

Twentieth Century Advice

Literature:

North American Guides on Race, Sex, Gender, and the Family

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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 will contain more than **150,000 pages** of text and illustrations. Items such as *How to Get Along with Black People: A Handbook for White Folks and Some Black Folks Too* (1940); and *Art of Living: Etiquette for the Permissive Age* (1972) give students and researchers deep insights into **shifting attitudes and values** over time.

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). These sorts of materials typically fell out of date quickly and were rarely collected or preserved by libraries.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.

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. 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.

The collection is rich in 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 or already secured include, for example, *The Sexual Responsibility of Woman* (1956), *How to Write Interesting Wartime Letters* (1942), and *Christian Etiquette for Everyday Living* (1969). Issues of race can be examined through videos and texts such as *New Girl at the Office*, an instructional film about a black woman beginning work as a secretary in a white dominated office; *Leadership and the Negro Soldier Manual M5* (Oct. 1944), a guide for white officers on how to lead black troops; *Race, Caste, and Prejudice [And] Student Handbook to Race, Caste, and Prejudice*, a training manual for teachers in 1970 on how to handle racial tension among students; the *Pullman Porter's Employee Manual* (1927); and *The Pocket Guide to China* (1942), which includes a 12-page pamphlet entitled *How to Spot a Jap*.

Twentieth Century Advice Literature 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 our other collections in *Social and Cultural History*.