Forsyth Library Special Collections and Archives

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The Special Collections/Archives room, located on the main floor of the library, has several different collections for the researcher. The subjects range from the history of the West to military history to genealogy. The following information explains each collection.

“C” Collection

Rare books in the “C” collection consist of materials separated from Forsyth Library’s General Collection because of scarcity or exceptional format. Half of this collection is in the Special Collections room and the other half is housed in the Center for Ethnic Studies.

Cecil B. and Laura G. Currey Archive of Military History

Books, journals, videotapes, audio cassettes, maps, papers and memorabilia comprise this archive, which establishes Forsyth Library as a leading provider of research materials about military history. Dedicated in April 1997, the Currey Archive covers the American Revolution, the Civil War, World War I, World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnamese Conflict. Of particular note, the Archive includes two original letters of Benjamin Franklin.

The Currey Archive also includes The Dana Chwan Collection, The Marty Comer Collection, The Ava Spencer Collection, The Susan Bastion Thisler Collection, The William D. Paschal World War II History Collection, and The Moore Papers. The materials include information from the Advisory Committee on Readjustment of Viet Nam Veterans and the Readjustment Counseling Service, booklets from the Defense Intelligence Agency and transcripts from the Korean War.
Genealogy Society Collection

The periodicals, books and other materials within this collection are owned by the Fort Hays Genealogical Society. Genealogists are welcome to use this collection for their research.

Graduate Theses

The Graduate School places one copy of all theses written by Fort Hays State University students in Special Collections. Another copy of the thesis resides in either the General Collection or the Western Collection. The copy of the thesis in the General Collection is available to check out.

University Archives

Records and publications of FHSU are part of this collection. The University Archives has photographs, posters, scrapbooks and other materials that preserve the history of this institution. The archives also contain records of university offices, faculty papers, university catalogs, directories, commencement programs and records of university related organizations.

Western Collection

The Western Collection contains fiction and primary material about Kansas and the American West. The collection covers various subjects with an emphasis on Western Kansas. Subjects included are frontier life on the Great Plains, railroads, Indians, and the cattle industry. Town and county history books and fiction books with a Kansas connection are also part of this collection.

Policies

Most of the materials in this room cannot be checked out and must be used in the room. The one exception is the Western Collection in which some items may be checked out with special permission of the head of Special Collections.

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The CENTER FOR ETHNIC STUDIES, housed at Fort Hays State University's Forsyth Library, contains a variety of pertinent reference works, bibliographies, and specialized studies, as well as pamphlets, journals, newspapers and dissertations published in the United States and abroad. General histories, church histories, parish registers, family histories, diaries and genealogies, obituaries, works on folklore, folk music and art make up the core of the collection. In addition, the collection contains numerous maps, photographs of bridal couples and of individuals and groups, as well as several video documentaries and recordings of folk music and of interviews.

Forsyth Library, the Department of History, and several interested groups and individual patrons support the CENTER. The Volga German Society of Rush and Ellis Counties and the Bukovina Society of the Americas are playing vital roles in developing the CENTER through donations of resource materials and funds for the enhancement of the facilities and purchases of additional resources.

Lawrence Weigel, a noted local folklorist, donated a substantial portion of his personal collection of materials on the Volga Germans that, together with many of the publications of the American Historical Society of the Germans from Russia, provide a rich source for further research.

While the holdings in these areas will continue to grow, the CENTER is seeking to further enhance its holdings pertaining to other ethnic groups in Kansas such as the Czechs, Dutch, English, French, Germans and Scandinavians as well as African-Americans, Asians and Hispanics.
Center for Ethnic Studies
Forsyth Library
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