

Raiders of the Lost Archive

The Southwest Collection was unofficially founded in 1925, the same year that Texas Tech University opened its doors. It has expanded from documents about early ranches to encompass thousands of collections on a variety of topics. During the construction of its new home, which opened in 1997, the Southwest Collection partnered with its sibling archives to become the Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library (SWC/SCL).

The SWC/SCL now consists of Texas Tech's University Archives; The Sowell Family Collection in Literature, Community, and the Natural World; The Crossroads of Music Archive; and our extensive Rare Books holdings. The SWC/SCL is also home to hundreds of rare maps and thousands of scholarly volumes and fictional works on West Texas, the state at large, the United States, and the world. Also within the collections are extensive audio/visual holdings in every imaginable type of media, as well as thousands of oral histories.

Additionally, the Remnant Trust, Inc., and the Vietnam Center and Archive are currently housed here as well. The Remnant Trust, Inc., makes available hundreds of rare manuscripts that they display freely to schools and the general public. The Vietnam Center collects and preserves the documentary record of the Vietnam War and the American Vietnam Experience. It is one of the largest collections of its kind in the world.

The items on display have rarely, if ever, been exhibited. These hidden treasures remind us that archival and special collections are more than pieces of paper and photographs filed away in boxes. They are also the unique, tangible evidence of a person's existence; how they lived, how they thought, and how we all remember them.

*Robert Weaver
Southwest Collection*