

Special Collections & University Archives



W.E.B. Du Bois Library, 25th Floor
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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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Special Collections University Archives

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





Even prior to the arrival of its first students, the Massachusetts Agricultural College acquired its first rare books. In 1868, H. K. Oliver's gift of a handful of historical works in apiculture and gardening formed the kernel from which an important research collection has grown. Through the years, the library has built upon the generosity of donors like Oliver, adding research collections that reflect the changing interests and values of the university community. From a foundation in agriculture and the natural sciences, the Department of Special Collections and University Archives (SCUA) has built rich holdings in the history and experience of social change; African American history; labor, work, and industry; and the history and cultures of New England.

As a research unit within the W.E.B. Du Bois Library, SCUA oversees a growing body of manuscript, archival, printed, photographic, and digital materials. With an emphasis on the late 19th and early 20th centuries, these collections form a tightly focused, highly integrated record of human endeavor that our staff makes freely available for the benefit of scholars, students, and community members. SCUA works in partnership with many groups within the university and without to preserve the fabric of history and American culture.

In fulfilling our mission, the staff in SCUA sponsors a range of public programs, exhibitions, instructional sessions, and tours for both students and the general public, as well as annual colloquia on social change and the legacy of W.E.B. Du Bois.

Social Change and Social Movements

Recognizing that there are few single-issue activists, SCUA documents the diverse ways in which individuals and organizations seek to better society. Rather than focus on any single idea or individual movement, our collections explore the larger organizational and intellectual connections underlying the struggle for social justice.

Representative collecting areas

- Antifluoridation activism
- Antinuclear activism
- Horace Mann Bond
- W.E.B. Du Bois
- Environmentalism (20/20 Vision, EarthAction)
- Intentional communities (Mungo, Diamond, Finestone, Famous Long Ago)
- Labor activism (Massachusetts AFL-CIO)
- LGBT issues (Gittings, MassEquality)
- Organic and sustainable agriculture
- Peace (AFSC, Kehler)
- Political radicalism (Mann and Hurst, Oglesby, Liberation News Service, Ross)

New England History and Culture

SCUA's collections center on the social, political, artistic, and cultural history of our region, with an emphasis on western New England. The collections run the gamut from foodways to farming, community groups to immigrant communities, labor to industry to horticulture and gardening.

Representative collecting areas

- Culinary history and foodways (McIntosh)
- Family & farm life
- Industrial history (Rodney Hunt, Lamson & Goodnow)
- Intellectual life (Hudson Family, Lyman Family)
- Quabbin town histories
- Politics & government (Clark, Conte, Rosenberg)

Literature and the arts

The arts both contribute to and reflect the nation's experiences with social change. SCUA's collections include significant holdings for the study of national arts policy, the performing arts, and writers and poets in New England.

Representative collections

- Arts Policy (Arts Extension Service, National Endowment for the Humanities)
- Music (Arcadia Players, Tillis Valley Light Opera)
- Performing arts (Abramson, Double Edge Theatre, Ellis, Haley)
- Poetry (Francis, Halley, *Massachusetts Review*)
- Prose writing (Lederer, Lewin, Manchester, Maslow)

Other Collecting Areas

- American study of Japan since 1945
- East Germany & Communist Eastern Europe
- Gravestone studies
- History of protistology
- Innovation in sport