

## CHAPTER 2

# Economics

*A wise man should have money in his head but not his heart.*

*Jonathan Swift*

### **AMERICAN NUMISMATIC SOCIETY—THE HARRY W. BASS JR. LIBRARY**

Address: 75 Varick Street, 11th floor, New York, NY 10013

URL: <http://numismatics.org/Library/Library>

Telephone: (212) 571-4470

Access: Members: Free. Government photo ID required.

Nonmembers: \$20 per day. Photo ID required.

Students with valid student ID: Free.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AmericanNumismaticSociety>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/ANSCoins>

Transportation: Subway—1, 2 line at Canal Street.

Like millions of little boys in the 1950s, I was an avid collector of coins, usually pennies. At that time, coins from the 1930s were readily found on the streets of Phoenix, and we could fill jars with that wartime curiosity of lead pennies (now impossibly rare). If you went to the bank and bought a roll of pennies, you could often find something even older, such as a 1909 first issue of Lincoln. Then you replaced that with a modern penny and brought it right back to the bank teller, who loved this little operation (at least they never told us otherwise, but there were pained expressions on their faces). Then you learned the rest of this game, sadly. I once amassed a good stack of buffalo nickels and took it to the coin store in central Phoenix. The man scratched his chin and said there is nothing much of interest here, but he would take them off my hands for 7 cents each. A month later, I saw them in a jar by the door: “Rare nickels: 75 cents each.” That ended my lifetime dealings with coin stores.



Main reading room of the library.

Still, I was happy to add the American Numismatic Society's library to my list in the first round. It was the second library I visited after getting my contract. I had contacted David Hill, who was very prompt in getting back to me and setting up a January visit. The building is a high-rise about a block north of Canal Street. The process of visiting reminded me of visiting a bank vault. The hallway leading up to the library was very sleek, with displays of the organization's long history. It began in 1858, and they purchased the first book for the library a year later. Unlike nearly all of the older libraries in this book, the Numismatic Society began in Midtown and then moved to the far north of Manhattan in 1908, as part of the complex created by Archer Huntington, founder of the Hispanic Society. In 1864, shortly after their founding, they added Archaeology to their name, but by 1908 they had gone back to their original roots. They have been at their current location since 2008.

David's title is the Francis D. Campbell Librarian, an endowed position named after the man who worked for the library for 50 years and as librarian for 30 of those. Hill told me that he still gets calls asking for Campbell, who was, at the time of my visit, still alive but very much retired. The typical users are students, scholars, and collectors. There are more than 100,000 volumes, with a substantial collection of the society's own publications. When I asked which item they were proudest of

holding, I was told that they kept a book in honor of Ulysses S. Grant. It is a two-volume scrapbook put together by George Kunz of Tiffany & Co. having to do with ceremonies and a medal produced by the Numismatic Society for Grant's Tomb. The library's rare book room also contains *De Asse et Partibus Euis*, by Guillaume Budé, 1516 (Roman B833 P37), on Roman coinage and one of the earliest books, if not the first, devoted to the study of ancient coins.

As we looked through the rarest or the rare, it somehow came up that we were both fans of the Grateful Dead. He had followed the band to many concerts. I have been to only one, but I did create a highly specialized Web page for Deadhead librarians.

I spent some time looking through their online catalog and found that it contained very deep coverage of the library's substantial holdings of journal articles. Its name, DONUM, is an acronym for "Database of Numismatic Materials" and is also the Latin word for "gift." There were numerous references to journal articles printed 40 and 50 years ago. The library also provides links to MANTIS, an online database that catalogs the thousands of coins in the organization's vaults.

## **LIBRARY: FOUNDATION CENTER**

Address: 32 Old Slip, 24th Floor, New York, NY 10005-3500

URL: <http://foundationcenter.org/newyork/library.html>

Telephone: (212) 620-4230

E-mail: <http://foundationcenter.org/getstarted/askus/>

Access: Open to the public

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/foundationcenter?fref=ts>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/FCNewYork>

I had a brief experience when I visited one of the Foundation Center's funding agencies sometime in the 1990s to give a talk about XML. The office was high in a tall building with a stunning view out to the East River. I had been in contact with the library director Jimmy Tom for several weeks, and we managed to set up a Friday morning meeting in March.

