

FINAL REPORT NARRATIVE

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PROJECT NARRATIVE

The Dyer Library Archives and Special Collections has a total processed collections of 876 linear feet. A majority of this is Saco City Records and photographic collections. We have 620 cubic feet of unprocessed materials documenting the history and culture of the Saco Valley region, York County and portions of Maine that support our own documents.

The archives includes personal papers and manuscripts of local and regional families, over 1000 photographs (albumen and silver gelatin prints), dry-glass plates negatives, Saco City Record dating from 1700s to early 20th century, Dyer Library Association records, map collections, postcard collections, ephemera, and personal journals. Date range of these collections span the mid 1600s to current.

The specific purpose of this project is to process and re-house 32 cubic feet of unprocessed collections that have a strong connection to the Saco Community. They are as follows:

1. **John Haley Collection** [9 cubic feet]. John Haley was the Dyer Library's first director. His collection includes personal Civil War Field Diaries. Mr. Haley was a great commentator on the nature and social history of Saco. Inclusive dates: 1758-1921
2. **Adelaide Haley Collection**. [4 cubic feet]. The daughter of John Haley, Adelaide was a historian/teacher who visited the Dyer Library Archives numerous summer doing research on Saco History. Her collection encompasses on her research papers and historical document that support her research. Inclusive dates: 1795-1948
3. **Deering Family Collection**. [4 cubic feet]. Joseph G. Deering II was our Benefactor. His home is now the current Dyer Library, donated and renovated in 1951. Owner of Deering Lumber and son of Frank Cutter Deering and grandson of Joseph Deering I, lumber barons in the late 19th and early 20th century. Joseph G. Deering was on the board of the Dyer Library Association and a benefactor/philanthropist in the Saco area. Joseph G. Deering II has been active during their adult lives in the cultural affairs of the Saco and Southern Maine community. 1844-2003.
4. **Gibeon Elden Bradbury Papers**. [2.5 cubic feet]. Gibeon is an important Maine artist, especially in Saco, as he was well known for his portraitures and landscape paintings. Inclusive dates: 1814-1952.
5. **Evangeline Rebekah Lodge Records**. [3.5 cubic feet]. This fraternal organization exemplified some of the outstanding women of Saco who were involved in social welfare in the community. Inclusive dates: 1874-1962
6. **Agriculture/Dairy Industry**. These four separated collections represent the agriculture community in Saco in mid-19th to mid- 20th century. There were 50 dairy farms in the City of Saco during the 1950s. There is only one dairy farm left. These records have historical value to the early agricultural history in Saco.
 - a. **Cole Farm Dairy Records**. [1 cubic foot]. Inclusive dates: 1878-1924

- b. Thurston Mill Records. [1 cubic foot]. Inclusive dates: 1918-1946*
- c. Merritt Gay Collection. [6 cubic feet]. Inclusive dates: 1931-1957*
- d. Irving Gay Collection. [1 cubic foot]. Inclusive dates: 1871-1957*

Collection formats consists of journals, correspondences, photographs, ephemera, invoices, photographs, maps, business records, ledgers and artifacts.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The premise of this project would be simple. Collections would be surveyed and identified in their logical groupings within the whole as they were established by the creator/compiler. The processors would identify any sub-groupings within each unit down to the level of granularity that is feasible or desirable, even to the individual item if feasible and realistic. Processed collections would be organized in series and re-housed appropriately. All conservation paper tear repairs would be done by Anastasia Weigle, managing archivist overseeing this project.

The project started July 15, 2005. The bulk of the survey work was initially done by Brian Skoczenski, an intern. His duties were to survey the collections so that we would know what was in them. This would help us determine where the series or sub-groups were, what order these collections should be put in and determine, through selection and appraisal what was relevant in the collection and what was not.

Our volunteers, Sallie Huot, Roy Fairfield and Anne King, assisted in re-housing letters, documents and ephemeral papers. As the archivist overseeing this project, my job was to ensure collections were handled properly, provenance would be maintained, research done on the creator and any historical notes relevant to the collections, appropriate conservation repairs on papers, organizing the collections and re-housing them in appropriate materials.

Documentation was created for each collection which included historical and/or biographical notes, scope and content notes, series descriptions and finding aids. These descriptive notes were added to our website and cataloged on our library database (Follett's DESTINY) which is available online. Collections were also entered in the Library of Congress NUCMC database. Although we initially started with nine collections, we found one additional collection that we have included with report and explanation. Below you will find a project analysis for each collection.

