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Digital Video and Audio Certificates and Their Usage in Educational Activities

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Abstract:

Šiauliai County Povilas Višinskis Public Library realized that creators, witnesses and preservers of a local history are, above all, people who live here, so the library collects the archives of historical and cultural events of Šiauliai region, which were captured in the old video tapes (VHS) by local residents. Videos from VHS tapes are transferred to a digital format, processed, described and become accessible to everyone via Internet. In 2015 a spoken history project about the Lithuanian drama festival "Atgaiva" (Šiauliai, 1988) was started. Festival contributed to the creation of a new democratic atmosphere in Lithuania. Memories of participants were recorded on a voice recorder, texts were reviewed, edited and published in the archive of a spoken history "Atgaiva" on the library's website.

In this way, the valuable historical material that people have ever created is preserved and is accessible to everyone.

The accumulated video and audio collections are used in educational activities: non-traditional/integrated lessons of history, civic education, etc. During the activities, participants review documentary films, check their historical knowledge by participating in a virtual quiz created for a specific film. It is a great opportunity to learn history not through textbooks, but through getting to know the "live" story. This form of learning is particularly attractive to young people because it is interactive and based on ICT. Creators of the video tapes are invited to participate in these activities and different generations take part in discussions.

This activity promotes interest in history, citizenship, strengthens the links of community members, historical and cultural identity.

Keywords: Filmed historical material, Educational activities, Interview, The Lithuanian Drama Festival “Atgaiva”.

Video Certificates – A Part of the Cultural Heritage

Throughout the history, the library has been the protector and promoter of the country’s history. The idea for the staff of Šiauliai county Povilas Višinskis public library (hereinafter – ŠCPL) to preserve the “living” facts and events of Šiauliai region history came while implementing a contest, during which citizens who participated in important events of Lithuania shared not only valuable articles but also a unique video collection. This material encouraged the library staff to start collecting filmed historical material which has been stored in drawers and not yet published but is very important for Šiauliai region and Lithuania as a whole.

Cinema lovers were active in Šiauliai city, they had independent studios and made films. Realizing that local history creators, witnesses and preservers are, above all, people living here, the ŠCPL staff suggested filmmakers to collaborate. In 2013, a cooperation agreement between the library and Cinema Art Club of Šiauliai was signed. It has resulted in the permission to access valuable collections and opportunity to display them on various occasions, in educational sessions, feature in thematic films.

After receiving the videos, they were digitized from VHS tapes, processed, described and entered into the Lithuanian Integral Information System of Libraries (hereinafter – LIBIS). The collection of video films (from the beginning of the 20th century) consists of copies of TV shows, works of the members of the Cinema Art Club of Šiauliai, thematic video films and other collections. The largest part of the collection – authors’ films (over 375 recordings), which feature the historical development of Šiauliai city, the development of urban industry, culture and architecture during the Soviet period. There are over 450 videos in the library and the collection is still being filled. This video archive is a part of cultural heritage directly related to Šiauliai region, mainly Šiauliai city itself.

You can get acquainted with this heritage in the video library created on the ŠCPL website. For user’s convenience, collections and movies are briefly described, keyword search is possible as well. Many movies are pre-recorded on CD and can be taken home or watched at the library’s cinema for free. In this way, valuable historical material is preserved and made accessible to all.



Figure 1. *A film collection of cinema amateurs of Šiauliai*

In the future it is planned to further digitize VHS tapes, process and describe them and upload to the LIBIS system. The most valuable collections of video films about the history of Šiauliai city will complement the largest Lithuanian digitalization library www.epaveldas.lt and the website www.europeana.eu.

The Usage of Documentary Material in the Learning Process

The collection of many cultural heritage video films was looking for new ways of dissemination. In 2013, ŠCPL implemented the project “Treasures of Šiauliai Region: Digitized Content and Living Witnesses”, during which the dissemination of digitized cultural values among youth was carried out. The aim of the project is to disseminate digitized cultural values as widely as possible among young people. Thematic, educational videos about Šiauliai city, its theater history, architecture, festivals, and education are made from the material of the collection.

During the project’s activities, students were introduced to the Lithuanian cultural heritage website www.epaveldas.lt and its practical use, they saw documentary video footage and interacted with witnesses of the period. Young people had a unique opportunity to see footage from the history of Šiauliai city and to hear firsthand memories.

Historical documentary footage received a lot of attention, and as a result of the success of the project, librarians have prepared and implemented an educational program “Get to Know the History of Šiauliai City in a Different Way!” which is open for everyone interested in history. During the educational sessions, participants are primarily presented with documentary videos. After watching the film, they test their historical knowledge in a virtual “Kahoot!” quiz. Classes are usually held in the cinema at ŠCPL, where the history of Šiauliai region is brought to life. Documentary witnesses are invited to participate in educational activities and discussions are held between representatives of different generations. In this way the history of Šiauliai city is introduced: the period of rebirth in Šiauliai (events from 1989 to the end of 1991), culture of Šiauliai city, development of city architecture, education, celebrations, sports, famous persons.

