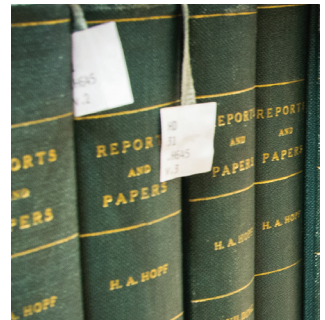


“Ours Is a Business Civilization”

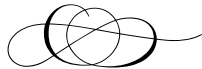
The University of Oklahoma
Bass Business History Collection
With Annotated Bibliography of Fifty Treasures

By Jeffrey M. Wilhite



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Introduction

Imagine having the opportunity to explore oversize seventeenth-century parchment edicts of kings, stacks of gold-plated coins, boxes of 1930s stock certificates, and modern ledger books; to review inestimable incunabula from before Gutenberg; and to flip through personal files of business tycoons, maps of railroads, and scores of historically significant photographs. That was the opportunity afforded Oxford University scholar Chris Nitschke when, in 2017, he visited the University of Oklahoma Bass Business History Collection to find the specific archival resources he needed.

“I first heard of the Bass Business History Collection when I researched archival collections for my dissertation,” said Nitschke. “I admit I was surprised at first to learn that Oklahoma University would hold the archives of J. & W. Seligman & Co., a private bank founded in the nineteenth century. Yet it [traveling to Oklahoma] gave me a chance to shake things up a little bit in terms of destinations on my East Coast-heavy research trip.”

Nitschke came to the University of Oklahoma specifically to research the material in the Seligman Archives, one of the most important segments of the Bass Collection. “The Seligman Archives had looked very useful the first time I had looked at the online finding aid, and getting here did not change things. A more detailed printed finding aid allowed me to locate some additional material I would have overlooked otherwise. The material I targeted all along—original letter books by the partners of Seligman’s international bank—proved incredibly valuable.”

After a few days of research in Bass, Nitschke found what he was looking for: “Fortunately they [the Seligman letter books] covered just about the time period I was interested in . . . the Harry Bass Collection is in excellent shape.”¹

The experience of this international researcher is not unique to students and other researchers: the Bass Business Collection is a hidden gem of immense value.

Origins of the Bass Business History Collection

The story of the Bass Business History Collection, like most tales told in retrospect, has many origins. Was the collection the idea of Texas oilman Harry W. Bass, who gave the founding donation? Was it the brainchild of fastidious OU business faculty member and first curator Ronald Shuman? Did the collection begin with the almost larger-than-life millionaire oilman Everette DeGolyer, who donated the volumes that became the University's History of Science Collection? Or with resourceful OU president George Lynn Cross, or his aide-de-camp Savoie Lottinville? Or possibly even Arthur McAnally, director of the OU Libraries at the time?

It was, in fact, all of them at once.

The true origins of the Bass Collection can be traced in Shuman's scattered books and papers. A distinguished OU business professor, Shuman had an intense interest in the history of business. In the 1946–47 school year, Shuman premiered a course in the history of management as a senior-level elective in the College of Business. No textbook existed, so he had to rely on materials found in the OU Libraries.² After DeGolyer's magnanimous 1949 donation that began the History of Science Collection, Shuman mentioned to President Cross the benefits that a business history collection would add to the University.³ Shuman's subtle suggestions to Cross continued, but with no immediate result.

It was not until the *coup de foudre* of Everette DeGolyer, striding up to President Cross, announcing the idea of a business history collection, and providing the name of a possible donor, that the idea began to take flight. Cross's interest was now piqued, knowing Shuman's own interest in the project, especially given DeGolyer's imprimatur of a potential patron. The name DeGolyer suggested was that of his friend and fellow Texas oilman Harry Bass, whose family had deep ties to Oklahoma, which dated all the way back to the 1893 Land Run.⁴

History of the Bass Family

The story of Enid, Oklahoma's celebrated Bass Family and their long history in Oklahoma began with the speeding horses, bouncing buggies, and racing feet of the Cherokee Outlet Land Run. Amid the hoots and hollers of an estimated 100,000 participants in this historic occasion—the largest of all the land runs—pioneer Daniel Clarence Bass made the run and settled his family in the newly founded city of Enid.

Daniel was a carpenter and soon established the D.C. Bass and Sons Construction Company out of Enid. He and his wife, Sophie Ackerman Bass, had many children, including brothers Harry and Henry.

In the 1910s, Harry attended the fledgling University of Oklahoma. He became a student in the OU School of Business Administration until the end of his junior year in 1917, when he entered the U.S. Army. Harry then served his country in the 82nd Field Artillery during World War I.⁵

After Harry's return to the states and civilian life, he worked as a bank teller in Enid. His banking life came to an abrupt halt as soon as he realized the wide gap between his pay and that of local oil field workers, so he packed up his belongings and headed to the booming Texas oil fields for more gainful employment.⁶ By 1925, he had formed his first oil company, Champlin & Bass, and by 1928 he had developed the first portable drilling mast, the A-frame derrick that is still in use today.⁷

During this time, Harry's brother Henry B. Bass attended the University of

Missouri and also served in the army during World War I, as a second lieutenant. After the war, Henry returned to Enid to work in the family's construction business, taking it to national prominence.⁸ In the late 1930s, Henry's son Robert ("Bob") and daughter Barbara both attended the University of Oklahoma, where Bob was a student of petroleum engineering and a member of the Phi Delta Theta fraternity.

As war beset the world again, the young men and women of America responded by volunteering their service. Bob left OU and enlisted in 1939. In western Germany in 1945, tragedy struck the Bass family: Bob was killed in action. He had been overseas since 1944 with the 324th Combat Engineers, attached to the 99th Infantry Division. He participated in the Battle of the Bulge, but was killed afterward on February 7, 1945, while his division was fighting its way through the Siegfried Line, in an effort to blow up a pillbox occupied by German troops.⁹

By the end of the war, four other Enid Phi Delta Thetas from the University of Oklahoma lost their lives in military service.¹⁰ Such losses were felt strongly in the heartland and were mourned at the University. The men from the University lost in World War II now have their names memorialized on the "Lest We Forget" plaque in OU's Student Union.¹¹

After his death, Bob's jeep driver wrote his fellow serviceman's parents a poignant letter of condolence: "He was more than an officer to us. He was my friend. He was my officer, and I can honestly say that he personified the high ideals of the uniform he wore so proudly. . . . Truly, he was our leader in every sense of the word." Robert Bass was buried in a German cemetery where he and eighteen thousand other Americans were interred. (His body was later returned to Enid.¹²)

In 1945, Harry and his wife, Wilma, founded the Bass Foundation in Dallas, a trust designed to support charitable, scientific, literary, religious, and educational purposes. In 1947, Harry and Henry, in honor of their nephew and son respectively, established The Robert Dean Bass Memorial Scholarship at the University of Oklahoma. The scholarship was awarded for the first time in fall 1948, when approximately \$600 was given to William C. McGehee, a junior majoring in arts and sciences.¹³

After the establishment of this scholarship, the Bass family began to work more closely with the University of Oklahoma. In 1953, when the University built the Cross Center dormitories for men, individual houses were named for several of OU's fallen. One of the houses was named Bass House, in honor of the late Robert Bass.¹⁴ This dormitory stood for sixty-three years, through many iterations of use, until Cross Center was removed in 2016 and replaced by a second addition of new student residential colleges.



Harry Bass, as painted by Frederic Mizen (1888-1964).

The Start of the Collection

By the late 1940s, Texas oilman Everette Lee DeGolyer, one of the founders of geophysics, had amassed a fortune prospecting for oil. Like Harry Bass, DeGolyer was an alumnus of OU who wanted to give back to his alma mater. In December 1949, DeGolyer provided the University with an initial loan of 129 rare volumes, from his personal library, focusing on the history of science. These books became the cornerstone of OU's world-famous History of Science Collections.¹⁵

In 1954, shortly before the Christmas holidays, DeGolyer and Bass met for lunch in Dallas to discuss the idea DeGolyer had been pondering: the establishment of a business history collection at the University. DeGolyer mentioned that he had already discussed the idea with President Cross and Rhodes Scholar Savoie Lottinville, director of the University of Oklahoma Press, both of whom, according to DeGolyer, were interested in the project.

At that same lunch, DeGolyer suggested to Bass that a gift of \$10,000 would get the enterprise going and would be an appropriate way for Bass to support the institution. To DeGolyer's delight, Bass agreed. In August 1955, after Bass visited the school and met with Business School dean Horace Brown and library director Arthur McAnally, he sent a \$10,000 check to establish the Business History Collection.¹⁶ At the time, this was one of the largest gifts the University had ever received. The gift was quickly followed by another gift of \$7,000 from Bass for the same cause.¹⁷

Now a resident of Dallas, Harry Bass had become a well-known independent oil and gas producer, and president of the Texas Mid-Continent Oil and Gas Association, the state's largest organization of oil and gas producers. He was also president of the Harry Bass Drilling Company of Dallas, the Goliad Corporation of Corpus Christi, and the Trinity Gas Corporation of Dallas. In addition, in June 1955, he served as aide to Secretary of the Interior Douglas McKay for the Fourth World Petroleum Congress.¹⁸

In 1955, Cross announced the inauguration of the new library collection, to be named "The Bass Business History Collection." Upon this announcement, Dean Brown said, "We feel that the collection will have great usefulness to the thousands of students who are pursuing careers here in business, economics, history and science. . . . It will also attract researchers in the fields from many parts of the United States."¹⁹ President Cross added: "It is our intention to gather as complete a library as possible relating to the history of business and industry in the country. Obviously it will have profound importance to our understanding of the contributions of business organizations and our civilization."²⁰

In the Footsteps of Giants

The study of business history is the study of the world as we know it, since business permeates all aspects of human life from the mundane to the esoteric. Business history is both very old and very young.²¹ To study the history of business is to study the development of business administration. Specifically business history deals with policy formation and management, but it also focuses on historical business trends in societies, all of which are topics now taught in business schools.²²

Business history did not evolve as an organized and substantial field until the 1920s, and then only sparsely. With the advent of researchers in business history and then academic classes on the topic, the next needed resources were dedicated library collections of business history materials. The problem was that business history study centers were nearly non-existent, even by the 1930s. Business history collections existed in Europe, but America lacked a comprehensive collection. That changed with the establishment of the Kress Collection of Business and Economics at Harvard University.

Established in 1938 at the Harvard Business School's Baker Library, the Kress Collection was donated by Claude Washington Kress, a wealthy mercantilist who had made his fortune operating a chain of dime stores in multiple cities across the United States.²³ Kress had purchased the twenty-thousand-volume business history collection from Herbert Somerton Foxwell, who was a professor of Economics at University College London and a fellow at St. John's, Cambridge. The core of volumes that formed Harvard's business history library was the second major collection Foxwell had gathered and then sold; the first, consisting of thirty thousand business history volumes, had already gone to supplement the business history collection of Goldsmiths College Library, University of London.

The Kress Collection at Baker Library included rare books, pamphlets, broadsides, manuscripts, and prints, with the earliest imprint dating back to 1474 and the latest 1850, although over the years some pre-1474 and post-1850 materials were added. From its founding, the strengths within the Baker collection included the history of political economy, economic philosophy, finance, agriculture, and trading and manufacturing.²⁴

After its founding, other collections were donated to the Baker Library. In 1935, Jane Bancroft, the widow of the Boston newspaper publisher Hugh Bancroft, presented her husband's extensive South Sea Bubble collection. In 1939, the Vanderblue collection of Smithiana was donated. Originally the private collection of Homer B. Vanderblue, a former professor at the Harvard Business School, the Ban-

croft collection was considered the most complete assemblage of works by economist Adam Smith in the world. In 1975, the New York firm of Arnhold and S. Bleichroeder donated to the library the remarkable print collection of their colleague F. H. Brunner. This collection included more than one thousand engravings, etchings, and lithographs from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries related exclusively to money, banking, and financial history.²⁵

Over its years of careful curatorship, the Baker Library continued to collect, preserve, and provide access to unique resources that focused on the evolution of business and industry, and supported research and teaching in a diverse range of disciplines. Presently, the Baker Library contains the most comprehensive collection of historical materials on business and industry in the world, dating from the late 1300s to the present day. Manuscript, print, visual, and other formats are available to academic and scholarly researchers, with extensive eighteenth- and nineteenth-century—and a growing focus on contemporary—business materials.²⁶ Today, the Baker Library, now with thirty-four thousand volumes, continues to be the most important center for business history in the United States, as well as one of the most important business history centers in the world.

In the 1950s, as the Bass Collection was being founded, there were only a handful of other emerging business history collections besides the Baker. These included dedicated business history collections at Yale University, the New York Public Library, the Huntington Library, and the University of Minnesota.²⁷ With Harvard's Baker Library as a touchstone and aspirational guidepost, the burgeoning University of Oklahoma Bass Business History Collection had quite a ways to go in establishing itself. But unlike the Baker, which was initially purchased, the Bass collection would have to be built from scratch, over time.

Ronald B. Shuman and the Building of the Bass Collection

The initial management of the new collection was given to the Bass Collection Committee, composed of members of the OU faculty and staff.²⁸ The actual assemblage of the business history collection, which was expected to take several years, was put in the very capable hands of professor Ronald B. Shuman, of the College of Business Administration.