HISTORICAL NOTES ON THE DYER LIBRARY AND SACO MUSEUM SPECIAL COLLECTIONS.

On September 6, 2000, the Dyer Library Association made an executive decision to create a new procedure for the consolidation of the archives that was currently housed in the York Institute (now Saco Museum) with the Dyer Library's Maine History Room (now called the Dyer Library Archives and Special Collection.) What the board members did not grasp was that although they were the "funding arms" for both the Library and the Museum, it did not make these two very separate and unique institutions the same. Each had its on archives with its on system of accession, or in the case of the library, no accession system, and it is own set of provenance. What resulted from this decision were misplaced, lost or merged collections. Some forever lost provenance.

This decision also caused a rift between the library and museum as each felt the other was intrusive.

In 2005, Anastasia Weigle, as the Director of the Library and Archives and Andrea Strassner, the Director of the Museum, coordinated workshop for the Dyer Library Association's collections committee to educate and instruct them on how to handle the library and museum archives. It was determined that the Museum Archives was not to be merged with the Library Archives, but instead, the Library would become a repository for the Museum. We also started a program in which the upper attic that housed large portions of unprocessed archives would be surveyed to determine which collections belonged to the library and which collections were clearly from the museum. Once these collections were identified, the museum archives would be housed in an already designated area. In this way, the Museum and curator would be able to have easy access to their collections. Provenance would be researched on these collections hoping to restore lost historical information.

The MHRAD grant project was a great challenge for the library as we knew, that although we did our best to separate library from museum archives, we still found some collections were separated and moved into other locations. Sometimes you would find 5 boxes of one collection and a month later, find two more boxes that belonged to this same collection. This problem was caused by too many "hands" handling one collection. These collections would be moved around and then forgotten when the volunteer was no longer able to volunteer.

We resolved this problem by assigning only trained volunteers in archival organization or archive interns to process collections and only one processing "archivist" person per collection.

Updated mission statements with governing authority were established including selection and appraisal policies.

A new archive processing room was created to control the work being done by volunteers. All this has helped us process more than 15 collections in one year. That is the largest number of collections that have been processed in the last 10 years. We feel that the Dyer Library Archives and Special Collections are moving toward the right direction. We also know that the relationship between the Library and Museum is now one of mutual respect and understanding of its role in the caretaking of their own collections.

PROCESSED COLLECTION OVERVIEW AND COMMENTS:

MS18. JOHN HALEY COLLECTION. *As first librarian of Dyer Library and a well known local Civil War Soldier, the John Haley papers contains numerous personal writings about local history, the civil war, social issues and personal musings. This is the greatest bulk of his papers. We also have John Haley's Civil War diaries handwritten in school tablets. These diaries have been written and rewritten by John Haley himself in order to embellish many of his experiences.*

The greatest challenge in the John Haley Collection is finding that this was not his entire collection. I found that many of his papers were kept in the vault but not separate. Instead, they were mixed in with other collections, which made it difficult to locate them. I surveyed the library vault and pulled out all of John Haley's papers. They were identified as such in the finding aids. They are now separate from other collections and placed in one location in the vault. The original civil war diaries are also kept in the vault.

Another challenge in this collection was the appraisal part of the archival process. As a collector of vast numbers of papers, I had to determine what was important to the collection and what was not. A torn piece of paper or papers with one or two words were removed from the collection, as it was impossible to determine what it was, or represented. Duplicate papers of more than two were

removed. This collection not only had a large number of personal journals with his own writings, Mr. Haley had a tendency to copy poetry and other people's speeches. Determining which were his own words and which were the words of others sometimes was difficult.

MMS19. ADELAIDE HALEY COLLECTION. *This collection is comprised of Adelaide Haley's and George Haley's (a distant cousin) of research notes on family history and Saco History. The larger portion of the collection belonged to Adelaide. George Haley mailed much of his notes to Adelaide.*

The vast amount of papers collected and notes written were difficult to process. It was important to create some kind of order that would be helpful to researchers. A number of series were created starting with personal correspondences, published and unpublished manuscripts, books, research notes for specific projects, and genealogical notes. Anyone interested in researching local Saco History will find this collection extremely useful. Genealogical work on the Haley family is vast and thorough.

