

CHALLENGES AND DISCOVERIES OF PROCESSING MAPS IN RAILWAY COLLECTIONS

AT&SF Railway Company Land Records in UTA Libraries
Special Collections



LESLIE WAGNER - INTRODUCTION

- M.A. in History, University of Texas at Arlington, 1998
 - Thesis Committee Chair: Richard Francaviglia, Director, Center for Greater Southwestern Studies and History of Cartography
- Certificate in Archival Administration, 1999
- Associate Archivist – The University of Texas at Arlington, 2009-Present
- Archivist
 - Methodist Hospitals of Dallas, 1999-2002
 - Dallas Jewish Historical Society, 2000-2006, 2009-2011
 - Dallas Holocaust Museum, 2002-2006
- Mapping the Southwest Project, 2010-2013
 - Project Archivist
 - Cartographic Cataloging
 - Training from one of the committee members

ATCHISON, TOPEKA & SANTA FE RAILWAY COMPANY LAND RECORDS

- Brief Summary of the Project
- The Details
- Approaching the task
- Technical aspects
- Add your third bullet point here



AT&SF RAILWAY COMPANY LAND RECORDS – SUMMER 2013

- Time and manpower constraints
 - 4 months/17 weeks
 - Project archivist, full-time
 - Student assistant, up to 19 hours per week
- Physical constraints
 - Location: basement storage room
 - Limited work surface and limited shelf space
- Technical constraints
 - No computer drops, just Wi-fi, so used department's laptop
 - Laptop configured with docking station, monitor, and keyboard
 - No phone or phone service

IN THE BEGINNING

- Dilapidated cardboard boxes
- Cobwebs, dust, and dead bugs
- Tight workspace
- Gloves, gloves, and more gloves
- Humidity and lack of air flow
- Time constraints



THE PLAN

- MPLP (More Product, Less Process)
 - Rapid assessment
 - Original order
 - Numbering systems represented different railroad affiliates
 - Redo of previously processed items (approx. 100 boxes)
 - From county to creator-assigned number (KEY)
 - “Touch it once” rule
- Creation of database to compile map details
 - Sort and filter
 - Pattern discernment
- Compilation of container list for final finding aid

MPLP (MORE PRODUCT, LESS PROCESS)

- Rapid Assessment
- Original Order
 - Numbering systems represented different railroad affiliates
 - Redo of previously processed items (approx. 100 boxes)
 - From filing by county to creator-assigned number (KEY)
- Processing the Maps
- Creating Access
 - Finding aid (Texas Archival Resources Online - TARO)
 - Bibliographic records (OCLC/WorldCat)
 - Voyager (local catalog)

PROCESSING THE MAPS

- Designed and adapted database to record all map data
- Applied the “Touch It Once” Rule
 - Teamed up to complete all aspects of processing for each map
 - Reviewed each map
 - Captured physical description
 - Entered data into key fields and noted all identifiers
 - Created an overall numbering system for the maps for later retrieval
 - Reviewed and noted preservation needs

CAPTURING MAP DETAILS

- What information to record?
 - Size
 - Title(s)
 - Identifying numbers
 - Company/railway name
 - Content description
 - Keywords
 - Preservation recommendations
 - Type of map

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

- Printing Methods
 - Sepia diazo prints
 - Blueprints
 - Some multicolor aniline prints.
- Size of rolled maps
 - Most common width of 1 yard/1 meter
 - Most common length about 140 cm
 - Nearly 2000 cm long
- Condition
 - Rolled/Flat/Folded
 - Damaged?
 - At risk maps were encapsulated immediately if appropriate
- Content

CAPTURING MAP CONTENT

- Recording Significant Details for the Potential Researcher
 - Who? What? Where?
- Understanding Map's Function in Context
 - Tracking acquisition, maintenance, and return of right of way
 - Tracking sale, purchase, and abandonment of railroad lands and lines
 - Tracking mineral rights and land use
 - Pinpointing litigation over property tracts
- Recognizing Research Value
 - Economic growth – urban development
 - Economic setback – ghost towns
 - Changes in landscape, transportation, and culture

PHYSICAL EXTENT OF THE COLLECTION

- 1200 Maps
 - 800 rolled maps
 - 200 folded maps
 - 200 flat maps
- 290 Manuscript Boxes
- 24-26 Oversized Boxes
- 10 index card boxes

DESCRIPTION LEVELS FOR FINDING AIDS

- Series level
 - Absolutely necessary
- Box level
 - Doable, but still extensive
- Folder level
 - Impractical for this project
- Item level
 - Unthinkable!

COLLECTION SERIES

- Series I – AT&SF Records (Boxes 1-46 with 15 subseries)
- Series II – Gulf, Colorado & Santa Fe Records (Boxes 47-72 with 4 subseries)
- Series III – Auxiliary company records (Boxes 72-78)
- Series IV – Deeds and abstracts (Boxes 78-281 with 6 subseries)
- Series V – Maps
- Series VI – Non-AT&SF Publications
- Series VII – Ledgers
- Series VIII – Boxed maps
- Series IX – Unboxed maps, rolled
- Series X – Artifacts