

Legacy Finding Aid Project at the Louisiana Research Collection

Louisiana Archives and Manuscripts Association
Annual Meeting, November 11, 2011



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The Louisiana Research Collection

- First acquisition in 1889
- Currently 4 linear miles of materials
- Special Collections division of Tulane's Howard-Tilton Memorial Library
- Areas of strength include
 - Carnival
 - the Civil War
 - Jewish studies
 - LGBT
 - Louisiana politics
 - Medicine
 - Social welfare
 - Southern literature
 - Waterways
 - Women's studies



Finding Aid Migration Challenges

“...Gaining buy-in from institutional decision makers, overcoming the urge to achieve perfection, finding ways to maximize scarce resources, and getting over the initial humps of dealing with a relatively complicated standard and what can be perceived as overwhelming logistical issues.”

Combs, Michele, Mark A. Matienzo, Merrilee Proffitt, and Lisa Spiro. 2010. Over, Under, Around, and Through: Getting Around Barriers to EAD Implementation. Report produced by OCLC Research, p. 6.



Finding Aid Survey

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Coll'n #	Collection	FA Status	# FA pages	# MPF pages	Linear feet (needs to be verified)	Notes
675	672	Dean, William T., Papers	Ready to go	6	1	1	
676	673	Destrehan Estate Litigation Papers	Ready to go	3	1	1	
677	674	Dresner, Jacob D.	Ready to go	8	2	6	
678	675	Duffel-Harris Family Papers	Ready to go	7	2	1	
679	676	Congregation Gates of Prayer	Minor work needed	6	3	6.25	Several different finding aids for original and accretions, need to be consolidated, Needs to be updated to include accretions
680	677	Allison Owen Papers	Ready to go	5	1	2	
681	678	Robinson, Martha Gilmore Collection	Major work needed	35	2	57.5	Incomplete finding aid
682	679	Cain Family Papers	Minor work needed		1	0.25	Inventory on MPF
683	680	E.A. Burke	Ready to go	3	2	0.25	
684	681	Russ, Edward K., Collection	Ready to go	4	1	0.25	
685	682	Special Citizens' Investigating Committee	Ready to go	34	2	32.5	
686	683	Monier Family Papers	Nothing		1	1	
687	684	Peters, Olga, Drawings in Carnival Collection	Ready to go	5	2	4.5	
688	685	Brosman, Catherine Savage, Papers	Minor work needed	9	2	14	Needs to be updated to include accretions
689	686	Hemard Family Papers	Minor work needed	1	1	0.25	No box or folder level arrangement
690	687	Art Reproductions Notebook	Nothing		1	0.5	
691	688	Frances Jackson's School Notebook for Fourth English Class	Nothing		1	0.5	
692	689	Boudreau, Amy Papers	Minor work needed	2	1	1	Description of collection, but no inventory.
693	690	Alfred A. Parmenter Papers	Minor work needed	4	2	1	Description of collection, but no inventory.
694	691	Ramos Papers	Nothing		2	1	
695	692	French Quarter Task Force	Minor work needed	1	2	1	Description of collection, but no inventory. Only 1 box, would be very easy to retype.
696	693	C.W. Robinson Lumber Company Papers	Ready to go	2	2	3	
697	694	Brizzard, Alvin E. Collection	Ready to go	29	2	3	
698	695	Gilmore, Samuel Louis, Jr., Papers	Ready to go	2	2	5	
699	696	Claudet, Paul, Correspondence	Ready to go	4	8	1	



Finding Aid Survey Results

- Ready to go finding aids: 40%
- Minor work needed finding aids: 14%
- Major work needed finding aids: 6%
- Collections without finding aids (“nothing”): 40%



Phase One: Quick and Dirty



Phase One: Workflow

Too understaffed to fully rekey legacy finding aids for the web, and inspired by William and Mary's approach in the "Archon Ultimatum," we implemented the following workflow:

- Create a basic collection record
 - If MARC record previously created, import and clean up data
- Attach PDF of the legacy finding aid
- Assign subject headings
- Create a MARC catalog record



Quick and Dirty Archon record



Title: John Leonard Riddell papers, 1829-1879 

ID: LaRC/Manuscripts Collection 599

Extent: 4.0 Boxes

[+ More Extent Information](#)

[+ Arrangement](#)

[+ Creators](#)

[+ Subjects](#) (links to similar collections)

[+ Administrative Information](#)

Repository: Louisiana Research Collection

Acquired: 1944.

Restrictions: Collection is open to the public. No known restrictions. May not be photocopied due to fragility.

Rights: Physical rights are retained by the Louisiana Research Collection. Copyright is retained in accordance with U.S. copyright laws.

Acquisition Note: Received from Jefferson D. Riddell in 1944; an additional diary acquired in 1999.

Preferred Citation: John Leonard Riddell papers, Manuscripts Collection 599, Louisiana Research Collection, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA 70018

Collection Material Type: Personal Papers

Other Note: For an inventory to the collection, please click on the "On-line Images/Records" link above for a PDF.

 [Printer-friendly](#) |  [Email Us](#)

Scope and Contents: The collection consists of diaries, notebooks, newspaper clippings, and other printed material of John Leonard Riddell.

[+ On-line Images/Records](#)

Documents and Files:

[John Leonard Riddell papers inventory](#)



Phase Two: Full Migration

In late 2010, LaRC chose Library Associates Companies (LAC) Group to rekey and update descriptions and subject headings for almost 500 “ready to go” legacy finding aids in Archon.

Biggest challenge?

