





Technology-driven age?

Rather, deep conceptual changes are being enabled, accelerated and influenced in iterative ways by digital technologies.

The past and present of computers in History is not primarily about historians and technology.

Rather, preliminary research suggests that the use of computers in History reflects the changing meaning in the discipline of:

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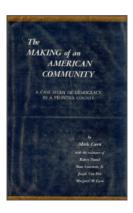
- 1. Numbers "quantitative"
- 2. Collaboration and Research Funding
- 3. Epistemology

1950s-1980s (Histoire 1.0)

1980s-1990s (Histoire 2.0)

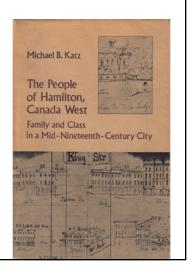
2000s-présent (Histoire 3.0)











Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie (1968):

"L'historien de demain sera programmeur ou ne sera plus"

Le Roy Ladurie, Le territoire de l'historien, p. 14

"Like the fountain pen and the typewriter before it, the computer is now accepted as a tool that can make a historian's life more pleasant and more productive."

Sheldon Hackney, "Power To the Computers: A Revolution in History?" American Federation of Information Processing Societies Spring Joint Computer Conference Proceedings, 36 (1970), 275-79.

## Computers and the Humanities

The official journal of The Association for Computers and the Humanities

"It should be noted at the outset that it is impossible for any person to any longer keep track of, let alone digest, all of the computer-assisted research in all fields of history. At best we can note high points and report trend."

#### Clio and Computers: Moving into Phase II, 1970-1972

Joel H. Silbey \*

Historians frequently take stock of the state of their discipline. They upd their bibliographies, compose leng historiographie essays, and regularly argue the vitter or viscs of new trendencies, conceptions, and methods, from such predictions, institution of quantitative and computer-assisted approaches into the historian's world from gene unmotices. Robort Switzenga's exhaustive and alse survey published in 19 capped a literature of at least a doctor ever longer and more detailed articles examine promoting, or stating insure with the electronic age of contribution to historio

The state of the art was clear crough. More and more historiess were utilized quantification and computer sechoology to deal with large masses of data and stubbon historical problems, institutional developments kept pace to provide a necessary frame for his sessach, and reports of substantive findings were begaining to a paper. Generally computer-assisted historical research appeared to be, so of 1970, healthy and grows with some grothers not utilization in influency, but with a supporte future as 2-discover with some grothers not utilization in influency.

In the two years since Swietreng's survey this pattern has continued. Learned journals and newsletters abound with descriptions of computer-austiced projects, new seeterch gants, and conferences of committed and like-minded individuals. More crucial, a polificrating list of articles, reviews, and books reports the finite of gener member of meetingations. Immittational developments also reflect an upcover. The laster-limitentity computer histories are finding available to them. On one level, a data bank, its Historical computer histories are finding available to them. On one level, a data bank, its Historical and the second of the second control of the second control

"I am grateful to a number of my colleagues for their advice, to Allan Bogue for many fruitf

<sup>18</sup> Robert Swierenga. "Clio and Computers: A Survey of Computerized Research in History. Computers and the Humanites 5 (Sept. 1870), 1-22, clin most of the other articles done through 1895. See also Metros Robettes, Samuel McSeworey, Philip Green, Robette Results, and J Oel Silber. "Quantification in American History: A Assessment," in Intertest Base, 4d, The State of Assessical History (Chicago: Qualenagh, 1970), 288-239, and the introductory chapter to Delward Shorter, The

<sup>9</sup> David S. Landes and Charles Tilly, eds., Watery at Social Science, The Behavorial and Social

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Computers and the Humanities, Vol. 7, No. 2, Annual Survey

67

"In the 1960s, historians self-consciously experimented and learned about the utility of computers for their own research. That period now seems past. Computer-assisted historical research appears to have hit its stride, become more 'normal' and much less self-conscious."

"Quantitative research in history remains controversial. There are still occasional emotional reactions against playing with computers at all, or a grumpy comment that the resources expended have not produced commensurate concrete results. More pointedly, a number of historians are apprehensive that relying on quantitative analysis and computer technology will cause a fundamental change in the nature of history itself."

Robert Zemsky called in 1969 for historians to "invent a methodology – including computer programs – of our own, a methodology designed to cope with the peculiar kinds of evidence with which we deal."

