

American Vernacular Music Manuscripts.

Access: <http://popmusic.mtsu.edu/ManuscriptMusic/default.aspx>.

This website contains an amazing collection of more than 300 volumes of handwritten 18th- and 19th-century music manuscripts collected or written by ordinary Americans. The manuscripts are drawn from The American Antiquarian Society and The Center for Popular Music.

The music includes well-known folk songs, hymns, obscure or original music, marches performed by unknown bands, and more. Many of these songbooks date from the Civil War and contain pieces that would have been played or sung at home for entertainment with friends. Some contain hand drawn illustrations or pictures cut out and pasted into the volumes. Some books contain only lyrics, some only music, and some both. Some are printed clearly and are easy to read, but others are barely decipherable.

Notable examples include L. H. Baker's books *Florae Memoriae* from 1825, which contain beautiful hand drawn and colored floral illustrations on the title pages. Corporal Thomas Fanning's book dating back to the American Revolution (1779) contains many military songs and poems.

It is easy to search the collections. "Home/Quick Search" allows the user to search the whole collection by keywords or song/tune titles. "Advanced Search" allows the user to search multiple fields and search the contents of the American Antiquarian Society or the Center for Popular Music separately. There are conveniently located search tips, as well as a detailed Search Help section. A gallery contains examples of several images from the collections.

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The website contains detailed guidelines for cataloging vernacular music manuscripts, which were developed by staff at the Center for Popular Music. These guidelines would be useful for those cataloging handwritten music manuscripts in their own libraries.

Users can view the manuscripts online or there are several options to download the material. The site also contains citation suggestions and copyright policies for those referencing the manuscripts.

These manuscripts contain a wealth of information, and would be useful for research into music history and American history. They are also just plain fun to browse.—*Mary Wise, Central Washington University, mary.wise@cwu.edu*

National Historical Geographic Information System (NHGIS). Access: <https://www.nhgis.org/>.

NHGIS is an extremely useful and entirely free resource providing researchers with online access to "spatially aggregated census data." NHGIS is a grant-funded project run by researchers at the University of Minnesota.

Although "GIS" is in the name of the resource, NHGIS also provides summary statistics from U.S. censuses and the American Community Survey (1790–present) in addition to the GIS boundary files (available as shapefiles, a standard file format for working with spatial data). Among the most valuable data available through NHGIS are pre-1970 census data, which were digitized and compiled from print sources.

As the site notes, "NHGIS does not provide tools for data analysis, mapping, or reporting. Rather, NHGIS supplies data files designed for use in spreadsheet applications (e.g., Microsoft Excel), statistical software (e.g., Stata, SPSS, SAS, R), or GIS applications (e.g., Esri ArcGIS)."

The Data Finder (found under "Select Data") is the tool through which users can

select data sets by using a combination of four filters (geographic level, year, topic, or data source) to locate their desired data. Available data include tabular data (tables from sources such as the U.S. decennial censuses and the American Community Survey), time series tables (data from multiple census years standardized and linked together), and GIS boundary files.

The site very helpfully offers comprehensive training and troubleshooting documentation through the “User Resources” menu that covers questions both general and specific, and will help get users up and running quickly. There is a clear explanation of exactly what data is available and for which years in the “Data Availability” section of the user resources, and the large FAQ gives many helpful tips. Unlike most free resources, NHGIS has a user support team, which offers assistance via email for users having technical difficulties. Users are required to cite NHGIS, as well as send a copy of the resulting publication or research to the NHGIS team.

For those researchers who know what data they are seeking and how they intend to use it, NHGIS is a goldmine. However, for those less certain about their needs, the wealth of data it provides may be daunting. Although there is robust documentation and support for use of this resource, it is most appropriate for faculty, graduate students, or sufficiently advanced undergraduates.—*Eli Gandour-Rood, University of Puget Sound, egandourrood@pugetsound.edu*

RefWorld. Access: <http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain>.

Produced by the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), RefWorld provides a wide spectrum of information dealing with refugee and human rights issues. The menu bar offers multiple choices for users. Options include “UNHCR” resources; “Laws,” which links to landmark legislation; protocols and conventions; and “Case Law,” which allows users to search or browse the re-

sults of international courts and tribunals. “Country Information” is broken down by news, profiles, reports, and maps. “Browse by” provides an A–Z index of sources, as well as separate listings by document type, publisher, and topic, as well as categories that include country information, legal information, policy documents, and reference documents, which are either thematic or subject oriented. “Resources” provides external links to related information, the UNHCR Emergency Handbook, standards and training, as well as other resources.

Also on the menu bar is “My Profile,” which allows users to save searches, create folders to save documents, and set up their own update service, with weekly emails alerting them to new additions to the RefWorld sections of interest that they select.

Below the menu bar, “In Focus” offers rolling headlines featuring recently published guidelines, documents, and databases. A search feature located near the top right corner provides access to topics on the entire site via either keyword or country name. This search feature travels to any subsequent page used.

Further down, a list of recent updates is presented, and below that are “Special Features,” which include a variety of topics related to human rights, such as “Children and Youth,” “Gender Equality and Women,” “Resettlement,” and “Statelessness.” Each of these topics contains listings of legislation, legal documents, policies, doctrines, thematic resources, country and regional specific sources, and internal UNHCR links, as well as relevant external links.

The information contained in RefWorld is current, updated daily, and aims for a balanced viewpoint on issues. It is highly recommended to general users, undergraduate students, and others interested in keeping informed about international issues that are of current concern, and will be of concern for the foreseeable future.—*Ford Schmidt, Willamette University, fschmidt@willamette.edu* 