Early English Books on microfilm

What it is.

The Early English Books microfilm collection consists of over 3,400 reels of microfilm containing roughly 95,000 documents printed in England or North America between 1475 and 1700. These documents include literature, essays, drama, religious texts, ballads and carols, political tracts, pamphlets, medical writings, the earliest editions of The Canterbury Tales and the Morte d'Arthur, and on and on. The originals of these documents reside in libraries and museums all over the world, and in many cases, only one copy exists. The collection actually is made up of two parts which are named for the authors who originally indexed the documents, so you may hear the years 1475-1640 referred to as Pollard and Redgrave, while the years 1641-1700 are referred to as Wing.

How it works.

The documents contained on the microfilms have been cataloged. They can be discovered through the WSU Libraries Online Catalog, but there are three simple steps you can take to ensure relevant results.

Step One. When you access the catalog (libcat.wichita.edu), change the default to Advanced Search:

![Advanced Search](image)

Step Two. Place your search term in one box, or two if you are combining or excluding terms. You can leave the Search in option to the default Keyword Anywhere or change it to Author or Title if you are looking for a specific author or document. If Keyword Anywhere is producing too many results, you can try Subject instead, but it is usually best to keep your subject terms broad. Also note that you may use the ? truncation character.

Step Three. In the next search box, enter the words early english books. Leave the other defaults alone. Now press the Search button.
In the following example, we are looking for documents about monarchs or monarchy and Queen Elizabeth or King James. Note that in the second line we changed the default as a phrase to any of these. It is not necessary to insert the word OR between the words elizabeth and james.

The search produced 36 results, the first two of which are shown below.

Note that the call numbers of these two results are the same, but the second one includes a Reel Number. You will need the Reel Number to locate the microfilm that contains the document you want. Frequently you will have to click on the document title to get this information. Let’s do that for result #1.

Title: *The Secret history of the four last monarchs of Great-Britain, viz. James I, Charles I, Charles II, James II (microform) : to which is added an appendix containing the later reign of James the Second, from the time of his abdication of England, to this present.*

Published: London printed : [s.n.], 1693.

Description: Microform.

Format: Microform.


Subject Heading: Great Britain History Stuarts, 1603-1714.

Great Britain Kings and rulers Biography.


Notes: Attributed to Nathaniel Crouch by Wing.

Reproduction of original in the University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign Campus) Library.

Other Author(s), etc.: R.L. : 1812-17287.

Location: Asia 1st Floor–Early English Books Microfilm East Wall

Call Number: PR11227 .US

Map Directions: Find Where It Is.

Text: Text this record to your cell phone.

Permanent Link: http://libcat.wichita.edu/cgi-bin/Webbin/OPAC?bbid=1287872
Since Early English Books is really made up of two collections, one ranging from 1475-1640 and the other from 1641-1700, the catalog information tells you to which set the document belongs. The first number after the set tells you which reel of film you need (Reel 1001 in this case), and the number after that indicates that, in this case, the document is the 10th one on that reel. *Documents may not have been filmed according to any pattern, so it is important to get this information.*

**I found the citation. Now what?**

The next step is to get the film you need out of the microfilm drawer. The film is located in green cabinets on the East Wall of the Reserve Room, near the Current Periodicals. If the Location “East Wall” doesn’t mean much to you, follow this map:

If you only need to view your document, proceed to the Microfilm Readers near the Reserve Desk. If you think you’d like to print, you’ll need to get a paper tray from the Reserve Desk. Likewise, if you need a lesson on operating the Microfilm Reader, stop by the Reserve Desk and someone will help you.

A card like this precedes each document.
Now you’re on your way to better, more effective use of the Early English Books collection. As always, if you need more help, Ask a Librarian! We can be reached in person at the Reference Desk; by phone at (316) 978-3584; or by chat or e-mail from the Wu_Knows page: http://library.wichita.edu/wuknows/. Happy researching!

Created by Liorah Golomb, Humanities Librarian, February 2009.