ABSTRACT
Take Me to the Movie Show:
Curating and Creating Digital Content

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The digital presence of museums has continually grown in recent years. This project examines the processes of digitizing a collection and creating digital content. The goals of this project were to select 155 pieces from the Frances G. Spencer Collection of American Popular Sheet Music, digitize them, and then to create audio files for a selection of these pieces. This project utilized the resources at the Riley Digitization Center and the Crouch Fine Arts Library at Baylor University to both digitize and create content. This project serves as a reference for the processes and challenges of selecting and creating digital content.

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I.   Introduction

   This project began with an advising appointment with Dr. Julie Holcomb, the Graduate

Program Director and a faculty member of the Museum Studies Department at Baylor

University. I knew I had an interest in doing a project involving collections, and I had also

become interested in learning more about the technological aspects of utilizing collections

through "Technology and Outreach for Museums" that was offered by the Museum Studies

Department the semester before I began my project. In the class, we had done group projects

going through the processes of selecting content, digitizing and creating content for digital

exhibits that would be featured on Baylor's Digital Collections website. I also had a need to stay

within the Waco, Texas area, preferably on Baylor's campus, which limited my options for a

project. Dr. Holcomb suggested I contact Eric Ames, the Curator of Digital Collections at the

Riley Digitization Center to see if there were any projects available that I could undertake for a

professional project. I had already taken courses with Professor Ames as both an undergraduate

student as well as a graduate student at Baylor. At a scheduled meeting with Professor Ames we

discussed what options the Riley Digitization Center could offer me. Professor Ames had two

projects that could possibly interest me. One of those projects involved digitizing a section of the

Frances G. Spencer Collection of American Popular Sheet Music.

II.   Original Goals

   The original goals of the project were to digitize 155 pieces of music from the collection

and then choose a subset of those to record utilizing undergraduate performers. We would then

choose a small number of the recorded pieces to perform at the presentation of the project. It was also discussed that if time would allow that my project could be turned into a temporary student-curated digital exhibit to be featured on Baylor's Digital Collection's website. There was also some discussion of creating MIDI files for un-recorded songs, but that also largely depended on the time available after the original goals were met. The proposal for my project was approved in April of 2013, and Professor Ames agreed to be my advisor for the duration of the project. In addition, I was offered an internship at the Riley Digitization Center that would allow me to begin work on my project over the summer.

III.   The Collection

The Frances G. Spencer Collection of American Popular Sheet Music is a collection that was given to Baylor University in 1965[1]. It was collected by its namesake over two decades. It consists of 30,000 titles arranged in over 200 subject categories[2]. It spans the late 18th to early 20th century and is one of the largest collections of its kind[3]. Mrs. Spencer began collecting sheet music in the 1940s while accompanying her husband on business trips[4]. She had exacting standards for her collection and often only mint condition pieces were good enough[5]. As Mrs. Spencer collected she created her own categories for the collection which are still in use for the collection[6]. The collection was acquired by Baylor only a few years after Mrs. Spencer's death[7].

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[1] Baylor University, "Frances G. Spencer Collection of American Popular Sheet Music," Baylor University, http://contentdm.baylor.edu/cdm/landingpage /collection/fa-spnc (accessed April 7, 2014).

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Baylor University, "Frances G. Spencer Collection of American Popular Sheet Music Collection History," Baylor University, http://contentdm.baylor.edu /cdm/history/collection/fa-spnc (accessed April 7, 2014).

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid.

The Spencer Collection is an active collection and new pieces are constantly being digitized and added monthly.

IV.   Curating Digital Content

My first step was choosing what subject I wanted to focus my project on. My ultimate goal was to have these songs recorded, which allowed the elimination of several categories due to content. The subject category that drew my attention was "Silent Movies." Movie scores tend to be one of the more underappreciated parts of filmmaking. A film score can round out the composition of a film. As opposed to its modern counterparts, silent film relies heavily on the usage of its music. Without the ability to use tone of voice, a silent movie must rely on a combination of the actor's abilities of mime, the inner dialogue of the audience reading the text, as well as the music to create the drama necessary to convey the scene. Also within the topic I saw the potential for research areas should my project be turned into a temporary exhibit on the electronic libraries website at Baylor. Finally, silent movies were a relatively short period in cinematic history. I thought it would be an interesting challenge to expose an audience to music that most likely had not been heard in a century.

