

“A Battle Axe in the Time of Battle” Procedures, Policies and Other Protectants When Working With Sensitive Content

Eric S. Ames
Curator of Digital Collections
Baylor University

“If you’re going to give a presentation, be sure to use a song title from the Black Gospel Music Restoration Project in the title.”

- My Subconscious Mind, since 2007

The BU Libraries Historical Context Statement: An Oral History

Or, How I Learned To Stop Worrying And Realize That Even Schools Like The University of Connecticut Had Troubling Images In Their Yearbooks

Be Advised

There will be offensive imagery and words, as well as disturbing content, in this presentation. This is not intended to offend for the sake of offensiveness but to provide illustrations of the kind of challenges faced by libraries, archives and museums when digitizing materials for online access.

How This Whole Thing Got Started

THE ROUND-UP



Ku-Klux Klan.

MOTTO.

"Do it or die!" (So we 'll do it.)

VELL.

Beat us! Beat us!

Beat us if you can!

Ku-Klux! Ku-Klux!

Ku-Klux Klan!

LEILA PACE.....Grand Dragon.

FORWARDS.

MARY LAWSON. GILLIE M. WHITMAN. MAMIE CONNOR. LEILA PACE.
ELSIE M. BECK. OUIDA OLIVER. MILDRED WATERMAN. GERTRUDE ENDALY.

GUARDS.

CENTERS.

ORA KIMBALL.

LAKE STEELE.

- ▶ The 1909 Baylor "Round Up" yearbook
- ▶ A Ku-Klux Klan-themed women's basketball team
- ▶ Discovered at beginning of process to put all 100+ years of yearbooks online and made freely accessible



one hundred three



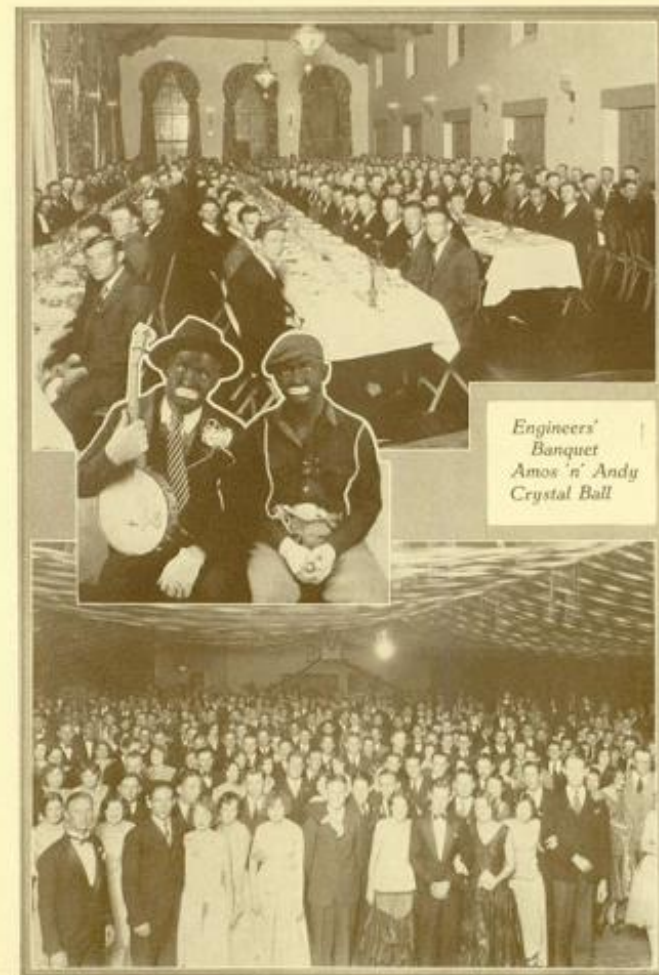
The K. K. K.'s.

• • •

PRESIDENT - - - - - R. L. BURNET.
SECRETARY AND TREASURER - - - - - LE ROY KIRKPATRICK.

HAINES, H. BURNET, R. L. BURNETT, W. F. GLEASON, B.
GORDHEIM, L. Z. HOFMANN, R. W.
KIRKPATRICK, LE ROY.
POTTS, R. J. TADOR, J. R. WARDMAN, H. A.

