

Author's Note

This book is largely a result of my independent research in a few different topics, namely economic theory and the political and economic history of money. Its reason-for-being had much to do with, in the writer's perception, the conspicuous non-existence of something close enough like it.

I undertook to write it as a non-academic venture. Reading in the areas relevant to this book, particularly in agrarian thought, I got the distinct impression that academics are highly self-conscious of writing within the constraints of pressures and professional norms that don't permit them to get either as particular or as far-ranging as they or their readerships might like. A certain level of restraint from drawing far-reaching conclusions is observed. There are, of course, exceptions to this rule. The benefit of a non-academic work is the freedom to pursue any topic beyond the limitations set by self-restraint, peer-pressure, awareness of career prospects, observation of good taste in academic writing, etc. The detriment of the non-academic work, on the other hand, is the lack of credibility. I have made an effort to refrain from advancing any claim bordering on controversy that cannot be supported by either an academic citation or a primary source. While academics are typically constrained to a narrow and specific effort, non-academics are better situated to produce something halfway between a history-book and an annotated bibliography – something that glues various historical works together in a clear argument which is implied within them *collectively* but which otherwise goes unstated. This conspicuous silence has much to do with to scholarly virtues like self-discipline, self-awareness, and an orientation toward constructive dialogue. For good reasons, many historians prefer to contribute to the field of historical knowledge with constructive works rather than craft pointed arguments using pre-existing materials. The present work is guilty of compiling and shaping their relatively selfless exertions into an argument.

A difficulty corresponding with the one stated above is the broad scope of this book. Both information and its meaning in the 21st century are highly fluid, malleable, and recontextualizable. History is an inexorably political field of study and, unfortunately, American historiography, politics, and the relation between the two have been rife with fateful miscontextualizations, especially in the areas this book deals with. This trend of increasing malleability will likely only intensify in the future. I felt that it was important that any work which seeks to make such an argument as this one does, must also be structured in such a way that safeguards in advance against distortion by making miscontextualization practically impossible. It does so by providing the reader with its own selected means of interpretation.

In consequence, it has taken on a somewhat contrived structure. Another way to say it is that this book is *modular*. It is made up of components that fit together, but are not necessarily a single sequentially-ordered thesis. In light of that modularity, the reader may find it tedious to (attempt to) reconstruct economic theory from the ground up before moving on to the book's core. They may find it more worthwhile to read only the parts that interest them, those most likely being the core elements pertaining directly to monetary things in American history. *I do not object to anyone doing so*, but also consider this book to be a cohesive, albeit manifold, argument.