What’s in a Name at HBS?

by Al Bartocci and Brent Sverdloff
(Historical Collections Department, Baker Library)

Any HBS student’s daily campus routine would make Pavlov proud. Rote exposure to locations and activities there makes for indelible associations. First stop of the day: Aldrich! You think “coffee.” What comes to mind with Kresge? Probably “food.” I say Baker, you think “too many stairs.” Beyond the personal associations which you either cling to fondly or wish somehow to shake loose, there are time-honored meanings behind these names. If you’ve ever wondered for whom and how these buildings were named (“fess up, you know you have”), read on.

Harvard Business School wasn’t always the compact little Georgian village that it is today. From its beginnings in 1908 until new facilities were built at Soldiers Field, the School occupied scattered quarters in and around Harvard Yard, under the first HBS Dean, Edwin F. Gay (1908-19). The present HBS campus was secured in 1924 with a $10-million capital campaign “to extend the National service of Harvard University.” In order to reassure the Harvard Corporation’s concerns about draining donors, second HBS Dean Wallace B. Donham (1919-42) had arranged to consolidate his project to secure new facilities ($5M) with Harvard’s efforts to fund a new chemistry laboratory ($3M) and art museum ($2M). Ultimately, however, the entire Business School stake was met by a sole contributor.

George F. Baker

Several substantial pledges had already been made on behalf of the School before the public inauguration of the campaign, but these were soon superseded by a startling offer by New York banker George F. Baker, Sr. He would give the entire $5 million, provided that he alone should have the privilege of building the entire campus! Harvard readily accepted and redirected the prior pledges to benefit HBS in other ways. Since Baker had intended all of his gift for bricks and mortar, he and his son, George, Jr., soon joined one another in an additional $1 million as a general endowment making a total of $6 million. The Bakers’ generosity is now commemorated in the official School name, “Harvard University, Graduate School of Business Administration, George F. Baker Foundation.”

George F. Baker, Sr., never attended Harvard but his son did, as an undergraduate in the class of 1899. The elder Baker completed high school, then became a clerk for the New York State Banking Dept., Albany in 1856. During the Civil War he moved to New York City as a teller for the new First National Bank of New York. He rose through the ranks to President in 1877, and on to Chairman. Ironically, an R.C. Dun & Co. credit report for the First National in 1881 does not evidence Mr. Baker’s superior financial acumen.
He would give the entire $5 million, provided that he alone should have the privilege of building the entire campus!

"Sept. 2 /81... George F. Bacon ? [sic] ... is well thought of among bankers, is not regarded as a brilliant man or a strong Banker, but considered very honest and reliable. He is said to be well off, a large amount of the stock of the 1st Natl. Bank is in his name, but whether it is actually his own or not is in question. He has a good income however and considered conservative, and safe for any thing he is likely to undertake."

By the early 20th century, Baker ranked among the most influential bankers and wealthy men in America.

Construction began on the HBS Campus in 1925, the dedication held two years later. At the half-way mark, Dean Donham took up the issue of naming individual buildings with the Bakers. He suggested that residence halls and houses, at least, should bear formal names and that the Bakers should decide how to name them. The younger Baker suggested that naming buildings after Secretaries of the U.S. Treasury might be appropriate. In

"Sept. 2 /81... George F. Bacon ? [sic] ... is well thought of among bankers, is not regarded as a brilliant man or a strong Banker, but considered very honest and reliable. He is said to be well off, a large amount of the stock of the 1st Natl. Bank is in his name, but whether it is actually his own or not is in question. He has a good income however and considered conservative, and safe for any thing he is likely to undertake."
Secretaries of the Treasury

From the Secretaries list Baker selected the requisite eight names. In order of service they were: Robert Morris [1781-84], Alexander Hamilton [1789-95], Albert Gallatin [1801-14], Salmon P. Chase [1861-64], Hugh McCulloch [1864-69; 1884-85], John Sherman [1877-81], Carter Glass [1918-20] and Andrew W. Mellon [1921-32]. Most of these men served during turbulent years in U.S. history. Robert Morris secured financing for the American Patriots during the Revolution; Alexander Hamilton promoted a strong currency and central government. Successful as both were at managing the public coffers, each suffered personal reversals of fortune and died deeply in debt. Mr. Gallatin significantly reduced the National debt.

