Administrative Notes

By Veronica Wald

2004 JOINT EI-CS MEETING

The 2004 annual joint meeting of the Early Indicators of Later Work Levels, Disease and Death research group and NBER’s Cohort Studies Group (EI-CS) will be held at the Hotel Monaco in Salt Lake City on April 22-24, 2004. James Vaupel will present the keynote talk, “Early vs. Late Life Determinants of Survival at Older Ages.” Further details and the preliminary agenda will be announced later in February or early March.

GRANTS RECEIVED

Investigators Robert Fogel and Kwangsun Lee have been awarded a mini-grant by the Center on Aging at NORC/the University of Chicago in support of the pilot project, Twentieth-Century Birth Records. Digitized data from a sample of birth records collected at Johns Hopkins, New York Lying-in, and the University of California San Francisco hospitals for the period 1897-1935 will be analyzed for the feasibility of using them, in conjunction with public health data, to assess the relationship between the local disease environment and the onset of disability, co-morbidity, and mortality over the first half of the twentieth century.

GRANTS IN PROGRESS

The CPE is submitting two applications to the National Institute on Aging under the new "R21 Exploratory/Developmental Award" funding mechanism. The first, to be adjudicated this spring, Explaining the Decline in Chronic Conditions, 1900-1960, will test the feasibility of building a database of Spanish-American War veterans that will parallel the Union Army data set, and enable the questions explored by the Early Indicators project to be brought forward into the twentieth century.

We plan to submit the second R21, Birth Environment Effects on Aging & Longevity 1900-1960 on June 1. The purpose of the project is to study environmental factors that differ by small units (wards) that impact health, chronic and disabling conditions, and longevity, from cradle to grave. The birth records will be used for a number of purposes, including the construction of perinatal morbidity and mortality rates that can be correlated with available aggregate public health data and tracked through time.

Staff Updates

By Carol Bridgeman

The CPE has recently experienced the following changes in its Chicago staff:

MEDICAL RECORDS RESEARCH SPECIALIST HIRED

We are delighted to that Jacqueline Mosley joined the CPE team as medical records research specialist in November 2003. Mosley did her undergraduate training at Duke, and her Master of Public Health degree is from the Tulane School of Public Health. She has held a number of interesting positions, most recently as an epidemiologist at Sinai Urban Health Institute in Chicago, and Project Management Consultant with Northwestern University’s Program for AIDS-Impacted Societies (PAIS).
Mosley’s primary responsibilities will include heading up the birth records research and early childhood phase of the EXDID (Explaining the Decline in Disabilities in the Twentieth Century) project. She can be contacted at 773-834-8822, or jmosley@cpe.uchicago.edu.

NEW FISCAL ASSISTANT

Our fiscal assistant, Sheree Ruth, resigned from the CPE in December after being with us for a little more than two years. Ruth accepted a new position in the Department of Pathology at the U of C Medical School, and we wish her much success in her new endeavor!

Replacing Ruth as fiscal assistant is Becky Shipley. Shipley was born and raised in Salt Lake City, Utah and is a recent graduate of the University of Utah. She received a BA in French Literature, with a mathematics emphasis as her secondary major. Her husband Matt is an MBA student at the U of C Graduate School of Business, which prompted their move to Chicago last September. Shipley enjoys hiking, camping, skiing, books, movies, and visiting all the great museums in Chicago. She is currently applying to graduate school and hopes to begin a Ph.D. program in Linguistics this coming Fall. Shipley says she “enjoys working at the CPE and appreciates the friendly atmosphere.” We will continue to be friendly to her, since we would be lost without her help! She can be reached at 773-834-8328 or rebecca.shipley@gsb.uchicago.edu.

Introducing New Website for Genealogists

By Veronica Wald and Todd Bridges

For more than 30 years, the Family History Library of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, has been instrumental to the research of the Center for Population Economics by providing access to a wealth of data and invaluable guidance in collection techniques. In the winter of 2003-04, the CPE developed a new user friendly Web-based application especially for genealogists and others interested in the histories of individual soldiers. This will allow genealogists to access military, pension, and medical records of the soldiers in the Union Army database from 1820-1940 and also from the U.S. censuses of 1850-1910. Genealogists will also be able to search for family history by names of ancestors, their spouses, siblings, dates of birth, marriage, death, divorce, and the places where these events occurred. This search engine is powerful enough to scour the data collections for information that is likely to be relevant to one’s search. The search engine will also automatically help users to refine their search parameters, thus preventing their next search from yielding too many or too few names.

On January 8, CPE Associate Director Veronica Wald accompanied long-time CPE associate, Professor Larry Wimmer of Brigham Young University, to present the template of Genealogy Search to the Library. Present were a number of Library notables, including director Raymond Wright and Fran Jensen, who is now product manager in the Member Needs Division of the Family and Church History Department, but was also one of the original contributors to the Early Indicators project. In the earliest days of the project, she assisted with the census research for 1850, 1860, 1900, and supervised the 1900 census research. Jensen also compiled histories of several of the companies and regiments used in the sample.

CPE developers are working with Library representatives to fine-tune Genealogy Search and make it available to the general public through the Library’s home page by Spring 2004. If you are interested in searching the database, please contact CPE managing director Joey Burton at jburton@cpe.uchicago.edu.

EXDID Project Update

By Todd Bridges

As we indicated in the Fall 2003 issue of the newsletter, CPE researchers are currently building an extensive data set named EXDID (Explaining the Decline in Disabilities over the Twentieth Century) from the 24 largest U.S. cities (circa 1900) for the years 1900-1960. The records contain ward, health district, and census tract level data on mortality, morbidity, socio-economic, and sanitary conditions. This data set will enable investigators to examine the evidence for both the decline and the convergence of health status, disability, infant mortality, and other measures of population over time in the best and worst sub-city level geographic units.

We currently have a team of six undergraduate research assistants working under the supervision of Todd Bridges. The undergraduates are working on different areas as follows: Ethan Lieber has finished Boston and is conducting preliminary analysis on the data for Professor Fogel; Joseph Caesar has finished St. Louis, Pittsburgh, and Philadelphia and is currently completing the extensive New York data set; Irina Shleyfer has finished San Francisco and is currently working on Minneapolis and Chicago; Aaron Oh and Ju-Hyun Chung, who are new to the project, are currently editing and finishing the Baltimore data set; and Rosaria Mannino, who recently joined the CPE.
will be working on the New York data set.

In addition, the project has its own website and it will be available to users as soon as the data set is built and is ready for use. The data set for each city, a brief history of the city’s public health, sources used in the data collection, and the variable dictionary for the entire data set will be available on the website. If you are interested in using the data set in its preliminary working version, please email Joey Burton at jburton@cpe.uchicago.edu.

Looking to the future, the EXDID team will finish the data entry for all the records we currently have available. We then plan to send researchers out into the field to collect any data that are missing and/or need to be expanded. Finally, we plan to obtain hospital birth records in these 24 cities for the purpose of creating ward-level infant health and mortality aggregates. Our medical records research specialist, Jacqueline Mosley, will be heading up this ambitious endeavor.

We thank the University of Chicago for providing start-up funds for the EXDID project.

**Black Sample Update**

*By Melissa Ptacek*

Cleaning of the African-American sample data is nearly complete for the military data set. Some new features of the military data set include coding of recruits’ wealth so as to clearly specify types of wealth (e.g., real estate, income/wages) and a system applied across all variables that indicates when and how raw data were altered (supplied, corrected, or otherwise transformed) by us. We expect to finish cleaning the military data set by the end of March. Cleaning of the surgeon’s certificates and the disease data sets will then commence.

What’s Happening in the Vienna, Virginia Field Office

*By Noelle Yetter*

The CPE field office in the D.C. area has been keeping busy with various tasks. Three new inputters have been trained at the Archives. We are continuing to collect military data for the Wisconsin and Indiana companies left from the original Union Army data set. We have completed the collection of the disease data for the Black Sample, and have begun collecting the disease data for Wisconsin and Indiana. Data collector Christian James has been promoted to assistant supervisor and is in charge of the collection of the military data. In regard to the EXDID data set, we completed the collection of data for Baltimore and New York City and collected ward-level health data from Newark, Jersey City, and Rochester. Travel is planned to additional cities to collect EXDID data and continue the collection of the Union Army data.

Research assistant Paula Canavese will present a paper on February 13 entitled “Arthritis: The Evolution of its Prevalence, 19th and 20th Centuries” at the NBER Disability Group Meeting. Canavese wrote this paper jointly with Professor Robert Fogel and it is the second half of a collaboration with Professor Dora Costa. Costa’s part of the paper is entitled “Heart, Joints, and Mind: Why Were Older Men in the Past in Such Poor Health?” It uses Union Army records to analyze why disease rates were so high in the past. The Disability Group Meeting is being organized by David Cutler and David Wise and will be held at the Wild Dunes Resort in Charleston, South Carolina.

Graduate Research Assistant Report

*By Carol Bridgeman*

CPE research assistant Dejun Su will present his paper, *Body Mass Index and Old-Age Survival: A Comparative Study between the Union Army Records and the NHANES-I Epidemiological Follow-Up Sample* at the 2004 PAA conference to be held in Boston on April 1-3. A draft of this paper is available on the CPE website at [www.cpe.uchicago.edu/publication/publ ication.html](http://www.cpe.uchicago.edu/publication/publication.html). The final version will be posted on the website shortly.

Dejun is collaborating on another paper with fellow research assistant, Claudia Linares. The paper is entitled, “Morbidity among the Union Army Veterans: An Anthropometrical Inquiry.” The main purpose of this paper is to evaluate the association between adulthood anthropometrical measurements (height, BMI, and the change of BMI) and morbidity in old ages. Dejun and Claudia expect that they can shed some light on the future prevalence of certain diseases. Most of the empirical analysis has been completed and some of the preliminary findings in this paper will soon be presented during a regular weekly CPE research meeting.

A paper by research assistants Lorens Helmchen and Max Henderson entitled “Changes in the Distribution of Body Mass Index of White U.S. Men, 1890-2000” is in press at the *Annals of Human Biology*. A link containing a more detailed citation will be posted on the publications section of the CPE website as soon as it becomes available.

Sheng Sen Guo has joined the CPE as a graduate research assistant. Guo comes from Peoples Republic of China and received his B.A. in Economics from Wuhan University. After two years of graduate study in the History of Economic Thoughts at Renmin University of China, he came to the University of Chicago to pursue his Ph.D. in Economics.
Guo’s initial goal in joining the CPE was to find some useful data and other materials to conduct his study on the economics of war. He finds this a potentially interesting topic, especially since Professor Fogel has done a great deal of research related to the Civil War. He has rapidly accumulated knowledge of demographic changes, marriage patterns, health issues and other economic history topics through discussions with professors and colleagues and by participating in workshops. Guo can be contacted at sguo@cpe.uchicago.edu.

Fogel Publishes Book

By Carol Bridgeman

In the Fall of 2003, Louisiana State University Press released a new book by CPE Director Robert W. Fogel entitled The Slavery Debates, 1952-1990: A Retrospective. In this book, Fogel chronicles the events that took place after he and his colleague Stanley Engerman released their groundbreaking and fiercely debated book on slavery, Time on the Cross, in 1974. This new title offers Professor Fogel’s own reflections on his participation in the slavery debates as well as his recollections of the contributions of many noted historians. For additional details, including information on how to order this book, please visit http://www.lsu.edu/lsupress/catalog/Fall2003/books/Fogel_Slavery_Debates.html.

Blanck Receives Funding, Releases Book

By Carol Bridgeman

CPE consultant Peter Blanck recently received two noteworthy awards. The first is a research grant from the Nellie Ball Trust Fund in the amount of $20,000 to renew support for his research examining the impact of discrimination against persons with mental disabilities, including depression and psychiatric conditions. Blanck says that the Nellie Ball Trust Fund grant will further his studies on attitudes toward, and the employment of, persons with mental disabilities. The Nellie Ball Trust Fund grant competition is administered by Iowa State Bank & Trust Company located in Iowa City.

Secondly, the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) of the U.S. Department of Education awarded Blanck’s research center, Law, Health Policy & Disability Center (LHPDC) at the University of Iowa College of Law, a $1.5 million grant to study asset accumulation and tax policy for people with disabilities. This project will develop a new and comprehensive body of knowledge to improve the economic independence, social empowerment and community integration of persons with disabilities. The Asset Accumulation and Tax Policy Project (AATPP) is designed to conduct research towards “stabilizing and improving lives of persons with disabilities,” said Blanck. He added, “over the next five years, LHPDC and its partners will examine tax policy and asset accumulation for persons with disabilities, and resultant improvements in economic and community integration.” The AATPP will investigate strategies such as financial education, matched savings accounts, and use of state and federal tax incentives for asset and community economic development.

Lastly, Blanck’s book Blanck, Hill, Siegal, and Waterstone’s Hornbook on Disability Civil Rights Law has been published. The book examines the basis of discrimination against people with disabilities, including the history of such discrimination and a review of studies that explore why people engage in this sort of discrimination. It examines the federal laws that culminated in the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The book describes the ADA’s definition of disability, how it has been interpreted and studied, and then reviews the three major titles of the ADA, including a review of the remedies available for various ADA claims and the procedures required to pursue them. Details on how to order a copy of this book can be found at http://west.thomson.com/product/40116858/product.asp.

For further information on the activities of Peter Blanck and the LHPDC, please visit http://disability.law.uiowa.edu.

Interesting Recent Findings

By Carol Bridgeman

CPE sub grantee Judith Pizarro, of the Psychology and Social Behavior Department at University of California-Irvine, presented her paper “Traumatic War Experiences and Post-War Lifetime Disease Development among Civil War Veterans” at the CPE on January 16. Using objective health and trauma data collected from well-documented records of military service and combat exposure, she demonstrates that traumatic war experiences predict mental and physical physician-diagnosed and self-reported disease in later life. She discovered that military trauma severity was directly related to the severity and quantity of subsequent physician-diagnosed disease. Pizarro has established that exposure to war trauma was directly related to the development of mental health, cardiovascular, and gastrointestinal disease presence, as well as the severity and quantity of ailments within each disease. Theories of physiological mechanisms by which trauma might result in disease are also discussed in this paper. For additional information, Judith can be reached at jpizarro@uci.edu.
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