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Preface

This book originated in a visit Davis and Gallman made to the Manuscript Room of Baker Library at the Harvard Graduate School of Business. Both were then, as they are now, research associates of the National Bureau of Economic Research and members of the NBER Development of the American Economy group. They had an idea for a line of research to be conducted under the aegis of DAE, a line of research on technical change and productivity improvement in the nineteenth-century United States. They planned to take it up in a year or two, once they had met other commitments, and they went to Baker Library on a scouting expedition, to see what the available data were like on two or three industries in which they had an interest—since to carry out their plan would take many data of a wide variety on each subject industry. Neither of them had any idea of doing a study of whaling.

They pursued a general search and Davis took abundant notes on one of the industries they were considering. Some time late in the first day, or early in the second, they laid hands on Joseph Dias's manuscript on whaling (see chapter 3), which contained many of the data they thought they would need for a good productivity study. Could the gaps be filled in? Probably, they thought, so they decided to do a brief study of whaling—a kind of pilot project, something to be finished in a relatively short time, before they began their major work. Something roughly on the lines of chapter 8 in this book is what they had in mind. The whales, however, turned out to be a group of tar babies. It was impossible to let them go. The plan of a paper exclusively devoted to technology and productivity expanded into a short monograph, and then into a very long book on the economic history of American whaling.

Along the way the group of investigators grew. First Teresa Hutchins, then a graduate student at the University of North Carolina, joined the group, participated in turning the Dias data into an automated data set, wrote a dissertation on whaling, and took part with Davis and Gallman in writing a number of

papers. Eventually, however, she was drawn away to other projects and opportunities.

By then a fourth participant, Karin Gleiter, research associate at the Carolina Population Center, had joined the group. Among other responsibilities, she took over the data set, located many new sources, and produced a much more extensive and richer empirical basis for the project than it had formerly had. Her odyssey among the data is described in chapter 3.

During the research for and writing of this book we have accumulated many debts. The NBER provided seed money, on the basis of which we prepared a grant request to the National Science Foundation. The request was successful, and the NSF became the principal source of funding. We are deeply grateful. Assistance also came from the Division of Humanities and Social Sciences of the California Institute of Technology and from the Kenan Foundation.

Among individuals who came to our aid we thank, in particular, Marty Feldstein, president of NBER, and David Grether, then chair of Humanities and Social Sciences at Caltech. The Carolina Population Center at the University of North Carolina shared computer facilities with us. Our thanks go to Dick Udry, then CPC director, and to Judith Kovenock, director of CPC Computing Services. Kathleen Gallagher and Billie Norwood, CPC staff members at the time, helped Teresa Hutchins build the original data set, and Mike Butler and Emil Friberg subsequently managed the project, until Dr. Gleiter came aboard. Mathias Moersch and Rob Stahle performed a variety of tasks, from data coding to computer programming. Craig Richardson, Kim Inbae, Gene Dyer, Gerald Granderson, Inseong Hwang, and Curtis Florence provided helpful research assistance of shorter duration. Our thanks go to all of them.

Librarians and archivists at the Baker Library Manuscript Room, the New Bedford Whaling Museum, the Melville Room of the New Bedford Free Public Library, the Houghton Library at Harvard University, the G. W. Blunt White Library at Mystic Seaport Museum, the Kendall Whaling Museum, the Davis Library at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and the California Institute of Technology Library were unfailingly helpful and pleasant. Florence Lathrop, of the Baker, put up with us for an especially long time yet retained her kind and cheerful manner throughout. Judith Downey, of the New Bedford Whaling Museum, not only found us apposite illustrations, but also set us straight on the matter of condemnation proceedings for whalers. Stuart Frank of the Kendall Whaling Museum was generous with both advice and manuscript material.

