



Early Indicators Program Funding to be Renewed

by Veronica Wald

The Center for Population Economics recently learned that its grant from the National Institutes of Health/National Institute on Aging is in line to be renewed, carrying the research agenda forward through 2013.

The program project, *Early Indicators of Later Work Levels, Disease and Death*, supports about half of the activity of the Center for Population Economics. This ambitious and wide-ranging project was first funded in 1991; the most recent five-year funding period concluded in August of 2006. Since then, *Early Indicators* has received three no-cost extensions (official continuations of activity with no infusion of funding) and a small bridge grant for life support while we developed a series of renewal applications to be reviewed by a committee convened by the NIA for the purpose.

The 2006 renewal application received a middling score, but the reviewers' detailed report provided outstanding guidance for the rewrite. The next version of the proposal fared substantially better, but because NIH's budget has been flat and the threshold for funding is higher than ever, it did not quite make the pay line. In January of 2008, a final revision was submitted. In mid-April, we learned that the priority score was 126 (on a scale of 500 to 100, with 100 being perfect), ranking the application at the 3.7th percentile. That score and rank indicate a very high likelihood of funding, even in these lean times. However, because the federal budget is in continuing resolution through March 6, 2009, the start date is uncertain. The NIA's funding meeting is December 8, after which we will have a better idea of our timeline.

The successful application described plans for scientific projects lead by CPE investigators Chulhee Lee, Dora Costa, and CPE director Robert Fogel, and four cores, the most important of which are Data Extension and Maintenance and Improvement of the Union Army Sample. To see a copy of the application, please contact Veronica Wald at Veronica.Wald@ChicagoGSB.edu.

Fogel Welcomes New NBER President

by Veronica Wald

James Poterba, Mitsui Professor of Economics at MIT, recently succeeded long-time National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) president Martin Feldstein, who stepped down last summer following 30 distinguished years of leadership. The Center for Population Economics owes much of its history to NBER, where CPE director Robert Fogel is a Faculty Research Associate. The Bureau made possible the extensive groundwork required for the first successful application for NIH funding of the *Early Indicators of Later Work Levels, Disease and Death* (EI) project in 1991. The grant is, in fact, still awarded to the Bureau, with activities in Chicago and other locations administered through consortium arrangements.

Robert Fogel visits with newly appointed NBER president James Poterba at the Bureau headquarters in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Photo by Veronica Wald



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

[EI Funding Renewed](#)

[NBER President Welcomed](#)

[Administrative Notes](#)

[Updates & Accolades](#)

[Vienna, VA Update](#)

[New Orleans Pilot Study](#)

[Lindau Meetings](#)

[Family News](#)

Next 

Fogel Welcomes New NBER President (cont. from page 1)

In October, CPE director Robert Fogel and associate director Veronica Wald paid a visit to the Bureau's headquarters in Cambridge, Massachusetts, to extend their welcome to Poterba and apprise him of the project's activities and plans. In turn, Poterba reiterated the Bureau's commitment to the *Early Indicators* project and shared his administrative philosophies. Several entertaining Drew Dernavich cartoons were commissioned to celebrate Feldstein's contributions to economics and to the Bureau. Wald took the opportunity for fruitful get-togethers with *Early Indicators* program administrator Janet Stein and the other Bureau staff members with whom she works.

Fogel and Wald also joined other *Early Indicators* project participants who are in the Boston area, including research scientist Liz Lawler (Massachusetts Veterans Epidemiology Research and Information Center and Harvard University), consultant Ron Spiro (Massachusetts Veterans Epidemiology Research and Information Center and Boston University), and consultant and former senior investigator, Louis Nguyen (Harvard University) for a working (but festive) dinner.



Fogel & Poterba admire a Dernavich cartoon portraying Marty Feldstein explaining to a fellow "caveman" armed with a rock aimed at a woolly mammoth: "You could do it that way, or we could wait for the high marginal tax rates to bring him down naturally."

Photo by Veronica Wald

Administrative Notes

by Carol Bridgeman

Costa Visits Chicago

Senior Investigator Dora Costa recently paid a visit to the CPE while at the University of Chicago to present the results of new work using the CPE's Union Army data. While in town, she gave two lectures. The first on "The Rise of Retirement among African Americans: Evidence from Union Army Veterans" was presented at the Harris School's *Public Policy and the Economy* workshop. The second, "Health, Stress, and Social Networks: Evidence from Union Army Records" was given at the Center for Health and Social Sciences (CHES). In between, Costa spent a productive day with CPE staffers discussing current projects and mapping methods.

Sok Chul Hong Gains Special Recognition

Senior Research Associate Sok Chul Hong earned special recognition from the *Journal of American History* for his paper, [The Burden of Early Exposure to Malaria in the United States, 1850-1860: Malnutrition and Immune Disorders](#), which appeared in the *Journal of Economic History* in 2007. Selection criteria for the "Recent Scholarship" award are described at the JAH [website](#).

