Overview

This resource offers unparalleled access to archival material selected from world class libraries. Explore a wealth of manuscripts, rare printed sources and visual images connected to the history of global commodities from the 1500s to the present day.

Our fully searchable documents, digitised in colour, include:

- Business accounts, mercantile papers and correspondence, government reports, rare pamphlets and dock records.
- Material from specialist collections such as the George Arents Collection on Tobacco at the New York Public Library, the Braga Brothers Collection from the University of Florida, and the Hudson’s Bay Company Archives.
- Statistical records associated with global trade and commerce, including prices current, bills of entry and trade returns.
- Historical maps.
- Advertising memorabilia and ephemera, including posters and packaging.
- Photographs, paintings and prints.
- Objects and artefacts, including examples of finished consumer goods and raw materials.

Sources offer information on subjects such as:

- Advertising and Consumption
- Cultivation and Production
- Exploration and Discovery
- Ecology and the Environment
- Global Trade and Commerce
- Health and Welfare
- Politics and Empire
- Social Practice
- Transportation and Exchange

Key Features:

- Read specially commissioned essays by scholars and subject specialists.
- Discover more about world history and global commodities through the interactive chronology.
- Explore and interrogate historic economic data through our impressive data visualisation tools.
- View hundreds of visual sources and search extensive image galleries.
- Learn more about global commodities through online exhibitions.
- Understand key words and phrases through a detailed glossary.
- Explore museum objects that come to life through 360° rotations.
- Link to other important websites connected to global commodities.
Global Commodities: Trade, Exploration and Cultural Exchange explores the history of key commodities that changed the world. They are:

Chocolate
Coffee
Cotton
Fur
Oil
Opium
Porcelain
Silver & Gold
Spices
Sugar
Tea
Timber
Tobacco
Wheat
Wine & Spirits

“Global commodities bring us to the centre of the great histories of empire, industry and material culture”
Maxine Berg, Department of History, University of Warwick

These commodities have been transported, exchanged and consumed around the world for hundreds of years. They transformed societies, global trading operations and habits of consumption, giving rise to new consumer desires and aspirations.

Through a wide range of manuscript sources, rare printed books, maps, advertising memorabilia, paintings, photographs and ephemera, Global Commodities explores the following:

- The origins of the commodities.
- The trades that developed around them and the ways in which these impacted regional and world history.
- The ways in which the commodities developed over time.
- The cultural dimensions of the commodities and their impact on societies across the world.
- The branding, marketing and consumption of the commodities as global products.
Chronology

From the earliest recorded trades to globalization, Global Commodities features a bespoke interactive chronology charting global demand for these raw materials and products over centuries.

- Key commodity timelines
- Fully searchable
- Filters: categorical, geographic, by commodity

Data Visualisations and Interactive Maps

- Our visualisations tool is built on a unique database which represents years of academic research. Eye-catching, informative, and perfect for in-depth study and classroom presentations.
- Interactive maps enable geographic-specific studies.

Visual Resources

Global Commodities features a range of visual research tools offering access to thousands of images and related data.

Global Commodities in Art:
- Selected fine artworks from Johannes Vermeer to Nicolas Lancret offer artists’ views of the everyday use, availability or transportation of key commodities.
- Pictorial analyses of the artworks provide students with new pathways and alternative methods for studying commodities.

360° Objects and Artefacts:
- Our innovative rotation viewer enables up-close ‘handling’ of raw materials and everyday objects from history. From coffee beans to cigarette packets, chocolate tins and tea caddies.

Online Commodity Exhibitions:
- Histories, observations and facts on the cultivation, production and consumption of the key commodities are presented in ‘exhibition’ form: taking a wider view of each raw material.

Image Galleries:
- Featuring advertising, posters, packaging, photographs, paintings and prints, the image galleries represent over a hundred years of commerce. Perfect for researching advertising and brand history.
Participating libraries

Explore the histories of key global commodities through a wide range of manuscript sources, rare books, maps, advertising memorabilia, paintings, photographs and ephemera.

Materials have been carefully selected from international libraries and archives including:

- American Antiquarian Society
- Bristol Record Office
- The British Library
- The Field Museum Library, Chicago
- Historical Society of Pennsylvania
- Hudson's Bay Company Archives
- Library Company of Philadelphia
- Liverpool John Moores University
- Massachusetts Historical Society
- Mauritshuis, Den Haag
- Merseyside Maritime Museum
- The National Archives
- The Newberry Library, Chicago
- New York Public Library
- Princeton University Art Museum
- School of Oriental and African Studies
- Senate House Library, University of London
- Städel Museum, Frankfurt
- The Robert Opie Collection
- The University of Florida, George A. Smathers Libraries

Other supporting companies and organisations include:

- Canton Tea
- Chicago Mercantile Exchange
- Commoditytrading.net
- Cotton Incorporated
- Cadbury’s
- Divine Chocolate
- General Mills
- Harveys of Bristol
- Imperial Tobacco
- International Cotton Association
- The Fairtrade Foundation
- World Commission on Forests

The publisher is grateful to all contributing archives listed above for the use of images in this flyer.

For further information and to request a free trial, please visit our website.

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