Collaborating on Description and Digitization: The Perry Special Collections Land Indentures Project

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**Original Publication Citation**

**BYU ScholarsArchive Citation**
Wiederhold, Rebecca A.; Lee, Ryan K.; and Bessendorfer, Shanna, "Collaborating on Description and Digitization: The Perry Special Collections Land Indentures Project" (2017). *Faculty Publications*. 5864. [https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/facpub/5864](https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/facpub/5864)

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BYU Land Indenture Digitization Project

Overview and Project Management
Ryan K. Lee, manuscript curator
CIMA/NWA 2017 - Boise, Idaho
Overview

• BYU Land Indentures Collection – what is it and how is it used
• How it all started – be careful what you ask for!
  • From simple request to complex project
• Project Management - collaboration to the MAX!
• Metadata challenges and opportunities
• One student’s experience in multiple aspects
The BYU Land Indentures Collection

• Description
  • Handwritten land indentures on parchment. Relate to the sale and ownership of land in England over three centuries. Also includes prenuptial and loan agreements and wills.

• Date span: 1599-1919 (at least), bulk 1700-1875
• Extent: nearly 1500 documents
• Size: ranges from 10 x 26 cm to 86 x 62 cm
• Languages: Mostly English, but some in Latin
• Provenance: Family historian from Utah collected. Came to BYU in 1970s?
  • more on him and how we got them later
• Who uses it: Paleography classes, taught bi-annually
  • more on this later
How it all started

• START = Simple digitization request
  • One teaching faculty
  • Wanted entire collection, but not linking to finding aid
  • To be hosted elsewhere

• END = Complex request
  • Need to flatten = rehouse = change order
  • Now we will host images
  • Linking to finding aid = Intense metadata creation
  • Multiple players = Major collaboration
  • From months to **years** to complete (still going)

• Opportunities > Challenges
Project Management – **Collaboration**

- Normal digitization requests = 3-4 groups or individuals
- This project involved at least eight:
  - Curator/Archivist
  - Faculty
  - Conservation
  - Collections Management
  - Cataloging
  - Metadata
  - Student help (expertise)
  - Digital Lab
Project Management – Conservation and Collection Management

• Flattening and other conservation work
Project Management – Conservation and Collection Management

• Humidification and flattening
Project Management – Conservation and Collection Management

• Measuring and foldering
Project Management – Conservation and Collection Management

• Fixing flaking ink
Project Management – Conservation and Collection Management

• Repairing tears
Project Management – Conservation and Collection Management

- Updating finding aid with measurements and new locations
Project Management –
Cataloging and Metadata and Student Help

• Used resources in Cataloging and Metadata to convert finding aid to EAD (in ArchivesSpace)
• Details covered by Becca and Shanna
Project Management – Digital Lab

- Requirements prior to scanning = Metadata
- Used a regular flatbed scanner, even for oversize
Project Management – Digital Lab

- Oversize items scanned in pieces, then stitched together using Adobe Photoshop
- Uploaded to CONTENTdm and linked to finding aid
BYU Land Indenture
Digitization Project

Cataloging and Metadata Challenges
Rebecca Wiederhold, Archives & Manuscripts Cataloger

CIMA/NWA 2017 - Boise, Idaho
Cataloging & Metadata – MARC is not enough

079  # $a ocn122606361
090  # $b MSS 1779
245  00 # $a Land indentures collection.
246  30 # $a Land indentures collection, 1613-1881
264  #0 $c 1569-1919.
300  # $a 31 boxes $a (155 linear inches)
336  # $a text $2 rdcontent
337  # $a unmediated $2 rdatamedia
338  # $a sheet $2 rdatacarrier
520  # $a Handwritten land indentures on parchment. The materials relate to the sale and ownership of land in England over nearly three centuries. Also included are prenuptial and loan agreements and wills. These materials have been used as examples of handwriting for paleography courses.
650  #0 $a Land titles $z England $x History $v Sources.
650  #0 $a Land tenure $z England $x History $v Sources.
650  #0 $a Paleography, English $z England $x History $v Sources.
650  #0 $a Prenuptial agreements $z England $x History $v Sources.
651  #0 $a Great Britain $x History $v Sources.
655  #7 $a Wills. $2 lcgft
655  #7 $a Deeds. $2 lcgft
Cataloging & Metadata – Structure Decisions

