

Editors' Note

With this issue, the editors of *Business History Review* announce several important changes. The new cover design, which features a picture of Harvard Business School's Baker Library, celebrates the journal's relationship with its sponsoring institution. Harvard Business School has a long commitment to the field of business history.¹ The School has offered a course in the subject for eighty years and, in 1927, created the first endowed chair in business history in the United States. It is a leading repository of business archives, which scholars from around the world consult.

We have reformulated the prizes that the *Review* has long offered. The annual award given to the journal's best article will be renamed in honor of Henrietta Larson, who served as editor of *BHR* from 1938 to 1953 and has the distinction of being the first woman at Harvard Business School to achieve the rank of tenured full professor. Larson was the author of many important works of business history, including *Jay Cooke, Private Banker* (1936), the *Guide to Business History* (1948), the *History of Standard Oil Company* (1955), and the *History of Humble Oil & Refining Company* (1959).²

With the closing in 2007 of the Newcomen Society of the United States, we are also renaming our triennial book award, which was established in 1962 and was formerly known as the Thomas Newcomen Book Award. Going forward, the prize will be called the Alfred and Fay Chandler Book Award in Business History. The new name is intended to honor Alfred D. Chandler Jr., who died in May 2007, and his wife, Fay, a noted painter and sculptor and a sponsor of the field of business history. The winners of both the Henrietta Larson Article Award and the Alfred and Fay Chandler Book Award in Business History are chosen by a vote of the *Review's* Editorial Advisory Board.

Finally, we take this opportunity to announce a new electronic presence for the journal. Founded in 1926, *BHR* is the oldest journal in the field of business history and continues to have the widest circulation

¹The Web site, www.hbs.edu/businesshistory, provides up-to-date information on the business history group at the School. Each of the 206 members of the faculty at Harvard Business School receives a copy of the journal.

²The *History of Standard Oil Company* was coauthored with Ralph W. Hidy and George S. Gibb.

worldwide. Since its formation, the *Review* has published 1,550 articles and research notes and 4,975 book reviews. Nearly all of these are now available online in EBSCO/host and JSTOR, creating a pool of articles on every dimension of the field.³ Abstracts of the most recent articles and a selection of book reviews are available at our Web site: <http://www.hbs.edu/bhr>.

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As we look forward to the future of *Business History Review*, we hope to build on our tradition of being at the forefront of important debates in business history. The editors remain committed to the journal's multidisciplinary approach, which attracts scholars in a wide range of fields, including history, management studies, sociology, economics, and political science.⁴ We expect to publish only articles that meet the highest standards of historical scholarship and that take an evolutionary view of their topics. Yet we believe that these articles can also be relevant to students of business today.⁵ It is increasingly recognized by many of the world's leading business schools that an understanding of business history is a prerequisite both for training future business leaders and for understanding contemporary management.⁶ The eclecticism in the discipline, sometimes regarded as a weakness, is better seen as a strength, for it allows business scholars to combine a rigorous study of "what really happened" in the past with an openness that draws on methods and tools in a variety of fields.

We also hope to continue our tradition of being international in perspective, inviting articles about business history in the United States as well as in other countries.⁷ In the past two years, three-quarters of

³ Electronic contents are also available on ABI/Inform.

⁴ In a 1962 article in the journal, entitled "What is Business History?" the HBS business historian Arthur Cole predicted that business history would have a "bright future" if it could appeal to students of both management and history. Arthur H. Cole, "What Is Business History?" *Business History Review* 36 (Spring 1962): 98–106.

⁵ *BHR* has a long tradition of publishing such articles. See, for instance, Michael A. Cusumano, Yiorgos Mylonadis, and Richard S. Rosenbloom, "Strategic Maneuvering and Mass-Market Dynamics: The Triumph of VHS over Beta" (Spring 1992): 51–94; and Clayton M. Christensen, "The Rigid Disk Drive Industry: A History of Commercial and Technological Turbulence" (Winter 1993): 531–88.

⁶ Among current prominent examples are thirteen HBS faculty with Ph.D.s in history; Copenhagen Business School has seven full-time business historians.