Shuman was a native of Minnesota and served in World War II as a member of General Dwight Eisenhower's staff. During the war, he hand-delivered the Allied invasion plans of Europe to Eisenhower.²⁹ Shuman came to the University in 1935, and by 1955 was one of its most distinguished faculty members. He had written several books and numerous articles both on the principles and history of business management and on the petroleum and natural gas industries.³⁰ As mentioned previously, it was Shuman who had first confessed to President Cross his desire for OU to have a world-class business history collection, so he was eager to begin collecting.³¹ In accordance with his research interests and his class on the History of Management, Shuman was thrilled to helm the collection and begin acquiring works for it.³²

As curator, caretaker, and steward, Shuman worked to develop the Bass Collection philosophy. The first tenet he had for the collection included the basic notion held by Harry Bass that "ours is in a very important sense a business civilization, and that an understanding of the record of business achievement, while fundamental to a rounded appreciation of the nature of our society, had been too often neglected in the institutions of higher education."³³

Shuman's second tenet was to approach the term "business history" generally, so that the scope of the collection embraced not merely histories of individuals and companies but also antecedent and complementary materials calculated to "place" the importance of business life and development as a vital element of the whole social order.³⁴ According to Shuman, "The strength of our collection . . . is that it takes a broad view. The best collection is not just histories of companies and men, but much more. The Bass collection, for instance, includes a few books on witchcraft which furnish valuable material on the atmosphere of business climate in early-day Massachusetts and New England. The collection is not restricted to a particular period, and materials date back to pre-historic times."³⁵

"The ultimate significance of the Bass Collection as a tool for study and research may be almost without limit," stated Shuman. "The great bulk of the American people find their livelihood in the basic forms of economic activity. Ours is a business civilization. Whether business is a 'profession' is debatable in terms of both semantics and the observed realities of life. That it is an enormously significant art and practice, vital to the existence of the social order, is self-evident. Both directly and indirectly the Bass Collection can make a most substantial contribution to a clear understanding of the past and the present of our economic structure."³⁶

A Dedicated Collection

Shuman's initial approach to building the collection was to pursue titles listed in Henrietta M. Larson's seminal work *Guide to Business History*.³⁷ He also perused bookdealers' catalogs and developed "Want Lists," which he would send out to booksellers and auction houses. Over time the collection grew, and the University worked toward building a new addition onto the original 1929 Bizzell Memorial Library building, with rooms dedicated to the library's burgeoning special collections.

In 1958, Harry Bass attended the opening ceremonies of the \$2,700,000 addition to the Bizzell Memorial Library, along with Frank Phillips, Everette DeGolyer, and the William Bennett Bizzell families.³⁸ This addition had a series of rooms on the second floor built specifically to house the growing Bass Business History Collection.

The crown of this new space was a recently painted portrait of Harry Bass by Frederic Mizen (1888–1964). Mizen was famous for his work in advertising, including billboards for Coca-Cola and covers for *Collier's Magazine* and the *Saturday Evening Post*. It seems appropriate that a business artist would paint the portrait of the businessman who donated the business library. With the Bass Collection now housed behind a very business-like mahogany and glass front entrance, Shuman continued to collect materials to fill the new area. He estimated that between 30,000 and 35,000 carefully selected books would be necessary to put the Bass Collection among the top three or four in the field. By 1960, the Bass Collection consisted of approximately 5,000 books, a solid number for only five years of collecting.³⁹

During the 1960s, the Bass brothers continued their support of the University. First, Harry continued making yearly donations for book purchases, once his initial \$17,000 endowment funds had been expended.⁴⁰ In 1964, Henry, now a successful builder in Enid, became a member of the Board of Directors of the University of Oklahoma Foundation, and his brother Harry was awarded OU's Distinguished Citizen's Award in 1964, along with Dr. George M. Sutton and Walter Neustadt, Sr.⁴¹

In 1966, Harry Bass provided funds for Shuman and colleague Duane H. D. Roller to visit Europe on a book buying trip. Roller was the tenacious curator of the History of Science Collections and was purchasing volumes for that collection, while Shuman was purchasing for Bass. Whereas Roller had been on a book-buying trip to Europe before, this was Shuman's first time to comb the European book markets. The professors met at intervals during the summer to compare notes on their purchases and travels.⁴²

During the 1960s, Shuman also produced a translation of one of the greatest treasures of the Bass Collection: its earliest volume, a 1468 edition of *De Contractibus Mercatorum*, by Johannes Nider (ca. 1380–1438). Shuman worked with an OU professor of classics to translate the valuable incunabulum (meaning “from the cradle,” the term for books published pre-1500, before Gutenberg’s moveable type). Harry Bass paid for the volume’s publication, as it reflected the high level of academic research and professionalism that could emanate from his collection.⁴³

By the end of the decade, after the book-buying trip and Shuman’s other acquisitions, the number of volumes in the Bass Collection increased to fourteen thousand, mostly historic in nature, with some very rare incunabula. Nationwide exceptional business history volumes were becoming harder to locate; since Bass was established in 1955, there had been a number of new and competing business history collections founded in the United States, including one at UCLA.⁴⁴ Thus the once small pool of rare historical business volumes suddenly became even smaller with new buyers added to the fray. Despite the competition, the Bass Collection grew and began to be compared favorably as second only to Harvard’s Baker Library.⁴⁵

The 1970s were a time of great change in the collection. In 1970, Harry Bass passed away, but his sons, Harry W. Bass, Jr., and Richard D. Bass, after a pause, followed in their father’s interest and began to fund the Bass Collection. Acting in the name of their father, they took the lead in providing yearly private funds for book buying. In 1971, during a brief gap in donations, the collection almost closed as there was no money to pay the employees. Ever-vigilant Dr. Shuman—so dedicated to the collection—came to the rescue and paid employees out of his own pocket to keep the collection open to the public.⁴⁶

In 1972, the North Central Association accreditation board conducted its regular ten-year review of the University. In its comments about the strengths of the University, it listed the special collections in the library as an area of national eminence. The accreditation board singled out the Bass Business History Collection by name and urged the University to continue its development of this collection.⁴⁷ The year 1972 was a high note for the collection but was also the year Shuman announced his retirement due to health issues.

During his eighteen years (1955–1973) as curator of the Bass Collection, Shuman distilled his philosophy for the collection into one primary purpose: “Our main interest,” he said, “has been to build toward a library unit so rounded that it can continue to be a practical, highly useful tool for study and research, not merely on exhibit for the casual visitor to stare at.”⁴⁸

Daniel A. Wren and the Growth of the Collection

Shuman chose as his successor a business management professor from Florida State, Daniel A. Wren, who had written an important book that was being used in OU business classes. Wren joined the OU business faculty in 1973 with added responsibilities for curating the Bass Collection, which then held fifteen thousand volumes.⁴⁹ Originally from Missouri, Wren successfully took the reins from Shuman to lead the collection forward. “The basic philosophy of the Bass Collection is a simple one,” Wren said. “An understanding of the historical record of business achievement is fundamental to a rounded appreciation of the entire nature of our society.”⁵⁰

As the seventies turned to the eighties, the library began to outgrow its walls and another addition to the building was planned. After much debate between OU president William S. Banoswky, library dean Sul Lee, and the State Regents of Higher Education, funding was secured and construction began in 1979. The Neustadt Wing of the Bizzell Memorial Library opened in 1981, complete with plaza and watchtower, with the entire fifth floor dedicated to the special collections, where the Bass Collection would have an impressive new home.

Located alongside the prestigious History of Science Collections, Bass now had its own reading room, offices, and vault. This secure, technologically advanced area also had fire protection devices, security arrangements, and humidity controls to preserve materials and ensure the longevity of the collection.⁵¹ It was during this period that Bass was compared even more favorably to the Baker Library by the University of Oklahoma dean of the College of Business Administration: “Although second to Harvard University’s collection in terms of total volumes—in terms of actual usefulness to the student, many rank it [the Bass Collection] as the number one collection of its sort in the country.”⁵²

In this new space, Wren continued to build the collection, courting donors for the special collection of business history resources, so that these archival collections could continue to provide valuable primary information for researchers.⁵³ In 1983, alumnus John W. Phariss donated forty-one boxes of materials on business and economic history after he saw an article on Bass in one of OU’s alumni newsletters. In 1984, the General Electric Co. donated the Harry Hopf Collection, which consisted of twenty-five boxes of materials on early-twentieth-century management. In 1987, the Sears Corporation donated Sears’s catalogs in microfiche and paper dating back to 1897.

Also in 1987, the largest and most important special collection within the

Bass Business History Collection was donated, the one Oxford scholar Chris Nitschke would later come to Oklahoma to review: the J. & W. Seligman & Company files. Containing more than fifty thousand pages of documents covering the lengthy history of the Seligman banking family, this collection would soon become the most used collection in all of Bass, with scholars regularly visiting from all over the world to utilize its unique resources.

During the 1990s, two major gifts arrived. In 1991, Price-Waterhouse donated the Management Horizons Retail Intelligence System, which contained reproduced copies of previously available reports from the advisory company. In 1999, the Robert Kahn Collection was donated, which included records of business dealings with Walmart as well as with Bill and Hillary Clinton. This donation is the last great gift to the Bass Collection to date. Each of these donations have added dimension to Bass and increased the unique archival research capacity of the collection as a whole.

In the meantime, other business history collections continued to grow and develop across the United States. The Library of Congress developed its Science, Technology & Business Division, with a section on the history of business.⁵⁴ The Smithsonian Libraries developed their Trade Literature Collection, which included catalogs and books from the merchandising of the American business collection, an internationally known source for the history of American business, technology, marketing, consumption, and design.⁵⁵ Another Everette DeGolyer donation formed the DeGolyer Library at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, which developed an exceptional collection of business and transportation materials, focusing in particular on the history of railroads.⁵⁶ In addition to these material collections, with the rise of the internet in the 1990s, business history collections began to develop online, including Stanford's Apple corporate history collections.⁵⁷

Under Wren's guidance (1973–2014), the Bass Collection grew from 15,000 volumes to 22,000 volumes, becoming the second-largest business and economic history resource in the United States, after Harvard's Baker Library.⁵⁸ Wren continued to teach in the business school and in 1989 was named a David Ross Boyd Professor of Management, as he had consistently ranked in the top percentile on student evaluations. He had also received the Outstanding Faculty Award by OU's Student Government Association and had received the prestigious Merrick Foundation Teaching Award in American Free Enterprise.⁵⁹

During the 1980s and '90s, the extended Bass family continued its generous interaction with the University. After the passing of Harry in 1970, the Bass Memorial Scholarship was sustained by his wife, Wilma.⁶⁰ In 1980, Henry Bass donated his extensive collection of Lincolnia to the OU Libraries Western History Collec-

tions. This collection included a poem—Lincoln’s favorite—written in the president’s own hand: “Mortality (O! Why Should the Spirit of Mortal be Proud),” by William Knox, as well as a book of poems personally owned by Lincoln.⁶¹

In 2000, Wren retired from teaching at the University of Oklahoma but remained the curator of the Bass History Collection. He continued to build the collection, adding full-text materials online and purchasing historically valuable volumes. In 2005, as a testament to his highly valued abilities, he was asked to return to the Price College of Business as interim dean for two years.⁶²

In 2014, Bizzell Library’s fifth floor was renovated. The Bass Collection Reading Room was refashioned as part of the History of Science exhibition space, but its resources remained intact.⁶³ In fact, now that it shared its space with the History of Science reading room, the Bass Collection’s hours increased due to the greater number of trained staff available to answer questions. In addition, this renovation merged publicity (including displays) of the two collections and added additional management oversight to the Bass Collection.

In 2014, Wren retired from his position of curator of the Bass Collection, after forty-one years of remarkable service. Wren had often quoted Shuman’s declaration: “Ours is a business civilization.” But he also elaborated: “The great bulk of the American people find their livelihood in the basic form of economic activity. Both directly and indirectly, the Bass Collection makes a substantial contribution to a clear understanding of past and present economic structures.”⁶⁴

Under Wren’s competent leadership, the Bass Collection grew and expanded to become a world-famous resource.

The Collection Today

As of 2017, the Bass Business History Collection contains 25,000 books, with approximately 2,000 published before 1850.⁶⁵ While books in the English language make up a majority of the collection, other languages and global business and economic developments are covered as well.⁶⁶ There are purely business titles as well as more general works, as the collection’s purpose is to broadly encompass not only biographies of business leaders and firms but also the economic, social, and political forces that influence the role of business in society.⁶⁷

The collection has many books of political and social history in addition to the business titles one would expect to find.⁶⁸ Early books fall into various subject categories, as early writers were not specifically “business” writers. Some of the

early writers were politicians or teachers or noblemen, observing business sometimes from afar through the lens of current or historical events. These early books may contain sections on business or economics but also political, social, and historical observations. Thus many of the older titles may not seem as directly related to “business” as are current titles (compare, for example, John Stuart Mill’s *The Subjection of Women*, from 1869, to Andrew Carnegie’s *The Gospel of Wealth*, from 1889), and that is because the early texts were not written as business tomes but as social reviews that often included business details.

Thus the use of the collection today falls into two main arenas. The older, broader topic books are often used by interdisciplinary researchers, including general historians, business historians, social scientists, and political scientists, in other words those researching historical trends whether in business or otherwise. The more recent, strictly “business” books written by “business” writers are used by contemporary business researchers, such as business students looking to complete a paper, check a citation, or dispute a dubious fact.

