remembered, and he will be missed.

It is well to touch the past, to remind ourselves of the glories and accomplishments of our colleagues past and present, to be part of that vibrant stream of historical scholars; but youth must be served. The BHC takes a special pride in awarding the first biennial Krooss Essay Prize to James Madison, Indiana University, for his contribution in the 1976 issue of BEH, "Changing Patterns in Urban Retailing." My fondest wish for the BHC is an unending stream of Krooss Essay Prize winners such as Jim.

The continuing publication of our *Proceedings* under the title *Business and Economic History* is made possible by the support of Dean Vernon K. Zimmerman of the College of Commerce and Business Administration and Robert Resek, director of the Bureau of Economic and Business Research, both of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The BHC has benefitted greatly in this association, and we look forward to continued success in this work so nobly begun.

Paul Uselding
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