August of 1926 Donham sent a list of Treasury Secretaries to the senior Mr. Baker, suggesting that eight of the "more prominent" be selected for the six dormitories and two instructors' houses. The Dean further advised that the faculty and student club houses could be named descriptively, the library named after the donor himself, and the administration building named as Mr. Baker saw fit.

J.P. Morgan

Mr. Baker agreed with Donham's suggestions, choosing to name the administration building in honor of his close friend, J.P. Morgan. Though Morgan was fifteen years Baker's senior, he also embarked on his banking career in 1857, as an accountant for a New York firm. Morgan took up international finance as agent for his father's firm in 1861 and within 10 years was a full partner in Drexel, Morgan & Co. This firm was reorganized into the world-famous J.P. Morgan & Co. in 1895, helping to infuse much European capital into American enterprise. Morgan engineered many of the great corporate mergers of the early 20th century.
The instruction facility was named for Mr. Rockefeller's father-in-law Nelson W. Aldrich, a Rhode Island financier and U.S. Senator.

despite Jefferson's purchase of Louisiana (1803) and a second war with England (1812-14). He next became ambassador to France and then to Great Britain, before resuming his banking career in New York.

Salmon Chase was an early Ohio Republican, who became instrumental to Lincoln's presidential nomination. Thus he was appointed Treasury Secretary and then Chief Justice of the Supreme Court but always longed to become President himself. Hugh McCulloch was Lincoln's second Treasury chief, a conservative Indiana banker who served as Comptroller of the Currency under Chase. As Treasury Secretary, McCulloch implemented the National Bank Act (1863). John Sherman, brother of the famous Union general, was a Republican Senator from Ohio who led the drive for the National Bank Act and for currency reforms. He confronted a "free-silver" backlash as Secretary but also managed to enlarge U.S. gold reserves during his tenure. In 1881 Sherman returned to the Senate, sponsored the Antitrust Act of 1890, and helped prepare the way for a later return to the gold standard (1900).

Carter Glass began as a Congressman from Virginia, a "Southern Democrat" who sponsored the Federal Reserve Act (1913), supported President Wilson's bid for the League of Nations and served briefly as his Treasury Secretary. With the Democratic presidential defeat in 1920, he was appointed to fill a vacant Virginia seat in the Senate, was re-elected on his own account and published his major work An Adventure in Constructive Finance in 1927. Andrew Mellon transformed his family's Pittsburgh bank into one of America's preeminent financial institutions. He amassed a personal fortune comparable to Baker's and became Treasury Secretary with the election of President Harding. Mellon championed the successful strategy of reducing the national debt by lowering taxes to create economic growth and continued in his post under Coolidge and Hoover.

The completed buildings were dedicated on June 4, 1927, but one of great importance to the benefactors was absent. The Bakers were keen to have Wallace Donham live on campus, but the Dean's House had been eliminated with several other faculty houses to reduce costs. Donham agreed to reinstate the Dean's House, and it was completed in 1929, just two years before the senior Baker's death.
The instruction facility was named for Mr. Rockefeller's father-in-law Nelson W. Aldrich, a Rhode Island financier and U.S. Senator.

Kresge and Aldrich

In 1952 a new classroom building and dining hall were added to the HBS campus by Dean Donald K. David (1942-55). The former was funded by John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and the latter by the S.S. Kresge Foundation. The instruction facility was named for Mr. Rockefeller's father-in-law Nelson W. Aldrich, a Rhode Island financier and U.S. Senator. Aldrich was President of the First National Bank in Providence from its inception during the Civil War, but left banking for politics as soon as the hostilities had ended. After election to the Senate (1881), he specialized in legislation for monetary and banking reform over the next 30 years.