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Next Steps

An Examination of Controversial Content in Historic Baylor University-Produced Materials

Options for Online Presentation

Baylor University Library Staff
9/30/2010

Presented to President Ken Starr by Pattie Orr, Vice President for Information Technology & Dean of University Libraries. Prepared by Eric Ames, Tim Logan, Billie Peterson-Lugo, and Darryl Stuhr of the Baylor University Electronic Library.

- ▶ Drafted report for VP/Dean of Libraries
- ▶ Provided three options
 - ▶ Redact
 - ▶ Skip
 - ▶ Historical Context Statement
- ▶ Dean reported to two separate diversity committees
- ▶ President's office signs off
- ▶ Production continues

The Historical Context Statement

- ▶ The Baylor University Libraries strive to make our digital collection resources available and useful to our faculty, staff, students, alumni, researchers, and the general public.
- ▶ Through our Web sites, the Libraries offer broad public access to a wide range of information, including historical materials that may contain offensive language or negative stereotypes.
- ▶ Such materials must be viewed in the context of the relevant time period. Baylor University does not endorse the views expressed in such materials.
- ▶ If you have questions or need further assistance, please email digitalcollectionsinfo@baylor.edu.

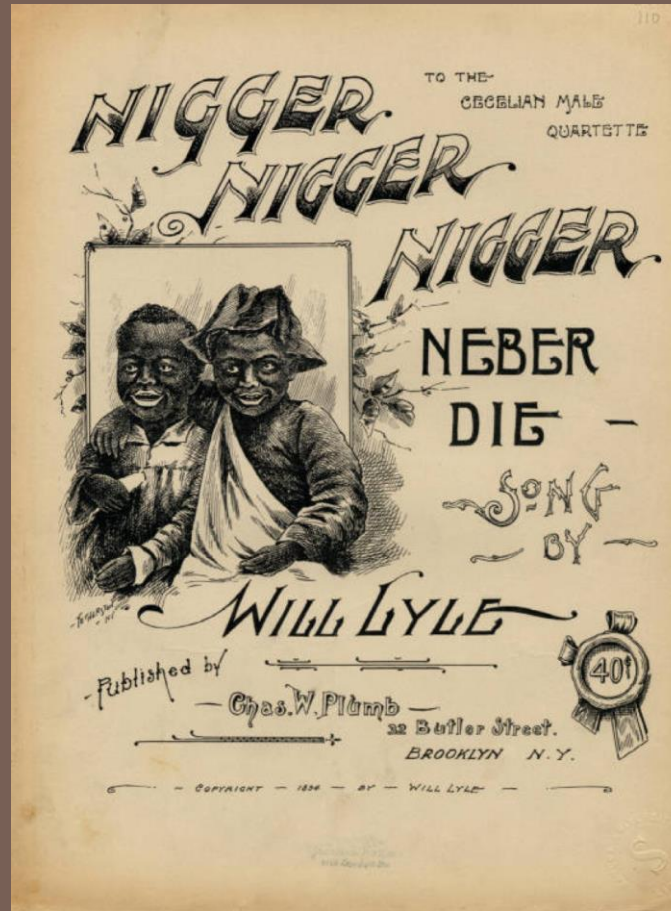
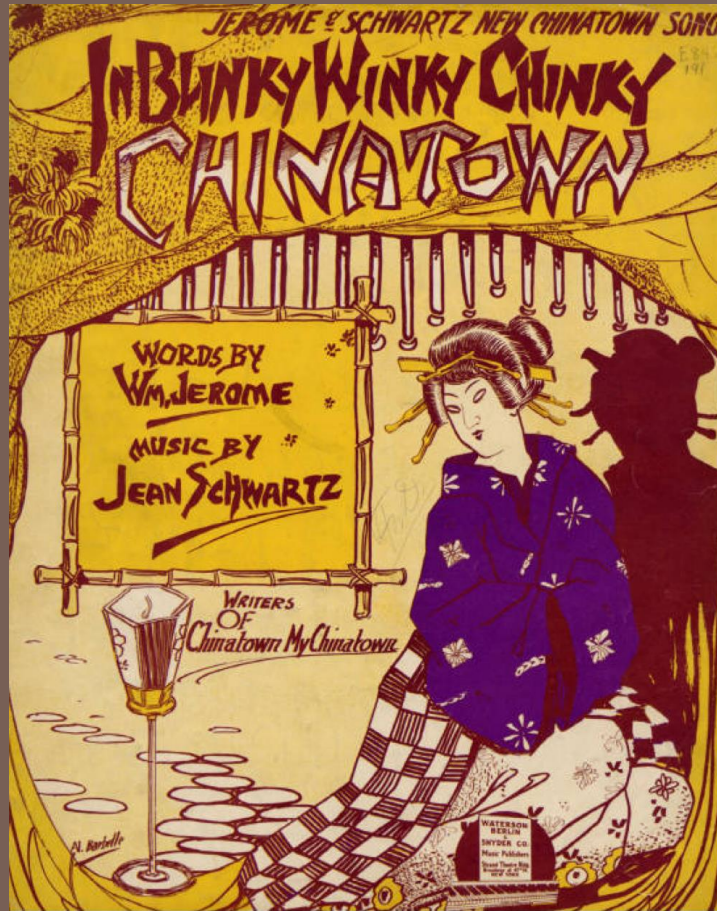
Difficult Content

