

Idiosyncratic Reflections on Ninety Years of *Agricultural History*, Written in Celebration of the Agricultural History Society's One-Hundredth-Year Anniversary

CLAIRE STROM

IN 1938, *AGRICULTURAL HISTORY* PUBLISHED AN article titled “The Significance of American Agricultural History” by Harry Carman and Rexford Tugwell. In it, they wrote:

It must be remembered always that until recently most of our people lived in the country. Colonial America was a land of farmers; many of the merchants, fishermen, and manufacturers spent some time working on the land, and even those who did not were closely dependent on farmers for their supplies and for their markets. Even when the Civil War was beginning, eighty-five in every hundred persons lived in the country; and one hundred and forty-one cities taken together could show a combined population of only five million persons, less by a good deal than modern New York. Only since the World War have cities outstripped the country. More than half of our population is now urban; but this development is recent, so recent that most of us still have individual rural backgrounds. As for America, apart from any citizen, it is not to be understood at all by one who forgets its homestead origin, backwoods training, and extremely short acquaintanceship with the furnishings of a sleek suburban life.¹

While some of us may be more acquainted now with the “furnishings of a sleek suburban life,” the bulk of this statement is as true today as it was in the 1930s. During most of American history, agriculture maintained an undisputed primacy, and, even today, the stories of food and fiber, how they are produced, and the people that produce them, are central to the national and global narrative. The explicit purview of this journal has been to explore these stories, with no set temporal or geographic parameters. Consequently, what its authors have chosen to address and by what scholarly methodology, has varied tremendously over the last ninety years. Ultimately, it seems, academic inquiry

CLAIRE STROM is the Rapetti-Trunzo Chair of History at Rollins College. She has written extensively on agricultural history, among other topics, and edited *Agricultural History* from 2003 to 2016.

This is the first of several essays and special features that will appear in our 2019 volume to mark the Agricultural History Society's centennial.

has been fueled by wider societal trends and events, as the journal's content reflects the broad currents of conflict and change over the twentieth century.

The Agricultural History Society was founded in 1919 at a meeting in the Cosmos Club in Washington, DC. Rodney True of the Bureau of Plant Industry, the main force behind the society's beginnings, was elected its first president. In 1920 the society established an affiliation with the American Historical Association (AHA) whereby the two organizations would meet jointly, and the Agricultural History Society would have "a minimum of 300 pages" in the AHA's annual report. However, most of the society's activity continued to be in Washington, DC, with its "branch" meeting monthly for a couple of years. By the mid-1920s, society members were concerned that the annual report of the AHA ran several years behind schedule, and thus became interested in starting their own journal. Cost, however, was the main obstacle to an independent publication. All agreed that a journal could not be underwritten by the USDA, which would make it dependent on "uncertain congressional appropriations." The final impetus came in 1927 when the AHA announced that it would only publish paper abstracts. This gave the society the push it needed, and by July, the first issue of the journal was published.²

This article will consider the nature of the journal and its contributions to scholarship from that first year until the journal's move to Kennesaw State University in January 2017. It is based on data gathered from the journal itself, but also from research on each contributing author. I learned as much as possible about each author in terms of their sex, race, professional career, and disciplinary affiliation. For those authors who were impossible to find, I only used the information provided in the journal. Consequently, statistics on professions may be somewhat inaccurate, although I believe that the overall picture is a fair representation. Additionally, I tracked each article according to themes, eras, and geography. This, too, does not provide a definitive snapshot as it is colored by my definitions and interpretations. However, the trends over time are still informative.

Agricultural History at the USDA to 1953

The first editor of *Agricultural History* was O. C. Stine of the USDA's Office of Farm Management. The journal he edited was self-published by the society using funds raised by annual dues. In 1931, Stine was replaced by Everett E. Edwards from the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. Edwards remained editor until he died in 1952, making him the longest serving editor of the journal. Wayne Rasmussen had gradually assumed the editorial responsibili-

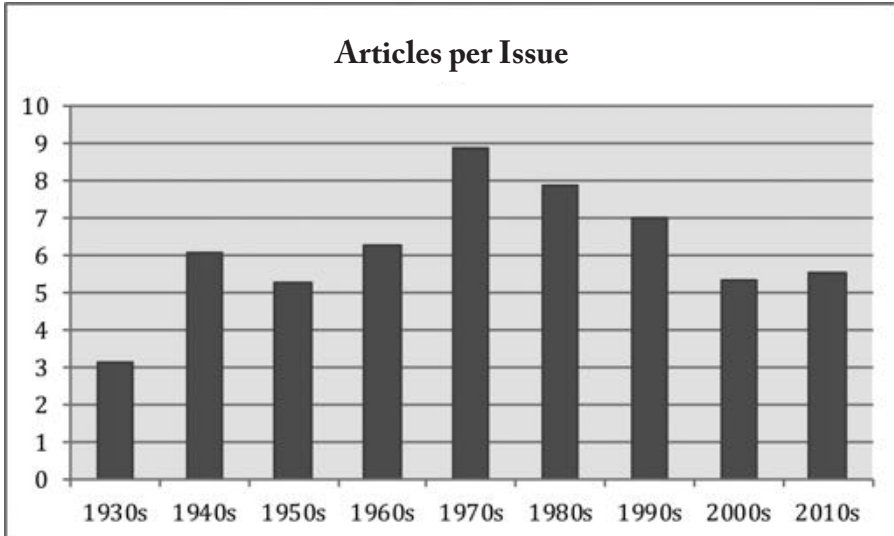


Figure 1. The number of articles per issue over the last ninety years clearly reflects the publication in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s of all the papers presented at the symposia.

ties for the journal after Edwards's first heart attack in 1952, and remained at the helm long enough for a special issue dedicated to Edwards in 1953. The journal then left the USDA for the University of Wisconsin and the editorship of Vernon Carstensen. The influence of the journal's home and editor are clearly evident in the content and editorial policies.³

In these early years, *Agricultural History* and its editors had a broad idea of what made a good historical article. This reflected its home in a nonacademic institution, as well as Edwards's character. The mission of the society was "to simulate interest, promote the study and facilitate the publication of researches in the history of agriculture," and Edwards interpreted this generously. As his friend and memorializer, Herbert Kellar wrote, "Edwards disliked turning down an author even if his contribution was not up to standard for publication."⁴ Hence, the articles were as varied as their authors. The length of many was less than ten pages, and some were no more than two pages (which made them very short, even considering that the journal moved to columns in 1943 in response to war regulations about paper usage), although they were interspersed with longer pieces. Some articles were verbatim copies of speeches given at Agricultural History Society meetings, with all the embellishments intended for a live audience. Many of these were published within months of the meeting, which implied that Edwards did not have a significant backlog of articles nor did he have a lengthy reviewing and revising process, although

Kellar notes that the editorial process included checking footnotes. Other articles were republished from other venues. Presumably in the days before the Internet and the PDF, republishing was one way to disseminate important materials. Interestingly, a considerable number of articles dealt with sources—either bibliographic lists, discussions of sources at various museums or archives, or reproductions of sources. Again, this would have been one of the main ways of communicating such information. Some of the articles were very scholarly with full footnotes, while other pieces had no footnotes at all. Several times—in 1942 and in 1948—the journal ran book reviews, but it was always just a one-issue-thing and fizzled out. The journal’s “News, Notes, and Comments” section though was published regularly and often listed what members were working on, and so alerted others to upcoming books and ongoing projects. The journal during these years was thus a place for people interested in agricultural history to share ideas, resources, and personal updates rather than a major venue for professional scholarship.

The antiquarian nature of the journal was reflected in its content. Some writers became captivated with a topic, and the journal accepted multiple articles from them. For example, Lois Olson from the Soil Conservation Service was interested in how the ancients (and Renaissance men) understood soils. She published five short articles on this over three years with titles like “Columella and the Beginning of Soil Science” and “Leonardo da Vinci: The First Soil Conservation Geologist,” citing mainly primary texts. Similarly, Edwards accepted five articles from Edmund Cody Burnett. Burnett had been a historian at the Carnegie Institution in Washington, DC, for most of his career, working on an eight-volume collection of the correspondence of the members of the Continental Congress. When he retired, however, he started writing reminiscences of his childhood on a Tennessee farm. *Agricultural History* published them, including one posthumously called “The Hog Drivers’ Play-Song and Some of its Relatives.”⁵ Other odd articles include “The Poet and the Plough” on poetry about rural life, by Clark Emery who, in later years would become the world expert on Ezra Pound, and a totally bizarre skimming through all of human history—with seemingly no point and no notes—entitled “Man’s Place in the Sun,” by a Jane Carter, who is not identified in any way. Edwards apparently welcomed anyone interested in the journal to contribute without any review or revision.

