

Collection Policy for US Studies

1. Overview

1.1 General coverage of subject in the Bodleian Libraries

The University's principal research collection relating to the **history** of early America and the United States is housed in the Vere Harmsworth Library (one of the Bodleian Libraries). The VHL has comprehensive collections relating to US history, spanning largely from the earliest colonial period to contemporary history. The collections of 100,000+ volumes of printed materials are impressive by both European and American standards - thanks to the long history of Legal Deposit and active purchasing over many decades. The Library has an excellent collection of printed materials, including monographs, journals and editions of documents. Researchers in colonial America also benefit from access to the Bodleian Library's extensive collection of early printed books as well as sources on microfilms and important electronic resources, such as *Early American Imprints I, 1638-1800*.

Research collections relating to **social science** aspects (politics, international relations, social and economic aspects) of the United States are covered by the Vere Harmsworth Library, but are also found in the Social Science Library (SSL). As a general rule, collections that are primarily focused on domestic aspects, or foreign relations from the point of view of the United States, are covered by the VHL; more comparative and theoretical works are held in the SSL.

The Bodleian Libraries' collections relating to US **law and legal history** are held in the Bodleian Law Library, which are the most extensive such collections in the UK. There are some law holdings in the VHL, particularly on political and historical aspects. The VHL holds the Bodleian Libraries' collection of US **government publications**, with the exception of various titles related to US law.

American Literature collections are kept in the Bodleian Library (research collections) and English Faculty Library (teaching collections). Material relating to the wider **arts and culture** of the United States may be found in the Bodleian Library, Sackler Library and Music Faculty Library. The VHL does have supplementary collections in all these areas, particularly for historical aspects.

The VHL reference copies are supplemented by the lending and teaching collections in the History Faculty Library (HFL) and Social Science Library.

Relevant Special Collections are largely in the Bodleian Library and Rhodes House Library.

OLIS (searchable via SOLO) is the online catalogue which lists most books and journals in the OULS teaching, learning and research collections. Parts of the VHL collections, most notably a substantial percentage of the Library's collection of printed Congressional Committee Hearings, are not recorded on OLIS.

1.2 Legal deposit

The importance of Legal Deposit cannot be underestimated for both current and future researchers. For instance, early printed books published in England and received by the Bodleian Library since 1610 serve as primary sources for the modern historian. Critical monographic works, modern printed source material but also popular titles for US Studies are received substantially through Legal Deposit.

Most titles relating to US history, politics and government received under Legal Deposit are held in the VHL. The Library also actively claims UK imprints under the Legal Deposit Act as well as relevant titles from major US publishers who deposit under Limited Import (most notably Ivy League university presses). Titles relating to other aspects of US studies are held in the relevant library as described above.

UK titles published within the last 2 years are actively claimed, wherever possible, by the staff in the Bodleian's Copyright Receipt Office. If despite a claim a title fails to arrive and the claim is signed off, then the title will be purchased in order to complete the collections. However, delays, often of some months, in the receipt of UK publications may occur. Titles requested by readers will be bought if the delay in receiving the Legal Deposit copy is too long for the purposes of teaching and/or research.

1.3 Electronic resources

OxLIP+ is the interface for electronic resources, such as databases, and e-journals. They can also be searched for within SOLO.

The range of electronic resources available is increasing ever more. They provide researchers with 24/7 remote access to research and teaching materials (unique or alternatives in print) and with a range of discovery tools. Resources are typically bibliographical databases, collections of primary source materials, newspaper archives, electronic alternatives to journals and/or books or research aids for biographical or reference research. There is good coverage for all historical periods as well as contemporary sources.

The decision to purchase or subscribe to a new database is made once funding has been secured and relevant members of Bodleian Libraries staff and academics have been consulted. The aim is to acquire as many relevant scholarly online source materials as possible, funding permitting. The Library aims to strike a balance between the different historical periods (colonialist to contemporary America). Source materials are largely digitised texts (books, newspapers, documents) but consideration is also given to source materials in other formats, such as digitised audio-visual sources and statistical data.

Examples of some important resources are listed in the Appendix.

The VHL also actively maintains a list of useful and relevant free web resources on the Library's delicious page (<http://delicious.com/vhllib>)

1.4 Notes about particular formats or collections

The VHL has a substantial collection of primary source materials in microform, largely papers of individuals or organisations which are not accessible electronically or within the UK.

1.5 Languages

Current selection criteria focus principally on English language. A small number of foreign language titles which are considered important for teaching and/or research (e.g. history of colonisation or immigration) may selectively be purchased. They are likely to be in Western European or Spanish (Mexican) languages.

2. Teaching collections

The History Faculty Library (HFL) holds the great majority of the borrowable teaching collections for the History of the United States, while teaching collections for US Politics, Government and International Relations are held at the Social Science Library as well as the VHL. Teaching collections for American Literature are held at the English Faculty Library. Academics and postgraduates associated with American Studies courses or research programmes of the University may additionally borrow titles which the VHL has purchased.