Once I had decided on my subject, it was then time to choose the pieces I would use. Baylor University continues to use a card catalog for the Spencer Collection. There were approximately 300 cards within the subject header of "Silent Movies", and it was my task to narrow them to 155. My primary concern in the selection of material was copyright infringement. I did not want to limit myself when it came to recording at this early in the project, so I chose to use 1922 as my cut-off year for songs I would accept for consideration. This year was chosen because 1923 is the widely accepted cut-off year for copyright. Works created prior to 1923 are considered in the public domain and thus not subject to copyright laws. This

particular criteria narrowed my choices considerably, and my pieces ranged from 1914 - 1922. I was also able to narrow down the available pieces simply because they had been previously scanned by the Riley Digitization Center. The final way I was able to eliminate pieces was more subjective. Topically some of the songs within the Spencer Collection could be construed as being inflammatory towards particular ethnic and racial groups. I knew I would have a difficult time asking performers to record songs that were potentially offensive. The difficulty in this was that I was choosing all of these pieces sight-unseen which made it difficult to be able to determine content. Using a search engine, I found what information I could about the piece and the movie it was used in to make my decision. This does not mean I excluded all content that could be considered inappropriate. Several of the songs that were chosen had sexually explicit themes. These were included both in the entire collection and in the recording stages.

V.   Digitizing

Each index card was then scanned. This was for the purpose of helping create the metadata to later go online. They were scanned using a Fujitsu ScanSnap scanner. This process was fairly quick and easy as index cards could be continually fed through the scanner. They were then named with an ID, and moved onto the Riley Center's preservation server for later use. All of these identification numbers were entered into a Google Drive spreadsheet and shared with Professor Ames. This spreadsheet was used to keep track of my progress throughout my project. A column was created for each step I needed to complete. When I completed a step I would date and initial next to the pieces that the step had been finished for. In addition to the steps I would need to complete, I added a column for the titles of the pieces for easy identification later.

Spencer ID	shelfcard scanned	Names	scanned 491 of 1379	checksum	transfer: preservation & bearspace	Dec. - bearspace: 141 to go	XML file	Uploaded to CDM	Lyrics
m918_196	HH 6-4-2013	That wonderful							HH 6-10-

		mother of mine						2013
m935_1	HH 6-4-2013	Rodolph Valentino blues						HH 6-5-2013
m935_2	HH 6-4-2013	Grandma's boy						HH 6-5-2013
m935_4	HH 6-4-2013	Take your girlie to the movies: (if you can't make love at home)						HH 6-5-2013
m935_5	HH 6-4-2013	What'll we do on a Saturday night: (when the town goes dry)						HH 6-5-2013
m935_10	HH 6-4-2013	Foolish wives						HH 6-5-2013

Table 1. Sample of Workflow Spreadsheet

I was then finally at a point where the pieces could be pulled for transcription and scanning. The Spencer Collection is not readily available to the public. It is currently locked in a room within Moody Memorial Library at Baylor University and pieces are made available to researchers by request. The librarian who assisted me explained how the collection was laid out within the room and left me to pull what I needed. All of the music was housed in archival boxes on a multitude of shelves within the room. Each box was labeled with a range of identification numbers of the pieces contained within them. The music was further split up within the boxes by folders identifying smaller ranges on the outside of the folder. I was given my own archival box and folders to hold the music while I was working with it. As I pulled the music I arranged it in descending identification number. There were a total of seven folders within the archival box with approximately fifteen to twenty pieces inside. Pulling the music took around one day.

I then needed to transcribe all the pieces with lyrics. Most of the music I chose for my collection had lyrics. I transcribed the lyrics using a Mac computer on a program similar to

Notepad. It took most of a week to transcribe the lyrics. These were also moved to the preservation server for later to aid in the creation of the metadata.

After these steps had been completed, I was finally ready to scan the physical pieces. I used a CopiBook book scanner to do this. At the point in time of my project this had been a brand new machine at the Riley Digitization Center, and thus far no project had been scanned on it. My project helped to begin establishing the workflow for later projects to be done on this machine. To begin, folders were pre-loaded onto the preservation server. The machine could then access the server and scan directly into those folders. The CopiBook scans using a camera mounted above a flat surface and takes the image. Any processing can be done before the scan has actually been taken, and so no post-processing was needed for the collection when using this machine. The pieces were able to be scanned fairly quickly and the digitization process only took another week. I was able to complete all of these steps required for digitization in roughly a month.