Unsurprisingly, the vast majority of pieces in these first decades dealt with the United States in the nineteenth century. Easily the most common focus was economics, which continued throughout the journal’s history. In



Figure 2: Photograph of the Agricultural and Rural History Section of the AHA, about 1963. The members of the section were receiving an award for the publication of *Century of Service*, the centennial history of the Department of Agriculture. Left to right, the staff include Gladys L. Baker, Vivian Whitehead, Connie (last name not known), Vivian Wisner, Wayne D. Rasmussen, Mae Smith, Jane M. Porter, Barbara Pollard, and Helen Edwards. SOURCE: USDA History Collection, Special Collections, National Agricultural Library. With thanks to Anne Effland for retrieving the photograph.

the 1930s, other areas of interest included ethnicity and agriculture. A small group of articles addressed various immigrant groups to the United States and their farming habits, such as the Ukrainians or the Finns and, invariably, these were written by scholars from these ethnicities. Most notable, in this decade, were seven articles that discussed slavery, and a couple that talked about labor in the postwar South. In the main, the approach of these pieces was largely economic. Ulrich Phillips's work offered an exception, with some of his opinions reflecting the Social Darwinism of his time, particularly in the address he gave to the Farmers' Institute at Virginia Polytechnic Institute. It is not clear that Phillips intended the address for publication, but it was found in the archives and published posthumously with permission from his wife. In it, Phillips's views on race, which were perhaps more toned down in articles intended for publication, are on full display. "Many of the lowliest [African Americans] are not without likeable and admirable traits; but most of them have yet to show, indeed yet to begin to suggest, that they can be taken into full fellowship of any sort in a democratic civilized order."⁶

The 1940s saw three main areas of interest: With the fiftieth anniversary of Turner's thesis many articles addressed the frontier. Some of them were conceptual, looking at notions of the frontier and its meaning, such as a six-page article by Fulmer Mood from University of California-Berkeley titled "Notes

on the History of the Word ‘Frontier’” and a two-part conceptual article by James C. Malin of the University of Kansas, “Space and History: Reflections on the Closed-Space Doctrines of Turner and Mackinder and the Challenge of those Ideas by the Air Age.” Additionally, the journal published more traditional pieces on Turner and the frontier, including a themed issue in 1943 with three articles on different American frontiers. A second area of focus was farmer activism, with articles on the Populists, the Nonpartisan League, and Societies of Equity. Most of these had a political and/or economic focus. Unlike the frontier focus, it is not clear why so many scholars concentrated on this activism. Perhaps with the end of the war, they, like many others, were anticipating the labor troubles that followed World War I or maybe coming of age during the New Deal made them interested in other attempts at significant social and political change. Finally, war was clearly of interest. Several articles appeared on previous wars, including the Napoleonic Wars and World War I. Almon Wright of the National Archives contributed two pieces that reflected the sources he had available on the Great War. The journal also published a number of contemporary or near contemporary pieces that reflected the writers’ experiences in World War II. In 1945, for example, a piece by T. Eugene Beattie called “Observations on Southern Italy” appeared. Beattie was stationed in Italy for eleven months and mailed his article back to a former professor. By the time it was published, Beattie had drowned on active duty. Completely different in many ways, in 1949, Howard F. Smith published his article, “Food Controls in Occupied Japan.” This article was largely based on information gathered by Smith while serving as Chief of the Food Branch of the Price and Distribution Division with the Allied Powers in Japan, although he offered his readers no footnotes. Thus, in its broad themes, the journal mirrored the preoccupations of its authors and, to an extent, of society at large and reflected the editors’ willingness to accept a wide variety of work by academics and nonacademics alike.

The authors of journal articles in these USDA years were an eclectic group. Of the 157 articles published before 1940, eighty-three were written by people who were solely academics. They represented a wide array of disciplines. Historians and economists were most commonly represented, but the journal also published articles by an anthropologist, an etymologist, a rural sociologist, and a botanist. Many of these scholars bounced around considerably, teaching at teachers’ colleges and high schools before finally getting a permanent position. For example, Wasył Halich was teaching high school in Superior, Wisconsin, when his article was published, but went on to teach at the Universi-



Figure 3. Photograph of Almon R. Wright examining records, Division of Classification and Cataloging, January 15, 1937. SOURCE: 12168574, 64-NA-195, Historic Photograph File of National Archives Events and Personnel, 1935–1975, RG 64, NARA.

ty of Wisconsin-Superior for most of his career.⁷ Another author, Kathleen Bruce, taught at five schools during her twenty-six-year career.⁸ Overall, the academic authors reflect both the open-armed editorial policies of Edwards and the trials of the Great Depression.

An additional thirty-four articles were written by authors who spent their careers working for the government in some capacity, most commonly for some branch of the USDA. The most noteworthy of these was probably Gifford Pinchot. In 1937, he gave an address at an Agricultural History Society meeting held at his house in Pennsylvania titled, “How Conservation Began in the United States.” At this point, Pinchot was about to commence his third bid for governor of Pennsylvania, the run that would be unsuccessful.⁹ Perhaps he saw reminding agricultural historians of his contributions to the nation as a soft campaign rollout. Six articles were written by librarians or curators from a variety of institutions, while nine authors had varied occupations, from working at arboreta to editing the *Prairie Farmer*, to serving as a superintendent of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Conference of North Carolina. Most interestingly, twenty-three of the papers, or 14 percent of those published before 1940, were written by people whose employment

changed between these different classifications, like Rexford Tugwell who was a professor of economics at Columbia University before going to work for Franklin Delano Roosevelt's administration in 1932. Rodney True, the society's first president, moved in the other direction, working for the USDA for nineteen years before becoming the chair of botany at the University of Pennsylvania. Others seem to have worked in agricultural history only briefly. Guy A. Lee was a graduate student at Harvard when he published his article on the Chicago grain elevator. He went on to work for the National Archives and then UNESCO. He ended his career in the foreign service in places like Sumatra, Jakarta, and Turkey.¹⁰ Several authors, such as Paul H. Johnstone, transitioned into the intelligence services in the mid-1930s.¹¹ The permeability of these careers suggests that agricultural history was viewed as a more politically relevant field of study than today. It also reflects the relatively small number of people who had the training necessary to fill these positions. Finally, necessities of war seem to have dictated many careers, leading people out of the classroom and office to work on matters of national security.

During the 1940s, the war also affected the journal through its impact on authors. Many of the authors served in some capacity or another—a surprising number were in the US Navy—although their affiliation listed in the journal remained their academic home. It is unclear how the articles were

Rexford Tugwell

Tugwell's career embodied that of many of the early contributors to *Agricultural History* as he moved easily back and forth between public service and academia. Born in New York state in 1891, he became an economist at Columbia University in 1922. It was during his tenure there that Tugwell and other liberals visited the Soviet Union in the wake of Sacco and Vanzetti's executions, a visit that would forever label him as "Rex the Red" in the eyes of his critics. Moving to the federal government to work for Roosevelt, Tugwell became Undersecretary of Agriculture under Henry A. Wallace, ran the Resettlement Administration, and supported other New Deal pro-

grams from tax subsidies to the Civilian Conservation Corps.

At the time he published his article in *Agricultural History* in 1938, however, he had left the administration because of the negative publicity he was generating. He worked briefly for Fiorello LaGuardia on city planning in New York, before going to Puerto Rico in 1940. On the island, he served as chancellor of the University of Puerto Rico before FDR appointed him governor—a post he held for five years. After this, he returned to academia and spent much of the rest of his career devising new versions of the US Constitution. He died in 1979 at the age of 88.⁴⁰



Figure 4. Rexford Tugwell in 1935. SOURCE: LC-USF344- 003487-ZB, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.

obtained and how the editing took place with authors stationed all over the world. Several other authors were victims of the conflict and/or the rise of the Third Reich. For example, Hildegard Binder Johnson had a PhD in history from the University of Berlin but had fled the country in 1934. She published an article on German immigration to Minnesota in 1945 but did not obtain a position until 1947 when she was hired by Macalester College, which was presumably looking to increase its faculty to deal with the influx of students from the GI Bill.¹² Rudolf Freund also fled the Nazis in 1934 and published two articles in the journal from his position at the School of Rural Social Economics at the University of Virginia (he would later be hired at the University of North Carolina).¹³ Finally, Paul Honigsheim served in the German military during World War I as a translator in prisoner-of-war camps in France and Belgium. He renewed his academic career after the war, but left Germany in 1933. He spent five peripatetic years in France, Panama,

and Peru, before gaining a job at Michigan State in 1938.¹⁴ In many ways, the journal presents a microcosm of American life during World War II, with almost all lives touched profoundly by the conflict.

