

## Archives Conservation Discussion Group/Electronic Media Group 2018 Preserving the Protest: Collection and Care of Social Movement Archives

### INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there has been renewed activism and mobilization worldwide as a means of generating social or political change. The United States alone has seen record attendance at marches, vigils, and protests addressing racial injustice, civil rights, health care, immigration, climate change, gun violence, free speech, and education.

Objects created and used for these social and political actions are often ephemeral, presenting conservation challenges because they can be complex, composite objects, often made with inexpensive, repurposed, or disposable materials. In addition, the way these objects are used can leave them vulnerable to deterioration. For example, many activists intentionally leave signs or other objects behind as a means of continued protest. These items can be exposed to a wide range of environmental conditions and may sustain damage before they enter collections.

Though repositories have been collecting works associated with activism for many years, born-digital content has become a significant part of documenting contemporary resistance movements. Streaming video, social media posts, oral histories, podcasts, and performances allow activist communities to tell their stories in their own words. Acquiring, preserving, and making these primary source materials accessible requires innovative approaches.

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This joint open discussion took place on June 2, 2018, during AIC's 46th Annual Meeting, May 29–June 2, 2018, Houston, Texas. The moderators organized and led the discussion and recorded notes. Readers are reminded that the moderators do not necessarily endorse all comments recorded and that, although every effort was made to record proceedings accurately, further evaluation or research is advised before putting treatment observations into practice.

### SUMMARY OF PRESENTATIONS

CHER SCHNEIDER

CAUGHT UP IN THE CURRENT

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Since the 2016 Presidential election, there have been widespread protest demonstrations in the United States. The archival community quickly realized that events like these needed to be proactively documented.

The University of Illinois Archives was inspired to participate in documenting the local March for Science held at the Children's Science Museum in Champaign-Urbana on April 22, 2017. Archivist Bethany Anderson realized that the University Archives needed to collect several different types of documentation in order to tell the whole story of the local march. Digital materials, ephemera, and brief oral histories were collected. Additionally, the archives used social media and web archiving tools to capture events simultaneously on campus. Twitter was chosen to document the local event for ease and expediency of sharing information using the hashtag #cumarchforscience.

Earlier the same year during the Women's March, a team of volunteers had asked the protesters to donate their posters, but only a handful of posters were given. As a result, archivists tried a more proactive approach during the March for Science by advertising on social media. A simple web form was created where people could share their thoughts and upload photographs, which could be matched up with later donations.

Getting in touch with the organizers of the march proved to be the best means of acquiring collection items. Many of the poster donors wanted additional information about the archival process and how their material would be made accessible in the future. These conversations were not only vital to the archival efforts, they provided important cataloging information about the creators' motivations and inspirations. They also offered an opportunity for outreach about preservation and the archival process.

The University Archives did not have a procedure for collecting protest ephemera. The collection was brought to

conservation in a large cardboard box in the exact position that they had been donated on the day of the march. The box contained a pile of jumbled posters that were folded, torn, and partially visible. Some of the posters were stuck together.

After examining the posters and convening several meetings, a spreadsheet was created that included identifying information, barcodes, conservation notes, and metadata that would be controlled by the collection's owner, the University of Illinois Archives. The posters were arranged by size, materials, and media. Certain themes emerged, which allowed for sub-categories for future searches. The spreadsheet is crucial for storage and future access to this collection, as it links data and will be used for retrieval.

Many of the posters consisted of poor-quality materials, materials on hand, or commercially produced art and craft supplies such as corrugated cardboard, wood-pulp poster board, used retail signs, Styrofoam food containers, office paper, and textiles. Media consisted of poster paint, felt tip pens, graphite, crayons, and inkjet ink—very unstable media which is dye based, light sensitive, water soluble, flaking, or friable. There were many collage elements and three-dimensional applications in the form of paper letters, self-adhesive appliques, paper cutouts, inkjet prints, iron-on textiles, and even nitrile gloves and specimen tubes. Many of the attachments were adhered with spray, water-based or heat-activated adhesives, rivets, sewing thread, and pressure-sensitive tape. Some of the three-dimensional elements were broken, loose, or delaminating prior to coming to conservation.

No conservation would be conducted on these posters for several reasons: they were in relatively good condition, the archivists wanted evidence of construction and use, the damage was not a risk to these suspected low-use items, and they were slated to be digitized.

