

Hoover AV and the CAVPP

Lisa Miller
Hoover Institution Archives
Society of California Archivists
April 2013
lisa.miller@stanford.edu



Pamela asked me to talk about Hoover's AV program and why the California AV Project is a good fit for us.

News Working Groups Archives Blogs what's new
 news releases calendar slide shows

News

Print this page
 Email this page


Tweet 1

August 16, 2011
 NEWS

Audiovisual Materials about California Digitized and Online

Historic [California audiovisual recordings from Hoover collections](#) have been digitized for [California Light and Sound](#), a project of the [California Preservation Program](#).

The audio and video recordings include two television commercials from the [1976 Reagan presidential campaign](#), a [1971 speech by Governor Reagan on the future of higher education in California](#), and two episodes of William F. Buckley's television show *Firing Line*. One of these features [Governor Jerry Brown in 1975](#); the other, taped in 1989, discusses Father Junipero Serra with guests [Edward Castillo and the Reverend Noel Maholy](#). One motion picture features images of Herbert Hoover's [presidential campaign festivities at Stanford University in 1928](#); the



Clockwise from left: William F. Buckley, Herbert Hoover, Jerry Brown, and Ronald Reagan.

But first I'll share one thing I personally really liked about it -- It gave us a way to post a photo of Jerry Brown – a Democrat - on the Hoover website. Brown was a guest on Bill Buckley's *Firing Line* TV show in 1975, and we included that videotape in the project.

With over 800 downloads that tape is by far our most popular item on California Light and Sound. In all seriousness, I feel like we've done a service to the people of California by making it freely available on this communal state portal.

Sound recordings: Statistics

- 100,000+ items
- 1938 to present
- Formats
 - 16-inch lacquer discs
 - Long-playing discs
 - Soundscriber discs
 - Reel-to-reel tapes
 - Compact sound cassettes
 - Mini and microcassettes
 - DATs
 - CDs
 - MiniDiscs
 - Unusual proprietary formats, e.g. Racal Wordsafe, RCS Tracker
 - File-based recordings



I'll talk separately about our audio and moving image programs.

We have more than 100,000 sound recordings in just about every format but cylinder and wire. Most are spoken word rather than music.

Among them are...

Sound recordings: Collections

80,000 tapes of radio broadcasts

30 TB of file-based recordings since 2000
(coming soon)



Radio Free
Europe/Radio Liberty
broadcast and
corporate records

Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty's broadcast and other recordings. They account for about 80 percent of our audio.

Sound recordings: Collections

10,000 discs, tapes, and file-based recordings,
1944-2012



Commonwealth
Club of California
records

We have all of the Commonwealth Club's recordings. That's another 10 percent of our holdings.

Sound recordings: Collections

Thirty 16-inch instantaneous lacquer discs, 1945



United Nations
Conference on
International
Organization
records

Smaller collections include recordings of the conference that established the United Nations, which was held in San Francisco.

Sound recordings: Collections

500 12- and 16-inch lacquer discs, 1941-45



US Foreign
Broadcast
Intelligence Service
miscellaneous
records

And American and Japanese radio broadcasts from the Pacific Theater of World War II. There's more audio scattered through hundreds of other collections.

Sound recordings: Staff and equipment

- 2 FTE: Audio archivist and audio engineer
- Audio studio can digitize virtually all formats in our collections
- IASA specifications
- Depending on source format, can digitize up to 4 concurrent audio streams (three analog streams and one high-speed optical-to-digital stream)

Ten years ago we had one part-time AV person who handled all the AV duplication orders. Driven by the growth of our AV materials, we've beefed up our staff and equipment since then.

Now we have a robust audio program thanks to three things:

-Two audio specialists;

-A full audio studio;

-Well established archival standards for audio digitization, which allows us to reformat with confidence.

In our lab we can digitize four recordings at once, but with lacquer discs we do not run multiple streams. By using concurrent streams our output increased from 500 digitized items in 2007 to nearly 2500 last year—that's with the same number of staff.

At 2500 items per year, we'll be done digitizing all our current audio recordings in about 40 years.

Sound recordings: Reformatting priorities

- Selection based on curatorial review, preservation needs, researcher requests, and donor agreements.
- Lacquer disc cleaning and digitizing is a special focus.



