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PRESTON AND HAINES

FATAL YEARS

# FATAL YEARS



*Child Mortality in Late  
Nineteenth-Century America*

SAMUEL H. PRESTON AND  
MICHAEL R. HAINES

PRINCETON

# FATAL YEARS

*Child Mortality in Late  
Nineteenth-Century America*

SAMUEL H. PRESTON  
AND MICHAEL R. HAINES

*Fatal Years* is the first systematic study of child mortality in the United States in the late nineteenth century. Exploiting newly discovered data from the 1900 Census of Population, Samuel Preston and Michael Haines present their findings in a volume that is not only a pioneering work of demography but also an accessible and moving historical narrative.

Despite having a rich, well fed, and highly literate population, the United States had exceptionally high child-mortality levels during this period: nearly one out of every five children died before the age of five. Preston and Haines challenge accepted opinion to show that losses in privileged social groups were as appalling as those among lower classes. Improvements came only with better knowledge about infectious diseases and greater public efforts to limit their spread. The authors look at a wide range of topics, including differences in mortality in urban versus rural areas and the differences in child mortality among various immigrant groups.

Samuel H. Preston is the Frederick J. Warren Professor of Demography and Professor of Sociology at the University of Pennsylvania. Michael R. Haines is the Banfi Vintners Distinguished Professor of Economics at Colgate University.

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# FATAL YEARS

CHILD MORTALITY IN LATE  
NINETEENTH-CENTURY AMERICA

*Samuel H. Preston and Michael R. Haines*



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