

Special Collections General Use Policy

Definitions

"Archives/Special Collections" as defined in this policy include materials in the Archives of Ohio United Methodism, the Ohio Wesleyan Historical Collection, and the Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Artifacts Collection also known as Special Collections. The "Archives/Special Collections Area" is the secured enclosure on the second floor of Beeghly Library where the Archives/Special Collections are stored.

Access to the Collections

Materials are housed in the Archives/Special Collections Area because they are unique, rare, or of greater value than materials typically owned by the University. Special preservation measures are required in order to continue to make these materials available to Ohio Wesleyan students, faculty, staff, and alumni, as well as outside researchers, including United Methodist Church historians, genealogists, and other interested persons. The goal of any limitation on access to the Archives/Special Collections Area is to strike a balance between user needs and preservation efforts in order to insure the continued availability of the materials to as many users as possible.

Accordingly, access to the Archives/Special Collections Area is limited to those times when Archives/Special Collections staff are available. If the online catalog indicates that identical copies of Archives/Special Collections materials are available somewhere else in the library or on campus, we ask that researchers use these first.

Written guidelines regulating the use and handling of Archives/Special Collections materials are provided to researchers using the Archives/Special Collections Area. While continued access to the collections is contingent upon compliance with these guidelines, the guidelines, like the access limitations, are in no way intended to discourage use of the collections. Their purpose is to ensure the availability of these materials to future users.

In order to facilitate access to Archives/Special Collections materials, staff members are available during scheduled hours and during specially arranged times to plan research strategies and orient users to the Archives/Special Collections online catalog and other available finding aids.

Hours

Hours are posted outside the Archives/Special Collections Area. Every effort is made to maintain consistent hours and to inform users when hours vary. For reasons of security and statistics those doing research in the Archives/Special Collections Area are asked to sign in and out.

Circulation and Duplication

Materials housed in the Special Collections Area do not circulate. Duplication of material is permitted provided that copying a given item will not damage it in any way. Some material is so fragile that it must be photocopied by Special Collections staff, or not photocopied at all.

Telephone and Mail Use

Information from materials in the Archives/Special Collections Area may be obtained by telephone or mail request. These requests are processed in keeping with the mission of the collections which generally places a higher emphasis to the campus and scholarly community.

Priority is also given to use by The United Methodist Church in the case of the Archives of Ohio United Methodism and use by the alumni in the case of the Ohio Wesleyan University Historical Collection. In all cases service to community groups and to those studying the history of their family are given secondary priority.

Where significant staff time is required to research requests for family history, a research fee may be charged. A research fee may also be charged when scholars require research demanding significant staff time rather than incur travel costs.

Visitor Categories

General Users

Those wishing to use the Archives/Special collections for short periods of time are referred to as "general users" and are urged to make an appointment so that staff will be available and prepared to assist them.

General users seeking access to the Special Collections Area at times when Archives/Special Collections staff members are not available regrettably cannot be assisted but should be asked by library staff to fill out a research request form so that service can be arranged at a mutually convenient time. Likewise, users seeking information over the telephone when Archives/Special Collections staff are not available should be encouraged to leave a message detailing their research request.

Scholars-in-Residence

Users may also be granted Scholar-in-Residence status for renewable one-term periods. Those granted this status are scholars, including OWU students and faculty, who have continuous need for the resources in the collections and are conducting research which requires a greater level of support than that of General Users. Those granted Scholar-in-Residence status must be working on a significant project such as a book, dissertation, or independent study. Scholars-in-Residence are provided with work space, interlibrary loan services, and other services as needed and as appropriate for the duration of the term. Scholars-in-Residence, like other users, are asked to sign in and out.

Group Visitors

Visits to the Archives/Special Collections area by classes, confirmation classes, community groups, etc., are encouraged within the limits of preservation mandates. Prior arrangement must be made with the appropriate Archives/Special Collections staff member and a list of visitors supplied at the time of the visit for security purposes.