One of the great challenges of this collection are Adelaide's handwritten notes on manila paper written in pencil. These notes are vast, I would say 1000-2000 sheets. What is interesting in these notes is that we also have a completed unpublished manuscript of Saco and Biddeford history created by these notes. Do I keep the notes or do I toss the notes away since we already have the manuscript. Also, Mr. Roy Fairfield had a duplicate copy of these notes in his collection housed at the Dyer Library (The Roy Fairfield Papers). Again, do we need multiple copies? Yes, these notes are organized in a particular way, which helps us understand how Adelaide researched her materials. Nevertheless, the question comes up repeatedly, "Is not the completed manuscript enough I chose to keep her notes, which are separated from the rest of her research and organized by chapter sections.

Adelaide was a devoted Dyer Library user and researched constantly on local genealogy, family genealogy and local history.

Many newspaper clippings were used in her research. These were very brittle. Therefore, copies made onto acid free papers is the appropriate handling of this situation. It is not cost effective for us to de-acidify these brittle papers. Newspaper clippings are a frustrating situation. They have no intrinsic value. The value is only in the article. Therefore, I feel it is appropriate to reformat them and throw the news clippings out.

MS27. JOSEPH G. DEERING FAMILY COLLECTION. *The Joseph G. Deering Family Collection consisted of papers from the Deering Family, Joseph Godfrey Deering I, his son Frank Cutter Deering and his grandson, Joseph G. Deering II. This collection consisted a variety of format including blueprints, photographs, books, letters, ledgers and journals. All three men were presidents of the Dyer Library Association, involved in the York National Bank, and The Sweetser School. The greatest challenge was determining the series in this collection. Do I break the collection into three sub-groups and then series, or just series?. I chose to organize the collection in Series because Joseph Deering I, Frank Cutter Deering and Joseph Deering II all operated Deering Lumber. Son picked up the "reigns" from father and then grandson followed. These men were almost interchangeable.*

We found blueprints in the collection that had what we perceive as "index numbers" on them, but no consistent order. For example, the first blueprint identified as 252.1 were alterations to the second floor of the Deering Homestead in 1915. 252.2 through 252.16 were the early 1870 water colored blueprints of the Deering Homestead. Blueprints numbered 252.17 through 252.44 were again 1915 renovations of the Deering Homestead. Blueprints numbered 252.22 through 252.23 were alterations done to the York National Bank (n.d.) Clearly, they were numbered much later and possibly, by a volunteer who inventoried them in no particular organization. I chose to keep the numbers should

an index be found, but separated by their time period. All blueprints pertaining to the 1870 drawings were listed first, then the 1915 and 1930 Deering Homestead renovations and lastly, the York National Bank alterations. These were rehoused in larger boxes so that most of the blueprints could be housed flat.

MS20. ANNIE KATHARINE DEERING PAPERS. *This is the extra collection they I found mixed in with the Joseph Deering Family Collection. The question here is, how do I know this was a separate donated collection and not part of the Joseph G. Deering Family Collection? The Dyer Library has, in the past, merged collections. Sometimes the archive volunteers will take two collections and merge them because they may have come from one donor or from the same family, even though the collections were clearly created separately. An example to clarify why I felt this may have happened, I would like to share a story. An intern at Dyer Library Archives was processing a collection (Elvira J. Lord Collection). Within this collection were papers from a Libby Towne. Libby Towne was still living when Elvira J. Lord died. So how do we get a living person in a dead person's collection? After some research, we found that these two separate collections came into the Archives at the same time from one donor. Instead of accessioning them separately as two individual collections, they were thrown into one large box. The Katharine Deering Papers were in a separate box at the end of the Deering Family Collection. It was labeled "Deering Family." All the other boxes housed papers of only the Deering Patriarchs in no particular order. However, Katharine's collection had a separateness and order to it. I made the executive decision to treat this collection as an individual one created by Katharine Deering. I feel this collection may have been added later to the Deering Family Collection. In keeping with provenance, I felt it was appropriate to treat this as a different collection.*

MMS51. GIBEON ELDEN BRADBURY FAMILY PAPERS. *The Gibeon Bradbury Family papers were composed primarily of correspondences to Gibeon Elden Bradbury (GEB), his wife, Jennie (JBB), and his son, Gibeon Elden Bradbury, Jr. (GEB, Jr.). The correspondences were arranged chronologically, with folders of letters at the beginning for which only the month is known or for which there are no dates known. These letters primarily addressed to GEB and JBB. There follows a small group of letters and documents dated from 1800 through the early 1850's addressed to various Bradbury's, including Nathaniel; a few are addressed to GEB. Next comes a large segment of the Collection, dated 1855 through 1904, consisting of letters addressed to GEB and JBB from friends and relatives. Many letters are from Jennie's brother, Charles Akers, living in New York City. Most are personal correspondence and touch on the activities, health and travels of the correspondents and of the Bradbury's'. Some also talk about Bradbury's work and his efforts to sell his paintings. Condolence letters on the deaths of JBB in 1896 and GEB in 1904 are also found in the collection. After 1905 the letters are primarily addressed to Gibeon Elden Bradbury, Jr. (GEB, Jr.) and his wife Maud (M BB). Many letters from 1906 are to GEB, Jr. from MB while he was living in Westerly, Rhode Island and she was ill at home in Maine. Numerous letters from 1916 are sympathy notes to MB on the loss of her infant son Herbert. The last letter to MB are dated 1926. The last correspondence in the collection is dated 1952. Unfortunately, the Maine History Volunteer who indexed the letters removed all the envelopes and kept them together—separate from the letter. Other materials include a large collection of photographs, miscellaneous journals, old deeds and miscellaneous supporting documents.*

