

Finding List for Manuscript Material in Baker Library

BAKER LIBRARY, with the assistance of the Business Historical Society, has brought together the first systematic collection of *business manuscripts*. Many libraries and historical societies have accumulated a few business manuscripts incidentally, but their chief interest, thus far, has been biographical source material or source material for political history. This is the first time business history has constituted the object in view.

The first set of records acquired, and still one of the best, was secured in 1916 by Arthur H. Cole, now Administrative Curator of the Library, while he was still a student at Harvard. This was the Samuel Slater Collection, comprising over one thousand volumes and constituting a reservoir of information concerning the early history of the textile industry. Further acquisition of material was at first hampered by lack of room and funds available for cataloging. Since the building of Baker Library the collection has grown rapidly, though little cataloging of manuscripts was possible prior to 1929. In the last three years all of the material has been made available; a system of cataloging manuscripts has been devised; and finally, a finding list of all the manuscript material in Baker Library has just been completed and is soon to be published. The list has been compiled by Margaret Ronzone Cusick, who has also had charge of the cataloging of manuscript material.

The list, arranged as it is by industries, points out clearly the strength and weakness in the collection. The records of more than five hundred different firms and individuals have been brought together. As might be expected, the material is predominantly from New England. It has always been the policy of the Library to encourage each section of the country to collect its own manuscripts. Although the Library possesses a few very valuable collections from other localities, the chief aim has been the building up of a collection which would be truly representative of the economic development of New England. For this reason it is not surprising that such industries as textile manufacturing, shoe manufacturing, shipping, foreign marketing, and banking should be those for which the material is most complete. On the other hand, records relating to lumbering, fishing, whaling, and shipbuilding are deficient and should be augmented, for these, too, are basic industries in New England.