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The Universal Dictionary of Trade and Commerce

From Wythepedia: The George Wythe Encyclopedia

by Malachy Postlethwayt

[Malachy](#)

The Universal Dictionary of Trade and Commerce

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THE
UNIVERSAL DICTIONARY
OF
TRADE and COMMERCE:
WITH LARGE
ADDITIONS and IMPROVEMENTS,

Adapting the same to the
PRESENT STATE of BRITISH AFFAIRS in AMERICA,
since the last TREATY of PEACE made in the Year 1763.

With GREAT VARIETY of
NEW REMARKS and ILLUSTRATIONS
Incorporated throughout the Whole:

TOGETHER WITH
Every Thing essential that is contained in SAVARY'S DICTIONARY:
ALSO,

All the Material LAWS of TRADE and NAVIGATION
relating to these KINGDOMS,

AND THE
CUSTOMS and USAGES to which all TRADERS are subject.

By **MALACHY POSTLETHWAYT, Esq;**

THE THIRD EDITION.

V O L I



L O N D O N :

Printed by H. WOODFALL, A. MILLAR, J. and R. TONSON, J. RIVINGTON, J. HINTON, R. BALDWIN,
L. HAWES and W. CLARKE and R. COLLINS, R. HORSFIELD, W. JOHNSTON, T. LONGMAN, J. BROTHERTON,
J. DODSLEY, T. PAYNE, J. ROBSON, T. LOWNDES, W. NICOLL, and J. KNOX.

MDCCLXVI.

Title page from *The Universal Dictionary of Trade and Commerce*, [📖](#) volume one, George Wythe Collection, Wolf Law Library, College of William & Mary.

Author Malachy Postlethwayt

Published London: Printed for H. Woodfall, A. Millar, J. and R. Tonson, J. Rivington, J. Hinton, R. Baldwin, L. Hawes and W. Clarke and R. Collins, R. Horsfield, W. Johnston, T. Longman, J. Brotherton, J. Dodsley, T. Payne, J. Robson, T. Lowndes, W. Nicoll, and J. Knox

Date 1766

Edition Third

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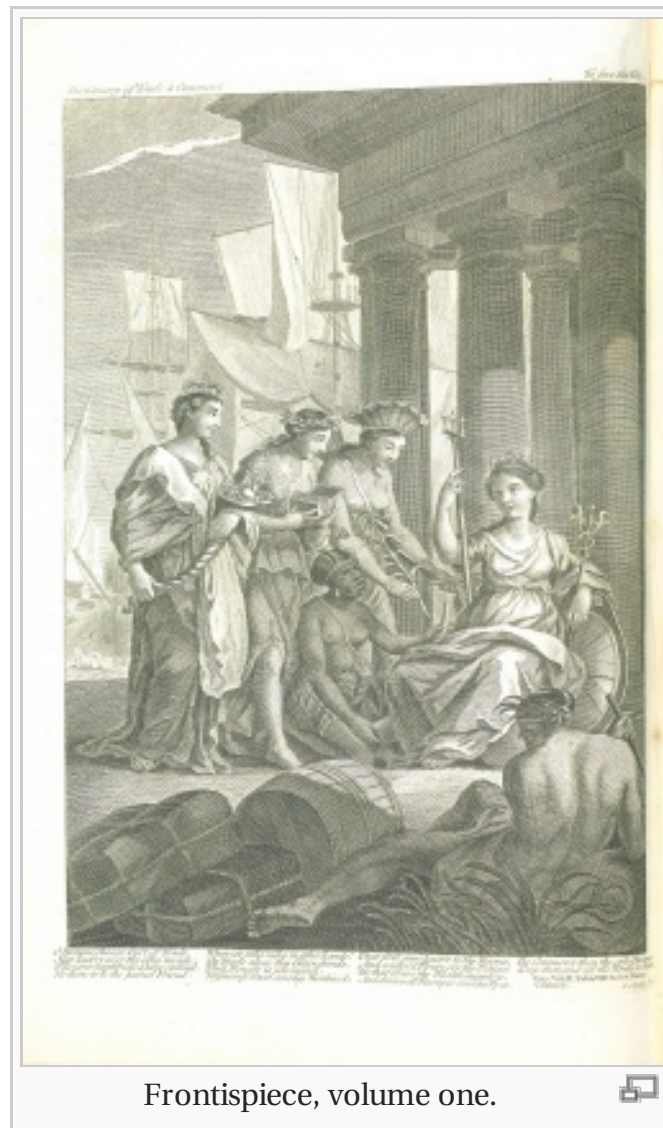
Volumes 2 volume set

Desc. Folio (43 cm.)