The journal was less representative of the larger picture in these years when it comes to diversity. Only a few women published in the journal in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. The highest percentage in these decades came in the 1940s, when 11 percent of the authors were women. Sadly, this percentage was not met or exceeded until the 1980s. Nonetheless, the women were impressive; many of them were groundbreaking in their field. Ellen Churchill Semple, who published two articles, was a professor of geography at Clark University and served as the first female president of the American Association of Geographers.¹⁵ Caroline Sherman was an agricultural economist with the USDA, while Lois Olson was Head of the Erosion History Section of the Soil Conservation Service.¹⁶ At a time when women were most likely to be employed in clerical positions, it is striking how many nontraditional women found their way to our journal. In 1947, the journal published the first two articles by nonwhites. One article was coauthored by Dolores Mendez Nadal, who, while working for the Soil Conservation Service in Puerto Rico, translated a primary source text about agriculture on the island. Her coauthor, Hugo Alberts, did the editing. By the time the article was published, she was no longer employed by the USDA, and Alberts was working as an agricultural attaché for the American embassy in Ecuador.¹⁷ The other author was Shu-Ching Lee. His affiliation was listed as the National Tsing Hua University in Peiping but conducting “special research” at the University of Maryland. Perhaps he, too, fled his home.¹⁸ Thus, in certain areas of diversity, the journal was ahead of its time, making a place for women and minority authors.

However, as far as race relations at home went, the journal continued to publish articles that subtly condoned slavery. Indeed, Robert Russel published an article in 1941 called “The Effects of Slavery Upon Nonslaveholders in the Ante Bellum South.” His main argument was that nonslaveholders did not want to live near black people and so were kept away from the best land. In the course of making this case, he also bemoaned the loss of slavery on the general agricultural production of the South, saying, “The abolition of slavery almost certainly made the Negroes of the South less effective as producers of farm products.”¹⁹ Indeed, many authors in *Agricultural History* not only published racist work but also denied that African Americans were historical actors, viewing them largely as commodities or labor.

The Midwest Years, 1953–1965

In the 1953 Vernon Carstensen took over as editor and moved the journal to the University of Wisconsin. During its time in the Midwest, the journal continued to be published by the society and funded from dues. Four years later, D. A. Brown at the University of Illinois assumed the editorship, with C. Clyde Jones as his associate editor. By 1959, Jones was sole editor, and he was then succeeded in 1960 by Frederick W. Kohlmeyer, also of the University of Illinois. In 1964 Kohlmeyer moved to Illinois State.²⁰ And, at the start of 1965, probably as a result of this move, the journal moved to University of California-Davis and to the editorship of James Schideler.

The move to the Midwest and to university control seems to have marked an attempt, conscious or otherwise, to make the society and journal more academic, but it could also have reflected a loss of interest in agricultural history among government employees and nonacademics. Certainly, the style of the journal shifted. In 1954 the journal began reviewing a substantial number of books in each issue, and it also started an annual list of books published on agriculture, a feature that would last for decades. By 1958, the journal featured “Book Briefs” and also the occasional museum review. Additionally, the space at the end of articles was filled up by anecdotal tidbits republished from historic sources like the *Farmers’ Almanac*, or in 1958, a piece called “Winter Horse Racing in Moscow” from the *Boston Daily Advertiser*, originally published in 1850. Around the same time, the journal added an “Activities of Members” section.

The topics of the articles remained largely focused on the United States (71 percent in the 1950s and 76 percent in the 1960s) and mainly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (73 percent for both decades). The majority of authors were still most interested in economics, politics, and commodities, although the articles displayed a growing interest in science and technology, with a strong focus on irrigation, drainage, and fencing. The journal saw several firsts, including the first article on herbicides and the first one on beekeeping. Authors also wrote about the rural-urban relationship and a few articles looked at colonization and agriculture—although not necessarily in a critical light. Unlike previous decades, the 1950s and 1960s had only one nostalgic piece on an ethnic group: a four-page address originally given at the Finnish Pioneer Day celebration in St. Paul, MN, in 1949, entitled, “In Praise of the Finnish Backwoods Farmer.” Overall, authors continued to show little interest in social history, with no articles on women’s history or African Americans and only one on Native Americans. However, with the anniversary of the

Morrill Land-Grant Act, the journal published more on agricultural and rural education. Articles on source materials remained plentiful with fifty-three being published over the twenty years; and some articles were aimed at facilitating research in other ways, including a theoretical and methodological piece on oral history and a summary of graduate work on agricultural history. Finally, 17 percent offered some form of biographical story, up from 12 percent in the previous decade.

Most noteworthy, perhaps, in terms of content were several themed groups of articles. Most of these originated at a conference and were very lightly edited. Indeed, in 1958 the session comments were published along with the articles, starting a trend that would last for decades. In 1953 Carstensen ran three papers on land reform in Russia, Ireland, and Mexico. In 1957, Brown and Jones published one set of papers addressing railroads and another looking at newspapers. In 1958 one issue had four papers dedicated to Turner and his thesis. And in 1959, Jones published a themed group on the New Deal,

Mary Wilma M. Hargreaves

Mary Wilma Massey was born in 1914 in Erie, Pennsylvania. Despite her abilities and her drive, her career was shaped by her gender. As an undergraduate, she attended Bucknell University where she was taught by Paul Wallace Gates. With his encouragement, she went to Radcliffe College and earned a master's degree with Frederick Merk. After this, in 1939, she went to work for the Brookings Institute, where she met her husband, economist Herbert "Walt" Hargreaves. After they married in 1940, Walt enlisted and spent much of the next decade training and serving in the armed forces. After the war, he was in Germany for several years as part of the economic reconstruction delegation. Hargreaves spent most of this time in New York City and, indeed, her first article for *Agricultural History*, published in 1948, just lists her as a city resident.

When Walt returned, he got a job at the University of Kentucky, and they moved to Lexington. In 1951, when Hargreaves

received her PhD from Harvard, she applied for a job at the University of Kentucky. However, instead of being hired as a faculty member, she was hired as a typist for James F. Hopkins's project editing the Henry Clay papers. She worked on that for over a decade as the associate editor for the first five volumes of the series. She was not brought into the history department until 1964, and she became the first woman to be promoted to full professor in the department in 1973. She retired in 1984.

Hargreaves's work on dry farming on the northern Great Plains during the twentieth century remains the standard in the field. She broke ground, writing environmental history before there was such a subdiscipline, and her writing captured the trials and adventures of life in a difficult and beautiful world. She served as president of the Agricultural History Society in 1975–1976, and one can only imagine the trajectory of her life and work if times had been different.⁴¹



Figure 5. Mary Hargreaves. SOURCE: University of Kentucky Archives.

which started with an article by Rexford Tugwell who was teaching at the University of Chicago by this point. This trend continued when the journal moved to Illinois. In 1961, a special issue on cattle was the product of an Association of American Geographers conference. And, in the last issue of 1962, the journal published its first symposium issue. This was to reflect on and honor the one-hundredth anniversary of the Homestead Act. Interestingly, the full articles were not actually published in the journal, but rather were presented as synopses. These themed groups reflect the professionalization of the journal. The editors were recruiting articles at academic conferences and, as a result, often were able to publish several articles that talked to each other in interesting ways.

The professionalization of the journal is also apparent in the careers of the contributors, with more academics publishing their work. In the 1950s, 56 percent of articles were published by people who seem to be solely academics, which was the same as the 1940s, but this increased to 65 percent

in the 1960s. The journal still attracted a variety of scholars, most notably geographers, although some economists and scientists gravitated to *Agricultural History* as well. Along with the dominance of academics publishing in the journal, the nature of the profession seems to have shifted as the authors in these decades taught at fewer schools during their careers. This may well reflect the dramatic increase of higher education after the war, with more university positions available, but also more PhDs being produced.

