

American Indian Studies – Ayer Collection – Voyages, Travels, and Accounts of Early America

The Ayer Collection's broad scope allows researchers to see the American reconnaissance as part of the larger history of the voyages of exploration. These early voyage materials have a four-fold significance. First, they set the American explorations in a larger context. Second, they contain some of the earliest known records of particular American voyages. Third, they serve to record the spread of knowledge about the Americas, which was a primary incentive to further exploration and eventually colonization. And finally, practically all of these voyages include some notices about the Indigenous inhabitants.

Of early voyages, for example, the Ayer Collection has the following: DeBry's Great Voyages and Small Voyages; Hakluyt's Divers Voyages and Principal Navigations; Eden's Decades; and multiple editions of Francanzano da Montalboddo.