

aghast to have the Colonne d'Austerlitz taken for a mere copy of Trajan's Column (p. 85). The choice of sites discussed, however, and the space allocated to each appear somewhat arbitrary. Can one justify a discussion of "Renaissance town improvement in Italy" which confines itself to Vigevano and Rome, with passing references to Vicenza and Venice (pp. 78-82)? And even for Rome, only two projects are mentioned, the Piazza del Popolo and the forecourt of St. Peter's. Paris and Versailles are discussed at slightly greater length, under "Renaissance planning in France," London in still more details. But why four and a half pages for London in the seventeenth century and only one page for the eighteenth?

For the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the book limits itself to Britain. Commissions, Committees, Schemes and Plans abound. True, the author in his preface declares his intention of narrowing "the breath (*sic*) of prospect" for this period, but can one really, without distorting the whole picture, virtually ignore all that has happened elsewhere in Europe and in North America? There is surely a lack of perspective, when the only mention of Le Corbusier is in half a line at the end of a paragraph devoted to François Fourier (p. 137, wrongly shown in the index as p. 13).

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J. D. CHAMBERS. — *Population, Economy, and Society in Pre-Industrial England*, London, Oxford University Press, 1972.

This, the author's third posthumous book, is a revision of a series of lectures delivered at the University of Kent in May, 1967. Their final form had still not been determined when the author died in March 1970; and the task of editing was completed by W. A. Armstrong of Kent.

Chambers pioneered the application of new methods of historical research to local history. Best known for his *Nottinghamshire in the eighteenth century: a study of life and labour under the squirearchy* (1932) and *The Vale of Trent, 1670-1800; a regional study of economic change* (1957),¹ he obliged historians, by his revealing conclusions drawn from local conditions, to recast some of their generalizations. More recently he had turned his attention increasingly to population studies.

His Kent lectures attempted to put into proper perspective recent work on English population movements before the first census of 1801. Their publication serves as a useful reminder of the often highly speculative

¹ For a complete list to 1966 of Professor Chambers's publications, see E. L. JONES and G. E. MINGAY, eds., *Land, Labour and Population in the Industrial Revolution: Essays presented to J. D. Chambers*, London: Edward Arnold Ltd., 1967, pp. xiv-xvii.

nature of the subject. There are doubtless more “perhapses” in the conclusions of pre-census demographers than in any other aspect of early modern English history. The problem arises not from scholarly modesty but from the poverty of the evidence. Only in the fifth lecture, appropriately entitled “Bricks without Straw,” did Chambers give this point adequate emphasis. Readers might start here !

His general aim is to search for “the roots of the mass market from which the modern structure of industry springs” (p. 140). The best source is the parish register, the study of which, despite differences in interpretation, Chambers believes:

confirms a suspicion of Professor Glass about the basic population of Gregory King and suggests that his reduction from 5.5 to 5.2 million or less in 1695 is in accordance with the facts; it shows that growth was taking place rapidly between 1690 and 1720 — probably as rapidly as between 1750 and 1780. It tends to confirm Tucker’s argument that 1750 was not so much a beginning of a new demographic age as a return to a previous trend and also that this new trend did not turn back on itself, but after a moment of hesitation in the late 1760s and in the early 1780s went on to new heights. Perhaps this failure of the trend to turn back on itself in the 1760s and 1780s marks the decisive break between the new and the old demography (p. 114).

Other, more specific, demographic “conclusions” are equally fascinating. For instance, rural mobility was far more extensive than has traditionally been thought. The lowering of the age of first marriage for women points “to one of the main causes of population growth in the eighteenth century” (p. 50). The extended family in England was rare. Those on the lower levels of the economic ladder had smaller families than their betters. There was a marked increase in the eighteenth century of pre-nuptial conceptions; so that “among the factors that influenced fertility, we must include the phenomenon of a changed moreal attitude” (p. 75). Infanticide was traditionally practiced among the English on a not insignificant scale. The impact of “the plague,” which afflicted England between 1348 and 1667, has been exaggerated; though its disappearance helped modify the death rate. With certain qualifications “the number of lives saved by inoculation could account for the entire growth of population between 1750 and 1800” (p. 100). This “demographic revolution was as much an agricultural and rural phenomenon as an industrial and urban one” (p. 119).

Though none of these conclusions are quite as firmly established as Chambers suggests, his attempts to interpret economic movements are even more speculative. Chambers tries to show that increased population provided enlarged economic opportunities, as if sheer weight of numbers created entrepreneurial skills and ready markets. Of the few demographic links that are clear, two relate to wages: abundance of workers kept wages down, a shortage had the opposite effect. Despite their efforts demographers can find no connection between disastrous harvests (famine prices) and the death rate. The attempt to link the “demographic retreat” after 1720 with the agricultural depression of 1730-45 is ludicrous. Equally absurd is the effort to associate

population growth with price inflation. Inflation, as twentieth century economist know well, is a very much more complicated matter than population movement. Chambers maintains, for instance, that the price inflation of Tudor England "which used to be fathered on the import of bullion to Spanish ports, is now firmly placed on the doorstep of a demographic boom," (p. 27). The "American bullion" thesis may be passé, but its alternative is by no means as obvious as Chambers suggested.

Other weaknesses should not be ignored. The impact of immigration to the colonies on English population totals is ignored. Moreover, by limiting his perspective to England, and ignoring Wales and Scotland except for a few rather trite references, Chambers takes an artificially delimited view, unfortunately too common among English scholars.² Nor has the opportunity been seized of making useful references to population studies in Ireland, while much less relevant comparisons have been made with France and Italy.

Despite these shortcomings, the lectures were well worth publishing. They are a worthy memorial to a notable historian, and provide a final insight into the mind of a scholar who remained as creative, stimulating and modern in old age as he had been earlier in his career.

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STEPHEN G. KURTZ and JAMES H. HUTSON, editors. — *Essays on the American Revolution*. Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 1973.

Essays on the American Revolution is a celebration. It is but one of many such volumes to be published during the next few years in commemoration of the bicentennial of American Independence. Nothing less will satisfy the national honour. This particular collection was the result of ceremonials that took place in the spring of 1971 in Williamsburg where nearly 40 scholars gathered under the prompting of the Institute of Early American History and Culture to debate at length the findings presented in a half-dozen papers on various aspects of the Revolution. These papers were then sandwiched between introductory and summary statements by Bernard Bailyn and Edmund S. Morgan, "acknowledged masters of the historian's craft," (ix) and published for the edification of the ever elusive educated reader.

In reviewing this handful of miscellaneous essays one is hard put to know where to begin. One difficulty is that the collection is not representative,

² See SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH COUNCIL, *Research in Economic and Social History*, London: Heinemann, 1971. Though research on Welsh and Scottish history is not ignored, that on Ireland is (except for a couple of references), despite the presence of K. H. Connell on the editorial committee.