religious schools serve as a measure of the socialization of adults who would have been educated years earlier, possibly in other locations? Also, when analyzing data of this type, it is difficult always to avoid the incorrect suggestion that the results reveal the behavior of particular groups of individuals. Such results actually represent the behavior patterns of areas of certain characteristics.

Despite such qualifications, this book is an excellent example of how historical data can be used to test explicitly formulated hypotheses quantitatively. Not only is it logically organized and succinctly argued, but it is difficult to conceive of any way that the topic could have been studied more thoroughly. So convincing is Wald's analysis, that the controversy over when and why class replaced religion as the fundamental cleavage in British politics must now be regarded as settled. Only a study able to provide new evidence specifically refuting his can add anything to our knowledge and understanding of this topic.

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A Calculating People: The Spread of Numeracy in Early America. By Patricia Cline Cohen (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1982) 271 pp. \$19.50

Although scholars have long known the details of the development of mathematical concepts, no one had ever traced the way in which modern society became mathematically oriented. Now, Cohen, in a pathbreaking study, has chronicled the rise of "numeracy"—meaning an ability with or knowledge of numbers—in this country, showing its Old World origins and how it eventually flourished in the New World. The author argues that "Anglo-American culture shifted from a prenumerate to a numerate state over the space of three centuries" (10–11). These, she asserts, were the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, just as the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries were the critical ones in the expansion of literacy. Numeracy, she emphasizes, did not come about in a few bursts, but developed slowly over time.

Cohen notes that numeracy became more extensive with the broadening of commerce, and that new economic, religious, and political ideas helped to spread reckoning skills and added to the "prestige of numbers and quantification" (12). At first, quantification was not something the average individual easily understood. Few young persons not preparing for a life in commerce learned any arithmetic whatever. But, over the years developments such as the English Board of Trade's search for accurate reports on the economic activities of the empire in the late seventeenth century ultimately changed this situation. Quantification, the author states, became a method for ordering reality.

Numeracy did not make much headway in America until the latter

half of the eighteenth century. By that time, it seemed clear that arithmetic had more than commercial uses; it could improve the logical and rational faculties of the mind. Grammar schools and academies, as well as colleges, started requiring mathematics in their curricula. Some skeptics still questioned the utility of mathematics and several attempts to expand the amount of information collected for early censuses met with strong opposition. However, individuals gradually came to see that statistical data could help identify pressing social problems and sometimes offer clues for their solution.

A Calculating People does not comprehensively describe all of the new uses of numbers from the seventeenth to the mid-nineteenth century. Rather, each chapter deals with a specific episode that illustrates the scope and limits of numeracy at a particular time. As she discusses each topic, the author shows how quantification altered the way people thought about economic, social, and political relations. For example, new statistical accounts showing variations in mortality rates in Puritan Boston precipitated a decline in fatalism and a growing belief that man could alter events. Readers of this *Journal* will be interested in seeing how certain tools of their trade—census reports and bills of mortality—came into wider use.

Although *A Calculating People* makes a fine contribution, a few elements are missing. For a start, this study of numeracy contains no tables, charts, or graphs. Aside from stating that fewer than 400 men in late seventeenth-century England were mathematically minded, the author provides no quantitative estimates. Nor, after focusing on England in the early part of the work, does she say much about how numeracy fared there later on. Finally, the episodic nature of the book makes one wonder just how far quantification proceeded in certain fields not mentioned. Although it might have been beyond the scope of the volume to discuss each one in depth, a brief summary of important advances would have been helpful.

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Tobacco Colony: Life in Early Maryland, 1650–1720. By Gloria L. Main (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1983) 327 pp. \$30.00

In the past fifteen years our knowledge of colonial Maryland has been transformed by a series of studies noteworthy both for the questions that they ask and for the methods, highly quantitative, that they bring to those questions. With her new book, Main takes a prominent place in that small but expert band that is making the study of early Maryland society one of the most sophisticated branches of early American social history. Hers is both a work of substantial primary research and one of synthesis. The primary research focuses on the period 1650 to 1720 and