The number of authors in government positions declined precipitously: from 22 percent in the 1920s and 1930s, to 18 percent in the 1940s, to just 6 percent in the 1950s, and 4 percent in the 1960s. Another change was evident in authors who worked in both academia and in the government. Previously, most careers of this type reflected time in the USDA. However, in the 1950s of the 12 percent (11 percent in 1960s) of papers published by someone who had a government and academic connection, the vast majority gained their government experience by serving in the armed services. Clearly, this speaks to the impact of the war and the draft on American life, but it also suggests that new employees at the USDA were not as interested in agrarian history and instead sought information for their decisions and policies elsewhere.

Despite this growing homogenization of authors, the editors tried to attract alternative viewpoints when possible. In 1964 the journal published two biographical pieces about Alfalfa Joe, a nineteenth-century advocate of pasture improvement, written by his son. The journal also ran articles by businessmen, one who was on the staff at Midlands Cooperative, another who worked for Armour's Livestock Bureau, and another who was the staff economist with Machinery and Allied Products Institute. Some authors seem to have turned to history after retiring from another profession, like Frank Gilbert Roe. Roe homesteaded with his parents in Alberta and then became an engineer on the Canadian National Railway. He retired from the railroad in 1944 and turned his attention to scholarship. Along with several articles in *Agricultural History*, he wrote a book on bison, *The North American Buffalo: A Critical Study of the Species in its Wild State* (1951). During these decades, the society worked to broaden its appeal in other ways by starting its book award and, in 1957, launching a development fund to broaden its membership. Interestingly, several agricultural corporations, like Armour, and at least one railroad contributed by becoming sustaining members. While professionalization was probably inevitable in the 1950s and 1960s, the journal editors and the society's board worked hard to keep the tent as big as possible.

However, their energies did not improve journal contributions in terms of

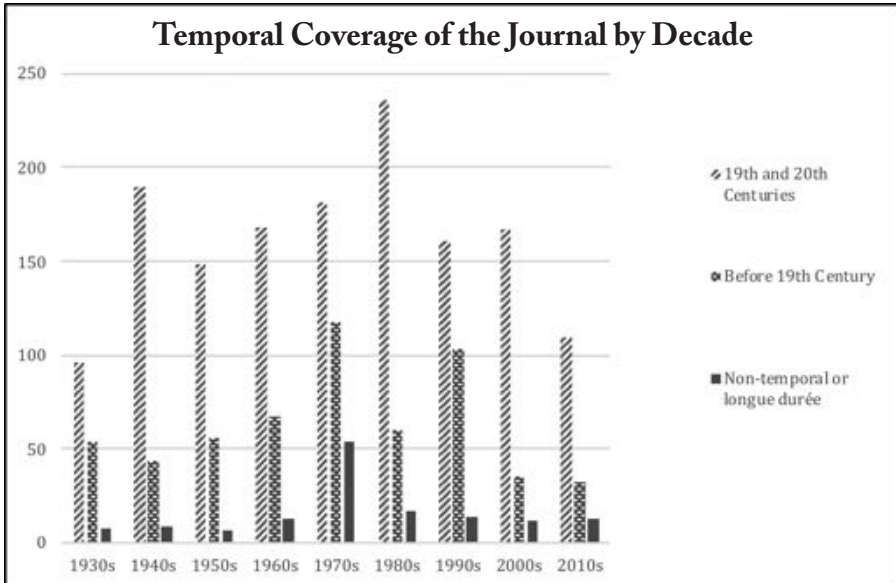


Figure 6. Temporally, the journal has always focused on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

diversity. The number of women publishing in the journal actually decreased through both the 1950s and the 1960s, as the GI Bill filled colleges with young men and societal pressure pushed women back into the home. On a more positive note, however, the journal made strides in racial diversity in the 1950s. Harold T. Pinkett, the first African American employee at the National Archives and Records Administration, published two articles in the decade, which, as far as I can make out, were the first by an African American in the journal. Both articles discussed resources available in the archives for agricultural historians. Additionally, in 1950, *Agricultural History* started to address African American history. Jack Abramowitz, a founder of the field of African American history, wrote an article entitled “The Negro in the Agrarian Revolt,” which was the first in the journal to discuss African Americans as actors rather than just as a labor force. Ultimately, in many ways, the journal mirrored the greater societal trends during these decades.

University of California-Davis

The journal was at the University of California-Davis from 1965 to 1994. During these twenty-nine years, there were only two editors, Jim Shideler for the first nineteen—the second longest serving editor—and then Morton Rothstein for ten. One of the biggest structural changes came in 1966 when the University of California Press started publishing the journal and manag-

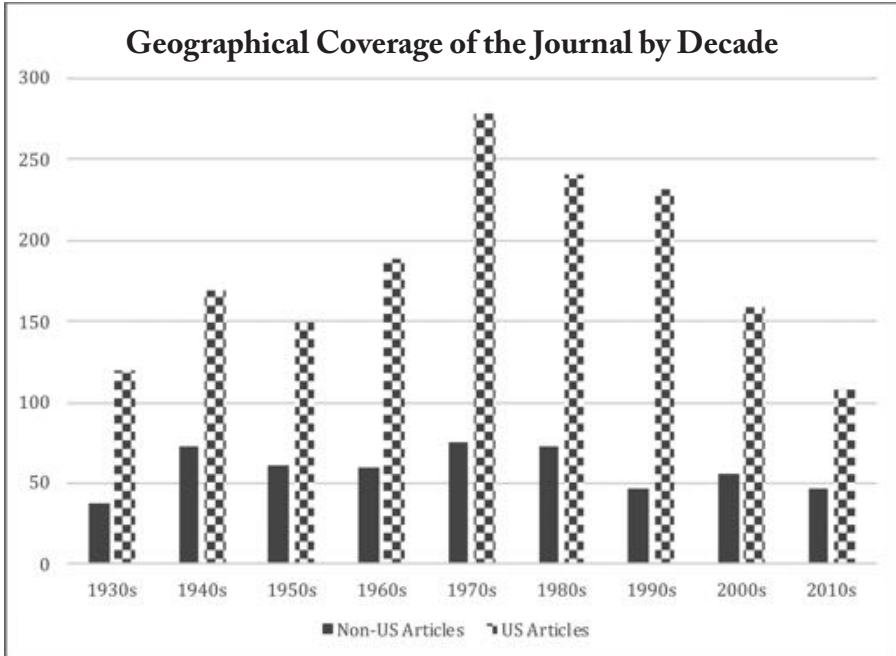


Figure 7. One of the impacts of the symposia, with their tight, often US, focus, was to decrease the international academic presence in the journal for several decades.

ing the membership and marketing. This must have reduced the administrative responsibilities of the executive committee considerably, although, over time, it reduced the society's control and income.

The journal clearly benefited from being at a school with an active agricultural research agenda and many faculty at Davis published in the journal. Additionally, these were the glory years for academic research and publishing in general and UC-Davis apparently had considerable funds to lavish on the journal and society in terms of meetings and the publication itself. The journal moved back to single-page printing in 1966, abandoning the columns adopted during World War II. And the symposia issues, which at one point were being printed every year, were often very long.

From the 1970s into the 1990s, most years saw a symposium. The symposia were small meetings focused on one particular aspect of agricultural and rural history. The summer gatherings attracted a highly engaged group of scholars and others interested in the topic, who presented and discussed for three to four days. The symposia pieces always found their way into the journal, initially rather randomly, but over time most symposia papers and presentations were included in a special issue of the journal. These events tended to drive

papers after the event as well, so they set the tone for much of the decades' content. The journal still published an annual list of books throughout this period, although in general, they continued to run about two years behind the books' publication dates. During this period, presidential addresses, which had been given and/or published fairly randomly in the previous decades, become much more standard. In terms of style, colons had arrived in article titles by the 1970s, although they were not as uniform as they would become. Interestingly, throughout this period, some articles still appeared without footnotes or with very limited notes. These usually originated in the symposia and were nonacademic contributions. Overall, the journal did well at Davis, with money to host symposia and publish long volumes. It also attracted important scholarship.