⁷ *BHR* was a pioneer in publishing articles on the history of globalization. See, to name a few, Mira Wilkins, "An American Enterprise Abroad: American Radiator Company in Europe, 1895–1914" (Autumn 1969): 326–46; and the groundbreaking special issue from 1974 on multinational enterprise (Autumn 1974), featuring an article by Lawrence G. Franko, "The Origins of Multinational Manufacturing by Continental European Firms," and another by John M. Stopford, "The Origins of British-Based Multinational Manufacturing Enterprises."

our articles have been written about businesses or businesspeople operating in regions outside the U.S. Just last year, we published articles on entrepreneurs and institutions in Australia, British West Africa, Egypt, Greece, Malaya, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, and Sweden. We also published a survey of the business history of Africa. Our next issue will feature articles on entrepreneurs and businesses in Latin America. We have also begun reprinting translated article abstracts from *Zeitschrift für Unternehmensgeschichte* (ZUG) and *Entreprises et Histoire* to inform our readers about some of the work being published in German and French.

We invite scholars to help us move the discipline forward. We strive to publish articles on compelling subjects that will engage and challenge our diverse audience. We define business history broadly, but we emphasize the importance of firms, business systems, entrepreneurs, and industries. Although case studies of individual companies still have a place in our pages, we ask authors to address large themes and issues that will be of interest to a wide readership.

We continue to welcome creative studies that expand the frontiers of business history and enrich its intellectual agenda. We encourage comparative research that analyzes the history of entrepreneurs, firms, and industries in two or more countries, cities, and regional clusters. And we seek articles that use a wide range of methodologies, from social and cultural approaches to quantitative studies employing aggregate databases.

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This issue of *Business History Review* pays tribute to the work of Alfred Chandler. Chandler, for many years the Isidor Straus Professor of Business History at Harvard Business School, was deeply involved with the journal. He became a member of the editorial advisory board in 1954 and published eleven articles and ten book reviews in the journal over the course of half a century. The essays in this issue of *BHR* assess the continuing relevance of his work to a number of disciplines, including world history, organizational sociology, strategy, and international business.

The introduction to one of Chandler's classic books, *Strategy and Structure* (1962)—which featured chapters on DuPont, General Motors,

The Spring 1970 issue of *BHR*, which was devoted to "Japanese Entrepreneurship," included "Entrepreneurial Studies in Japan: An Introduction," by Henry Rosovsky and Kozo Yamamura; "The Organizational Structure of Mitsubishi and Mitsui Zaibatsu, 1868–1922: A Comparative Study," by Hidemasa Morikawa; and "Evolution of the Japanese System of Employer-Employee Relations, 1868–1945," by Robert Evans Jr.

Standard Oil, and Sears—contains a vivid description of the type of history he was writing at the time. “Only by showing these executives [top and middle managers] as they handled what appeared to them to be unique problems and issues can the process of innovation and change be meaningfully presented,” he wrote. “Only in this way can the trials of harassed executives faced with novel and extremely complex problems be clearly pictured, and the impact of specific personalities and of historical or accidental situations on over-all change be adequately presented.”⁸ These sentences present a concise summary of what business historians can accomplish. In this paragraph, Chandler made it clear that he wanted to avoid being present minded in his assessment of the behavior of individual executives; his goal was to capture the ambiguity and complexity of the problems they faced at the time.

Chandler’s approach was not merely descriptive. He was arguing for a history in which data are not gathered to illustrate theoretical generalizations, but in which valid generalizations are derived from data. The “complex decisions, actions, and events are not taken out of context and presented as mere illustrations as they would have to be in a general history of American business or of the American economy,” Chandler wrote.⁹ Instead, they are analyzed in order to develop theoretical propositions.

As we look forward to the future of *Business History Review*, we believe that the ability to reach theoretical insights about business from careful analysis of corporate archives, oral histories, and other sources remains one of the most important objectives of the field. As the discipline steadily accumulates a wealth of empirical data, the opportunities for synthesis, conceptualization, and generalization continue to grow. The following essays show that Chandler’s work, on this point and many others, remains thought-provoking, relevant, and insightful.

⁸ Alfred D. Chandler, *Strategy and Structure: Chapters in the History of the Industrial Enterprise* (Cambridge, Mass., 1962), 7.

⁹ *Ibid.*