

John E. Fogarty Reading Room

Guidelines for Researchers

Help us preserve our collections for future researchers!

Using the Archives Reading Room

- The Reading Room is open to PC students, faculty, scholars, and the public. We offer drop-in hours, research appointments, classes using the Archives, and reference consultations. Contact us: pcarchives@providence.edu
- Researchers must leave coats, backpacks, bags, and other personal items in the designated area in the Reading Room's foyer. Bags are not permitted at the research tables.
- Food and drink are not allowed in the Reading Room. This is a spill-free zone.
- Ink pens, felt-tip pens, markers, and highlighters are not permitted in the Reading Room. We are a PENCILS ONLY space. If you do not have a pencil, we are happy to provide one for you.
- The use of personal computers, cameras, or phones is allowed as long as they do not harm the records or disturb other researchers.
- All cell phones must be silenced or in vibrate mode. Researchers are asked to leave the Reading Room to answer calls or have conversations so as not to disturb other researchers.

Guidelines for Handling Collections

- Please ensure that your hands are clean. Wash your hands with soap and water before handling materials to prevent transferring the oils from your skin onto the materials. Keep your hands clean and dry. Moisture can damage materials and smudge ink.
- Avoid using alcohol hand gel and hand creams immediately before or during your visit to the Reading Room as these can damage materials.
- Be mindful if wearing jewelry that could catch and tear materials, you may need to remove it before handling materials.
- Use a pencil to take notes. Pens or markers of any kind are not permitted in the Reading Room.
- Please keep all items in plain view on the table rather than on your lap, on chairs, or on other surfaces.
- Please maintain the order of the documents within folders and folders within boxes. All material in cartons or boxes should be kept in the order received. Please remove only one folder from a box at a time. As you remove a folder from a box, use a placeholder provided by the Reading Room Attendant to mark where the folder

belongs. If you think pages or folders are out of order, please consult a staff member before reordering them.

- When a folder is in use it should remain flat on the table. Contents should remain flat and in order in their opened folder while being read.
- Paper documents and book leaves should be handled as little as possible and turned gently one at a time, with fingers in the non-text areas of the sheet whenever possible.
- Do not unfold maps or book inserts yourself. Please ask the attendant for assistance with any unfolding or unrolling of materials.
- Do not rest anything on top of manuscript or printed items. If you need to mark your place, please use the file markers provided. If you need assistance holding an item flat, please see the reference archivist. Avoid placing anything other than provided weights on top of collection materials to prevent damaging material or obscuring it from view.
- Open books only as far as they will open easily, without force, including during photography. Special weights are available to keep books open or items flat.
- Staff may present book cradles for bound volumes, which are designed to reduce potential damage to the spine of the book. Please keep the volume in the cradle, which should always stay squarely on the table.
- Support material by always resting it directly on the table or on foam supports, so materials do not need to support themselves.
- Gloves will be provided for material that is especially sensitive to damage from direct handling, such as photographs and negatives. Never touch the emulsion surface of a photographic print as it is vulnerable to fingerprints, scratches, and marks. Pick up photographs only from the edges to avoid touching the surface. Gloves are available in the Reading Room.
- If needed, ask staff to remove staples or paper clips, open envelopes, or cut uncut pages.
- Consult an Archives staff member at any time if there are questions about the above guidelines.

Photographing Our Collections

- You may photograph items within our collection. Cameras/phones are only to be used without flash.
- Please keep materials flat on the table surface when taking photographs. Do not press open or press down on materials when photographing.
- Handle all items with care. Use two hands to safely handle photographs, fragile objects, or brittle paper.
- If you need assistance, always consult staff members.
- If you need high quality scans or photos for your project, please contact the Reference Archivist.