Striking a Balance with Video: Processing LMU’s First Television Collection

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Taz Morgan, Media Archivist,
William H. Hannon Library,
Loyola Marymount University
An overview

- Making video materials less daunting for smaller repositories and lone arrangers
- Rosendahl-Adelphia Collection of Public Affairs Television Programs

Screencap from Week in Review Episode 1615(2000-01-07), hosted by Bill Rosendahl
Background: The collection

Screencap from *Week in Review* Episode 1615 (2000-01-07), hosted by Bill Rosendahl
Background: The environment

- Dept. of Archives & Special Collections at LMU:
  - Manuscripts; University Archives; Rare books; Center for the Study of Los Angeles Research Collection
  - A/V not a focus
  - No playback machines
Background: Other factors

- External pressures
- Large scale of collection
- Lack of documentation
Inventory counts

- **Total number of tapes**: 3486
- **Total number of DVDs**: 791 (693 unique programs not found on tape)
- **Total number of tapes & DVDs** (total number of inventory items): 4277
- **Total number of programs**: 3802
- **Total running time of programs**: Estimated over 2,850 hours
In the beginning...
Initial decisions and goals

- **Decisions:**
  - Hired an archives assistant in April 2011 to work on project full-time

- **Goals:**
  - Create an inventory
  - Establish consistent description

- **Other considerations:**
  - Access points
  - Reformatting
Challenges of video

1. Various versions/generations: master; duplicates (dubs)
2. Various formats: in this case, $\frac{3}{4}$ inch U-Matic, BetacamSP, Digital Betacam and DVCPRO
3. Short-shelf life
4. Reliance on playback machines
Addressing the challenges

- Our processing approach: *Striking balances*
- Item-level inventory to establish understanding of extent, format and program information
- Brief visual inspection of the tapes
- Keep original masters and dubs; begin research on reformatting
3/4-inch U-Matic

Week IN Review
8/13/99  TRT  57:20
Show# 1529
Betacam

Work In Review
Mono Mix
12-5-97 58:16

EDITED MASTER
Digital Betacam

ORANGE COUNTY PERSPECTIVE
Guest: Michela Alioto
8/06/98  Show #1250, 0CP #81

TRT: 28:06
Digital Betacam
Week In Review

with Bob Jimenez

PROD. #3266

Air Dates: 11/18/05 - 11/22/05

Audio: Mix

TRT: ______
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unique tape number ID from the tape (if available, this is usually identified on tapes or covers)</th>
<th>Tape start date (yyyy-mm-dd)</th>
<th>Tape end date (yyyy-mm-dd)</th>
<th>Duration (&quot;TRI&quot;) (mm:ss)</th>
<th>Format (select one - if not on list, go to notes field and enter free text)</th>
<th>Audio track information available on tape (y/n)?</th>
<th>Sound (select one - if not on list, go to notes field and enter free text)</th>
<th>Language English? (y/n)</th>
<th>Language Spanish? (y/n)</th>
<th>Preservation concerns: (y/n) (Does the tape smell like vinegar? Are there any visible signs of deterioration (for example, flaking)? Add any relevant details in)</th>
<th>Host one (last name, first name)</th>
<th>Host two (last name, first name)</th>
<th>Guest one (last name, first name)</th>
<th>Guest two (last name, first name)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>129D</td>
<td>1989-11-17</td>
<td>1989-11-17</td>
<td>&quot;Week in Review&quot;</td>
<td>U-Matic</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>UN</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>132</td>
<td>1989-11-30</td>
<td>1989-11-30</td>
<td>&quot;Public Affairs Special - Politics in the '90s&quot;</td>
<td>U-Matic</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Monaural</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>UN</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Haffenblum, Correll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>133</td>
<td>1989-12-01</td>
<td>1989-12-01</td>
<td>58:30</td>
<td>&quot;Week in Review&quot;</td>
<td>U-Matic</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Monaural</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>UN</td>
<td>Brandy, Marvin (listed as 'client' on tape label)</td>
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<tr>
<td>136</td>
<td>1989-12-22</td>
<td>1989-12-22</td>
<td>59:30</td>
<td>&quot;Cable TV Press Conference - 1-on-1 with Henry Waxman&quot;</td>
<td>U-Matic</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Monaural</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>UN</td>
<td>Loque, Sassoon</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>137</td>
<td>1989-12-27</td>
<td>1989-12-27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Waxman, Henry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Preservation

