



Rauner Special Collections Library in Webster Hall
6065 Webster Hall Hanover, New Hampshire 03755

MANUSCRIPTS AND MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS

The manuscripts and manuscript collections exist to support, supplement, and complement programs of instruction and research required by members of the Dartmouth community. Manuscripts, defined as any original, written materials that are created as unique items, include holographs and typescripts, as well as computer files. Materials in the collection range in age and size from papyrus fragments and cuneiform tablets to large bodies of modern political papers. The majority of the manuscripts are in English or western European languages and date from the sixteenth century to the present. At the same time, representative examples of manuscripts from all eras and languages are acquired for teaching purposes.

Manuscript material is actively sought and acquired. For the most part, these materials support and complement other collections held by the Library. The broad areas of collecting include art history, presses and fine printing, literature, and social and political history. Special emphasis is placed on the following areas: modern British and American literature, polar history (the Stefansson Collection on Polar Exploration), presses and fine printing, Dartmouth College alumni who have made significant contributions to society, and the history of New Hampshire. In the latter collecting area, social history, the Cornish Colony, the White Mountains, and the Civil War are emphasized.

Locating materials in the manuscript collection often requires a two-step process. All manuscript collections and many individually cataloged manuscripts can be searched in the on-line catalog. Materials can be found by author, title, and subject. Using the Material Type <manuscript> in a search will produce a result for only manuscript material. In many cases, the search result will produce a record for a large body of materials. Guides to many of these collections are available in the reading room. If there is a guide available, this will be listed in the notes section of the long display of a record. The guide will allow the researcher to examine the contents of the collection, down to the folder level, without the need to examine many boxes of materials.

A number of individually cataloged manuscripts are not listed in the on-line catalog. Access to these materials can only be gained by using the manual catalog in the reading room. Most materials in this group date from the late eighteenth century to the present. First-time researchers should request assistance in using this catalog.

Once a search has been completed and the researcher has located materials of interest, it is important to note the call number or numbers of the manuscripts or

collections needed. This call number is different from the call numbers of printed materials. It can consist of a collection number—such as Stef Mss 123, ML-50, or MS-21—or can be a six-digit number—such as 000123, Codex 934520, or Webster 818450. With the six-digit call number, it is exceptionally important that the researcher note any name prefix, such as Codex, Frost, Webster, or Ticknor. The prefix and the number are critical in requesting materials. Materials can be requested from the reading room supervisor by completing a white manuscript request form. Separate forms must be used for each manuscript or box requested. It usually takes only a few minutes to pull materials for use although some manuscript materials are housed off-site.

In a few cases, there are restrictions on the use of manuscript materials. These are not placed on the materials by this department. Rather, for whatever reason, the donor of the materials has determined that access be restricted and the department must abide by those restrictions. Questions about access to restricted materials should be directed to the reading room supervisor.

Copying of manuscript material is usually possible. Photocopies or photographs cannot be provided if the material is too fragile, if copying would violate federal copyright laws, or if the donor of the material has restricted copying. In most cases, photocopies can be provided in two working days and photographs in ten working days. Researchers requiring copies should consult the procedures sheet found on each research table to determine how to identify materials for copying.

Under federal law, there are two sets of rights that accrue to any manuscript material. The first are physical property rights that are held by Dartmouth College as the owner of the manuscript material. The second is the literary property right, or copyright, held by the creator of the material or the creator's heirs. In some cases, these literary property rights are held by the College. Researchers should inquire prior to planning on using materials in publications. If questions of literary rights arise, the researcher should consult the appropriate copyright statutes and brochures produced by the U. S. Copyright Office. Copies of these materials can be obtained at the reference desk. Please note that the reading room supervisor cannot provide advice on legal matters.

Special Collections is open 8 -4:30, Monday - Friday
(603) 646-2037
<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~speccoll/>