

Practical Activity

Heights and Well-Being

Economic History



Suggested citation

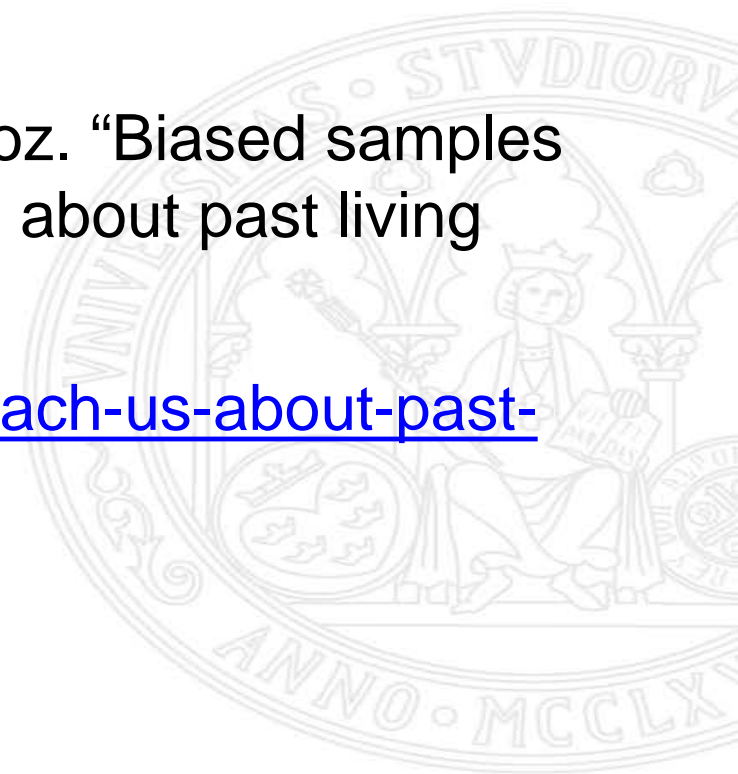
- MARTÍNEZ-RODRÍGUEZ, Susana. 2018. “PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES/SEMINARIES. Economic History. Heights and Well-Being.” Departamento de Economía Aplicada-Universidad de Murcia.
- Proofreading Services provided by www.rachelbland.com

- CONVOCATORIA PARA EL IMPULSO Y LA CONSOLIDACIÓN DE PROYECTOS DE DOCENCIA BILINGÜE DURANTE EL CURSO 2017/2018 (**Resolución Rectoral 787/2017, de 26 de julio de 2017**)





- **Task 1**
- Material:
- Bodenhorn, Howard, Timothy Guinnane and Thomas Mroz. “Biased samples yield biased results: What historical heights can teach us about past living standards.” July 22, 2015.
 - [<http://voxeu.org/article/what-historical-heights-can-teach-us-about-past-living-standards>]



Other Materials:

- The New York Times. 2013. *Robert W. Fogel, Nobel-Winning Economist, Dies at 86*. June 11, 2013.
 - [http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/12/business/robert-w-fogel-nobel-winning-economist-dies-at-86.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0]
- Bill Gardner and Paul Kelleher. 2011. Robert Fogel on life expectancy and health care. Blog. Something Not Unlike Research. July 22, 2011.
 - [<http://notunlikeresearch.typepad.com/something-not-unlike-rese/2011/07/robert-fogel-on-life-expectancy.html>]

- Technique:
 - Team Work (please write down all your peers' names!)
- Delivery Method:
 - One assignment by group.



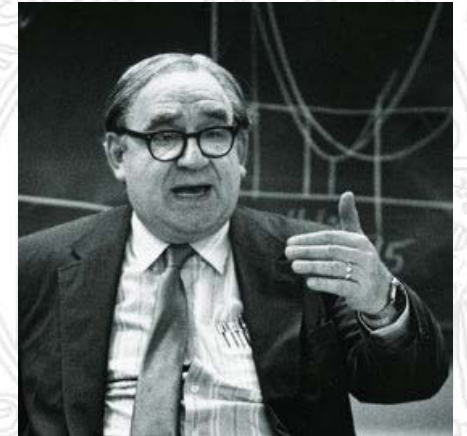
Who was ROBERT FOGEL?