We also had a great deal of deeds and contracts dating back to the early 1800's. Many of these were need of paper conservation repairs which I have done. They were then placed in polypropylene sheets and housed in acid free folders.

The Gibeon collection had a large number of photographs which were organized and indexed.

One of the challenges they I found in this collection, was another collection. Yes, again, somehow a small collection, a folder consisting of deeds from a different family found their way in this collection. First, the Gibeon E. Bradbury Family papers were part of the Museum Archive Collections, which supported their Gibeon Bradbury Exhibitions. Many of the museum archives were transferred to the Dyer Library Archives and mixed or merged, thus jeopardizing their provenance (see Dyer Library Archives and Saco Museum Archives historical notes). We feel that this was an example of such an event, The Gibeon Papers were transferred with other papers and put together instead of separating them with appropriate accession information. I removed the “foreign” collection and housed it with the Museum Archives for later processing

BR38. EVANGELINE REBEKAH LODGE RECORDS. *This collection has a very small scope and content including membership dues, financial accounts and miscellaneous notes that were taken during the monthly meetings of the organization. A very simple collection to survey and process. Initially provenance was a mystery, as is with most of these collection due to the lack of accession records and deeds of gifts. However, research revealed a donor name who was a member of the Rebekah Lodge.*

MS47. COLE FARM DAIRY RECORDS. *This collection was fairly easy to process A collection of eight bound journals written between 187 and 1924. The journals were daily reports on both the weather and happenings that were taking place on the Cole Farm in Saco. The Journals were written by two members of the Cole family, Clark Remich Cole, born in 1841 and W. Harris Cole, born 1879. As with all the other collections, this two had no accession record or deed of gift. Therefore, exact provenance was difficult. Many of the collections were donated to the library and since the Maine History Room is run by a different volunteer, inconsistencies with recording keeping was inevitable. As for condition of facsimiles, a simple rehousing in acid free boxes seem to be all they needed.*

BR35. THURSTON MILL RECORDS. *This collection was called the Thurston Farm Records. However, when we proceeded to survey the collection, it seemed that Thurston Farm was really Thurston Mill as Mr. Albert A. Thurston was a Mill man. I decided to do some research on the Thurston Family to see if they had owned a working farm. However, all records indicate the Thurston Family ran a lumber mill. Therefore, I took the liberty to modify the title of this collection from Thurston Farm Records to Thurston Mill Records. I feel it does not make the collection any less valuable because of this.*

One of the challenges in a collection such as this (meaning Business Records) is the ability to select and appraise the whole to determine what is viable to keep and what is not. For example, there were bank statement, invoices and cancelled checks. Do we really need the cancelled checks if we had bank statements that showed us their business earnings. I asked this question often but I do admit, I hesitate to remove the cancelled checks as they indicated the vendors names (doing business with) whereas the bank statements did not. Did this mean the bank statement were not relevant? Bank statements gave us expenditures and earnings, again, a visual picture of our the mill business ran for the Thurston Family.

MS37. MERRITT GAY COLLECTION. *The Merritt Jesse Gay collection contains a vast number of personal papers and business records. There were also a few personal artifacts. Included in this collection are school accounts, first drafts of correspondence, church memorabilia, newspaper clippings, bank accounts, business receipts, farming literature and farm production records. Merritt and his father Irving ran a poultry farm in West Scarborough Maine. The majority of the material in this collection concerns the Gay Farm. Of interest is a paper stencil used to mark egg boxes, day*

journals of farm expenses, daily records of milk and egg production and receipts for poultry. In addition there are Extension Service pamphlets concerning farming from the University of Maine dating from 1931 to 1937.