CPE Researcher Locates Important Lincoln Document

Former CPE research assistant, AJ Aiseirithe, who now works for The Papers of Abraham Lincoln project, recently discovered a long-lost, four-page letter written by Abraham Lincoln in an obscure file buried in the National Archives' vaults in College Park, Maryland. In the letter, dated October 22, 1864, Lincoln explains his reasons for not meddling in a political dispute involving his vice presidential running mate and military governor of Tennessee, Andrew Johnson. The details of Aiseirithe's exciting find are available at the [Illinois Government News Network](#).

Program Coordinator Joins CPE

October marked the one-year anniversary of Lewis Meineke's appointment to the CPE staff as program coordinator. Since earning his bachelor's degree in economics from Reed College in June 2007, Meineke, originally from this area, returned to Chicago and has been polishing his advanced math skills at both UIC and the University of Chicago. He learned mapping techniques for his senior thesis, "The Contagion Effect of Housing Abandonment in Philadelphia."

Meineke contributed substantially to the crafting of the successful 2008 grant application, and went on to take major responsibility for identifying/locating, planning, and overseeing the retrieval, and entry of, historical public health data. He is also extensively involved with the CPE's mapping projects.

Updates and Accolades

CPE Investigator Dora Costa, formerly on the faculty at MIT, is now in her second year at UCLA as Professor of Economics and Associate Director of the California Center for Population Research (CCPR). She can be contacted by email at costa@econ.ucla.edu or on the web at <http://www.econ.ucla.edu/costa/>

CPE Researcher Sok Chul Hong was appointed Affiliated Research Associate at the Center on the Demography and Economics of Aging at NORC.

Editorial Assistant Nat Grotte earned his certificate in editing from the Graham School of General Studies. Associate Director Veronica Wald is working toward certification as well.

Two of our long-time Vienna, VA research assistants, Maisha Duncan and Hallet Brazelton, received advanced degrees in May 2008. Duncan received a Masters of Library Science from the University of Maryland and Brazelton received his JD from the University of Virginia.

What's Happening in the Vienna, Virginia Field Office

by Sharon Nielsen & Noelle Yetter

The Field Office staff has been very busy over the past year. Much has happened both in and out of the office, especially in anticipation of the start of the new grant.

Work on the pilot sample for Dora Costa's "Oldest Old" project was completed at the end of 2007. It consisted of pensions, surgeons' certificates, and census data for soldiers drawn from the gravestone database, National Tribune obituaries from the Library of Congress, and GAR Death Rolls. We look forward to adding to this work under the new grant when it begins.

Since October 2007, the majority of our time has been spent collecting pensions, surgeons' certificates, and census data on 2,000 survivors of Andersonville Prison. This project, under the direction of Dora Costa, is on schedule to be finished in early 2009. We have already seen some interesting differences between this cohort and the Union Army sample. For example, the numbers of men with mental illnesses and scurvy is much greater and the marital histories are much more complex. Also, the stories in the records are much more poignant than in the general Union Army sample.

Work on the Urban sample proceeds on many different fronts. In the fall of 2007, Yetter and Nielsen traveled on a successful data-mining trip to Cincinnati and St. Louis. On a more recent trip to Washington, DC, program coordinator Lewis Meineke discovered that the Library of Congress has a potentially useful collection containing many of the sought-after sources for multiple cities in the Urban sample. After completing the 20 percent collection of the 1850 and 1860 population schedules for Baltimore and Boston, work is nearing completion for New York City and the collection for Philadelphia has begun. Vienna research assistant Janice Faulconer has begun work on trying to find more complete death information for urban residents from the Union Army sample. Using a variety of sources, researchers at the National Archives are also working on a survey of urban regiments to get residential information to determine the best way to draw the Urban sample.

For another project directed by Dora Costa, research assistant Sandy Mason has been reading through early 20th century newspaper articles to determine the effect of media attention on factors such as mortality rates from, and treatment of, infectious diseases. Some interesting early findings include:

Hippopotamus feet stew is tasty.

Balto the Sled Dog steals the thunder from Siberian Husky Togo.

All life, including human life, came from mold.

All diseases come from vegetable molds.

Cigarette smoking keeps men physically fit.

Sleeping outdoors will cure TB.

Serum from butterfly grubs will cure the world of TB.

The New York City health commissioner said there were no

unsanitary conditions in their slaughterhouses. He praised their rooftop gardens for giving the cows the opportunity to get fresh air.

During the past summer, CPE staff members got together with Professor Dora Costa for lunch at the Capital Grille in D.C. after hosting her research presentation.

