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Professorial Memorial Collection: J. Bartlet  
Brebner, Stephen Koss, Garret Mattingly,  
1927-1993  
UA# 0142

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**SUMMARY INFORMATION**

**Creator**

R.K. (Robert Kieter) Webb, 1922-

**Title and dates**

Professorial Memorial Collection: J. Bartlet Brebner, Stephen Koss, Garret Mattingly, 1927-1993

**Abstract**

This collection contains materials related to the lives and work, and memorials for, three Columbia University professors known by R.K. Webb: J. Bartlet Brebner, Stephen Koss, and Garrett Mattingly. R.K. Webb, Professor of History Emeritus at University of Maryland-Baltimore County, studied under Professors Brebner and Mattingly as a graduate student at Columbia University, later taught at Columbia University in the Department of History, and served as editor of the American Historical Review.

**Size**

1.5 linear feet (3 document boxes)

**Call number**

UA# 0142

**Location**

Columbia University  
Butler Library, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Rare Book and Manuscript Library  
535 West 114<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10027

**Language(s) of material**

English

**Biographical Note**

Professor of History Emeritus R.K. Webb, University of Maryland-Baltimore County, graduated from Columbia University with a Ph.D. in History in 1951 and taught in the History department at Columbia from 1953 to 1985, before moving to the Department of History at UMBC. Webb is a noted scholar of British social history and British working-class literature, and a former editor of the *American Historical Review*, the central scholarly history journal for the history profession in the United States. The papers in this collection document the lives and work of three professors whom Webb knew personally. As a graduate student at Columbia University, Webb received instruction from Professor of History John Bartlet Brebner (1895-1957), a well-known historian of Great Britain, British constitutional law and history, and Atlantic and Canadian history who taught at Columbia from 1925 until he died in 1957, and Professor of History Garrett Mattingly (1900-1962), who taught the history of early modern Europe at Columbia from 1948 until 1962, one year before he died. As Professor of History at Columbia University in the 1950s and 1960s, Webb instructed and mentored Stephen Koss (1940-1984), who later taught at Barnard and Columbia University until his death in 1984.

Webb was central to preserving the memory of the lives and contributions of Professors Brebner, Koss and Mattingly to Columbia University and the historical profession. Webb co-founded and coordinated the Brebner Memorial Fund (which was chaired by Professor Garrett Mattingly) soon after Brebner's death. The Memorial Fund was intended to foster Columbia University Department of History graduate students' study of historical topics relevant to Brebner's research by facilitating the acquisition of microfilms of British newspapers and other primary sources. Webb also preserved Brebner's research notes and chapter drafts of an unfinished book on industrializing Britain that Brebner was preparing when he died. According to Webb, the book and the accompanying notes and drafts had their origins in a popular lecture course Brebner taught at Columbia in the 1940s and 1950s. Webb and other colleagues interested in Brebner's project decided that Brebner's four chapter drafts in these files, while "admirable and elegant as they are as summaries of his matured views on the mid-eighteenth century," were not ready for publication at the time.

Webb also participated in the memorialization of Barnard College Professor of History Stephen Koss, a former graduate student of Webb's at Columbia, and later colleague and friend. Correspondence between Webb and Koss in 1965 regarding Koss's dissertation, which Webb determined had to be nearly completely revised, caused considerable tension between Koss and his mentor, and in part illustrates the shifting norms of formality and formal communication and address in academic and professional life in the 1960s. This "contretemps" was clearly a sensitive matter for Webb, who attached to it his only note regarding any of the papers he donated in this collection.

