

- The Mercantile Library's transportation historical collections include many items on rail and river improvements in the West, from the story of early Missouri River explorations to the development and operations of Western railroads. Also present are the business archives of the Milwaukee Road, the last transcontinental line; the substantial Western resources in the Bureau of Railway Economics collection; and rare volumes and photographs in the distinguished Barriger Railroad Library; and in the Pott Inland Waterways Library.

- The John Mason Peck Collection, including the complete, extant library of an early frontiersman, author and "guiding light of the pioneers."



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A Broadside from *Goodwin's Pacific Railway Directory* - 1867

Far West Fruit Packers Labels - 20th Century



Facilities, Systems, Services & Access

Access to the collections is available free of charge for all inquiries connected with personally conducted research. The Library catalogues its collections on OCLC, the national bibliographic database. Finding aids and guides to the collections are available to researchers; interlibrary loan, Infopass and on-line database searching and Internet services are also available. The Library participates nationally in the Western Americana Specialists Group. The Mercantile Library sponsors internships, symposia, lecture series and exhibitions on the history of the American West and on its collections. Further programs continue to be developed. Optional membership allows holders borrowing privileges for circulating materials.

ST. LOUIS MERCANTILE LIBRARY at the University of Missouri – St. Louis

(Thomas Jefferson Library Building)
8001 Natural Bridge Road
St. Louis, Missouri 63121-4499

Hours:

8:00am – 10:30pm – Mon. – Thurs.
8:00am – 5:00pm – Friday
9:00am – 5:00pm – Saturday
1:00pm – 9:00pm – Sunday

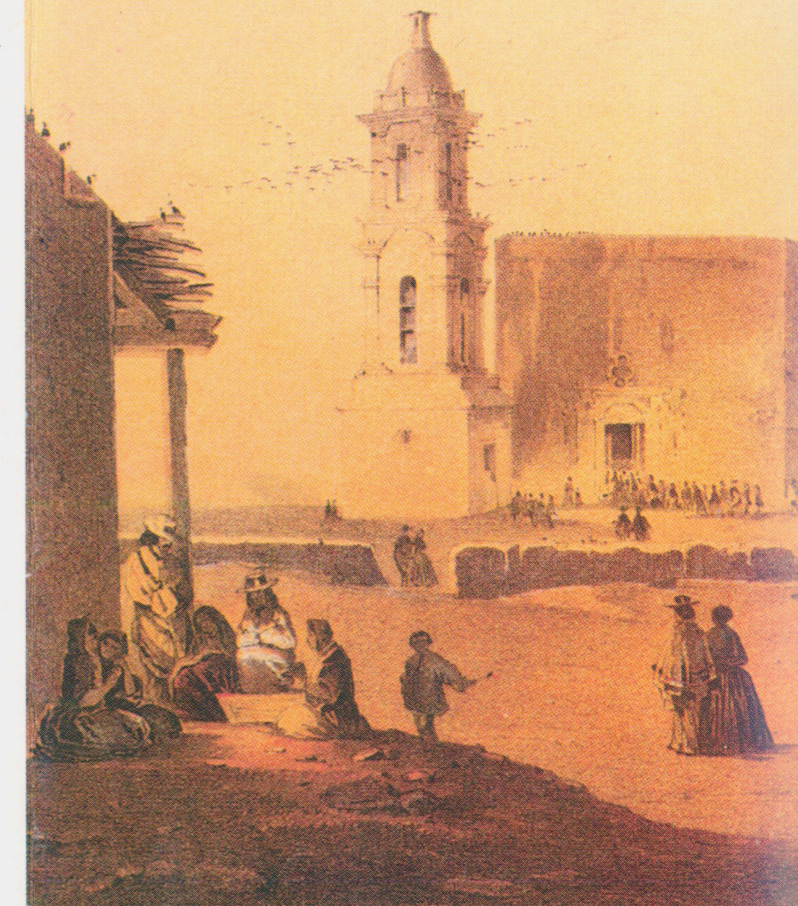
Rare Book and Manuscript Reading Room,
Intercession and summer school hours vary from the above.

Telephone: 314/516-7247
FAX: 314/516-7241

Fees: Annual \$35 Membership (Student \$15.00) in the Library allows for certain reduced fees (i.e. photocopying – 15 cents per page; 30 cents non-member); other service fees may be charged depending on the nature of research, such as photographic duplication, and the amount of staff time involved.

Front Cover: "The Plaza and Church of El Paso" from *Report on the U.S. and Mexican Boundary Survey* from *Emory's Report* – 1857.

Research Opportunities in the History of the American West and the Westward Movement



at the
St. Louis Mercantile Library
at the University of Missouri – St. Louis

Programs and Collections

"Our eyes will be turned westward, and a new and strong literature will be the result"

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

The Mission of the Mercantile Library

The goal of the St. Louis Mercantile Library as a research library is to collect, preserve, and make its collections available for use to the widest number of local and national users. These collections have come to concentrate on Western Expansion, the story of the American West, related issues in the American rail and river transportation experience, and by extension the history, development and growth of the St. Louis region.

The West, St. Louis, & the Mercantile Library

The Mercantile Library, the citizens of St. Louis, and the American West have always possessed a great kinship. The Mercantile Library's founders in 1846 could look back on many eventful decades of their city's existence which coincided with the growth of the United States. Already for three generations before, everyone seemed to have been involved somehow in the creation of the American West – business leaders, tradespeople, explorers, soldiers, statesmen, naturalists and scientists, cartographers, artists, journalists, and writers, settlers – pioneers all. The Library was a collecting vantage point, witness to the legendary days which gave St. Louis its western gateway heritage.

