

**B Sides**  
<http://ir.uiowa.edu/bsides>



04|16|2010

# Digitizing Vaudeville

## The Keith-Albee Manager Reports

Amy Slowik

© copyright by Amy Slowik 2010

<http://ir.uiowa.edu/bsides/05>

*B Sides* is produced by Iowa Research Online, the University of Iowa's Institutional Repository

**Editors** | Angela Murillo & Rachel Hall

**Faculty Advisor** | Jim Elmborg

**Associate Editors** | Julia Skinner & Katie DeVries

**Layout & Identity design** | Colin Smalter

## 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 | 20<sup>th</sup> century



# How do we preserve early 20<sup>th</sup> century texts for use by scholars and LIS professionals?

## Digitizing Vaudeville The Keith-Albee Manager Reports

University of Iowa, Special Collections

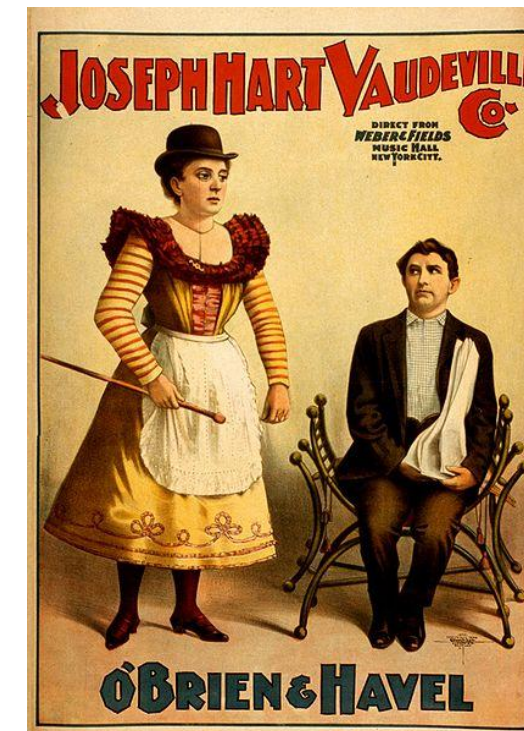
Amy Slowik



### 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

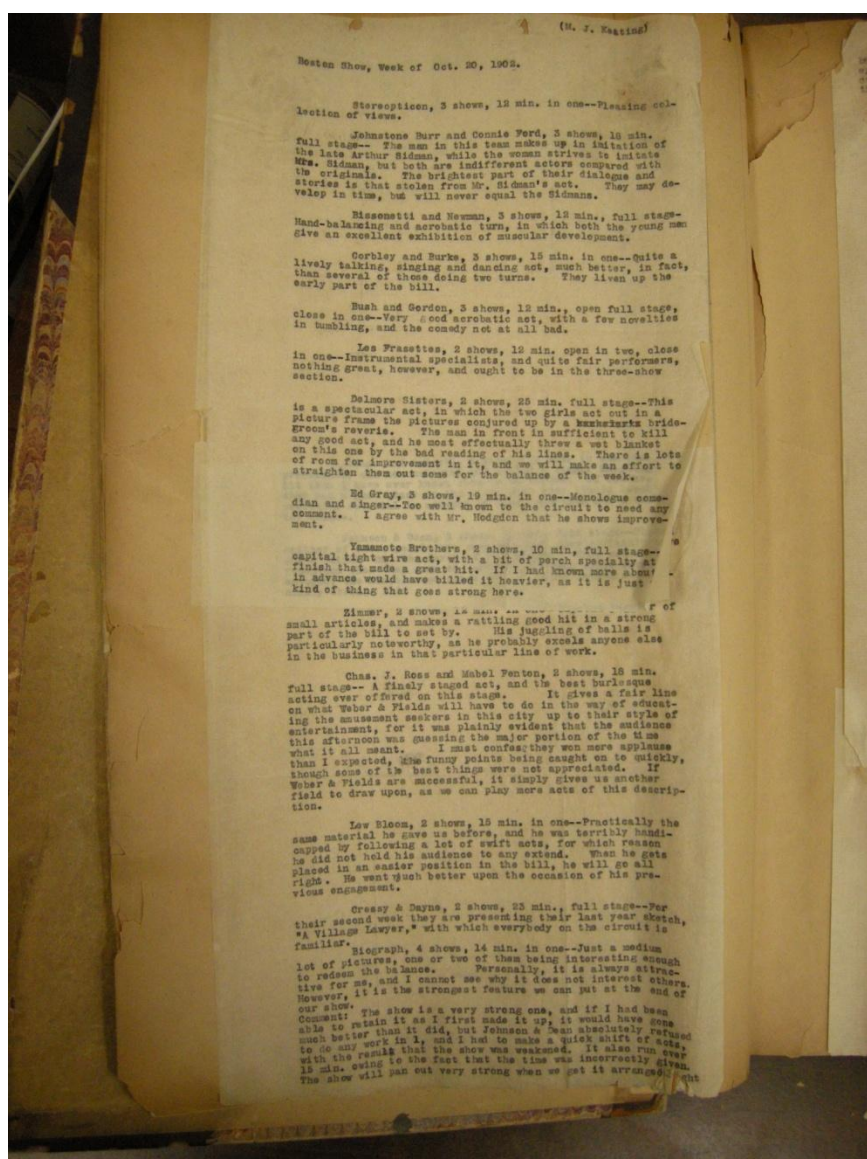


### Importance

- Vaudeville was the major popular entertainment of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> 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
- Upload to Iowa Digital Library
  - Public availability
  - CONTENTdm management system
  - Add metadata

### Sample Original Text with Index Format

KR- SMIAL & KESSNER:- In an acrobatic singing, dancing and comedy act. Man and woman. The turn is modelled after that of O'Brien & Havel, and I think the man works even better than O'Brien, the woman, however, is not as good as Havel, still the act went very big, and it can be called a valuable addition to any bill. The finish in one with the poodle dog is very strong. 20 Mins. open full stage, close in one.

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



Amy J. W. Slowik  
Digital Library Fellow  
School of Library and  
Information Science  
Amy-slowik@uiowa.edu

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.