The subject matter of the collection includes histories of individual companies and accounts of the world’s leading insurance firms, banks, oil companies, public utilities, manufacturing organizations, steel producers, and so on through a broad spectrum of American and world business life.⁶⁹ Histories of companies and individuals are supplemented by antecedent and complimentary materials that establish the development and importance of business life as a vital element of the social order.⁷⁰

The collection also features numerous biographies of business leaders, including such retail merchants as Marshall Field, Filene, Sears, Wanamaker, Rosenwald, Penney; steel men Carnegie, Gary, Frick; automakers Ford, Chrysler, Sloan; financiers J. P. Morgan, the Stillmans, Mellon, Hetty Green; railroad developers Vanderbilt, Cooke, Fisk; oilmen Rockefeller, Getty, “Coal Oil” Johnny Steele; rubber manufacturers Goodyear and Firestone; newspaper owners William Rockhill Nelson and Clarence Walker Barron; meat packer Armour; and chemical developer DuPont. Also available are works on the earliest American businessmen, including Alexander Hamilton, George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Eli Whitney, John Jacob Astor, Paul Revere, Stephen Girard, Peter Cooper, and John Stevens.⁷¹

These examples are only a limited sampling of the collection. In addition to the histories of firms, there are histories of entire industries such as textiles, soap and candles, iron, coal, pottery, tobacco, oil, carpet manufacturing, paper making, rayon, airlines, telegraphs, lumber, whaling, fur trade, slave trade, and publishing.⁷²

While some of its collections focus on rare books (pre-1850), the Bass Busi-

ness History Collection extends beyond that area by adding out-of-print and more recent books to enrich teaching and research in business and economics. Bass does not collect for the sake of rarity but adds original texts by prominent individuals to increase the collection's research span. The result is a unique blend of old and new books that supplement the holdings of the University of Oklahoma Libraries.⁷³

At present, the collection has a small fund to purchase important historical volumes, and the OU Libraries still house the collection, maintaining current subscriptions to such periodicals as *Fortune*, *Business Week*, and the *Harvard Business Review*. The collection is still often used by researchers, many who travel from Europe or Asia to utilize the special collections, often the Seligman Collections, as we have seen.

In Wren's words, "The primary purpose of this collection is to provide research material on the history and the role of business and industry and to provide material from related areas."⁷⁴ It is the University Libraries' hope that the collection can "provide both practitioners and students with a more solid basis for future action."⁷⁵

According to current Dean of University Libraries Richard Luce, "Our special collections are at the core of our mission to provide access to information resources. Rare and unique primary sources provide first-hand evidence of historical or cultural events. Just as art and artifacts in museums preserve creative output and cultural context, primary sources provide an unbiased, unfiltered window into our past."⁷⁶

With over sixty years of history, and almost 25,000 volumes, the Bass Business History Collection does indeed represent the past and the present of our complex business civilization.

Conclusion

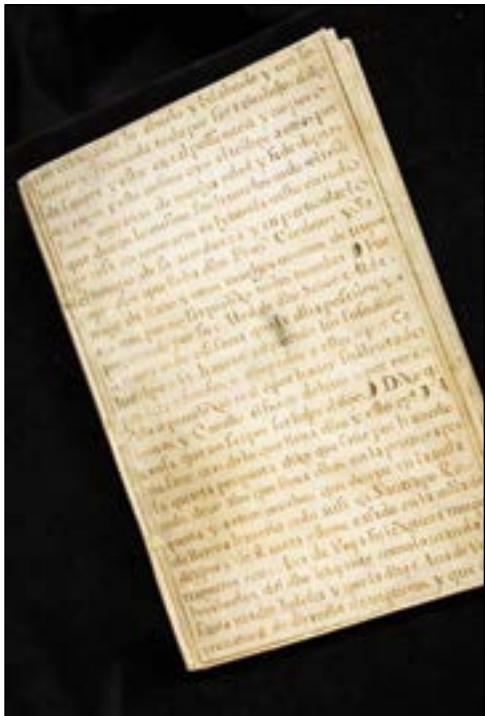
Back in the OU library, Oxford University scholar Chris Nitschke's visit to Bass reflects the best of research experiences. "It [The Bass Collection] seems to be more extensive than is communicated via the library's online presence. The Seligman Archives, in particular, held quite a few more items than originally indicated. With some more time and money, I could imagine the Bass Collection becoming a rich and elaborate deposit for business history primary sources similar to, say, the Baker Library at Harvard Business School."⁷⁷

And that, sir, has always been the goal of the Bass Business History Collection.

Annotated Bibliography of Fifty Treasures of the Bass Collection

The following fifty treasures represent the finest and rarest manuscripts or collections available from the University of Oklahoma Bass Business History Collection. Selected from a list by Bass curators and staff,⁷⁸ these items from the classical to modern business worlds—ranging from 1468 to the present, and including such influential authors as Luca Pacioli, Thomas Hobbes, and Adam Smith—all share some similar characteristics, the most notable of which is their world-wide acclaim and notoriety.⁷⁹ The list is presented in chronological order, providing date of work, title, call number of the book in the Bass Collection vault (in parentheses), then author's name and birth and death dates, if known.

This list is not exhaustive but rather serves to highlight the magnificence of the University of Oklahoma Bass Business History Collection.



1. 1468: *De Contractibus Mercatorum* (347.7 N549d)

Johannes Nider (ca. 1380–1438)

The bright red, rubric script jumps from the page and belies you into thinking you are holding a much more modern book than the almost six-hundred-year-old tome in your hands. As the oldest book in the Bass Collection, *De Contractibus Mercatorum* (trans. *On the Contracts of Merchants*) is a fine example of incunabula, and covers the subjects of commerce, business ethics, commercial law, and contracts. Recently bound in a decorative 1950s ochre cloth personal binding, the original slim (58-page) volume was published in 1468 in Cologne, Germany.

Written in Latin, the volume was published posthumously, as its author, German Dominican Catholic

friar Johannes Nider (ca. 1380–1438), passed away thirty years prior. Nider was a preacher, theologian, and religious reformer who, among other scholastics, provided a link between Aristotle and later Reformation thinkers. In Nider’s work we find the phrase *caveat venditor* (trans. “seller beware”), an expression of his moral guide to merchants, as well as other surprisingly modern business ideas such as justice in exchange, restitution for defective goods, the market as the final arbiter of sale, and the importance of creating utility in products.⁸⁰

In 1966, Ronald B. Shuman produced a translation of this volume, which Harry Bass paid to have published. In 2000, Daniel A. Wren wrote a modern evaluation of the work: “Medieval or Modern? A Scholastic’s View of Business Ethics, circa 1430,” which was published in the journal *Business Ethics*.⁸¹

This small Nider volume is truly epic for the era of history it represents. The entire volume has been scanned by the OU Digital Laboratory and is available online at: <https://repository.ou.edu/uuid/eccba108-575c-5bcd-a792-76c49a0ca5d4>.



2. 1497: *Libro che Tratto di Mercanzie ed Usanze dei Paesi* (332.15 C4311)

Giorgio Chiarini (b. ca. 1400)

This bespoke volume, modern-bound in hazel dyed, polished calf and emblazoned with a cottage-style gold emblem, is soft to the hand. Inside, the 1497 incunabula text, translated as *Book about the Merchandise and Customs of Countries*, begins with a woodcut of Italian men in a bank, said to be the first printed depiction of a banking office.⁸² Published in Florence by Bartolommeo di Libri for Piero Pacini, the volume is written in Italian and intended for merchants.

The subject of the book is trade customs of different countries. It details the

relative weights, measures, and currencies merchants would use when traveling and doing business with various European cities. The book also provides and compares prices for a long list of cities in Italy and other major trading centers of Europe.⁸³

Although there is no author named in the book, the volume is historically attributed to Giorgio di Lorenzo Chiarini (b. ca. 1400), about whom there is unfortunately little biographical information available.

A charming Piscean publisher's device ends the book elegantly.



3. 1503: *Tariffa de Pexi e Mesure* (511.8 P263t)

Bartolomeo di Pasi (ca. 1500)

The decorous oxblood polished calf cover, with a traditional raised band spine of this post-incunabula (1503) volume opens to reveal a book of stiff crème paper. *The Tariffs of Weights and Measures*, as it is translated in English, by Bartolomeo di Pasi (ca. 1500), is an Italian handbook of coinage, exchange, and customs duties pertaining to Mediterranean trade. Published by Stampado in Uenesia for Albertin da Lisona, the 310-page volume shows the growing effect of decoration in printing, as the book starts with an elegant drop initial “H” at the beginning of the first sentence.

In the volume, di Pasi presented a price list of commonly traded commodities of the time period, including diamonds. He distinguished between *diamanti* (which did not have a natural pointed shape and were sent on to Antwerp to cut) and *diamanti in punta* (which were natural octahedrons and were sent to Lisbon and Paris).⁸⁴ Unfortunately there is a lack of biographical information on di Pasi, except that he was living and writing in Italy in the early sixteenth century.

There is Latin marginalia toward the end of the volume, including the inscribed name *Bapta Casellius*.



4. 1523: *Summa de Arithmetica, Geometria, Proportioni et Proportionalita* (510 P114s)
Luca Pacioli (ca. 1447–1517)

This dark-bound volume is embossed with blind decorations in the leather, opening to reveal a red rubricated post-incunabula volume, which is the most celebrated book in the entirety of the University of Oklahoma Bass Business History Collection. Published in 1523, this book is a *remboîtage*, with the original antiqued leather boards incorporated into a newer, better binding, which is detailed with a traditional raised band spine.

Renaissance man Luca Pacioli (ca. 1447–1517) was an Italian Franciscan friar, as well as a mathematician. He helped develop the field of accounting and is sometimes referred to as the “Father of Accounting and Bookkeeping.” He collaborated with Leonardo da Vinci, teaching him mathematics, and may have worked with him on a book of chess strategy.⁸⁵

First published in 1494, *Summary of Arithmetic, Geometry, Proportions and Proportionality*, as translated into English, is an immaculate book on math. The volume introduces the idea of double-entry bookkeeping (namely, debits and credits), which has endured to the present day as the basis of all accounting systems. OU possesses a second 1523 edition version, which is only one of thirty-six known cop-



ies of that edition in existence. Due to the importance of the 1494 book, in 1994 OU Libraries hosted a quincentennial (500-year) celebration of its publication.⁸⁶

Even though the book was published so long ago on a Gutenberg press with vegetable dyes on rag paper, it is still in remarkably excellent condition.⁸⁷

5. 1564: *Histoire des Hommes Illvstres de la Maison de Medici* (DG 737.42 .N436 1564)

Jean Nestor (ca. 1560)

The first French book on our list promenades in with appropriate Parisian aplomb. Sumptuously and artistically detailed, *History of the Famous Men of the House of de Medici*, as translated into English, is a 1564 volume on the subject of the Italian de Medici family and its lineage. Published in Paris for Chez Charles Perier, its author, Jean Nestor (ca. 1560), is another figure who has sadly disappeared into the folds of time.

Despite its rather bland 1950s speckled cardboard covers, the interior of the book is highly decorative, as was the wont of French publishers at the time. The most impressive insert is a large gatefold of twelve woodcuts depicting the emblems of the different members of the House of Medici. The volume also boasts a number of other fine woodcuts, including a vignette of an armored rhinoceros, which was the emblem of the Duke of Florence, based on the 1515 Albrecht Durer rhinoceros.⁸⁸

An interesting addition appears on the beginning flyleaf page, where we find an ominous drawn hangman accompanied by a line in gothic Latin text threatening malice for those who mistreat this book.

The volume has been scanned into the internet and a digital copy is available.⁸⁹

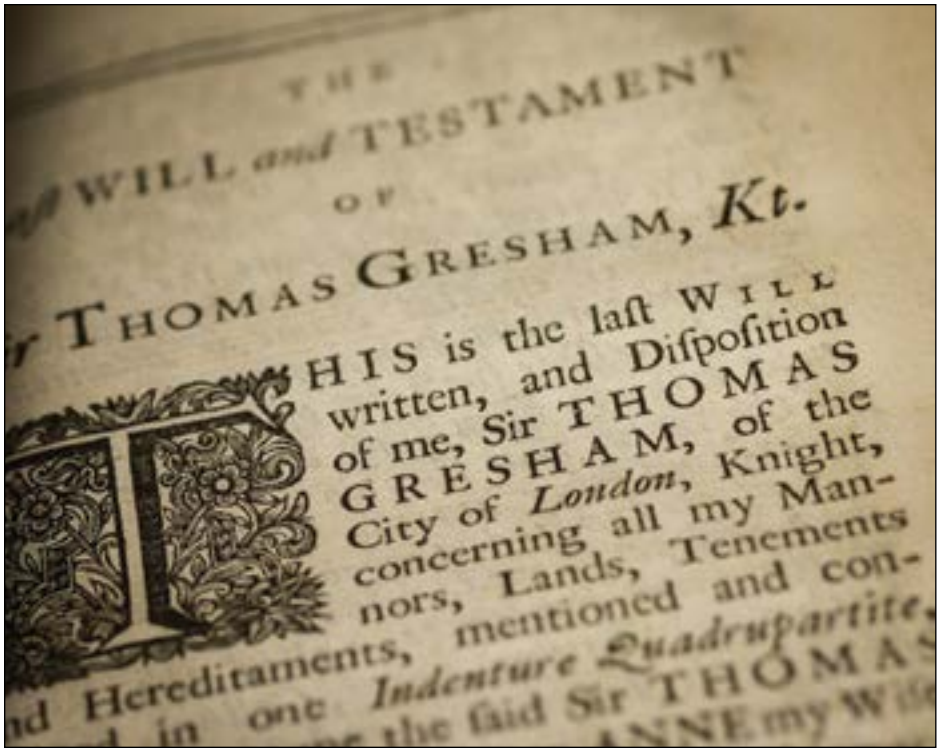
6. 1584: *The Last Will and Testament of Sir Thomas Gresham* (332.092 G866a)

Sir Thomas Gresham (ca. 1519–1579)

The first English-language book to enter our list is a British last will and testament from 1584, which is the date printed on the spine (although not within). Modern half-bound in patterned red leather and peppermint-swirl marbled paper boards, this is a slim volume of only fifteen pages.