Reviewing every single finding aid
before data entry



Phase Two: Workflow

Finding aid review process:

- Annotate copy of paper legacy finding aid
 - Check contents at the level described
 - Correct dates/titles as needed
 - Make notes of unprocessed materials
- All annotated finding aids sent as PDFs to LAC (daily batches over 9 months)



Phase Two: Workflow

LAC was provided with sets of data entry templates. They were responsible for:

- Collection-level information
- Creator information and authorities
- Subject and genre headings
- Inventory

LAC sent regular release reports; weekly site meetings with LAC and Tulane Library staff.



Box 1

Membership list

Box 1 title: Early organizational history, correspondence, manuscripts

Folder 1. (A list of early members of the society and a circular advertising for subscriptions to the Comptes-Rendus, 1885.)

Folder 2. Projects pertaining to the University of Louisiana and the Athénée.

Folder 3. Correspondence, 1876-1907, on a variety of topics. (Included here are the letters pertaining to the resignation of Armand Mercier, 1880-1881. Of interest are a letter from Joseph Jones to Gén. Beauregard concerning Dr. Augustus de Plongeon, an explorer, 1884, and a long letter from a young woman who signs herself as Margoton du Cypre Mort and who claims to be uneducated, 1882.)

Folder 4. A letter from Pierre Latour, 1834 (Latour of Plaquemines Parish, to the unnamed author of a recent history of the state, complaining that the use of the verses of Casimir Delavigne, French poet, were inappropriate for a Louisiana History, and giving some suggestions for improvement. Fragile.)

Folder 5. Two letters to J.G. Hava from Chs. Bacarisse and an issue of "Le Grande Stenographe," 1880.

Folder 6. Scientific manuscripts, (including essays on Dyspepsia, the Hydrology of the Mississippi River, the Philosophy of Solar Heat, Alimentary Substances, the Telephone, Tasmanian Insectivorous Plants, etc.)

Folder 7: T. Guyot letter on the barometer, 1877

Box 1: Early organizational history, correspondence, manuscripts

Folder 1: Membership list, 1885

A list of early members of the society and a circular advertising for subscriptions to the Comptes-Rendus, 1885.

Folder 2: Projects pertaining to the University of Louisiana and the Athénée

Folder 3: Correspondence, 1876-1907

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Annotated legacy finding aid

Fully rekeyed Archon version



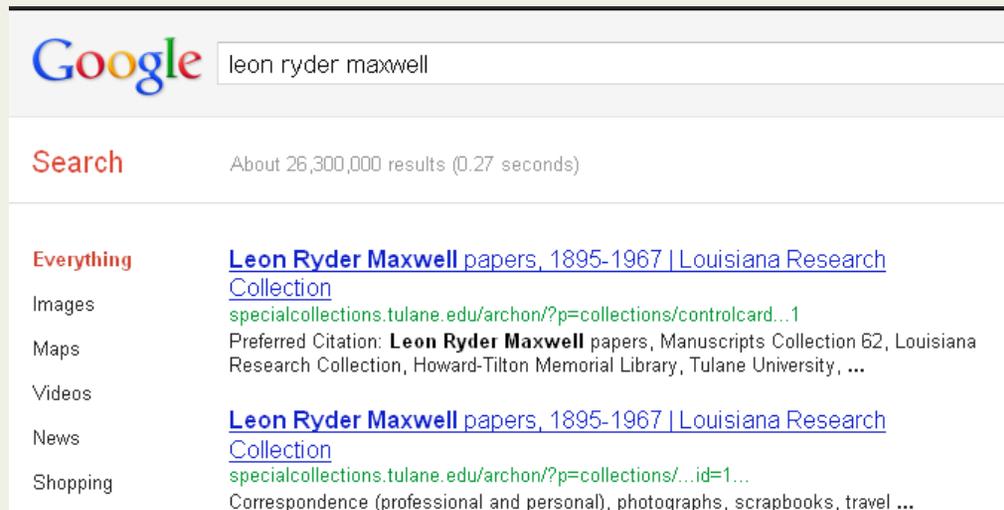
Finding Aid Migration Challenges

- Ensuring all finding aid accuracy was LaRC's responsibility, heavy burden on staff resources
- 2009 finding aid survey used different criteria than we were dealing with two years later
- Department has existed for 60+ years, a variety of descriptive standards and arrangement levels
- Continuing challenges of poor quality finding aids, or accessioned collections without finding aids



Finding Aid Migration Benefits

- Accurate collection information due to major review
- Data portability – can export EAD files from Archon
- Increased reference statistics
- Increased access – liberation from the binders
- Online visibility – first page of Google results



The screenshot shows a Google search interface. The search bar contains the text "leon ryder maxwell". Below the search bar, it indicates "Search" and "About 26,300,000 results (0.27 seconds)". The search results are categorized under "Everything". The first result is a link to "Leon Ryder Maxwell papers, 1895-1967 | Louisiana Research Collection" with a URL: specialcollections.tulane.edu/archon/?p=collections/controlcard...1. Below this, it provides a preferred citation: "Preferred Citation: Leon Ryder Maxwell papers, Manuscripts Collection 62, Louisiana Research Collection, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, ...". The second result is another link to "Leon Ryder Maxwell papers, 1895-1967 | Louisiana Research Collection" with a URL: specialcollections.tulane.edu/archon/?p=collections/...id=1.... Below this, it provides a snippet: "Correspondence (professional and personal), photographs, scrapbooks, travel ...".



In Conclusion...

- Legacy finding aid migration is a monumental task.
- Requires significant amount of staff resources
- Carefully consider the trade-offs between hiring an outsourcer and doing the data entry work in-house.
- Legacy finding aid migration helps ensure transparency, upholds security, promotes holdings, and increases access.



Contact Information

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Copies of slides: eiratansey.com/projects

Carnival Images: larc.tulane.edu/exhibits/carnival

