

# LIBRARY OF CONGRESS COLLECTIONS POLICY STATEMENTS

## United States History

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

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### I. Scope

This policy statement addresses reference works, monographs, serials, and comparable electronic resources about the history of the United States 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; closely related materials in Class CT (U.S. Collective Biography) and Class Z1215 - Z1363 (Bibliography—United States); and materials relating to individuals prominent in United States history in Class Z8000 (Personal Bibliography). They also comprise electronic materials consistent with the content of these classes.

Class E includes materials that document the political, social, intellectual, cultural, diplomatic, military, or ethnic history of the United States of America. More specialized topics included in Class E are works on elements of the population, such as histories and discussions of ethnic groups, including multiracial and minority populations; the history of Native Americans north of Mexico, as a whole and as tribal groups; and minority religious groups. Specialized monographs and serials on the various periods from first European contact of the Americas to the present fall within Class E, as do works on special subjects or problems of United States history. Various types of electronic resources parallel the content areas of Class E and its related classes. Materials covered by this statement include domestic and international works on United States history.

For more specific information on aspects of United States history in other classifications, see Collections Policy Statements in other subjects, especially [Economics and Business](#); [Law](#); [Literature and Language](#); [Local History](#); [Political Science](#); and [Religion](#).

### II. Diverse and Inclusive Collecting Statement

As the nation's de facto national library, the Library of Congress strives to build an expansive, yet selective, collection that records the creativity of the United States and is reflective of the nation's

diversity and complexity. The Library's mandate is to have collections that are inclusive and representative of a diversity of creators and ideas. A priority includes acquiring material of underrepresented perspectives and voices in the Library's collections to ensure diverse authorship, points of view, cultural identities, and other historical or cultural factors. The Library also seeks to build a research collection that comprises a globally representative sample of international materials that are diverse in voice and perspective, relative to their places of origin, further supporting the Library's mission to sustain and preserve a universal collection of knowledge and creativity for Congress and future generations.

Diverse collecting is mentioned within many of the Library's Collections Policy Statements. In addition, the Library has adopted several specific collection policies in an effort to ensure it is building an inclusive and representative collection. For more information, see the Library's Collections Policy Statements on [Ethnic Materials](#), [LGBTQIA+ Studies](#), [Women's and Gender Studies](#), [Independently Published and Self-Published Textual Materials](#), and [Countries and Regions with Acquisitions Challenges](#).

### III. Research Strengths

The Library's collections in American history are extensive and include a complete range of domestic and international writing about the United States, its history, policies, culture and peoples. In addition to the myriad titles housed in the General Collections, special strengths include the vast holdings of United States government publications, American newspapers, American doctoral dissertations (in microform and also available electronically through the *ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global* database), and a broad array of electronic materials in various digital formats. Many early American imprints and first editions are held in both the General Collections and the collections of the Rare Book and Special Collections Division and are increasingly available through the Library's subscriptions to or purchase of electronic databases, such as *American Periodicals Series Online* 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 United States history held in the various custodial divisions.

### IV. Collecting Policy

The Library collects reference works, monographs, serials, and textbooks on United States history, regardless of format. Domestic works are collected at level 5 (comprehensive) and non-U.S. works are collected at level 4 (research level). Comparable electronic materials are collected at the same levels.

Microfilm collections not available in electronic format are also collected. Examples include *Press Conferences of the U.S. Secretaries of State, 1922-1973*, distributed by Scholarly Resources, Inc.; and *American Indian Periodicals from the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1884- 1981*, distributed by University Publications of America.

The Library also collects current works on United States history that exist only in electronic format. These include, but are not limited to, web portals, online scholarly discussion fora, blogs, serials and

databases published only in electronic form, web-based digital humanities projects, and other such resources, all of which are increasingly integral to the practice of historical scholarship. The Library also collects born-digital web content in United States history through its Web Archiving program. For guidelines pertinent to the collection of electronic materials, see the [Electronic Resources Supplementary Guidelines](#) and the [Web Archiving Supplementary Guidelines](#).

The Library collects self-published memoirs of Americans who experienced significant world events or movements (e.g., the Holocaust), and memoirs of non-U.S. citizens who participated in and experienced significant American events or movements (e.g., the Civil Rights Movement), as well as biographies of immigrants to the United States, especially those from the developing world, and refugees who are fleeing political or economic persecution. Self-published material in Native American history, culture, and language are also collected. Publications regarding Native American language revitalization, as well as tribal, local, and family history are wanted.

