

Howard and Lois Adelman Regional History Collection Collection Development Policy

Introduction

Lewis University has a history that goes back to 1932, but the Howard and Lois Adelman Regional History Collection was established only in 1983, when John Lamb donated his I&M Canal and local communities collections to the university. Mr. Lamb began building his collections in 1964, and in subsequent years augmented them with donations of records from organizations and papers from individuals. In 2009, the collection changed its name from the I&M Canal Regional History Collection (hereafter, the Adelman Collection). The major portion of the collection is housed on the second floor of the Lewis University Library, with some additional research materials housed in the Fitzpatrick House south of the university campus on Route 53.

The Adelman Collection is staffed by Lewis University librarians and is administered by the Lewis University History Center: Urban, Cultural and Catholic History of the Upper Midwest. The Center strives to preserve and promote the region's heritage (with a special focus on the Illinois and Michigan Canal) through the collection of historic documents and materials and promotion of research and activities involving core areas of public history. The History Center is headed by a director who receives guidance from the History Center Advisory Board.

Mission

The mission of the Adelman Collection is to serve as a regional history information resource for states and communities throughout the Midwest; and in particular to encourage the appreciation, study, and understanding of the history of the Illinois & Michigan Canal and the development of its surrounding communities. To fulfill this mission, the Collection assembles, organizes, preserves, and makes available research materials relating to the history of the I&M Canal and the social and economic development of communities along it. In addition it supports presentations, publications, and local exhibits relating to the area.

Scope of the Collection

The primary focus of the collection is on documentary materials, maps, pictorial materials (paintings and prints, etc) and photographs, publications, ephemera, and small artifacts relating to the following:

- The I&M Canal from its beginnings in the early nineteenth century as a transportation artery to its present-day use as a recreational and historic site.
- The communities surrounding the I&M Canal from Chicago down through LaSalle County to Peru, Illinois—with particular emphasis on the communities of Romeoville, Lockport, and Joliet—encompassing their history, preservation efforts, and development as heritage, recreational, and economic areas.
- The I&M Canal National Heritage Corridor, the nation’s first national heritage corridor.
- Canal history and preservation worldwide, but primarily in the northeast United States.

The bulk of the Collection relates to the I&M Canal and surrounding communities, but with regards to maps and research materials relating to canals in general the collection ranges worldwide. The collection includes materials dating from the late eighteenth century to the present day.

The Collection has 66 linear feet of canal and communities research materials stored in archival boxes, divided into 25 record groups. There are separate collections of the Adele Fay Williams drawings and prints, H. H. Carter photos, and a post card collection, available in both tangible and in digital form. In addition, the Collection contains separate materials on the Milne family, the Cheadle family, and Adelman family, also available in tangible and digital form. The map and poster collection contains some 700 items stored in 33 drawers, and an extensive collection of local newspapers, dating from the early nineteenth to the late twentieth century, stored in some 30 storage boxes. The Collection includes some 2,700 books and 1,600 serials.

Collection Constituents

The Adelman Collection serves the faculty and students of Lewis University, the general public, scholars from across the U. S. and abroad.

Selection of Specific Types of Materials

Organization Records

The Collection accepts only records of organizations that directly relate to the I&M Canal, historic preservation issues, local economic development, and tourism in the surrounding communities.

Personal Papers

Personal papers of individuals and families are of interest to the Collection if they have a direct connection to the history of the I&M Canal and civic engagement in the development and preservation of surrounding communities

Maps

Maps and plats relating to canals and land transportation are accepted. We have special interest in maps of the I&M Canal and surrounding communities, generally if they are related to the history, preservation, and tourism in the region.

Photo and Slide Images

The Adelman Collection is dedicated to building a strong image collection relating to the I&M Canal and surrounding communities. Most of the images are photos and slides, but printed sources such as postcards, circulars, and posters are also collected and accepted.

Audio-visual Materials

The Collection accepts audio and video materials if they relate to the I&M Canal, surrounding communities, or significant individuals with careers that connect to the area. If a purchased or donated book has an accompanying cassette, CD, or DVD, it will be added to the collection.

Paintings, Drawings, and Art Photography

The Collection will accept paintings, drawings, and art photography of artists who have made a significant impact in the I&M Canal heritage corridor.

Books

The Collection limits book acquisitions to those that are related to the Chicago region and especially to the I&M Canal and surrounding communities, in addition to books on collection management.

Serials

Serials are acquired through subscriptions and they include journals, periodicals, newspapers, bulletins, newsletters, and annuals that relate to the I&M Canal and the region's history. The Collection will accept back issues of such publications that help complete its serials.

Genealogical Materials

The Collection does not collect materials of a strictly genealogical nature, nor does it have a separate section devoted to genealogical research, because they do not directly support its mission. The Collection, however, does collect genealogical materials that specifically relate to people involved in the I&M Canal or who were significant to the surrounding communities.

Artifacts

The Collection will accept artifacts that help explain the region's history and culture. Generally, these will be no larger than hand size, such as tools and construction objects. The Collection does not accept donations of furniture and large outdoor objects more appropriate for museums.

Multiple Copies and Formats

Multiple copies are not normally purchased. However, additional copies may be added to the collection when titles have demonstrated or expected user demand. If the purchase cost of a title includes multiple formats, the subject librarian may choose the format to be added to the collection or keep all the formats if there are compelling reasons to do so.

The Howard and Lois Adelman Regional History Collection reserves the right to change its collection policy at any time, and may deaccession materials that no longer fit its needs or wants.