

Business History Review

S P R I N G 1 9 9 1



SMALL BUSINESS AND ITS RIVALS



Published by the Harvard Business School

<https://doi.org/10.1177/00076503910000000000>

Cover: The Nineteenth-Century Corset Trade

The corset industry is a particularly interesting subject for analysis because of its position on the spectrum between specialty and mass production manufacturers. Certainly not a large-scale mass production industry like cigarettes or automobiles, the corset trade nevertheless adopted some of the techniques of the high-throughput industries, as corset makers were able to standardize larger sections of the process than proved possible in other parts of the garment industry.

The front cover shows Warner Brothers' first corset factory in McGrawville, New York, 1874–75, whereas the back cover, an engraving from Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper of 12 July 1884, depicts the firm's factory in Bridgeport, Connecticut, only ten years later.

The cover illustrations are reproduced courtesy of the Historical Collections of the Bridgeport Public Library, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

For a close look at the corset industry, see pp. 91–129.

© 1991 by The President and Fellows of Harvard College
All rights reserved.

ISSN 0007–6805

Second-class postage paid at Boston, MA.

Business History *Review*

Published Quarterly by the Harvard Business School
Volume 65 Number 1 Spring 1991

EDITOR · Steven W. Tolliday, *Harvard University*
ASSOCIATE EDITOR · Patricia Denault, *Harvard University*
BUSINESS MANAGER · Ann Chaney, *Harvard University*

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

Louis P. Cain, *Loyola University of Chicago*
Alfred D. Chandler, Jr., *Harvard University*
Tony Freyer, *University of Alabama*
Mark Fruin, *University of California, Los Angeles*
Thomas P. Hughes, *University of Pennsylvania*
David J. Jeremy, *Manchester Polytechnic*
William Lazonick, *Barnard College*
Maurice Lévy-Leboyer, *Université Paris X, Nanterre*
Thomas K. McCraw, *Harvard University*
John J. McCusker, *University of Maryland, College Park*
John P. McKay, *University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign*
H. V. Nelles, *York University*
Daniel Nelson, *University of Akron*
Hans Pohl, *Universität Bonn*
Glenn Porter, *Hagley Museum and Library*
Susan Socolow, *Emory University*
Richard S. Tedlow, *Harvard University*
Paul Uselding, *University of Northern Iowa*
Richard H. K. Vietor, *Harvard University*
Mira Wilkins, *Florida International University*

The *Business History Review* is published in the spring, summer, autumn, and winter by the Harvard Business School and is printed at the Office of the University Publisher.

- Manuscripts, books for review, and all editorial correspondence should be sent to

Business History Review
Baker Library 5A
Harvard Business School
Boston, MA 02163
Telephone: 617-495-6154
Fax: 617-495-6001

- Queries regarding advertising and subscriptions, as well as all changes of address, should be sent to the business manager, Ann Chaney, at the same address.
- Correspondence regarding rights and permissions should be addressed to

Audrey Barrett
Permissions Editor
Publishing Division
Harvard Business School
Boston, MA 02163

• *Annual Subscription Rates*

Individuals	\$25.00
Institutions	\$50.00
Students (with valid ID)	\$16.00
All subscriptions outside the U.S. and Canada	\$50.00

- Most issues of volumes 57-64 (1983-90) are available from our office for \$10.00 per issue or \$40 per volume. Please write for details.
- *Business History Review* articles are listed in *Business Methods Index*, the *Book Review Index*, the *Journal of Economic Literature*, *Historical Abstracts*, *America—History and Life*, ABI/INFORM, and the AHA's *Recently Published Articles*.
- Notice of failure to receive issues must reach this office no later than six months after the date of mailing. Postmaster: Send address changes to *Business History Review*, Baker Library 5A, Harvard Business School, Boston, MA 02163.

CONTENTS

SMALL BUSINESS AND ITS RIVALS

INTRODUCTION • *vii*

SURVEYS AND DEBATES

Mansel G. Blackford Small Business in America: A
Historiographic Survey • 1

ARTICLES

Philip Scranton Diversity in Diversity: Flexible Production and
American Industrialization, 1880–1930 • 27

Bernard Smith Market Development, Industrial Development:
The Case of the American Corset Trade, 1860–1920 • 91

Alan R. Raucher Dime Store Chains: The Making of Organization
Men, 1880–1940 • 130

EDITOR'S CORNER • 164

BOOK REVIEWS

Elizabeth Armstrong, *Before Copyright: The French Book-Privilege
System, 1498–1526*. Reviewed by Steven A. Epstein • 217

Ron Chernow, *The House of Morgan: An American Banking
Dynasty and the Rise of Modern Finance*. Reviewed by Edwin J.
Perkins • 185

Gary Cross, *A Quest for Time: The Reduction of Work in Britain
and France, 1840–1940*. Reviewed by Wayne Lewchuk • 213

Keith Dix, *What's a Coal Miner to Do? The Mechanization of Coal
Mining*. Reviewed by James R. Green • 183

Debòrah Fitzgerald, *The Business of Breeding: Hybrid Corn in
Illinois, 1890–1940*. Reviewed by Glenn E. Bugos • 181

