

04|16|2010

Digitizing Vaudeville

The Keith-Albee Manager Reports

Amy Slowik

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Abstract:

This is a previously-unseen version of Amy Slowik's poster. It discusses efforts to digitize the Keith-Albee Manager Reports at the University of Iowa Special Collections, and details the importance of this digitization effort along with some of the challenges faced by those working with the collection.

Keywords:

Special Collections | Vaudeville | digitization | preservation | 20th century

How do we preserve early 20th century texts for use by scholars and LIS professionals?

Digitizing Vaudeville The Keith-Albee Manager Reports

University of Iowa, Special Collections

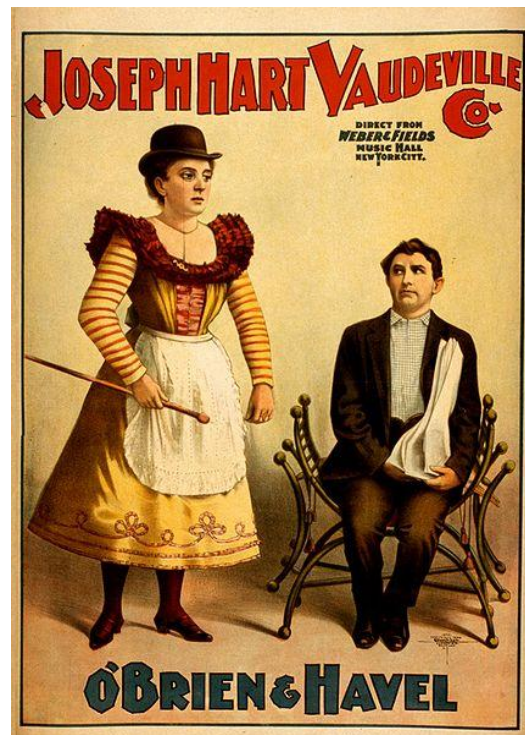
Amy Slowik



What is the collection?

Items from the late 1800's to early 1930's including:

- Weekly reports written by and circulated among circuit theater managers
- Detailed reviews of acts
- 24 ledger books, 6056 typescript reports



Importance

- Vaudeville was the major popular entertainment of the late 19th and early 20th centuries
- Little detailed evidence of vaudeville remains, despite its former dominance
- Scholars of many disciplines from all over the world heavily use the collection

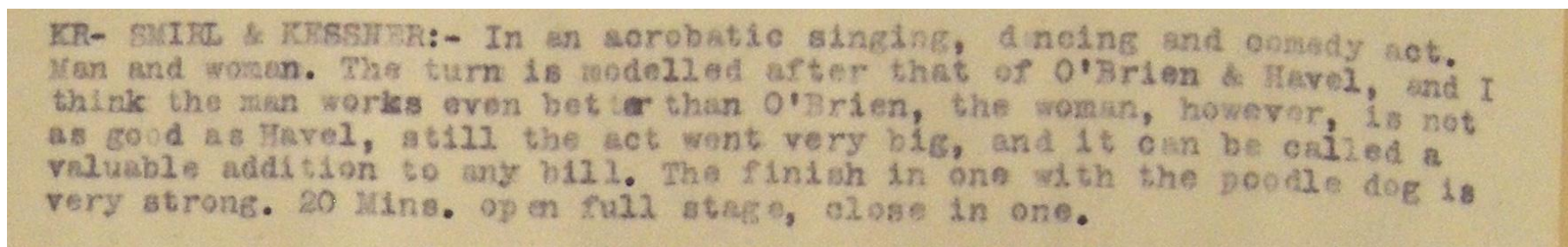
Challenges

- Reports not indexed
- Manager jargon
- Lack of controlled vocabulary
- No funding
- Rapid collection disintegration
- Which fields appropriate to which discipline?
- Scholars do not have time to help index
- Borrowed equipment

Solutions

- Digitization
 - Digital photography
 - Specialized equipment needed
- Indexing
 - Consultation with scholars for structure and terms
 - Standardization of terms
 - Differentiation for cataloging fields
 - Up to 10-15 entries per page
 - Name of the act
 - Reporting manager
 - Theatre
 - Type of act or film
 - Date
 - Names
 - Audience reception

Sample Original Text with Index Format



Identifier	Theatre	City	State	Manager	Date	Bill	Film	C.V.
MRXX_XXX					yyyymmdd			



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Image Credits: Wikimedia Commons, Amy Slowik, University of Iowa
Special Collections & Archives Keith-Albee finding aid.

Thanks To: Sid Huttner, Head of Special Collections & Archives at
the University of Iowa; Michael Slowik, PhD candidate in Film
Studies at the University of Iowa.

