

Orson Welles Audio Collection New York University Study Center Final Summary

Overall, our project followed the guidelines set out in the revised project proposal. However, due to time constraints as well as the process of moving files between storage medium, there were slight changes to the original plan that are noted here. In addition, communication between our group and the video group was too cumbersome from a scheduling perspective. It was recommended that the two groups work together on those elements included in both collections, but it was not possible at this time. It is suggested that, in the future, a single project manager facilitate meetings between the two groups and determine how the materials are linked.

Initially, our group planned to digitize ten audiotapes from the Orson Welles Collection, which were as follows: Anderson, T. Interview #1 and #2, Barnouw Interview #1 and 2, Houseman Interview #1 and 2, Welles Documentary: Part 1, #1 and 2 and Welles Documentary: Part 2, #1 and 2. It became necessary to choose four of these reels for digitization at this time. The interview with Tommy Anderson was selected as it was felt the perspective of a performer who interacted with Welles during his time as a theatre director gave a unique, and often unexplored, glimpse at Welles and his work outside of film. Professor Simon also endorsed this choice, calling the interview “fabulous.” The interview with Erik Barnouw, a broadcast and documentary historian, was selected to contrast the more positive view of Tommy Anderson with a more scholarly, and sometimes contradictory, perspective.

If future digitization projects are considered for these materials, our group does believe that the six audiotapes we were not able to digitize remain a high priority within this collection. Perhaps the highest priority would be the items related directly to the Audio Documentary on Welles as they are compilations of audio material from various interviews, representing the curatorial work of the organizers of the Welles exhibition and conference. We also believe the interview with John Houseman, a business associate and close friend of Welles, gives a more personal glimpse into this man’s life, and should also be prioritized.

Communication between our group and the video group was too cumbersome from a scheduling perspective. It was recommended that the two groups work together on those elements included in both collections, but it was not possible at this time. It is recommended that, in the future, a single project manager facilitate meetings between the two groups and determine how the materials are linked.