Because most of the posters were of similar sizes, prefabricated metal-edge and corrugated clamshell boxes were used for permanent storage. To save space, posters were stacked within the boxes, allowing for reduced storage volume and efficient retrieval. Posters with collage elements or sensitive media were placed into polyester L sleeves within the boxes. Loose fragments were saved in polyethylene bags, which were labeled and placed into the boxes.

The two-step approach to preservation included digitization and long-term storage in the high-density cold storage unit. The posters could not be stored at the main library due to space limitations. Other oversized, low-use objects from Special Collections were recently moved to another library facility, so this was a logical choice and the best solution for these protest materials.

Once items had been organized, cataloged, and boxed, they were digitized and transferred to permanent storage. The most important part of the digitization process was creating the highest quality digital surrogate for preservation and access, without bringing harm to the newly acquired

collection. The reward in digitally preserving political posters is realizing that patrons may one day use these items to learn about this historical political movement.

Many of the March for Science posters were too large to digitize in a single photograph, so they were shot in two or more images and stitched together. Capture took about two and a half hours for 120 posters and an additional three hours to stitch the photographs together. The preservation master files for this collection are saved as a 16-bit Adobe RGB uncompressed TIFF files, and access files are a derivative 8-bit JPEG 2000.

Legibility was an issue with some of the posters, due to high contrast materials, especially bright white and neon poster boards, where reflected light can cause loss of legibility in the image. The flat surface also makes focusing a challenge, as the poster board is smooth and shiny, and causes texture and highlight loss during imaging. Therefore, digitization chose a slower shutter speed and smaller aperture along with lowering the white point. They found this crucial to avoiding overexposure, tonal saturation, and texture loss.

The digitization department determined that it was necessary to capture digital images using raking light and angle shots to best represent the three-dimensionalities of the posters. These details also helped to provide scale for the posters. Extra attention was paid to double-sided items. Some of the posters had edited information and remnants of attachments. Because several of the posters had signatures, this became a copyright concern. Signatures were digitally blocked to allow for full access.

The project sought to preserve the posters' authenticity and context of creation, as well as to enhance access to the physical ephemera. The subtleties of materiality can easily become lost in the digital surrogates, so it was necessary to consider how much descriptive information was necessary for cataloging.

Details emerged in how the creators used materials to communicate their political message. The information from the oral histories will fill in the gap, and a nontraditional approach will allow for continued collection of metadata by the donating authors. The University of Illinois Library is committed to providing full access to this collection in its original form. The posters can be requested through University Archives. They will be retrieved from the high-density storage facility and brought to a reading room by request. The limited digital format can be found through the university's holdings database, and their preservation master files are in the repository and can be requested for review.

Modifying collection forms can help to address ambiguous concerns for future protest accessions. Space, money, time, and staffing are limited and should be considered when developing a preservation strategy. Open collaboration and communication is imperative from start to finish. An updateable content management system is necessary. Safely creating

a high quality representative preservation master file is key. A proactive, ethical, and inclusive collecting strategy is crucial to creating trust in the community, which in turn will engender more donations for the archives.

*Cher Schneider, Juanita J. and Robert E. Simpson Senior Conservator, Bethany Anderson, Archival Reference and Operations Specialist, and Angela Waarala, Digital Collections Project Manager, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

DANIEL BURGE

THE HISTORY, EVOLUTION, AND GROWTH OF DIGITAL PRINTING TECHNOLOGIES AND MATERIALS CORRELATED WITH MAJOR POLITICAL AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND EVENTS OVER THE LAST THREE DECADES

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The digital print era began in 1984 when two important products came onto the market: the inkjet and laser desktop printers. Both devices used black ink or toner, as they were intended for producing documents and not for creating images. This form of hard copy began to be produced in large quantities in offices and homes, entering into personal papers, corporate records, and governmental archives. Throughout the 1980s, new technologies were introduced and each played an important part in the evolution of these new materials, including the dye sublimation printer (1986), the color inkjet printer (1987), and the digital photocopier (1987).