In the first few years in California, the journal published a number of themed issues, which, as before, tended to originate at conferences. These issues often included pieces by noteworthy historians. For instance, a 1965 group of articles on the Populists had a piece by Oscar Handlin and one by Norman Pollack. The same year, several articles focused on twentieth-century farmer activism, while 1967 saw a themed issue on the Henry Wallaces, and one on the sugar beet industry. The comments delivered at the conferences were published along with the papers. Thus, the sugar beet group has comments by Gerald Nash and Wayne Rasmussen. In the 1970s, the journal had more articles addressing topics before the nineteenth century, largely due to a symposium on early agriculture. The articles are predominantly American (78 percent), but the non-American pieces have more variety, with articles on Africa and South America as well as Europe. In the early years of the decade, the journal was still publishing historical snippets, a trend Shideler inherited from Illinois, but these eventually disappeared. Methodologically, more authors were producing quantitative work, using lots of census data and crop data, which reflected a wider trend among historians of the time.

Two groups of papers perhaps constitute the most interesting entries in the late 1960s. First, in 1965, four papers on Soviet agriculture were presented at the Midwestern Slavic Association meeting at the University of Kansas and published in the journal the following year. They included an article by a former CIA agent, Roy Laird.²¹ Laird served in the Navy during World War II. After the war, he went to university, obtaining his bachelor's, master's, and PhD by 1956, at which point he joined the CIA. He was an expert on Soviet agriculture and became a professor at the University of Kansas until his retirement in 1990. Another article was by Jerzy Karcz, who was born in Poland

and had joined the Polish army in exile to fight against Germany. He was captured in France in 1940 and spent the next five years in a POW camp. From there he helped organize the resistance. After the war, he returned to the Polish army for a few years before moving to the United States. By 1966, he was a professor of economics at University of California-Santa Barbara.²² The careers of these authors reflected the trajectory of many of the government/academic professionals who published in the journal in the postwar decades.

The second interesting group of articles, in 1967, came from the American Historical Association's meeting the previous year. Eugene Genovese penned an eloquent defense of Ulrich Bonnell Phillips in "Race and Class in Southern History: An Appraisal of the Work of Ulrich Bonnell Phillips." In it he argued that Phillips, although racist, produced a body of work that "emerges as the history and sociology of the slaveholding class and of the regime to which it gave rise." Therefore, for Phillips, "The plantation and slavery grew up together and 'the plantation product of men' of which Phillips spoke so glowingly was, in fact, the slave-holding product of men." What Phillips admired, according to Genovese, was not slavery, but the communal system of production, "the incorporation of the more humane and rational values of pre-bourgeois culture into modern industrial life." Three scholars, David Potter, Kenneth Stampp, and Stanley Elkins, responded to Genovese at the conference and in the journal, taking pains to pull apart his argument in fine academic prose. The resulting condemnation of slavery and the racist regime of the Antebellum South was timely, just a few years after the Civil Rights Act and less than a year before Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination in Memphis. It was also a notable about-face for a journal that was eager to publish Phillips in the 1930s and 1940s, so eager that of his five articles in *Agricultural History*, four of them were posthumous.²³

In the 1970s, the symposia issues—containing as many as thirty-nine articles—started to drive the journal's content. Until 1980, the journal published comments as well as articles, sometimes even more than one comment on a single article or group of articles. In 1974, the symposium was held at the University of California-Davis. The subsequent issue included introductions to sessions, and even a one-paragraph introduction had its own title and author. One college president who was hosting the symposium gave a short address at dinner; it was published. Perhaps the decision to publish comments depended on whether authors submitted them or submitted them in a timely fashion. The symposia issues were guest edited, usually by a scholar at the institution that hosted the gathering. And although the trend to print

primary sources had essentially disappeared, the symposia were still utilized by archivists to draw scholars' attention to their collections.

A couple of interesting themes emerged during this era. First, because of an initial symposium on southern agriculture, and perhaps the earlier articles on Phillips, slavery and Reconstruction absorbed a lot of the journal's space. Indeed, this was not just in symposia. In 1975, the journal published another set of articles on slavery that had been delivered at the OAH, together with the comments. There were also longer review essays on important books, such as Robert William Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman's *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery* (1974). The journal also published a written exchange centered on an article delivered at a symposium. In 1975, Charles A. Roberts and Robert Higgs presented a written debate on whether white southern farmers discriminated against African Americans during the latter nineteenth century. This focus on race and racism reflects the larger transitions of the 1960s and 1970s, with the civil rights movement and Black Power bringing attention to racial concerns and encouraging historians to reassess their understanding of historical race relations.

The second theme was the environment. With symposia dealing with the Far West in 1975 and the Great Plains in 1976, this seems somewhat inevitable. Both symposia attracted prominent names, with Paul Gates present at both, Earl Pomeroy and Rodman Paul among the luminaries at the Far West meeting, and Gilbert Fite, Mary Hargreaves, and Allan Bogue attending the Great Plains symposium. The journal's authors also paid substantial attention to the politics of agriculture in the early twentieth century. The Country Life movement was addressed in a couple of articles, the New Deal was a frequent topic, and the second issue of 1977 contained a number of essays on Hoover's agricultural policies, which came from an OAH panel. However, the perspective in these articles was top down: farmer activism received almost no attention, probably because authors had focused on it extensively in the previous several decades. The 1970s continued the trend of the 1950s and 1960s with several articles addressing African Americans as people with agency, and the decade also saw the journal's first articles on women's history.

Moving into the 1980s, the articles remained predominantly nineteenth-century or more recent, with over 80 percent falling into this category. Nearly 76 percent of the articles dealt with the United States, although the non-US articles continued to be varied, with several on South America. In terms of research methodology, authors continued to emphasize quantitative data, and the society held a symposium addressing the topic in 1988. In terms of con-

tent, the environment remained an important topic, with a symposium on soil and water conservation in 1985 and another on the effect of climate in 1989. The interest in the issue of southern labor also continued, with articles on both slavery and Reconstruction. For example, in 1987 there was a sixteen-page review essay of Gavin Wright's *Old South, New South: Revolutions in the Southern Economy since the Civil War* (1986). The journal also reflected some new scholarly interests, with an increased emphasis on rural life and rural education, including symposia on both topics during the decade. Additionally, scholars displayed a renewed fascination with farmer radicalism, with articles on the Populists and on various farm movements of the twentieth century. Most of the symposia also include presentations by archivists and curators on potential sources. Overall, the decade represented another transition for the society and its journal. Having completed its professionalization around the war years, the 1980s saw authors being influenced by the new social history, asking new questions of old sources, and spending more time on everyday rural life and experience.

In terms of participation, the symposia were, in part, a way to re-engage

Hugh Carson Cutler

Cutler was born in Milwaukee in 1912 and became one of the United States' first paleoethnobotanists. He completed his master's degree at the University of Wisconsin, where he became interested in both useful plants and traveling by water. After completing his PhD in 1939 at Washington University in St. Louis, he went on a two-month float trip down the Colorado River, during which he collected some Anasazi corn cobs that were nine hundred years old. Four days after the trip, he married Marian W. Cornell, and they embarked on a three-month honeymoon collecting maize specimens throughout Mexico and Guatemala. In the early 1940s, Cutler was a research associate at the Harvard University Botanical Museum working on plants in Peru and Bolivia.

During the war, he worked as a botanist for the US Army. His job was to fly over

the Brazilian rainforest in a blimp, identifying rubber trees from the air. Ground crews would then move in and tap the rubber. He also bought a dugout canoe and traveled down the Paraguay River collecting specimens.

After the war, Cutler worked for the Field Museum in Chicago and then, from 1953 on, at the Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis. His most famous contribution was the use of the flotation method to recover archaeological specimens. In this method, soil is suspended in water and gently agitated. The heavy materials, such as dirt and stone, sink, while the lighter materials including plant matter float, allowing recovery. This method had been used in Europe, but Cutler is reputed to be the first to suggest its use in the Americas. Cutler published an article titled "Food Sources in the New World" in the journal in 1954.⁴²

nonacademics. The symposia allowed nonacademics to participate because the articles did not have to be long, or even footnoted, although many were. All symposia papers were published without peer review. Thus, for example, a farmer presented at the symposium on the Far West, as did the vice president of Massey-Ferguson. In 1974, Raymond Baker, an agronomist with Pioneer Hi-Bred, published a four-page paper entitled "Indian Corn and its Culture." And in 1979 Richard D. Sheridan presented a paper at the symposium entitled "Chemical Fertilizers in Southern Agriculture." Sheridan was a research chemist at the TVA who had spent much of his career working for chemical companies.²⁴ In 1989 Alan Marcus and Dick Lowitt hosted a symposium to celebrate the one-hundredth anniversary of the USDA. The articles were published the following year. Several interesting nonacademics attended, including the past CEO of Pioneer Hi-Bred and the former editor of the *Des Moines Register*, who had been responsible for inviting Nikita Khrushchev to Iowa in 1959.²⁵ Symposia were an ingenious way of engaging nonacademics, and it would be interesting to know whether some of these contributors also helped to finance the meetings.

