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# **The Archives of the Chicago Board of Trade**

Gretchen L. Lagana  
University of Illinois at Chicago

The comment was made that people become emotional over food and, in my experience as a librarian, I've discovered that people also become very emotional over library resources. My comments are going to be very brief. Before I came here last December, I was curator of rare books at the University of Wisconsin for many years. It has been a great leap to go from collections on the history of science and on Tibet to the materials of the Board of Trade.

The University's Special Collections incorporate the university archives, the manuscripts department, and our rare book department. The Archives of the Board of Trade are in the manuscripts section. From your point of view, this is the most important collection that we have. Owen Gregory has been working with them now for several years. He can answer any specific questions you might have about them.

Our Chicago Board of Trade holdings run from 1859 through 1973. A good portion of them have been processed. The materials covering 1859-1925 are described in a catalog that Owen produced and which is available to you. Owen is now in the process of processing the remainder of the materials. Our eventual goal is to have all the inventoried materials available within the restrictions of the accession agreement that deals with the membership papers. This is going to take the remainder of this year and, perhaps, some of next year.

This does not mean that you cannot use the materials now. If you are interested in using our materials, we ask that you write ahead. This is a noncirculating collection as are all the special collections in our purview. If you write ahead and describe what you are interested in doing, we will make every effort to provide you with the materials, including the materials now being processed. But given the state of the collection, we need time to pull together the materials for you. When you write ahead, we will send you a research access form which you will be asked to fill out and return. This is only a means of getting on record what you need to use. It helps us in getting the materials for you. Another reason for writing ahead about your topic—it gives us time to provide you with information on our complementary materials which we hope will be useful to you.

The thrust of our Special Collections has been to document the growth and development of the Chicago metropolitan area since 1871 to the current period. We have many other collections housed at the university that we hope will be important to you and enhance your research. If it is at all possible, we will try to get this information to you.

For example, the University of Illinois at Chicago was very fortunate this past spring in acquiring probably the most important private collection of Chicagoana. This is some 9,000 volumes which make up the Lawrence J. Gutter Collection. Gutter spent 30 years in putting together a collection that tried to reflect every aspect of Chicago, including its commercial history, its political history, and its cultural and literary history. The collection contains monographic materials that might be of great importance to you. It also is in the process of being inventoried and catalogued. So, whatever information you can give us will help us provide the resources you need.

I made a quick list of some of the items we have discovered in the Gutter Collection. This is just to give you an idea of resources that would be available to you in addition to the Archives of the Chicago Board of Trade. In the Gutter

Collection, there are: The Act of Incorporation, Rules, Bylaws, and Inspection Regulations of the Board of Trade of the City of Chicago as adopted September 25, 1875; a dedication to the new Board of Trade Building of the Board of Trade of the City of Chicago; materials on the inaugural ball of the Chicago Board of Trade, Friday, September 1, 1865; and a souvenir of the dedication of the new home of the Chicago Board of Trade, June 9, 1930. So, if you let us know in advance what you are interested in, we can help pull out this kind of material.

We can also refer you to other collections in the Chicago area, which is so rich in resources. The University of Illinois at Chicago is obviously focusing on Chicago and Chicagoana. So is the Chicago Historical Society, the Newberry Library, the University of Chicago, and Northwestern University. As we find out your informational needs, we then can refer you to other collections as well as our own outstanding collections.

With the Special Collections, we walk a fine line. Many individuals look at Special Collections and think they can't use them because of certain restrictions. Our purpose is only to protect the materials so that they can be accessible and available for scholarly research. Whatever controls we have are to protect the materials, not to keep them from you. We hope that you will use them. It is a very exciting collection.

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 **Chicago Board of Trade**

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