In a watershed moment in 1990, singer/songwriter Graham Nash used an inkjet printer to create fine art prints of his photographic works for his two shows in the United States and Japan. He used an Iris continuous inkjet printer, which was originally designed for proofing offset printing, to print his black-and-white photographs. There were a variety of new advances in 1993, including wide format inkjet, black pigment inks, and the digital press. By this point, users had home desktop printers and office printers. However, commercial printing companies started buying even larger versions of this equipment, called digital presses, to meet their customers' needs. The first of these presses used the electrophotographic process. The advantage of this print method over traditional print systems was that they could print one object at a time or instantly print many unique objects one after another. By contrast, on an offset printer, it is necessary to make the printing plates, have staff that can ink the plates, and then run make-ready copies, all of which takes time. In offset printing, every single impression must be the same, creating long runs of each page which are eventually collated and bound. Digital presses can produce variable data, which means that each object can be printed independently. With these devices, every page can be printed one at a time in sequence to produce a single book and bind it immediately.

In 2007, inkjet printing entered the commercial market. This process uses even larger devices and was intended to

compete directly with offset lithography. These inkjet printers also use variable data to produce different impressions of each object, though their size and speed prevents printing singular objects. There were some difficulties getting this technology to market, as it takes a lot of computing power to run a machine that fast and make every impression different, as well as having paper that can handle that much water, because the ink is aqueous.

Since 1984, many objects printed using technologies such as desktop printers, office printers, and commercial printers have entered into museum, archival, and library collections. At a minimum, internal administrative records are almost always printed using one of these techniques. In 2008, an Image Permanence Institute survey found that 80% of institutions had some forms of digital prints in their collections, including dye sublimation, inkjet, and electrophotography. This number is likely underestimated for several reasons: many people underestimate how long this technology has been in use and often expect a digital look, such as pixelation. In addition, the "poster child" for digital print has been the digitally printed photograph. If it looks like a photograph but is identified as inkjet, it is often called a "digital print." However, a digitally printed book is rarely considered a digital print. In fact, many short run publications, especially periodicals, may be printed using digital technology. The terminology used to describe different digital print types is often misunderstood and inconsistent. Misidentification or misnaming in records is therefore a big problem.

Digitally printed materials will dominate 21st-century collections such as those in the National September 11 Memorial and Museum. Almost everything in their collection that is printed is digital hard copy, such as objects recovered from the sites themselves, as well as items that were created immediately after the attacks, including printed posters of the missing and memorials to the deceased. Many of these items are unique in that damage is part of the object's story, but the objects also have forensic evidence associated with them. Since 9/11, there are also works created that comment on those events, whether artworks or short run publications.

During the last 34 years of digital printing, a variety of social movements have emerged. These range from ActUp, which came about at the beginning of the AIDS epidemic in the 1980s, to more modern movements such as Black Lives Matter today. Anything that has been created and collected from any of these movements has the potential to be a digital hardcopy. Most of the printers used to create protest materials are also low-end home printers, rather than the high-quality printers used in fine art print shops. Additionally, the objects are usually exposed to outdoor conditions.

An important point to consider is that there can be manifest damage, which is when an object is brought into a collection, and it is already obvious something has happened to it. There can also be latent damage, which means

that decay is not immediately visible, but may appear as time passes while the object is in storage. This is especially true if the work has been exposed for extended periods to light, atmospheric pollutants, high humidity, water, dirt, improper handling, or mold, as well as if the materials are collected but not processed right away. Digital prints are sensitive to all of these factors. However, in many cases, the damage is part of the object's story.

The evolution of digital print materials has also affected these prints' stability and permanence. Image Permanence Institute experiments have documented the effects of water, light, and pollutants on examples of these prints from the 1980s. Many people believe that digital print evolution has consistently led to improvements in print durability. The truth is that the types of damage these prints experience has changed over time, with early examples being sensitive to light and moisture, and more recent examples being more sensitive to pollution and abrasion. Newer prints need just as much thoughtful care as older ones.

Digital printing is not new. It is ubiquitous in collections, but underappreciated and poorly understood. It is diverse and evolving. Conservators need a new preservation awareness and new skills for identification and care of these objects, and education and training are key. For additional information or workshops, please see the Image Permanence Institute website, as well as the Digital Print Preservation Portal (Image Permanence Institute 2018).

*Daniel Burge, Senior Research Scientist, Image Permanence Institute*

ROY CANIZARO AND KIM R. DU BOISE  
MOLDY OLDIES: SAVING HISTORIC AUDIO TAPES WITH  
DIGITIZATION AND ORGANIC PARTICLE MASKS

This project was the emergency mitigation of mold on 35 10.5-in. reels of 1/4" audio tape and the final conservation efforts to save the information recorded on them. The tapes, which date from 1983 to 1992, were owned by the Honors College of University of Southern Mississippi and are now accessioned by and housed in the University Archives.

