Unfortunately, although I had to read their main works, at the time I remained oblivious to their full significance, namely, that they represent two extremes of historiography that have remained throughout the history of history - two approaches to how history is created and written. These themes are the background for this paper. However, before I go any further I want to make a clarification - Philip was keen that my presentation remain consistent with the theme of the conference - history and the state. Accounting: historical perspectives. With the establishment of the first English colonies in America, accounting, or bookkeeping, as the discipline was referred to then, quickly assumed an important role in the development of American commerce. Two hundred years, however, would pass before accounting would separate from bookkeeping, and nearly three hundred years would pass before the profession of accounting as it is practiced in the twenty-first century would emerge. Although corporations (e.g., banks, canal companies) were present in the United States prior to the early 1800s, their numbers were few. History of Public Accounting in the United States. New York: Garland. Hills, George H. (1982). 1. History of Accounting By John R. Alexander at Net Gain. © 2002 Association of Chartered Accountants in the United States 341 Lafayette St., Ste. 4246 • New York, NY 10012-2417 • (212) 334-2078. 2. Table of ContentsIntroduction. But perhaps the most compelling reason is to help explain the phenomenal growth that the profession of accountancy has enjoyed worldwide since the first royal charters were granted to the Society of Accountants in Edinburgh less than 150 years ago. In 1904, 50 years after the emergence of the formal profession, about 6,000 practitioners carried the title of chartered accountant. In 1957, there were 38,690 chartered and incorporated accountants (Scottish, British and Irish).