

The Online Books Page

INFORMATION ABOUT

THE CATALOG OF COPYRIGHT ENTRIES

Interested in better accessibility of copyright records? The Copyright Office is considering digitizing their pre-1978 records. If you're interested in this, fill out their [survey](#).

The Catalog of Copyright Entries, published by the US Copyright Office, contains a list of all copyright registrations received. This information can be used to

- See whether a copyright has been registered or renewed. This can be useful for determining whether a work published after 1922 is now in the public domain. For instance, copyrights for works first published before 1964, and first published in the US, that were not registered and renewed in a timely manner, have now expired into the public domain. (Some material that was first published abroad may be exempt from renewal requirements.) To learn more about how to investigate the copyright status of a book, see [this file](#).
- Find out who registered a copyright, and what the copyright covers. This can be useful if you want to contact a copyright owner to ask permission to put an old work online.

This page will include pointers to electronic copies of renewal registrations, and textual registrations. We'd like to get help from the community in putting this material online.

This work is supported by the [Universal Library Project](#) at Carnegie Mellon, which has scanned page images for the "books" portion of the renewal volumes, the [Carnegie Mellon University Libraries](#), which provide much of the storage space for the scanned images, by the [Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh](#) and the [Newark Public Library](#), which have supplied volumes to be scanned, by Juliet Sutherland, who provided replacement scans for missing or damaged images, by Philip Harper and Project Gutenberg, who are providing transcriptions of some of these records, and by volunteers and donors from the Internet community. If you'd like to help out, write onlinebooks@pobox.upenn.edu to find out more how you can get involved with this project. Thanks to everyone helping out. (Thanks also to the Copyright Office for compiling this material in the first place, and for maintaining the online records from 1978 onward.)

New: A quick search of selected copyright renewal records can be found [here](#), thanks to Michael Lesk. Don't rely on this search as the last word, since the database is not complete and might not have all records in correct form. But it can be a useful first screening pass to find renewals quickly.

Here is what is available online so far:

1950 - 1952 (renews copyrights from 1922 - 1925)

Dianne Bean, Mary Mark and I have scanned renewal records for all book-related categories, other than music. In addition, Philip Harper has [transcribed some of these renewal records as searchable text](#).

The page images can be found here: [1950](#) -- [1951](#) -- [1952](#)

1953 - 1977 (renews copyrights from 1925 - 1950)

The Universal Library has scanned book renewal records from these years. Renewals in related categories that may be relevant to books (such as periodicals, drama, and artwork) have not yet been scanned. Be aware that some of the material in certain books may be covered under copyrights in those related categories. (For instance, if a portion of a book first appeared in a magazine, it may still be copyrighted under the magazine's copyright even if the book's copyright was not renewed.)

Here are tables of contents for the Universal Library scans: [1953](#) -- [1954](#) -- [1955](#) -- [1956](#) -- [1957](#) -- [1958](#) -- [1959](#) -- [1960](#) -- [1961](#) -- [1962](#) -- [1963](#) -- [1964](#) -- [1965](#) -- [1966](#) -- [1967](#) -- [1968](#) -- [1969](#) -- [1970](#) -- [1971](#) -- [1972](#) -- [1973](#) -- [1974](#) -- [1975](#) -- [1976](#) -- [1977](#)

Up through 1973, each page link includes a summary of the alphabetical range covered by the page, making it easier for people to find relevant pages in their search. (Thanks to Philip Harper for producing summaries for 1955-1957, and 1959-1963, and to Meredith Dixon for producing summaries for 1964 and 1965!)

The Copyright office stopped alphabetizing renewal records in mid-1973, making it much more difficult to search for a particular renewal record in the 1973-1977 time period using the page scans. However, searchable text transcriptions of renewals from those years are now available from Project Gutenberg, and are linked to from the years above.

1978 - 2004 (renews copyrights from 1950 - 1977)

You can see copyright registration records from 1978 onward from the Copyright Office's [Copyright Records web site](#). This will include renewals for copyrights from 1951 onward (and some, but not all, renewals for 1950 copyrights), as well as original registrations from 1978 onward. For information on how to use the system, see [this file](#). Note that due to changes in copyright law, all works copyrighted in 1964 or later automatically had their copyrights renewed, whether or not a renewal was filed.

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