Baylor University outsources the creation of its metadata to a company called Flourish. The reason that the collection size was 155 pieces was because Flourish takes batches of that size and creates the metadata for them. We took all the scans I had created, both the index cards and the music scores, as well as the transcriptions, and sent them to Flourish to create the metadata for my project. It took roughly another month before I was able to get the metadata back. During that time I was unable to move forward on my project. The metadata needed to be entered into CONTENTdm which is a digital collections management software. It gives you the ability to enter metadata into different fields and then it creates what is seen on the Baylor Libraries website. The metadata librarian at Baylor was unavailable to help me at this time, and so with the

help of Riley Digitization Center staff, I did my best to enter each piece of metadata into the correct field.

VI.   Recording

At this point, I was finished with the actual digital processing part of my project. Everything was available online by August of 2013. It was now my responsibility to begin contacting different people throughout Baylor for recording space and musicians and performers so I could create recorded audio for a subsection of this collection.

Professor Ames and I discussed our best options for recording and decided that I should try to find a Baylor-affiliated recording space. We also discussed options on whom to contact for finding performers and recording space. We were looking ahead to a performance during the presentation and discussed what facility we might be able to use that would fulfill the needs of a concert and a professional presentation. We also looked for spaces with a piano that could be used during the performance. There was also a discussion of how many pieces we should record for this part of the project. It was decided that the goal should be fifteen pieces recorded.

I had noticed particular themes running through the music while transcribing them and instead of sampling a song from each theme, I chose one theme to focus entirely on. I focused on the theme of "movies." This means that the songs to be recorded would be about movie stars of the time, going to the movies, or making movies. I was still open to the possibility of my project being made into a temporary exhibit and I felt that theme could easily relate to a general audience through our society's focus on celebrities and how that has permeated our society for over time.

When it came to finding performers I decided to contact Dr. William May, the dean of the School of Music at Baylor. I had known of Dr. May through my undergraduate years as a

performer in one of the Baylor University ensembles, and I felt that he would be able to recommend contacts for this part of the project. I emailed him in August, and he responded quickly with different suggestions of people I may be able to contact in regards to my project. One person was Dinah Menger, a visiting lecturer who directed an *a capella* group on campus called VirtuOSO.

Ms. Menger was enthusiastic about the prospect of some of the students participating in my project, and invited me to call her. During that phone call we discussed the goals of my project, a time period for recording and the details about her group. She invited me to come visit them during a rehearsal and propose my project to the students. VirtuOSO is comprised of thirteen undergraduate students. All of them were music majors and the majority were vocal performance majors. All thirteen expressed their interest in participating in the project. Since this was not an official VirtuOSO performance, Ms. Menger gave me a student liaison who I could contact and would pass information to the rest of the group as needed. This method worked well for a couple months while I was still in the process of finding a pianist and recording space, however, eventually I stopped receiving contact from the student liaison. After several failed attempts to garner a response from the student, I contacted Ms. Menger to inform her of the situation and to ask if the group was still interested in working on my project.

Ms. Menger informed me that the student liaison I was given was no longer a part of VirtuOSO due to time commitments elsewhere. She also informed me that VirtuOSO was also no longer available. During that time, VirtuOSO had increased its performance commitments and so I was no longer able to use the group for my project. Ms. Menger did offer me another group that I could meet with. She also was directing the Baylor University Chamber Singers, and invited me to meet with them and propose my project. I was more prepared for this meeting than

my original one with VirtuOSO. I had found that not being in touch directly with all the students participating was a severe disadvantage. I created a sign-up sheet requesting contact information as well as an information sheet detailing information about the project. I also included the songs to be recorded and links to them in the Baylor digital collections so the volunteers could readily access them. I had around eight students sign up at that initial meeting, and I had six fully commit to participating. Each student would need to perform two to three songs. I allowed all of the students to email me their preferences on a "first come, first served" basis. Songs were assigned to performers only if no one had signed up for them or if a student had not given me their preferences. It was late in the Fall 2013 semester at the point when I finally had performers signed up to perform and music assigned. I decided to postpone recording till the beginning of the new semester (Spring 2014).

I received contact from a professor in regards to finding a pianist on-campus, but I was unable to secure one through that channel. I was finally able to secure a pianist early in the spring semester of 2014. This was through a chance conversation with one of my co-workers. I had explained my difficulties in finding performers for my project and my continued difficulty in finding a pianist. My co-worker then told me of a friend who was a pianist and may be able to help. She offered to contact him and he was able to accept.

My last hurdle for recording was finding a space for recording. Baylor University has several places on campus that would be available, however many of them require payment which was simply not possible for this project. I was finally able to get in touch with Rick Carpenter who is the Recording Studio Manager and Sound Engineer for the Baylor University School of Music. He informed me that it was difficult to reserve recording space not only because of availability was limited, but because I did not have any affiliation with the School of Music. I

would also not be able to reserve a space less than a year out and it took a 30-day approval. He suggested I try other locations on campus, but these were ruled out due to various reasons. I discussed this with Professor Ames and we decided that we would use Woodway First United Methodist Church. Professor Ames was a member of the church and was able to reserve the space for recording. The staff at the Riley Digitization Center had also done recordings before at local churches and so there was a precedent for taking this route.