Various materials in this book have appeared, in preliminary form, in other publications. Some of our ideas were first laid out in Lance E. Davis, Robert E. Gallman, and Teresa D. Hutchins, "The Structure of the Capital Stock in Economic Growth and Decline: The New Bedford Whaling Fleet in the Nineteenth Century," in *Quantity and Quidity: Essays in U.S. Economic History*, ed. Peter Kilby (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1987), 336–98;

Wesleyan University holds the copyright for *Quantity and Quiddity*, and we use our material by permission of the University Press of New England. We summarized our approach to the present analysis also in Lance E. Davis, Robert E. Gallman, and Teresa D. Hutchins, "Call Me Ishmael—not Domingo Floresta: The Rise and Fall of the American Whaling Industry," in *The Vital One: Essays in Honor of Jonathan R. T. Hughes*, ed. Joel Mokyr, 191–233, *Research in Economic History*, supplement 6 (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1991); we use this material with the permission of JAI Press. A first version of chapter 4 was published as Lance E. Davis, Robert E. Gallman, and Teresa D. Hutchins, "The Decline of U.S. Whaling: Was the Stock of Whales Running Out?" *Business History Review* 62, no. 4 (winter 1988): 569–95; we use material from that paper with the permission of *Business History Review*. A first version of chapter 5 was published as Lance E. Davis, Robert E. Gallman, and Teresa D. Hutchins, "Risk Sharing, Crew Quality, Labor Shares, and Wages in the Nineteenth-Century American Whaling Industry," in *American Economic Development in Historical Perspective*, ed. Thomas Weiss and Donald Schaefer (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), 127–67; the Board of Trustees of the Leland Stanford Junior University holds the copyright for this material, which is used here with the permission of the Stanford University Press. A first version of chapter 7 was published as Lance E. Davis and Robert E. Gallman, "The Last 1,945 Sailing Ships," in *The Economics of Informational Decentralization: Complexity, Efficiency, and Stability: Essays in Honor of Stanley Reiter*, ed. John O. Ledyard (Boston: Kluwer Academic, 1995), 159–217; we use the material with the permission of Kluwer Academic Publishers. A first version of chapter 8 was published as Lance E. Davis, Robert E. Gallman, and Teresa D. Hutchins, "Productivity in American Whaling: The New Bedford Fleet in the Nineteenth Century," in *Markets in History: Economic Studies of the Past*, ed. David W. Galenson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 97–147; Cambridge University Press holds the copyright for this material, which is used here with the permission of the press. A first version of chapter 12 was published as Lance E. Davis, Robert E. Gallman, and Teresa D. Hutchins, "Technology, Productivity, and Profits: British-American Whaling Competition in the North Atlantic, 1816–1842," *Oxford Economic Papers* 39, no. 4 (December 1987): 738–59; we use this material by permission of Oxford University Press.

Versions of several chapters were given at meetings at Washington University of St. Louis, the University of Illinois, the University of Chicago, the University of Michigan, Brown University, Yale University, the University of Rochester, the Triangle Workshop in Economic History, the International Economic History Pre-conference at Bellagio and the Conference at Berne, the International Cliometrics Meeting at Santander, and the International Whaling Symposium at Sandefjord. At each meeting we received helpful suggestions, for which we are grateful. David Galenson read chapter 8 with his usual care;

Stan Engerman and Claudia Goldin read the whole manuscript and offered insightful comments; the manuscript reviewers for the University of Chicago Press provided us with most helpful suggestions.

Many friends and acquaintances gave us useful bits of information. At the head of the list are those omnivorous readers Stan Engerman and Peter Coclanis, who sent us a steady stream of references. Robert Evenson suggested a statistical test that proved helpful. Daniel Vickers, Haven Wiley, and Lee Craig offered us valuable advice, based on their own research; David Robinson drew our attention to an essay that filled an important gap in our knowledge; Kathleen Gallagher sent us a very rare book on whaling; Bates Buckner brought us back whaling materials from Hawaii; and Margo Shaw of the Looking Glass Cafe kept two of the authors in good spirits through many a working lunch and dinner. From Deborah Coclanis we obtained our one piece of physical evidence: a whale's vertebra.

Finally, we thank the NBER, which funded the project in its early phases and managed the NSF grant, and whose members provide us always with encouragement and stimulation.