The dining hall was named for Sebastien S. Kresge, who established his philanthropic Foundation in 1924 and still influenced decisions at the time of the bequest. Kresge began his merchant career in Memphis before the turn of the 20th century. In Detroit he established Kresge & Wilson, predecessor to the international retail chain which bore his name (now K-mart). In deference to Kresge's practice of total abstinence, various campus pubs were housed elsewhere.

Secretaries of the Treasury Revisited

Dean George P. Baker (1962-69) (unrelated to the School's founder) initiated the next campus expansion in 1965, as well as the practice of rededicating buildings without proper namesakes. Baker turned increasingly to HBS alumni and other Harvard affiliates to support much of the construction. He built the two small houses opposite the Dean's House in 1965 and, in 1966 and 1969, refurbished the two erected in 1940 opposite Morgan. The four were named for recent Treasury Secretaries who were somehow associated with the respective donor groups; from east to west they are: George M. Humphrey (1952-57), C. Douglas Dillon (1960-65), Henry H. Fowler (1965-68) and Robert B. Anderson (1957-60). Humphrey was a corporate attorney, life-long executive for the M.A. Hanna Co. and bank organizer in Cleveland. The other three were appointed to the Treasury post directly from investment banking and were thereafter associated with leading firms in the industry. Anderson House was later renamed (1968) in recognition of the Loebs, John L. Sr. and Jr.

Deans and Donors

Dean Baker's principal achievement, however, was finding the resources needed to build five substantial campus buildings during the last three years of his administration. Cottling House was begun in 1967 with a gift from Charles E. Cotting, a Harvard alumnus and HBS Overseer for 23 years with a venerable family heritage in Boston commerce. It housed the International Teachers Program begun earlier at HBS and has since become headquarters for the School's doctoral programs (1974-date). Two units were built to accommodate the expanding Executive...
donations, largely orchestrated by HBS Alumnus and Chair of the HBS Visiting Committee, Albert H. Gordon (MBA ’25). The building was officially named George Pierce Baker Hall in honor of the former Dean.

New quarters for the burgeoning Harvard Business Review were also completed in 1969. The stark concrete building was funded from general HBS accounts and first named for the School’s flagship publication, then in 1974 rededicated to honor Stanley F. Teele (MBA ’30), fourth Dean of HBS (1955-62). Teele was Associate Dean under Dean David and was instrumental in the campaign to fund Aldrich and Kresge. The last building in this cluster is Burden Hall, an auditorium completed in 1970. It was given by the Burden family in memory of William A.M. Burden, Sr., and his grandson, William A.M. Burden III, who both died in their early 30s ending very promising careers in banking and journalism, respectively.

Cumnock Hall, completed in 1975, represents the only new building designed and erected under the sixth HBS Dean Lawrence E. Fouraker (1970-80). Funding was bequeathed to HBS during the Baker administration by the will of Grace Cumnock Ditman. Ditman had formerly served as a director of the venerable textile firm of Appleton Manufacturing Co. The company was established in Lowell (1828), acquired by the Cumnock family (1898), moved to South Carolina (ca.1923) and finally merged into the J.P. Stevens Co. (1950). Mrs. Ditman had specified that the building be named in honor of her father Alexander and brother Arthur, who had directed Appleton in succession to 1930. The building originally housed five flexible classrooms, health services, squash courts and lounge, but was later remodeled to remove the ball courts and create a reception area and offices for retired faculty (1989).

The seventh HBS Dean John H. McArthur [1980-95] commissioned a “master plan” to guide the HBS facilities program. The Dean brought three new buildings to HBS, not to mention the systematic renovations to 16 of the 26 existing buildings and a total rebuilding of Morgan Hall.
HBS Alumni

The seventh HBS Dean, John H. McArthur [1980-95], commissioned a “master plan” to guide the HBS facilities program. The Dean brought three new buildings to HBS, not to mention the systematic renovations to 16 of the 26 existing buildings and a total rebuilding of Morgan Hall. The School embarked on new construction with the “fitness center” completed in 1989. Since funds for the $18.5-million project were drawn from a variety of sources, the Center was named in recognition of John S.R. Shad (MBA ’49) for his substantial contributions to development of the MBA curriculum. Shad had entered investment banking in 1953, chaired the SEC [1981-87] and served as U.S. Ambassador to the Netherlands [1987-89]. He was deeply committed to the School until his death in 1994.