In terms of selection for reformatting, we have several parallel paths:

- curators select based on the content;
- audio staff select based on media stability;
- patrons request copies for their research;
- some of our donor agreements require digitizing.

We can accommodate these multiple feeds because of our 4-stream capacity.

Moving images: Statistics

- 5,000 motion picture reels (16 and 35 mm)
- 10,000 video items
- Video formats
 - 1-inch and 2-inch open reel
 - Umatic
 - Betacam, BetacamSP, Digital Betacam
 - VHS and S-VHS
 - D-2
 - DV, Hi8
 - DVD
 - File-based recordings



Turning to moving images, we have about 15,000 items in a variety of formats.

Moving images: Collections

230 motion picture film reels, 1896-1977



Herman
Axelbank
collection

If you've seen any documentaries about the Russian tsars, some of the footage probably came from our Axelbank collection.

Moving images: Collections

1 motion picture film reel, 1945

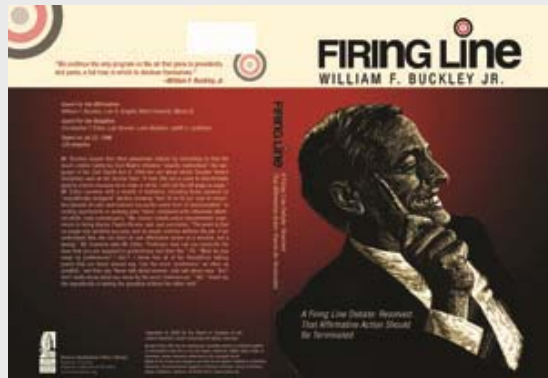


Harold
Melvin
Agnew film

We have footage of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This is the only film taken of these events.

Moving images: Collections

3,000 videotapes, 1966-1999



Firing Line
broadcasts

Our largest video collection is the *Firing Line* broadcasts, with about 3,000 tapes of 1,500 different TV shows. We've found that the fan base for this show is truly fanatical – they really cannot get enough of *Firing Line*. That's really its own, separate story.

Moving images: Staff and equipment

- 3 FTE: Visual archivist and 2 assistants
- U-matic, Betacam and VHS decks
- VHS-to-DVD capability
- Steenbeck, film shrinkage gauge and rewinds



We have 3 staff focused on visual materials including moving images. Those three spend a lot of time on reference requests and reproduction orders for still photos and posters.

Right now we're surveying our motion picture films. We're beefing up their descriptions and building a case for more preservation funding. This is a much more detailed survey than the initial assessment that we did as part of the work Mary talked about. We wanted to contribute to that statewide effort, but thought we needed more details to take to our managers.

Our moving image program is less extensive than our audio program for several reasons:

-We don't have the equipment to do preservation-quality transfers, so we have to outsource our moving image reformatting.

-We don't have dedicated funding to pay lab costs for preservation and transfer work;

-Unlike audio, it's a wild west in terms of standards for digitizing moving image materials. So it's harder to make reformatting decisions and feel that we're investing our resources well. We're still reformatting to Digital Betacam, which is a tape format, for lack of anything that better fits our current situation.

Moving images: Reformatting priorities

- Patron requests
- Donors fund their collection materials
- In past, funding for Axelbank and Agnew
- Grants: NFPF (2 reels in 2012), NTVPF, Mericos Foundation
- *Firing Line*: Sales on Amazon.com fund ongoing *Firing Line* preservation work

Because we don't have dedicated funds, the selection process for reformatting is very different than for audio:

-Researchers select items when they're willing to pay the full lab costs for the transfer, but this is too expensive for most people.

-For one collection, the donor's family pays to reformat one film reel each year.

-Grant money funds reformatting of a few items – last year we preserved 2 film reels with an NFPF grant.

But all of these sources barely make a dent in our 15,000 moving image items.

The big exception to this framework is *Firing Line*. Because we own the copyright and the show has a strong fan base, we're selling copies on Amazon and earning royalties. We use the royalties to reformat more *Firing Line* tapes. I'd say that around one FTE is dedicated to *Firing Line* work.

Sound and moving images: Access

The Hoover Institution Archives only allows access to *copies* of audiovisual items. To listen to sound recordings or to view videos or films during your visit, please contact the Archives at least two working days before your arrival. We will then advise you of the accessibility of the material you wish to see or hear. Please note that not all audiovisual material is immediately accessible.