Location Shelf B-5

[Postlethwayt](#) (1707 – 1767) was a British economic writer and author. Beginning in the 1730's he was employed by Prime Minister [Robert Walpole](#) as a government publicist.^[1]

Postlethwayt was elected as a fellow to the [Society of Antiquaries](#) in March of 1735.^[2] In 1743 he began his employment with the [Royal Africa Company](#), and was elected a member of the company's court of assistants in 1745.^[3] During the 1740's and early 1750's Postlethwayt prepared his most critically acclaimed work, *The Universal Dictionary of Trade and Commerce*, which was released as two installments between 1751 and 1755.^[4]



Frontispiece, volume one.

Postlethwayt's *Universal Dictionary of Trade and Commerce*, as compared to other popular economic writings at the time, illustrated his interest in political problems, economic nationalism, and a belief in the economic usefulness of experimental philosophy.^[5] *The Universal Dictionary of Trade and Commerce* contained many practical articles on inventions and improvements, as well as on commercial

practices such as banking, commercial bills, and customs house business.

Evidence for Inclusion in Wythe's Library

Listed in the [Jefferson Inventory of Wythe's Library](#) as "Postlethwayt's Dictionary. 1. of the vols only. fol." and given by

[Thomas Jefferson](#) to his son-in-law, [Thomas Mann Randolph](#). Later appears on Randolph's 1832 estate inventory as "'Dictionary of Trade & Commerce' (\$2.00 value)." We do not have enough information to conclusively identify which edition Wythe owned. [George Wythe's Library](#) ^[6] on LibraryThing indicates this, adding "Several folio editions were published, the first in 1751-55." The [Brown Bibliography](#) ^[7] lists the third edition published in London in 1766 based on the copy Jefferson sold to the Library of Congress in 1815. ^[8] This was the edition purchased by the Wolf Law Library.

Description of the Wolf Law Library's copy

Bound in contemporary speckled calf with spines in seven compartments with raised bands. Tooled in gilt on either side of each band. Dark red and dark green morocco lettering-pieces in the second and third compartments, the others with a repeat decoration in gilt with marbled endpapers. Purchased from Donald a. Heald Rare Books.

Images of the library's copy of this book are [available on Flickr](#). ^[9]
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Full text

- [Volume I](#) ^[11] (137MB PDF)
- [Volume II](#) ^[12] (116MB PDF)

See also

- [George Wythe Room](#)
- [Jefferson Inventory](#)
- [Wythe's Library](#)

References

1. Peter Groenewegen, "[Postlethwayt, Malachy \(1707–1767\)](#) ^[13]" in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed September 26, 2013.
2. Robert Bennett, "Malachy Postlethwayt 1707-67: Genealogy and Influence of an Early Economist and 'Spin-Doctor'," *Genealogists' Magazine* 1 (2006): 1-8.
3. Groenewegen, "Postlethwayt, Malachy."

4. Bennett, "Malachy Postlethwayt."
5. E. A. Johnson, "Postlethwayt, the Publicist," in *Predecessors of Adam Smith: The Growth of British Economic Thought* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1937), 402.
6. *LibraryThing*, s.v. "[Member: George Wythe](#)," accessed on November 13, 2013.
7. Bennie Brown, "The Library of George Wythe of Williamsburg and Richmond," (unpublished manuscript, May, 2012) Microsoft Word file. Earlier edition available at: <https://digitalarchive.wm.edu/handle/10288/13433>.
8. E. Millicent Sowerby, *Catalogue of the Library of Thomas Jefferson*, (Washington, D.C.: The Library of Congress, 1952-1959), 2:359 [[no.2102](#)].

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