

Twentieth Century Advice Literature: North American Guides on Race, Sex, Gender, and the Family

Rapid and drastic changes in cultural values and behaviors touched nearly every aspect of American life in the twentieth century. Conduct, behavioral, advice, and etiquette literature reveal how society grappled with these changes.

Twentieth Century Advice Literature: North American Guides on Race, Gender, Sex, and the Family will contain more than 150,000 pages of text. Items such as *How to Get Along with Black People: A Handbook for White Folks and Some Black Folks Too* (1940), *Art of Living: Etiquette for the Permissive Age* (1972), and *Growing Up Straight—What Every Thoughtful Parent Should Know about Homosexuality* (1968) give students and researchers deep insights into shifting attitudes and values over time.

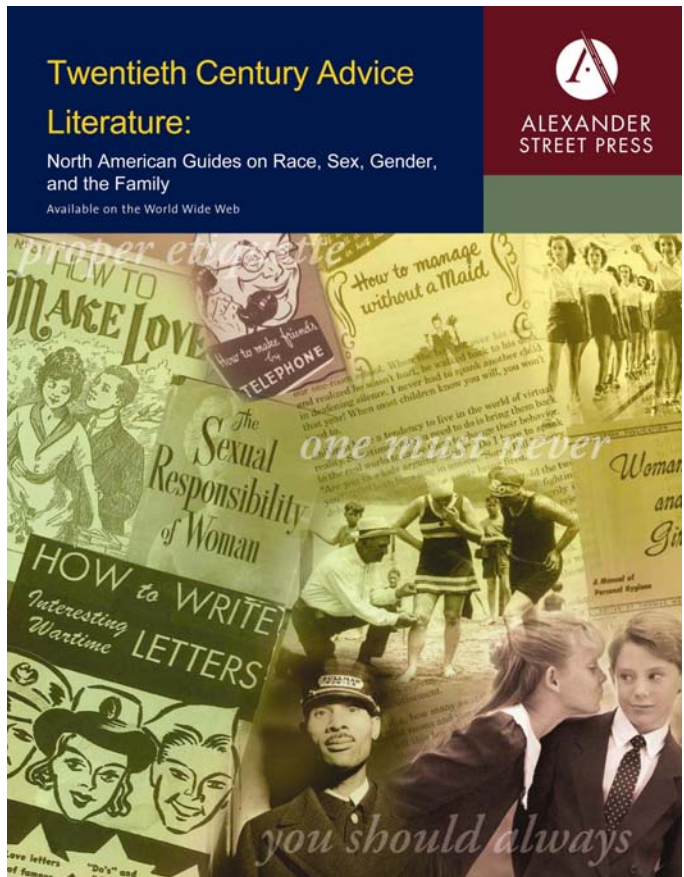
These sorts of materials typically fell out of date quickly and were rarely collected or preserved by libraries. Much of the content was distributed by organizations only to their members and was never cataloged. Alexander Street is painstakingly collecting the literature from archives and academics around the country, with more than a third of the items in the database classified as ephemeral.

Alexander Street's *Twentieth Century Advice Literature* focuses on gender roles and relations, American consumerism, views of democratic citizenship, character development for children, changes in reaction to each major war (including World Wars I and II, Korea, and Vietnam), class relations, and adjustments to new technology (such as proper manners when using one's new telephone, point-and-shoot camera, or e-mail).

Scholars of American history, cultural studies, gender studies, literature, psychology, sociology, language, and linguistics will find a wealth of insights into the way Americans have behaved, spoken, and interacted over time. In plain language that is accessible to undergraduates and scholars, advice literature give us detailed, contemporaneous accounts of rules and guidelines in place and time, along with the underpinning reasons and justifications—how people actually behaved compared with the dictates of how they ought to behave. The content is often illustrated and can transport users, conveying the feeling of the decade by allowing them to watch and read as did people of the day.

CONTENT

Alexander Street has assembled a rich collection that includes traditionally published items, including how-to books and guides; professional manuals, such as employee manuals; society publications, including sorority and fraternity pledge manuals and Boy Scout and Girl Scout manuals; textbooks that deal with home economics, health and hygiene, and sex education; teacher-training and course



manuals; commercial literature that promotes specific behaviors; and government instruction manuals for a variety of workplaces and industries.

Items targeted and already secured include, for example:

The Sexual Responsibility of Woman (1956)—*Woman has come of age, but at no time during her formal or informal upbringing has she been impressed with the fact that marriage is a realm in which she has profound personal sexual responsibility.*

Instructions for American Servicemen in Britain (1942)—*Stop and think before you sound off about lukewarm beer, cold boiled potatoes, or the way English cigarettes taste.*

How to Enjoy Life (1943)—*The pursuit of happiness... must begin with the realization that [man] is a member of a society from which he cannot escape, the rules of which he dare not disobey, and the obligations of which he must unhesitatingly accept.*

How to Write Interesting Wartime Letters (1942) provides detailed examples of what is and is not appropriate to mention to your husband serving abroad.

Christian Etiquette for Everyday Living (1969) shows how religion should be integrated in all parts of your life.

Supervising Women Workers (1944) lays out the roles of men and women in an industrial workplace setting.

Leadership and the Negro Soldier Manual M5 (Oct. 1944) is a manual for white officers on how to lead black troops.

Pullman Porter's Employee Manual (1927)

The Pocket Guide to China (1942) includes a 12-page pamphlet entitled *How to spot a Jap*, detailing supposed character differences between Chinese and Japanese.

Race, Caste, and Prejudice [And] Student Handbook to Race, Caste, and Prejudice is a training manual for teachers in 1970 on how to handle racial tension among students.

Woman and Girl: A Manual of Personal Hygiene, a guide to sex, love, and marriage. ("So you see, without a good sex education you cannot hope to be a good wife or a good mother.")

PUBLICATION DETAILS

Twentieth Century Advice Literature: North American Guides on Race, Gender, Sex, and the Family is available on the Web, either through one-time purchase of perpetual rights or through annual subscription. Please visit <http://alexanderstreet.com> for more information and to read about the other databases in our *Social and Cultural History* series.

ALEXANDER STREET PRESS

800-889-5937 • sales@alexanderstreet.com • <http://alexanderstreet.com>
copyright © 2007 Alexander Street Press, LLC