• Should we organize the finding aid by:
  • Land owner?
  • Geographical location?
  • Document size?
  • Document number?
  • Creation date?
Cataloging & Metadata – Structure Decisions

Collection of land indentures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land indentures, before 1600</th>
<th>Series</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land indentures, 1600-1624</td>
<td>Series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Varney condition and bond, 1609 June 27</td>
<td>Item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Edridge admittance, 1614 April 28</td>
<td>Item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Morris quitclaim, 1615 July 3</td>
<td>Item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel Dagnall admittance, 1618 January 16</td>
<td>Item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Amys quitclaim, 1618 March 29</td>
<td>Item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clement Wyse quitclaim, 1618 April 1</td>
<td>Item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Ansten bargain and sale, 1619 July 20</td>
<td>Item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land indentures, 1625-1649</td>
<td>Series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land indentures, 1650-1674</td>
<td>Series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land indentures, 1675-1699</td>
<td>Series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land indentures, 1700-1724</td>
<td>Series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land indentures, 1725-1749</td>
<td>Series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land indentures, 1750-1774</td>
<td>Series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land indentures, 1775-1799</td>
<td>Series</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cataloging & Metadata – Item-Level Description

• What to include:
  • DACS title
  • Date
  • Language
  • Extent
    • Base material
    • Dimensions
  • Subject: Genre

• Notes:
  • Original numbering
  • Parties involved
  • Location of property
  • Condition notes
  • Maps, schedules, memos or other inclusions
Cataloging & Metadata – Genre assessment

• Deeds
• Leases
• Manorial records
• Probate records
• Mortgages
• Conveyances
• Contracts
Cataloging & Metadata – Metadata work

• CONTENTdm digital object metadata added

• Link to finding aid in CONTENTdm

• Link to image in finding aid

Manuscript Collection Descriptions

Sir Charles Cavedyshe mortgage

Dates: 1653 April 22

- Extent: 4 sheets : paper ; 40 x 31 cm
- Call Number: MSS 1779 Series 4 Item 3 oversize 3 folder 8
- Repository: L. Tom Perry Special Collections; 19th Century Western & Mormon Manuscripts; 1130 Harold B. Lee Library; Brigham Young University; Provo, Utah 84602; http://sc.lib.byu.edu/
- Access Restrictions: Open for public research.
- Images: http://cdm15999.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p15999coll24/id/29537
Cataloging & Metadata – Mid-project request revisions

STAMPS

SEALS
## Cataloging & Metadata – Problems/Work-Arounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISSUE</th>
<th>WORK-AROUND</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Only one note displays in finding aid and CONTENTdm</td>
<td>Metadata student copies text of notes from ArchivesSpace into CONTENTdm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty requested images from certain documents not yet described</td>
<td>Student identified similar documents from already-digitized documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTENTdm collection not easily browseable</td>
<td>Training on how to navigate the finding aids database to find desired items and then access the image through the URL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cataloging & Metadata – Follow-on Projects?

Possible GIS project to visually link land records by geographical location for:

• genealogical interest
• study of land transfer
Cataloging & Metadata – Working with a Student

Special expertise:
• Handwriting
• Document types
• Latin language
• Abbreviations

Can you read this?

Yeah, neither can I
BYU Land Indenture Digitization Project

Student Involvement
Shanna Besendorfer-Brigham Young University Student

CIMA/NWA 2017 - Boise, Idaho
Emphasis on reading old handwriting.

Transcription of pre-round hand document.

Historical report on the chosen document.

Latin transcription document.
Round Hand – in use since the early 1800s.

Italic Hand – in use from the 1500s to early 1800s century.
Secretary Hand— in use from 1400s to mid-1800s (though mostly obsolete by 1750).

