



Special Collections • LSU Libraries

FINDING MANUSCRIPT RESOURCES IN THE LOUISIANA AND LOWER MISSISSIPPI VALLEY COLLECTIONS (LLMVC)

The Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections (LLMVC) is comprehensive research collection comprised of materials in all formats dedicated to recording the history and culture of the Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley. Formats include books, serials and journals, photographs, state documents, microfilm of existing files of most LA newspapers, audio and visual materials, pamphlets and maps. In addition to these published works, the collections include unpublished sources in the form of archive and manuscript collections totaling more than 5000 discrete collections and including over 10 million items.

❖ Online catalog

Manuscript collections are cataloged in the online catalog, along with books, serials, audio visual materials, and the other holdings of the LSU Libraries. To retrieve records for manuscript collections most effectively, choose to do an Advanced Search, which gives you the option to search by author, title, subject, and keyword. These can be combined for an even narrower search by using AND, OR, NOT, which is called Boolean searching. Keyword searches are very helpful for conducting a broad search to locate manuscript items by topic.

To make any search retrieve only records for manuscript collections, choose the following options on the Advanced Search form: "Special Collections" as the library, "Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections" as the location, and "archives and manuscripts" as the catalog format.

SAMPLE CATALOG SEARCHES

Title: Joseph D. Shields papers

Author: Chol Emmanuel (name in reverse order; no comma needed)

Subject: Plantations Louisiana (must be a Library of Congress subject heading)

Keyword: reconstruction and Louisiana (finds all records in which "reconstruction" and "Louisiana" both appear) The same results can be had by filling in one box with "reconstruction" and setting the search to keyword and filling in a 2nd box with "Louisiana," also set to do a keyword search. The operator in the box on the right should be "AND."

✓ Though all processed manuscript collections have been cataloged in the Libraries' online catalog, it is still useful to check the **MANUSCRIPT CARD CATALOG**, which is only available in the reading room of Hill Memorial Library.

❖ Subject Guides—<http://www.lib.lsu.edu/special/research/msg.php>

Subject guides prepared by Special Collections staff identifying some of the strengths of the collection and individual collections about those topics. To find out more information about the collections referenced, check the online catalog, or link to the online finding aid when it is available as indicated by a link in the collection's entry. Inventories are more specific, written descriptions for the collections. Subject guides can be searched via the search box on the Subject Guides page. Limit your search to a specific subject guide by checking the box next to it, or search across all guides by leaving the boxes unchecked.

❖ Finding Aids and Inventories

The above points of access enable you to identify a potentially relevant collection. Finding aids (also called inventories) of the collections, which are more detailed descriptions of a collection's contents, are also available to identify and navigate relevant collections. Besides providing additional description, these assist you in determining which boxes of a particular collection you would like to request and view. Paper copies of finding aids are filed on in the reading room, and some (more than 700) are available and searchable at <http://www.lib.lsu.edu/special/findaid/>. See the introduction to finding aids on that page for more information about inventories.

❖ **Louisiana Digital Library**

Selected items from our archival collections and in some cases entire collections have been digitized and are available in the Louisiana Digital Library (LDL), which also contains digitized content from libraries and museums across the state. See www.louisianadigitallibrary.org and find "LSU" listed in the list of institutions.

❖ **Additional Online Access**

Selected archival materials from the LLMVC have been digitized and published online through subscription databases. Electronic access to these resources is limited to campus, faculty, staff, and students. Go to <http://www.lib.lsu.edu/databases/> to access these by title.

History Vault

Digital access to the microfilm series *Records of Antebellum Southern Plantations from the Revolution through the Civil War*.

Slavery, Abolition, and Social Justice, 1490-2007

This portal for slavery studies brings together documents and collections covering an extensive time period spanning six centuries, from libraries and archives across the Atlantic world.

HOLDINGS AT OTHER REPOSITORIES

Other repositories may have materials that complement what is available at LSU, or you may be interested in an area for which we have no resources. To locate these materials, databases that combine the records of many different libraries into one large database are available, allowing you to search the holdings of multiple institutions.

- ❖ **WORLDCAT**—Publicly available at www.worldcat.org. Allows you to search the records of any type of materials cataloged by libraries across the U.S. and some other countries. Records for manuscript and archival collections at LSU are also included in WorldCat.

WorldCat allows searching by the title, author, subject, keyword, as well as many other choices. Searches can be basic, advanced, or expert and can also include Boolean operators. Advanced and expert searches can also be limited by year of publication, document type (choose "mixed material" for manuscript collections), language, and library location.

- ❖ **ArchiveGrid**—Publicly available at <http://beta.worldcat.org/archivegrid/>. Searches WorldCat plus finding aids that repositories have mounted on their websites. Probably the most exhaustive resource available..
- ❖ **ARCHIVE FINDER**—Available on campus or to those affiliated with LSU. From the LSU Libraries web at <http://www.lib.lsu.edu/databases/descriptions/archivesusa.html>. A current directory of over 5,000 repositories and nearly 220,000 collections of primary source material across the United States. Using Archive Finder, researchers are able to read descriptions of a repository's holdings to determine whether a collection contains material useful to their work as well as to find the information they need to contact the repository directly. Supports Boolean searching. Choose "Collection Search" to begin
- ❖ Another option is to go to the website of a specific repository which you think may have information you are seeking. See "**Repositories of Primary Sources**," organized by country and state, at <http://www.uiweb.uidaho.edu/special-collections/Other.Repositories.html>.
- ❖ Special Collections has purchased microfilm of manuscript and archival collections from other university and state libraries, the United States National Archives, and archives of France and Spain. Some of these are cataloged in the online catalog or may have an index or guide available in the reading room near the finding aids. These sets relate to southern women and their families, Confederate soldiers in the Civil War, southern plantations in the antebellum and post-Civil War eras, the Freedmen's Bureau, African-American banks, and other topics.
- ❖ Mine the footnotes and bibliography of a book or article related to your topic.