



The Library of Congress

Kurt S. Maier

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Two hundred years ago, the Library of Congress--America's oldest national cultural institution--was founded as a small room with 740 books, later adding Thomas Jefferson's personal library.

Today, the Library of Congress is the largest book palace in the world with nineteen million volumes in three buildings, and more than ten Web sites. The Library's collections include the papers of twenty-three presidents; manuscripts from Booker T. Washington, Walt Whitman, Irving Berlin, and numerous other eminent Americans; the diaries of Orville and Wilbur Wright. Other treasures include rare books dating as far back as the fifteenth century, maps, movies, television and radio broadcasts, even the earliest known baseball cards.

Kurt S. Maier has worked at the Library of Congress for over twenty years, in the History and Literature Cataloging Division and as an on-call tour guide. His love for and knowledge of the Library of Congress inspired him to put together this tour in words and pictures. The book is in response to the variety of questions he has been asked while leading visitors through the three Library buildings, twenty reading rooms, and numerous exhibits. An accessible question-and-answer format, highlighted with photos and archival prints throughout, covers a multitude of categories including the Poet Laureates, the Librarians of Congress, the Main Reading Room, Special Divisions such as The Manuscript Division, The Music Division, The Law Library, The Hispanic Division, and so much more.

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