Sixteenth-century Italian manuscripts, a record detailing the inception of the University in 1865, and photographs, letters and diaries documenting Kansas families—all of these and more can be found at the University of Kansas in the Spencer Research Library.
Donating materials to the Kenneth Spencer Research Library

Sixteenth-century Italian manuscripts, meeting minutes detailing the inception of the University in 1865, and photographs, letters and diaries documenting Kansas families—all of these and more can be found at the University of Kansas at the Kenneth Spencer Research Library. KU Libraries continue to build upon diverse collections that contribute to scholarly research right here in Kansas as well as around the globe. Students, academic researchers, historians and community members are all welcome to visit and delve into our rich materials. Many of these collections are built from personal and organizational papers donated by people like you. When you donate your papers to KU Libraries, your family or organizational history becomes part of a legacy that provides unique insight into our collective past.

Personal papers

History is recorded in many voices: the Native Americans who lived in Kansas centuries before the arrival of Europeans in North America, African Americans whose arrival in Kansas comprised the nation’s first post-Civil War mass migration, political activists intent on reshaping the world, and average people trying to make a good life for themselves and their families.

Those voices can still be heard through letters, diaries, scrapbooks, photographs and other documents. Donating your family’s or your own personal papers preserves those accounts of the past. We collect personal papers of the university’s faculty and staff, Kansans from all walks of life, left- and right-wing political activists, as well as notable literary, historical and scientific figures who are featured in our collections.

Records of businesses, organizations, churches and clubs

Each of these entities has a distinct history. Meeting minutes, reports, publications, ledgers, correspondence, photographs and other items document important activities and events. Donating these materials to an academic research library ensures their preservation in the historical record, offering future generations the opportunity to gain valuable insight about our history, culture and society. We are actively seeking materials in the following areas:

- Kansas and regional history
  - Persons and organizations in Kansas
  - The African American experience in Kansas
  - The experience of LGBT people from and residing in Kansas
  - The Latino/Latina experience in Kansas
  - Women’s experiences in Kansas
- Materials related to left- and right-wing American political thought and action from 1960 to the present
- University history including materials related to sports, the student experience, as well as faculty and staff papers
- Collections of family or personal papers that present unique historical evidence for a variety of eras and time periods
- Letters, photographs and documents related to notable figures

What about electronic records and digital collections?

Increasingly, personal and organizational papers are created, used and stored in electronic rather than paper form. If you are considering a gift of digital records or materials to KU Libraries, please contact us.

Other collections

KU Libraries invite and accept many other types of collection gifts, including books, manuscripts, oral histories, ephemera, archival materials, scores, photographs, media, CDs, DVDs, videos and recordings.

Monetary gifts

Financial support is crucial for our collections and services; it enables us to preserve and thoroughly catalog the materials we collect, making them accessible to users, and helps us better meet the needs of researchers. Although such gifts are never a requirement for the acceptance of a collection, donors who are able to assist the library by making contributions toward the cataloging and conservation of their papers would be providing much-needed assistance and are encouraged to do so.

Tax information

In certain circumstances, donors may take a tax deduction for their donation of papers. Donors should discuss their gift with a tax accountant or attorney. Curators and librarians cannot provide tax advice, nor are they permitted to appraise the monetary value of a collection. They can, however, provide contact information for appraisers. It is the donor’s responsibility to make arrangements for and bear the cost of such an appraisal.