

Tulane archive preserves the history of steamboats

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This undated photo of "The Queen City" steamboat is among the 60 linear feet of steamboat images housed in the Louisiana Research Collection. (Photo by James R. Mullens)

The [Louisiana Research Collection](#) (LaRC) at Tulane University has made accessible to the public a new online guide to the Steamboat Image Collection.

The collection, made up of more than 60 linear feet, preserves thousands of images of riverboats including sternwheelers, sidewheelers, tugs, packets, showboats, and more.

"People from around the world can now search our online index to find out what images we preserve," said Lee Miller, head of the LaRC.

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Miller hopes to one day digitize the images so that they can be accessed remotely.

The images document all stages of the steamboats' production —from construction to wreckage —providing a fascinating view of the country's steamboat era in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

It is one of the larger collections of steamboat images in the world and was purchased for Tulane by the Joseph Merrick and Eugenie Penick Jones Foundation in 1966 from the estate of Capt. Donald T. Wright, editor and publisher of the *Waterways Journal*.

Tulane University

Stored in filing cabinets and accessible only through a paper finding aid since that time, the collection has been completely rehoused and upgraded by student intern Kyle DeCoste, who also created the collection's first online index.

The project is one part of LaRC's larger program to upgrade its extensive image holdings. The guide to the entire image project, including the steamboat section, is available online.