

LINDA LEAR CENTER FOR SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AND ARCHIVES



The Linda Lear Center for Special Collections and Archives houses approximately 21,000 books, 400 prints and paintings, 3,500 photographic prints, 42,000 slides and negatives, 450 postcards and 1,400 linear feet of manuscript material (approximately 400 linear feet of which consists of Special Collections manuscripts, and 1,000 linear feet of which belongs to the College Archives). The Lear Center is staffed by two librarians, with student assistance in collections processing and digitization. The collection's strengths are environmental activism and conservation, children's literature, fine press printing and illustration, artists' books, and New London history. The Lear Center holds significant archival collections on Rachel Carson, Eugene O'Neill, Beatrix Potter, and Prudence Crandall.

In the last academic year, Lear Center staff hosted 291 researchers, evenly divided between Special Collections and Archives. The Center provides scanning services at no charge to the campus community as time and the condition of materials permits. Priorities for the coming year include processing archival collections and improving the online presence of both Special Collections and Archives. Special Collections has four modest endowments for building collections. These endowments are generally used for enhancing existing areas of strength in the Artists' Books Collection and children's literature collections.

THREE THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE LINDA LEAR CENTER'S COLLECTIONS AND SERVICES:

- Special Collections is composed of 32 manuscript collections, 16 print collections and six art collections. The most important collections for teaching and research are those on Rachel Carson and Eugene O'Neill, and the Artists' Books collection.
- In the 2012–2013 academic year, 147 researchers used Special Collections materials, and 144 used Archives materials. Lear Center staff fielded some 400 phone and email reference requests.
- The Lear Center has an active digitization program featuring College publications and historic images. The student newspaper is being uploaded to Digital Commons, and there are plans to digitize yearbooks, catalogs and student handbooks in the future. We are exploring ways of presenting image-rich digital collections and exhibitions.

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