

Top Ten Things You Should Know About Special Collections

10. Located on the main floor of Miller Library, Special Collections is part of the Colby Libraries, but we have different types of published and unpublished materials requiring special care, such as rare books, manuscripts, correspondence, diaries, scrapbooks, and photographic materials. We're also home to the Colby College Archives.

9. We're open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to noon and from 1 – 4:30 p.m. If necessary, you can make an appointment outside of our regular hours (contact Pat Burdick, Special Collections Librarian, paburdic@colby.edu or 859 – 5151), but you don't need to make an appointment to come by during our normal hours.

Our staff is small, and sometimes we have to close during our regular hours. When this happens, we'll post a sign on the door. We apologize in advance for this occasional inconvenience.

8. When you come in to Special Collections, we'll ask you to sign in at the desk in the lobby. This is for our records only.

7. Our materials are located in closed stack areas— if you tell us what you want, we'll get it and bring it to you for use in our reading room. If you're not sure about what you're looking for or about what we might have on a particular topic, come in and talk to us. Many of our materials are unpublished and can't be found in the library catalog.

6. Because our materials are rare or unique, they can't be checked out. They can only be used inside Special Collections with staff supervision. We can provide a limited amount of photocopying or scanning of nonfragile materials if necessary, or, with permission, you can make digital photographs of materials.

5. At the risk of sounding like your mother, before you handle our materials, we'd appreciate it if you would wash your hands to help preserve them. With some items, such as photographs not protected by archival plastic sleeves, we may ask you to use cotton gloves, which we will provide.

4. Please be gentle when handling our materials. Some of our books are over 500 years old; other materials are very fragile or in poor condition.

3. If you need to take notes while using our materials, we'll ask you to use a pencil. If you've ever accidentally written on yourself with a pen, you'll understand why we do this (If you haven't ever written on yourself, then you're more coordinated than we are.). You're welcome to bring a laptop into the reading room.

2. We love coffee and other caffeinated beverages, but we can't let you bring any drinks or food into Special Collections. We're sorry, but we have to keep things clean. Crumbs can attract book-eating pests, and moisture in the carpet can bring on mold. Everybody spills from time to time, and nobody wants to be the one who spills a Red Bull on a book published in 1862.

1. To help preserve our materials, Special Collections is climate-controlled. This means that our reading room has air conditioning, which is lovely in the summer but can get a little chilly during winter. If you're planning a visit, you might want to bring along a sweater.

We hope we haven't scared you off with all our restrictions—if you're still reading this, please do stop in for a visit, or contact us at speccoll@colby.edu or 859 - 5150. If you come by, we'll show you a medal from the very first modern Olympic games, held in Athens in 1896.