Court Hand – in use from the late middle ages to early 1700s.
The English Documents

The Tutorial: making sense of old handwriting

INTRODUCTION: ENGLISH SCRIPT

Between 1500 and 1800 Britain and Ireland used a variety of scripts—
other missing forms from an older script with newer innovations. While
much material written after 1750 is decipherable without specialized
training, some older, difficult, forms of writing persisted in particular
record types until the 1830s. The dominant script from the early
modern period (1500–1700) in England, Wales, Ireland, and colonial
America was the secretary hand. Secretary hand was also used in
Scotland, though Scots writers developed a few unique letterforms and
strokes not found in other places within Britain. This tutorial
concentrates on secretary hand, but begins with more modern hands to
provide palaeographic practice: it also introduces older scripts used
between the middle ages and the sixteenth century.

While English is the dominant language in all early modern British,
Irish, and American sources, certain documents might be in other
languages, or contain portions in other languages. Latin was the official
ecclesiastical-legal language in England until 1735 and Latin phrases
lurk in British and Irish Documents until the eighteenth century.
Scottish documents might also contain words or phrases in Scots. Documents from the Celtic areas (Ireland, Scotland,
and the Isle of Man) might have Gaelic words or Gaelic-based phonetic spellings and documents from the Channel Islands
will contain French.

This tutorial is designed to introduce you to the various hands used between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries in
much of the English-speaking world. It also provides you with tools to interpret manuscripts from that period.
Manuscripts are made up of more than just letters and pen strokes. They contain a host of details that made sense to

Land Indenture Collection

script.byu.edu
Land Indenture Collection

Look at each document and create a spreadsheet with type of document, where located, date, and primary people involved.
Add Land Indenture Collection to the Script Tutorial Website, along with the transcriptions.
[1] This is the final Agreement made in the Court of o[u]r Sov[ere]igne Lord the King at Westminster from the day of the Holy Trinity in three weeks in the twelfth year of the Raigne of Charles the second by the grace of god of England Scotland France


[4] Southcott & Jane Southcott Desire[s] of the Mannor of Mehighot or otherwise Mannor Ottery Moucher Knighton & Humeote with the appurtenance[s] and of Seaven messuages two water

[5] corn mill eight gardens eight orchards & five hundred acres of land fifty acres of meadow
Latin Language and Documents Class

- Emphasis on Latin language.
- Transcription of Latin document.
- Historical report on the chosen document.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>J</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Box</td>
<td>Old Folder</td>
<td>Document number</td>
<td>New call number</td>
<td>New Box</td>
<td>New Folders</td>
<td>Material</td>
<td>Sheets</td>
<td>Dimensions (h x v)</td>
<td>Genre</td>
<td>Type of document</td>
<td>ArchivesSpace Title</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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<td>-------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
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<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A-1</td>
<td>MSS_1779_B1_F1_I1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>parchment</td>
<td>1 sheet</td>
<td>59 x 68 cm</td>
<td>Leases</td>
<td>Duplicate Assignment of a Leasehold</td>
<td></td>
<td>Edward Maspratt duplicate assign 1869</td>
<td></td>
<td>Edward Maspratt, Surrey (England), builder (first part); L gentleman; William Flower of London (England), gentl &amp; Shubings, Surrey (England), paper merchant (third part); John Motteh, Middlesex (England), gentleman (first part); Richard Elliott Morgan, Pembroke (Wales), esquire (second part); Thomas Glover, Kent, L gentleman; Dame Martha Rivers Gay, Hampshire (England), widow; Dame Martha Rivers Gay, Hampshire (England), esquire (one part); William Evans, Bath, gentlemen; John Butler, Berkshire (England), housekeeper (one part); Henry Page, Oxfordshire (England), esquire (one part); Thomas Page, Oxfordshire (England), esquire (second part); Edward Willet, Norwich (England), esquire; Phillip Page, Oxfordshire (England), esquire; William Flower, London (England), gentleman (first part); William Page, Oxfordshire (England), esquire; Philip Page, Oxfordshire (England), esquire; Mary Flower, London (England), widow; William Flower, London (England), esquire; John Flower, George Leach, Middlesex (England), gentleman; Thomas Tyle, Gloucestershire (England), esquire (first part); William Mountford Nurse, Middlesex (England), esquire; George Leach, Middlesex (England), gentleman (second part); William Vaughan, London (England), esquire; William Mountford Nurse, Middlesex (England), esquire (second part); John Motteh, Middlesex (England), gentleman (other part); The land is in Middlesex (England), esquire (second part); Charles John (third part); Valentine Leach, Wiltshire (England), gentl; Job Crouch, Surrey (England), builder (first part); Job Crouch, Surrey (England), builder (second part); William Vaughan, London (England), esquire; William Mountford Nurse, Middlesex (England), esquire (Eng); Henry Page, Oxfordshire (England), gentleman (other part); The land is in Wiltshire (England), esquire; Mr. Charles William Mumby, London (England), attorney (to London (England), gentleman (other part); The main part; John Motteh and Henry Montefith, Gloucester (Scotland), esquire; Steele, Chester (England), esquire (other part); The parts involved: John Stone, Bath (England), gentleman; housekeeper (one part); and Isaac Bryant, Bath (England), gentleman; William Worrall, Cheshire (England), gentleman (one part); gentleman (other part); The land is in Derbyshire (England), esquire (other part); The land is in Warwickshire (England), gentl; and John Motteh, Middlesex (England), gentleman (other part).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What’s in it for the Student?