Thomas Gresham (ca. 1519–1579) was a merchant, financier, and founder of the British Royal Exchange in London. In his remarkable business career, Gresham acted on behalf of a number of members of the British Tudor royalty, including King Henry VIII (1509–1547), King Edward VI (1547–1553), Mary I (1553–1558), and Elizabeth I (1558–1603).

Gresham died suddenly on November 21, 1579, apparently from a fit of apo-



plexity, as he returned from an afternoon meeting of the merchants at the exchange. He was buried on December 15 in the church of St. Helen, Bishopsgate, beneath a tomb that he had prepared for himself during his lifetime. According to the directions of his will, his coffin was followed to the grave by two hundred poor men and women clothed in black gowns. His funeral was likewise conducted on a scale of unusual splendor.⁹⁰

This sixteenth century English text shows the patterns indicative of early British typography, including ligature letters (where two or more letters are cast as one—linked—such as “c” and “t”), the long “s” (that often looks like an “f” without the crossbar, and is inserted in the word dependent on the placement of the “s”), and the inclusion of catchwords (the word placed at the bottom of each page, under the last word in the last line, being the first word of the following page).⁹¹ These English printing trends would continue for the next two hundred years.

This volume has been scanned into the internet and a digital copy is available.⁹²



7. 1598: *Diarium Nauticum*:... (G 690 1594 V46)

Gerrit de Veer (ca. 1570–after 1598)

Within a modern plain ecru speckled cardboard cover, this highly illustrated 1598 volume, besides being one of the more popular books on the list (or at least the only one with a 3D movie made out of it), also has the longest title (as translated into English): *Naval Diary: The true and perfect description of three voyages so strange and wonderful, that the like have never been heard of before: done and performed three years, one after the other, by the ships of Holland and Zeeland, on the north sides of Norway, Muscouia, and Tartaria, towards the kingdoms of Cathaia & China; showing the discoveries of the straights of Weigates, Noua Zembla, and the countries lying under 80 degrees; which is thought to be Greenland: where never any man had been before: with the cruel bears, and other monsters of the sea, and the unsupportable and extreme cold that is found to be in those places . . .*

Certain pages of the Latin manuscript have been repaired with delicate Japanese paper that mends, strengthens, and disappears when glued. The author, Gerrit de Veer (ca. 1570–after 1598), was a Dutch officer who voyaged with Willem Barebtsz, the noted navigator and explorer. De Verr recorded their adventures in diaries, including this volume.

Lavishly illustrated with thirty-one plates, including maps, highly decorative depictions of boats, and pictures of those “cruel bears” (polar bears), this book has been fictionalized into a novel (Hans Koning’s 1956 *The Golden Keys*), which was made into a 2011 3D motion picture, *Nova Zembla*. The original Latin text in reproduction is also available for purchase to this day.⁹³



8. 1625: *By the King a Proclamation to Declare . . .* (DA 47.8 .G75)

King Charles I of England (1600–1649)

The first seventeenth-century item on the list is another British entry, this being a 1625 sizable broadside edict of a king. The full title is: *By the King a proclamation to declare, that all ships carrying corn, or other victuals, or any munition of war, to, or for the king of Spain, or any of his subjects, shall be, and ought to be esteemed as lawful prize.* The king in question is Charles I of England (1600–1649), who presided over the English Civil War, where he was captured and eventually executed by Oliver Cromwell’s forces. This

act brought an end to the English monarchy for eleven years. Beyond its political significance, the business side of the proclamation involves crops, privateering, and foreign relations.

This is one of a number of early 1600s royal English proclamations housed in the Bass Collection. The others announce such topics as a ban on the making of saltpeter (for gun powder), a declaration to send the gentry out of London and back to their country houses for a time, and an issue on the transportation of wool and leather.

The edict in question was printed in London by “Bonham Norton and John Bill, Printers to the Kings most Excellent Majesty.” This broadside is in excellent shape for an almost five-hundred-year-old placard, considering it was designed to be nailed up in public places.



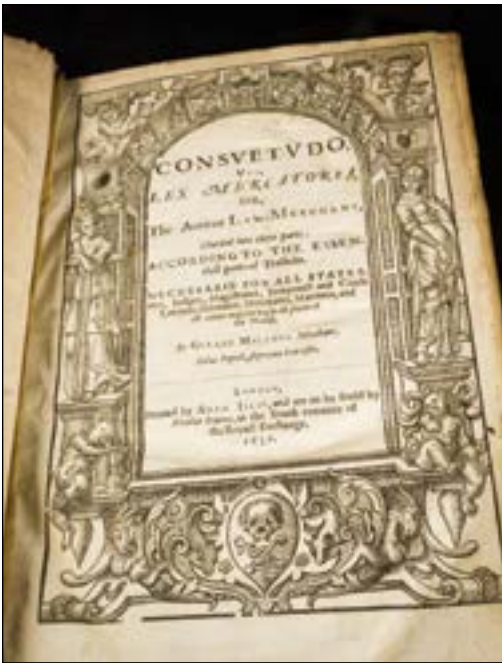
9. 1636: *Machiavels Discourses*
 (English translation of the 1513 original) (JC 143 .M163 1636)

Niccolo Machiavelli
 (1469–1527), author
 Edward Dacres
 (ca. 1630), translator

This small, fat, caramel-colored mottled leather volume is the first translation on the list. Published in 1636, it is the first English translation of Niccolo Machiavelli's (1469–1527) *Discourses upon the First Decade of T. Livius*, from 1513. Translated by Englishman Edward Dacres (ca. 1630), this volume was published more than one hundred years after the original work's publication. Unfortunately, little is known today of Dacres, beyond contemporary references to his excellent translations, of which there were a number.

Presented in Italian with a complete English translation, the book was printed in London by Thomas Paine for William Hills and Daniel Pakeman. The volume is a political and philosophical history of the Roman philosopher Livy. Although this may not appear “business”-oriented by current standards, recall that the collection development direction of Bass includes economic, social, and political forces that influenced the role of business in society.⁹⁴ At a healthy 646 pages, this translation helped bring the political thinking of Machiavelli to the English-speaking world.

The internal flyleaf contains, as many of these older volumes do, cryptic notations from a previous bookseller, listing a code only they would recognize. These handwritten numbers and letters often told them how much they paid and where the volume was from, but the coding disguised the information from future buyers. The mysterious code penciled into this volume is: *D 117/SYC*.



10. 1636/1651: *Consuetudo, vel, Lex Mercatoria, or, The Ancient Law—Merchant* (1636) and *The Merchants Mirrour* (1651) (HF 1210 .M3)

Gerard de Malynes (1586–1641)

This English volume actually contains two separate volumes bound under one cover, which is called a “bound-with.” As was the want of antique book collectors or dealers, these two similar British volumes were bound together at some point in history to form one larger book. Was this bound-with done by the owner for his own personal enjoyment? Or was it done by a bookdealer to sell both volumes for a higher price? Sadly, we will never know.

The 1636 *Ancient Law—Merchant* opens with a charming emblem of two women presenting anchors around a crest, followed by a completely decorated title page. Sadly, the paper is brittle and difficult to turn, but the insides of the volume hold the most interesting subject matter. An introductory dedication evokes King James as “Most high and mighty monarch,” then there is an introduction “To the Courteous reader,” and then a table of contents, making it the most modernly arranged book on the list so far. The “Ancient Law” section of the book explains in detail how to be a merchant, including how to deal with pirates.

The second included book is the *Merchant’s Mirror*, which seeks to explain

how to do accounting and inventory, and includes sample multiplication tables. This volume describes maritime laws and how to keep the books “after the Italian manner,” i.e., referring back to Pacioli and his bookkeeping methods (see number 4).

In toto, these publications record the beginning of international commerce and are basically a “How-to for Dummies” on being a seventeenth-century merchant.

Within the large and lovely chocolate-hued leather cover boards, this two-in-one book reveals itself to be another *remboîtage*. The volume is highly decorative for an English book, showing the apparent influence of the competing French presses from across the channel. For a splash of local color, inside the back cover one of the previous owners has dramatically written his name: *Mr. John Blackader*, possibly linking this book to the famous lieutenant Colonel John Blackader (1664–1729) of the Scottish Cameronian Regiment.



11. 1651: *The Leviathan* (320.1 H65le)
Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679)

The book that comes in at number 11 on the list is another political treatise that dramatically affected society and thus business. The large and heavy book

with a press-decorated cover is as dark as it appears forbidding, but its interior is lavishly illustrated, especially the title page showing a god-king wearing armor composed of tiny humans.

This 396-page volume was published in London in 1651 by A. Ckooke. Written by English philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), *Leviathan; or the Matter, Form, and Power of Common-wealth Ecclesiastical and Civil* (its full title) quickly cemented its author as a significant political thinker and commentator on current society. According to one source, “His vision of the world is strikingly original and still relevant to contemporary politics. His main concern is the problem of social and political order: how human beings can live together in peace and avoid the danger and fear of civil conflict...Establishing a social contract theory, he stated that civil war could be avoided by a strong central government. His theories became the basis of many western political philosophies.”⁹⁵

A detailed handwritten biography of Hobbes has been copied into the flyleaf in the back of the volume.



12. 1664: *Breviarium Itineris Italiae* (DS 410.9.B4)

Christopg Esslingen (ca. 1660)

1668: *Diarium; Oder, Tage-Buch*

Johann von der Behr (1615–1692)

Behind a common, modern, spotted, and tattered cardboard cover, Bass treasure number 12 is actually two German travelogues: *Breviarium Itineris Italiae* from

1664 by Christophg Esslingen (ca. 1660), and *Diarium; Oder, Tage-Buch* (trans. *Diary; Or Daybook*) from 1668 by Johann von der Behr (1615–1692). The importance of Esslingen and his work has been lost to history, but the reverse is true of Behr: the star of the bound-with is certainly his *Diary; Or Daybook*.

Behr was a German traveler and tradesman who worked out of the Netherlands for the East Indian Company, and his diary recounts some of his business adventures. The Behr work is one of the loveliest books in the collection, heavily illustrated with a number of evocative tan-and-black pictures. Beyond a massively decorated title page depicting the author, other illustrations include huge sailing ships, a school of soaring flying fish, and portrayals of mysterious and unique new foliage.

The volume has been scanned by the OU Digital Laboratory and is available online at: <https://repository.ou.edu/uuid/dae5467a-34d9-51c3-863d-39833d8241aa>.



13. 1680: *Ambassades Memorables de la Compagnie des Indes Orientales* (DS 808.M77)
Arnoldus Montanus (ca. 1625–1683)

Wrapped in large thick slick vellum covers, this book emits pure magic when opened. The 1680 *Ambassades Memorables de la Compagnie des Indes Orientales* (trans. *Memorable Embassies of the East Indian Company*), by Arnoldus Montanus (ca. 1625–1683), is a contender for most magnificent and beautiful book in the Bass Collection. Another vivid travelogue, this French/Dutch-language volume details an extended visit to Japan by Montanus, a Dutch teacher, scholar, and minister.

Published out of Amsterdam, this Grangerised (or extra-illustrated) book contains numerous superbly drawn gatefold maps and luxuriously detailed illustrations of Japanese royalty and their estates, including a robed emperor surrounded by umbrella-wielding servants. The value of the work to a business reader is in its explanation of the Far East, including the region's traditions, government,

and commerce. The magic of the volume is in its elongated size and the sheer elegance and detail of its illustrations of a world you seem to know—want to know—yet can never really know.

Fortunately, the entire volume has been scanned by the OU Digital Laboratory and is available online at: <https://repository.ou.edu/uuid/09bb08bc-d3b5-5715-a2a2-731248c33e30>.



14. 1690: *Political Arithmetick* (330.1 P456p)

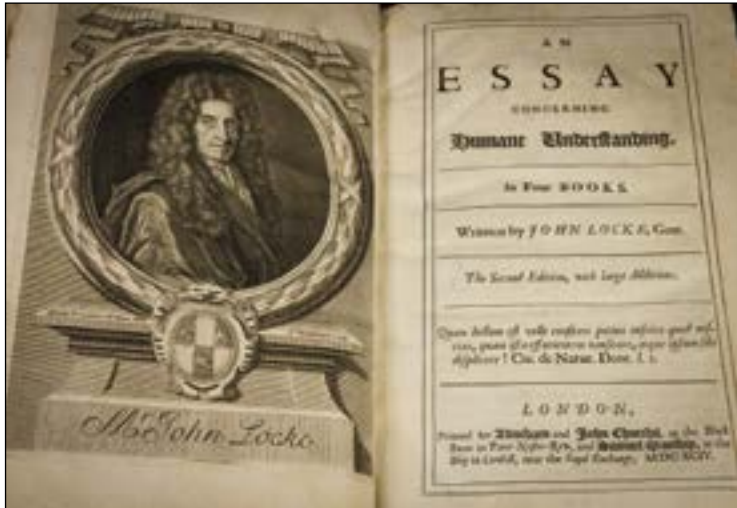
Sir William Petty (1623–1687)

A small volume, contained within a mottled tawny leather cover, our entry for number 14 is not grand in appearance but rather in its effect on society. Englishman William Petty’s 1690 tome, *Political Arithmetick, or, A Discourse Concerning the Extent and Value of Lands, People, Buildings . . . as the same Relates to every Country in General, but More Particularly to the Territories of His Majesty of Great Britain, and his Neighbours of Holland, Zealand, and France*, details economic conditions in Great Britain and surrounding European countries at the time. An expert on political economy, William Petty (1623–1687) was a scientist and philosopher, a Member of Parliament under Cromwell, and a charter member of the Royal Society, the British society for the study and advancement of science.⁹⁶

The great historical importance of the volume lies in its use of illustrative comparative numbers, which helped set the groundwork in establishing the sci-

ence of statistics. Complete with side-notes to help guide the reader, somewhere over the last three hundred or so years, this volume was unfortunately rebound so tightly that it is now hard to open. Interestingly, this small volume was executed with large print, which seemed an unusual choice for the day.

