

Emporia State University Archives was established by charter in 1987, and serves as the repository of record for the University and the administrative center for numerous heritage collections relevant to the University's history or in support of the academic disciplines explored by faculty, students and others throughout the scholarly community. Significant holdings include the personal papers of William Allen White, a multiple-Pulitzer winning journalist, political advisor of nine US Presidents, and friend of hundreds of literary, art, science and political figures of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century; and the memorial collection of art and manuscripts documenting the career and influence of May Masee, who, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, established two of the first three children's book divisions in American publishing houses, and whose stable of authors and illustrators won a higher percentage of major awards for their works than any publishing house has achieved since. Other collections include an extensive photography collection tracing the history of the railroad in Kansas; and such unquestionably unique items as a scrapbook of observations made of Woodrow Wilson when he was President of Princeton by a student in his jurisprudence class (later a History professor at ESU); and a scrapbook of photos and correspondence concerning the 19th Century British and American friends and associates of a large American landowner's family, including Queen Victoria and her consort, Prince Albert, several of their children, British authors Alfred Lord Tennyson and Sir Walter Scott, US President John Quincy Adams and many others.

As is common among repositories of record, the University began creating, collecting and compiling its records and collections long before its Archives was established. Efforts were made over time to track the Archives' holdings using MARC records in a bibliographic catalog. These bibliographic records did not attempt to document the context in which the records and collections had been created, nor did they document the creator of the records and collections. The bibliographic records also sought to classify the materials in subject groupings, taking the items intellectually and, often, physically out of their original order. Acknowledging that fitting archival finding aids into a library catalog was much like squeezing a square peg into a round hole, it was decided in 2006 to create a separate Archives Catalog in which DACS-compliant finding aids at any and all levels of description would be recorded, made accessible via the Internet, and encoded to maximize accessibility via the Web.

After exploring most cataloging systems on the market, we chose to create our on-line Archives Catalog using the Eloquent Archives System. Not only would it give our small staff of one archivist, one processing supervisor, and one reading room supervisor a user-friendly, low maintenance, and powerful tool by which we could make the collections in our care globally accessible, the accessioning module would integrate our acquisitions process with the arrangement and description process and the reference process, thereby saving time; the fully-searchable finding aids - underscored in MARC but created according to DACS - could be published in EAD, HTML, and PDF, literally at the click of a mouse; and we could attach digital files including images of the items being described or complete box or folder list inventories directly to the finding aids for the benefit of users needing a more complete indication of the

content of our holdings. The system would require minimal equipment (we purchased a server); and included expert technical support available to coach us through our questions by phone.

Between June 2006 and March 2007, archives personnel worked with Eloquent's technicians to customize our catalog so that it would resemble our sister Library's catalog and include the University's logo and colors. Eloquent's technicians also loaded the DACS standards into the system so that our processing staff would have automated access to the rules of DACS - another time-saver that meant a lot to our small staff - and customized data entry templates and reports. Working with our archives staff, student employees, interns, practicum students, and 20 students in a processing class that I was teaching that fall in ESU's School of Library and Information Management, we managed to create more than 180 finding aids in time to launch our catalog to the public on March 26, 2007, in conjunction with the inauguration of Dr. Michael Lane, our new University President.

We now have more than 200 finding aids available through our [Eloquent Archives Catalog](#).

One of the greatest satisfactions that I have found in using the Eloquent Archives Catalog is in its ability to arrange the levels of description according to hierarchy, and its use of authorities files and the thesaurus to link collections and record groups having common subjects. It is truly rewarding to see our work plotted out and interlinked via the cataloging system, and, more importantly, to reach audiences all over the world who have not yet had access to our holdings.

The catalog and its implementation have been a tremendous success, and we look forward to working with the people at Eloquent to explore even more ways to augment our finding aids and make our information accessible to our global audience.

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