Doctoral dissertations accepted by universities in the United States, preferably in microform or digital format, are collected by the Library. Current non-U.S. dissertations are acquired on a highly selective basis, with special consideration given to the fields of law, library science, music, and the history, government, and literature of the United States. These are not acquired unless they make an original contribution to knowledge. (See the [Dissertations and Theses Collections Policy Statement](#).)

## **V. Best Editions and Preferred Formats**

For guidance regarding best editions for material acquired via the Copyright Office, see: <http://copyright.gov/circs/circ07b.pdf>.

For guidance regarding recommended formats for material acquired via all other means; e.g., purchase, exchange, gift and transfer, see: <http://www.loc.gov/preservation/resources/rfs>.

For information regarding electronic resources, open digital content, web archiving, and data sets, see the following Supplementary Guidelines: <http://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/electronicresources.pdf>, <https://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/opencontent.pdf>, <http://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/webarchive.pdf>, and <https://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/datasets.pdf>.

## **VI. Acquisition Sources**

The mandatory copyright deposit law is the primary means by which the Library has built its United States history collections. Materials selected for the Library from the items submitted for copyright have given the collections their great depth and breadth. Also enriching the Library's collections are materials acquired through the Cataloging in Publication (CIP) program. Only U.S. publishers that publish titles that are most likely to be widely acquired by libraries in the United States are eligible to participate in the CIP program.

The Library also acquires domestic materials related to United States history published by government agencies, and via purchase and gifts. Purchase and exchange are major sources of materials published

abroad and not widely distributed in the United States. The Library collects works on United States history from foreign governments, universities, and learned institutions at a research level. Gifts are reviewed on a case-by-case basis in accord with procedures described in the Recommending Officer’s Checklist for Acquisition via Gift or Deposit.

Identifying and assessing subscription electronic databases is an integral part of collection development. Also, as collections are digitized and new forms of digital scholarship are developed and offered online by academic, historic, and government libraries, institutions, and organizations, collection development increasingly involves locating and evaluating these electronic resources for possible linking to the material from the Library’s online catalog or website. The Library may also choose to establish cooperative partnerships between the Library of Congress and the originating institution or organization. Sharing digital resources increases the scope of the Library’s United States history collections by allowing for the incorporation of unique materials in areas where other libraries or organizations retain extensive holdings for specific subjects. New forms of communication such as blogs, podcasts, online videos, and forms unique to new technologies, will be evaluated for incorporation into the Library’s digital collections.

The acquisition of print and born-digital materials from state and local sources and of publications by and about smaller organizations, sects, cults, and non-western religions is increasingly important to the collection of materials in United States history. The Library will increase its focus on materials from small and alternative presses and collections that focus on regional events and interests, which are important to the study of American social and economic history.

## VII. Collecting Levels

Meeting the Library’s Diverse and Inclusive Collecting Statement (see Section II) and the collecting levels outlined below requires continual evaluation of the publishing landscape, sources of expression, current events, and socio-cultural trends to thus maintain effective collecting policies and acquisitions methods. Changes in publishing or in the creation of materials covered by this policy statement may necessitate collecting efforts not explicitly referenced here. Such efforts will be handled on a case-by-case basis while the Library evaluates the need for policy statement updates.

For explanation of the Collecting Levels used by the Library, see <https://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/cpc.html>.

LC Classification	Subject	U.S. Levels	Non-U.S. Levels
CT	General collective or individual biography, as appropriate	5	4
E11-E29	America (General); works comprehensive in scope	5	4

<b>LC Classification</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>U.S. Levels</b>	<b>Non-U.S. Levels</b>
E31-E46	North America; works actually comprehensive in scope	5	4
E51-E99	Pre-Columbian America. Indians of North America	5	4
E101-E135	Discovery of America and early explorations	5	4
E141-E143	Descriptive accounts of America to 1810	5	4
E151-E180	United States (General)	5	4
E181-E183.9	U.S. Military, Naval, Political, and Diplomatic history	5	4
E184-E185.98	Elements in the population	5	4
E186-E199	Colonial history	5	4
E201-E298	The Revolution	5	4
E301-E440.5	Revolution to the Civil War	5	4
E441-E453	Slavery in the United States. Antislavery movements	5	4
E456-E655	Civil War period	5	4
E660-E738	Late nineteenth century, 1865-1900	5	4
E740-837.7	Twentieth century	5	4
E838-E889	Later twentieth century, 1961-2000	5	4
E895-904	Twenty-first century	5	4
Z1215-Z1363	National bibliography. United States	5	4
Z8000	Individual bibliography as appropriate	5	4
Electronic Resources	All content areas commensurate with the classes above	5	4

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