Robert Swierenga defined this need in 1970 as "the vital task of the next generation....Borrowing from other disciplines is not the solution" (since historians deal with different kinds of evidence that call for different statistics and computer programs)

Robert Zemsky: "Just how did our evidence come into being?" Computers and th Humanities (1969);

Robert Swierenga, "Clio and Computers: A Survey of Computerized Research in History," <u>Computers and the Humanities</u> 5 (Sept. 1970): 1-21.

## HISTORICAL METHODS NEWSLETTER:

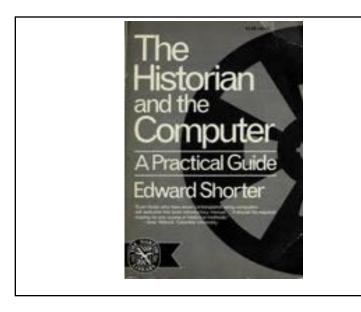
QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

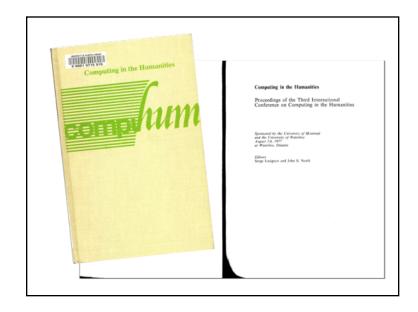
Vol. I, No. I December 1967

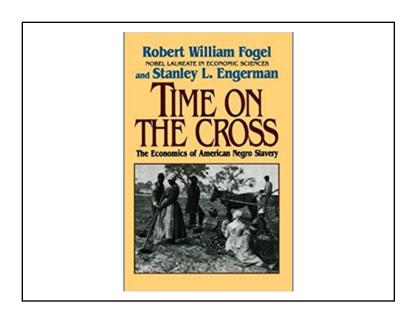
#### GENESIS

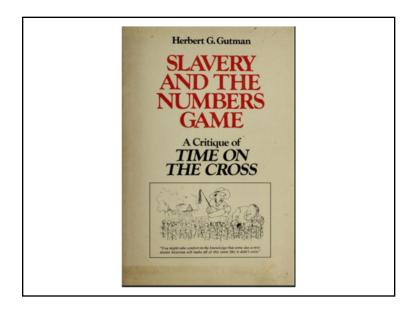
In the summer of 1965, thirty-one historians and graduate students participated in a special conference sponsored by the Inter-University Consortium for Political Research and supported by a grant from the National Science Foundation. The conference was intended to stimulate interest among researchers in the historical analysis of quantitative data and to acquaint them with rudimentary statistical techniques. Those participating in the conference recognized the desirability of creating a permanent channel of communication. But, while the possibility of a newsletter was discussed, no plans were formulated. It was during the following year that specific plans began to take shape, and the scope of the projected newsletter was broadened into a cross-disciplinary medium.











### The New York Review of Books

VOLUME 22, NUMBER 15 · OCTOBER 2, 1975

### The True & Tragical History of 'Time on the Cross'

"The book may have a longer life than it deserves because of the awesome financial and institutional apparatus that stands behind it. Time on the Cross is a product of factory scholarship and we know what happens to artisans who compete with factories. The production line for *Time on the Cross* was subsidized by government grant money and manned by dozens of graduate research assistants who are now fiercely loyal to their company and its products."

"...to raise methodological questions, to criticize sources and to provide evidence to support our contention that the manuscript census has some very serious limitations for the study of literacy..."

#### Literacy and Social Structure in Nineteenth Century Ontario: An Exercise in Historical Methodology

Peter Laslett, Be British social historian, suggested recently that one he most compelling tasks facing the historian of social structure is "the overy of how great a proportion of the population could read and write ny point in time." Not only is literacy a necessary part of the process solicida socialization and participation, it also may be related, as rence Stone suggests, to social stratification, employment opporties, religion, theories of social control, demographic and family error, and economic organization. In short, as either a dependent or

Research in the area of literacy has increased in both intensity and ity during the past decade. The work of Carlo Cipolla, Lawrence Roper Schofeld, Kenneth Lockridge, and R. K. Webb attests to a ng recognition in Britain and the United States of the importance of y studies. In Canada the only systematic studies of literacy rates awe been published recently are those of H. J. Graff.

limost thirty years ago A.R.M. Lower suggested that, by 1867 "mos side Quebec were more or less literate." This statemen nost Canadian historians until Graff began his work. Ind racy" does not even appear in the index of G. F

Herbert J. Mays is a Ph.D. candidate at McMaster Universit Assistant with the Peel County History Project. Peter LANETT, The World We Have Lott (London: 1971), 207

HISTOIRE SOCIALE - SOCIAL HISTORY 1974

#### **ESSAY IN REVIEW**

#### Modernizing History \*

Michael B. Katz, <u>The People of Hamilton, Canada West;</u> Family and Class in a <u>Mid-nineteenth-Century City</u>, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1975. 381 Pages, Cloth, \$17.50.