It should be noted that from here on, the titles of the “treasures” lean exclusively toward English or French, as the historical acquisitional aim of the collection veered toward those two languages.



15. 1694: *Essay Concerning Humane Understanding*, second edition (B 1290 1694)
John Locke (1632–1704)

The Bass Collection contains a handful of works by luminary British political philosopher John Locke (1632–1704), so the selection of just one for inclusion in this list was difficult. After review, Locke’s 1694 *Essay Concerning Humane Understanding* understandably rose to the top because of its societal acclaim. According to one source: “Locke’s writings had a profound influence on the framers of the American Declaration of Independence, provided a rationale for the protection of property rights, introduced a system of justice to redress grievances, and argued for representational government.”⁹⁷

Although a second edition—which is still a coup of ownership due to the difficulties of now acquiring a quite rare first edition—this London-published volume is another general societal treatise that is included in the collection for

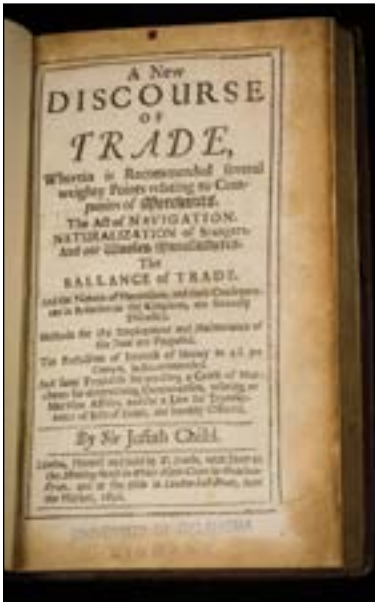
its effect on politics, business, humankind, and the world as we know it. Hidden behind rather tattered, russet-leather cover boards, the text block of the book is in excellent condition, with a superb portrait medallion of Locke on the cover page. The Bass Collection also contains a fourth edition of the title from 1700, which has the clear distinction of smelling the most like a glorious used bookstore in its aged musty leatheryness.



16. 1698: *Discourse on the Publik Revenues and on Trade of England* (330.1 D268d)
Charles Davenant (1656–1714)

Printed in London for James Knapton, this two-volume 1698 set is modern-bound and has such tightly trimmed margins one can hardly read at the seam, which is unfortunate. This set actually contains three publications by Englishman Charles Davenant (1656–1714). Davenant was an economist, mercantilist, and politician. The first, and the stand-out, title is: *Discourse on the Publik Revenues and on Trade of England*. This treatise concerns political economy and the state of the British government and colonies. The second piece is a discourse on improving the revenue of the state of Athens by Xenophon, translated from the Greek, and the third is an essay on East India trade.

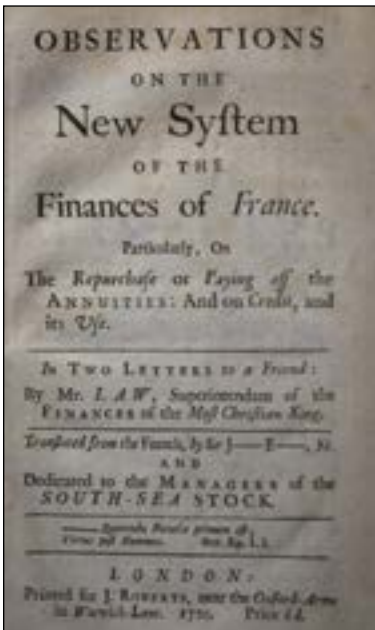
A note in the index sassily says that “The Author had not leisure to make an Index to these Discourses; it was done by another hand, and in haste, which must excuse its imperfections,” so 313 years later we can thank Davenant for his honesty in printing this disclaimer.



17. 1698: *A New Discourse of Trade* (330.942 C43n)
Sir Josiah Child (1630–1699)

The full title for this 1698 Sir Josiah Child (1630–1699) British volume is: *A New Discourse of Trade, wherein is Recommended Several Weighty Points Relating to Companies of Merchants, the act of Navigation, Naturalization of Strangers, and our Woolen Manufactures. The Balance of Trade, and the Nature of Plantations, and their Consequences in Relation to the Kingdom, are Seriously Discussed*. First Baron Child was one of England’s wealthiest businessmen of the seventeenth century, was governor of the East India Company, and wrote on the economics of mercantilism. The importance of this title lies in its discussion of free trade in Britain’s business systems.

Printed in London by T. Sowle, this 238-page book has printed on its spine the oddly abbreviated: *CHILI ON TRAD*.



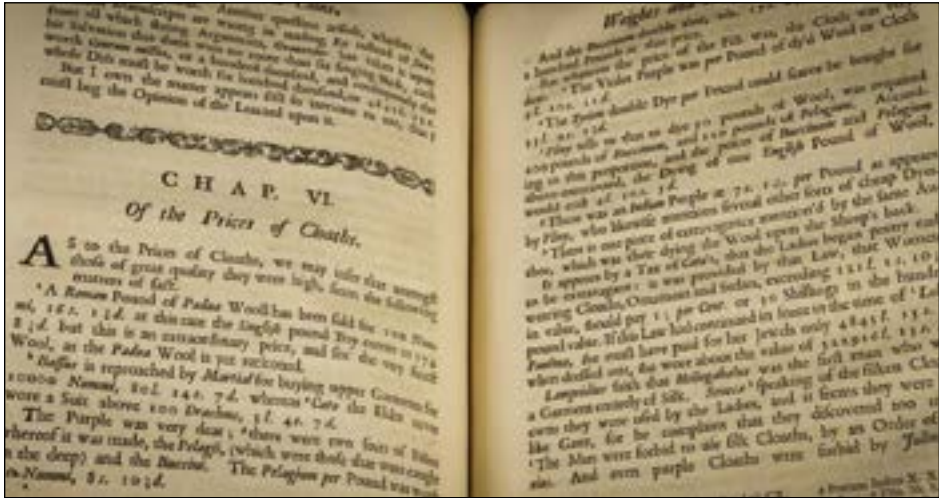
18. 1720: *Observations on the New System of the Finances of France* (336.44 L412ob)

John Law (1671–1729)

Bass treasure number 18 is our first eighteenth-century item on the list. It is a lithe twenty-two-page English volume, or pamphlet, in a rather terrible slim paper cover. *Observations on the New System of the Finances of France: Particularly, on the Repurchase of Paying off the Annuities, and on Credit, and its use, in Two Letters to a Friend* is the full title of this 1720 publication by John Law (1671–1729).

The pamphlet focuses on international economic issues, specifically between England and France at the time. Law was a wildcard Scotsman with a mind for numbers (and duels)

who found his fortune after being established as the controller general of finances for France under the Duke of Orleans, regent for King Louis XV.⁹⁸ Among his most controversial theories was the favoring of paper money over coin. This thin volume was published in London (during a time of personal controversy in Law's later years) for J. Roberts.



19. 1727: *Tables of Ancient Coins, Weights, and Measures* (HC 31 .A8)

John Arbuthnot (1667–1735)

This solid, well-bound mahogany-dyed marbled leather volume was written by one of the more flamboyant British writers of the early eighteenth-century. The 1727 *Tables of Ancient Coins, Weights, and Measures* was a product of John Arbuthnot (1667–1735), a Scottish physician, philosopher, and satirist. He was a member of the Scriblerus Club (where he was said to have influenced Jonathan Swift and Alexander Pope), and he created Britain's John Bull character.⁹⁹

Published in London for J. Tonson, the 327-page volume details the weight and measures of early coinage, while also working in topics of value, navigation, and even early medicine. The tome begins with a dedication to the king, then a preface, table of contents, table of measures, and then a charming emblem. Also included are fold-out tables completed in a very formal manner.

The overall caliber of this rare numismatics sourcebook is formal, precise, and elegant.

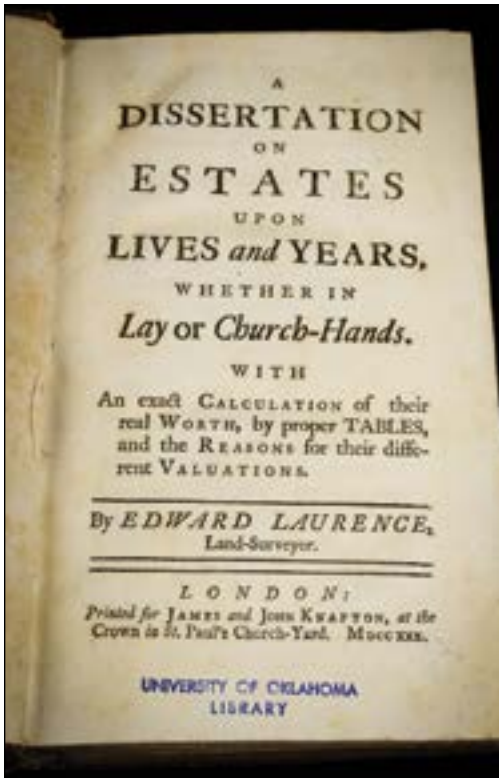


20. 1728: *The Fable of Bees: or Private Vices, Public Vices*, fifth edition (171 M31f5)
Bernard Mandeville (1670–1733)

Beyond a rather rugged buff leather Cambridge panel stamped binding and classic raised band spine, the text box of this set of 1728 books is in remarkably sound shape. Printed in London and sold by J. Roberts, *The Fable of Bees: or Private Vices, Public Vices*, by Bernard Mandeville (1670–1733), is a work on social ethics focusing on charity schools. Mandeville was an Anglo-Dutch political economist, philosopher, and satirist.

Decorated with various icons (including a quite curious rabbit), this volume had a particular influence on philosophers of the Scottish Enlightenment, most notably Francis Hutcheson, David Hume, and Adam Smith. With its great overall influence on the fields of ethics and economics, the *Fable* is, perhaps, one of the greatest and most provocative of all early-eighteenth-century English works.¹⁰⁰

The 1728 edition of this volume, which is what resides in Bass, is a fifth edition. The first edition of the title was published in 1714.



21. 1731: *A Dissertation on Estates upon Lives and Years, whether in Lay or Church-Hands. With an Exact Calculation of their Real Worth, by Proper Tales, and the Reasons for their Different Valuations, with Tables on the Value of Leaseholds and Annuities* by Sir Isaac Newton (HG 8793.L3)

Edward Laurence (d. ca. 1740)

Sir Isaac Newton (1642–1726)

The twenty-first volume on the list is penned mainly by a rather obscure author, but it also includes a certainly more famous one. Published in London for J. and J. Knapton, this 1731 volume is by Edward Laurence (ca. 1740), and contains two works by the writer. Laurence is an author we know little about today besides that he wrote instructions for gentlemen's stewards and surveyors.

The first book, *A Dissertation on Estates*, benefits from tables on the value of leaseholds and annuities constructed by Sir Isaac Newton (1642–1726). After an escutcheon surmounted by a griffon and dragon and following the Laurence text, the Newton tables detail cathedral, church, and college leases.

While little is known of Laurence, Newton is widely regarded as one of the most influential scientists in history. An English mathematician and physicist, Newton is famous for developing new laws of mechanics, gravity, and laws of motion. His work laid the framework for the Scientific Revolution of the seventeenth century,¹⁰¹ and apparently he dabbled in lease and annuities work sometime before his death, which occurred before this work was published.

The second bound-with item is another by Laurence, similarly titled *A Dissertation on Estates upon Lives and Years*, which unfortunately lacks the import of the first piece.



22. 1747: *A Short Introduction to Moral Philosophy, in Three Books* (BJ 1005 .H9 1747)
Francis Hutcheson (1694–1746)

This small book, translated from Latin into English by the author, is bound in pristine, camel-colored, speckled polished calf and appears completely modern. Published in Glasgow in 1747 by R. Foulis, *A Short Introduction to Moral Philosophy, in Three Books*, by Francis Hutcheson (1694–1746), details ethics and the law of nature. This book is important for the effect it had on the interpretation of civilization, and, even more importantly, for its effect on business. Father Francis Hutcheson was a priest and philosopher who is now referred to as the “Father of the Scottish Enlightenment.”¹⁰²

It is interesting how professional book binding rather hit its high mark in the early eighteenth-century and how the field has not dramatically changed since, as the books from here on all seem very “modern” to a contemporary eye. This volume does prove an old adage: a quality product endures.



