

## Jeff Chan

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### Business Address

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**Citizenship** Canadian

**Research Interests** Economic History  
International Trade

### Academic Positions

July 2023 - now Associate Professor, Wilfrid Laurier University  
Jan. 2017 – June 2023 Assistant Professor, Wilfrid Laurier University

### Education

2010-2016 PhD, Economics, University of Toronto  
2009-2010 MA, Economics, University of Toronto  
2005-2009 BA, Economics, University of Western Ontario

### Work in Progress

Proving their Loyalty: A Research Note on the Effects of Serving in World War II on Immigrant Outcomes

- Conditionally Accepted, *Demography*

Full Steam Ahead: Steamship Adoption and Trade Flows During the First Golden Age of Globalization

- Revise and Resubmit, *European Economic Review*

Fuelling Change? Access to Coal and Agriculture in the 19th Century

The Geography of Segregation in Canada, 1891-1921

Training Young Minds or Lining their Pockets? Market Access, Child Labour, and Education in the 19th Century

Railroads, Market Access, and Indigenous Land Dispossession (with Azim Essaji and Rob Gillezeau)

Won't You Be My Neighbor? Media, Nation-Building and the Formation of Canadian Identity (with Mathias Bühler and Andrew Dickens)

From Learning to Earning: How Television Shaped Economic Opportunity (with Mathias Bühler and Andrew Dickens)

## **Publications**

Book review: Christopher M. Meissner, *One from the Many, The Global Economy Since 1850* (Oxford University Press, 2024. Pp. 352. ISBN: 9780199924462 PbK \$32), 2025, the *Economic History Review*.

The Effects of the 19th Century US Railroad Expansion on Port-Level Wine Trade Flows (2025), *Journal of Wine Economics*, Vol. 20(2): 181-193.

Railroads, Land Cessions, and Indigenous Nations: Evidence from Canada (with Azim Essaji and Rob Gillezeau)  
Forthcoming, *Canadian Journal of Economics*

Changing the pace of the melting pot: The effects of immigration restrictions on immigrant assimilation (2024), *Journal of Comparative Economics*, Vol. 52(4): 733-754.

The Local Effects of the First Golden Age of Globalization: Evidence from American Ports, 1870-1900  
Forthcoming, *Canadian Journal of Economics*

End of the Line: The Effects of Large Passenger Rail Cuts on Local Economic Outcomes (2024), *Canadian Public Policy*, Vol. 50(4): 422-439.

For Amber Waves of Grain: Commodity Booms and Structural Transformation in Nineteenth Century America (2024), *Canadian Journal of Agricultural Economics*, Vol. 72(4): 489-507.

Banking on Railroads: The Effect of Market Access on Banking Provision During the Gilded Age (2025), *Economic History Review*, Vol. 78(3): 776-801.

Does Anti-Immigration Policy Lead to Protectionism? Evidence from the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act (2024), *Applied Economics Letters*

Force Displacement and Migrants' Location Choices: Evidence from the Japanese-Canadian Experience during World War II (2023), *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, Vol. 211: 206-240.

The long-run effects of childhood exposure to market access shocks: Evidence from the US railroad network expansion (2024), *Explorations in Economic History*, Vol. 91: 101503.

Oil Royalties and the Provision of Public Education in Brazil (2023), *Economics of Education Review*, Vol. 92: 102351.  
(Joint with Ridwan Karim)

Farming Output, Concentration, and Market Access: Evidence from the Nineteenth Century American Railroad Expansion (2022), *Journal of Development Economics*, Vol. 157: 102878.

Viewing the COVID-19 Pandemic from Space: The Effect of COVID-related Mobility Declines on Night Light Brightness in Canada (2022), *Canadian Journal of Regional Science*, Vol. 45(3): 188-198.

The Geography of Social Distancing in Canada: Evidence from Facebook (2020), *Canadian Public*

*Policy*, Vol. 46(S1): S19-S28.

The Effect of Immigration on Local Public Finances (2019), *Economics Bulletin*, Vol. 39(4): 2423-2428.

Tariffs and the Composition of Employment: Evidence from the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (2019), *Canadian Public Policy*, Vol. 45(3): 342-365.

Labour Market Characteristics and Surviving Import Shocks (2019), *The World Economy*, Vol. 45(2): 1288-1315.

The Effect of College Education on Intolerance: Evidence from Google Search Data (2019), *Applied Economics Letters*, Vol. 26(2): 83-86.

Market Access and Occupational Upgrading: Evidence from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century American Transportation Network (2018), *Applied Economics*, Vol. 50(45): 4879-4900.

