HOW DO I CITE SPECIAL COLLECTIONS & ARCHIVAL MATERIALS?

Many citation guides, such as the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* and the *Chicago Manual of Style*, can help in citing materials for your research project, including unpublished and primary source materials. If you have any questions about citing materials from Special Collections (including what collection a resource belongs to), please do not hesitate to ask us!

Citations should contain enough information to lead readers to the sources you have consulted.

**Important information to include in your citation (if it is available/relevant):**

- Author or creator's name
- Title, caption, or description
- Date
- Publication information (if published)
- Format
- Collection name
- Repository (name of archive)

- The key is to include as much information directly off the item as possible.
- You may find that the information is simply not there, or you may have to be less precise, or leave out unknown information altogether.

**TIP:** Start with the most specific detail about the item—creator and title or description—and end with the broadest piece of information—the name of the repository.

Description of item usually includes some combination of author/creator, title/caption, date, format.

**TIP:** Always include the *collection name* as well as the *repository name and location* when citing archival and special collections materials.

**Example of correspondence:**

Mary Low Carver to Louise Helen Coburn, July 31, 1890, Colbiana Collection, Colby College Special Collections, Waterville, Maine.

**MLA:** Low, Mary. Letter to Louise Helen Coburn. July 31, 1890. Colbiana Collection, Colby College Special Collections and Archives, Waterville, Maine.