"...the book's greatest deficiency is that it is not at all about the people of Hamilton. It is about what quantitative data can say about aggregates of people. There is a very real difference."

Bulletin of the Committee on Canadian Labour History / Bulletin du Comité sui

"To a graduate student such as myself, engaged in the labourious task of researching and writing a thesis, the collaborative efforts of a team of scholars, generously funded, and immersed in their sources for five years, promises much."

"Quite separate are the "scientific historians," the cliometricians, who are defined by a methodology rather than by any particular subject-matter or interpretation of the nature of historical change. They are historians who build paradigmatic models, sometimes counter-factual ones about worlds which never existed in real life, and who test the validity of the models by the most sophisticated mathematical and algebraical formulae applied to very large quantities of electronically processed data."

## THE REVIVAL OF NARRATIVE: REFLECTIONS ON A NEW OLD HISTORY\*

Lawrence Stone

Past & Present, No. 85 (Nov., 1979), pp. 3-24

"There is, however, a difference in kind between the artisan quantification done by a single researcher totting up figures on a handcalculator and producing simple tables and percentages, and the work of the cliometricians. The latter specialize in the assembling of vast quantities of data by teams of assistants, the use of the electronic computer to process it all, and the application of highly sophisticated mathematical procedures to the results obtained. Doubts have been cast on all stages of this procedure." "It is just those projects that have been the most lavishly funded, the most ambitious in the assembly of vast quantities of data by armies of paid researchers, the most scientifically processed by the very latest in computer technology, the most mathematically sophisticated in presentation, which have so far turned out to be the most disappointing.

Today, two decades and millions of dollars, pounds and francs later, there are only rather modest results to show for the expenditure of so much time, effort and money. There are huge piles of greenish print-out gathering dust in scholars' offices; there are many turgid and excruciatingly dull tomes full of tables of figures, abstruse algebraic equations and percentages given to two decimal places."

"Quantitative history has gained few converts, social science methodology remains suspect, and theory – begged, borrowed or invented – is steadfastly ignored in the interests of narration untrammelled by either speculation about or commitment to a systematic theory of social discontinuity."

DAVID GAGAN and H.E. TURNER, "Social History in Canada: A Report on the 'State of the Art," *Archivaria* 14, 1982.

Robert P. Swierenga,
"Historians and Computers: Has
the Love Affair Gone Sour?"

OAH Newsletter 12 (Nov. 1984), Special Supplement, 2-3.



Vannevar Bush

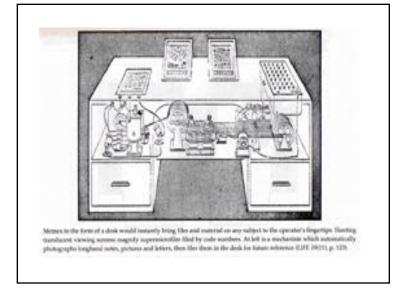
# \*Atlantic

## **As We May Think**

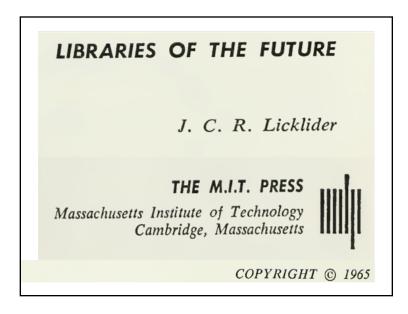
By Vannevar Bush

originally written in 1939, first published in July 1945

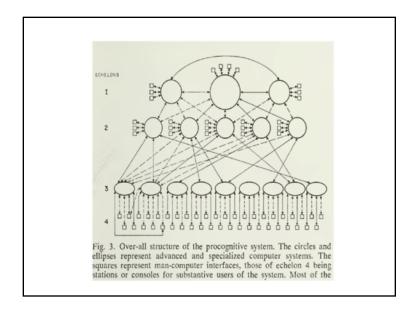
Consider a future device for individual use, which is a sort of mechanized private file and library. It needs a name, and, to coin one at random, "memex" will do. A memex is a device in which an individual stores all his books, records, and communications, and which is mechanized so that it may be consulted with exceeding speed and flexibility. It is an enlarged intimate supplement to his memory.