These recordings represent the political, social, creative, educational, and technological issues and projects of their time. Some of the topics addressed during the presentations were those of civil rights, women's rights, and the earliest attempts to create electronic music. Others addressed political issues such as apartheid, international trade, and foreign relationships. The speakers on the tapes included Dr. Jesse Jackson, Betty Friedan, Sir Harold Wilson, Prime Minister of England, and Mark Mathabane, South African author of *Kaffir Boy*. It was vitally important to the Honors College and University Archives that the content of these tapes be saved and made accessible to researchers and the public.



Fig. 1. Kim Du Boise checking the mold condition on tape and box.  
Credit: Roy Canizaro.

The tapes were found in a locked closet that had unknown leakage for several years. They arrived at the PhotoArts Imaging Professionals' lab with no containment of the mold on the reels or tape, and were inside what appeared to be their original boxes. The coating of active mold averaged approximately 1-mm thick and was thicker on several audio tapes. Staff quickly put on their personal protective equipment, sprayed the tapes with a 91% isopropanol solution to help render the mold inactive, and placed them into small, translucent shredder bags which were sealed with blue tape. Isopropanol (91%) is an effective solution for rendering the mold dormant until further efforts at removal can be started. The shredder bags are strong, create a semi-anoxic micro-environment, and allow viewing of the contents' condition (fig. 1).

Once the initial emergency stabilization work had been completed, the curator asked for an estimate to mitigate the mold intrusion, clean and stabilize the audio tapes, digitize the contents, and put the original tapes/reels into archival storage containers, transferring the original data from the contaminated boxes. The curator discovered the university's foundation had a fund for departmental project grants and was determined to write for one. It took approximately two full weeks of inspection, written and photographic documentation, guessing whether the runtimes noted on the boxes were correct, and respraying the tapes and boxes so that the mold remained dormant in its microenvironment. It was also

not possible to be sure the tapes' contents matched the information on the boxes until the actual playing.

The project was put on hold awaiting a grant application for the conservation and reformatting of the tapes. This took three to four months before work could begin on the project, rather than continuing to keep the tapes isolated in a section of the lab. At that point, part of the facility became a temporary isolation chamber to contain the mold, while staff started planning for the materials and workflow. The tapes with the now dormant mold were taken out of their boxes and transferred to gallon zip top freezer bags to maintain the anoxic conditions and make their progress more visible. Prior to placing them into the bags, they were sprayed with a 70:30 ethanol : distilled water mixture to kill the remaining mold. Once the information was transcribed, staff properly disposed of the boxes and shredder bags.

Over this period, the audio tapes were treated with ultraviolet radiation of standard commercial quality. This type of bulb emits an average UV wavelength between 350–380 nm, which is enough to affect the mold and keep it dormant without exposure levels that would cause further tape degradation issues. The treatment times were usually limited to two to five hours from a distance of about 18 in. The treatment was chosen because it limits the amount of liquid used after the mold was under control.

When the grant for the conservation came through, a cleaning station was set up on the counter at one end of the lab, directly under the exhaust fan. The fan draws and exchanges the air five to six times per hour; it was on constantly during any procedure that required handling the tapes. The fan was intended to draw out any dormant, dead, or dying mold that could be removed. It was possible that even the stabilization and cleaning steps could damage the metal layer. All steps, including the removal of the mold from the metal-based tape, were carefully handled to make these recordings as stable as possible so the information could be salvaged and digitized.

Roy Canizaro, the time-based media conservator, designed the tape cleaning setup. He used two 8-in. spooling arms that held the reels set approximately 4 ft. apart. The area was covered with plastic-backed pads that could be cleaned or discarded. The generally recommended cleaning material is nonwoven polyester webbing. Due to the damaged binder and flaking magnetic layer, he used Kimwipes because they are thinner, smooth-textured papers, and did not affect the tape but efficiently removed the dead mold structures. The dry paper material was not always effective at removing all of the mold the first time, so a Kimwipe dampened with the 70% ethanol mixture was used to take off the rest of the mold on a second pass (fig. 2).

