



University of California, Office of the President
300 Lakeside Drive, 6th Floor Oakland, CA 94612

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John Ober, University of California (510) 987-0425

john.ober@ucop.edu

Eileen Lawrence, Alexander Street Press (800) 889-5937

lawrence@alexanderst.com

**The California Digital Library Acquires Unique Humanities Databases for
the University of California from Alexander Street Press**

The California Digital Library has chosen Alexander Street Press, L.L.C., to provide University of California students and scholars with newly available electronic resources in the humanities and social sciences. This is the first system-wide acquisition of Alexander Street products by the California Digital Library (CDL).

The full-text databases acquired are *North American Women's Letters and Diaries, Colonial-1950* and *The American Civil War: Letters and Diaries*. These collections will be accessible to more than 300,000 students, faculty and staff on the ten campuses of the University of California (UC). The agreement is another milestone in the development of comprehensive digital content to benefit the entire University of California system.

"Alexander Street Press is delighted by the CDL's decision to make *North American Women's Letters and Diaries, Colonial-1950* and *The American Civil War: Letters and Diaries* accessible to students and faculty at UC member institutions," said Stephen Rhind-Tutt, president of Alexander Street Press, when announcing the agreement.

"We have pledged that our databases will bring value far beyond mere digitization, with broad and deeply indexed collections. The UC System has recognized the added value we are offering to their users."

Eileen Lawrence, vice president of sales and marketing, adds, "In the rush to digitize data, we feel that the importance of librarianship and scholarship are often missed. These resources put the scholar back in the center of the product design. UC System students and faculty will be able to ask questions now in ways that were previously difficult – or impossible. We are excited by the possibilities that these resources open up for the UC community."

"Alexander Street's databases in the humanities are significant new resources for UC's scholars and students," said Beverlee French, CDL's associate director for shared collections. "The CDL is thrilled to expand digital content in these areas and pleased with

the publisher's commitment to working with university librarians on the development of

North American Women's Letters and Diaries is the largest electronic collection of women's diaries and correspondence ever assembled. The collection includes more than 100,000 pages of published letters and diaries from Colonial times to 1950, plus 4,000 pages of previously unpublished manuscripts, in electronic format for the first time. Drawn from more than 1,000 sources, including journal articles, pamphlets, newsletters, monographs, and conference proceedings, the writings represent all age groups and life stages, all ethnicities, all geographical regions, the famous and the unknown. The diaries provide a detailed record of what women wore, the conditions under which they worked, what they ate, what they read, and their leisure activities. Students and scholars can see how frequently they attended church, how they viewed their connection to God, and how they prayed. They can explore their relationships with lovers and family and friends.

The American Civil War: Letters and Diaries knits together more than 100,000 pages of diaries, letters and 4,000 pages of previously unpublished manuscripts in facsimile form, memoirs that provide fast access to thousands of views on almost every aspect of the war. The writings of politicians, generals, slaves, landowners, seamen, wives, and spies are included. The letters and diaries give both the Northern and the Southern perspectives, as well as the views of foreign observers. Detailed firsthand descriptions of historical characters and events, glimpses of daily life in the army, anecdotes about key events and personages, and accounts of sufferings at home, written for private consumption, provide an immediacy and a richness that are unmatched in public sources.

In both products, Alexander Street Press has deeply indexed the data using Standard Generalized Markup Language (SGML), and has provided a variety of search screens with multiple fields, plus a number of unique text analysis tools. Users can ask questions never before possible. Queries will quickly produce sets of search results that would have taken years, or been impossible, without the databases themselves.

The CDL, which collaborates with the campuses to select and provide access to digital scholarly resources, including the Alexander Street databases, was created in 1997 and opened its "digital doors" in January 1999. Its aim is to build shared digital collections and innovative scholarly information services for the institutions in the University of California system. They include existing UC campuses at Berkeley, Davis, Irvine, Los Angeles, Riverside, San Diego, San Francisco, Santa Barbara, and Santa Cruz, and also UC Merced, which is scheduled to open in 2004.

Alexander Street Press, L.L.C., is an academic publisher of electronic full-text databases in the humanities and social sciences. The company, launched in July 2000 by executives of the former Chadwyck-Healey company, is currently developing databases in history, women's studies, sociology, popular culture, film studies, the arts, and more. Titles in production include *North American Women's Letters and Diaries, Colonial-1950; The American Civil War: Letters and Diaries; Exploration Narratives: Encounters with the*

New World, 1534-1924; American Film Scripts Online; The Woman Suffrage Movement and others.

Alexander Street Press is located in Alexandria, Virginia.

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Editors: For additional information on the CDL please contact John Ober, CDL assistant director for education & strategic innovation, (510) 987-0425; or John.Ober@ucop.edu. Additional information about the California Digital Library may be found at the CDL web site, <http://www.cdlib.org> .

For more information on Alexander Street Press and its products, contact Eileen Lawrence, vice president of sales and marketing, (800) 889-5937 or lawrence@alexanderst.com, or visit <http://alexanderstreetpress.com>.