Uncovering CUNY's Audiovisual Heritage
Preservation Report for Medgar Evers College

Last date updated: December 17th, 2021

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1 Project Summary

This paper serves as succinct documentation for the Uncovering CUNY's Audiovisual Heritage Project (UCAVH), for which the Medgar Evers College (MEC), Charles Evans Inniss Memorial Library is a participant. It aims to clarify issues and specifications unique to the collection.

1.1 Uncovering CUNY's Audiovisual Heritage

UCAVH is a multi-year project that aims to digitize, describe, and make accessible the videotape collections held in archives across the CUNY network. The project is spearheaded by CUNY-TV and makes use of its in-house digitization equipment and OAIS-based digital repository. The project is funded by the Council for Library and Information Resources' *Digitizing Hidden Special Collections and Archives: Enabling New Scholarship through*

Increasing Access to Unique Materials. Readers are encouraged to browse the project's dashboard for more extensive details and documentation about the UCAVH project: https://github.com/cunytv/UncoveringCUNYTV/blob/main/README.md.

1.2 Charles Inniss Memorial Library Audiovisual Collection

Twelve U-Matic tapes from the Charles Inniss Memorial Library at Medgar Evers College were selected for digitization. The recordings appear to be content produced by the college's audiovisual department in the 1980s. They include videotaped documentation of speeches by such civil rights luminaries as Shirley Chisholm, Betty Shabazz, and John Henrik Clarke and coverage of faculty events, short documentaries, and interviews.

These materials were not initially part of the grant application but folded into the project in May 2021. The tapes were received by Kelly Haydon in June of 2021 and returned to Tom Gubernat in December 2021.

1.3 Responsibilities

CUNY-TV agrees to digitize the collection mentioned above and return the following before the project's end:

- 12 U-Matic tapes from the original collection
- 9 Archival Information Packages (AIP)
- 1 Spreadsheet of descriptive and preservation metadata
- 1 Preservation Report
- 9 Automated caption files

CUNY-TV will store the AIPs - the preservation master file, digital derivatives, pertinent technical metadata, and file fixities - in the long-term digital repository on LTO tape. Medgar Evers University is welcome to retrieve files by contacting CUNY-TV archive@tv.cuny.edu.

The minimum responsibility of Medgar Evers University to the Uncovering CUNY's Audiovisual Heritage Project is to publicly post the descriptive metadata prior to the Summer of 2022, the end of the grant cycle. Public domain metadata is a requirement of CLIR. The metadata could be presented in a finding aid or the description of the videos, so long as it is discoverable. Otherwise, administrative, storage, access, description, and outreach can be folded into current MEC workflows and practices for digital video content.

1.4 Personnel

The author of this paper is Kelly Haydon, UCAVH Project Manager (kelly.haydon@tv.cuny.edu). The project was spearheaded by CUNY-TV staff members David Rice, Director of Archives, and

Catriona Schlosser, Archivist, both of whom can be reached at archive@tv.cuny.edu. The contact at Medgar Evers College is Tom Gubernat, Media Archive Technician (tgubernat@mec.cuny.edu)

2 Physical Objects

2.1 Formats

The collection consists of 12 U-Matic tapes recorded between 1980 and 1988. A complete inventory is available in Appendix 6.1.

2.2 Condition/Conservation

Nearly all tapes were in various stages of Soft Binder Syndrome (its extreme form is known as Sticky Shed Syndrome). “Baking” tapes is a short-term remedy for restoring the tape point where it can be played and digitized. Baking at CUNY-TV involves incubating tapes in a LEM brand food dehydrator at 125°F for 30 hours. The tape reels are removed from the cassette for more thorough baking, resulting in the label of the tape’s spine being cut with a straight razor.

The following tapes are so far degraded they needed multiple baking sessions before. They also exhibit inherent color issues and dropout.

CLIR0049 - Faculty Poetry Reading (3 tapes)
CLIR0051 - Iswe Lethu
CLIR0048 - An Interview with Kalamu ya Salaam
CLIR0053 - NAACP Black History Program: Dr. John Henrik Clarke

3 Digital Deliverables

This section details the digital deliverables provided to MEC in December of 2021 on an external hard drive.