The new Morgan and Class of 1959 Chapel were both completed in 1992. Morgan Hall retained only three facades and its name. Otherwise, its new structure is more than twice the size of the old one. The Chapel is named for MBA ’59, the class which brought Dean McArthur to HBS and committed both their 25th and 30th Reunion fund-raising campaigns to bringing the School a retreat for contemplation, reflection and worship.

Although functional renaming first occurred in the early 1950s with the changing purposes of the original Faculty and Student Clubs, the 1970s initiated the practice of renaming buildings in recognition of laudatory service to HBS by its alumni. The precedent began with the dedication of the “HBR Building” as Teele Hall under Dean Fouraker and was revived by Dean McArthur.

Both Loeb House (1988) and Ludlce House (1991) assumed these names during the McArthur years. Loeb was renamed in recognition of the many contributions of John L. Loeb, Sr., and his son John L. (MBA ’54). Both were Harvard undergraduates, served on the Board of Overseers, and pursued investment banking as partners in Carl M. Loeb, Rhoades & Co., which in 1966 gave the school a substantial unrestricted gift as well as the funds needed to renovate the building. The old “Alumni Center” was renamed in recognition of a generous unrestricted gift to the School by Gipp L. Ludlce (MBA ’25). Ludlce pursued a career in investment services with the Boston-based Putnam group and was very active in the HBS Alumni Association. He served as an HBS career advisor and over the years has been secretary, fund agent and 60th Reunion Chairman for his alumni class.

The most recent name change occurred just last year, soon after HBS Dean Kim B. Clark [1995-date] took the helm. Wilder House holds the HBS record for buildings changing names, with no less than four priors: the Student Club [1927-52], Middle Management House [1953-59], Doctoral House [1960-1974], Career Resource Center [1975-1997], all reflecting its changing purposes. Named for William P. Wilder (MBA ’50), former CEO of Consumer’s Gas Co., Ltd. [1979-84], Canada’s largest natural gas distributor, he began his career at the investment firm of Wood Gundy & Co. in 1946 and rose to President of the firm in 1967.
This concludes our whirlwind historical tour of the HBS campus. The Historical Collections staff in Baker Library 100 is happy to assist you with any further inquiries you may have regarding the School’s history. Our mission is to preserve the memory of this institution. We do so by collecting and preserving such documentation as faculty papers, historic photographs, and permanent copies of HBS publications, including working papers, theses, retired cases, and yearbooks. Please visit us in person or via the Web to learn more about our extensive collections on both HBS and business history in general over the last five centuries. The URL is <http://www.library.hbs.edu>. Follow the link from Library Collections to Historical Collections.

Al Bartovics joined Baker Library in 1990 and has been the Research Archivist in Historical Collections for the past five years. He attended Williams College as an undergraduate, taking an M.A. and Ph.D. in anthropology from Brown. He has conducted both archaeological and archival research on 19th century textile villages and technology. Al taught anthropology at North Adams State College in western Massachusetts for twelve years before returning to Simmons College in 1988 for a second master's in Library and Information science. He now conducts archival research in the collections of Baker Library for members of the HBS community.

Brent Sverdlof has been the Reference Archivist in Historical Collections at Baker Library since 1996. Armed with a Master’s degree in Romance Linguistics from UCLA, Brent cut his archival teeth amending, describing, and cataloging art historical, European manuscript collections at The Getty Center in his native Southern California. Shortly after his arrival in Boston in 1994, he worked managing the collection of technological artifacts at The Computer Museum. When not on duty at Baker, Brent can often be found absorbed in a work of historical fiction or in a long, mind-clearing run along the Charles River with his partner Craig.