



# History of the Colonial Americas in the Newberry Collection

## How to Use Our Collection

The Newberry is an independent research library; readers do not check books out to take home, but consult materials—mostly rare books, manuscripts, maps, and other materials with a focus on the humanities—here at the library. We welcome into our reading rooms researchers who are at least 14 years old or in the ninth grade. Creating a free reader account and requesting collection items takes just a few minutes. Visit <https://requests.newberry.org> to begin the registration process and to start exploring our collection; when you arrive at the Newberry for research, a free reader card will be issued to you in our third-floor reference center.

The Newberry has an abundance of primary source material documenting the British, French, Spanish and Portuguese colonies of the Americas, particularly relating to interactions between European colonizers and Native peoples. Major collections including a colonial-era focus are the **Edward E. Ayer Collection**, the **Everett D. Graff Collection**, and the **Rudy L. Ruggles Collection**.

## British Colonies

The Newberry's British Colonial History collections demonstrate the history of the settlement of the Atlantic coast and the western movement into its hinterland. Highlights among the British colonial history collections include:

Smith, John. *A Description of New England...*  
London: Robert Clerke, 1616. The Newberry holds all the early editions of John Smith's explorations in New England and Virginia, beginning with this first edition. **Call #: VAULT Ayer 150.5 .N4 S6 1616**

Brereton, John. *A Briefe and True Relation of the Discoverie of the North Part of Virginia...*  
London: George Bishop, 1602. Copies of both the first and second impressions of this rare account. **Call #: VAULT Ayer 116 .G6 B7 1602 and 1602a**  
A complete set of the 11 pamphlets often known as the "Eliot tracts," authored by John Eliot and other

missionaries and issued between 1643 and 1671 by persons in England interested in the work of converting the New England Indians. Call numbers vary.

Cochrane, Gavin. *A Treatise on the Indians of North America : Written in the Year 1764*. A contemporary copy of a manuscript treatise by a British military officer, tracing the history of British relations with the Indians of the Great Lakes region from 1760 to 1763, and offering suggestions as to how they might be improved. **Call #: VAULT Ayer MS 176**

In addition to these rare items, we hold a large number of pamphlets on the French and Indian War, extensive material on the Hudson Bay Company and Indian Wars, one of the world's most extensive collections of Indian captivity narratives, a large collection of material on Indian linguistics, and a great wealth of printed archival material.

## French Colonies

The Newberry collection includes many important sources on the history of the French colonies, particularly in the Ayer Collection. Some of the special sources of note are:

A complete set of the **Jesuit Relations**, the reports from Jesuit missionaries in New France and other colonies between 1632 and 1673, in the original Cramoisy editions. **Call numbers: Vary, but many at VAULT Ayer 263 .J512**

Champlain, Samuel. *Des Sauvages ; ou, Voyage de Samuel Champlain...* Paris : Claude de Monstr'oeil, 1604. The account of the first French explorer of the Great Lakes region. **Call #: VAULT Ayer 121 .C6 1604**

Hennepin, Louis. *Description de la Louisiane...* Paris: Sebastien Huré, 1683. The account of the expedition of Hennepin and La Salle to the Great

Lakes and Midwest; the Newberry holds many early editions. **Call #: VAULT Graff 1858**

Dumont de Montigny. *Memoire...* 1747. The manuscript journal of a French military officer and historian, which narrates events of his life between 1715 and 1747, including his experiences in Louisiana from 1719 to 1737. He describes Southeastern Indian practices and the city of Natchez before the massacre of 1729 and includes accounts of expeditions against the Natchez and the Chickasaws (1736). The journal also includes more than twenty drawings and maps. **Call #: VAULT Ayer MS 257**

## Spanish Colonies

The Newberry has collected extensively for the history of Mexico and Latin America in the period of Spanish conquest and colonization, and the history of Native peoples in the Spanish empire was of particular interest to Edward E. Ayer. Some of the rare printed works include:

Cortés, Hernán. *Praeclara Ferdina[n]di Cortesii de Noua Maris Oceani Hyspania Narratio...* Nuremberg: F. Peypus, 1524. The First Latin edition of the second letter of Cortés, describing the conquered city of Tenochtitlan (Mexico City) and accompanied by a hand-colored map of the city. **Call #: VAULT Ayer 655.51 .C8 1524d**

Casas, Bartolomé de las. *Brevissima Relacion de la Destruycion de las Indias...* Seville: Sebastian Trugillo, 1552. The first edition of las Casas' *Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, publicizing and denouncing the abuses of Natives by Spanish

colonizers. The Newberry copy is bound with the other eight tracts by las Casas published in 1552 and 1553. **Call #: VAULT Ayer 108 .C3 1552**

Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés, Gonzalo. *La Historia General de las Indias*. Seville: Johann Kromberger, 1535. The first edition of the first attempted history of the Spanish conquest in the Americas. **Call #: VAULT Ayer 108 .O9 1535**

Many editions of the works of other early historians of the Spanish presence in the Americas, such as **José de Acosta, Pedro de Cieza de León, and Antonio de Solís**.

Many manuscripts and transcripts of archives relating to the conduct of the Spanish colonies are available at the Newberry. These collections generally consist of documents from the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries relating to United States territories formerly held by Spain. Transcripts have been copied from the archives of the Indies at Seville, Simancus, Madrid, Nacogdoches, and Matamoros.

## Portuguese Colonies

The **William B. Greenlee Collection** is focused on Portuguese and Portuguese colonial history, with a focus on the growth of colonial Brazil. It is particularly strong for periodicals, gazetteers, and bibliographies; travel literature and special subjects relating to social life and customs; biography; and local history and description. It also includes a collection of over 15,000 pamphlets, nearly all from the colonial period.

**This quick guide** was created for the Newberry Colonial History Lecture Series, cosponsored with the Society of Colonial Wars in the State of Illinois in partnership with the University of Illinois History Department.

**Your generosity is vital** in keeping the library's programs, exhibitions, and reading rooms free and accessible to everyone. To make a donation, call 312 255-3599 or visit <https://go.newberry.org/donate>.