2.1 Textbooks

In the selection of textbooks, the HFL and SSL purchase from the Faculty and Departmental reading lists for Undergraduate and Graduate degree programmes.

The HFL buys all key titles from reading lists and as many other titles as are related to US History. Reading lists can be extensive (on average 50+ pages) and interdisciplinary in nature. A degree of informed selection, done in liaison with the convenor, is on occasion necessary. HFL staff will also liaise with the VHL over selection and ensure that provision of teaching materials is comprehensive overall. The SSL purchases all texts cited on reading lists for US politics and government unless already held by the VHL.

Core titles on reading lists are also held in the VHL Reserve Shelf collection. Students will additionally find extensive collections on the open-shelves in the VHL. The VHL purchases titles on the reading list for the MSt in US History where relevant to US history and not already held in Oxford.

2.1.1 Levels of provision (undergraduate)

The HFL will normally buy one lending copy of selected textbooks from reading lists in the first instance. If the title is a key title, for a highly subscribed course or should evidence from enquiries, circulation and reservation activities indicate high use, then additional copies will be bought, sometimes over time, to support the higher demand. Provisions and usage of titles in other Bodleian libraries will also inform a decision about how many copies to purchase. As a matter of preference, the Library will try to secure an electronic copy first before buying duplicates in print.

The SSL provides a minimum of two copies (one confined, one lending) of all core titles, and additional copies according to student numbers.

The VHL will not normally purchase copies of books on undergraduate reading lists just to support the course, but students may find that the VHL holds copies of many of their texts.

Every attempt is made to buy multiple copies of out-of-print titles if they are needed for a course. However, there may be delays in receipt as sourcing these is unpredictable.

2.1.2 Levels of provision (taught graduate)

The VHL purchases all titles on reading lists for postgraduate courses provided they are relevant to US Studies. The HFL will, at the very least, buy all key titles from reading lists. The SSL will purchase copies of any texts on graduate reading lists in US Studies if not already held by the VHL.

Core readings (monographs) are kept in the VHL staff desk collection and not available for borrowing to ensure that all students can access them. Where a book is listed as a core reading but would not normally be purchased (for example, if peripheral to US history), the Library will either obtain a copyright-cleared copy of the cited article for hosting on Weblearn, or if the book is in the Bodleian stacks, call it up to the VHL for the week that it is listed.

2.2 Primary source materials (US History)

The study of primary sources is the main purpose for historians and the Oxford degree course places much emphasis on teaching students how to interpret and understand the sources.

2.2.1 Set Texts

The HFL holds a Reserve Collection of Set Texts for relevant US History courses. These are selected primary source materials which students are required to study in detail for the Honour School of Modern History (Gobbet papers). The texts are mostly available as monographs, though are often out-of-print titles or highly selected passages for re-printed primary source materials.

As a matter of preference, the HFL will digitise required readings under the CLA License wherever possible and make the texts available on WebLearn. Otherwise, one confined and two lending copies are purchased. Additional copies will be purchased over time if high demand is evident. Preference will be given to securing an electronic copy first before buying duplicates in print.

The VHL will additionally hold copies of all Set Texts as part of its research collection.

3. Research collections

3.1 Research books

The VHL aims to collect comprehensively titles on national history and politics, collect extensively for regional history (esp. Eastern US) and provide good coverage for particular localities (e.g. New York, Chicago, etc.)^{*}. The VHL also aims to provide good coverage of social and economic aspects of the United States, and selective coverage for arts, literature, culture, and law (predominantly covered by other libraries; see section 1).

For history, the Library buys materials covering all periods but prioritises selection in the following: colonial history, the American Revolution, The Early Republic, slavery and secession, Lincoln and the Civil War, the Progressive Era, New Deal, 1960s and 70s America. The Library's collection policy also seeks to make acquisitions in areas which transcend specific chronological periods, for example in the history of racism, religion, education, foreign relations, immigration, the exploration of western regions, African American protest and culture and the growth of the state.^{*}

Selection of titles will be largely critical scholarly monographs or edited published documents, incl. diaries, letters, transcribed interviews, etc.

3.2 Monograph serials / standing-orders

^{*} See Section 5 for further details.

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Most monograph series taken by the VHL are published papers of important public figures, such as leading public figures, Civil Rights activists, etc., as well as papers, publications and transactions of historical societies. The VHL also aims to acquire multi-volume publications of private papers of important people or organisations, e.g. *Papers of John Adams*.

3.3 Journals

The VHL receives via subscriptions and Legal Deposit all key US history journals. For certain states or periods, specialist US history titles are also subscribed to*.

The VHL avoids duplication with the Social Science Library for key American political journals where the focus is not only on the politics of the United States. The VHL subscribes to major American news and political magazines such as *The Nation*, *The New Republic*, *The National Review*, *National Journal*, and *US News & World Report*.

