

THE
LONDON
LIBRARY

A guide to the United States collections

Scope of the collection

Since its inception, the Library has developed a significant collection of books for those interested in the study of the United States, its art, literature, history, culture, religion, politics and topography. As such, relevant material will be found across the collection and, increasingly, within the electronic resources. This guide attempts to highlight some of the main areas where material may be found.

History

The Library's extensive collection of books on the history of the United States covers all aspects of United States history from its beginnings to the present day. There are various shelfmarks covering the history of the United States but the majority of the books can be found under the shelfmark **H. United States**.

Immediately following this section are other, more specific, shelfmarks:

H. United States, Civil War: this shelfmark covers all aspects of the American Civil War

H. United States, Congress &c.: this shelfmark includes works on the United States Congress and individual works on the House of Representatives and the Senate respectively

H. United States, Constit.: this covers constitutional history, the United States electoral system and governance (for the legislative bodies see H. United States, Congress &c.)

H. United States, Social &c.: here you will find books on economic and social history

Other shelfmarks in the general History section relevant to the United States are:

H. Alabama Question: this covers civil war history specifically regarding the naval operations of the British built CSS Alabama and the issue of Alabama Claims (damages sought by the United States against Great Britain in 1869)

H. America, Discovery of: here you will find books on early American history and exploration

H. Army, United States: this shelfmark covers military history

H. Spanish-American War: here you will find books about the war fought between the United States and Spain in 1898.

Works on indigenous people of the United States can be found in **H. United States**, **H. United States, Social &c.**, but also in **S. Ethnology &c.**



US Government publications

H. United States, Govt. Publs. is an interesting collection of official publications from the United States Government and individual State Departments on a wide range of subjects from territorial expansion to labour rights and the rights of women and children. Many of these documents have been digitised and are freely available online or through subscriptions held by the London Library.

American State Papers: <https://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw/lwsp.html>

Foreign relations of the United States: <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments>

Message from the President of the United States to the two Houses of Congress: <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents>

New York State legislature. Journal of the Assembly: <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/scandocs/nysdocsguides.htm>

Official Congressional Record: <https://www.congress.gov/congressional-record>

United States. Census Bureau: <https://www.census.gov/>

United States. Children's Bureau: https://openlibrary.org/authors/OL18005A/United_States_Children's_Bureau.?sort=old (Open Library on Internet Archive – search by author)

United States. National Monetary Commission: <https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/author/425>

United States. Statutes at large: <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/browse/category/bills-statutes> or <https://uscode.house.gov/> or <https://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw/lwstdo.html>

United States. Women's Bureau: <https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/author/770>

Biography

Works about and by presidents and key figures in United States history can be found under their names in the main **Biography** section.

Art

The Library holds an extensive collection of books on American artists and catalogues from major exhibitions and galleries in the United States.

Books found in **A. Art** are shelved under art historian not artist. Works by or about individual artists are shelved throughout the art collection depending on the medium in which they work, for example books on Georgia O'Keeffe can be found in **A. Painting, O'Keeffe**. Books on photography can be found in **A. Photography**.

Literature

The Library has an extensive collection of works by major American authors. Works of fiction can be found in **Fiction**; poetry and criticism can be found in **L. English Lit.**; and plays in **L. English Drama**.

Other literature shelfmarks of interest are:

L. American Anthols.: this contains anthologies by American authors

L. American Indian: this shelfmark includes both primary and secondary works on the literature of indigenous writers throughout both American continents

L. American Lit., Hist. of: works on the history of American literature and works of criticism when they include three or more writers

Philology

Philology, American Languages: this shelfmark contains both instructional language books on native languages, for example: *A grammar of Comanche*; *Navajo made easy*; and works about native languages, for example: *The languages of native North America*.

Religion

Books on religion associated specifically with the United States can be found under the following shelfmarks:

R. American Eccles. Hist.

R. Heresies: includes works on the Amish society and on scientology and other minority religious groups in the United States

R. Mormons

R. Shakers

Books on Judaism and Jewish communities in the United States can also be found in **H. Jews**, general books on other religious communities in the United States can also be found in **H. United States** and **H. United States, Social &c.**

Topography and travel

The majority of the topographical and travel books on the United States can be found under the shelfmark **T. America (Gen.)**. The collection includes travel writing, guide books and also covers the geography and archaeology of the United States and the history of individual towns and cities.

Also found in **T. America (Gen.)** is a collection of illustrated guide books called the American Guide Series produced by the Federal Writers' Project under the Works Progress Administration (WPA). This series covers the history, geography and culture of the individual states and others cover individual cities, regions and interstate roadways.

Three individual states are shelved separately so books primarily concerned with these states can be found under the shelfmarks: **T. Alaska**, **T. California** and **T. Hawaii**.

There is also a small collection of American-themed encyclopaedias – *Encyclopaedia of the Great Plains*; *The American Midwest*; *New Encyclopaedia of the American West*; *The encyclopaedia of Chicago*; *Encyclopaedia of New York City*, *Encyclopaedia of New England*.

More guide books can be found under the shelfmark **Guide Books, America (North)**.

Printed periodicals

The Library has current subscriptions to the following periodical titles of interest in the study of the United States. The current editions are held in the main Reading Room while past volumes, if retained, will be bound and shelved under **Periodicals**.

The American Scholar: current affairs/literature/science/history/culture

The Atlantic Monthly: current affairs/literature/science/history/culture

The Hudson Review: literature and the arts

The Journal of American History: (formerly the Mississippi Valley Historical Review) covers all aspects of American history.

The Journal of American Studies: peer reviewed journal covering international perspectives on culture, literature, politics and history of the United States

Massachusetts Review: literature, arts and culture

The New Republic: politics/arts

The New Yorker: politics/culture/arts/literature/current affairs

The Sewanee Review: literature (from 2016 onwards available online only)

Southern Review: literature

The William and Mary Quarterly: early American history and culture (from 2016 onwards available online only)

In addition to the periodicals the Library also possesses publications issued by American scholarly institutions and societies. These can be found under the shelfmark **Societies**.

There is also a substantial collection from the Smithsonian Institute which can be found both under the shelfmark **Societies, Smithsonian Institute** but also as monographs within the general collection, mainly in the **Science and Miscellaneous** section.

Online journals and electronic resources

The Library also provides access to a number of relevant periodicals electronically through JSTOR (the online archive of academic journals). There is no overall subject covering American/United States Studies but journals can be found under disciplines such as African American Studies, American Indian Studies and, wider disciplines, for example Art, Language and Literature, Film Studies and History. This is a very useful resource for finding both well-known journals and less well-known ones such as *California History* and *Arizona and the West*.

Other more specialised journals (available on JSTOR) cover specific time periods or individual state histories, these include:

The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era: covering all aspects of United States history from 1865-1920 (2002-09).

Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association: focuses exclusively on Lincoln scholarship (1979-2010)

The Western Historical Quarterly: covers history of the North American West

William & Mary Quarterly: covers early American history and culture (earlier issues of this periodical are also available in print under the shelfmark **Periodicals**)

State history, for example:

New York History (journal of the New York state Historical Association) devoted entirely to New York state history (the Library holds print copies from 1919-1933 and later volumes are available on JSTOR)

Oregon Historical Quarterly: history of Oregon & the Pacific Northwest

Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society

Massachusetts Historical review

The Library's electronic resources can be found on the Catalyst homepage, for example:

American National Biography

George Washington Papers

New York Review of Books

Please sign in to Catalyst first before accessing the e-resources.

