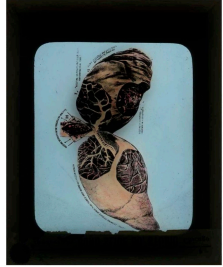
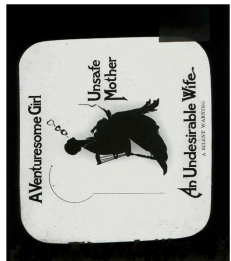


THE ANTI-CIGARETTE LEAGUE: A TALE OF MIXED MEDIA, PUBLIC HEALTH, AND GROSS IMAGES!



A 2015 ISchool Capstone Joint
Kellen Carpenter, Martin Sloat,
and Andrew Weaver



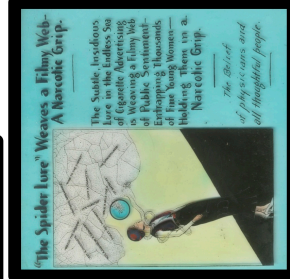
MADNESS OF METHODS!

The lantern slides came in two boxes that were covered in dirt and literally falling apart. Our first step was to appraise the collection and see what materials were unique or otherwise worth preserving. Once we selected these, we began the process of cleaning the slides and rehousing them in archival boxes with paper sleeves to protect the slides. Then the slides were carefully described and some of them were digitized for convenience of access. Part of creating this finding aid for the slides and films involved researching the slides and putting them into context. Why were there so many slides depicting seemingly unrelated social ills like drinking, prostitution, and widespread syphilis? Our research helped to situate the Anti-Cigarette League materials as part of the temperance movement of the 1920's that sees cigarettes as just one thread in a tapestry of social ills



OUTCOMES!

Due to this project, this collection will soon be available to researchers at UW Libraries who will be able to view the original materials as needed. The created finding aid for this collection and digital surrogates help to contextualize the collection, increase accessibility, and in the case of the film, allow researchers to see the film strips as moving pictures rather than just a series of stills on a plastic strip.



SHOCKING ORIGINS!

Our story begins in the university of Washington Special Collections, deep in cold storage: two mysterious boxes from Bastyr University containing materials from the Anti-Cigarette League. What materials you ask? 35mm film of unknown composition and about 300 Glass Lantern Slides depicting the horrors of tobacco use and how it leads to a life of vice and poor health. We wanted to make this interesting visual collection available to the public, but several challenges existed. We lacked the means to play the 35mm filmstrips and had evidence that they might have been made out of dangerous and toxic nitrate. The slides were in no discernable order, dirty, and were often damaged. What then were our heroes to do?



METHODS OF MADNESS!

Due to the film's appearance and age, we assumed that the films were composed of cellulose nitrate -- a highly combustible material that must be handled with extreme care. Further, inspection revealed that many splices of film were printed on safety film, but did not show the characteristics of safety film deterioration, such as "vinegar syndrome". What were the films made of? To solve this mystery, we sent in a sample of the film to the labs at Eastman Kodak in Rochester, New York. Chemical tests of the film's composition revealed that we were in possession of cellulose diacetate -- a very early form of safety film. Because we were handling an inert format that will not combust from the heat of a flatbed scanner, we were able to safely scan segments of film.



We solved the problem of access by utilizing the Flatbed Scanner Digital Telecine Project developed by Richard Kinch of Germany. The software isolates each frame by detecting the sprocket holes in the film strip and saves the frames into individual TIFF files. The TIFF files are then recombined using FFmpeg. Through this process, we were able to scan segments of film and convert image files into video files, thus emulating the experience of viewing the films through a projector.

TO BE CONTINUED...?!

We are not done with this collection. Though the materials will soon be available for access through UW Special Collections, we are going to continue to add contextualizing detail to the finding aid. Equally important, we hope to continue our digitization efforts to increase access to the slides and film. Hopefully, our efforts to digitize the 35mm film provide an example and a template for low cost digitization of film formats that some libraries simply don't have the specialized equipment to digitize in the traditional way. Though this method is time-consuming, it is inexpensive in terms of material resources and allows libraries to provide digital video to see the film in motion as intended.

We are very grateful to our sponsors and colleagues at UW Special Collections, with particular thanks to Hannah Palin and Nicolette Bromberg. Also to the ISchool and our life coaches Hyerim Cho and Nancy Gershenfeld.