

Uncovering CUNY's Audiovisual Heritage

Preservation Report for Medgar Evers College

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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. The goal of this document is to clarify issues and specifications unique to the collection. The appendices provide item-level information regarding each of the 12 recordings on U-Matic tape that were digitized as part of the project. A list of additional readings for a more complete picture of the project and CUNY-TV's transfer and storage environments can be found in Appendix C: CLIR 2021 Grant Application.

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*. For more extensive details and documentation about the UCAVH project, readers are encouraged to browse the project's dashboard: <https://github.com/cunytv/UncoveringCUNYTV/blob/main/README.md>.

1.2 Charles Inniss Memorial Library Audiovisual Collection

As part of the project, twelve U-Matic tapes from the Charles Inniss Memorial Library at Medgar Evers College were selected for digitization. The tapes appear to be content produced by the college's audiovisual department in the 1980s. They include video documentation of speeches by such civil rights luminaries as Shirley Chisholm, Betty Shabazz, and John Henrik Clarke, as well as coverage of faculty events, short documentaries, and interviews. A complete inventory with notes on digitization is included in Appendix A.

These materials were not initially part of the grant application but folded into the project in May of 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 above-mentioned collection 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, all 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 responsibilities of Medgar Evers University to the Uncovering CUNY's Audiovisual Heritage Project is to publicly post the descriptive metadata prior to 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 in 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 (it's extreme form is known as Sticky Shed Syndrome). "Baking" tapes is a short term remedy to restore the tape point where it can be played and digitized. Baking at CUNY-TV involves incubating tapes in an LEM brand food dehydrator at 125°F for 30 hours. The tape reels are removed from the cassette for more thorough baking, which may result in the label of the tape's spine to be cut with a straight razor.

The following tapes were so far degraded they needed multiple baking sessions before they could be played, 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. At CUNY-TV the AIP is organized as separate directories for metadata and object files. The contents of the AIP include:

- objects/...All physical formats under the asset are encoded to a 10-bit FFV1 and wrapped in Matroska (.mkv).
 - Note: Matroska files can be played in open source systems such as VLC Player. It is generally not supported by proprietary software. However it is not recommended that the master be used for any other purpose than transcoding to new files for editing, streaming, and viewing. The file name 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 separates intellection content (assets) from formats (instantiations). If a program has more than one tape, each tape receives its own instantiation id but the same asset id. In the AIP, the digital preservation master of each tape is named the id of the tape. During the ingest process, the two parts are combined and the derivatives are named by the asset id.

3.2 Metadata and Documentation

The following items are included as deliverables on the external hard drive, but also as documents downloadable from Github: <https://github.com/kellyhaydon/UncoveringCUNYTV>. Most documents can be found in the Collections/Medgar Evers directory.

- ucavh_mec_transferlog/...
 - 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 more complete information about the project and CUNY-TV Archives workflows and technical requirements.
- ucavh_mec_inventory/...
 - The original inventory of the collection was sent to CUNY TV archives. More tapes were later added, bringing the collection to twelve tapes and nine assets.
- ucavh_med_documentations/...
 - 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), which is widely accepted by streaming and playback platforms.
- To playback the files locally with the captions overlaid, both the access file and the video file 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).