Nobel Prize in Economy (1993) (& Douglass C. North)

Pioneer in applying economic theory and statistic techniques to Economic History (Cliometrics).

Main contributions:

1. The impact of railroads and American economic growth.
2. On Slavery and American economic growth (and social development).
3. Demography and standards of living.(*)



Assumption-fact:

Adult height reflects (net) nutrition in childhood and adolescence.

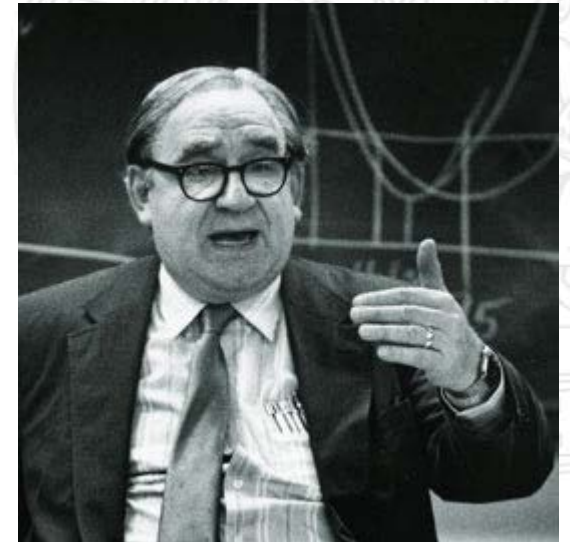
“Industrialization Puzzle”:

Industrialization increased GDP (GDP per capita) BUT living standards decreased the population.

Evidence:

Height records declined during the industrialization

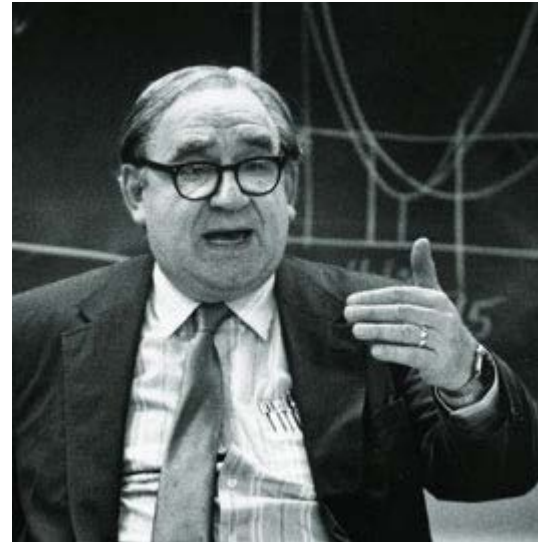
Explanation:



Explanation:

Physical conditions of the population during the IR were worse than those of the preceding generations.

