This bibliography has a narrow focus: to list the works that scholars and students of the Dead phenomenon need in order to form a basic understanding of the Dead, as well as provide some notion about what they are likely to encounter in their own research. The list of works on and associated with the Dead and the Deadheads is extensive and growing; the only full-length bibliography on the band listed more than 2,000 entries as of 1999 (see Dodd and Weiner, The Grateful Dead and the Deadheads). We have also included a representative sample of some of the more ancillary items, which serve to indicate the range of topics that can be explored under the rubric, Grateful Dead phenomenon. If diehard Dead bibliophiles find nothing new here, we hope they’ll at least find something thought-provoking about the selection.

Though far from comprehensive, this lists a majority of the books written about and by the band, with a few titles on surrounding contexts that cast significant light on the Dead, such as the Haight-Ashbury and rock poster art. We did not list outdated and superseded secondary treatments such as Burt and North’s West Coast Story, nor could we include such ancillary topics as the grateful dead legend, which has its own well-developed body of scholarship; Deadhead scholars should start with family member Alan Trist’s The Water of Life: A Tale of the Grateful Dead (Eugene, OR: Hulogosi, 1999). Non-Dead-related primary material we also excluded, such as Weir’s children’s books; we did, however, include Hunter’s poetry, which is so strongly tied in with his lyrics. Likewise, most of Barlow’s non-Dead primary work on Internet-related issues is not included.

Like the band’s music, many of these works can fit several categories. Hank Harrison’s unreliable but nonetheless unavoidable books are classified here as primary, though in subject they are clearly secondary; this is because Harrison’s accounts feature interviews and his own impressions as an early member of the scene—the only elements that can be considered reliable, in scholarly terms. Likewise, memoirs involving the band by non–family members are listed here as primary, though works with an exclusively critical focus—such as Carol Brightman’s—are listed as secondary. Deadheads have always been good about allowing their categories to be flexible. The last section is a brief list of useful ancillary titles that describe elements of or contexts for the Dead’s story.
Books

Primary

A fine coffee table book of photographs and memorabilia assembled by a longtime family member, featuring some unusual ephemera, such as Pigpen's Beat-inspired poetry.

A book of lithographs by Garcia, with an introduction from his teacher at the San Francisco College of Arts and Crafts, noted Beat artist Wally Hedricks.

A series of illustrated “anecdoubts” that provides a surprisingly revealing look at his childhood and some of the forces that shaped his art.

Charles Reich, ex–Yale Law professor and author of The Greening of America, and Jann Wenner, publisher of Rolling Stone, interview Garcia on a battery of topics, including the formation of the band, a thorough discussion of the acid test era, and the sociological function of the Dead.

The first book on the Dead, written by a former roommate of Phil Lesh and band hanger-on. Error-ridden though useful.

This represents Volumes Two and Three of the trilogy, according to Harrison's preface; highlights include the band's 1978 Egypt trip. It maintains its predecessor's standards.

Drummer Hart’s look at the history and culture of the drum; little Dead-related information.

All of Hunter’s song lyrics for the Dead, Garcia, and others, such as Bob Dylan and Zero. Crucial, especially for the annotations he provides.

A collection of poetry including variants of ten poems from Infinity Minus Eleven and elsewhere. Two poems, “Black Rose” and “After the Ball,” speak to his life and work with Garcia.

Hunter’s first collection of poetry, sounding many of his familiar lyric themes: cards, chance, the West, roses, music.

A collection of poetry. Hunter also recorded an album of readings with the same name, released in 1993 by Rykodisc (RCD 20265).

Petersen was a friend of Lesh and part of the early Peninsula scene that birthed the Dead. His Beat-influenced poetry resembles the lyrics he supplied for the band.

Secondary

A groundbreaking and seminal collection of sociological and anthropological essays on Deadhead culture and the Dead phenomenon edited by two leading Dead scholars. A good overview of most of the major critical issues in studying the Dead phenomenon and a thoughtful critique of sociological methodology as well.

The first scholarly monograph on the band, written by the sister of long-time band light designer Candace Brightman. Many fans and scholars take exception to the book’s overly political interpretation, feeling it loses sight of the band’s art, though it benefits from extensive access to the band and family.


The first and only book-length bibliography of the band and fans, well-indexed with more than 2,000 entries.


A superb anthology of articles, poems, book excerpts and essays that makes a strong claim for the phenomenon’s literary significance.


A well-edited and illustrated anthology of articles and interviews principally from *Rolling Stone* magazine, with several inclusions from other publications and three commissioned for this volume.


An affectionate collective eulogy, gathered from the WELL and other Internet sources in the immediate aftermath of Garcia’s death in 1995. A fine tribute.


A fine, early popular group biography, drawing on a wide array of sources, with good overviews and assessments by one of the scene’s foremost authorities.

Getz, Michael M., and John R. Dwork, eds. *The Deadhead’s Taping
A useful if uneven overview of the taping scene and tapes in circulation. Some additional information, especially on Vault historian Dick Latvala, appears in the privately produced fourth installment (The Deadhead Taper's Addendum. San Francisco: PepperTonic, 2002), though its primarily value is as Deadheadiana.


A quickly edited oral history, written shortly after Garcia's death. Though primarily sensationalistic and largely based on outsiders, it has some useful information.

This first examination of the Dead phenomenon is still the best evocation of the subculture and its rituals. A wonderful if popular account coedited by the editor of The Art of Rock.

A coffee table book so bowdlerized it manages to discuss the band’s Sixties era with almost no references to drugs.

The first serious biography of the late great guitarist, and the first well-researched monograph on the band. Sadly, a fifth had to be cut at the last minute, including the references; readers should go to the author's website, <www.blairjackson.com>, to read some of the excised parts.