Šiauliai city and district students are especially invited to participate in non-traditional history and Lithuanian language classes. Educational institutions have another possibility to participate in these activities – to invite librarians to their own premises. Youth has an opportunity to learn history in a different way – not through textbooks, but through getting to know the “live” story. These activities promote interest in the history and development of Šiauliai city, foster national feelings, help to appreciate the importance of historical events and the role of individual personalities. They are interactive and based on ICT solutions, making this form of learning particularly attractive to today’s youth.

ŠCPL aims to offer and adapt its services to different groups of society. The educational programme “Get to Know the History of Šiauliai City in a Different Way!” was adapted for people with special needs, including persons with intellectual disabilities. In 2015, more than 20 thematic educational activities were organized involving around 300 young participants with special needs.

The Lithuanian Drama Festival “Atgaiva”

At the beginning of the revival, on December 12-22, 1988, during important political and social transformations, the Lithuanian drama festival “Atgaiva” took place in Šiauliai including Lithuanian Drama and Puppet Theaters with the best Lithuanian classical and contemporary dramaturgy performances. The organizers of the festival invited writers, critics, scientists to Šiauliai to give lectures on relevant issues, hold discussions and readings of poetry. It was an eloquent and democratic act of revitalization of national memory, knowledge of one’s own culture and reappraisal of values.

During the festival, a bulletin “Atgaiva” was being published. Four issues of the publication had been published, which are considered the first forerunners of the free cultural press. In order to preserve this bibliographic rarity, ŠCPL has digitized all four issues and published them on the library’s website.

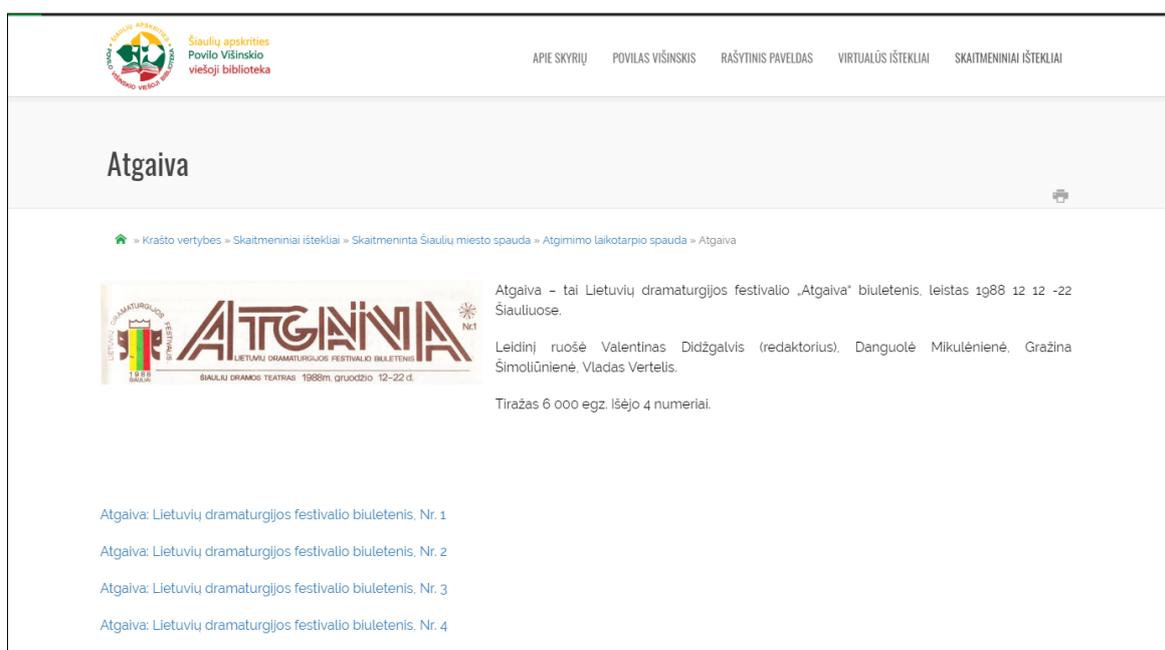


Figure 2. Digitized “Atgaiva” bulletins on the ŠCPL website

The Spoken History Archive “Atgaiva”

Professor Patrick Chura from the University of Akron (Ohio, USA) is well known to the people of Šiauliai because of his interest in Lithuanian literature and culture, translations of Lithuanian literary works and cultural texts from Lithuanian into English.

