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Guide to Special Collections:

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Introduction

Special Collections is the division of the Brown University Library which houses those materials which require special handling and preservation. While many of the items in Special Collections are rare or unique, a majority of the materials are part of large subject-oriented collections which are maintained as discrete units. Altogether, Special Collections consists of over 250 separate collections numbering some 2,500,000 items.

Location and Hours

The majority of the Special Collections at Brown University are housed in the John Hay Library, College and Prospect Streets. Telephone: (401) 863-2146. The John Hay Library is open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, with extended hours on Thursdays (9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.) during the academic year. Requests for evening use of archives, manuscripts, broadsides and sheet music should be received by 4:00 p.m. on Thursday.

Access and Use

The John Hay Library is open to all members of the Brown community and to the general public, and any researcher presenting a valid personal identification card is welcome to use the collections. Special Collections materials do not circulate, and all readers must comply with Reading Room regulations designed to protect rare and fragile materials. Readers engaged in extended research may place materials on reserve for a period of one month (renewable).