The authors in the 1970s and 1980s remained largely academic, but they were not limited to the discipline of history. A significant number of authors, especially surrounding the issue of slavery, were economists, and a fair number were geographers. Some authors also had interesting career trajectories, like Frenise Logan, who was an academic but ended up working at the American Embassy in Nairobi; Knowles Ryderson who was a former dean of agriculture but was summoned repeatedly to work for various US presidents; and Don Paarlberg who had taught agricultural economics at Purdue, directed agricultural economics at the USDA, and worked for Eisenhower, Nixon, and Ford.²⁶ The decade of the 1980s saw more coauthored pieces, including one by Stephen DeCanio, who went on to be part of a group who won a Nobel Peace prize in 2007 for work on climate change.²⁷ The society hosted two symposia in 1988: The first, publicly sponsored research, saw a number of graduate students and professors from Iowa State University giving papers—perhaps the first emergence of the Iowa State "mafia," as the graduates of the school have branded themselves. The second symposium was on quantitative studies and was largely dominated by economists.

The years at the University of California-Davis were transformative for the journal, in many ways mirroring the wider currents of American society. In the 1960s, the number of women publishing in the journal had reached a nadir with only eleven articles (4 percent) by women. But, by the 1980s, the

authors became considerably more diverse. The number of women publishing increased to 14 percent, although several of their articles were co-authored with men. Additionally, there seems to be more racial diversity among the authors. In 1984 Yuji Ichioka published an article about Japanese landowner-ship. He had been in an internment camp during World War II.²⁸ The second piece written by a Hispanic woman appeared in 1989, and the same year saw an article by the first (and only) identifiable Vietnam veteran. The lack of military personnel from Vietnam publishing in the journal after the war is notable, especially given the ubiquitous nature of service during World War II. This probably reflects the smaller commitment of manpower on the part of the United States, as well as deferments for college students and other discriminatory draft practices.

Minnie Miller Brown

In 1976 at the bicentennial symposium, Minnie Miller Brown presented a paper on "Black Women in American Agriculture." Brown was more than an academic, however. As a black woman and long-time extension worker in North Carolina, she had intimate experience with her subject matter. Brown received a degree in Home Economics in 1943 from Bennett College and went on to receive an MS in rural sociology from Cornell twelve years later.

Brown was born in 1922 in Salisbury, NC, and died in 1995 in Raleigh. After teaching in black high schools for four years, she became head of "Negro Home Demonstration Work" at North Carolina A&T State University. At this time, only seven of the historic black land-grant schools had a research budget at all. While at A&T, Brown started sociological research with Paul Marsh at North Carolina State University. Their work continued after desegregation in 1967, when Brown moved to North Carolina State. Using over one thousand interviews with rural families in nine North Carolina counties, Brown and Marsh

collected and published benchmark data that was used to design and expand extension services over the next several decades.

Brown's work with low-income families was in demand in the late 1960s when the USDA decided to establish a national nutrition program. Brown was part of the original advisory committee for the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program and ran the program in her home state, while continuing to participate on a national level.

During her life and on her death, Brown received many accolades and tributes. She was, by all accounts, an easygoing, charming woman. However, the words of her colleague and co-author, Marsh, in particular, capture the difficulties and problems she faced every day: "Traveling with Minnie in Eastern North Carolina, I saw her constant struggle to find a place to stay and to eat. This turned my longtime intellectual opposition to segregation to a profound anger. How could a system do this to someone like Minnie!"⁴³

Iowa State and the Return to the Heartland

In 1994 the journal left University of California-Davis and moved to Iowa State University under the editorship of R. Douglas Hurt. The trend for the decade was to publish four articles per issue more consistently than before, except with the symposia issues, which generally ran on an annual basis. In the last years of the decade, Hurt published several issues with only three articles, as the space was used up by either a particularly long article or movie reviews. This concern with space also meant that the issues were consistently shorter than during the Davis years, probably reflecting the University of California Press's attempts to control costs. At Iowa State, the journal still published lists of significant books and also started to produce lists of dissertations and book notes. Under Hurt's direction, presidential addresses and presidential photographs were published more regularly. Overall there was more conformity in the length of articles, which may have stemmed from the demands of the publisher.

One interesting new direction in the late 1990s was that more articles were critical of federal policies. This became especially evident in 1996 with a symposium that focused on federal activity, where authors criticized the Army Corps of Engineers and their work on the nation's waterways, and the policies of the Soil Conservation Service. Many of the authors were graduate students, like Bert Schneiders, a colleague of mine in the Iowa State graduate office, who published an article titled, "The Myth of Environmental Management: The Corps, the Missouri River, and the Channelization Project," and Steven Phillips from Georgetown who wrote, "The Limits of Federal Policy Making: The Soil Conservation Service and Levee Repair." This type of criticism expanded in the subsequent decades, with work by Pete Daniel and others, and, most recently, has shifted to a more critical consideration of the Green Revolution.

Other notable changes in the 1990s included more work in social history, with an increase in articles about women and African Americans, largely due to symposia on those topics. More pieces of cultural history also appeared, with Pete Daniels's presidential address being the first article published in the journal on music. The decade also included a paper on literature, and one on farm design. However, some older trends persisted, as the journal and its symposia continued to include articles on archives because such pieces were still useful. As I remember, the one computer in the graduate office at Iowa State in the late 1990s had a black screen with a flashing white cursor and was inadequate for everything but searching the library catalog. In terms of

research, the 1990s still had more in common with the 1930s than the 2010s.

The demographic of authors changed in two main ways during the decade. Considerably more authors were women and minorities. Over one-quarter of the articles were written by women, and the journal evinced other signs of equality as well. In coauthored pieces, women were increasingly given equal billing or were working with other women. For example, in 1993, Anne Efland, Denise Rogers, and Valerie Grim cowrote an article entitled, "Women as Agricultural Landowners: What Do We Know about Them?" Evaluating the race of contributors continues to be harder to evaluate, but the decade includes at least eighteen pieces by minorities, including a presentation at the symposium on the cotton gin by Ronald Bailey, who earned the first ever PhD in Black Studies in the United States. The other main trend was even more

Carlo Cipolla

In 2000 Carlo Cipolla died. He was an economist at the University of California-Berkeley and had published extensively on economic history, including a 1975 article in *Agricultural History* titled "European Connoisseurs and California Wines, 1875–1895." This article was just part of his intellectual breadth, as his work ranged from the history of money, medicine, and public health to groundbreaking work in demographic history early in his career.

Born in Pavia in 1922, the same year as Minnie Miller Brown, he obtained his undergraduate degree at Pavia University in 1944. He taught at a number of schools in Italy, but in 1959 started teaching in California, where he spent the bulk of his career. Together with his wife Ora, Carlo lived a seemingly idyllic life commuting between Berkeley and Pavia each year.

To the wider world, Cipolla remains famous not for his academic work but for a treatise he wrote on stupidity. In it, he determined that there were five basic laws of stupidity, which are:

Always and inevitably everyone underestimates the number of stupid individuals in circulation.

The probability that a certain person will be stupid is independent of any other characteristic of that person.

A stupid person is a person who causes losses to another person or to a group of persons while himself deriving no gain and even possibly incurring losses.

Non-stupid people always underestimate the damaging power of stupid individuals. In particular non-stupid people constantly forget that at all times and places and under any circumstances to deal and/or associate with stupid people always turns out to be a costly mistake.

A stupid person is the most dangerous type of person.

Of course, as a good economist, Carlo accompanied his rules with many explanations and tables, but the laws seem to stand well on their own.⁴⁴

professionalization. As the decade progressed, authors tended to be academics and even more specifically, historians. The professionalization was also reflected in the editing, as the review process became more elaborate and time-consuming. For example, in 1997 the journal published an article by Christine Daniels that she had presented at the AHA seven years prior. Although this time lag might have been extreme, the decade certainly represents the culmination of the professionalization that had been evident since World War II.