- Hands-On Experience.
- Skills Improvement.
- Experience with multiple aspects of a project.
- Resume Builder
- Working with some really cool documents.
- Exposure to some really old mold and dust.
Interesting Finds
Occupations

• Manufacturer of Patent Firewood
• Fishmonger
• Fellmonger
• Victualler
• German Sausage Manufacturer
• The Master and Keepers or Wardens and Commonalty of the Mystery or Art of Ironmongers
• Her Britannic Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at the Court of Denmark
• Silk Manufacturer
• Ship Biscuit Baker
• Soapboyler
Historical References

The New Jersey Colony was founded in 1664. It was originally named the Province of New Jersey, after the British island named Jersey.

Indentures in Collection are dated:
- 1714
- 1760
- 1764
By the Commissioners of the Land-Revenue.

These are to certify, that the said Commissioners have contracted and agreed with John Thumlinson of the city of London, in the County of Cumberland, Esquire, gentleman Thomas Wood, gentleman John Tomlinson, John Poulson, John Jefferson, Mathew Bullen, Richard Milson, John Beke, Andrew Wilson, and Robert Daniel, Esquire, Michael Daniel, gentleman, and John Blewett, gentleman, Edward Berry, John Baker, Philip Marsden, and Joseph North, penman, John Blewett, gentleman, Thomas Barnes, gentleman, William Reid, penman, and Henry Bishop, all of the parish of Wigan in the county of Cumberland, for the selection of all that yearly rent of Nine shillings and ten pence due and payable to the Majesty by the said John Thumlinson and the several other persons abovesaid, for or in respect of certain lands and tenements so situate and being at Backgate in the parish of Wigan, otherwise Wigan, which are situate and being in the said parish of Wigan, in the several shares and proportions since which the said Rent is now paid or payable by those respective persons, at or for the price or sum of Thirteen pounds and fifteen shillings, at or for the price or sum of lawful Money of Great Britain, to be paid by the said John Thumlinson and others into the BANK OF ENGLAND, in the Name of the said Commissioners; (Which said Rent, from and immediately after the payment of the said Sum in manner aforesaid, and the implantation of this Certificate, with the Receipt for the said Purchase-Money, in the Office of the Auditor of the Land-Revenues for the County aforesaid, shall be adjudged, deemed, and taken to be absolutely vested in the said purchasers from Thumlinson and Aspden for ever, by virtue of an Act passed in the Twenty-sixth Year of the Reign of His present Majesty King George the Third, intituled, "An Act for..."
Maps
Provenance
George Minns

- Born 24 June 1855 in England.
- Well-Known Organist.
- Became interested in genealogy before joining the LDS Church.
- Immigrated to Utah in 1925.
- Died 2 November 1938 in Salt Lake City, Utah.
Ideas for future use of collection

- Stamps
- Seals
- Signatures
- Inks
- Parchment
- Maps
- Making of Documents
- Land transactions
- Genealogy
Questions?

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shanna.besendorfer@gmail.com