

History of Preservation
Tales from Tamiment

In Spring 2008 *Tales from Tamiment* was preserved by BB Optics and the students of Bill Brand's Film Preservation class in the Moving Image Archiving and Preservation Program at NYU with the cooperation of the Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives at New York University.

Background

Tales from Tamiment depicts the activities of Camp Tamiment, a summer camp in the Poconos associated with the Rand School of Social Science, the most prominent institution dedicated entirely to socialist education in the United States from the 1920s to the 1960s. Although initially founded as a retreat for socialists, this mission soon became economically unviable, and the camp was forced to begin operating like any other for-profit camp of the period. Louis W. Kellman, the producer of the film, was a Philadelphia-based industrial filmmaker who processed his own film in his garage laboratory. He appears in several scenes, laughing and joking with other campers, and is clearly a close friend of camp guests, explaining the intimate and familial nature of many of the scenes.

Tales from Tamiment is a 760-foot (approximately 21 minutes at 24 frames per second) silent black and white positive 16mm print on various tinted stock that was shot circa 1932. This is the only copy known to be in existence, and the only known moving image material of the camp from the 1930s.

Element Received from Tamiment Library

The original b&w film is lost and the only remaining element is an a-wind positive print made on tinted stock and assembled with diagonal cement splices. There are also a few sections where tinted "light struck" leader was used. When BB Optics received the film, it appeared to be in good condition but was shrunk 1.2% and a strong odor of camphor was present indicating diacetate decomposition. The film element contains both actual diagonal splices as well as images of splices printed through from the lost picture original. Some splices were peeling apart and these were repaired without losing frames and retaining the original diagonal overlap.

BB Optics also produced preservation credits on 3272 internegative stock, which were added to the head of the internegative reel.

Preservation process

Even though the original film negative was b&w, we decided to make a 3272 color preservation internegative in order to incorporate the color tinting in the negative. While making a b&w negative and printing to a timed color positive might have produced less “toning” (coloring of the black and grey areas) we decided that the difference was unimportant for this project.

The internegative was created by Colorlab as a wet-gate contact print. Colorlab also produced two release prints, a telecine to Digital Betacam from the internegative, and a DVD.

Although formal plans for exhibition have not yet been announced, Dan Streible has noted that he is considering screening the film at the Orphan Film Symposium in March 2010.

In July 2009, the following items were delivered to the Tamiment Library:

Tales from Tamiment

- Original a-wind 16mm b&w tinted print
- 3272 b-wind preservation internegative
- 1 16mm a-wind color positive answer print
- 1 16mm a-wind release prints
- Digital Betacam video master
- DVD master
- 2 DVD copies

Bill Brand, BB Optics and NYU MIAP, Class of 2009