

# Rare Books, Special Collections, and Preservation

Offering a Unique Experience to Visitors, Scholars, and Students

► Located on the second floor of Rush Rhees Library, the River Campus Libraries' Department of Rare Books, Special Collections, and Preservation (RBSCP) stewards unique and specialized materials, including books, manuscripts, photographs, maps, prints, broadsides, digitized works, and more.

The department is committed to acquiring and preserving rare books, manuscripts, and archival collections and makes its materials easily accessible to students, faculty, international scholars, and the public. It also acts to preserve the institutional memory of the University of Rochester by collecting its official records and historical documents in the University Archives.

## Book Collection

RBSCP's book collection comprises more than 100,000 volumes and ranges from those printed before 1501 to modern first editions.



▲ Film preservation graduate student Heather Harkins (left) works with history professor Thomas Slaughter (right) digitizing the papers of the William Seward family.

With a broad assortment of British and American literature, the department has special strengths in the works of authors and dramatists such as Charles Dickens, Alfred Lord Tennyson, and Henry David Thoreau. Its collections

are also particularly strong in early American children's books, Rochester and other local imprints, and Roycroft Press books from the Arts and Crafts Movement.



*"Being able to work with an amazing team digitizing William H. Seward's papers has been one of the highlights of my college experience. I love American history, and helping it unfold is terrific."*

—Demeara Torres '18  
computer science major and a recipient of the Alan and Jane Handler Scholarship



▲ The papers of Amy and Isaac Post document the social movements of the 19th century and include letters from Frederick Douglass, the Fox Sisters, and Susan B. Anthony.

### Manuscript Collection

RBSCP's staff curates more than 400 manuscript collections and thousands of letters, diaries, and other bound and unbound manuscripts. Specialties include 19th- and 20th-century political and social reform movement manuscripts, American literature, and a teaching collection of medieval, renaissance, and other early manuscripts.

### University Archives

The department is the repository for the historical documents of the University, including the papers of presidents. The archives also contain student publications, photographs, architectural drawings, miscellaneous objects, and electronic materials—even websites. Archiving these important materials preserves them for future generations and provides insight into the history, culture, and impact of the University.

### Scholars at Work

RBSCP engages in a range of academic and community partnerships to enhance the learning experiences of our students and in support of advanced research and inquiry.

**Exhibitions:** RBSCP partners with academic departments and students to curate exhibitions highlighting visiting lecturers and faculty publications. They often feature items from the collections that directly connect to and build upon these lecture topics. Staff and students also work with faculty authors to create exhibitions highlighting their research and writing and host events during which faculty read from their books.

### Collections in Coursework:

The University's undergraduate students often work directly with the department as part of their coursework. For example, the

papers of William Henry Seward (secretary of state under Presidents Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Johnson) form the foundation of a course taught in conjunction with the Department of History. Seward Project students collaborate with RBSCP and the RCL's staff in the Digital Scholarship Lab to examine, transcribe, and annotate the family's correspondence to gain 21st-century digital media skills and contribute to an online archive.

### Experiential Learning

**Opportunities:** High school students who participate in a "Hands-On History" summer course (part of the University's Rochester Scholars Program) work with RBSCP to learn about the department's archival and manuscript collections and exhibition program. To showcase their research, students curate an exhibition and host a public opening and reception.

### How You Can Help

Please consider supporting RBSCP internships, undergraduate projects, exhibitions, and experiential learning opportunities. Additional support is needed to sustain new areas of inquiry and instruction through acquisition and enriched access to collections, as well as digitization and preservation. Gifts can also support endowed positions. Such generosity lives in perpetuity and becomes a vital part of the success of our students.

Learn, Discover, Heal, Create—And Make the World Ever Better

[www.library.rochester.edu](http://www.library.rochester.edu)

For more information on giving opportunities, please contact  
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