It wasn't until mid-February that I was able to pull all the pieces together to start recording, and we decided to record in late February. Everything was set until the morning of the recording. We had decided to record that evening because it fit best for everyone's schedules. In the morning, however, I received an email from the pianist saying he would be unable to attend the recording session that evening. He attempted to find a replacement for himself, but it was extremely short notice and we were unable to replace him. I ended up making the decision to cancel that recording session.

After a discussion with Professor Ames, we decided to schedule the recording session for the following week. Unfortunately, one of the performers would now be unable to attend because of a schedule conflict and I then had to redistribute the song list. I also emailed the pianist to confirm the changes as well as the replacements he had suggested in case he should have the need to cancel again. I failed to hear from the pianist until the day of the rescheduled recording session. He informed me that the pieces were too difficult for him to learn and that he would have to remove himself from participating. I also had not heard from the alternate pianists.

I had several options at this point. I could reschedule the recording session again and attempt to find a new pianist who would be willing to volunteer their time. However, at this point it was early March and I was presenting within the next couple of weeks and so time was a major

factor. Rescheduling meant I also ran the risk of losing more singers because of their school obligations. I could also cancel the entire part of my project and possibly refocus it. However, I would need to think of a something to replace this particular part of my project and I still was going to be pressed for time.

I ended up deciding to cancel this particular part of my project and refocus it. I sent an email to the performers and informed them of my decision as well as letting them know that if they would like to perform the songs they had prepared that could still be an option during my presentation later in the month. In the early stages of planning my project, I had discussed with Professor Ames the possibility of creating MIDI files for a selection of the songs that could not be recorded. This way the public would be able to hear what the songs sound like even if they are not recorded by performers. I revisited this idea in a meeting with Professor Ames shortly after my decision to cancel the recording sessions. We decided that this would be the best option given the limited time that I had to complete my project. My original goal for creating MIDI files was to create audio files for ten pieces. I selected these from the ones I had already planned on creating audio files for previously.

VII.   Creating Digital content

The program I used to create the MIDI files is called Finale. It is a music notation software frequently used for composition and arranging music. I was familiar with what Finale could do, but I had never actually used the program myself. I was able to learn the program through a combination of experimentation, using a search engine to answer questions, as well as an acquaintance who frequently used the program and was able to answer my more complicated questions. Finale was only available to me in the Baylor University Crouch Fine Arts Library so

I was unable to work on my project outside of the library's hours of operation. I tried two different methods of entering the music to determine what would be the most productive.

Finale has the ability to read scans of sheet music and then transcribe the music into itself. Like most programs that have the capability to do automatic data entry, the user would then have to make minor edits to make the transcribed information accurate. This was the first method I chose to try. The software seemed to read most of the notes correctly. It was unable to add a key or a time signature and so those were manually inputted. As I was editing I frequently had to correct accidentals and notes that were printed too close together and were read incorrectly by Finale. My main issue was when the music was inputted it was read with a different time signature than what the music was written in. When I corrected it the music automatically adjusted and created issues. I ended up having to delete most measures as I came to them and re-enter them entirely. The entire process for the first sheet of music took a total of eight hours to complete.