Newspaper clippings encompass world and local activities reported in the Portland Press Herald and the Biddeford Daily Journal. Merritt saved newspaper reports about events at his church, Thornton Academy and notices about friends. He also saved the daily cartoon "Out Our Way" and "The History of Maine" series.

Because Merritt and his father, Irving, ran a farm, we learned a great deal about the difficulties of maintaining the farm and profiting from this business. One of the most significant letters in this collection is the original written by his cousin living in California. She is interested in returning to Maine with her husband and two small children and buying a farm. Her husband, an accountant and Marji, an office worker felt farming would be the way to go. Merritt's response is informative and blunt as he describes the Maine economic and moral conditions in the 1950's. Good land prices were high, experience was essential, and he was not interested in a farm partnership. He indicated that his cousin's concerns about California would not be obliterated by a move to Maine. He noted that there was polio, alcohol and prostitution in Saco also.

The greatest challenge in this collection was dealing with the vast amounts of paper, ephemera, drafts of letters with the original letters, etc. Do I keep all the ephemera, which were can labels and advertising art that Merritt used for paper? There were large number of empty envelopes and junk mail. Again, Merritt did not waste any paper as he used every scrap to write on. Although papers that were not relevant to the overall whole of the collection was pulled out, but I still wonder about the draft letters. Although the decision was made to keep them, I am now wondering if this was wise. Is it not redundant to keep them if we have an original letter? Is the draft important? I may determine to review this collection later to deal with this question.

One of the unusual findings in this collection was two boxes of Saco tax receipt books and Saco vital stats. We do not know how these Saco City records ended up with the Merritt Gay Collection. We research Merritt's background to determine if he ever worked for the City of Saco as a tax collector. We did not find this. We then decided to research Irving Gay's background, but again, did not find anything that said the Merritt's collected taxes. By law, these City Records belong to Saco. We withdrew these from the Merritt Gay Collection and contact the Saco City Clerk. We explained our findings and ask that they be picked up and delivered to their office, which was done.

MS36. IRVING GAY COLLECTION. *This collection is comprised of photographs, publications, correspondence and financial records along with a few other supporting documents. The collection is made up of both personal and business related materials of both Irving and Merritt Gay. Many of the letters that are included in the collection are sympathy cards and notes that were sent to Irving and Merritt over the death of Irving's wife, in 1944. Another large area of the collection is Irving's financial records. These records are broken into both personal and business. This collection also has various things, which belonged to Merritt Gay, including papers and reports cards, relating to education, and personal letters that he had received. This collection was not as complicated as Merritt Gay's and found it easy to organize.*

FINAL ANALYSIS

The overall project was a success. Not only were we able to process all nine collections as was stated in our grant request, but we ended up finding an additional collection, which brought the total to

10. We also were able to successfully catalog the collections on our library database and put them onto our library website. We also have included these in the NUCMC.

However, three things I would like to address were the mostly challenging and frustrating.

The first was the lack of accession records and information on provenance. I feel that I did not have enough time to research thoroughly the history of how these collections came to the library. I asked volunteers and staff members about these collections that had no accession history. Sometimes they had the answer and other times they did not. If they had a donor name, that donor may or may not be living anymore. I believe that in order to resolve this problem, the past Library Director, Gerry Moran, should be contacted as he had a great deal of knowledge to where most of these collections came from. This is something that I would like to see the Dyer Library do. Mr. Moran's knowledge to these collections is invaluable to us.

The second concern dealt with collections that were merged or separated. I could have avoided this problem if I had done a quick inventory/survey of the upper and lower attics to ensure the collections were together and not separated. It required me to spend 106 hours on this project, twice the amount of time I had initially anticipated.

The last is the most important as it deals with selecting and appraising. Selecting and appraising collections is an important part of our jobs. We need to do this before accepting or rejecting a collection. Some collections that were accepted should have been looked at more closely before accepting the entire collection. Some of the items in the collections are questionable. Do they serve a purpose in the collection? Did they belong in the collection? Much time was used up trying to figure out why certain papers were in a particular collection that had no bearing on the person. I think it is important to revisit some of these collections in the future and review them again.

I do not like to be vague on a collection. Keeping everything for fear I may eliminate something they could or could not be important to the collection is too draining. I think it is important for the archivist to have a discerning eye on historical collections. We select for a variety of reasons and goals. The most important being the simplest—for the purpose made by your particular institution. In the case of the Dyer Library, that would be materials pertaining to the history and culture of the Saco Valley region, York County, and portions of the State of Maine that support our own documents. These materials include genealogy and local family histories.

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