

**Econ 8534**  
**American Economic History**

Professor Ann Carlos  
Econ 208A

Fall 2008

This course explores the economic history of the United States from colonial times to the present. Its purpose is to expose you to economic history as a method of economic analysis and to provide insights into some of the main features of America's economic growth and development. In a very real sense, this course is a sampler. We cannot cover everything in one semester. Depending on the class interests, missing topics can be added.

For those of you who have not had a course in American economic history, two very useful text books are Jeremy Atack and Peter Passell, *A New Econ*

## **2. Initial Conditions and Development Paths:**

Kenneth Sokoloff and Stanley Engerman, "Institutions, Factor Endowments and Paths of Development in the New World," **JEP** 14 (Summer 2000)

Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson and James A. Robinson, "Reversal of Fortune: Geography

David M. Wishart, "Evidence of Surplus Production in the Cherokee Nation Prior to Removal." **JEH** 55 (March 1995).

Jared M. Diamond, *Guns, Germs and Steel: The Fate of Human Societies*, New York: Norton, 1997.

## 6. Transportation and American Economic Growth

Atack and Passell, chs. 6 and 16

Mark Kanazawa, "Possession is Nine Points of the Law: The Political Economy of Early Public Land Disposal." **JEH**, (April 1996).

Robert Fogel, "Notes on the Social Savings Controversy". **JEH** (March 1979)

C. Knick Harley, "Oligopoly Agreement and the Timing of American Railroad Construction". **JEH** (December 1982).

Douglas Puffert, "The Standardization of Track Gauge on North American Railways, 1830-1890," **JEH** 60 (December 2000)

## 7. Industrialization and Technical Choice

Atack and Passell, chs. 5 and 7

Nathan Rosenberg, "Technological Change in the Machine Tools Industry," **JEH** (December 1963).

John A. James and Jonathon S. Skinner, "Resolution of the Labor Scarcity Paradox," **JEH** (September 1985).

Claudia Goldin and Kenneth Sokoloff, "The Relative Productivity Hypothesis of Industrialization," **QJE** 99 (August 1984)

Naomi Lamoreaux, "Banks, Kinship and Economic Development," **JEH** 46 (September 1986)

Douglas A. Irwin and Peter Temin, "The Antebellum Tariff on Cotton Textiles Reconsidered," and "Comment" by C. Knick Harley, **JEH** 61 (September 2001)

## 8. Slavery and Southern Development

Atack and Passell, chs 11 and 12

Alfred Conrad and John Meyer, "The Economics of Slavery in the Antebellum South." **Journal of Political Economy** 66 (1958).

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Lee J. Alston and Joseph Ferrie, "Paternalism in Agricultural Labor Contracts in the US South:  
Implications for the Growth of the Welfare State," **American Economic Review** (1993)  
Melinda Miller "The Effect of Free Land Access on For

Price Fishback, "Operation of 'Unfettered' Labor Markets" **JEL** (June 1998)  
Mark Aldrich, *Safety First: Technology, Labor, and Business in the Building of A*