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## *Economists at Wisconsin: 1892–1992*

Robert J. Lampman, Emeritus Professor of Economics at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, has assembled a centennial volume chronicling the tumultuous history of the UW Economics Department. Lampman has been affiliated with the department for over fifty years—as an undergraduate, graduate student, and professor. It was he who was the guiding spirit behind the establishment of the IRP at Madison in 1966.

The story includes the early years of foment under Richard T. Ely, when university areas of study—economics, commerce, civil polity, history, political science—were merging, shifting, and disappearing. Ely himself was accused of being an anarchist. (His acquittal by the Board of Regents resulted in their statement on academic freedom, later enshrined in a tablet on campus: “Whatever may be the limitations which trammel inquiry elsewhere, we believe the great state University of Wisconsin should ever encourage that continual and fearless sifting and winnowing by which alone the truth can be found.”)

There were as well heady years, when institutionalism flourished under John R. Commons, of whom it is said that he contributed in one way or another to virtually all the social and labor legislation that has been enacted in the twentieth century. There were fat years and lean years, years of advancement in research and years dominated by petty squabbling.

All the while a steady stream of students came under the Wisconsin influence, received their degrees, and moved on to expand and alter the approaches to economics they had learned.

Lampman’s 362-page volume contains, in addition to the narrative history, excerpts from the writings of important participants in the story, and tables providing budgets, enrollments, courses, faculty, and degrees conferred. The illustrations of bewhiskered men and university events enable us to see what has changed and what has not in the course of one hundred years.

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