The tapes had to be taken off the original reel and respooled on to a clean reel after dry cleaning. Two 10.5-in. reels were used for respooling. This allowed the second conservator time to clean mold off the original reels. Tapes were

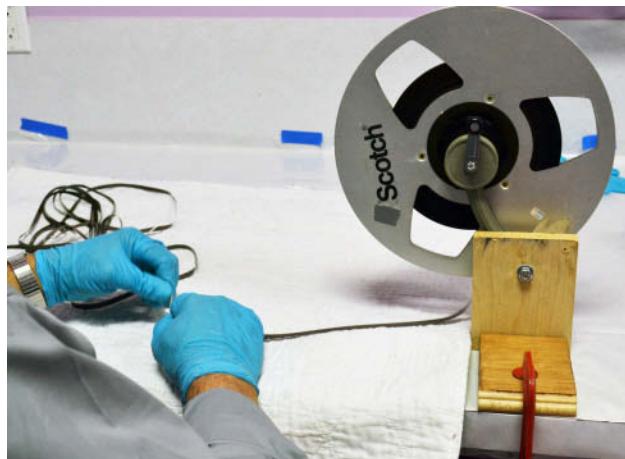


Fig. 2. Dry cleaning audio tape to remove dead mold colonies treated by the ethanol mixture. Credit: Kim Du Boise.

sprayed with the 70% ethanol mixture, which was made in pint batches and then put into spray bottles. This was used to clean the reels of mold that had grown into the recesses and insides of the hubs, as well as the screws that held the reels to them. The water had rusted some of the screws and holes, and a black mold had found its way into the hard, plastic hubs and between them and the side reels.

Kimwipes, cotton swabs of various sizes, and steel brushes were used to clean the reels, depending on how contaminated or damaged it was. The disassembly, cleaning, and reassembly of an empty reel averaged 25–30 minutes. As a final step before reformatting, the tapes were spooled onto cleaned reels and housed in Stil inert polypropylene boxes that have antistatic properties and are vented to stabilize humidity (fig. 3).

Due to the condition of the tapes and the advanced invasion of the mold, there might only be one chance at digital capture. From all indications, the binder on the tapes, if not the metal composition of the magnetic layer, had been compromised by the moisture intrusion and mold. The tape binder layer had deteriorated in many places allowing the magnetic metal layer to flake (fig. 4). This required disassembly of the tape deck heads for cleaning after playing every tape.

Once the tapes were cleaned and ready for digitization, they had to have heads and tails attached to many of them. The tapes were played on a 10.5-in. reel-to-reel player that had one of the capture devices attached to it. This device was attached to a laptop containing the software used to reformat the information to the required file format requested by the client, often in MP3 or MP4 format.

The contents of the tapes did not match the labels on the boxes or announcer's notes inside. One tape was not a speaker, but a concert from the University of Southern Mississippi Symphony. On another tape, the speaker had the microphone turned down when they began to speak and it was difficult to bring out their voice, which was less than a whisper. The



Fig. 3. Cleaned reels and tapes, respooled with new heads and tails in Stil hard case archival boxes made to stand vertically on a shelf or in a box. Note that the box comes with securing hub and secondary hub for larger core reels. Credit: Kim Du Boise.



Fig. 4. 10-in. reel-to-reel player/recorder with head protectant shield removed for flaking magnetic layer to exit the machine. Note the flaked materials on the table. Credit: Roy Canizaro.

archives had brought the tapes directly from the damaged area, and they were not yet accessioned, so staff had to make a list for them to provide a record of what was at the lab.

When working on a large multistep project that had suffered accidental damage, it is most important to document the timeline and the total hours the project steps consume. Knowing what is ahead made it easier to estimate the work performed for the grant budget. Understanding the importance of documenting treatments and results can never be emphasized enough. Spreadsheets are used to document every step, treatment, enhancement, or issue found, and these are essential to the final report given to the client.

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#### WHITNEY BAKER

#### PRESERVING ARTIFACTS OF FREE SPEECH: SIMPLE SOLUTIONS FOR BUTTONS, T-SHIRTS, AND BUMPER STICKERS

Established in 1965, the Wilcox Collection of Contemporary Political Movements at the University of Kansas (KU) Libraries features United States left- and right-wing political materials from the 1960s to the present. The KU Libraries are still adding to this collection. It is one of the most highly used and one of the library's most nationally significant collections, as it encompasses the full spectrum of American political thought. The collection contains a wide variety of paper, ephemeral materials, leaflets, broadsides, and posters.

While paper-based materials are handled according to KU Libraries' preservation guidelines, many repositories are finding more nonpaper objects coming in with archival collections. As a result, there is a need to find ways to stabilize or safely house these materials. Because KU has a graduate level Museum Studies program, conservators at KU Libraries have hired many of these students to focus on housing solutions for these unusual objects and reduce archival backlogs.