3.1 Archival Information Package (AIP)

The Archival Information Package, or AIP, is an attribute of the OAIS framework, an ISO reference model for digital preservation repositories. The AIP is organized as separate directories for metadata and object files. The contents of the AIP include:

- objects/…All physical formats within the asset are encoded to a 10-bit FFV1 and wrapped in Matroska (.mkv).

    - Note: FFV1/.mkv files are readable by most open-source media programs such as VLC Player. It is generally not supported by proprietary software. However, it is not recommended that the master be accessed other than transcoding to new files for editing, streaming, and viewing. The filename of the master(s) are format id, or instantiation id, which are combined when creating derivatives
- objects/access…
    - images, a collection of ten randomly selected frames as .tiff files
    - mp3, the audio track of the video files
    - prores, a highly quality prores/.mov file recommended for editing, color-grading, and releasing to media makers
    - youtube_up, an h264/.mp4 file used for viewing, streaming, and sharing.
- metadata/…
    - checksum, list checksums of all digital objects
    - checksumchecks, date/time stamps of when checksums were created
    - dfxml, digital forensics xml schema of technical metadata
    - mets, xml output of technical metadata in METS schema
- metadata/depictions…a .png snapshot of the audio waveform
- metadata/fileMeta…XML outputs of technical metadata from four different readers.
- metadata/logs…
    - capture.log, metadata on the creation of the AIP package, this may also include notes by the technician
    - capture_options, output of transfer environment, vrecord options, and notes on dropped frames and presentation timestamp discontinuity (errors).
    - vrecord_input, metadata on the digital detail as it entered the vrecord software.
    - framemd5, frame-level md5 checksums
    - qctools, XML file for viewing in the qctools software
    - qctools graph, a snapshot of qctools video/audio data as a .jpeg.

- **Note on file names and unique identifiers**: CUNY TV metadata is based on the PBCore metadata schema, which nests formats (instantiations) under intellectual content (asset). If a program has more than one tape, each tape receives its own instantiation id, whereas containing the same asset id. In the AIP, the digital preservation master of each video has named the id of the tape. During the ingest process, the two parts are combined, and the derivatives are named with the asset id.

3.2 Metadata and Documentation

The following items are included as deliverables on the external hard drive and as documents downloadable from Github: https://github.com/kellyhaydon/UncoveringCUNYTV.

- ucavh_mec_transferlog/…

        - A complete log of metadata generated through the preservation process, including descriptive metadata and notes on transfer, conservation treatment, and quality control.
- ucavh_clir_grandapplication/…
    - A pdf of the original grant application sent to CLIR in 2019. The grant contains complete information about the project and CUNY-TV Archives workflows and technical requirements.
- ucavh_mec_inventory/…
    - The original inventory of the collection from MEC. More tapes were later added, bringing the collection to twelve tapes and nine assets.
- ucavh_med_documention/…
    - A digital copy of this report.

3.3 Caption Files

- Access files from each asset were auto-captioned by Descript, a transcription tool used by CUNY-TV for broadcast.

- Caption files were delivered to MEC as SubRip files (.srt), widely accepted by streaming and playback platforms.

- To playback the files locally with the captions overlaid, both the access and video files must be in the same directory with the same filename. YouTube and Internet Archive have modules for uploading captions.

- Files may be manually corrected using open-source readers such as AegisSub or YouTube's caption studio.

- CLIR0046 (Alvin Ailey) was not auto-captioned as it contains mostly music.

5 Access

5.1 Recommendations

In addition to providing access to researchers in the reading room or on the library's homegrown streaming service, MEC may want to consider uploading to Internet Archive or Youtube to receive a wider audience. CUNY TV hosts a very active Internet Archive channel and can assist with the process: https://archive.org/details/@cuny_tv.

All files should be streamed with their caption file to reach a diversity of users, preferably corrected by hand and following CUNY TV guidelines for captioning: https://www.cuny.edu/accessibility/content/videos/

Takedown notices, accessibility statements, and disclaimers are all recommended, so viewers with concerns have pathways for making contact. CentroPR, another UCAVH participant, has these on their on Internet Archive page: https://archive.org/details/@centropr

5.3 Accreditation

Please use the following statement when necessary, usually where the work is streamed or screened:

“Efforts to preserve this program were made possible by CUNY-TV and "Uncovering CUNY's Audiovisual Heritage," a project funded by Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR).