

to clandestinely ship goods across the ocean, thereby keeping their wares safe from British seizure. Chapter 9 further examines the way in which co-nationals preferred to interact with one another: American shippers tended to work with American commission agents in Bordeaux. But the wider Bordeaux economy still benefitted indirectly from the American presence, as Bordeaux merchants could grant loans and insurance contracts to American shippers (pp. 344–46). The final chapter revisits the idea that the transatlantic trade was disproportionately important to Bordeaux—enabling the French port to endure through the Revolution and the period of European wars—whereas it was only one of many possible trading arenas available to merchants from the United States.

An exhaustive, at times redundant, analysis of the commercial relationship between Bordeaux and the United States, Marzagalli's book is best suited for a specialist audience. Anyone interested in port cities, transatlantic trade, merchant networks, the early U.S. republic in the wider world or early modern French economic history will find it a useful read. The book is too narrow in focus for undergraduates or even graduate exam reading lists. But for those working on a related subject it is not to be missed.

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#### UNITED STATES AND CANADA

*The Pox of Liberty: How the Constitution Left Americans Rich, Free, and Prone to Infection.* By Werner Troesken. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015. Pp. vii, 237. \$40.00, cloth.  
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Should vaccinations be required by law? Why are quarantine decisions made by state governors? What role should the federal government play in public health provision? While these are questions of current importance, they are also issues that the United States has been struggling with since the Revolution. At the heart of these issues lies a set of legal judgements, rooted in the U.S. Constitution, about when and how the state can intervene in order to improve public health.

In *The Pox of Liberty*, Werner Troesken sets out to study the complex impact of the U.S. Constitution on health in U.S. history. This is an ambitious book and a useful contribution to work in this area. By focusing on how the Constitution and the legal system influence public health, both directly and through economic growth, *The Pox of Liberty* illuminates a neglected aspect of public health history. While the author is trained as an economist, he has taken a narrative approach in this book which makes it approachable for a broad audience. This book is likely to be of particular interest to demographers, historians, and economists who would like to gain a better understanding of the way that legal factors influenced public health in the U.S. history.

One of the central messages of this book is that the United States was often less healthy than comparable European countries “not *despite* its being rich and free, but *because* it was rich and free” (p. 5). Put another way, Troesken argues that many of the laws that allowed the United States to become wealthy, and that promoted

personal freedom, also made it more difficult to fight infectious disease. Balanced against this is a feedback mechanism through which economic success improved health, by, for example, providing cities with the money needed to invest in water systems.

The book begins with two preliminary chapters. The first, Chapter 2, traces the origin of U.S. public health law to early townships. Following this, Chapter 3 provides a review of the key legal issues that influenced public health provision. These chapters provide a useful entry point for those who are less familiar with the channels through which the legal system affects public health.

The core of the book is organized into three chapters, each focusing on a major infectious disease. Chapter 4 studies smallpox, a deadly airborne disease. The development of a vaccine in the late eighteenth century made this disease a natural focus for public health interventions. To illustrate the role played by the legal system in the fight against smallpox, Troesken compares the United States to Germany where, after unification, centralized power allowed the government to rapidly reduce smallpox rates. In contrast, the United States legal system's protection of individual liberties allowed a portion of the population to resist vaccination and as a result, progress against smallpox was much slower. Perhaps the most interesting example is provided by U.S. colonies, such as Cuba and Puerto Rico, where military control allowed the U.S. government to fight smallpox in a much more effective way than was possible within U.S. borders. Thus, smallpox provides a vivid illustration of how the U.S. legal system, by favoring liberty and individual rights, impeded the implementation of broad public health measures.

The next chapter studies typhoid, a waterborne disease that was a scourge of U.S. cities in the nineteenth century. Fighting this disease required costly investments in water and sewer systems. Troesken highlights several avenues through which the legal system influenced the fight against typhoid. Because the necessary investments were made at the level of cities or states, the decentralized U.S. political system was better suited for the fight against this disease. Moreover, decentralization allowed experimentation and resulted in competition between municipalities. Troesken also describes how the Contract Clause of the constitution played an important role in allowing cities and states to borrow in order to fund their water-system investments. Also, the author suggests that, by fostering economic growth, the U.S. legal system helped provide the funding needed for these very large investments. Thus, typhoid represents a counter-example to smallpox, one in which the U.S. system appeared to be more effective.

Finally, the book considers the case of yellow fever, a disease spread by mosquitoes that regularly visited trading cities, particularly in the southern United States. The natural way to address this disease was by quarantining ships with passengers or crew that showed symptoms. Thus, this example illustrates how the U.S. legal system influenced the effectiveness of quarantine use. The primary conclusion from this discussion is that the decentralized U.S. approach, which vested power with individual states, struggled to effectively implement quarantines. States often failed to share information and to coordinate their quarantine policies. There is also evidence that states used quarantine powers for economic purposes such as redirecting trade from ports in other states. Overall this chapter, while interesting, is not as convincing and focused as the chapters on smallpox and typhoid.

Together, these chapters provide an illuminating set of examples. Most of these suggest that the decentralized U.S. system, with its strong focus on individual rights, private property, and fostering commerce, led the United States to lag behind in the provision of public health. The example of typhoid shows, however, that there were important exceptions to this pattern.

For anyone interested in the history of public health, looking for research ideas, or simply hoping to gain a better understanding of the legal origin of modern health debates, this book is a useful starting point. At just 179 pages it is a quick read and full of ideas. While thought-provoking, the nature of the evidence presented means that any conclusions must be tentative. Thus, *The Pox of Liberty* is likely to serve as a point of departure for more comprehensive work on these topics, rather than the final word.

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*Auburn, New York: The Entrepreneurs' Frontier.* By Scott W. Anderson. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2015. Pp. vii, 292, \$39.95, cloth.  
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This impressive book, written by geographer Scott W. Anderson, centers on the rise and eventual fall of Auburn, New York, from the late eighteenth century to the present. While Auburn is the primary focus of the book, the heart of this volume is a discussion of the entrepreneurs who helped build this great city but who eventually “passed accumulated wealth to their heirs . . . who were wealth-holders and managers and not visionaries.” When this new “privileged class” turned its attention to global markets and investments in stock and bonds, a “long process of stagnation and decay” began.

This shift from the visionary, risk-taking entrepreneurship of young America to the safer wealth accumulation through investment in the expanding global economy is a cautionary tale not just for upstate New York but for the nation as a whole.

Although *Auburn, New York* is organized—more or less—chronologically, this broad story of vigorous entrepreneurial growth and subsequent abandonment and decline is rooted in economic theory. Three theories inform his work. The first is “staple theory,” developed by Harold Innis in the late 1930s. Innes argued that vigorous economic growth often stems from the exploitation of staple resources. Anderson devotes his early chapters to the formation of a class of entrepreneurs who speculated in land when the New Military Tract opened in 1790. These entrepreneurs recognized that Auburn was located near the great water power source of the Owasco Outlet that promised abundant power for mills and later factories. It was also situated along the “ancient Genesee Trail”—later to become the route of the Seneca Turnpike. These two great resources would shape the city of Auburn and allow its successful development.

The first generation of prosperous land speculators in Auburn included such figures as Hardenburgh, Seymour, Fitch, Case, and Seward. These individuals effectually developed the land in and around Auburn and helped attract new settlers and other entrepreneurs. They solidified a strong “upper class” through intermarriage and their wealth formed the basis of later entrepreneurial ventures.