



# Henry Edwards Huntington: A Biography

*James Thorpe*

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## **Henry Edwards Huntington: A Biography** James Thorpe

A legendary book collector, a connoisseur of fine art, a horticulturist, and a philanthropist, Henry Edwards Huntington is perhaps best known as the founder of the world-renowned Huntington Library, Art Gallery, and Botanical Gardens in San Marino, California. James Thorpe's comprehensive biography of Huntington tells the richly human story of the man who became America's greatest book collector and was a leading figure in the development of southern California.

Henry Edwards Huntington was born in New York State in 1850. He began working at the age of 17, eventually moved to California, and in later years was hailed for his vision in developing the street railway system that created the structure of the Los Angeles area. Always a lover of books, Huntington acquired many spectacular volumes—among them the complete Gutenberg Bible on vellum and the library of the Earl of Bridgewater. He also built a splendid art collection and established a grand botanical garden on the grounds of the buildings that would house his art and books. Then, in an act of philanthropy seldom equaled, he gave these great treasures to the public.

The intimate side of Huntington's life appears in these pages, too. Thorpe has culled a vast trove of private letters, diaries, and other documents that reveal Huntington's exceptional personal qualities. The author's well-rounded biography of this unassuming yet gifted American is also richly evocative of the times in which Henry Edwards Huntington lived.

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