## Professorial Memorial Collection

Webb noted that his very formal addressing of Koss as "Dr. Mr. [sic] Koss," after recently addressing his correspondence to Koss with "Dear Stephen," had to be appreciated in a context of not only correspondence regarding Koss's dissertation, but Webb's professional maturation in the rather more formal environment that characterized academic life before the cultural revolutions of the 1960s, "a background that probably few of my younger colleagues could understand in this informal age. I recall so vividly the transition from 'Mr.' to first-name status with my own teachers - - Howard Robinson at Oberlin, J.B. Brebner and Garrett Mattingly at Columbia, H.L. Beales at the London School of Economics - - it was long in coming and arrived at rather late in each of the relationships. And I know that in the 1960s I was still concerned about scrupulousness in this matter: in the simplest form that, prior to completion of the doctorate, when one was still, so to speak, sitting in judgment, maintaining a formal style was more appropriate. I have largely abandoned that scruple because present-day undergraduates would find it astonishing to be addressed by anything other than a first name, a case applying *a fortiori* to graduate students." Webb also followed Koss's frustrated efforts to facilitate access to The Woods Collection, an archive dealing with the history of the twentieth-century British political press, a topic on which Koss was an expert, and contributed to professional memorials for Koss that culminated in a volume in his honor, J.M.W. Bean, ed., *The Political Culture of Modern Britain: Studies in Memory of Stephen Koss* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1987).

Webb also preserved materials concerning the professional memorial and *estschrift* for Columbia University Professor of History Garrett Mattingly, who supervised Webb's studies as a graduate student at Columbia along with Brebner. Webb participated in the professional memorial and helped to prepare a volume of essays dedicated to the memory of Mattingly and his scholarship, *From the Renaissance to the Counter-Reformation: Essays in Honor of Garrett Mattingly*, edited and with an introduction by Charles H. Carter (New York: Random House, 1965).

### Description

R. K. Webb's Professorial Memorial Collection contains materials related to the lives and work, and professional memorials for, three Columbia University professors known by Webb: J. Bartlet Brebner, Stephen Koss, and Garrett Mattingly. The collection documents the work of the Brebner Memorial Fund, and includes promotional and organizational records, correspondence to and from Webb and other officers of the Fund, lists of microfilm materials to be acquired by the Fund, and papers regarding the memorial volume for Brebner. Other materials regarding Brebner include Brebner's research notes and chapter drafts of his unfinished book on industrializing Britain, academic articles retained by Brebner and some unrelated ephemera.

The Professorial Memorial Collection also documents the activities of, and professional memorial for, Stephen Koss, and the relationship between this student of Webb's, and later, Webb's colleague and friend. The collection includes materials from Koss's memorial, extensive correspondence between Webb and Koss, Webb's letters of recommendation for Koss, and other material concerning Koss's efforts to facilitate access to The Woods Collection.

Lastly, the collection contains materials concerning the professional memorial and *estschrift* for Columbia University Professor of History Garrett Mattingly.

### Arrangement

This collection is arranged in three series.

Series I: John Bartlet Brebner, 1927-1960s

Subseries I.1: Memorial Fund, 1927-1960s

Subseries I.2: Manuscript Research Notes and Drafts, 1940s-1950s

Series II. Stephen Koss, 1963-1993

Series III. Garrett Mattingly, 1950s

**Series I: John Bartlet Brebner, 1927-1960s**

This series comprises records and documents from the early operations of the John Bartlet Brebner Memorial Fund and the research notes and chapter drafts of Brebner's unfinished manuscript on the history of early modern and industrializing Britain. Material in this series is arranged chronologically.

Subseries 1: Memorial Fund, 1927-1960s This subseries includes organizational and promotional materials that document the creation and early operation of the Brebner Memorial Fund. They include correspondence to and from Webb and other officers of the Memorial Fund, correspondence with various donors, including many former students and colleagues of Brebner, memorials to Brebner, and some of Brebner's personal ephemera.

Subseries 2: Manuscript Research Notes and Drafts, 1940s-1950s Contained in this subseries are academic articles, newspaper and magazine clippings, and research notes and research materials relevant to Brebner's unfinished historical manuscript on early modern and industrializing Britain, which he was preparing when he died in 1857. These files also contain various drafts of four chapters on Britain in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

**Series II: Stephen Koss, 1963-1993**

This series contains correspondence between Koss and Webb, letters of recommendation for Koss written by Webb, and papers and documents focusing on the death of, and professional memorial for, Stephen Koss, including material related to the memorial volume. This series also contains correspondence and other documents related to Koss's efforts to facilitate the acquisition of The Woods Collection. Material in this series is arranged chronologically.

**Series III: Garrett Mattingly, 1960s**

Series III contains documents and correspondence regarding the death of, and memorial for, Garrett Mattingly, including papers related to the memorial volume for Mattingly. Material in this series is arranged chronologically.