Steve Fraser and *Gary Gerstle*, eds., *The Rise and Fall of the New
Deal Order, 1930–1980*. Reviewed by Stephen Amberg • 190

Michael J. French, *The U.S. Tire Industry: A History*. Reviewed by
Daniel Nelson • 189

- Michael Frisch*, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History*. *Reviewed by* Joel R. Gardner • 196
- Keith Grieves*, *Sir Eric Geddes: Business and Government in War and Peace*. *Reviewed by* Derek Matthews • 209
- Charles Harvey* and *Jon Press*, eds., *International Competition and Industrial Change: Essays in the History of Mining and Metallurgy, 1800–1950*. *Reviewed by* Thomas F. O'Brien • 207
- Keith Hayward*, *The British Aircraft Industry*. *Reviewed by* David Edgerton • 211
- Maury Klein*, *Union Pacific: The Rebirth, 1894–1969*. *Reviewed by* Keith L. Bryant, Jr. • 179
- Christine MacLeod*, *Inventing the Industrial Revolution: The English Patent System, 1660–1800*. *Reviewed by* Jennifer Tann • 205
- James H. Madison*, *Eli Lilly: A Life, 1885–1977*. *Reviewed by* David L. Cowen • 194
- Andre Millard*, *Edison and the Business of Innovation*. *Reviewed by* David B. Sicilia • 175
- Paul J. Miranti, Jr.*, *Accountancy Comes of Age: The Development of an American Profession, 1886–1940*. *Reviewed by* Thomas R. Robinson • 178
- Colin Newbury*, *The Diamond Ring: Business, Politics, and Precious Stones in South Africa, 1867–1947*. *Reviewed by* Stanley D. Chapman • 223
- Dianne Newell*, ed., *The Development of the Pacific Salmon-Canning Industry: A Grown Man's Game*. *Reviewed by* Arthur F. McEvoy • 198
- Gérard Noiriel*, *Workers in French Society in the 19th and 20th Centuries*. *Reviewed by* Gerald Friedman • 219
- Chris Nyland*, *Reduced Worktime and the Management of Production*. *Reviewed by* Wayne Lewchuk • 213
- Roger M. Olien* and *Diana Davids Olien*, *Easy Money: Oil Promoters and Investors in the Jazz Age*. *Reviewed by* William R. Childs • 187

- Ellen Frankel Paul and Howard Dickman*, eds., *Liberty, Property, and the Future of Constitutional Development*. *Reviewed by* William W. Fisher III • 169
- Hans Pohl*, ed., *Die Bedeutung der Kommunikation für Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*. *Reviewed by* Michael L. Hughes • 221
- Arthur J. Ray*, *The Canadian Fur Trade in the Industrial Age*. *Reviewed by* Ann M. Carlos • 200
- Sharon V. Salinger*, "To Serve Well and Faithfully": Labor and Indentured Servants in Pennsylvania, 1682–1800. *Reviewed by* Henry A. Gemery • 166
- Ronald E. Shaw*, *Erie Water West: A History of the Erie Canal, 1792–1854*. *Reviewed by* Donald J. Pisani • 171
- Ross Thomson*, *The Path to Mechanized Shoe Production in the United States*. *Reviewed by* Kenneth L. Sokoloff • 173
- James D. Tracy*, ed., *The Rise of Merchant Empires: Long-Distance Trade in the Early Modern World, 1350–1750*. *Reviewed by* Constance Jones Mathers • 201
- Ken Tucker and Mark Sundberg*, *International Trade in Services*. *Reviewed by* Louis T. Wells, Jr. • 224
- Gilbert Ziebura*, *World Economy and World Politics, 1924–1931: From Reconstruction to Collapse*. *Reviewed by* Diane B. Kunz • 203

CONTRIBUTORS

Mansel G. Blackford teaches business history at the Ohio State University. He has published a number of books on American and comparative business history, most recently *Local Businesses: Exploring Their History* (1990), written with K. Austin Kerr and Amos J. Loveday, and *A History of Small Business in America* (Twayne Publishers, 1992). His *Planning for Progress and Profits: Businessmen and City Planning on the Pacific Coast, 1890–1920* is forthcoming from the Ohio State University Press.

Alan R. Raucher is professor of history and department chair at Wayne State University. The author of *Paul G. Hoffman, Architect of Foreign Aid* (1985) and of recent articles on the history of public relations, he is currently working on a history of Sunday closing laws and retailing in the United States.

Philip Scranton, professor of history at Rutgers University, Camden, and incoming director of the Center for the History of Business, Technology, and Society at the Hagley Museum and Library, received his Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania. He has held fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, and the Hagley Museum and Library. His most recent book, *Figured Tapestry* (1989), was awarded the Taft Prize in labor history. The present article is the first product of a broader study of flexible manufacturing in the United States, entitled “Endless Novelty.”

Bernard Smith received his doctorate in economics from Yale University in 1989. He is an assistant professor of economics at Drew University in New Jersey and an assistant director of the Drew University Brussels Semester on the European Community. He is currently doing work on the uneven development of the women’s clothing industry in the United States.