

[← Collections Policy Statement Index](#)

United States History (Classes E, CT as appropriate, Z1236-Z1249, Z8000 as appropriate)

Contents

- I. Scope
- II. Research Strengths
- III. Collecting Policy
- IV. Acquisition Sources: Current and Future
- V. Collecting Levels

I. Scope

This Collections Policy Statement is based on the second of the Library's three "Canons of Selection": "The Library should possess all books and other materials (whether in original form or copy) which record the life and achievement of the American people." This policy statement includes reference works, monographs, and serials about the history of the United States on the national level from pre-Columbian times to the present, whether in print, microform, or electronic format.

Core materials covered by this statement comprise the collections in Class E and closely related materials in Class CT (U.S. Collective Biography), Class Z1236 -- Z1249 (Bibliography of U.S. History), and materials relating to individuals prominent in U. S. history in Class Z8000 (Personal Bibliography); as well as electronic materials consistent with the content of these classes.

Class E includes materials which document the political, social, intellectual, cultural, diplomatic, military, or ethnic history of the United States of America as a nation. More specialized topics included in Class E are works on elements of the population. Histories and discussions of ethnic groups are included here, as are histories and discussions of minority religious groups. The history of Native Americans north of Mexico, as a whole and as tribal groups, is covered. Works on African-American history in E class include regional and state histories, as well as the history of slavery and of anti-slavery movements in the United States and in the individual states. Specialized monographs and serials on the various periods from the European discovery of the Americas to the present fall within Class E, as do works on special subjects or problems of U.S. history. Electronic resources, both in forms analogous to print materials and in forms unique to new technologies, parallel the content areas of the E Class, and related classes.

For more specific information on aspects of United States history in other classifications, see the individual Collections Policy Statements such as Economics and Business, Law, Literature and Language, Local History, Political Science, and Religion. In addition Collections Overviews on related topics may be consulted: Women's Studies, African American History and Culture.

II. Research Strengths

The Library's collections in American history are comprehensive and include a complete range of domestic and foreign critical writing about the United States, its history, policies, culture and peoples. In addition to the myriad of titles housed in the general classified collections, special strengths include the vast holdings of U. S. government publications, American newspapers, American doctoral dissertations (the latter in microform and also available electronically through the *Digital Dissertations* database), and a broad array of electronic materials exploiting new digital technologies. Many early American imprints and first editions are held in both the general and rare book collections, and are increasingly available through the Library's subscriptions to or purchase of electronic databases, such as *American Periodicals Series*, *Sabin Americana, 1500-1926*, and *Early American Imprints, Series I & II, 1639-1819*. These holdings are supplemented by microform reproductions of titles not owned in the original by the Library. Further complementing the Library's general and rare book holdings are its unsurpassed special collections of manuscripts, prints, photographs, maps, sheet music, motion pictures, and sound recordings relating to U.S. history held in the various custodial divisions. For more specific information, please refer to the American History Collection Overview statement.

III. Collecting Policy

The Library collects at Level 5 current reference works, monographs, serials, and textbooks (published commercially in the U.S.) on United States history regardless of format, including electronic materials, whether initially networked (as through the Internet) or in stand-alone form, commensurate with the content areas of these types of print materials. The Copyright Best Edition statement provides guidance for selecting materials for the United States history collection.

Microfilm collections which are not available in electronic format are also comprehensively collected, such as *Press Conferences of the U.S. Secretaries of State, 1922-1974*, distributed by Scholarly Resources, Inc., and *American Indian Periodicals from the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1884-198*, distributed by University Publications of America.

The Library also collects at Level 5 current works on United States history that exist only in electronic format by exploiting new technologies for historical research and teaching; these include (but are not limited to) web portals, online scholarly discussion fora, serials and databases published only in electronic form, and other such resources, all of which are increasingly integral to the practice of historical scholarship. (For some guidelines pertinent to the collection of materials from the internet, see the Electronic Resources, Selection Guidelines (2008).

Doctoral dissertations accepted by universities in the United States, preferably in microform or digital format, are collected comprehensively by the Library; special consideration is given to acquiring foreign dissertations relating to the history of the United States. Theses are not acquired unless they make an original contribution to knowledge. (See the Dissertations and Theses Collection Policy Statement.)

IV. Acquisition Sources: Current and Future

The mandatory copyright deposit law has been the primary means which allowed the Library to build the U.S. history collections. Materials selected for the Library from the items which are submitted for copyright have given the collection its richness and wide scope. Also enriching the Library's collections are materials acquired through the Cataloging-in-Publication (CIP) program. U.S. publishers who publish titles that are most likely to be widely acquired by U.S. libraries are eligible to participate in the CIP program. As collections are digitized and offered online by academic, historical, and governmental libraries, institutions, and organizations, acquisitions will increasingly involve locating and evaluating these electronic collections, in order to either provide links to the material from the Library's online catalog or web site, or to establish cooperative partnerships between the Library of

Congress and the institution or organization. Sharing digital collections will increase the scope of the Library's U.S. history collections by incorporating unique materials in areas where other libraries or organizations retain extensive holdings for specific subjects, such as small and alternative presses which are important to the study of American social and economic history.

New forms of communication, such as blogs, podcasts, and online videos will need to be evaluated for incorporation into the Library's digital collections. Identifying and assessing subscription electronic databases will be an integral part of collection development.

V. Collecting Levels

LC Classification		Collecting Levels
CT	General collective or individual biography, as appropriate	5
E11-E29	America (General); works comprehensive in scope	5
E31-E46	North America; works actually comprehensive in scope.	5
E51-E99	Indians.	5
E101-E139	Discovery of America and early explorations.	5
E141-E143	Descriptive accounts of America to 1810.	5
E151-E180	United States (General).	5
E181-E183.9	U.S. Military, Naval, Political, and Diplomatic history.	5
E184-E185.98	Elements in the population.	5
E186-E199	Colonial history.	5
E201-E298	Revolution.	5
E301-E440.5	Revolution to the Civil War.	5
E441-E453	Slavery in the United States. Antislavery movements.	5
E453-E655	Civil War.	5
E660-E738	Late 19 th Century.	5
E740-	20 th Century.	5
Z1236-Z1249	Bibliography of United States history.	5
Z8000	Individual bibliography as appropriate	5
Electronic Resources	All content areas commensurate with the classes above	5

Revised by the Humanities and Social Sciences Division, November 2008.