

James P. Adams Library

Special Collections

Collection Development Policy

The Special Collections Department was created in 1974 and established in its present location in 1978. In 1982 its reading room was dedicated, in honor of Professors Ronald Ballinger (History) and Martha Bacon Ballinger (English). Most of the books in Special Collections are listed in the HELIN catalog. There are lists, registers, and other aids available for finding other materials. Assistance and reference services are available whenever the department is open. An appointment is recommended, but not required. Materials do not circulate. However, loans to other institutions can be made on a case by case basis with the approval of the Special Collections Librarian and the Director of the Library.

The principal purpose of the James P. Adams Special Collections Department is to identify, collect, preserve, provide access to, and encourage the use of its papers, books, and other materials. It is here that the Library houses its collections of rare and special books, manuscripts, and real objects. The College Archives is its major component. Through these collections the department supports the research, teaching, and service mission of Rhode Island College.

Special Collections' primary responsibility is to serve the research needs of faculty and students of Rhode Island College. To this end, it seeks to collect in subject areas receiving substantial and sustained attention within the College community, those representing ongoing departmental research interests, or those areas that are the focus of interdisciplinary programs. Special Collections also seeks to play a role in the broader research community by building collections in areas not well covered by other repositories. It thereby draws visiting scholars to the campus and enhances the College's overall reputation as a center for scholarship.

The Head of Special Collections is responsible for the development of collections in this department, and, in consultation with the Library Director, will accept or reject materials. Although material for the Special Collections may be solicited, purchased, or exchanged, donation is the preferred method of acquisition. Library funds are used to purchase Rhode Island-related materials and faculty authored monographic works in all media normally collected by the Library. The Baltasar Lopes da Silva Fund (Cape Verdean) and the Hoffmann Rare Book Fund (Rhode Island) supplement purchases in their respective areas.

Librarians, staff, faculty, students, and the public are free to recommend material that they think would be appropriate for Special Collections. Before an item will be accepted, however, it must be evaluated by the Special Collections Librarian.

Acceptance of materials for Special Collections is subject to the following criteria:

- The materials must support the mission of Special Collections and complement existing collections.

- The materials should be free from access restrictions or legal encumbrances that will diminish its research potential.
- The materials must be in such a condition that the cost of preservation and conservation will not be excessive in relation to the materials' intrinsic or historical value.
- Special Collections must be able to house and care for the materials according to professional standards.

Specific factors to be considered when deciding whether or not to acquire an item or collection include its age, quality, physical condition, size, local availability, completeness, research potential, and possible current and future use. Exhibit and outreach possibilities may also be taken into account. Of primary interest to Special Collections is the acquisition of materials that will add value to the existing collections. It will work cooperatively with other community groups or institutions to enhance strengths and avoid duplication.

At the discretion of the Special Collections Librarian, books from the Library's main collection that are too fragile, rare, or valuable to remain in an unsecured area or that meet the established criteria for transfer (q.v.) will be moved to Special Collections. This manner of growth is restricted due to the limited availability of shelf space.

Special Collections' strengths lie in the areas of education, ethnic heritage, social history, Rhode Island, and the College itself. All the subject collections are related to Rhode Island College or the state of Rhode Island. Included among them are the following:

Nathaniel Terry Bacon Papers (industry, literature, philanthropy, education)

Cape Verdean Collection (Cape Verdean American culture and history)

Maribelle Cormack Papers (natural history, education, children's literature)

Michael DeCiantis Papers (law and politics)

Irving Jay Fain Papers (civil rights, fair housing)

International Institute of RI Records (ethnic culture and history, law)

Joseph R. Muratore Collection (Italian American culture and history)

Carl Russell Gross Papers (African American experience)

Nancy Elizabeth Prophet Collection (art; African American life)

Social and Political Materials Collection (socio-political movements, 1950-80)

Maurice and Vera Vendettuoli Papers (school busing).

Rhode Island College Archives

The Archives is a rich depository of the history, records, and memorabilia of Rhode Island College. Contained within it are the non-current records of the College, faculty publications, student theses and dissertations, and other College-related materials that are of potential enduring historical value. Thus this collection documents the internal life and culture of the College community.

The Archives receives these materials from departments, offices, committees and organizations of the College, and they are arranged by office of origin. They include, but are not limited to, correspondence, records, reports, policy statements, manuals, minutes, curricula, and published items.