23. 1748: *Dictionnaire universel de Commerce* (650.3 Sa93d2)

Jacques Savary des Bruslons (1657–1716)

Visually breathtaking, this grandly oversized, three-volume French set is bound in marbled, dark, coffee-colored leather with gold highlights, detailed inside with extraordinary red, blue, and yellow marbled end pages. Published in 1748, the *Dictionnaire universel de Commerce* (trans. *Universal Dictionary of Commerce*), by Jacques Savary des Bruslons (1657–1716), is an illustrated alphabetical dictionary of commerce and industry, ranging from AAG to Zurzach.

The *Dictionnaire universel de Commerce* was the first comprehensive encyclopedic dictionary of commerce and commercial law in modern Europe, and remained the essential reference work in the field for the nineteenth century. In addition to several French editions, it was also translated into English, Dutch, and Italian.¹⁰³ Bruslons was the son of the famous economist Jacques Savary, and was a writer in his own regard.

Published in Paris for Chez la Veuve Estienne et fils, this three-volume oversized set is surprisingly handsome in a way reminiscent of large fairytale books. Illustrated with angels, tableaux, magnificent drop initials, and an icon of a mischievous squirrel set within a whirl of foliage, this set is an excellent example of how for the period, really no one produced more artistically brilliant books than the French.



24. 1755: *Samuel Hale's Day Book*
(657 H135s)

Samuel Hale (ca. 1750)

The first American title to stride onto our list is a 1755 manuscript that comes stored in a Solander box, as the paper is in such delicate condition. Little is known of Samuel Hale (ca. 1750), but we do know from this account book that he was an early eighteenth-century New Hampshire businessman. The mercantile ledger starts on March 18, 1755, listing items he sold to people, including: "3 dozen mittens to Jacob Sheafe," and "10 quarts of rum to Stephen Brown of North Hampton."

Hale's entire ledger is sequentially complete—cover to cover—with a large fold down the middle, which makes you wonder if he carried it in a big pocket in his coat. It is a wonderful example of manuscript work, opening a window into one early American's personal business.

In inspecting this volume, I had to use a micro-spatula to turn the heavily damaged pages. Luckily, the OU Digital Laboratory has scanned the book for everyone to review, without fear of further harming the original, and it is available online at: <https://repository.ou.edu/uuid/4eb126c3-69b8-5e49-bf21-d1f2702ab382>.



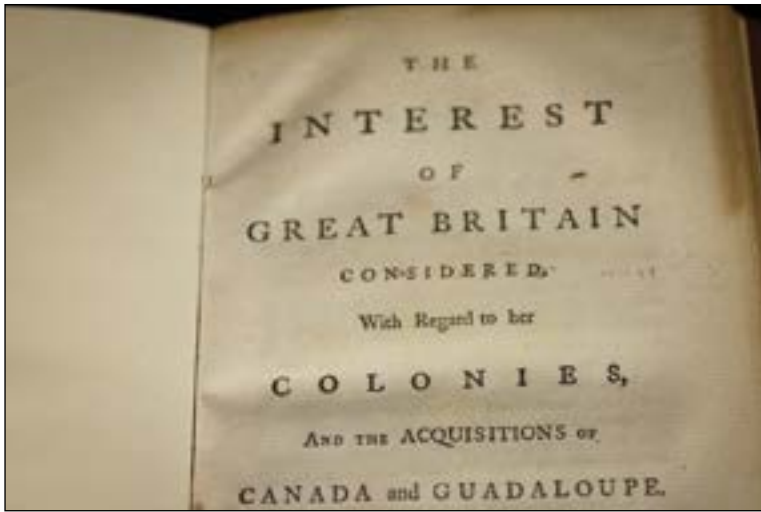
25. 1759: *A New Universal History of Arts and Sciences* (AE 5.N58)

Denis de Coëtlogon (ca. 1700–1749)

These two volumes by Denis de Coëtlogon (ca. 1700–1749) appear to be in their original 1759 tan leather covers, not too tattered by time. With a rubric red title page, *A New Universal History of Arts and Sciences* is decorated more brilliantly than many English books of its age, with fifty-two copper plates and gatefold illustrations. Like the other dictionaries on our list, these volumes explicate such scientific terms as astronomy, geometry, and botany, but also more business-oriented terms such as water hydraulics and candle-making. The volume also has a rather matter-of-fact chapter on witchcraft: “A kind of sorcery, especially in women . . .”

Volume one starts with a color illustration of well-heeled gentlemen in a study surrounded by curiosities, including an orrery celestial sphere. At the end of volume two, there is an index and then “Directions to the binder for making the cuts.” A Frenchman, Coëtlogon moved to England, where this volume was first printed in weekly installments. In 1759, a decade after Coëtlogon’s death, his brother had the weekly issues published in this two-volume set in London for J. Coote. Coëtlogon’s encyclopedic presentation of “treaties” on various subjects paved the way for future encyclopedias, including, most notably, the *Encyclopedia Britannica*.¹⁰⁴

Interestingly, a printing of this elegant book is still available for purchase, and the entire volume one has been scanned by the OU Digital Laboratory and is available online at: <https://repository.ou.edu/uuid/5d91fd7a-f67b-591e-93f3-d168b8367d48> .



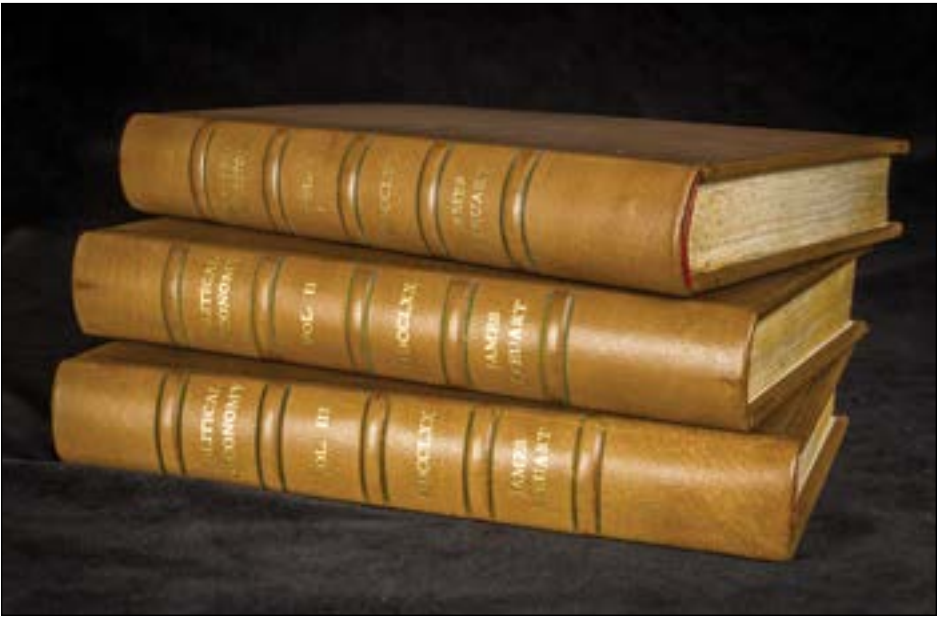
26. 1760: *The Interest of Great Britain Considered, with Regard to her Colonies, and the Acquisitions of Canada and Guadeloupe* (973.26 F854i)

Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790)

Entry number 26 is by the most famous personage on our list: founding father, celebrated scientist, inventor, writer, critic, civic activist, governor of Pennsylvania, delegate to the Constitutional Conventions, signer of the U.S. Constitution, and the first U.S. ambassador to France, Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790).

This volume, printed in London in 1760 for T. Beckett, and entitled *The Interest of Great Britain Considered, with Regard to her Colonies, and the Acquisitions of Canada and Guadeloupe. To which are Added, Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind, Peopling of Countries, etc.*, is interesting due to both the subject matter and date (close to 1776). The text is a philosophical commentary debating the colonies' politics and governments, as well as the Anglo-French War of 1755–1763. As these were events that affected humanity and society, they thus affected business, and are therein included in the collection.

Although the Bass Collection recognizes Franklin as the author, the authorship of this fifty-eight-page pamphlet has been debated by some historians. As if to quell this discussion, and probably to claim a better price for the tome, some helpful bookman from days of yore has penciled in "Benjamin Franklin" on the title page of the volume.

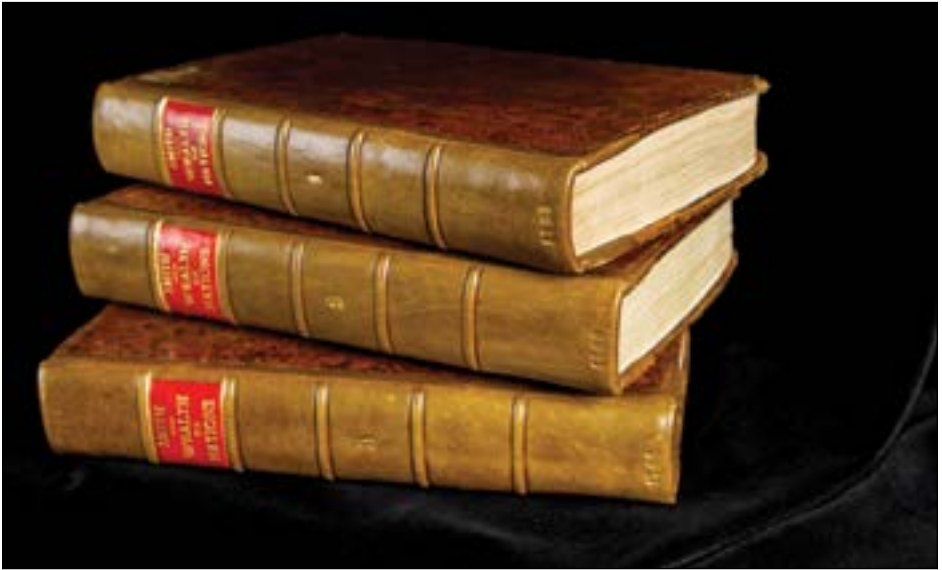


27. 1767: *An Inquiry into the Principles of Political Economy* (330.1 St466i)
Sir James Steuart (1713–1780)

This sturdy two-volume set exemplifies British printing at the time: direct, clear and economic, without all of those French frills. *An Inquiry into the Principles of Political Economy: Being an Essay on the Science of Domestic Policy in Free Nations in which are Particularly Considered Population, Agriculture, Trade, Industry, Money, Coin, Interest, Circulation, Banks, Exchange, Public Credit, and Taxes* is by Sir James Steuart (1713–1780), and was printed in 1767 in London for A. Millar and T. Cadell.

The basic subject of the work is economics and how they affect current society. The volume is divided into sections focusing on population and agriculture, trade and industry, money and coin, credits and debts, and taxes. A contributor to the Scottish Enlightenment, Steuart was a gentleman philosopher, and later a baronet. This work is regarded as the first systematic work on economics, and the first work to have “political economy” in its title.¹⁰⁵

The volumes are printed on heavy paper and include fine gatefolds of coinage. The Bass Collection also has a 1770 (second?) edition of the work, which is in three volumes. Interestingly, after all of these years, volume two of the Bass edition still has some uncut—and thus unread—pages.



28. 1776: *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (330 Sm51i)
Adam Smith (1723–1790)

The next item on our list is written by the most famous business author represented in the Bass Collection. Scotsman Adam Smith (1723–1790) was a successful political and economic writer of his time. *Wealth of Nations*, published in 1776 in London for W. Strahan and T. Cadell, was his magnum opus, and went on to change the way business was managed around the world.

This title is the second most internationally celebrated volume in the Bass Collection, after the 1523 Pacioli. The reason for its import is that it is the first modern work on economics to establish the foundations of classical free market theory, which then allowed for the study of business and the history of business. *Wealth of Nations* deeply influenced politicians of the time as it represented a break with mercantilism and the rise of the classical school of economic liberalism. These ideas provided the intellectual foundation for the great nineteenth-century era of free trade and economic expansion.¹⁰⁶

The two volumes of the book are bound in a lovely calf binding with decorative paneling and good thick paper inside. Interestingly, there is an offset of ink showing through some of the pages in the first volume, but not the second. The Bass Collection contains this, the virtually irreplaceable Adam Smith original volume (1776), as well as all the other editions completed during Smith's lifetime:



the 1778 second edition, 1784 third edition, and 1786 fourth edition. The collection sought to obtain editions published during the author's lifetime to allow observation of changes he made in the text that represented Smith's evolving ideas.¹⁰⁷

The 1776 volumes have been scanned in the OU Digital Laboratory. Volume one is available online at: <https://repository.ou.edu/uuid/015a5263-ed8b-5261-9cca-d64e6211fc7c>; and volume two at: <https://repository.ou.edu/uuid/f9567abb-dd54-5c41-a0ac-1371330944c3>.



29. 1780: *Theorie de l'interet de l'argent, tiree des principes du droit naturel, de la theologie & de la politique, contre l'abus de l'imputation d'usure* (HB 535 .R8 1780)

Anne Robert Jacques Turgot (1727–1781)

What a happy surprise to find an eighteenth-century female economist and business writer here among the list of man after man after man. And then imagine the dismay upon

the discovery that Anne Robert Jacques Turgot (1727–1781) was—*quelle surprise*—a Frenchman.

Theorie de l'interet de l'argent, (trans. *Theory of the Interest of Money*), published in 1780, is a book about interest and usury in business. Referred to as “the French Adam Smith,” Turgot was an economist and statesman who was attempting to reform his government’s draconian economic policies.¹⁰⁸

Published in Paris for Barrois l’aine, the book is small, detailed, and typically pretty, *à la Francaise*.



