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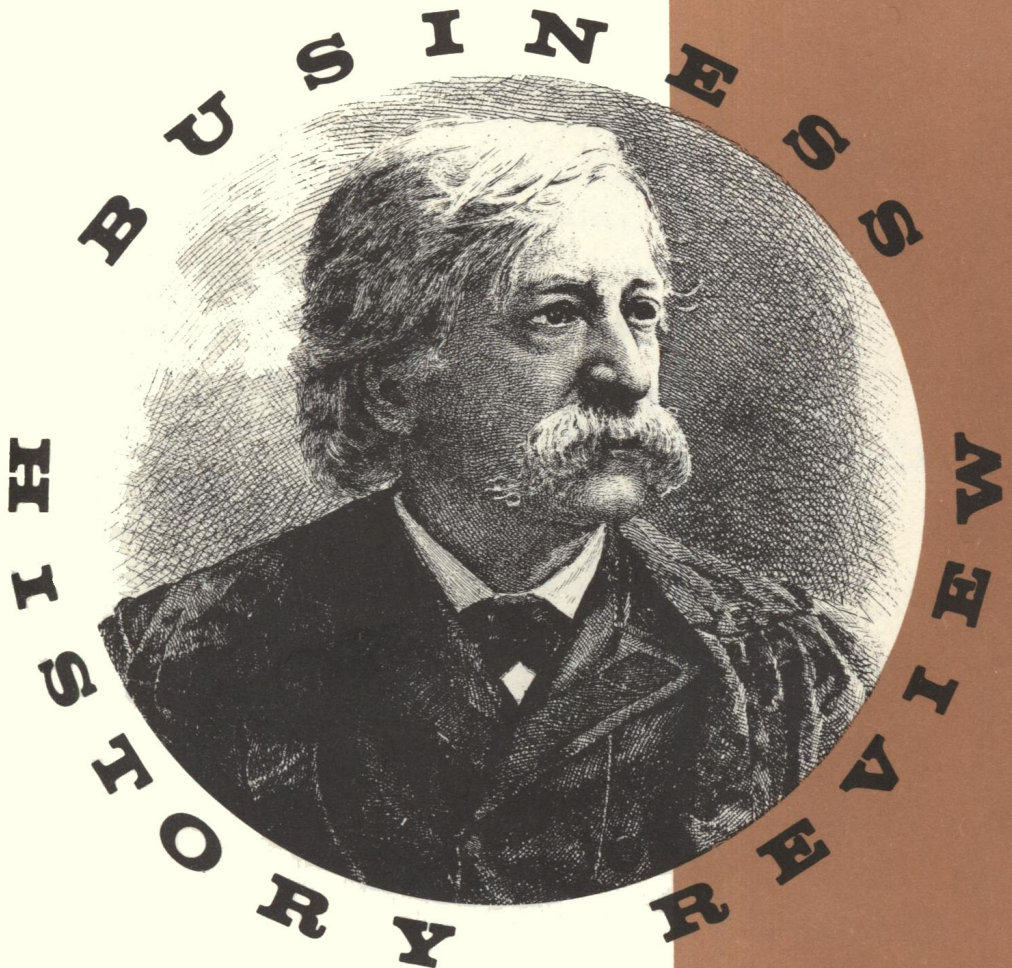


Special Issue

Legal and Business History

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- The Knight Sugar Decision of 1895
- Federal Courts and the National Economy
- Private Claims to Public Land Minerals
- Business MSS at Baker Library, 1969-1979
- EDITOR'S CORNER
- BOOK REVIEWS



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¶ Criteria for selection include: originality, value, breadth, and interest of contribution, quality of research materials and methods, and quality of presentation.

Editor's Note

This special issue on the interaction of law and business in the economic development of the United States is the ninth in a series of special issues that were begun under James P. Baughman and continued under Glenn Porter. These special issues have always required considerable advance planning and contributions by special consulting editors. I am grateful to Professor Morton Keller of Brandeis University for his commentary on the three articles, and salute the scholarly devotion to their subject that has made our three authors, Charles W. McCurdy, Tony A. Freyer, and Gary D. Libecap, the real creators of this issue.

This particular special issue, however, "came knocking at our door." Historians and social scientists have become so excited at the rich rewards of studying legal development within the context of economic and business history — and vice versa — that the field is emerging as the most promising since historians began to assert that history was more than "past politics." While various "new" schools based on a narrow definition of method recede in a cloud of embarrassing fatuities, the history of law and business points the way to a truly useful history of American civilization based upon an increasingly catholic view of the whole life of the people.

Edward A. Purcell, Jr., writes in the June 1979 issue of the American Historical Review (840) that "The major significance of legal history lies in its analysis not of doctrine and technique but rather of functional relationships between the legal system and the society that supports it." Can this not be said with equal cogency about all aspects of American history? Are these words not a clear call for a broadening of the cultural base in both the teaching of historians and the writing of history? If the fruits of our labors are to be our only guide, can there be any doubt that the future belongs to the New Interdisciplinary History?

A. M.