The policy is to secure electronic access wherever possible.

3.4 Official Papers

The VHL holds extensive collections of historic official publications from the United States, including almost complete runs of the *Congressional Record* and online access to the *United States Serial Set* (1817-1994) as well as a substantial run of the 19th century volumes in print. The library also holds a selection of Congressional Committee Hearings in print from the mid 20th century, and bibliographical finding aids such as the *Monthly Catalog*. Other major series subscribed to by the library include the *Foreign Relations of the United States*, *Presidential Papers*, *Statistical Abstract of the United States* and the published census volumes. Various 20th century departmental publications are also held, but these are usually incomplete and no longer current. The Library aims to fill the gaps in historical OP collections which are not available online.

Recent government publications (mid 1990s-) are available freely online via *GPO Access* and the Library has no need to continue buying these in print.

3.5 Microform

The VHL has been able to purchase a wide range of microfilm collections of primary source materials, largely papers of individuals or organisations which are not accessible electronically or within the UK.

The policy is to buy microform collections if they are required and are not available in other formats, especially electronic, nor are expected to be so in the foreseeable future.

Examples of some important microform acquisitions are listed in the Appendix.

4. Special Collections

The VHL holds archives and rare books if they were specifically donated to that Library and if funding for processing the receipt was provided.

The major archive held by the VHL is the Philip & Rosamund Davies US Elections Campaigns Archive, donated by Professor Philip Davies. This is the most extensive such collection in Britain and continues to be added to by the donor.

Manuscript material relating to the history of the US is usually housed in the Rhodes House Library or the Bodleian Library. They include notably the historic archive of the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and the papers of

the (British) Anti-Slavery Society. The major modern political collections in the Bodleian include the papers of three British ambassadors to the US, Sir John Crampton, 1848-53, Sir James Bryce, 1907-13, and Roger Mellor Makins, 1st Baron Sheffield, 1953-6 (see [Online Catalogues of Western Manuscripts](#)).

The VHL is in the process of acquiring a number of manuscript collections, including material relating to Ronald Reagan (donated by journalist Godfrey Hodgson), and a collection on the civil rights movement (donated by former activist Lady Carla Carlisle).

5. Subject coverage of selected purchased material

In addition to the legal deposit intake and general works, the Bodleian Libraries will purchase non-deposited material in the following specific subjects:

General themes: economic, political, diplomatic, military, social history, cultural, gender & women's history, native, religious, intellectual history, art history, constitutional, legal and presidential history, history of political thought, historiography, US government, Congress and the Presidency, foreign relations of the US.

Geographical coverage:

National history [comprehensive]

Regional history [good coverage of most states, very good coverage for the original colonies & Eastern US]

Local & city history [selective coverage, good coverage for e.g. New York or Chicago]

Pre-colonial

Pre-historical [very selective; also related to Anthropology & Archaeology]

Native history [selective]

Colonial history 1607-1775

Native history [selective, good on major tribes]

Early Settlers (incl. e.g. agricultural history, land disputes)

Wars of the colonial period (e.g. French and Indian War, 1755-1763)

Immigration & Pioneer migration

Government & administration of British colonies

American Revolution 1775-1783

Causes, origins, impact, interpretation

Diplomatic history (e.g. Treaty of Paris 1783, propaganda, alliances, etc.)

Early constitutional history

Economic disputes 1760s

Influence on trade, intellectual life, etc.

Military history (e.g. American army, campaigns, participation)

Confederation, Early Republic 1783-1861

Constitutional history (Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, Federalists, early Congress, administration, etc.)

Slavery & slave trade (moral & ethics, economic & social aspects, plantation management, religious aspects, insurrections, slave trade, slave life)

Territorial expansion

Native history

Foreign & diplomatic relations

Trade & trade relations

War of 1812

Civil War 1861-1865 & Confederate States

Secession

Slavery (moral, ethical, economic & social aspects, plantation management, religious aspects, insurrections, slave trade, slave life, Underground Rail Road)

Antislavery movement (emancipation)

Late 19th century (1865-1900)

Native history
Labour history
Reconstruction (e.g. Amnesty, race relations, etc.)
Foreign relations
Immigration
Industrialisation

20th-21st century

Immigration
WWI
Stock Market Crash 1929 & Great Depression
New Deal 1933-1939
WWII (participation, economic aspects, internal impact, etc.)
Cold War 1945-1989
Korean War 1950-53
Great Society Era 1960-70
Martin Luther King
Race relations
Civil Rights movement
Labour history & relations
Un-American activities
Cuban Missile Crisis 1962
Vietnamese Conflict 1961-75
International relations, globalisation, internationalisation
9/11 and aftermath

6. Name of subject consultant(s) responsible for collections

US Studies Librarian

Jane Rawson, Vere Harmsworth Librarian jane.rawson@bodleian.ox.ac.uk

History Faculty Librarian-in-Charge

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Social Sciences Subject Consultant

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