Conservation Services tries to use and adapt archival housing materials it has on hand for archival processes. Because this collection is large and still actively collected, there is not a large budget for custom housing solutions. The housings should be straightforward and easy to use, incorporating pictures of the objects and the way they are housed on both the outside and inside of the boxes. The hope is to ensure that curators can handle these objects safely when they use them in teaching and exhibits.

The "more product, less process" approach (Greene and Meissner 2005) used by many archival processing units

means that there is often not a lot of granularity in finding aids. Unless an inventory of single items is created, most researchers aren't going to know what is in the collection. The Museum Studies students are helpful at creating inventories—something lab staff might otherwise not have time to do.

Both the Wilcox Collection and the University Archives have thousands of political buttons that are used for instructional purposes. Conservators worked out a process to individually house those buttons that the curators feel are significant, so they are able to find particular buttons quickly.

Conservation Services has many  $15.25 \times 11.5 \times 3$  in. boxes that were designed to be used for slide storage and come with six long, skinny boxes inside, measuring approximately  $2 \times 2.5 \times 11$  in. each. Both the skinny boxes and their lids are used as trays for button storage within the larger slide boxes. Since large groups of buttons can be heavy, these relatively small boxes can contain many buttons without being difficult to carry. Each button is housed with a 20-point support that is stamped with archival information; the button and support are placed in a clear polyethylene bag (fig. 5). This storage solution can also be adapted to larger items, with adjustments to the size of the box, bag, and support. For example, oversized buttons are housed similarly, but using the “card-file” size archival box. This method of storage also does not affect the pin back, which can potentially damage the metal if the button is pinned to a support. Also within the collection are thousands of t-shirts from various student and political groups. They are stored rolled onto a tissue/batting core

and stored in flat archival boxes, usually  $20 \times 24$  in. The aim is to safely get as many t-shirts into a box as possible, as the collections have thousands of t-shirts and lack adequate space to store them flat. Each t-shirt is photographed and its image is placed on the box lid inside a pocket as well as on the outside of the box. That way, researchers can view the picture before or instead of unrolling the item. Conservators try to make it as easy as possible for the researcher to find the information they need.

Bumper stickers also frequently come in with many archival collections, and these have been discussed previously at previous AIC meetings (Baker 2012). These are housed in alkaline folders within a standard sized archival storage box. If the sticker has condition problems, such as sticky adhesive or ink, shrunken vinyl, or peeling backing, it is placed individually onto a sheet of silicone release paper within the alkaline folder (fig. 6). While Mylar might seem like a possible solution for these items, the polymer-based inks used to print modern bumper stickers can sometimes stick to the polyester.

*Whitney Baker, Head, Conservation Services, University of Kansas Libraries*

DAN ERDMAN  
MAKING SOCIAL MOVEMENTS ACCESSIBLE AT MEDIA  
BURN ARCHIVE

Media Burn is a small independent video archive in Chicago. It began operations in 2003 when founder Tom Weinberg, who had produced several documentaries and television



Fig. 5. Buttons housed in polyethylene bags, placed within slide trays in a slide storage box. Credit: Whitney Baker.



Fig. 6. Bumper sticker within folded piece of silicone release paper, placed within a standard alkaline folder. Credit: Whitney Baker.

shows for public broadcast, decided that he wanted his collection of tapes, including finished programs, production elements, and various bits of video ephemera, to survive into posterity. Since that time, Media Burn has been digitizing and cataloging video. Currently there are over 7,000 tapes online, all of which are available for free (Media Burn Archive 2018). Weinberg has deep connections with the greater video production community and as a result, Media Burn has added the work of many artists, documentarians, and other video makers to their collections.

Many early video works are political in theme and the Media Burn collection reflects that. Many videos in the collection depict protests of one form or another. "Protest video" as a phrase may not be as straightforward as it seems; searching that term on the Media Burn site returns 22 pages of results. To make these materials more accessible to viewers, Media Burn works closely with the producers of the footage to provide necessary contextual information. Three brief case studies illustrate the ways in which video producers helped Media Burn ensure the fullest possible access to their materials.

Collaboration with producers can be an important means of clarifying the nature of an event, particularly in a media environment in which everyday news has seemingly undergone spin and revision before reaching its conclusion. Producers are in some ways better equipped to take on this role of clarifying than third-party eyewitnesses, as producers can often point to their own images as supporting evidence.