Does Import Competition Worsen the Gender Gap? Evidence from Matched Employer-Employee Data (2018), *Economics Letters*, Vol. 165(C): 13-16.

The Long-Run Impact of the Power Loom: Evidence from 19th Century Prussia (2014), *Economics Bulletin*, Vol. 34(3): 1776-1791.

### **Chapters in Books and Policy Papers**

How Social Media and Cellphone Data Can be Used to Measure Mobility During Pandemics  
-Chapter in eBook prepared for Data and Privacy during a Global Pandemic Conference

### **Awards and Grants (since 2017)**

Laurier Centre for Economic Research & Policy Analysis Grant (\$1,325), 2023

*Canadian Public Policy* Referee of the Year, 2021

Cole Grant-in-Aid (5,000 USD), 2022

SSHRC Insight Development Grant (\$24,821), 2019-2021

Laurier Centre for Economic Research & Policy Analysis Grant (\$1,461), 2019

Freure Homes Student Assistantship Award, 2017

Laurier Centre for Economic Research & Policy Analysis Grant (\$1,153), 2017

### **Conference Presentations (since 2017)**

2026: American Economic Association Meeting (Philadelphia, scheduled)

2025: Canadian Network of Economic History Conference (Montreal), Economic History Society Conference (Glasgow UK), Canadian Economics Association (Montreal)

2024: Asia-Pacific Economic and Business History Conference (Honolulu), Canadian Economics Association (Toronto), Social Science History Association Conference (Toronto), Canadian International Trade Study Group Conference (Burlington)

2023: Canadian Economics Association (Winnipeg), Western Economic Association (San Diego), Economic History Association Conference (Pittsburgh), Canadian Network of Economic History Conference (Toronto)

2022: Canadian Economics Association (Ottawa), NARSC (Montreal)

2021: Canadian Economics Association (virtual), European Economic Association (virtual)

2020: Western Economic Association (virtual), European Economic Association (virtual), U. of

Waterloo Data and Privacy during a Global Pandemic Conference (invited speaker, virtual)  
 2019: Canadian Economics Association (Banff), NARSC (Pittsburgh)  
 2018: Canadian Economics Association (Montreal), Western Economic Association (Vancouver)  
 2017: Canadian Economics Association (Antigonish), NARSC (Vancouver)

### **Seminar Presentations (since 2017)**

2025: UBC Okanagan  
 2024: Wilfrid Laurier University (Internal Seminar)  
 2023: University of Texas – RGV  
 2022: Wilfrid Laurier University (Internal Seminar), Toronto Metropolitan University  
 2018: Brock University

### **Teaching**

#### Wilfrid Laurier University

EC239: International Trade (W17, W18, W19, W20, W21, W22, W23)  
 EC285: Introductory Statistics (W17, W18, W19)  
 EC395: Applied Econometrics (W25, W26)  
 EC639: International Trade – MA (W20, W21, W22, W23)

### **Supervision (MA Students)**

Yuxuan Zhong (S17), Sebastian Stanglmeier (W18), Harrison Domagala (F19), Charles Kwak (co-supervisor, F19), Joshua Cooney (co-supervisor, W20), Nicole Catarino (S20), Melis Kaya (S20), Xiangyan Yao (S21), Hari Patel (W25)

### **Departmental and University Service**

LTA Hiring Committee (2024-25)  
 LCERPA Director (2024-25, 2025-26)  
 Mentor Coordinator (2024-25, 2025-26)  
 External Seminars Committee (2024-25)  
 Lazaridis Merit Committee (2024-25)  
 Chair Nominations Committee (2022-23)  
 Internal Seminar Committee (2022-23)  
 Undergraduate Petitions Committee (2021-22, 2022-23)  
 Internal Research Grant Review Committee (2020-21)  
 Part-Time Appointment Committee (2019-20)  
 Ontario Universities' Fair Volunteer (2018)  
 Graduate Program Committee (2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21)  
 Departmental Hiring Committee (2017-18)  
 Library Coordinator (2017-18)

### **Professional Service**

Canadian Economics Association CEDC/CWEC Mentoring Committee Co-Chair (2025-26)

### **Refereeing**

American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, Annals of Regional Science, Applied Economics (x3), Applied Economics Letters, British Journal of Political Science, Canadian Journal of Economics (x6), Canadian Medical Association Journal, Canadian Public Policy (x7), Economic Inquiry (x5), Economic Systems, Economics of Education Review, Education Economics, European Review of Economic