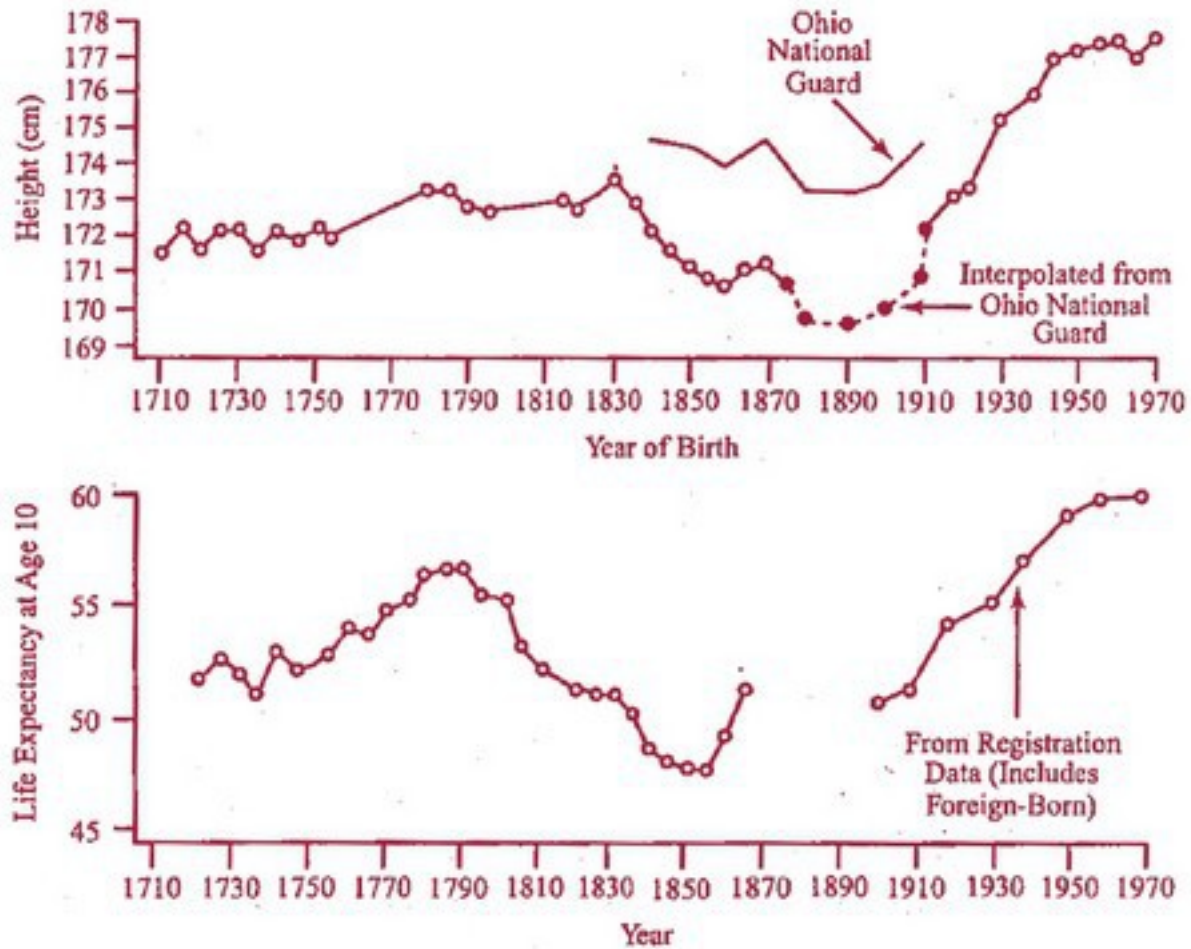
1. Unhealthy work places
2. Hard work
3. Adulterated food
4. Overcrowded rooms in the cities



**THE PERSISTENCE OF MISERY
 IN EUROPE AND AMERICA
 BEFORE 1900**

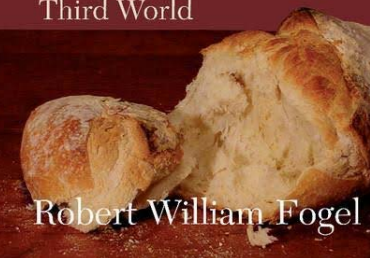
Trend in Mean Final Height of Native-Born White American Males and Trend in Their Life Expectancy at Age 10.

Note: Height is by birth cohort, and life expectancy at age 10 is by period.



The Escape
 from Hunger
 and Premature
 Death, 1700–2100

Europe, America,
 and the
 Third World



Robert William Fogel

<http://notunlikeresearch.typepad.com/something-not-unlike-rese/2011/07/robert-fogel-on-life-expectancy.html>

Some scholars disagree with the mainstream.

- How it could be that higher economic development (GDP/capita) EQUATES TO lower biological standards?
- Reasons:
 1. The data was unrepresentative of the population.
 2. The data was biased.
 3. Contemporaries who collected data had specific aims (by no means to understand well-being)



Data collections from the 18th and 19th

Centuries:

1. Young men in the army.
2. Slaves.
3. Criminals, offenders... imprisoned
4. Hospitalized patients.

Data collectors... not scholars who want

to measure well-being:

1. Military recruiters
2. Prison officials
3. Slave traders
4. Hospital managers
5. School administrator



Task 2

1. Explain the concept “Industrialization puzzle” using the information in the article.
2. List some sources of heights in which the data were biased (the sample was unrepresentative of the population). Please, use the information in the article.
3. Explain why the mean height of US soldiers decreased in the 19th C while the US economy was growing.
4. Discuss with your peers some of your direct relatives’ heights (1st and 2nd degree of kinship). According to your observation, do you think that the new generation is taller than previous ones? (15-20 lines)

- Technique:
 - Team Work (please write down all your peers' names!)
- Delivery Method:
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