Quick Facts

Pamphlets capture the diverse attitudes and opinions of often-neglected segments of society.

More than 25,000 rare items capture a century of controversies, from slavery to suffrage.

An exceptionally valuable record of American history, culture and contemporary life.

“An enormous amount of unique and eclectic material related to ideas, events, institutions, and people of the time.”
—David Lincove, Professor, History, Political Science, Public Affairs & Philosophy Librarian, Ohio State University

Overview

Created to cajole, convince, inform and edify the American people on nearly every issue of the day, pamphlets have had a powerful impact on American life. As America’s population grew rapidly and printing costs declined, the use of pamphlets exploded in the 19th century. Revealing passionate views and perspectives not seen in other print genres, these rare items addressing slavery, suffrage and dozens of other divisive issues include speeches, orations, debates, sermons, treatises, tracts, narratives, poems, songs, memoirs, announcements, legal notices and more.

The under-explored views of overlooked segments of society

Now this unique online resource—produced from the New-York Historical Society’s extraordinary collection of pamphlets—provides more than 25,000 short works printed in every region of the United States. Key to the study of race, ethnicity and gender in the 19th and early 20th centuries, these pamphlets span 100 years of American life, from the Jacksonian Era through the dawn of the Jazz Age. Researchers will find outstanding coverage of contentious topics related to politics and government, religion and religious movements, art and entertainment, business and economics, health and medicine, education, immigrants and ethnic groups, American Indians, slavery and the Civil War, African Americans, Hispanic Americans, women, and science and technology.

Perspectives not found in books, periodicals or newspapers

Pamphlets represent a genre of printed materials written by authors from an unusually large socio-economic range. Few Americans in the 19th century could afford to publish bound books; however, many more had the means to print pamphlets. As with broadsides and other ephemeral items, pamphlets are a hard-to-find class of primary source materials, rarely collected and catalogued. More so than the heavily researched more traditional print genres, they offer scholars and students in American history, culture and contemporary life fresh opportunities for insight into a wide spectrum of American society.

Awaiting discovery…a newly available record of the past

This invaluable collection of newly digitized pamphlets from one of the world’s leading historical societies will open up a new world of research materials for scholars and students in such disciplines as history, communications, political science, literature, sociology, gender and ethnic studies. Picking up where Early American Imprints ends, American Pamphlets, Series 1, 1820-1922 is fully integrated into America’s Historical Imprints for seamless searching with Afro-Americana Imprints, American Broadsides and Ephemera, and related collections.