

**New York Public Library  
Humanities and Social Sciences Library  
Rare Book Division  
-Collection Policy-**

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## **New York Public Library – The Rare Books Division**

- Humanities and Social Sciences Library
- New York City - Bronx, Manhattan, and Staten Island boroughs
- New York Public Library
  - o Goal: The mission of The New York Public Library is to use its available resources in a balanced program of collecting, cataloging, and conserving books and other materials, and providing ready access directly to individual library users and to users elsewhere through cooperating libraries and library networks. The mission of The New York Public Library is to use its available resources in a balanced program of collecting, cataloging, and conserving books and other materials, and providing ready access directly to individual library users and to users elsewhere through cooperating libraries and library networks
  - o Objectives: Provide a solid groundwork of information for the New York City area and beyond, serving as a community center, research center, and preservation of materials of the world.
- Humanities and Social Sciences Library
  - o Goal: To satisfy the needs of the researchers in the areas of human behavior, social life, and culture.
  - o Objectives: The New York Public Library's Humanities and Social Sciences Library encourages the preservation and cultivation of the documentary evidence of human behavior, social life and culture, by acquiring, organizing and making accessible materials for study in the fields of history, languages and literature, art, popular culture, philosophy, religion, psychology, sociology, anthropology, theology, geography and politics.
- The Rare Books Division
  - o Goal: To collect and preserve rare books and manuscripts published prior to 1801 to create and maintain a history of human culture for all time.
  - o Objective: Collect and preserve books that represent the best in book making and information prior to 1801, focusing on Americana but also collecting all books from around the world for the general research of the public.

## **The User's Profile for The Rare Books Division**

- Size of Population: 1,759,693 Users of all the NYPL Research Libraries (2005) Est. User of Rare Books Division: 500,000 (2005)
- Population Characteristics
  - o Age: Anyone of the age to have a valid photo ID
  - o Income Level: College Lower Class – Upper Upper Class (average)
  - o Education: Bachelor's Degree and up. (average)
  - o Any cultural background: European, Middle Eastern, Asian (average)

## **Collection Profile of The Rare Books Division**

- Size: Est. 100,000 books; 150,000 other materials including maps and archives.
- The Rare Books Division is rich in Americana, especially books printed in the Americas before 1801, but is not limited to solely American printed text. Materials

- considered are important texts and manuscripts prior to 1801 from around the world collected at a research level
- Strengths: Americana and Religious Texts; Weaknesses: American Historical Documents & Manuscripts; possible Children's Collection
  - Size of the Collection: 130,000 est.
    - o Subjects:
      - Americana Manuscripts: 20,000
      - European Books & Manuscripts: 80,000
      - Asian Books & Manuscripts: 5,000
      - Incunabula: 800
      - Others: Unknown
  - Cooperation with other institutions:
    - o Lenox Library foundry for the materials in the collection
    - o Within the Humanities and Social Science Research Library (cooperation within system)
    - o A part of the NYPL (cooperation within system)
  - Special Collections
    - o Pre-1801 American texts and other printed materials
    - o Pre-1801 Worldly historical documents
    - o Pre-1801 Religious Texts
    - o First editions of popular children's books/ Pre-1801 Children's texts
    - o Pre-1801 Literature accomplished texts/manuscripts
    - o General Incunabula
  - Special Services:
    - o A card of admission is required to use the Rare Books Division. Apply for this card in the Office of Special Collections, Room 316. Each applicant must show traceable identification and supply the name and address of a non-relative reference that can verify the information on the application.
    - o For a complete list of access information please see the Rare Books Divisions Security Policy statement