The North and the South

In 2003, the journal moved to my editorship at North Dakota State University: after seventy-six years of publication it had its first female editor. Five years later, it moved with me to Rollins College in Florida, which was the first time the journal had not been at a research university since its early days at the USDA. The other big change in the first decade of the twenty-first century was the end of the symposia and the start of an annual conference. The conference was the brainchild of Anne Efland, Deborah Fitzgerald, C. Fred Williams, and me at the last symposium at Cornell. Deborah agreed to host the inaugural event at MIT in 2006, which was a great success. Holding an annual conference represented an attempt—one of many during the life of the society—to broaden our appeal. Although we were dubious whether the society would be able to attract sufficient scholars every year, it was, and continues to be, well attended. During my thirteen-year tenure as editor, we made other changes in the journal. With the advent of the Internet, we stopped doing the annual lists of books and dissertations, and we also started putting some book reviews on our website. In addition, we transitioned from the University of California Press to a society-publishing model. With the society now managing subscriptions and distribution, and the Sheridan Press handling the printing, the journal started generating more money, and we were able to increase its size. This allowed the addition of interviews with members, think pieces by distinguished scholars, and a series of articles on using unusual sources to explore agricultural and rural history. The journal continued its professionalization as well, with at least three reviewers for every article, an active and expanded editorial board, and an office staff who checked every footnote in accepted manuscripts.

In terms of content, authors continued to interpret agricultural and rural history in new, broadening ways. For example, the new century has seen an increased interest in rural recreation, the lives of rural children, and rural life divorced from the farm. Articles on rural industry, rural medicine, and rural

radio intermingled with more traditional pieces on crop production. The interest in women's history in a rural context also continued to grow, with the Rural Women's History Conference generating a steady stream of articles and enthusiasm.

As editor, I quickly realized my limitations in terms of content. Despite my interest in certain topics, submissions were often limited by factors outside my control. Therefore, scholars in fields that had a strong competing journal

William Henry Harbaugh

William Henry Harbaugh was born in 1920 in Newark, NJ. Initially, he had no intention to be an academic, much less a historian. He wanted to play baseball and was signed to play for the St. Louis Cardinals. To his disappointment, the team dropped him after just four weeks and so he enrolled instead at the University of Alabama. There he played college baseball and earned a degree in journalism, all the while training with the ROTC for the impending war. Three months after his graduation in 1942 he went to Europe with the army.

He served throughout the war, first as a lieutenant and then as a captain. He was first in North Africa, then in Sicily with George Patton, and then took part in the liberation of Marseille. Moving north, he was part of the invasion of Germany, liberating several labor camps around Dachau. He earned a Croix de Guerre for his service, which also convinced him that he was "an ignorant man."

On return to the United States, he applied to Columbia University and started his career in history, finishing his studies at Northwestern. He taught at many schools, including the University of Connecticut, Bucknell, and the University of Maryland, but the bulk of his career—twenty-four years—was at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. His biography of Theodore Roosevelt

was well-received, and in retirement, Harbaugh invested his energies in preserving Roosevelt's Virginia residence, Pine Knot, south of Charlottesville.

Harbaugh, like so many of his generation, was permanently shaped by his experiences in the war. Adamantly against the conflict in Vietnam, he worked actively against it, marching and speaking at anti-war rallies. In 1970, days after the shootings at Kent State, he gave a speech entitled "The Cambodian Crisis" at the University of Virginia. In the speech, he talked about "the traumatic flash of empathy that the massacre of the Kent State Four induced in all of us." He hoped that this would compel everyone to acknowledge the lies underpinning the conflict, and he called "on Richard Nixon to reverse a policy the inner logic of which dictates that we drive farther and farther into, today, Cambodia, tomorrow Laos, the next day North Vietnam, the day after that Thailand, the day after that Burma, and the day after that China."⁴⁵ Somewhat unexpectedly, the article that he wrote for the journal has no apparent connection to his passion for Roosevelt or opposition to the war. Titled "Twentieth-Century Tenancy and Soil Conservation: Some Comparisons and Questions," it appeared in 1991, when Harbaugh was in his seventies.

were hard pressed to think about *Agricultural History* as a venue. This limited the number of articles on colonial and early America, English history, and, to a lesser extent, environmental history. The flip side of this was that scholars without a clear alternative journal were more than happy to work with us, which meant a high number of articles on Australia and New Zealand among other regions and topics. Another stumbling block was academic traditions around the world and accompanying linguistic barriers. The academic profiles and expectations of historians differ widely, as do understandings of what articles should include and how they should be constructed and referenced. Additionally, while a global journal, we have remained an English-language journal, which further limits possible submissions.

In terms of authors, the journal became even more academic and even more the bastion of historians. At the same time, the percentage of women authors climbed still further, although still not reaching the 50 percent mark. Nonetheless, the winter issue of 2012 marked the first issue where all the authors were women. This trend is also evident in terms of our presidents, with seven of the thirteen women presidents serving in the last fourteen years.

The Future

The journal has moved to the competent hands of Bert Way at Kennesaw State University. Over the next decade or so, I am sure it will experience many more changes and confront more challenges. Most of these, I anticipate, will be driven by technology. Bert and the executive committee will need to keep wrestling with questions regarding the extent of the journal's online presence and its open-access status.

Open access emerged in the 1990s and has grown rapidly ever since. The basic premise of open access is that some version of all scholarly material should be made freely available in an online repository. This shift is revolutionary and has been compared to the invention of the printing press.²⁹ Open access can work in myriad ways. Journals can put the final version of their articles online immediately, they can put the content up after a certain amount of time, or they can allow their authors to self-archive manuscripts at various stages in the publication process.³⁰

Regardless of method, open access offers a "social promise" to the world; a democratization of information that allows everyone with an internet connection to access current, or near current, scholarship and data.³¹ The fundamental good inherent in the concept of open access has been widely recognized and embraced, especially in Europe, with the Budapest Open Access

Initiative (2002), the Berlin Declaration (2003), the Finch Report (2012), the Lyon Declaration (2014), and most recently, Plan S (2018). The research on open-access journals is not huge, but it does exist. Open-access journals, especially those that were started as open access, have a fairly strong success and sustainability rate.³² It is clear that open access is here to stay. What is much less obvious is how it will affect the world and work of social scientists and humanities scholars in general, and historians in particular.

First of all, the intellectual benefits of open access to historians are hard to quantify. While we do publish in journals, our academic currency—at least in the United States—is still the monograph. The decline of the monograph may still be in the offing, but it is not as imminent as predicted a decade ago.³³ Another difference for historians is speed. Most scientific articles include their data as a necessary component. Other scientists can use this information to move their own research forward, and speed of access is often crucial.³⁴ The

Mary Neth

Although I never met Mary Neth, I felt like I knew her. Her life and work represented a transition for the journal and the society, and she seems to contain in one person much of what was good about both our past and our present.

Mary was born on a farm in Smithville, Missouri, just north of Kansas City. The farm was mixed, raising livestock and arable crops, and life there taught Mary about the struggles needed to keep a family farm afloat in the late twentieth century. These struggles would preoccupy her academic life and work.

She received her PhD from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, writing a dissertation that would become her first book, *Preserving the Family Farm: Women, Community, and the Foundations of Modern Agribusiness, 1900–1940* (1995). After graduating, she worked in Virginia and at the Smithsonian, before moving to the University of Missouri in Columbia. Mary's scholarship brought together traditional discussions about

farm economics and agricultural systems with new insights into the role of women and society. She was active in the Rural Women's Studies Association from its inception, but also moved seamlessly within the still-very-male Agricultural History Society.

Mary died of breast cancer when she was just fifty-four years old. In the fall of 2009, the journal published a series of articles in her honor. She was remembered for her scholarship, mentorship, and her friendship, and the articles both reflected her interests and offered an academic conversation with her past work. Although not completely without precedent, this style of memorial and the clear emotion running through so many of the contributions represented a new step for the society. It acknowledged for the first time the deep bonds we forge with one another in the early hours of the morning at conference bars, chatting in airport waiting rooms, and getting our game faces on together in hotel bedrooms.⁴⁶

same is not true about historians as we use each other's work very differently and speed is not of the essence.