*Pictured are (l to r):
Joey Burton, Will Blackburn, Michael Hall, Noelle Yetter, Eugene Green, Patrick Merentie, Karla Lazo, Maisha Duncan, Dora Costa, Sharon Nielsen, and Sandy Mason.*

Photo by Heather Desomer

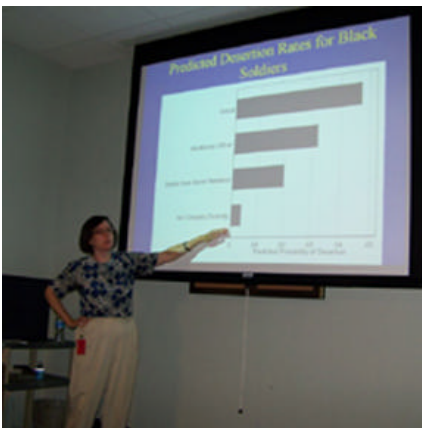


What's Happening in the Vienna, Virginia Field Office (cont. from page 3)

by Sharon Nielsen & Noelle Yetter

The Virginia researchers hosted a visit from Professors Fogel and Costa in June of this year. Costa presented her paper, "Heroes and Cowards: The Social Face of War" at the National Archives lecture series *Know Your Records*, with Fogel acting as commentator. Both were very well received. In a thank-you letter to Noelle Yetter, CPE Assistant Director for Data Acquisition, from Diane Dimkoff, Director of the National Archives Customer Service Division, she commented: ***"We appreciate your coordinating with the presenters and for recognizing the fascinating research work using our records. The program exemplified our goal of informing staff, volunteers, researchers, and the general public on the records of the National Archives and how they can aid in historical research."***

Professors Fogel and Costa also met with Allen Weinstein, the Archivist of the United States. As a result of this meeting, the Vienna staffers have moved into a new research room. Using this room will offer our research team a more conducive environment for collecting the military and pension records at the National Archives.

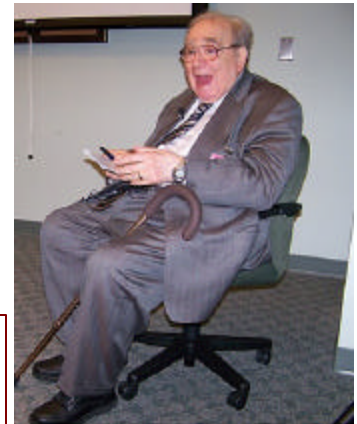


Professor Dora Costa presents to the National Archives lecture series, "Know Your Records."

Photo by Heather DeSomer

Professor Robert Fogel offers his comments on Dora Costa's presentation at the National Archives lecture series.

Photo by Heather DeSomer



We have bid a fond farewell to long-time CPE staffer Sharon Nielsen, who left the CPE at the end of September to pursue new opportunities. Nielsen, who is renowned for her expertise with surgeons' certificates, has been involved in the CPE research since 1992. We wish her luck in her future endeavors. Nielsen's replacement, Heather DeSomer, began her new duties on October 13. DeSomer has had a long and varied association with the project, beginning in 1995 when *Early Indicators* investigator Larry Wimmer sent her to the National Archives as a Brigham Young University intern. Since then, she has been involved with every major data collection project that Noelle Yetter has supervised. These include the Union Army, USCT, JHUH, Urban, Oldest-Old, and Andersonville projects. She will also continue working on Professor Dora Costa's *Disease and Media* project. We are thrilled to welcome her to the team as a full-time member of the Vienna office. Heather attended BYU as an undergraduate and received her Masters Degree from the University of Virginia. She has been employed by the Investment Company Institute (ICI), for the past 10 years as a Library Services Associate. We are thrilled to welcome her as a full-time member of the Vienna Field Office team.

The "Ladies of Vienna" got together recently for a farewell luncheon in honor of veteran CPE Data Collection Manager, Sharon Nielsen. These women have long been associated with the EI project and represent our core crew at the Vienna, VA CPE Field Office.

Pictured are (l to r):

Amy (AJ) Aiseirithe, Heather DeSomer (newly promoted to Data Collection Manager); Noelle Yetter, Anise Collins, Sandi Mason, and Sharon Nielsen.

Photo by Veronica Wald



Growing Old in New Orleans: A Pilot Study

by Lewis Meineke

In the summer of 2007 the CPE was awarded a small grant from the Center on the Demography and Economics of Aging at NORC to carry out a pilot study, *Growing Old in New Orleans: NODS [New Orleans Data Set] Project*. While still a very new member of the CPE staff, Lewis Meineke undertook responsibility for coordinating the small-scale, but important, groundwork for NODS.