In 2009, the professor was a lecturer at Šiauliai University. While in Šiauliai, he spent much of his time researching the archives of Šiauliai Drama Theater and Lithuanian literature and art, was interested in the history of the Lithuanian theater. The professor was particularly interested the Drama festival “Atgaiva” that took place in Šiauliai in 1988. He said: “If we look at the festival “Atgaiva” as a one single narrative, it could be understood as a declaration of Lithuanian cultural independence from the Soviet Union’s culture that took place even fifteen months before the political declaration of the country’s independence.”¹

In 2015, a cooperation between P. Chura and staff of Šiauliai county Povilas Višinskis public library has started. A spoken history project on the Lithuanian drama festival “Atgaiva” (Šiauliai, 1988) was started. According to the teatrologist Elvyra Markevičiūtė, this is one of the most beautiful cases of cooperation: not being a Lithuanian himself, but with the help of the library staff, the professor could implement his idea.

In 2015-2017, ŠCPL invited organizers, directors, actors, theater staff and audience to share their memories about the festival “Atgaiva” (Šiauliai, 1988) for the spoken history project.

¹ Markevičiūtė E., Kultūros nepriklausomybės dienos, *Lietuvių dramaturgijos festivalis Atgaiva 30*, 2018 m.

10 dienų, kurios sukrėtė Lietuvą!
Sakytinės istorijos projektas apie
Lietuvių dramaturgijos festivalį „Atgaiva“

Kviečiame dalyvauti – kiekviena istorija unikali ir svarbi!





Siaulių apskrities Povilo Višinskio viešoji biblioteka, bendradarbiaudama su Akrono universiteto (Ohajo valstija, JAV) profesoriumi Patrick Chura, inicijuoja sakytinės istorijos projektą apie Lietuvių dramaturgijos festivalį „Atgaiva“, vykusį 1988 m. gruodžio mėn. 12-22 d. Šiauliuose.

Yra galimybė susitikti su projekto iniciatoriumi prof. Patrick Chura, kuris Šiauliuose lankysis 2015 m. lapkričio 16-27 dienomis.

Profesorius Patrick Chura tyrinėja festivalį „Atgaiva“.

JAV lietuvių žurnale „Litanus“ 2013 m. publikavo straipsnį „Ten Days That Shook Lithuania“: The Atgaiva Drama Festival of 1988.“ Darbus tęsia toliau – planuoja parašyti knygą apie festivalį bei sukurti sakytinės istorijos archyvą. Jūsų pasakojimas būtų vertingas įnašas į sakytinės istorijos archyvą. Archyvas bus talpinamas bibliotekos internetinėje svetainėje ir prieinamas kiekvienam, kuris domisi Lietuvos kultūros, Atgimimo laikotarpio istorija.

Kviečiame Jus prisidėti prie festivalio „Atgaiva“ sakytinės istorijos archyvo kūrimo. Mums svarbu, kad savo atsiminimais apie festivalį pasidalintų:

- Festivalio organizatoriai, režisieriai, aktoriai, teatro darbuotojai.
- Žiūrovai, kurie dalyvavo festivalio renginiuose, vaidinimuose, diskusijose „Ryto mintys“, skaitymuose „Nakties poezija“.
- Asmenys, kurie gali pasidalinti savo nuomone apie festivalio poveikį Lietuvos kultūrai ir politikai Atgimimo metu.
- Visi norintys papasakoti savo prisiminimus apie festivalį.

Jūsų pasakojimas pagal pateiktus klausimus (žr. žemiau) bus įrašomas į diktofoną Jums patogiu laiku ir pasirinktoje vietoje.
 Vėliau – patalpintas į festivalio „Atgaiva“ sakytinės istorijos archyvą bibliotekos internetinėje svetainėje.

Figure 3. A public invitation from the library to contribute to the creation of the spoken history archive of the festival “Atgaiva”

Nine people responded to the invitation and shared their memories: Vytautas Juškus, a political and public figure of Šiauliai city and Lithuania (head of Šiauliai Drama Theater in 1987-1992); theater director Gytis Padegimas (chief director of Šiauliai Drama Theater in 1988-1993); art critic Valentinas Didžgalvis (literary director of Šiauliai Drama Theater in 1984-1989); theater and film actor Antanas Venckus (Šiauliai Drama Theater actor since 1977); actor, photo artist Juozas Bindokas (Šiauliai Drama Theater actor since 1972); actress, reciter Irena Liutikaitė (actress of Šiauliai Drama Theater since 1972); actress Nomeda Bėčiūtė (student of the Lithuanian State Conservatoire in 1987-1990, actress of Šiauliai Drama Theater since 1990); artist, political and public figure of Šiauliai city Arūnas Vasiliauskas (viewer of the festival “Atgaiva”); choir conductor and educator Sigitas Vaičiulionis (viewer of the festival “Atgaiva”). During the interviews, the experiences and significance of the festival were discussed. Conversations were recorded on a voice recorder, reviewed and edited.

Interviews with the history witnesses of that time encouraged the professor to continue his research and study the historical significance of the festival. On this subject he wrote and published a couple of articles:

1. Patrick Chura. „Dešimt dienų, kurios sukrėtė Lietuvą“: 1988 metų dramaturgijos festivalis „Atgaiva“. *Varpai*, 2015 (32), p. 103–122.
2. Patrick Chura. