

Special Collections & University Archives



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The unique and historically valuable collections in SCUA are the product of countless acts of generosity over decades of support. With the help of our friends and partners, SCUA has assembled a rich record of social change and cultural achievement that has fueled research and enriched the lives of students, scholars, and community members alike.

SCUA welcomes gifts of materials or financial support relating to our collecting interests and public programming, particularly in social change, agriculture, labor, the arts, and the history and cultures of New England. All donations are fully tax deductible.

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W.E.B. Du Bois Library :: University of Massachusetts Amherst





Under the terms of the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862, the Massachusetts legislature fulfilled a long-standing goal in the Commonwealth by creating a public college for agricultural education. From its first graduating class in 1871, the Massachusetts Agricultural College drew notice for its practical, progressive curriculum, even earning the attention of the Emperor of Japan, who called upon the expertise of MAC faculty to help organize the Sapporo Agricultural College in 1875. By the time it issued its first graduate degrees at the turn of the century, MAC was known as an important center for research in agriculture and horticulture, entomology, landscape architecture, and rural sociology, and it was home to two major experiment stations and a vigorous extension service.

Changing its name to Massachusetts State College in 1931 and to the University of Massachusetts in 1947, reflecting its growth into a modern research university, UMass has retained a distinctive character and a commitment to its land grant mission and public service to the people of the Commonwealth.

University Archives

The University Archives houses the official and unofficial records of UMass Amherst from its founding as the Massachusetts Agricultural College in 1863 through its present status as the flagship campus of the University of Massachusetts system. With over 13,000 linear feet of records and tens of thousands of photographs, the Archives offers a nearly comprehensive perspective on the history of the university and the university community.

The Archives contain the papers of presidents and provosts, chancellors, deans, and institute directors, along with records of cultural events and student life, academic departments and the library, and scholarly and extracurricular life. In addition to the wide range of publications issued by administrative, academic, and research units, the collections include the minutes of university committees, reports, planning documents, maps of campus, correspondence, and memoranda produced in the conduct of university business.

Students, Staff, Alumni

With an eclectic mix of memorabilia, the records of student organizations, personal letters, class notes, and other documents, the Archives offers a vivid portrait of student life from the pioneering class to the present. The Archives also houses the papers of alumni who have enjoyed prominent careers in disparate fields, from the telecommunications pioneer and philanthropist Sidney Topol to gardening expert James Crockett, Japan scholar Conrad Totman, politician Stanley Rosenberg, and motion picture director Michael Haley.

Faculty Collections

From polymer science to political science, history to horticulture, the faculty at UMass Amherst are a diverse bunch, with as many interests and experiences as there are individuals. As scholars engaged with their communities, the faculty are the intellectual center of UMass and a focal point of the Archives.