30. 1782: *Mémoires sur la vie et les ouvrages de M. Turgot, Ministre d'État* (DC 137.5 .T9 D8 1782)

Pierre Samuel du Pont de Nemours (1739–1817)

The entry for number 30 is a first for the list, as it concerns one influential economist reflecting on another influential economist’s life and theories. *Mémoires sur la vie et les ouvrages de M. Turgot, Ministre d'État*, (trans. *Memoirs on the life and works of M. Turgot, Minister of State*) is about

the life and works of the economist and statesman Anne Robert Jacques Turgot (1727–1781), who is featured in number 29. Written in French, this work (like number 29) was published in Philadelphia and Paris by Barrois l’aine.

The book was released a year after Turgot's death and helped establish his sound reputation as an economist, as well as continuing the discussion of French public finance. Pierre Samuel du Pont de Nemours (1739–1817) was a French writer and politician who immigrated with his family to the United States as the French Revolution began.¹⁰⁹ Once in America, the DuPont family would begin an incredible business dynasty.

The book itself is bound in tan cardboard, and is small, plain, and unillustrated, which is unusual for a French volume.

31. 1797: *American Accomptant . . . Designed for the Use of Schools. . .* (511 L51a)
Chauncey Lee (1763–1842)



This 1797 item is intriguing for a number of reasons, the very least of which is that it was used as an early American math schoolbook. *American Accomptant; Being a Plain, Practical and Systematic Compendium of Federal Arithmetic . . . Designed for the Use of Schools*, by Chauncey Lee (1763–1842), was printed in Lansingburgh, New York, by William W. Wards. The volume was designed as an arithmetic text with math lessons covering commutation and book-keeping, including bookkeeping for farmers.

But the stellar aspect of this thin book, now with foxed paper and tattered covers, is that it not only boasts the earliest known depiction of an American coin (a 1795 U.S. eagle), but also the first

printed use of a dollar sign (although not identical to our current symbol).¹¹⁰

All in all, a very interesting schoolbook.



32. 1803: *Traite d'Economie Politique, ou Simple Exposition de Maniere dont se Forment, se Distribment, et se Consommet les Richesses* (HB 163 .S24 1803)

Jean Baptiste Say (1767–1832)

The first book on the list from the nineteenth century, again from across the pond, is *Traite d'Economie Politique* (trans. *Treaty of Political Economy*), by Frenchman Jean Baptiste Say (1767–1832). Say was a businessman and economist, who wrote on the “law of the markets,” which stated that supply creates its own demand (and is still called “Say’s law”).¹¹¹

Published in 1803 in Paris for Chez Deterville Libraire, the two volumes of this set are bound in an almost reversed cinnamon-dyed leather binding that are now showing their age. The book is not decorative, as nineteenth-century book publishers, even in France, began to turn away from the ornamental glory of earlier years, much to a book lover’s disappointment.

Inside the cover a previous owner has written: *The Wicked borrowith, and not returnith not again—Psalms, 37-21*. There is also a bookplate: *Donated in Honor of Fred E. Brown, October 23, 1987*, as this book was donated to the Bass Collection by University Libraries, under the aegis of Dean Sul Lee, in the name of Fred E. Brown, after Mr. Brown donated the Seligman Archives (which appear as number 47 on this list).

The presentation of this volume in 1987 was filmed, and the video is available for any interested viewer on DVD in the Bass Collection as part of its multimedia collection.

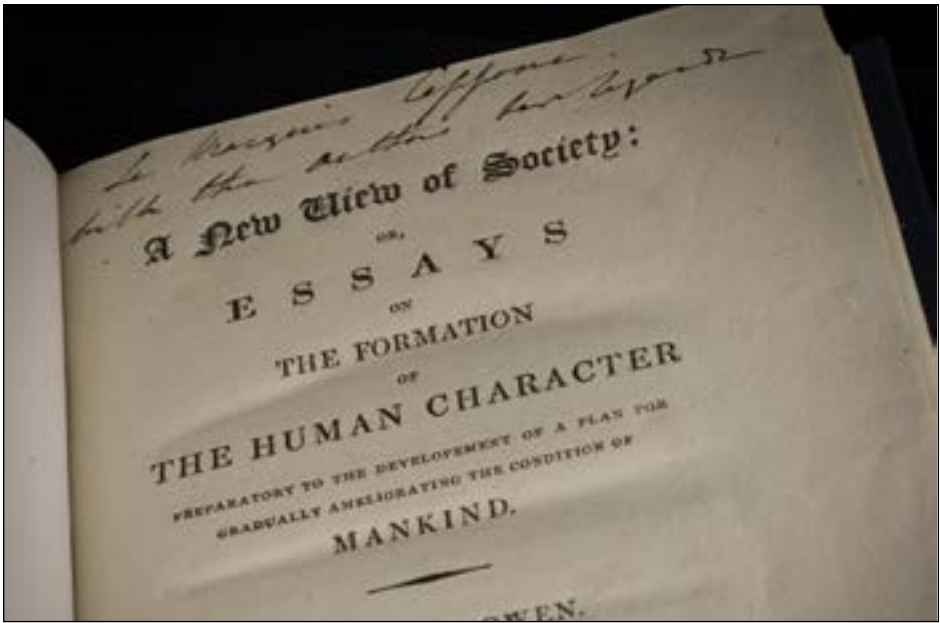


33. 1817: *On the Principles of Political Economy and Taxation* (330 R35o1)
David Ricardo (1772–1823)

This elegant half-bound book has gorgeous orange marbled pages with matching book edges, making it one of the loveliest on the list. The 1817 volume, *On the Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*, is by British economist David Ricardo (1772–1823). The book covers contemporary economics in England, delving into such topics as rent, profit, wages, and free trade. Ricardo was a successful businessman, writer, and Member of Parliament.¹¹²

There is a charming placard in the front of the book stating it was the *1st Prize for General Eminence in the Class of Political Economy, Session 1881–2*. A sticker in back states: *Bound by J. Cookson & Sons*, which is the first professional binder's maker's mark encountered on the list.

Interestingly, this is the first English-language volume without the long "S" that had been used consecutively since the sixteenth century in British and American typography printing. From here on, the books on the list read completely as modern. It gives one pause that British and American books from the early nineteenth century forward are so similar in binding, printing, and readability to volumes produced today that they appear and read as contemporary.



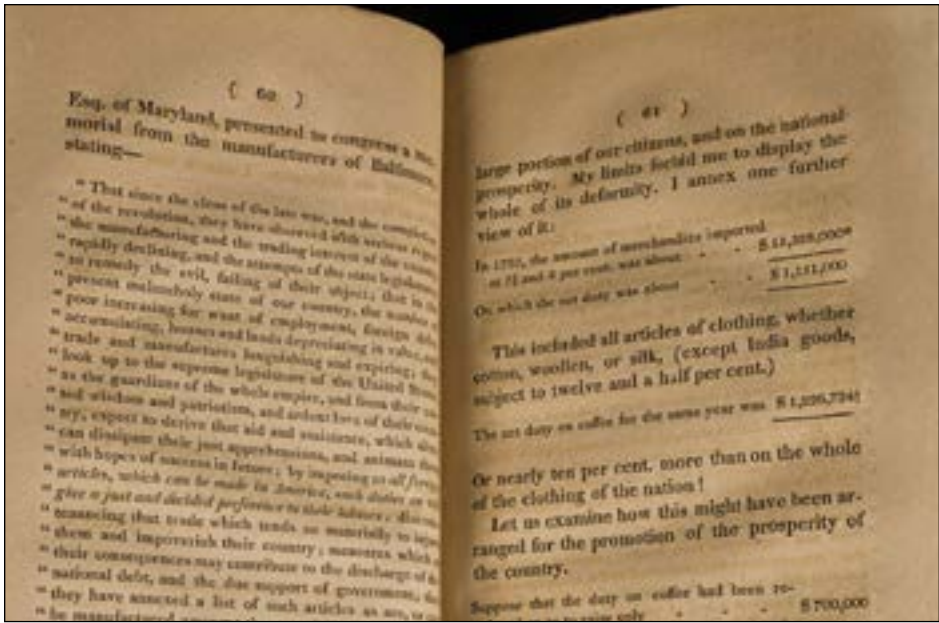
34. 1818: *A New View of Society; or, Essays on the Formation of the Human Character Preparatory to the Development of a Plan for Gradually Ameliorating the Condition of Mankind*, fourth edition (HX 696.09 1818 a)

Robert Owen (1771–1858)

This 1818 entry is the first author-signed presentation copy on the list. Printed in London for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown etc., this slim plain blue volume by Welshman Robert Owen (1771–1858) is titled *A New View of Society; or, Essays on the Formation of the Human Character Preparatory to the Development of a Plan for Gradually Ameliorating the Condition of Mankind*. Although this title was first published in 1816, the Bass Collection owns an 1818 fourth edition, signed to: *Le Marques Cittone with the author's regards*.

The work details, through four essays, Owen's educational philanthropy, touching on economics, communism, and socialism. Owen was a writer, critic, and social reformer who in 1824 established an early experimental Utopian society in Indiana.¹¹³

This volume is a bound-with, and includes Owen's 1819 "An Address Delivered to the Inhabitants of New Lanark . . ." The address has no particular significance.



35. 1820: *The New Olive Branch; or, An Attempt to Establish an Identity of Interest between Agriculture, Manufactures, and Commerce*, second edition (337 C189n)

Mathew Carey (1760–1839)

This solid 1820 mocha-dyed polished calf book is composed of thick, rough-edged paper of unfortunately poor quality. As printing became more commonplace and widespread, the quality dropped to meet the market. *The New Olive Branch; or, An Attempt to Establish an Identity of Interest between Agriculture, Manufactures, and Commerce*, by American Mathew Carey (1760–1839), was published in Philadelphia by “M. Carey” himself. Carey was a writer, publisher, and economist of Irish descent who lived in Philadelphia and who wrote on what Americans then called “internal improvements.”¹¹⁴

This second edition discusses free trade, tariffs, and protectionism in the United States. As writers emerged who specifically began to write on economics and their effects, soon a circle of contemporary business writers was formed who all began citing one another—as we saw with du Pont writing on Turgot—with phrases such as “Mr. Smith says . . .” or “According to Carey . . .”

This volume has interesting marginalia, as well as a printed note in the front stating: *No copyright is secured. . . . The writer requests . . . and has two weeks from this day, to make corrections, should any be found necessary.*



36. 1832: *On the Economy of Machinery and Manufactures* (338.4 B113o)

Charles Babbage (1791–1871)

With the advent of Babbage, we have the first book on business machinery introduced to the list. Published in London in 1832 for C. Knight, this volume bears worn sepia silk covers. In the introduction of *On the Economy of Machinery and Manufactures*, the author states: “The object of the present volume is to point out the effects and the advantages which arise from the use of tools and machines; to endeavor to classify their modes of action; and to trace both the causes and the consequences of applying machinery to supersede the skill and power of the human arm.”

Charles Babbage (1791–1871) was a mathematician, philosopher, engineer, and inventor who originated the concept of a programmable computer. In this book he sur-

veys manufacturing practices and discusses the political, moral, and economic factors affecting them. The book met with hostility from the publishing industry on account of Babbage’s analysis of the manufacture and sale of books. His analysis and promotion of mechanization and efficient “division of labor” (still known as the “Babbage principle”) continue to resonate strongly for modern industrial engineering.¹¹⁵

The title page bears an icon of a monk inscribed *Rogerius Bacon*, referring to the thirteenth-century English philosopher and friar. There is also a Victorian-era *G & J Robinson Booksellers* Liverpooldian booksellers’ sticker adhered to the inside front cover, showing the growing importance of the book trade from this point on in London.



37. 1835: *The Philosophy of Manufactures; or, an Exposition of the Scientific, Moral, and Commercial Economy of the Factory System of Great Britain* (TS 145 .U7)

Andrew Ure (1778–1857)

A golden arabesque curlicue adorns the cover of this tan leather volume printed in 1835 by C. Knight of London. *The Philosophy of Manufactures; or, An Exposition of the Scientific, Moral, and Commercial Economy of the Factory System of Great Britain*, by Scotsman Andrew Ure (1778–1857), expounds on the British factory system and its manufacturers. Ure was a writer, chemist, and scientist. Interestingly, per experiments Ure carried out on a deceased murderer, claiming he could bring the man back to life, it has been said that Mary Shelley used Ure as a model for the main character in her 1818 novel *Frankenstein*.¹¹⁶

This book is well illustrated with numerous gatefolds showing different settings, including a loom factory and a flax mechanism. Inside the front cover a previous owner has signed the volume: *Thomas Richardson, Newcastle upon Tyne*, which means, in all likelihood, this book was once owned by the rather famous British industrial chemist Dr. Thomas Richardson.¹¹⁷

38. 1841: *Factory Operatives' Magazine* (AP 2.0646)

An Association of Females

Entry number 38 on our list is different from all the others as we finally have a publication by not just one female author, but a journal produced by an entire association of female authors. The *Factory Operatives' Magazine* was published in 1841 by An Association of Females, issued by WM. Schouler of Lowell, Massachusetts.



Unfortunately there are no female authors named, but the unnamed authors did publish this journal for the other female workers at the Lowell Mills.

At the height of the Industrial Revolution during the 1840s, upwards of eight thousand women were employed in garment making in the town of Lowell, Massachusetts, and were referred to as “The Lowell Mill Girls.”¹¹⁸ *Factory Operatives' Magazine* offered these young, mainly unmarried women—some of whom had just left their homes for the first time—moral instruction and guidance.