History, Explorations in Economic History (x2), Feminist Economics, Industrial and Corporate Change, ILR Review, Journal of Economic Geography (x2), Journal of Economic History (x4), Journal of Economic Studies, Journal of Economics & Management Strategy (x2), Journal of the European Economic Association (x2), Journal of Regional Science, South African Journal of Economics

## Abstracts (Works in Progress)

### Railroads, Market Access, and Indigenous Land Dispossession (with Azim Essaji and Rob Gillezeau)

The expansion of the United States across the North American continent displaced and dispossessed hundreds of Indigenous nations. Historians have long argued that this process was hastened by improved transportation links resulting from the construction of the railway. In this paper, we explore empirically the question of whether increased market access, as facilitated by railway building, accelerated the displacement and dispossession of Indigenous peoples and nations. Using spatial data containing all Indigenous land cessions up to 1894 in what is today the United States, we find that increases in market access increased the probability of Indigenous land cessions within that decade. Reductions in transport costs and growing populations in US counties both play important roles in explaining market access's overall effect. Finally, we find evidence that market access-induced land dispossession led to greater assimilation with settler populations, shorter heights for those born after dispossession, and modestly higher long-run incomes. Our findings indicate that increasing market access hastened the dispossession of Indigenous peoples and influenced on their socio-economic outcomes post-dispossession.

### Fuelling Change? Access to Coal and Occupational Choice in the 19th Century

I examine the role that coal proximity plays in determining occupational choice in the 19th century United States. Using linked full-count Censuses from 1870 to 1900, I find that increasing proximity to coal fields increases the likelihood that an individual works in agriculture and lives on a farm. I then use Census of Agriculture county-level data to show that increased access to coal induces more agricultural activity while increasing productivity and mechanization on farms. My results point to the role that access to coal played in structural transformation for the US during the Gilded Age.

### Full Steam Ahead: Steamship Adoption and Trade Flows During the First Golden Age of Globalization

From 1870 to 1910, shipping to and from the US transitioned from an industry dominated by sail-powered ships to one where steam accounted for virtually 100% of shipping. I study the effects of the rapid adoption of the steamship on US port-level trade flows and their composition, leveraging cross-port differences in the speed and extent of steamship usage over time. In order to conduct this analysis, I digitize port-level trade flows disaggregated by product and port-level tables of shipping volume broken down by sail versus steam. I find that ports which increased their proportion of steam in shipping volumes increased trade by diversifying their trade flows. This diversification occurred along two dimensions: trading partner countries and products. In other words, ports which adopted steam saw more trade, driven principally by products and countries which were not initially dominant in that port's trade in 1870. The results in this paper therefore suggest that one way in which trade diversification can occur is via the lowering of transport costs.

### The Geography of Segregation in Canada, 1891-1921

Using full-count census microdata from the Canadian census, I construct measures of residential segregation for immigrants in Canada from 1891 to 1921. The availability of the full-count data coupled with the original structure and nature of the census enumeration allows me to infer the nativity of each immigrant household's neighbours, which I use to construct residential segregation measures at the Census Division level, similar to Logan and Parman (2017) and Eriksson and Ward (2019). I find that immigrants exhibited a high degree of segregation during this time, but that considerable spatial

heterogeneity was also present across Canada. I document these patterns and show that segregation, while high throughout my sample period, was notably declining. I then further explore the richness of the data by producing segregation measures at the Census Division level for each country of origin and find that different immigrant groups experienced very different ranges of residential segregation. Countries from Eastern Europe and Asia regularly topped the list of origins that had the highest levels of segregation, while traditional countries of origins such as Ireland, the USA, and Scotland had the lowest levels of segregation. Taken together, the results in this paper show that segregation of immigrants was pervasive in early 20th century Canada, but that its presence was also uneven across space, time, and immigrant groups.

### Training Young Minds or Lining their Pockets? Market Access, Child Labour, and Education in the 19th Century

The construction of the railroad and subsequent ubiquity of the train as a mode of transport of people and goods led to a huge reorientation of the American economic landscape and increases to economic activity and the overall size of the country. I investigate whether the massive rollout of the United States' railroad network from 1870 to 1910 and these subsequent shifts had an effect on child labour and education. While market access could increase education due to the provision of better economic opportunities and increased incentives to invest in children's futures, improved labour market prospects might induce children to enter employment earlier than they otherwise may have, sacrificing educational attainment to do so. I explore this empirical issue and find, in contrast, that literacy rates, employment rates, and school attendance rates all increased for children in counties that saw increases in market access. I reconcile these seemingly contradictory results by showing that children were disproportionately less likely to remain idle, or out of both school and work, when market access increased in their counties.