Issues:

- Some U-Matic tapes displayed a vinegar smell or signs of binder hydrolysis (sticky shed syndrome)
- Many U-Matic tapes – mold
- Short shelf-life

Solutions:

- Sought advice from vendors and external colleagues
- Triage - deaccessioned some of the moldy U-Matic tapes that had Betacam dubs
- Prioritization/plan for reformatting to address challenge of short shelf life for video
Results
Collection Title: Bill Rosendahl-Adelphia Communications Corporation Collection of Public Affairs Television Programs

Collection Number: 104

Get Items: No online items

Contact Loyola Marymount University, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library.

Collection Overview

Description: The Bill Rosendahl-Adelphia Communications Corporation Collection of Public Affairs Television Programs consists of videotapes and DVDs, which document the public affairs television programming of Century Communications Corporation and Adelphia Communications Corporation in the Los Angeles metropolitan area between 1987 and 2006.

Background: Century Communications Corporation, a major provider of cable television services, was founded by Leonard Tow in 1973. Century Communication's first acquisition was four lagging cable TV markets in California, which were owned by Cablecom General. During the late 1980s, the company acquired new markets and improved its existing operations. Its cable subscribership ballooned to 721 million in 1988 as company revenues soared past $160 million. Bill Rosendahl, Regional Vice President of Adelphia, television program producer, and donor of this collection, was born in 1945 and raised in Englewood, New Jersey. Rosendahl became active in politics as a student in the 1960s involved in the civil rights movement. As a graduate student, Rosendahl took a leave of absence from his studies to work for the 1968 presidential campaign of Robert F. Kennedy. In 1979, President Jimmy Carter brought Rosendahl into his administration to be chief of operations in the trade and development program. When Carter was defeated by Ronald Reagan in 1980, Rosendahl relocated to Los Angeles and entered broadcasting. Before signing on with Century Cable, Rosendahl worked for Westinghouse Broadcasting Company.

Extent: 380 linear feet

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Table of contents:

Program Description
- Week in Review
- Local Talk
- Beyond the Beltway
- A Perspective On
- Orange County Perspective
- @ Issue
- The God Squad
- MidEast Perspective
- Good News
- AIDS Update
- Healthcare Update
- It's Your Call
- Clearing the Air
- Personal Best
- Techlink
- Vantage Point
- Search L.A.
- Local Edition
- Speak Out L.A.
Other outcomes

- Changes within the department
- KCET Collections – processing and planning for reformatting
A few lessons we learned

- Accepting ‘good enough’ / finding balances in workflows
- Cannot make long-term assessment without basic inventory
- Develop clear appraisal policies for audiovisual collections
- Manage outside constraints realistically
- Need for audiovisual specialization
What’s next?

- Issue RFP for reformatting project
- Establish policies
- Data storage and digital preservation planning
- Outreach and partnerships

Screencap from Week in Review Episode 2028 (2001-03-16) hosted by Bill Rosendahl
Online resources

Video formats; preservation issues:
- Bibliography compiled by AIC Conservation Online:
  http://cool.conservation-us.org/bytopic/video/
- Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts online tutorials & resources on A/V media preservation:
  http://www.ccaha.org/education/videos

Preserving Local Television:
- AMIA Local Television Task Force:

Processing A/V collections:
Organizations

Membership-driven:
- PrestoCentre: [https://www.prestocentre.org/](https://www.prestocentre.org/)

Non-profit:
- Bay Area Video Coalition: [http://www.bavc.org/](http://www.bavc.org/)

For-profit:
Let’s continue the conversation…

Thank you!

Taz Morgan, Media Archivist,
Department of Archives and Special Collections,
William H. Hannon Library,
Loyola Marymount University

Taz.Morgan@lmu.edu

Screencap from God Squad Episode 2091 (2001-05-10), hosted by Bill Rosendahl