



Special Collections • LSU Libraries

FINDING MANUSCRIPT RESOURCES IN THE LOUISIANA THE LOWER MISSISSIPPI VALLEY COLLECTIONS

The Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections (LLMVC) is an integrated research center, which means it contains all formats of materials, dedicated to recording the history and culture of the Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley (the area from Memphis to New Orleans). 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 In addition to these published works, the collections include unpublished sources in the form of archive and manuscript collections totaling more than 5000 discrete collections and including over 10 million items.

LLMVC HOLDINGS

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

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 and the manuscript card catalog in the reading room of Hill Memorial Library. The notation “Complete Finding Aid Available” indicates an inventory of the collection is available online as well. Inventories are more specific, written descriptions, for the collections. Those inventories on the web and the subject guides, are keyword searchable at <http://www.lib.lsu.edu/special/research/search.html>

❖ **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 a any search retrieve only records for manuscript collections, choose the following options on the Advanced Search form,: “Hill Memorial Library,” as the library, “Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections as the location, and “Manuscript format” as the catalog format.

SAMPLE 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; seen as Plantations—Louisiana in the record, but the search is entered without the dashes)
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.”

✓ It is important to note that not all manuscript collections in the LLMVC have been cataloged or entered in the online catalog, so it is also necessary also to check the **MANUSCRIPT CARD CATALOG**, which is only available in the reading room of Hill Memorial Library

❖ **Inventories**

The above points of access enable you to identify a potentially relevant collection. Inventories of the collections, which are more detailed descriptions of a collection’s contents, are also available. Besides providing additional description, these assist you in determining which boxes of a particular collection you would like to look at. Paper copies are filed alphabetically by the name of the collection in the reading room, and approximately 200 are available on our website at <http://www.lib.lsu.edu/special/findaid/>. See “Tips on Using Manuscript Inventories” for more information about

inventories. The inventories and the subject guides on the web site can be searched by choosing “Search this Site” under “Research Tools” on the Special Collections website, and limiting your search to “Online Finding Aids.”

HOLDINGS AT OTHER REPOSITORIES

Other repositories may have materials that complement what is available at LSU. For example, the papers of 19th-century French émigré, Louisiana musician, and Thibodaux resident Emmanuel Chol are split between LSU and Nicholls State University in Thibodaux. Or, you may be interested in an area for which we have no resources. To locate these materials, there are databases that combine the records of many different libraries into one large database so that when you search that database, you are searching across institutions. Be aware, however, that not all repositories contribute to these cooperative databases.

- ❖ **WORLDCAT**—Available from the LSU Libraries Web page (<http://www.lib.lsu.edu/databases/>) by going to “W” and scrolling down to “WorldCat.” Allows you to search the records of any type of materials cataloged by Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) member libraries.

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.

- ❖ **EUREKA**—Available from the LSU Libraries Web page (<http://www.lib.lsu.edu/databases/>) by choosing “E” and scrolling down to “Eureka.” Allows you to search the Research Libraries Group Union Catalog (RLIN), a comprehensive database which serves as a major union catalog for everything from books and serials to archives, manuscripts, maps, music scores, sound recordings, films, photographs, posters, computer files, and more.

Eureka offers simple searches (keyword, author, title, subject) and advanced searches (keyword, author, author word, title, title word, subject, subject word, related title, form and genre, code, record id, related record id, and electronic access). Terms may be combined using Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT). Results from simple and advanced searches can be limited by date, country of publication, type of material, language, RLIN file, and location. To limit searches to manuscript collections, choose “Archives and Mixed Collections” under “Type of Material” or “RLIN file.”

- ❖ **ARCHIVES USA**—Available from the LSU Libraries web page (<http://www.lib.lsu.edu/databases/>) by choosing “A” and scrolling down to “Archives USA.” A current directory of over 5,000 repositories and nearly 120,000 collections of primary source material across the United States. Using ArchivesUSA, 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. Access to a list of manuscript repositories, organized by state, is provided on the Special Collections web page <http://www.lib.lsu.edu/special/research/links.html>.
- ❖ Mine the footnotes and bibliography of a book or article related to your topic.