I found out that, like many of these libraries, they use Koha for their online catalog, with ByWater as their automation facilitator. By way of explanation, Koha is an open access program, so it is free to any library

who wants to use it. However, it requires a level of automation competence that most small libraries lack, so nearly all of them sign up with a company that guides them through the process and manages their technical support. Tom told me that the library owns 5000 volumes, and most of these are monographs rather than serial sets. I had observed an information session about Koha when a nearby library was migrating several years ago, and it seemed that the basic bibliographic information was well served, but name authority was still a weak link. Tom did not dispute this point. The library does its own cataloging and uses a homemade system rather than Dewey or Library of Congress. According to Tom, “We are particularly proud of *The Foundation Center’s Guide to Proposal Writing*, now in its sixth edition. It is written by Jane Geever and incorporates results of interviews with grantmakers across the nation.”



Free materials from the library.

Tom filled me in on the history of his parent organization. Foundations including the Rockefeller, Carnegie, Kellogg, and Russell Sage created the Center in 1956. The founding president, F. Emerson Andrews, came from the Sage Foundation. The original mission was to create a “strategic gathering place for knowledge about foundations.” The Center soon became

national in scope, opening offices in major cities around the country. For its national program, it gathers information from sources such as Web pages, IRS reports, and direct contact. By now it devotes much of its effort in gathering data from around the world.



Research area of the library.

The Foundation Center is heavily into the use of social media. In addition to the usual outlets such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, they instruct each regional office to create a blog. The New York office has a staff of five, and they are all involved in training, reference, and special programs for the public and for agencies. Their online product, Foundation Directory Online, is available for as little as \$399 per year for people who need the information but are not conveniently close to a library that subscribes. People in New York do not have that problem. In addition to the Foundation Center itself, the New York Public Library subscribes and makes the full database available at the Stephen A. Schwarzman Building. The Bronx Library Center and the St. George Library Center are part of the Funding Information Network, a network of libraries, community foundations, and other nonprofit resource centers that provide access to Foundation Center databases and publications.



Circulation desk of the library.

While the library is primarily reference, Tom told me that the library does a limited number of two-week circulations to registered members. The real activity here seems to be in programming. He gave me the March calendar, and I saw that there was training scheduled for 15 days. All-day sessions involved a fee, but the one-hour sessions were free—you just need to schedule a slot. Most of the 50 libraries were involved in grantsmanship, so this library is appropriate to all of the others.

## FURTHER READING

American Numismatic Society Magazine: <http://ansmagazine.com/>.

DEADUCATED – a web page for librarians who are fans of the Grateful Dead: <http://www.terryballard.org/deadlib/>.

Foundation Directory Online: <https://subscribe.foundationcenter.org/fdo>.

Frank Campbell and the ANS Library: An appreciation: [http://www.coinbooks.org/esylum\\_v11n31a09.html](http://www.coinbooks.org/esylum_v11n31a09.html).

Investor's Guide to United States Coins: [https://books.google.com/books?id=lk9sgCd\\_FF8C&lpg=PA25&dq=american%20numismatic%20society%20library&pg=PA25#v=onepage&q=american%20numismatic%20society%20library&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=lk9sgCd_FF8C&lpg=PA25&dq=american%20numismatic%20society%20library&pg=PA25#v=onepage&q=american%20numismatic%20society%20library&f=false).

Mantis Catalog of coin holdings: <http://numismatics.org/search/>.

Russell Sage Foundation 100 year document: <http://www.russellsage.org/sites/all/files/u4/Brief%20History%20of%20RSF.pdf>.

Wikipedia page about American Numismatic Society: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American\\_Numismatic\\_Society](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Numismatic_Society).

Wikipedia page about the Foundation Center: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foundation\\_Center](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foundation_Center).