Rare Book Collections

The Rare Books unit holds over 100,000 volumes and a small collection of complementary serials and audiovisual materials. Researchers may use books only in the Special Collections Research Center (SCRC) reading room. While most Rare Books are listed in the main Morris Library catalog, many remain uncataloged. Rare Books staff will gladly check for specific titles in the following collecting areas.

Expatriate and Modernist Literature

SCRC collects works published from 1905 through the 1950s from British, Irish, and expatriate American authors, modernist writers, and critics and artists associated with the modernist movement. British and American authors collected include Richard Aldington, Kay Boyle, Bob Brown, Lawrence Durrell, Robert Graves, D. H. Lawrence, Henry Miller, and Anaïs Nin. SCRC collections of works by and about these authors are comprehensive, and include multiple editions of their published books and copies of their contributions to anthologies and periodicals. Other important authors represented in this collection include T. E. Lawrence, Harry Crosby, Caresse Crosby, James Laughlin, and Aleister Crowley. SCRC is fortunate to own Lawrence Durrell’s personal library, which includes many books inscribed to Durrell by members of his circle.

Irish Literature and History

The Irish literature collection covers the period often called the Irish Renaissance, from approximately 1860 to 1930, and includes some writers to the present day. Comprehensively collected authors include Katharine Tynan Hinkson, Flann O'Brien (Brian O’Nolan), Lennox Robinson, Mary Lavin, Francis Stuart, W. B Yeats, James Stephens, Francis Sheehy-Skeffington, and Conal O’Riordan (Norrys Connell). An extensive collection of materials relating to the Abbey Theatre supplements the literary and historical materials. A gift from Dr. John V. Kelleher, formerly of Harvard University, has filled many gaps in the Irish literature collections, and has added much important non-fiction material on the full spectrum of Irish history.

James Joyce

SCRC’s collection of printed James Joyce materials includes almost every printed edition of Joyce’s works in all languages, as well as all critical and biographical
publications about Joyce. The core collection of books, manuscripts, and correspondence was amassed by Harley Croessmann, a resident of Du Quoin, Illinois. When Croessmann transferred his collection to Morris Library in 1959, SCRC agreed to continue collecting all important Joyce editions as they are published, along with all important Joyce criticism and secondary works, including photographs, art, and audiovisual materials, retrospectively filling in any gaps in the collection.

First Amendment Freedoms

In 1981, SCRC was fortunate to receive Dean Ralph E. McCoy’s personal collection of material related to First Amendment Freedoms. This collection traces the intellectual history of the concept of freedom of expression in the United Kingdom and the USA from 1600 to the present. The McCoy Collection is perhaps the most rich and diverse research collection of printed materials in SCRC. Freedom of expression has been developed and debated in many arenas in the Western world, and the materials in the McCoy Collection document such varied topics as the Popish Plot of 1678, Victoria Woodhull’s advocacy of women’s suffrage and “free love,” and the legal controversy over the “obscene” nature of D. H. Lawrence’s Lady Chatterley’s Lover.

The McCoy Collection contains significant holdings of books banned or challenged for any reason, and material on the history of sex education in England and America. SCRC endeavors to keep this collection up to date, adding all printed material that is banned or challenged, and documenting the efforts of pro- and anti-censorship advocates. The McCoy Collection maintains subscriptions to appropriate magazines on censorship and freedom of expression that are not collected elsewhere in the library. These include Access Reports, AIM Report, Censorship News, Communications and the Law, Extra!, Gauntlet, Heterodoxy, Index on Censorship, Obscenity Law Bulletin, Propaganda Review, and St. Louis Journalism Review. There are also runs of various free magazines, including Censorship Matters, and the newsletter of the ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom, among others.

Early Printed Books

SCRC holds a relatively small but significant collection of books printed during what is known as the “hand press period,” from approximately 1450 to 1801. Some of the highlights of this collection include one of the famous Shakespeare Folios, printed in 1685, and the “editio princeps,” or first printed edition, of Demosthenes’ Orations, produced in 1504 by Venetian printer Aldus Manutius. The collection also includes a significant number of early printed Bibles and liturgical works, and many of the books in this collection have beautiful and elaborate bindings.

Fine Printing

**World War I**

The Great War was one of the defining events of the modernist period, and SCRC's WWI collection complements the literary collections by providing historical context. Titles produced about and during the war include important accounts by Robert Graves, Richard Aldington, and Siegfried Sassoon, as well as factual accounts of the combatants’ experiences, and other non-fiction about the events of the war. Anthologies of war literature, periodicals, and some audio materials are also collected.

**Spanish Civil War**

SCRC holds approximately 2700 volumes of books and serials related to the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39. The collection includes a large number of items published in Spain and the rest of Europe in the 1930s and 40s, as well as secondary source material about the war. The Spanish Civil War generated a great deal of international interest, and many well-known reporters who covered the conflict, such as Ernest Hemingway, are represented in our holdings.

**Philosophy**

In conjunction with the Center for Dewey Studies at SIUC, SCRC holds books from Dewey's library, and a representative selection of books by and about philosophers who followed closely in Dewey’s footsteps. A separate philosophical collection contains the works of Open Court Publishing Company, founded more than one hundred years ago and still active in LaSalle, Illinois, publishing works on philosophy, religious thought, and allied subjects, including the magazine *The Monist*. Along with the papers of the company, we have a complete collection of all Open Court books and periodicals, which continues to grow through generous donations of all newly published works.

**Southern Illinois History**

SCRC collects books, periodicals, and printed ephemera about the history and culture of Southern Illinois and the Missouri Valley, and also holds certain titles on the history of St. Louis, Cape Girardeau, and other regions that border Southern
Illinois. Following the gift of several hundred works written by SIU alumni by the Graduate School in 1985, SCRC pledged to enlarge this collection through purchase or gifts from authors. Authors with local ties featured in this collection include Robert Coover, Dick Gregory, and Charles Johnson.

**Historical Children's Literature**

SCRC holds approximately 3500 children’s books published in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, all in their original publisher’s bindings. This collection is particularly useful for the study of the history of education, reading practices, and the role of children in society.

If you would like to make a gift or donation to SCRC's Rare Books unit, please visit the [Donating and Giving](http://www.lib.siu.edu/scrc-donations) page.

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