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crucial. One example: the trial of Wayne Williams for two of the "Atlanta child murders." The evidence on which the jury convicted him in 1982 was largely circumstantial and scientific. Technicians asserted that microspectrophotometers and other instruments showed that fibers found on the victims matched those in a carpet at Williams's home. Statisticians calculated the odds against coincidence. It was said that only one in 7,792 Atlanta-area homes might have carpets of Williams's color (green) and brand (West Point Pepperell).

For a time, courts assiduously curbed scientific evidence following *Frye v. United States*. In that 1923 ruling, the U.S. Supreme Court rejected evidence from an experimental "systolic-blood pressure deception test" (a precursor of the polygraph); no technique or theory, it said, could be used in court before it won "general acceptance" in its field. For a half-century, most federal courts and at least 45 state benches hewed to that standard. They barred analysis of hair samples by ion microprobes and trace-metal detection techniques to determine, say, if a murder suspect had held a metal object. But during the 1970s, the *Frye* ruling was relaxed. Society, a Florida judge said, should not tolerate homicide while waiting for some "body of medical literature" to sanction evidence.

By 1985, *Frye* had been eroded in roughly a third of U.S. court jurisdictions. And most courts, meanwhile, have eased the "ultimate fact" prohibition, which long barred "experts" from addressing the basic issue before the court. For example, Imwinkelried notes, psychiatrists may now testify, on the basis of one "highly suspect" cellblock interview, whether a defendant is insane or potentially violent.

Imwinkelried does not want science barred altogether from the courts. But judges and juries are too impressed by specialists, who may show more assurance on the stand than they do in their labs. "Someone must take responsibility" for fully explaining their limitations.

### *Why Lynn Was Loved*

"Rural-Urban Migrants in Industrial New England: The Case of Lynn, Massachusetts, in the Mid-19th Century" by Thomas Dublin, in *The Journal of American History* (Dec. 1986), 112 North Bryan St., Bloomington, Ind. 47401.

Lynn, Mass., was already a thriving shoemaking town in 1750, when Welsh-born John Adams Dagys conceived a mass-production system there. In his small shop, workers cut leather into uppers that were sent out for binding by farmers and their wives. With such methods, by 1795 Lynn firms were making 300,000 pairs of footwear annually. By the mid-1800s, Lynn was the U.S. center of women's shoe- and boot-making.

Yet Lynn was not just Shoe Town, U.S.A. In an unstable era, marked by the fading of New England agriculture, it was stable. In other factory towns, people came and went. Rural folk who moved to Lowell, a textile town near Lynn, during 1850-80 rarely stayed beyond four or five years. Those who came to Lynn stayed 26 years on average. The population climbed from 14,000 in 1850 to more than 38,000 in 1880.

Why was Lynn so favored? Dublin, a historian at the University of

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California, San Diego, has found that it offered more than mere work.

Dublin traced the paths of 364 people from four nearby counties who were in Lynn in 1865. Many migrants then were in their teens or 20s, the unwed offspring of farm families. For young females in most New England mill towns, social life and potential spouses were scarce; Employers relied chiefly on women workers. At one point, Lowell was 60 percent female. But Lynn, whose firms hired women *and* men, had gender parity. Of the 74 in Dublin's study who first appeared in Lynn censuses as single boarders, 62 married in the town—and stayed on an average of 35 years.

Lynn had another draw: upward mobility. The "put-out" work of the shoe firms helped farmers; the diary of a Miss Ivory Hill recorded \$240 in income from shoemaking in 1857. But those who toiled in Lynn itself could fare even better. Of the 70 people in Dublin's study who started as semi-skilled shoemakers, 33 moved on. Only five "descended into lower-paying occupations." Seven found skilled work, eight got white-collar jobs, and 13 rose to "the ranks of manufacturers and suppliers." Notes Dublin: "Clearly, there were rewards for persistence in the city."

Indeed, 188 of Dublin's 364 migrants lived out their lives in Lynn. Prosperity did not bring ease: Lynn was a hotbed of labor agitation. But it was spared the human ebb and flow that swept most New England towns. In the biggest, Boston, the turnover during the 1880s was four times the population at the start of the decade.



*Three generations of the Phillip Chase family, photographed circa 1850, ex-country folk who found the good life making women's shoes in Lynn, Mass.*