

UNDERSTANDING ARCHIVES

COMPONENTS OF A FINDING AID

Unique Number

- Alpha-numerical or numerical
- Could be the accession number

Creator and Title

- The Creator – person, organization or group responsible for creating collecting or maintaining the materials.
- Title=Type of materials – general (papers, records, collection) or specific (photographs)
- *i.e. Amelia Earhart Papers*

Dates

- Include the earliest and most recent date.
- Also include bulk dates (the dates where the majority of materials fall).
- *i.e. 1900-1938 (bulk 1920-1925)*

Extent

- Size of the collection
- Use linear or cubic feet – pick one and don't switch between the two
- Can also include number of boxes, or items
- *i.e. 5 linear ft.; 6 boxes*

Biographical or Historical Note

- For individuals or families (Biographical Note)
 - Birth and death dates
 - Occupations
 - Marriages and children
 - Events or accomplishments
 - For family papers, be sure to explain the relationships
- For an organization or corporate entity (Historical Note)
 - Founding and dissolution dates
 - Geographic location
 - Purpose or function
 - Any name changes and the date occurred