deal about early America and its lost dreams — remains stubbornly “Not proven!”

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For the past decade Theodore Hershberg and his associates at the Philadelphia Social History Project (University of Pennsylvania) have engaged in the herculean task of gathering and processing mountains of machine readable historical data on the demographic, economic, social, and spatial growth of nineteenth-century Philadelphia. Although the endeavor has produced mainly historical monographs, Hershberg has tirelessly and correctly emphasized the interdisciplinary character and significance of this undertaking. Moreover, underlining the interdisciplinary nature of the PSHP, during most of its life the project was funded by the National Institute of Mental Health. (Just recently Hershberg overhauled the PSHP, transforming it into the Center for Policy Studies.)

While it hardly exhausts the PSHP’s full scholarly output, Philadelphia can be fairly entertained as Hershberg’s summa, a capitulation of the achievement of the PSHP. Certainly, the book mirrors the project’s methodological range as well as its topical agenda. Hershberg’s plea — like Eric Lampard’s — has been to treat “Urban as process,” which he interprets to mean “the dynamic modeling of the interrelationships among environment, behavior, and group experience — [the] three basic components of the urban system” (p. 28). Accordingly, employing a “change over time” perspective Hershberg organized Philadelphia into four sections: Work, Space, Family, and Group Experience. However, these categories merely serve as general foci illustrating the project’s principal conceptual priorities: the journey-to-work, the nexus between work and residence, the family life cycle and survival strategies, and, finally, the city as an opportunity structure.

Under the section on “Work,” Bruce Laurie, Mark Schmitz, Hershberg, and George Alter analyzed Philadelphia’s nineteenth-
century patterns of work and ethnicity. Abjuring the traditional occupational hierarchy model, they explored instead the subtle bases for stratifying occupations. Their research discovered that frequently unskilled Irish employed in capital-oriented industries such as building construction encountered greater occupational mobility than skilled Germans clinging to the traditional consumer-oriented trades.

Writers such as Harold Cox, Dale Light, Alan Burstein, and Stephanie Greenberg examined urban space as an opportunity structure where housing and jobs comprise the decisive variables. Using a model built on the analysis of center fabricated data grids, Hershberg hypothesized the existence of multiple labor sheds rather than a single urban job market. Constrained by the nexus between jobs and housing, poor blacks, Irish, and German immigrant families shifted from shed to shed (as well as from city to city) in search of stable employment. In an article on “Immigrants and Residential Mobility,” Burstein proposed that change in the ecological characteristics of different urban areas — particularly with reference to employment opportunity — explains urban residential mobility better than individual socio-economic profiles.

Several fascinating insights emerge from Michael Haines's and Claudia Goldin's longitudinal analyses of the linkages between poverty, family composition, and the life cycle of black, German, and Irish immigrant families. Haines's data disclose that poverty often afflicted families early in the life cycle before the household’s young children entered the work force.

Under group experience, the Hershberg, Henry Williams, Frank Furstenberg, and John Modell articles on black mobility and black family structure in nineteenth-century Philadelphia not only document the existence of color as a stratifier of black society, but they also trace the high incidence of female-headedness to the brutality of urban life, especially to a staggering mortality rate among male heads-of-household.

Collectively, the insights found in Philadelphia represent not only a contribution to the fund of social and historical knowledge, but a monument to the achievement of the PSHP. Unquestionably, in the tradition of E. P. Thompson and Stephan Thernstrom, Hershberg, Laurie, Yancey, Erickson, Modell, Lees, and the other contributors to Philadelphia have bestowed some small voice and immortality upon the inarticulate Irish, German, and black city dwellers who struggled in or near the basement of nineteenth-century Philadelphia society. Yet, it is difficult to ignore totally Michael Ebner's recent criticism of
Hershberg and his company of "quantificators." [Journal of American History 68 (June 1981): 78-79.] Admittedly, the PSHP articles are unabashedly ecological in approach, and on the whole ignore the political and ideological/cultural elements in the community complex. This neglect of the "soft" side of human experience, while not necessarily detracting from the significance of the PSHP heritage, renders the portrait of nineteenth-century Philadelphia society incomplete. Recently, a few historians have ventured to flush out the voids left by the "accountants" of history. James Borchert's study of Alley Life in Washington [D.C.] (1980) blended "hard" and "soft" data to illustrate how poor black Washingtonians constructed a functional urban life style out of the materials of a resilient black culture. Thomas Kessner in The Golden Door performed a similar alloying of "hard" and lettristic data to contrast the Jewish and Italian ethnic experience in New York. Hershberg and his corps of PSHP scholars have erected a well-furnished stage for the analysis of nineteenth-century Philadelphia as an opportunity structure; now historians are presented the enviable task of peopling the historical drama with actors.

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The contradictions in Matthew Stanley Quay have fascinated historians. He loved literature (particularly that of Augustan Rome), and his library was so dear to him that one of his last requests was "to see my books once more before I die" (p. 250). Though an urbane guest and a gracious host, Quay was a quiet, reserved man who would rather read at home in Beaver or fish on Florida's Indian River than attend a fashionable ball in Washington. And yet when Quay entered politics he earned a reputation not as a statesman — for his name is associated with no movement, no issue, and no legislation — but as an unsavory party boss. He was one of the most astute organizers in the history of American political parties and one of the