An important anthology of articles from the well-edited Deadhead periodical The Golden Road.

Jackson, Blair. Grateful Dead: The Music Never Stopped. New York:
76 DEAD LETTERS

Out-of-print early popular monograph, written by the editor of The Golden Road and later author of Garcia: An American Life, a positive, fan-oriented snapshot of the band up to the early Eighties.

A band-authorized biography for their twenty-fifth year. A good, brief history, well written and illustrated.

A collection of interview quotations from Deadheads, some famous, several interesting, and about various topics, some useful.

A book documenting the art used to decorate the laminates—passes that controlled backstage access at concerts—with some related anecdotes.

A meticulously researched, authorized but uncensored account of the band by their longtime official historian and publicist, also author of the Kerouac biography Desolate Angel. Indispensable.

A compilation of anecdotes and information about the Dead’s songbook. Uneven, with some errors.

Uneven, early anthology of Dead writings, reproducing—with some errors—several previously published and some new articles, including several scholarly pieces.

Another coffee table book, written by a Relix and Goldmine editor, more extensive and detailed than Hall.
Scully, Rock and David Dalton. Living with the Dead: Twenty Years on
A floridly written, sensationalistic account by a former manager and insider, marred by serious factual errors (e.g., Mickey Hart's alleged Europe '72 participation). It adds some nice color to the band's early Haight-Ashbury days but focuses far too much on the band's druggie early-Eighties years.

The eleventh edition in a series of books that is the result of a mammoth computer programming project begun more than a decade ago. A tremendous work of amateur scholarship, it is the only performing history of the band, though maddeningly mute on its data sources.

Perhaps the best-loved book in Deaddom, this is an articulate, impassioned compendium of well-researched history, folklore, and arcana of the Dead and the Deadheads.

Illustrated versions of Dead songs, introduced by comics enthusiast Jerry Garcia.

An uneven Dead encyclopedia, ambitious in scope but less good than Shenk and Silberman.

A thin, poorly researched first biography of Garcia, written by an occasional Relix contributor. Much inferior to Jackson's Garcia.

Some of the interviews may be helpful for some scholars.

Weiner, Robert G., ed. Perspectives on the Grateful Dead: Critical
DEAD LETTERS

The first academically oriented collection of articles on the Dead, some scholarly.

Another Dead encyclopedia.

An interesting and useful snapshot of Deadhead culture.

A sympathetic, informative look at Deadhead culture by Deadheads.

Articles and Chapters

Primary

An essay by band lyricist and Internet activist Barlow with a number of biographical references.

An interview with lyricist Barlow with numerous references to the band.

Contains a very good interview with Garcia, his last major one.

An interview with Lesh focusing on his technique, current projects, and life on the road with the Dead, including historic gigs such as Egypt.

A good, early interview with Weir, one of 13 in the book. Out of print but common.

Secondary

In this textbook chapter, Deadheads are classified as a subculture “exploring nature religion” through a metaphysical relationship to music.

A positive assessment of the Grateful Dead’s customer service practices from a business theory perspective, identifying five service quality characteristics: reliability, availability, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness.

A ground-breaking musicological essay on the Dead’s magnum opus, “Dark Star.”

Stories of Deadhead life and the parking lot scene.

Contains a section on the Dead’s 1974 sound system, the Wall of Sound.

A brief look at American Indian Deadheads and their Dead fanzine, Indian Dead, pointing out their proclivity for political activism.

Haskell, Robert E. “Listening to the Grateful Dead, Live in Concert: An Introduction to Deep Listening,” in his Deep Listening: Uncovering the
Examines how Deadheads converse and the hidden meanings in those discus-
sions, with a “Grateful Dead, Live in Concert Matrix Map” to illustrate.

A favorable assessment of the Dead’s marketing strategies, from a business school perspective.

Lydon’s chapter is one of the best articles written on the band, a thoughtful contemporary portrayal of the Dead at the peak of the Sixties.

As sweeping, sensationalistic, and inaccurate as its title would suggest.

A chapter-long description of an amnesiac Deadhead who responded to the band’s music and temporarily regained reality.

An assessment of how Deadhead identity is formed, from the rituals which surrounded Dead concerts to the mythical nature of Deadhead unity.

Sardiello defines Deadhead identity by three types (Hardcore, New, and Stable) and provides a definition of the Deadhead subculture.

A fine, one-chapter early critical assessment of the Dead’s principal lyricist.

An essay on the religious and spiritual aspects of the Dead concert experience.

A positive assessment of the Dead organization’s business culture and practices, including their philanthropic concerns.

Veteran Dead critic Silberman writes with insight and balance about a negative tripping experience at a Frost Amphitheater show in the Eighties.

Based on interviews with Deadheads, the author explains the Dead experience as religious and spiritual, based on academic theological theory.

Related Titles

A well-designed and profusely illustrated memoir of the Haight-Ashbury by a participant, with an introductory essay by Beat poet Michael McClure.

A lavishly illustrated, well-researched oral history of the rock poster, paying particular attention to the psychedelic artists who illustrated the ballroom scene.

The first major survey of the topic, by a journalist for Billboard. A useful reference, especially good on the Sixties and the ballroom scene.

A still useful early reference, this well researched chronology of the Haight-Ashbury focuses on the years 1965 to 1970.

A good, journalistic history, largely based on interviews, of the rise of the San Francisco scene and the psychedelic ballroom era.

A slender though useful memoir of the early Haight Ashbury by Grace Slick's brother-in-law, a member of the Great Society and author of the song “Somebody to Love.”

A work that Kesey later called “96% accurate,” Wolfe's book remains the invaluable New Journalism account of the Acid Test era, as told from the perspective of Kesey and the Pranksters. The best evocation of the lysergic quality of the times.