Cowboy Band at First National Cattlemen's Convention - St. Louis 1884



In no small way, St. Louis was forged on the anvil of Manifest Destiny; its earliest library – the Mercantile – took advantage of this circumstance so much so that by the 1870's its Head Librarian could proudly remark that "the history of our country's early and aboriginal history claims our special attention." The leaders of the Mercantile Library clearly understood the historical moment which they seized. They documented this epoch on their new library's shelves. Because of that, almost from its inception, St. Louis possessed a national library which collected the heritage of the new nation. Its greatest achievement has been that from that early impulse the Library has continued to create one of the most respected and comprehensively developed public collections of Western Americana.

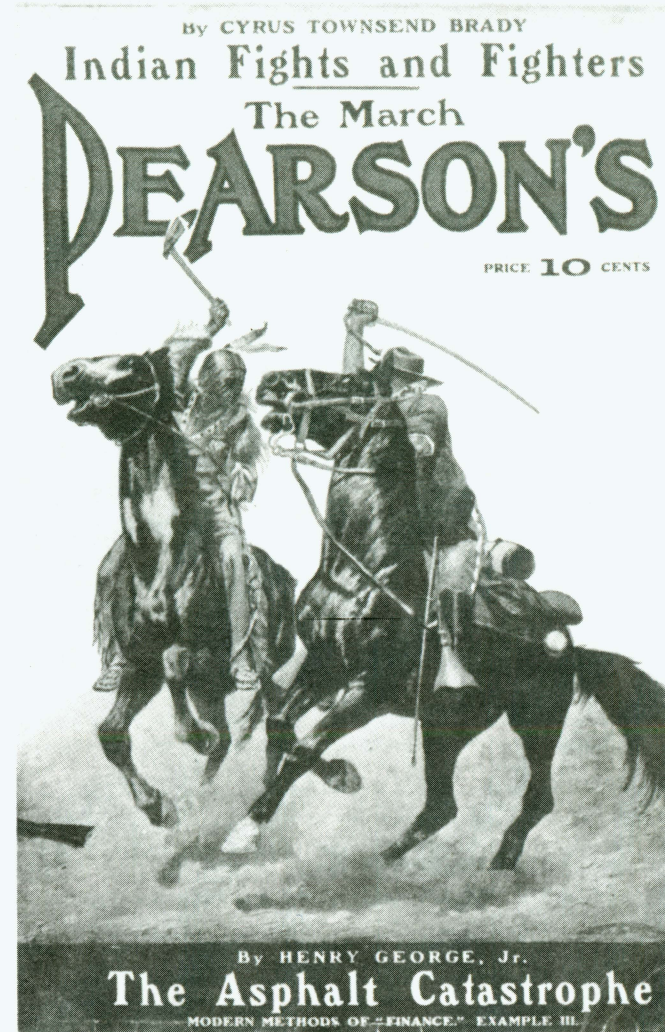
The Mercantile Library in recent years has promoted institutional cooperation by providing opportunities for the study of the history and culture of the American West and Westward Expansion which complement the wealth of research materials available in numerous other excellent collections and repositories in the St. Louis region.

The Scope of the Collections

Today, the Mercantile Library's holdings on the history of the American West and the centuries of reconnaissance, which relate to the development and the social and cultural history of half of the North American continent, number over 70,000 printed items. These are distributed in numerous primary and secondary special collections housed in three major divisions of the Library, which include general, rail, and river concentrations. Formats include rare books and scarce pamphlets, early newspapers and virtually unobtainable runs of contemporary periodicals, maps, manuscripts and archival documents, original art, engravings and drawings, photographs, oral history tapes, motion pictures and microfilm.

Collection Highlights

The Mercantile Library's Western Americana collections hold valuable items on the geography and description of the West, state-by-state. Added to this are early and contemporary works on law, economics, art, literary studies, religious issues, as well as the history of travel and exploration of the region. Numerous primary government documents are also included.



• Selected manuscript sources include the Robert Campbell Papers on the Rocky Mountain fur trade, diaries related to the Mexican War, travelers' accounts, and annotated, authors' presentation copies of early writings on the American West. Other manuscript collections include those by artists George Catlin and Oscar Berninghaus, as well as important single items by Auguste Chouteau, Daniel Bissell and others.

• Agricultural collections which include distinguished materials related to the range cattle industry, early Western agricultural periodicals, and other primary, printed sources.

• Photographic collections by Alexander Gardner, Thomas Houseworth and others.

• St. Louis Imprints, including almost 10,000 items, document St. Louis's role as a strategic center for the development of the West.

• Squier Collection, including books from the library of noted nineteenth century ethnologist and Americanist, Ephraim George Squier, with annotated texts of numerous sources on native Americans.

• Various special collections such as those of Indian captivities, a collection strength and one of the best developed in the United States, western city directories, and almanacs, including an excellent run of the famous Crockett Almanacs.

• Original art including one of the oldest series of Plains ledger drawings – the Arapaho Little Shield series – oils and watercolors by Theodore Kauffman, Charles Deas, Oscar Berninghaus, Charles Russell, George Caleb Bingham, and others; also original engravings by Audubon, Catlin, Bodmer, Baumann and many others. The Mercantile Library's institutional archives is a valuable resource for studying Western art and artists, a focus nurtured for generations at the institution.

• General, Wayman, and Time Table Brochure Collections, which include maps, travel and promotional brochures, and ephemeral publications from the late nineteenth century to the present on the American West.

Gen. William Sherman in council on the Plains from *Scenes in the Indian Country*.