**ACCESS AND USE**

**Access**

This collection has no restrictions.

**This collection is located off-site.** You will need to request this material at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance to use the collection in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library reading room.

**Restrictions on Use and Copyright Information**

Single photocopies may be made for research purposes. Permission to publish material from the collection must be requested from the Curator of Manuscripts, Rare Book and Manuscript Library (RBML). The RBML approves permission to publish that which it physically owns; the responsibility to secure copyright permission rests with the patron.

**Other Finding Aids**

John Bartlet Brebner Papers, 1937-1957, Rare Books and Manuscript Library, Columbia University  
Garrett Mattingly [Papers] [ca. 1940]-1962, Rare Books and Manuscript Library, Columbia University.

**ACQUISITION AND APPRAISAL**

**Provenance and Acquisition**

This collection was donated to the Rare Books and Manuscript Library by Professor Emeritus R.K. Webb, 1993 December.

**Accrual of Records**

No additions are expected.

**PROCESSING AND OTHER INFORMATION**

**Processing Information**

This collection was processed by Justin Jackson, GSAS 2012. Finding aid written by Justin Jackson, June 2008.

**Descriptive Rules Used**

Finding aid adheres to that prescribed by *Describing Archives: A Content Standard*

**Encoding**

Finding aid written in English.

**Preferred Citation**

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); Professorial Memorial Collection: J. Bartlet Brebner, Stephen Koss, Garret Mattingly; Box and Folder; University Archives, Columbia University.

**Subject Headings**

These papers have been indexed in the Columbia University Library online catalog using the following terms. Those seeking related materials should search under these terms.

Brebner, John Bartlet, 1895-1957  
Koss, Stephen E.  
Mattingly, Garrett, 1900-1962  
Webb, R. K. (Robert Kiefer), 1922-

Series I: John Bartlet Brebner, 1927-1960s

**Box 1**

Subseries I.1: Memorial Fund, 1927-1960s

- F. 1 Committee, 1958-1960  
Correspondence
- F. 2 Correspondence, 1959-1977
- F. 3 Correspondence - - Controller's Office, 1958-1961
- F. 4 Correspondence - - From Donors, 1958-1960
- F. 5 Correspondence - - To Donors, 1958-1960
- F. 6 General Material, 1957-1960
- F. 7 Historiography Project, 1958-1961
- F. 8 Microfilm Materials--, Lists, 1960s
- F. 9 Project Arrangements, 1927-1959

Subseries I.2: Manuscript Research Notes and Drafts, 1950s-1960s

- F. 10 Book Project--General, 1955-1957  
Drafts
- F. 11 Draft, Chapter--, "Undercurrents," circa 1950s
- F. 12 Draft, Chapter Three--, "Commitment To Industrialization (1760-1790)," circa 1950s
- F. 13 Drafts, Chapters, circa 1950s

**Box 2**

Notes

- F. 14 Notes, "Before 1650," circa 1950s
- F. 152 Notes and Draft, "Cherished Stability (1750)," circa 1950s

**Box 2**

- F. 13 Notes, "The Climate of Opinion, 1760-90," circa 1950s
- F. 24 Notes, "The Climate of Opinion, 1760-90," circa 1950s
- F. 35 Notes, "The Changing Polity, 1760-1790," circa 1950s
- F. 46 Notes, "The Changing Polity, 1760-1790, Discarded," circa 1950s (Originally titled "Discarded as too Bald")
- F. 57 Notes, "The Changing Polity, 1760-1790, Discarded," circa 1950s (Originally titled, "The ~~Traditional~~ Polity, 1760-90")
- F. 68 Notes, "The Economy About 1760-90," circa 1950s
- F. 79 Notes, "Social Change, 1760-1790," circa 1950s (Originally marked "Somewhat Slight Needs Pervasive Ideas")

**Box 3**

Series II: Stephen Koss, 1963-1993

- F. 81 Correspondence, 1963-1993
- F. 92 Death and Memorial, 1984-1985
- F. 103 The Woods Collection, 1979-1982

Series III: Garrett Mattingly, 1963-1964

- F. 114 Memorial Minutes, 1963
- F. 125 Memorial Volume, 1963-1964