A Veritable Cornucopia of Institutional Reputation Risk

Two Major Categories

- ▶ Personally Identifiable Information
 - ▶ Driver license numbers
 - ▶ Social Security Numbers
 - ▶ Date of birth
 - ▶ Bank account numbers
 - ▶ Don't ignore simply due to age, just as the grandchildren of M.P. Daniel!
- ▶ Culturally/Ethnically Insensitive
 - ▶ Culturally offensive
 - ▶ Politically charged topics
 - ▶ Racism
 - ▶ Sexism, ableism, etc.

Culturally Insensitive Sheet Music



Assassinology, JFK and the Conspiracy Movement

The Great
Zapruder
Hoax



The “N-Word” In Campus Materials

“THE LITTLE NIGGER EPISODE”

Baylor Barbers Make
Evening's Fun—E
strel Sh

Booker

Well, my cousin told me she never heard of something I told. My uncle, my father's oldest brother, was in the service, and on the South's side. And after the war was over, why, the breakup they spoke of it as, well, this nigger stayed on. And my grandfather was deaf. So, my Grandma Booker would go out and issue the meat. And one of these niggers was—got very smart after the Yankees came in. And she said, “Don't have got to have some.” (Imitate your mouth. I'll cut your head of the boys was at her side, but

He doesn't know who's playing and isn't really watching. He's thinking about the pigeon at his feet and Ronin and Cheers. He hears the bachelors, pseudo-bachelors, and silver backs start to cheer and cheer and someone is yelling run nigger run and others are shouting run nigger run...that's my nigger and one team gets a touchdown and the guys are happy and spitting. One fast lil' nigger. He isn't thinking about pigeons. He's frozen to his chair and getting lightheaded. The team kicks an extra point and it's

Materials Evaluation

An Ounce Of Prevention ...

Two Approaches

▶ Work With Content Specialists

- ▶ Partner with curators, collections managers et al. from holding institution
- ▶ Rely on their knowledge of the materials to seek out trouble spots
- ▶ Potential drawback: busy, busy, busy

▶ Go It Alone

- ▶ Work at your own pace, level of importance
- ▶ Potential challenges: less familiarity of materials, also: busy, busy, busy

Request
materials
(organized)



Review at
the page
level



Digitize,
upload,
carry on

Some Tips for Materials Processing

- ▶ Create a rubric or list of “warning signs” for collection processors
- ▶ Brief staff - and especially student workers - ahead of time re: possible troubling content
- ▶ Create spreadsheet - we use Google Sheets - where processors can note appearance of potential troublespots

Drafting a Policy

A Paper-Based Firewall

Job Protection 101

- ▶ Identify your stakeholders
 - ▶ Think all the way to the top
 - ▶ Immediate supervisors get regular updates
 - ▶ Top of the line needs “big picture” understanding of situation
- ▶ Have a disaster plan
 - ▶ What will you do/say if someone Tweets an offensive image from your collection without proper context?
- ▶ Address feedback
 - ▶ “Good faith effort” to address concerns
 - ▶ Be honest and supportive but firm about your decision to place material online

Questions, Comments, Vitriol?

eric_ames@baylor.edu

<http://digitalcollections.baylor.edu>

(Image: "Be Sweet To Me, Kid" sheet music from the 1907 musical comedy "The Girl Question")

