

Defining a Nation: The Literature of Early America

Series 1-2

Nearly every work of literature published in early America from 1645-1819



Quick Facts

Supports research into every aspect of literature in America from 1645-1819

Features more than 6,000 titles spanning 82 genres, including works by little-known and previously marginalized writers

Enhances undergraduate study with suggested search paths for discovery while advancing humanities research with text analysis tools

Overview

America's Colonial and Early Republic Eras have traditionally been studied through the works of prominent writers such as Edward Taylor, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Paine. But what of the thousands of other voices typically underrepresented by nature of gender or race? The inclusive *Defining a Nation: The Literature of Early America* features hundreds of obscure works written by women, African Americans, and many others that explore relations between settlers and Native American tribes. Importantly, foreign literary works published in America during this era are also included, providing a fascinating look at what Americans were reading—and being influenced by—at a time when the nation's literary heritage was just beginning.

In America, the 17th and 18th centuries were marked by battles fought, freedoms won, and areas of discourse that are still debated today. While historical newspapers chronicle the sweeping span of events, they often lack individual narratives that capture life experiences and poignant perspectives. The poems, satires, novels, anthologies, captivity narratives, biographies, memoirs, and other genres included in *The Literature of Early America* close this gap and comprise a singular resource for the teaching of advanced literature classes.

First-hand accounts broaden understanding

Lauded for their roles in securing America's independence from British rule, the familiar works of the Founding Fathers provide a necessary framework and documentation. *The Literature of Early America* broadens the learning experience by ensuring representation of historically marginalized people. Among the thousands of included titles are compelling works such as, "Poems compiled with great variety of wit and learning ... by a gentlewoman in New-England;" "A sermon, preached at the execution of Moses Paul, an Indian;" and "The interesting narrative of the life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African," an early slave narrative that provided a forceful argument for abolition. The collection features many re-printed European works and distinctly American works that are available to researchers for the first time.

Engage students and researchers at every level of study

Sourced from the American Antiquarian Society and the Library Company of Philadelphia, *The Literature of Early America* contains all the works in the Norton Anthology that were printed in America between 1645 and 1819. Fully digitized content includes suggested search paths, author biographies, and the Readex Text Explorer to support introductory literature courses as well as advanced curriculum or genre-specific studies. The archive's broad scope also enriches discovery for researchers and scholars of history, sociology, religion, ethnic studies, women's studies, Native American studies, and political science.



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