Support the Archives

Preparing papers for use by researchers is the most expensive operation in the Archives. With an initial gift, the Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections has set up an endowment to provide funds in perpetuity for the arrangement, cataloging, and conservation of faculty papers. Contributions to this endowment will help the Archives work on your papers and those of your colleagues, predecessors, and successors to preserve them and to make them available to researchers. In short, your financial support will help make Cornell’s history visible and accessible to future generations.

For more information about the University Archives visit:
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To learn more about what is collected see the page on preserving history:
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Or contact:

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Preserving Cornell History: Faculty Papers in the University Archives

Cornell University Library seeks your help to ensure the long-term survival of the work of generations of Cornell faculty. The University Archives serve as Cornell’s institutional memory, identifying, describing, and preserving records of enduring value that chronicle and promote knowledge of Cornell’s origins, growth, and ideals. The work of Cornell faculty forms an important part of Cornell history. Curriculum materials, research files, correspondence, and administrative records document not only the progress of the university, but the advancement of science, literature, art—in short, of human knowledge in all fields.

Historical Collections

A vital part of the Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections in Carl A. Kroch Library, the Cornell University Archives collects and preserves records of historical, legal, fiscal, and administrative value to Cornell University. Holdings include official records and reports of the university, its officers, and component parts; private papers of faculty, students, staff, and alumni; official and student publications; maps and architectural records; audiovisual materials including still photographs and negatives, motion picture film, oral history interviews, and audio- and videotapes; and artifacts and ephemera documenting Cornell’s history. The University Archivist is responsible for appraising university records to determine their historical and long-term research value.

Faculty Collections

Cornell’s archival collections reflect the whole range of academic life in the university. Their historical strengths lie in subjects including agriculture and the biological sciences; architecture and planning; human ecology; the humanities, including Classics, history, English, and theater arts; the physical sciences; and the social sciences. We also hold collections documenting the development of programs in engineering, hotel administration, law, management, and veterinary medicine at Cornell.

Donating a Personal Collection

Because the Archives cannot personally contact all members of the faculty, we rely on you to help us identify potential collections. Unlike official university records, faculty papers are the property of the individual and must be transferred through a deed of gift. Such “gifts in kind” of personal collections have enriched the rose Goldsen, Department of Sociology, 1992.

Cornell University Library since its founding, and the market value of materials given may be tax-deductible to you or your estate.

We can help you determine what kinds of material are suitable for donation to the Archives. Professional and personal papers may include, but are not limited to:

- Biographical sketches or vitae, and bibliographies
- Correspondence
- Curricula, syllabi, lecture notes, and other classroom materials
- Research or subject files
- Material concerning policies/programs that reflect development or change in a discipline
- Minutes of meetings
- Diaries or journals
- Photographs and albums (labeled)
- Films, videotapes, or DVDs (labeled)
- Audiotapes or CDs (labeled)
- Scrapbooks
- Family papers may be included

James Sumner in Savage Hall Laboratory, 1950.