It was then that I tried to enter the music in note by note. I was able to start with the correct number of measures and key signature as well as time signature before anything was entered. The downside to this was that I would have to enter every dynamic, key signature change, accidental and note by hand. However, this ended up being the faster of the two ways. I was able to have a pdf of the music on half of my computer screen to follow along and Finale on the other half to enter the music.
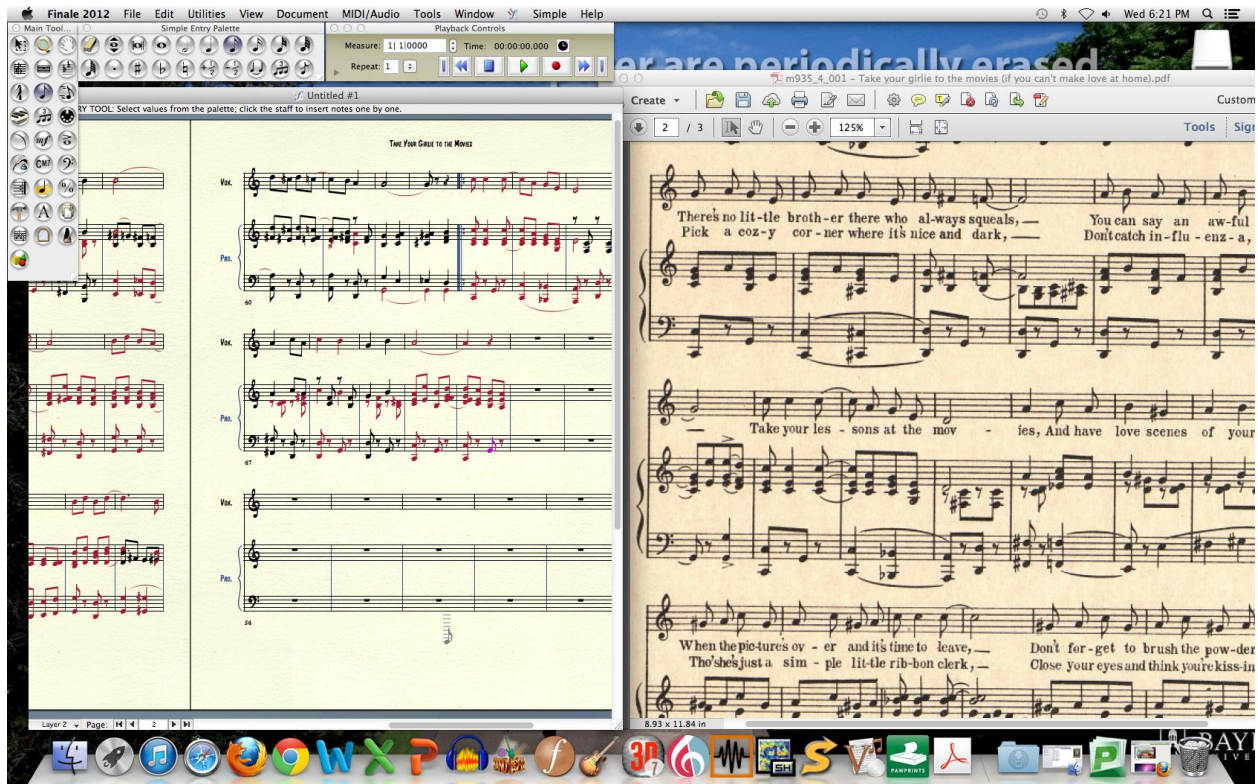
Figure 1. Sample of Set-up using Finale

It took me less than half the time to digitize this way as compared to the first way. In the end I was able to digitize five of the original fifteen songs I selected. The songs that audio files are created for are: 1. At the 10 Cent Movie Show, 2. Let's Go Into a Picture Show, 3. At the Moving Picture Ball, 4. Take Me to the Movie Show, 5. Take Your Girlie to the Movies (If You Can't Make Love at Home). These were then loaded into CONTENTdm after they were completed.

VIII.   Conclusions

Though I had been able to experience a similar project in a class, this was my first opportunity to take complete control of the processes of curating and creating digital content. It provided some valuable lessons. I came into this project thinking that the recording would be a smoother process than it was. It was a hard lesson learned that even with the best intentions

working with other people can be difficult. It was particularly difficult trying to organize the schedules of several different people who were not as invested in this project as I was. However, I felt it was also beneficial to realize how necessary making and utilizing contacts can be. Several elements of this project would not have been possible without the help of others who were more knowledgeable than me or who had contacts that I didn't. It was also an important lesson that not every project will go exactly as planned and tough decisions will have to be made in some circumstances. This included the subjective method of what to include in the collection. A different curator would have made entirely different decisions. It also included the decision to cancel the recording sessions and refocus that part of the project on making MIDI files. The MIDI files were difficult to produce, and I would not suggest creating them for every piece in the Spencer Sheet Music Collection. This particular part of the project worked because I had the time and the resources to produce them. While I was not able to complete all of my original project goals, I do believe I was able to achieve the essence of the goals of the project. While I would have liked to have performers recorded for the music, I think any audience would benefit from hearing the MIDI files that were created.

Work Cited

Baylor University, "Frances G. Spencer Collection of American Popular Sheet Music," Baylor University, http://contentdm.baylor.edu/cdm/landingpage /collection/fa-spnc (accessed April 7, 2014).

Baylor University, "Frances G. Spencer Collection of American Popular Sheet Music Collection History," Baylor University, http://contentdm.baylor.edu /cdm/history/collection/fa-spnc (accessed April 7, 2014).