

# Introduction

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ANDREW POPP

In January 2017 business history lost one of its very best, Chris Kobrak. Chris's sudden passing was a terrible shock, a tragedy for his family and many friends, and an irreplaceable loss to the discipline. Chris was an almost overwhelming force of life, and always eager for more: to learn more, to know more, to talk more, to debate more, to make more friends, to have more good times. He was also unstintingly kind, loyal, and generous—the latter almost to a fault. I will miss him, as I know many, many others will. It is an honor for *Enterprise and Society* to be able to remember Chris's life and achievements through contributions from three of his closest collaborators: Mira Wilkins, Andrea Schneider-Braunberger, and Joe Martin. Together, Mira, Andrea, and Joe celebrate Chris's outstanding scholarship, his remarkable life, and his unique character and presence.

January 2018 brought changes to the editorial team at *Enterprise and Society*. At the end of 2017, Richard Weiner stepped down as Reviews Editor after a number of years in the role. Richard did really outstanding work in this capacity by introducing specially commissioned review essays, for example, and I want to thank him for his long and dedicated service. I am delighted to announce Betsy A. Beasley as Richard's replacement. Betsy is currently a member of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton; her first book, entitled *Expert Capital: Houston and the Making of a Service Empire*, is under contract with Harvard University Press. We are very pleased to welcome Betsy aboard. The Print Media Oversight Committee (PMOC), under Chair Louis Hyman, ably undertook the search for Richard's replacement, and I thank all members of the committee for their service.

Meanwhile, late 2017 saw the announcement of an exciting new initiative: the launch of a fifth annual issue of *Enterprise and Society*. This new issue is designed to serve as a platform for debates on the most important topics, to stimulate dialogue with other disciplines, and to raise the profile and impact of business history as a field. The initiative was developed through collaboration among the full

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editorial team, the PMOC, and Cambridge University Press. I want to thank all of my colleagues who contributed to that process. Full details of the initiative can be found on the journal's homepage at Cambridge University Press or on the Business History Conference website.

Finally, along with the tributes to Chris Kobrak and a full slate of book reviews and essays, this issue also carries a wide ranging and diverse set of research essays that take us from twentieth-century Scottish coalfields to nineteenth-century Australian insurance markets, with many stops in-between. I hope you enjoy them all.