Independent filmmaker Bill Stamets was present at the aborted Chicago rally for then-candidate Donald Trump in April 2016. Stamets did not intend to make anything in particular of the material he shot that evening. He also did not, and could not have, anticipated that this event would be shut down before the featured speaker could take the stage, nor that the mainstream news coverage would attribute this cancellation to violent incidents in the hall itself. Stamets submitted his footage to Media Burn some weeks after the event and only after this particular narrative of violence had fully made the rounds. Originally shot in brief increments on his iPad, ranging from 3 seconds to 4.5 minutes, he edited these into a longer complete piece and supplemented them with a written observation on what he saw at the event. Specifically, Stamets observed that his footage runs counter to the conventional journalistic wisdom of the event as an outbreak of mass mayhem, and his account also suggests that the speech was cancelled not because of a threat of violence, but because the majority of the crowd had no intention of acting as cheerleaders for Trump.

Many of Media Burn's videos are programs created for broadcast on independent or public television and in addition to the final videos, producers often provide production elements, including raw camera original footage of the event. It is not always a priority for moving image archives to make raw footage accessible, but Media Burn has always regarded camera original video as essential to the understanding of the work. Not only does it give the viewer a sense of the choices



the producer made in the structuring of the video piece but it can also reveal details that were not regarded as important at that time. An example of the potential for raw footage to cast a wider light on such an event can be found in an episode of *The 90s*, a program that Tom Weinberg created for public television. This particular episode was focused on the 1992 presidential primaries. The clip shown is a short scene of a demonstration by Chicago homeless people outside a fundraiser for George H. W. Bush. The clip makes a straightforward political rhetorical point, contrasting the people protesting outside with the comfortable, well-fed donors inside. But the raw footage, which is also streamable, reveals that the protest by the homeless was only one of many outside the building that evening, including one by Haitians demonstrating against U.S. foreign policy and another against the extradition of IRA fighter Joe Doherty. This footage illustrates the range of communities and activist organizations that had an axe to grind against the administration of that time. One can see the ways in which different groups made their case; the homeless group set up an impromptu soup line in front of the hall, while the others waved signs and chanted. It also reveals the sort of treatment each of these groups received by the police.

“Activist video” can mean something much broader than simply the documenting of a protest. It can also refer to video that was created for use as part of a specific piece of political agitation. An especially salient example from the Media Burn collection is Communications for Change, an initiative begun by Tedwilliam Theodore, who thought that the medium could be used by activists of all types, from documentarians to neighborhood associations. These actions from the very early 1970s often resulted in the creation of footage that was not meant to be shown to a wide audience, but only in particular circumstances. For example, one particular piece of footage does not seem like either a protest or a typical piece of agitprop. In the clip, a woman is standing in a pothole poking at it with a cane to see how deep it goes. The context of this, not necessarily obvious to the viewer, can be found in some of the documents included on the site provided by the producers. In a lengthy reminiscence about his time with Communications for Change, Theodore remembers this as “The Pothole Action.” Community members took the initiative not only to demonstrate the extent to which neighborhood infrastructure was crumbling but in fact to capture it on tape. This was not necessarily created for public consumption—it was not supposed to get on the news or get a local PBS affiliate—but to illustrate the problem to the city. Once this was screened for development officials, aldermen, and whichever department was responsible for potholes, the hole was repaired almost immediately, according to Theodore. For him, this is not only a demonstration of the tactical potential of protest or video, or protest *and* video, but of the way in which both could empower communities and individuals generally. As he wrote, the woman in this footage “used the

video camera’s presence to generate an event, an action which got results, increased her stature in the community, and created a feeling of accomplishment and power in those who participated. And most importantly, a dynamic situation was created to move apathetic individuals” (Media Burn Archive 2018).

Media Burn has primarily worked with video producers; all three of these examples have focused on collaboration with video production professionals, or semiprofessionals, who are video-makers first and activists second. They are, to one degree or another, removed from the actions being documented. Media Burn hopes to create more connections with communities and interest groups who might be undertaking these actions themselves and to take advantage of the momentum for community archiving and collaboration currently taking place in the media archive world.

*Dan Erdman, Video Archivist, Media Burn Archive*

#### DISCUSSION SUMMARY

After the last presentation, the moderator opened up the floor for questions, comments, and answers. The contents of the discussion are summarized and paraphrased in the following.

