

Harold C. Livesay: His Life and Times

Before turning his attention to academic pursuits, Harold C. Livesay toiled at several occupations, with fluctuating success: tomato picker, ferry boat deckhand, telephone repairman, railroad yardmaster, self-employed painter of bulldozers, parachutist in the 82d Airborne Division of the United States Army, steel trucker, and numerous others. Following this period of peregrinating odd-jobbery (during which he acquired a love for travel, an expensive skiing habit, a curiosity about American history, and several children), Mr. Livesay yearned for a less laborious, more mentally stimulating way of life and, therefore, sought solace in the printed page. His single-minded dedication to his new career resulted in a B.A. from the University of Delaware in 1966, an M.A. from The Johns Hopkins University in 1968, and a flow of publications on topics in and out of economic history.

After receiving his Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins in June, 1970, Mr. Livesay accepted a position in the History Department of the University of Michigan, where he slogged on until 1978, to the benefit of the citizens of the state and to the intense relief of his creditors. In 1978 he removed his seat of operations to the State University of New York at Binghamton. In 1981, emulating many of the industries he studies, Mr. Livesay moved south, becoming Head of the History Department of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University at Blacksburg, Va. Thence, he departed in 1987 for Texas A & M University where he became in September 1988 the Clifford A. Taylor Professor in Liberal Arts, a position he retained until relinquishing it in August 2014.

After forty plus years of productive research, publication, teaching, and service (as summarized below), he became poster boy for the “What have you done for us lately?” assessment method, which in time will reduce faculty evaluations to a four word summary: “Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin.”

While wryly observing the decline of American higher education under the onslaught of yahoos and know-nothings to whom the treasures of western culture seem as alien as Choctaw dialects, Mr. Livesay nevertheless retains his sense of purpose, fulfillment, and joy in the classroom.

EDUCATION

B.A. history, University of Delaware, 1966

Ph.D. history, The Johns Hopkins University 1970.

PUBLICATIONS

Books

Merchants and Manufacturers: Studies in the Changing Patterns of Distribution. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1971. (with Glenn Porter)

Andrew Carnegie and the Rise of Big Business. Boston: Little, Brown, 1975.

_____ Revised second edition published 2002 by Pearson Longman.

_____ Revised third edition published 2007 by Pearson Longman.

Samuel Gompers and Organized Labor in America. Boston: Little, Brown, 1977.

American Made: Men Who Built the American Economy. Boston: Little, Brown, 1979.

_____ Revised Second Edition published 2005 by Pearson Longman.

_____ Revised Third Edition published 2012 by Pearson Longman.

From Invention to Innovation: Commercialization of New Technology by Independent and Small Business Inventors. Washington, DC: National Technical Information Service, 1989.

_____ (Revised edition published 1999.) (with Marcia L. Rorke)

Edited book:

Entrepreneurship and the Growth of Firms. Aldershot, U.K.: Edward Elgar, Ltd., 1995. Contributed introduction and two chapters.

Articles, Book Chapter, Contributions to Collections, etc.: Over fifty of these published, primarily on entrepreneurs and technology commercialization.

REVIEWING

I've never kept a record of these activities, but I've refereed dozens of books and articles for academic and commercial presses, and for scholarly journals. In addition, I've published over forty book reviews, the most recent a review of Shane Hamilton, *Trucking Country: The Road to America's Wal-Mart Economy.* (Princeton, N.J., and Oxford, Eng: Princeton University Press, c. 2008. Pp. xii, 305. *Journal of Southern History*, November 1, 2010.

PAPERS, SPEECHES, CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

In addition to well over a hundred talks on a variety of topics to other professional and non-professional audiences, including schools, civic groups, etc. I have presented papers and delivered comments at many professional meetings, including those of the American Historical Association, the Organization of American Historians, the Economic History Association, the Business History Society, and the Economic and Business Historical Society. In addition I have made presentations at professional meetings in Great Britain, France, Spain, Germany, Japan, and Australia.

PROFESSIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE

Occupational experience:

Clerk, freight brakeman, yardmaster, for the Pennsylvania Railroad in Wilmington, Delaware, and Baltimore, Maryland.	1952-1957
Parachutist, 82d Airborne Division Field Artillery, U.S. Army, Ft. Bragg, N.C.	1957-1959
Yardmaster, Pennsylvania Railroad, Wilmington Delaware, and Chester, Pennsylvania.	1959-1962
Self-employed steel hauler and industrial painting contractor, coast-to-coast.	1962
Chemical research technician for E.I. du Pont de Nemours and Co. in Wilmington, Delaware.	1964-1966
Undergraduate student at the University of Delaware.	1964-1966
Graduate student at The Johns Hopkins University.	1966-1970
Assistant, then Associate Professor (1974) of History, University of Michigan.	1970-1978
Professor of History, State University of New York at Binghamton.	1978-1981
Chair, History Department, State University of New York at Binghamton	1980-1981
Head, Department of History, Virginia Tech	1981-1987
Professor of History, Texas A&M University	1987-

Teaching Experience: forty-four years' worth, all shapes, sizes, and levels, on campus and in extension programs, including teaching in penitentiary programs.

University Administrative Service

I have served in all the various capacities usually associated with a career trajectory such as mine, including terms as department chair at the State University of New York at Binghamton (one year), department head at Virginia Tech (six years), and acting department head (two semesters) at TAMU.

Other Professional Activities

Consultant to:

Alaska Science and Technology Foundation
American Telephone and Telegraph, Historical Records Division, New York, N.Y.
British Broadcasting Corporation
California State University Division of Technology Commercialization
Center for Regional Economic History at the Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, Delaware
Cotton Incorporated
Coronet Films and Video, Chicago, Illinois
Division of Management Education, Graduate School of Business, University of Michigan at Ann Arbor
E.I. Dupont de Nemours
Energy-Related Inventions Program, U.S. Department of Energy
Ford Motor Company
Historic American Engineering Record, Smithsonian Institution Washington, DC
Los Alamos National Laboratory, Los Alamos, New Mexico
Martin Sandler Productions, Waltham, Massachusetts
Mohawk Research Corporation, Rockville, Maryland
National Bureau of Standards (National Institute of Standards and Technology)
National Coastal Resources and Research Institute
National Public Broadcasting
Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Oak Ridge, Tennessee
Office of Technology Assessment, Washington, DC
Solomon Associates, Washington, DC
Texas State Department of Commerce
Westinghouse Corporation
WGBH Boston

Several of my case studies have appeared in the Harvard University Graduate School of Business's Business History Casebook.

I have made presentations to Congressional subcommittees and committee staffs in Washington, DC on the subjects of inventor-support programs in the U.S. and abroad, and on the importance of inventors to technological competitiveness.

Television

I appeared as historical commentator in "The Entrepreneurs: An American Adventure," a six-part series produced by Martin Sandier Productions of Waltham, Massachusetts and syndicated coast-to-coast in winter, 1986-1987.

I had a similar role in a two-part program, "Andrew Carnegie," produced by WGBH in Boston that appeared in 1989, and a History Channel series broadcast in 2001. In June 2002, I was filmed for a BBC series, "The Great Scots," broadcast in the UK in February 2003.