The NODS preparatory work project explored the feasibility of extending the urban disparities component of the *Early Indicators* project to include the city of New Orleans, since it was thought that data from 19th and early 20th century New Orleans would be an attractive complement to the existing *EI* sample of the eight mid-19th century American cities with the largest populations. It would be the only city in the Deep South, the only city in a semitropical climate, and the only city routinely subject to severe flooding. All of these factors contributed to a unique disease environment as well as an exceptionally high mortality rate.

The results of the pilot were mixed. New Orleans will not fit easily into the research strategy developed for the other subject cities, but it would potentially be fruitful for alternative projects. The data available for New Orleans are not directly comparable with the data available for other cities for two main reasons. First, the project relies largely on data collected at the ward level. Most government agencies in the subject cities reported data regularly at the ward level, allowing a consistent and convenient way to recreate local conditions. However, data for New Orleans are rarely available at the ward level. Instead, most data are either broken down only by demographic groups (rather than geographical units) or are available only in "raw" disaggregated form at the address or block level. Data at this level of spatial disaggregation can be used, but data collection, entry, and cleaning are much more time-consuming and expensive.

Secondly, even data available at the ward level are not necessarily useful because of how ward boundaries were drawn. In the other sample cities, wards were roughly coterminous with neighborhoods during most of the study period. In New Orleans, however, ward boundaries were drawn so that each ward included pieces of many neighborhoods of widely-varying income levels. This situation diminishes the usefulness of ward-level analysis, since most of the heterogeneity in disease environments was *within* wards rather than *across* wards.

There are other substantial barriers to empirical analysis. Since much of the data are available only from original manuscript documents such as ledger books, data would have to be either microfilmed or entered onsite. Furthermore, much of the surviving data are not consistently available over a span of years. In particular, there are address-level lists of cases of infectious diseases during epidemic years, but not other years.

Although these difficulties are fairly severe, surviving records also offer the potential to provide high-quality data sets, especially address-level epidemic data sets and information on the construction of sewer, water, and drainage systems. While it may not be advisable to collect data on New Orleans in the same fashion as in other subject cities, supplementary studies tailored to the unique situation in New Orleans may be very useful. Preliminary findings were presented at the [Workshop on the Economics and Biodemography of Aging and Health Care](#) at the Center for Population Economics on April 25, 2008. These findings were largely confirmed on a subsequent site visit in June, 2008.



CPE Researchers Attend Lindau Meetings

by Carol Bridgeman

The CPE was well represented at the 3rd annual Lindau Meeting of the Winners of the Bank of Sweden Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel. The meeting was held August 20-23, 2008 on Lake Constance in Lindau, Germany. Accompanying Professor Fogel, also as guests of the conference, were CPE staffers Sok Chul Hong, Lewis Meineke, and Carlos Villarreal. Fogel gave a very well-received talk on "Forecasting the Cost of U.S. Health Care in 2040." The Lindau Nobel organization has posted the abstract and video of Fogel's presentation in Lindau at their [website](#). The paper has also been published as an [NBER working paper](#).

The Lindau Meetings have been held since 1951 and host up to 25 invited Nobel Laureates. The underlying idea of the meetings is to provide a platform that will offer the opportunity for the world's best young scientists to interact with the Nobel Laureates. Each year, hundreds of young economists and graduate students worldwide are nominated by their universities and research institutions to come hear the Laureates speak. Participants are able to take part in lectures, roundtable discussions, and small group meetings, and are also allowed several hours throughout the day to have individual discussion with a designated Laureate. Many social events are scheduled throughout the meetings to increase the opportunity for junior participants to interact with Laureates.

More about this year's events in Lindau are posted on the meeting organization's [website](#).

Family News

by Carol Bridgeman

Managing Director of Research Joey Burton and his wife Dicy welcomed their first child with the arrival of Eleanor Mae Burton on November 10, 2007. Happy first birthday to Eleanor!!

Senior Investigator Chulhee Lee and his wife Eunjai Yu welcomed their second child and first daughter this past year. Nayun, whose English name is Dorothea, was born December 1, 2007.

Senior Investigator Hoyt Bleakley and his wife Miriam Wasserman welcomed their second daughter, Sylvia Taylor Bleakley-Wasserman, to their family on September 9, 2008.

We also welcome babies born to current and former Vienna Field Office staff. Benjamin Mattingly Cavallaro was born in December, 2006 to Cindy Cavallaro; Jake Veatch was born June, 2007 to Jessica Robinson and Nichole Veatch; Juliette Lisle was born May, 2008 to Brittany McLerran Lisle; and most recently, Fahey James, born August 27, 2008 to Christian James.

On August 28, 2008 CPE graduate research assistant Shari Eli married Nicholas Li at Tribeca Rooftop in Manhattan. The couple met in 2005 at Berkeley on the first day of graduate school during orientation.



Eleanor Mae Burton enjoying her first autumn season.

Photo by Joey Burton



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