Hoover's AV Access Statement

In terms of access to all of our AV materials, we only allow access to use copies rather than the original recordings, and all of the digitized recordings are available in our reading room. Use is not very high. In the last 3 years, we averaged more than 1400 different people per year in the reading room, of which 16 used audio (about 1 percent), and fewer used moving images.

We'd like to see more researchers use these materials because it's good content and researcher use helps sell our managers on the need to fund AV preservation.

Sound and moving images: Access

**Tape 61, "Role of Government in a Liberal Society" sound recording 1958
June 17**

Access Information

Use copy reference number: 85023_a_0006904

Scope and Content Note

Speaker: Milton Friedman. Friedman looks at the role of government in a free society. Topics include: means and ends, unanimity without homogeneity, proportional representation, neighborhood effects and regulation, paternalism over the insane and children, occupational licensing, and parks. Among the audience is F. A. Hayek, who asks a question.

**Single audio digitization stream –
Rich description**

AV materials won't get used if no one knows about them. So adding rich descriptions of reformatted materials – as well as unformatted video and film when possible -- to finding aids on the Online Archive of California is central to our access efforts.

When we digitized one audio item at a time our engineer could listen to the recording during the transfer process and write a description of it.

Sound and moving images: Access

**Tape 101, "Freedom and Certainty of the Law" sound recording
1958 June 19**

Access Information

Use copy reference number: 85023_a_0008225

Scope and Content Note

Speaker: Bruno Leoni. The sound quality is terrible at the head of the program.

**Concurrent audio digitization streams –
Little description**

But now that we run multiple streams this is not possible—a big loss. I'd like to see more of our staff time go to filling this description gap. Hoover spends a lot of resources preserving these materials. So I think they warrant more description - at the item level - than the paper materials that we and our users are more accustomed to.

Sound and moving images: Access

News

[Print this page](#)

[Email this page](#)

[Tweet](#) 4

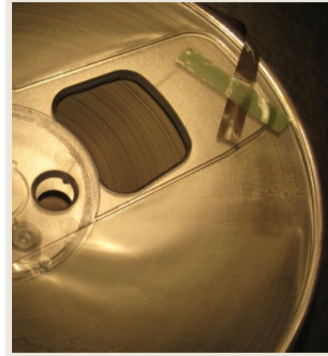
March 13, 2013

NEWS

Institute of Humane Studies' Audiotapes Digitized

Nearly one hundred and fifty audiotapes of lectures delivered at the [Institute of Humane Studies](#) have been digitized for preservation and access by Hoover's audio lab. The institute is a US nonprofit organization that promotes laissez-faire economics. The tapes include lectures on economics and political theory by Milton Friedman, Friedrich von Hayek, John Jewkes, Arthur Kemp, Felix Morley, Bruno Leoni, Jacques Rueff, and others.

The audiotapes represent the bulk of the [Institute of Humane Studies miscellaneous records](#) at the Hoover Institution Archives. Also included in the collection are correspondence, memorandums, and financial records relating to the production of the festschrift *Toward Liberty* (1971) in honor of Ludwig



To try to boost access we also announce newly digitized materials on our website, which then feeds into our Facebook site and Twitter account.