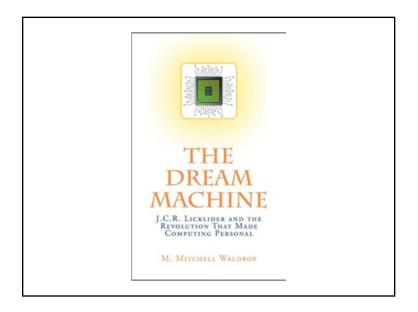


The historian, with a vast chronological account of a people, parallels it with a skip trail which stops only on the salient items, and can follow at any time contemporary trails which lead him all over civilization at a particular epoch. There is a new profession of trail blazers, those who find delight in the task of establishing useful trails through the enormous mass of the common record. The inheritance from the master becomes, not only his additions to the world's record, but for his disciples the entire scaffolding by which they were erected.



"...research libraries are becoming choked from the proliferation of publication, and that the resulting problems are not of a kind that respond to merely more of the same – ever and ever larger bookstacks and ever and ever more complicated catalogues."





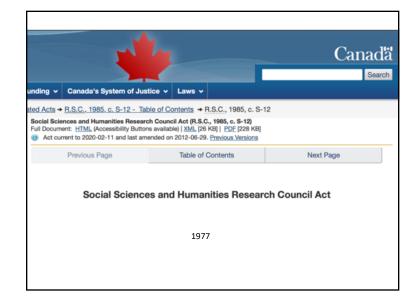




"'Quantitative social history' is now old hat in Canada, though it was shiny and new only twelve years ago...... The interesting development is not that from qualitative to quantitative history... Rather, it is the impact of large-scale, collaborative research in social history on the practices of historical research as a whole."

Ian Winchester (1980)

Hs-SH, Vol. XIII, No 25 (mai-May 1980)

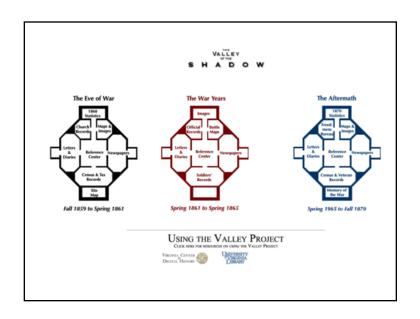












In Fall 1994, Roy Rosenzweig founded the Center for History and New Media (CHNM) in the Department of History and Art History at George Mason University (GMU).



collaborators Steve Brier and Josh Brown on a CD-ROM edition of ASHP's Who Built America? textbook. After the first disk was finished, in August 1993, Roy proposed establishing a Center for History and New Media at GMU. The Center's first funded projects were collaborations with ASHP and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), beginning in 1995 with a second Who Built America? CD-ROM, followed in 1997 by Liberty, Equality, Froternity, and in 1998 by History Matters.

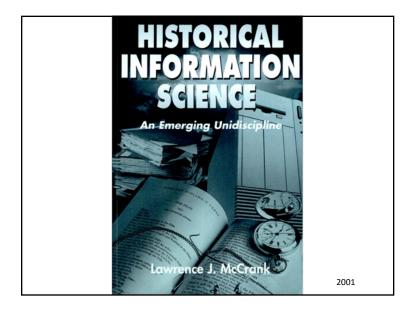
The Center's origins lay in an agreement between the American Social History Project (ASHP) and GMU in 1990 that provided time for Roy to work with his longtime ASHP

Roy Rosenzweig

The Center was first located in Roy's office in Dickenson Hall on the Fairfax Campus, with computers in the lobby of the Department's offices. Michael O'Malley, who joined the Department the same semester that Roy launched the Center, became Roy's main

collaborator, and, in 1995, formally CHNM's Associate Director. Elena Razlogova, who began a PhD at GMU in 1995, joined the Center as its first staff member, working ten hours a week. When the Department moved to Robinson Hall in 1997, CHNM expanded to two offices connected by a lobby area, which contained computers and a printer – not dedicated equipment for the Center, but available for general use by the Department. A postdoctoral fellow, Greg Brown, arrived in 1997, to work on Liberty, Equality, Fraternity. In 1998, three Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs) from the History Department Joined the Center staff, together with a webmaster.





