

OBITUARY

James H. Soltow 1924-2001

James H. Soltow, professor emeritus of history at Michigan State University and a founding member of the Economic and Business Historical Society, passed away at the age of 76 on Monday, January 8, 2001, at his Isle of Palms, South Carolina, residence. Soltow is survived by his wife of 54 years, Martha Jane Stough Soltow. A memorial service is scheduled for Friday, January 12, 2001, and interment will be at Shippensburg, Pennsylvania, on Tuesday, January 16, 2001. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the charitable funds of Stella Maris Catholic Church, Sullivan's Island, South Carolina.

Soltow was born in Chicago, Illinois, July 1, 1924, and attended schools in Plainfield, New Jersey. After serving in the U.S. Army from 1943 until 1946, Soltow took an A.B. from Dickinson College in 1948 and a Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania in 1954. He lectured in history at Hunter College from 1952 to 1955 before becoming a research associate at Colonial Williamsburg for a year and an instructor at Russell Sage College from 1956 to 1958. The following year Soltow spent at Harvard as a Business History Fellow. From Harvard, Soltow went to Michigan State University where, except for a 1965-66 Fulbright Research Fellowship at the University of Louvain, Belgium, he spent the remainder of his teaching career, retiring in 1984. Soltow served as department chairman for history at MSU from 1970 through 1975.

Retirement for the Soltows meant leaving the cold of Michigan for the warm sands of the Isle of Palms, a barrier island off Charleston, South Carolina. A house with a view of the Atlantic Ocean and health good enough for regular foreign travel provided Soltow with an idyllic retirement. A stroke in the summer of 1998 slowed Soltow's speech and step, but not his keen mind. He refused to be incapacitated and pursued his physical therapy as vigorously as he had his research topics. He recovered sufficiently to drive an automobile and twice accompany Martha Jane to Europe.

While at MSU, Soltow had published *The Economic Role of Williamsburg* (University Press of Virginia, 1965) and *Origins of Small Business: Metal Fabricators and Machinery Makers in New England, 1890-1957* (American Philosophical Society, 1965). His academic career did not end when he retired. In 1993, ten years after retiring from MSU, Soltow was a keynote speaker at the Cotton Gin Symposium held at Auburn University, Ala-

bama. His presentation was published as "Cotton as Religion, Politics, Law, Economics, and Art," in Eli Whitney's Cotton Gin, 1793-1993. That same year (1993) the second edition of *The Evolution of the American Economy: Growth, Welfare, and Decision Making*, coauthored with Sidney Ratner and Richard Sylla, was published by Macmillan. The retirement years also saw publication of *The HON Story: A History of HON Industries, 1944-1985*, with C. Maxwell Stanley (Iowa State University Press, 1991); *Ninety Years: A History of CTS Corporation, 1896-1986* (CTS Corporation, 1988); and *Signode: 75 Years and Beyond* (Signode Industries, 1985). Soltow had been researching a history of the Isle of Palms when he died.

A business historian, Soltow was a longtime member of the Economic and Business Historical Society, the Business History Conference, and the Economic History Association. In addition to scores of articles and book reviews, Soltow edited *Essays in Economic and Business History: Selected Papers from the Economic and Business Historical Society from 1976 through 1979*. The journal, now titled *Essays in Economic and Business History: The Journal of the Economic and Business Historical Society*, is edited by Michael V. Namorato, one of Soltow's doctoral graduates from MSU. Soltow also served on the editorial board of *Business History Review* 1965-68.

Jim Soltow will be remembered as an inspiring teacher, meticulous researcher, and valued colleague. He was a credit not only to the profession but to his family, his faith, and his community.

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