*Commenter:* Comment for Baker. We recently received a few hundred metal buttons and we did the exact same thing—stored them in plastic bags in slide boxes. We sat down and talked to our curators to identify about 20 or so that would be representative of that collection and made a tray to house them that could be easily shown and taken to classes.

*Commenter:* Question for Schneider. Can you speak more about the decision to blur out the creators’ names when you digitized the posters?

*Schneider:* The archivist who made that decision was concerned about ownership and unsure about copyright, and blurring the creators’ names seemed like the safest way to make the content quickly accessible. The names are blurred for online access but not in the original catalog record. The donors did sign a release, which allowed digitization and web access, but the signature is considered a separate matter. For now, we decided to blur the signature, though that may change in the future.

*Commenter:* Question for Canizaro. After cleaning the moldy audio tape, what kind of preparation was done for digitization?

*Canizaro:* Other than cleaning we did no other preparation; we took them straight up to the digital lab for transfer. Their condition was so bad that we only had one shot to capture

the audio. If we had done any other preparations on them, we probably would have lost more of the magnetic materials. The binder layer was deteriorating badly from the conditions where they were found and the necessary use of alcohols and dry cleaning treatments to get rid of the mold.

After each pass of the tape, I really had to work to clean the machines afterwards. I could only run one tape in a session, clean the machine; then run another tape and clean the machine. After playing, there was really nothing left on the tape in some areas.

*Commenter:* Question for Canizaro. Is there a specific reason that you didn't consider baking the tape?

*Canizaro:* Yes—it wasn't "Sticky Tape Syndrome," it was pure and simple failure of the binder layer that holds the magnetic metal layer to the tape. The tape was on a polyester back, not an acetate back, which is where sticky syndrome occurs in cellulose acetate tape. The reason to bake a tape is so it will hopefully run through the machine better. This is not always the case though. These tapes were from the 1980s–1990s when Ampex made only polyester support tape; it was a simple failure of binder breakdown due to the wet boxes, excessive moisture from the leaky closet, and mold growth. Baking the tape after cleaning the mold would have probably only accelerated the binder failure.

*Commenter:* Question for Schneider. If you were asked to gather documentation for another march, how would you prepare?

*Schneider:* Make sure that we advertised as much as possible on social media and any other venues; recommend conservation be more involved in the process from the beginning; determine a better way of collecting items so that they do not get damaged or start sticking together right away.

*Commenter:* Questions for the whole panel. What is your biggest learning experience working with activist communities? What advice would you give for a repository or association starting this process?

*Erdman:* Working directly with community organizers and community groups is something that needs to be done more going forward. As for advising any organization in the future, collect materials from video producers and the people responsible for putting forth the message; if those are not the same people, try to get as much from both as can be responsibly maintained.

*Schneider:* We would like to be more organized. We were really surprised by the response—the organizers of the protest were happy to hear about us, to learn about archiving, and wanted

to be a part of the preservation of the protest so they could make announcements about it to participants. That kind of collective approach really helps. The organizers got many more people to donate and do the oral histories. Even the protestors were interested in preservation and archiving and were excited to share their stories. It became this whole story that was told in many different ways. We plan to share some of our documentation and forms to show others what we are doing.

*Moderator:* Maybe information like this could be on the AIC Wiki.

*Burge:* Given the fact there is often no control over when these protests erupt, who is going to them, what they are going to say, what materials they are going to bring and what they are going to do with those materials afterwards, you cannot really be prescriptive about what types of materials will be included. Since what you are getting is always a surprise, the ability to identify a variety of things in terms of their composition and condition as effectively as possible is important. With the digital hard copy, it is really about adding it to the already existing knowledge that conservators have in their specialties because digital lives between specialties.

*Canizaro:* One of the things we are trying to overcome is working with small universities that do not have funding—who often have protest cartoons and other ephemera in their archives that they did not know they had. They have movies, audio tape, video tape, of all sorts of things. In fact, the University of Southern Mississippi has a large collection of materials about the Freedom Summer that they are trying to get funding for us to digitize and put on the internet. So, you have small universities who want to work with people to get things done but do not have funding. We are always trying to help them find some grants or patrons.

*Commenter:* Regarding storage—lack of storage, cost of storage—where we draw the line with what we accept and what we refuse?

*Schneider:* Storage was something we talked a lot about. Storage and space will disappear quickly. Continuing this process, they may have to be selective about what gets collected and to collect what represents the overall voice rather than collecting everything.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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