Take a Trek Through the Past

Immerse yourself in the rich history of the American Southwest. The Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library offers a variety of materials, more than 1600 manuscript collections and exhibits on the history of the Texas High Plains and the near Southwest.

Recapture the past in historic photographs and documents that tell the story of one of the last frontiers in North America. Browse through 19th century maps and journals that chronicle the heyday of ranching empires. Listen to one of over 6000 oral histories and experience history through the voices of the early settlers.

Take a tour and witness what few have seen—rare items including the 1688 Coronelli Globe, leaves from the Gutenberg Bible and the Magna Carta, and manuscripts ranging from 14th century texts to the letters of Thomas Jefferson and Queen Isabella of Spain.

The archive is home to collections of world-class stature—West Texas Ranching and Agriculture, the Joseph Conrad Collection, and the James Sowell Family Collection of Literature, Community and the Natural World. Our holdings include maps, rare books, Texana, photographs, one of the oldest oral history collections in the United States, artwork, newspapers, and historical documents from Texas Tech University.

Take a trek through the past with us and witness history from the ground up. Admission is free and we are open every day except Sundays.
The Southwest Collection has experienced phenomenal growth. Culminating in the 1997 opening of a new facility with broader collection and development responsibilities, the Southwest Collection has evolved into the Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library, widely recognized as a premier source of history on the American Southwest.

Today the Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library has more than 1600 collections, including original manuscript materials, letters, diaries, military documents and business records; books on the American West and Southwest; 1 million photographs; 6,000 oral history tapes; 1,500 newspaper and periodical titles; 8,000 reels of microfilm; and 1,300 reels of motion picture film and video tape.

With continued emphasis on ranching, and added emphasis on water, natural history and sports history, the Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library is one of the major research facilities in the United States.