The magazine contains impassioned essays (e.g., “Gleaned from the Parlor”) and poems (e.g., “Friendship . . .” the last line of which is: “It blossoms fair, eternally”). Flourished with marvelous editorials (“Here the muse may sing . . .”), this magazine is so lovely, charming, and passionate it makes you want to curl up with it by the fire to read.

The book itself is composed of bound copies of the original journal. Over the years the book has been poorly rebound, cutting deep into the text block, and refurnished with cheap paper covers, which are now peeling. Unfortunately, the interior paper is so severely foxed to the point of almost resembling a saltine.

Another first for this list: *Factory Operatives' Magazine* is the first book to be known to be owned by a woman. Inside the front cover is written: *Miss Sophia Wentington, Spencer, 1877*, penned thirty years after the magazine was first disseminated.

The OU Digital Lab has scanned the volume, so do enjoy with a cup of tea, online at: <https://repository.ou.edu/uuid/2f0a13ef-9a79-5c2a-8894-4c62673e1869> .



39. 1844: *Essay on Some Unsettled Questions of Political Economy* (HB 161 .M645)
John Stuart Mill (1806–1873)

This thin, decorative, half-bound volume has brightly colored marbled cover boards. The 1844 British volume, *Essay on Some Unsettled Questions of Political Economy*, by John Stuart Mill (1806–1873), was published in London for J.W. Parker. Mill was the most influential English-language philosopher of the nineteenth century. According to one source, “He was a naturalist, a utilitarian, and a liberal, whose work explores the consequences of a thoroughgoing, empiricist outlook.”¹¹⁹ His major titles include *System of Logic*, *On Liberty*, and *On the Subjugation of Women*.

Essay on Some Unsettled Questions of Political Economy is not one of Mill’s most famous titles, but it does settle him amid the other business and economic writers of the age. In this work he discusses laws and distribution of gains between countries, the influence of consumption on production, productivity versus unproductivity, and profits versus interests.

Astride the inside cover is a round bookplate of a winged helmet next to a decorative escutcheon, with a banner furred about it bearing the initials: G.S.M. Curioser and curioser.



40. 1848: *Appleton’s Railroad and Steamboat Companion* (E 158.W 703)

Wellington Williams (ca. 1840)

The first atlas to enter the list is *Appleton’s Railroad and Steamboat Companion. Being a Travelers’ Guide through New England and the Middle States, with Routes in the Southern and Western States, and also in Canada, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia*. Published in New York

in 1848 by D. Appleton & Co., this book has a bright red cloth cover with gold lettering. Sadly any information about the author, Wellington Williams (ca. 1840), has been lost to time, although his fine book remains.

The volume is a guidebook to early America with thirty black-and-white maps engraved in steel that seem too brittle to unfurl, yet you can do just that. There are a few pages of advertisements for other books in the back, as the practice of including ads had come into vogue for British and American books at the time. In the introductory pages, there is also a distinct mention of copyright, which had been established in America through the federal government in 1790.



41. 1850: *New Values of Gold and Silver Coins . . .* (CJ 1753.E 26)

Jacob Reese Eckfeldt (1803–1872) and William E. Du Bois (1810–1881)

The *New Values of Gold and Silver Coins*, published in Philadelphia in 1850 by authors Jacob Reese Eckfeldt (1803–1872) and William E. Du Bois (1810–1881), appears as a rather common half-bound book, but the real treat is within.

This volume is about numismatics, coinage, and money in general. The book documents different denominations, complete with information on weight, fineness, and value. There are wonderful colored illustrations, and even one page of bright blue velvet with images of gold-painted California and Mormon coins. The plates were engraved with medal-ruling, a mechanical

technique of copying relief directly from the coin into the copper plate.¹²⁰

Eckfeldt and Du Bois were numismatists, writers, and assayers for the U.S. Mint. Inside the front cover of this volume is a Department of State library plate stamped *Cancelled*, as the book had been withdrawn from the department's collection. Also written inside is: *Received from F. Taylor 27th Sept. 1857*. Mr. F. Taylor may have donated the book to the Department of State library.



42. 1865: *United States Internal Revenue. Annual Taxes, 1865* (HJ 2381 .U53 1865)

United States, Internal Revenue Service

The next item on our list is from the U.S. federal government. *United States Internal Revenue. Annual Taxes, 1865*, is an original copy of one of the first U.S. tax returns. The form consists of one large sheet of paper folded to make four pages, each printed on the front and back.

The first federal income tax was established as an emergency measure in 1862–1872,¹²¹ and then was formally ratified into law in 1913. As typical of taxes today, the form is rather complicated with sixteen different categories of income specified. There is also a list of taxable items that can be noted, including silver plate, billiards table, gold watches, piano fortes, and a yacht.

The form is dated April 25, 1865, and is docketed with the name of a Chippewee, Massachusetts, taxpayer and the local assessor. This document has been scanned in by the OU Digital Laboratory and is available online at: <https://repository.ou.edu/uuid/610afa43-85d1-5f33-af8d-dd86c3a27aa6> .

43. 1888–1987: *Sears, Roebuck, and Co. Catalogs* (TS 199 .S43 and Microform Serial 701)

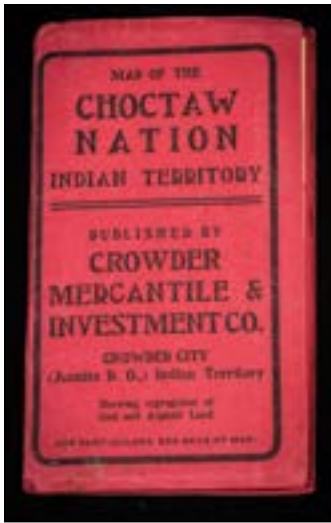
Sears, Roebuck, and Co. Corporation

Entry 43 is the first item on the list to be published in the twentieth century. But publication of the Sears, Roebuck, and Co. catalogs began much earlier, in 1888. The Bass Collection has copies of the original Sears, Roebuck, and Co. catalogs from



1888 to 1987, the early volumes in paper and the later on microfilm.

Sears catalogs have long been regarded as cultural and social chronicles of the times. The products on each page can tell a little story about the lifestyles of a particular season or year in our past.¹²² The Bass Collection had collected paper copies of the original Sears, Roebuck, and Co. Catalogs, and in December 1987 the Sears Corporation donated microfilm copies of its Christmas "Wish Book" from 1933 to 1987. The paper books are in various conditions, some good, some not, but the microfiche, as befits its nature, is so far unchanged by time.



44. 1903: *Map of the Choctaw National Indian Territory* (G 4022. C57 H5 1903)

Crowder Mercantile & Investment Company.

This small red 1903 cardboard bound book opens up to reveal the *Map of the Choctaw National Indian Territory*. The item was published in Crowder City, Indian Territory, for the Crowder Mercantile and Investment Company. The city of Crowder is east of Oklahoma City on Lake Eufaula, just north of Bugtussle.

Besides basic map points, the map shows segregation of coal and asphalt land and also contains matters of interest concerning lands of the Choctaw Nation, which is in the southeast corner of the state. Produced for a local company to disseminate, this is an early piece of American business ephemera, as well as being relevant to early Oklahoma and Native American history. This item has been scanned in by the OU Digital Laboratory and is available online at: <https://repository.ou.edu/uuid/4d2bf81b-d763-59ea-90ce-18830cd15893>.

45. 1921: *Calico Painting & Printing* (745 B173c)

George Percival Baker (1856–1951)

There is no other word in academia or beyond to describe this vast portfolio besides: fabulous. The 1921 *Calico Painting and Printing in the East Indies in the XVIIth and XVIIIth Centuries* is a ridiculously oversized, overstuffed, ribboned, and folded masterpiece of commercial printing. Published in London by E. Arnold, this magnificent 78 inch portfolio yearns to be unfurled.

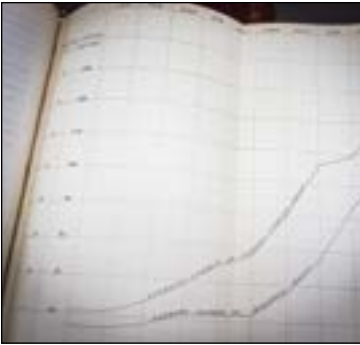
To open the book, which is covered in calico vignettes, one must first untie two large, silvery ribbands before one can unfold the outer boards. Then two deli-



cate sets of satin aubergine ribbon must be untied to allow the two inner boards to open to reveal the stack of elephantine prints. And what prints they are! All are of calico fabric designs from India, on thick paper and simply splendid in their color and presentation. The multi-fruited Tree of Life is depicted, along with dense flowers, imaginary castles, huge sailing ships, and a menagerie of animals, including lions, giraffes, and many a strutting peacock.



George Percival Baker (1856 –1851) was a textile printer and merchant, mountaineer, plantsman, gardener and apparent bon vivant for gifting the world with such a wonderful thing of beauty.¹²³ Luckily for us, the entire volume has been scanned in by the OU Digital Laboratory and is available online at: <https://repository.ou.edu/uuid/d9a262ec-a742-5557-be12-dc910fe9cce6>; and the oversized portfolio plates are available at: <https://repository.ou.edu/uuid/85100d7b-2b5c-5206-834a-f2786bc08f8e>.



46. 1983: Phariss Donation; and 1984: Hopf Collection

The next item on our list is not a book, but rather two donated collections of many books and items: the Phariss and the Hopf Collections. In 1983, John W. Phariss donated forty-one boxes of volumes of his impressive business and economic history collection after he saw an article on the Bass Collection in OU's Business Administration's *Dialog* alumni newsletter. The donated titles ranged from a 1761 volume, *The History of Our Customs Aids Subsidies National Debts and Cares*, to "newer" nineteenth-century texts such as the 1821 James Mill *Elements of Political Economy*. Upon receipt, these fine books were merged into the Bass Collection overall.

In 1984, the General Electric Co. (GE) donated the Harry Hopf collection of twenty-five boxes of materials on early twentieth-century management. Hopf was a consultant and lecturer who showed factories and offices how to incorporate scientific management into their businesses. Hopf worked at GE, which inherited his library. GE then gifted the archives to the Bass Collection to allow researchers access to it.¹²⁴ This 1,600-object collection contains English as well as foreign language titles. Instead of being housed together in one location, the books are distributed in different locations. Some materials are in the main library, but Hopf's bound reports and papers and kept together in the Bass vault for research purposes.¹²⁵

47. 1987: J. & W. Seligman & Co. files

The most renowned and most used section of the Bass Business History Collection is the J. & W. Seligman & Co. files. These were donated in 1987 by alumnus Fred E. Brown, former chairman of J. & W. Seligman & Co., Inc. This archival collection details the history of the Seligman family, who have been dubbed "the American Rothschilds," and their pioneering New York investment firm that was



founded in the midst of the Civil War and thereafter played a pivotal role in American and international economic development. The collection is composed of more than fifty thousand pages of private and business letter books, account and profit and loss statements, stock certificates, unpublished manuscripts, photographs, and transcripts of oral interviews.¹²⁶

The collection's main focus is business, as the Seligman firm was one of America's first investment banking houses. Other subjects are covered as well, including a photo of Mary Todd Lincoln, and a personal letter by Joseph Seligman to Ulysses S. Grant, containing an appeal to the president to provide for presidential widows. There are also historically important photographs of Wall Street, railroad scenes, cable cars, and banks. The Seligman collection provides a glimpse into late nineteenth and mostly early twentieth-century investment banking, especially its international dimension.¹²⁷

Today Seligman is a closed collection; although there is scholarly access, reproduction of materials is not allowed.



48. 1991: Price Waterhouse, Retail Management System

Amid the gifts to Bass in the 1990s, the most significant in the area of retailing was the 1991 gift by Price Waterhouse of copies of their Management Horizons Division publications series. These volumes cover the 1970s–1990s and address such issues as sales, consumer product marketing, and demographics. These products were retail guides that companies would have purchased from Management Horizons to review as guides for how to improve their business.



Archived titles include: *Changing Economics of Retailing and Profitability and Productivity Trends in Retailing and Improving Sales Promotion Productivity and Profit Opportunities through Merchandise Management*.¹²⁸ This useful and research-worthy collection involves many black bound books and pamphlets, which are kept together in the Bass vault.

49. 1999: Kahn Collection

Patty Kahn, the widow of Robert Kahn, the successful consultant and retailing strategist, donated her husband's books, correspondence, and other materials to the Bass Collection in 1999. Robert Kahn worked for such giant companies as Walmart

and Mervyn's. It is rumored that Sam Walton called Kahn "the greatest retail strategist," and even extended the mandatory retirement age limit so that Kahn could continue serving on the Walmart Board of Directors.¹²⁹

The donation involved nearly fifty boxes of materials, from correspondence with Walton, to Board of Directors meeting notes, to financial statements and correspondence with Bill and Hillary Clinton. These items are organized together in the Bass vault and constitute the last great archival donation to the Bass Collection to date.

50. Present: Current Journals

The final treasure of the Bass Collection brings the list to the present: the currently received business journals. The University Libraries maintain a number of contemporary business periodical subscriptions, including *Business Week*, *Fortune*, and *Harvard Business Review*. The collection preserves the back issues of these journals but also still receives the current issues in paper, as well as making them available electronically in full text.

With these publications, there is life coming into the collection monthly. These titles help the Bass Collection grow and prosper and remain relevant in the field of business history research.



NOTES

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