Sound and moving images: Access

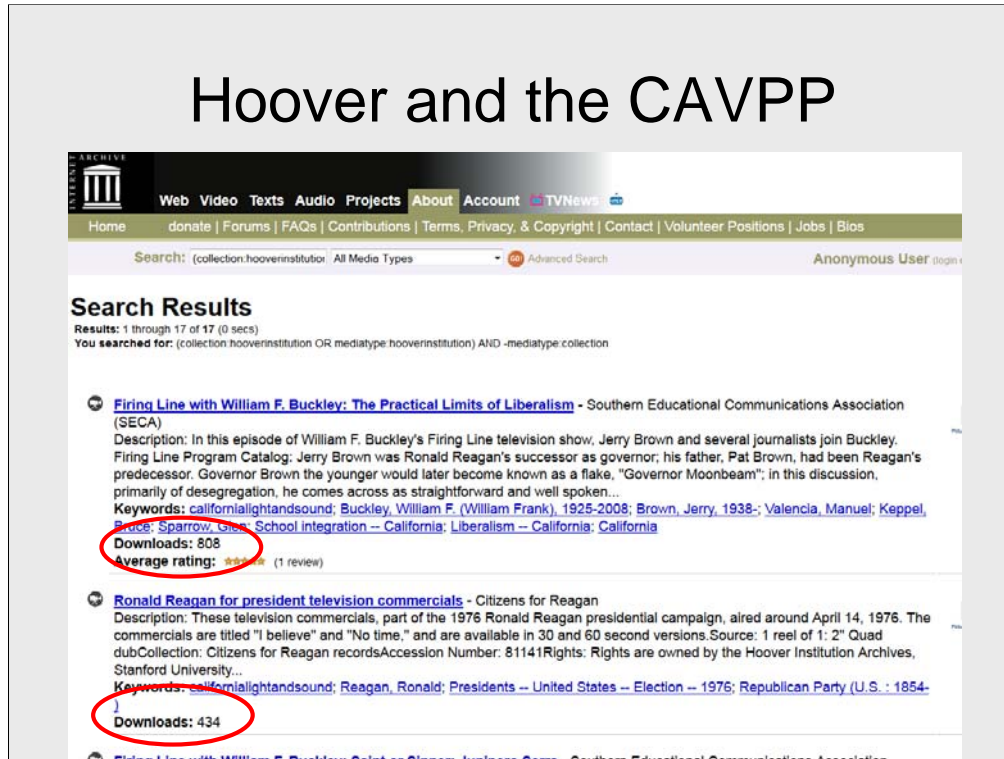
The image shows a screenshot of a Wikipedia article for Junipero Serra. The article title is "Junipero Serra" and it includes a small portrait of him. Below the article text is an "External links" section. One of the links is circled in red: "Firing Line with William F. Buckley: Saint or Sinner: Junipero Serra (March 17, 1989) Edward Castillo and Father Noel Maholy talk with William F. Buckley after Serra's beatification." To the right of the external links is a box for "Wikimedia Commons has media related to: Junipero Serra".

A lot of our web traffic comes from Wikipedia. So we link from Wikipedia entries to our content. The one seen here points from the Junipero Serra Wikipedia entry to a *Firing Line* show about him on the California Light and Sound website.

In the future I'd like to

- publicize recordings on listservs used by historians, like H-Net
- add entries about our materials to the Internet Movie Database (IMDb)
- reach out to younger users who might be more open to using AV as primary sources.

Hoover and the CAVPP



So how does the California AV Project fit into our program? For starters, we have two big hurdles to participation:

1. We have to find AV materials that relate to California, when most of our materials concern other regions
2. We have to clear copyright, which is usually retained by the donor and may also contain many underlying rights owners.

We've only found a few collections that meet both these criteria. We're trying to get rights from PG&E for another film collection, but no luck so far. But even with these challenges, this project is worthwhile for three big reasons:

1. It pays for the creation of preservation master copies – At Hoover, we're selecting mostly film and video items that we'd otherwise have to pay a vendor to reformat.
2. It gives us an Internet site for delivery of the digitized content – The Hoover website is not set up to provide this content to users even when we can clear copyright.
3. It's free to users – they pay no reproduction fees nor travel costs to visit our reading room.

When the current rounds of submissions are all digitized, we'll have reformatted 23 videotapes and 7 films, which is more items than we can digitize and preserve any other way given our current program.

You can see how the California Light and Sound website multiplies use. We've had more than 2000 downloads total vs. just a handful of researchers using AV items in our reading room. Of the downloads, 95 percent are moving images. Either our audio content is really dull, or audio isn't optimized for the visual nature of the Internet.

I'll end with a list of some other benefits I see with the CAVPP:

- it expands the number of redundant, dispersed copies for enhanced preservation;
- it provides Hoover with guidance on target digitization specs for film and video
- those specs may also help the archival community settle on standards,
- it establishes a communal website much like the OAC. A federated search portal benefits current and potential users. It also gives each of us another venue to publicize our content.

Participating in the California AV Project takes time from other work, and the website is a bit clunky. But it preserves and gets to our users AV items that would otherwise lie dormant in our stacks. That's why it's a good fit for Hoover. Thank you.