



Collection Guide

Library of American Civilization (LAC)

The Library of American Civilization (LAC) is a collection of materials on microfiche relating to all aspects of American life and literature from their beginnings to the outbreak of World War I. Included in the collection are pamphlets, periodicals, documents, biographies and autobiographies, fictional works, poetry, collections of various kinds, materials of foreign origin relating to America, and many rare books not generally available. Access to the LAC is provided through the library's online catalog, Portal, and through a printed, four-volume set of catalogs for the LAC materials. The print catalogs are shelved in the microform area.

Finding Library of American Civilization Materials

The first step in using the LAC is to find the LAC fiche number assigned to the material. Portal can be used for author, title, subject and keyword searches. The resulting Portal records for any LAC materials contain the fiche numbers. The printed volumes are author, title and subject catalogs along with a biblioguide index. The LAC fiche number appears at the top right corner of the entry in each catalog and in the index.

The biblioguide index is divided into 29 chapters - each its own broad topic. At the beginning of each chapter is an outline of topics. A brief explanation of each subheading is followed by a list of titles in LAC, which relate to the subheading. This list is alphabetized by author's name. An index of more specific terms and names is at the end of the biblioguide index.

Retrieving LAC Materials

The LAC microfiche are located in one file cabinet in the microform area. The microfiche are filed numerically by LAC number. LAC materials are on a type of microform called ultrafiche. Up to 1000 pages of text will fit onto one piece of ultrafiche. A high-powered lens must be used on the microform readers to read the ultrafiche. This special lens is stored in the Periodicals Office, room 112F. Please feel free to ask for assistance in setting up the microform readers. Operating instructions are posted next to the readers for the convenience of patrons.

Some of the works included in the LAC are now freely available on the Internet. Terry Ballard, the Automation Librarian at Quinnipiac University, has compiled a search guide for these items that are maintained by the University of Pennsylvania. The search guide has hundreds of links to LAC items. The URL is <http://www.quinnipiac.edu/x1849.xml>. Although it is not probable that a particular item will be listed in these links, it could be worth the effort to check for a title on the Internet before using the microform readers.

Copying LAC Materials

Microform copies are 10 cents per page copied. Make sure to deposit your money in the coinbox attached to the microform reader. From that point on pressing the print button on the microform reader will make copies of the viewed materials. The printer located underneath the microform reader must be turned on. An attendant in the Periodicals Department will be able to assist if necessary. Alternatively, a person could print off of one of the research computers if the item was on the Internet.

When Finished

Please place the microfilm in the small return box on the table next to the microform readers.

We invite questions and/or comments and look forward to hearing from you. Contact Sarah Sutton at Sarah.Sutton@mail.tamucc.edu.