Founded in 1812 by Revolutionary War patriot and printer Isaiah Thomas, the American Antiquarian Society (AAS) is both a learned society and a major independent research library. The AAS library houses the largest and most accessible collection of books, pamphlets, broadsides, newspapers, periodicals, music, and graphic arts material printed through 1876 in what is now the United States, as well as manuscripts and a substantial collection of secondary texts, bibliographies, and digital resources and reference works related to all aspects of American history and culture before the twentieth century. The Society sponsors a broad range of programs—visiting research fellowships, workshops, conferences, seminars, lectures, and concerts—for constituencies ranging from school children and their teachers through undergraduate and graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, creative and performing artists and writers, and the general public. The Society’s online presence allows AAS to reach constituents all over the globe through digital versions of collection material, the Society’s exceptional catalog (catalog.mwa.org), online exhibitions, and more.

The library is open to researchers, free of charge. Please check the website for hours. For questions about conducting research at AAS, please contact Kimberly Toney, head of readers’ services, at 508-471-2171 or ktoney@mwa.org. For more information or to learn more about our events, please visit our website at www.americanantiquarian.org.
Graphic Arts
The graphic arts collection at AAS contains diverse holdings of over 130 different types of visual material made and used in America, including broadsides, prints, maps, ephemera, photography, and sheet music. Nearly half a million objects are held in the collection; we are interested in acquiring any pre-1820 prints, broadsides, and ephemera that we lack, as well as later visual material illustrating or related to historical events, printed material associated with the book trades, and outstanding examples of American printing in all forms before 1900 (typesetting, wood engraving, lithography, etc.).

Contact: Lauren B. Hewes, Interim Vice President for Collections, Chief Curator, and Andrew W. Mellon Curator of Graphic Arts, 508-471-2124 or lhewes@mwa.org

Books
The American Antiquarian Society wants at least one copy of everything printed through the year 1876 in the United States, Canada, and the Caribbean. Collecting is comprehensive through 1820, more selective from 1821–1876, and limited from 1877–1900 primarily to the far West or book history. Americana published elsewhere and secondary scholarship supporting the study of AAS's primary collections are also acquired. The Society regularly adds photographically illustrated books, erotica, catalogs, amateur printing, bindings, cookbooks, crime narratives/novels, type specimen books, salesman’s dummies, and works by or about eccentrics, women, people of color, or religious minorities.

Contact: Elizabeth Watts Pope, Curator of Books and Digital Collections, 508-471-2118 or epope@mwa.org

Children’s Literature
The AAS children’s literature collection is a comprehensive resource comprised of 26,000 picture books, primers, school texts, religious tracts, and novels for children and youth published in the American colonies and the United States between 1650 and 1876—and in the case of picture books, 1899. We seek titles and editions that are new to the AAS collection, particularly children's tracts, fiction, and picture books; we are particularly interested in acquiring picture books issued ca. 1850–1899 by McLoughlin Bros. and their competitors, including American firms and transatlantic publishers.

Contact: Laura E. Wasowicz, Curator of Children's Literature, 508-471-2146 or lwasowicz@mwa.org

Manuscripts
AAS has some 2 million manuscript items in roughly 1,500 collections. The Society actively collects material from New England from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries, including family papers, diaries, sermons, business records, church records, and other organizational records. Also collected are manuscripts relating to book history on a national level. These include papers of printers, publishers, booksellers, and allied trades (e.g. printing press manufacturers and paper manufacturers). Also of interest are manuscripts such as subscription library records and records of personal reading.

Contact: Ashley Cataldo, Curator of Manuscripts, 508-471-2174 or acataldo@mwa.org

Newspapers
The newspaper and periodical collection includes over 2 million original issues in 17,000+ titles. We are interested in acquiring American newspapers before 1877 as well as Arkansas, Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Oregon and Texas before 1881, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Washington, and Wyoming before 1891, Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, New Mexico, Nevada, and Utah before 1896, Alaska before 1901, West Indies and Canada before 1877, Great Britain to the end of the Revolution, Central American countries in English before 1877 and amateur newspapers before 1901.

Contact: Vincent L. Golden, Curator of Newspapers and Periodicals, 508-471-2148 or vgolden@mwa.org