

Project will create expanded access to history of Louisiana's free people of color

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The [Louisiana Research Collection](#) at Tulane University will share a \$194,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities for the project "'Free People of Color in Louisiana: Revealing an Unknown Past.'" The project will digitize and provide free public access online to family papers, business records, and public documents pertaining to free people of color in Louisiana and the lower Mississippi Valley.

"The largest part of our contribution will be papers relating to Andrew Durnford," says Leon Miller, head of the Louisiana Research Collection. "A well-educated free man of color and a practicing physician, Durnford owned St. Rosalie Plantation in Plaquemines Parish. Extensive correspondence between him and John McDonogh, a white New Orleans merchant and philanthropist, is found in McDonogh's papers held at the Louisiana Research Collection, and Tulane holds additional records relating to Durnford's business dealings."

Resources created by the project will support new scholarship that explores and illuminates the complex history of free people of color in the ongoing story of race relations in the United States. The project will provide new resources for teaching African-American history as well as for genealogists. In addition, it will help to increase the general public's understanding of the important role that free people of color played in the history of the United States.

Project staff will create a minimum of 25,000 digital scans as well as finding aids that will be available on the project website and in the [Louisiana Digital Library](#). The project will bring together collections held by the Louisiana State Museum, Louisiana State University Libraries, the New Orleans Public Library, the Historic New Orleans Collection, and the Louisiana Research Collection.

"Digitizing these valuable resources will make them available to an even wider

audience,” says Miller.

The resources will be available online in June 2014.