A more practical difference for historians is the financial challenge of open access. Journals are most often traditionally funded by subscriptions paid by scholars who want to have access to their content. When that access becomes freely available, much of the reason for membership evaporates. The most common system of open-access funding is for journals to transition from a reader-pay model to an author-pay model through an article processing charge (APC).³⁵ Historians rarely operate with large research grants and so paying APCs would devolve upon the individual researcher or their institution. In fact, one study on open-access funding discovered that APCs for articles by historians and humanities scholars were waived 40 percent of the time—hardly a way to fund a journal.³⁶ Additionally, scholars at poorer institutions or in poorer countries would be less able to publish than those in wealthier regions of the world, thus replacing one sort of economic discrimination with another.

A final concern is the cost of transition. How much would it cost, in total, for journals to move to open access and thus develop effective repositories, websites, and online search engines? How much would it cost to subsidize these journals as they move from a subscription basis to another financial model?³⁷ In 2012 the American Historical Association published a Statement on Scholarly Journal Publishing. In it, the governing body of the AHA voiced concerns about the cost and accessibility of open-access journals for historians. Nonetheless, while historians and others in the United States are late to embrace open access, the trend seems inexorable to me (although other, smarter, people disagree), and *Agricultural History* must keep a close watch. Additionally, as more of the world's scholars and institutions move toward open access, it will become less desirable to publish in a journal that is not. Currently, *Agricultural History* is considered partially open access, but the executive committee should keep considering other possibilities and other funding models moving forward.

Along with open access, the journal will hopefully continue to expand its horizons and redefine the meanings of agricultural and rural history. Although Bert will be limited by submissions, as all the editors have been, his energy and contacts, together with the support the society gets from Alan Marcus and Jim Giesen at Mississippi State University, will continue to broaden our membership and the nature of our combined scholarship. Moving forward, I anticipate we will have more environmental offerings, more articles that con-

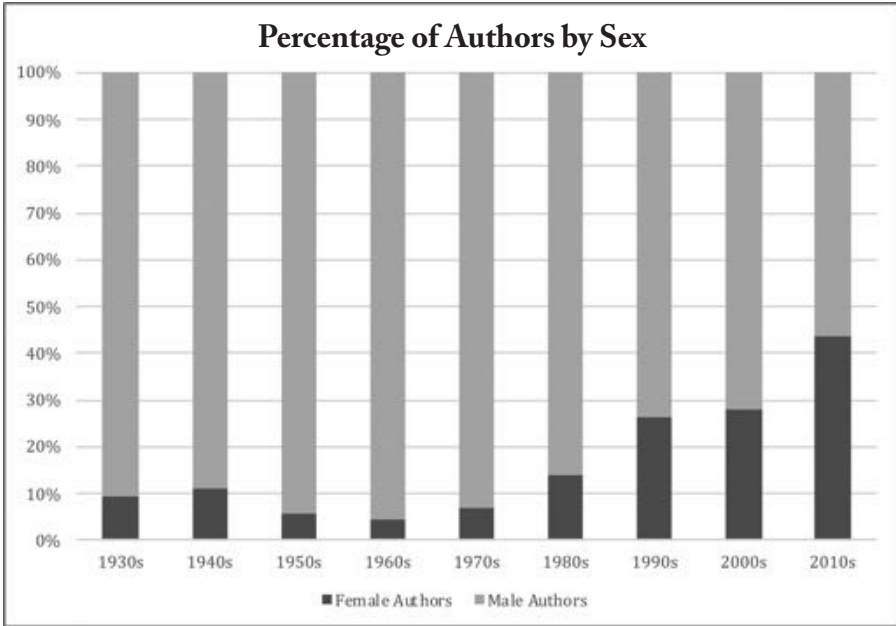


Figure 8. The number of women authors publishing in the journal reflects both the relatively high number of nonacademics publishing in the early years and the growth of sex equality toward the end of the twentieth century.

sider rural life divorced from the production of food, and more on the social life of rural people, be it education, childhood, romance, or entertainment. I imagine that certain key topics of agricultural history—most notably, the Populists, the New Deal, and land-grant education—will never grow old but will just keep engendering new interpretations and perspectives.

Finally, if I had a magic lamp and could dictate the course of the journal and its contents, I would wish for three things. First, I am constantly amazed by the lack of pre-nineteenth-century scholarship. For all the years that the United States, and indeed the world, was overwhelmingly rural and agricultural, the journal has published very little scholarship on this period. Despite Carman and Tugwell's assertion that "Colonial America was a land of farmers," colonial historians have not flocked to our society.³⁸ I am sure this is largely a factor of competing journals and societies. But it is also a result of the fact that scholars writing about a predominantly agricultural world lose the forest for the trees. They write about society, economics, land policy, and politics, often missing that all of these are transpiring in a rural setting. I think Bert's biggest challenge, and one that I found insurmountable, is to reach these scholars and convince them that they have a second home in our society.

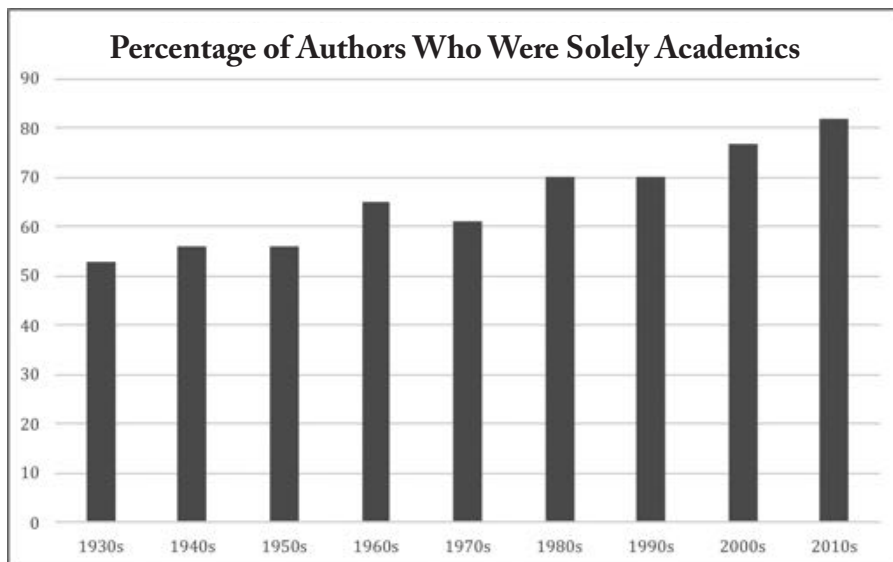


Figure 9. The trend to increasing professionalization of the journal and its contents may be glimpsed through the occupations of its authors, with a fairly steady increase in the number of career academics publishing articles. This data must be approached with the caveat that I was unable to find full career data on a substantial number of people.

A second wish would be for more work on the impact of agriculture and agricultural production on diplomacy. Diplomatic history has been marginalized for so long now that it is due a renaissance, and it would be super-cool if some of that came through our society and our work. We published one special issue on diplomacy and agriculture in 2008, and I found it most exciting. How has the United States used its agriculture in conjunction with foreign policy to control countries around the world over the last two centuries? Before that, what are the parallels with other great powers and their global presence? Diplomacy and the tea trade, diplomacy and opium production, diplomacy and rubber ... there are so many potential stories out there waiting to be told.

My third wish would be for the the society to continue its committment to its international presence. This commitment has been restated and remade many times over the last one hundred years. However, our international membership and international submissions are eclectic and sporadic. The commitment to taking the conference abroad every four years should help, but more is needed. The journal's editorial staff needs to work hard to recruit non-US manuscripts, and the society needs to abet these efforts by making sure that international conferences are well advertised and well attended by members. I would also encourage us all to think about doing comparative coauthored

work more often to encourage the presence of an international perspective in the journal and in our membership.

In 1944, Everett E. Edwards published a paper titled, “Objectives for the Agricultural History Society during its Second Twenty-Five Years.” In it he wrote: “The Society may have fallen short of fulfilling all the hopes of certain of its founders, but the mere fact that it has lived to celebrate its twenty-fifth anniversary may be considered at least partial evidence of a useful existence.”³⁹ While I could write about our tendency to be Chicken Littles, continually anticipating the sky falling—tendencies still apparent today and present in many of the retrospective articles published throughout the journal’s history—I won’t. Rather, I would like to echo Everett’s sentiment. I think it is marvellous that the Agricultural History Society, founded by a bunch of USDA officials at the Cosmos Club in 1919 is still going strong one hundred years later. I am even more thrilled that today’s society is full of young women and men who continue to be excited to talk, think, and write about agriculture and rural life. And, lacking the pessimism of many agricultural historians, I predict that the society will still be strong and vibrant in 2119.

NOTES

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