"There are signs of changing times, growing awareness, genuine interest, but also conservatism reaction, and resistance in traditional disciplines and, at the core of their research, to information technology for its own sake."

p. 241

Computers and the Humanities 30: 347-350, 1997.

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Computers and historians: Past, present, and future

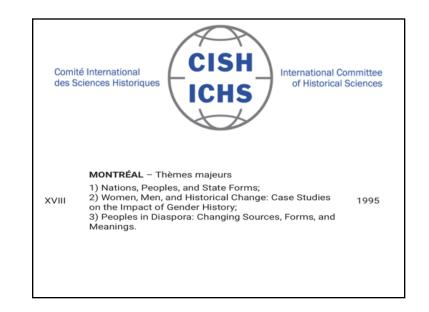
José E. Igartua

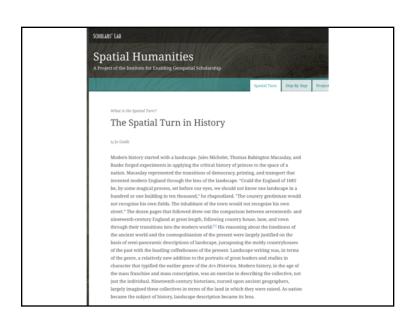
Département d'histoire, Université du Québec à Montréal, P.O. Box 8888, Downtown Station, Montréal, Québec, HSC JPS Canada

e-mail: igartua\_jose@uqam.ca

Abstract

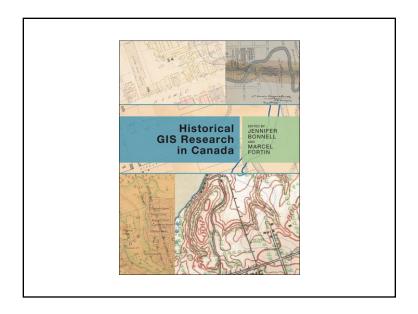
This article is an introduction to this thematic issue on historical computing, produced on the occasion of the tenth international conference of the Association for History and Computing. It offers a brief presentation of the conference and introduces five examples of current work in historical computing.









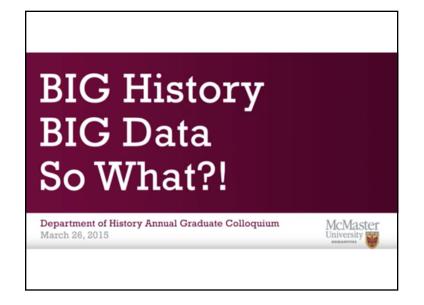


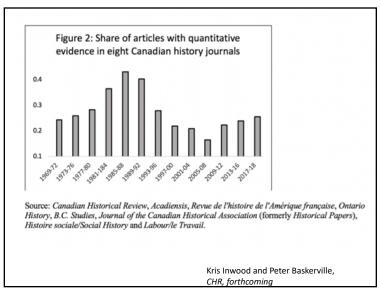


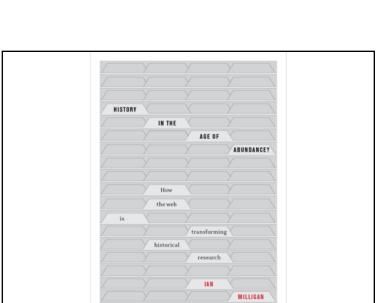














Preliminary research suggests that the use of computers in History reflects the changing meaning in the discipline of:

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To what extent are we contributing to the development of "methodology designed to cope with the peculiar kinds of evidence with which we deal" (as Robert Zemsky called for in 1969) since exclusively "Borrowing from other disciplines is not the solution" (as Robert Swierenga pointed out in 1970)?

To what extent are we fulfilling the expectation that a digitally-enabled historian would establish "a skip trail which stops only on the salient items, and can follow at any time contemporary trails which lead...all over the civilization at a particular epoch" (as Vannevar Bush wrote in 1939)?

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To what extent is digitally-enabled History being defined by historians – not as transformative – but as a faster and more efficient version of the 20<sup>th</sup> century print-culture-based historical discipline?

