

# Shedding Light on the Unknown: Creating Encoded Archival Description Records for Enhanced Access to Unprocessed Manuscript Collections

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## Project Description

As part of their transition from a paper based circulation system to the online request system Aeon, the Modern Manuscripts Department at the Newberry Library **recognized the need for a stronger online presence for their unprocessed manuscript collections**. Many of these collections were only described in paper inventories. My project addressed this information problem through the **creation of collection level encoded archival description (EAD) records**.

## Process

The archival data management system Archivists' Toolkit was used to create the EAD records. The chart below describes each phase of the project.

Finding aid created from EAD record

Collection request in Aeon

### Phase 1: Data Clean Up

Reconciled collections with multiple accession records and added additional metadata elements.

### Phase 2: Identify Collections

Created a list of all unprocessed collections that needed EAD records and identified additional collections also needing records.

### Phase 3: Create Records

Created collection level EAD records for all collections identified in previous step and added additional metadata elements.

### Phase 4: Testing

Tested finding aids produced from the EAD records online and in the Aeon system.

## Impact

- Patrons of the library now have **online access** to unprocessed collections.
- Finding aids are in place for **future expansion** when collections are processed.
- Archivists at the library **can track circulation of unprocessed collections** for data to help determine processing priorities.
- Collection records will be **used in external portals** including ArchiveGrid and the Chicago Collections Consortium.

## Outcome

Through the work of this project, approximately **300 unprocessed collections now have an online presence** in the library's list of manuscript abstracts, a collection level finding aid, and are available for request in Aeon.

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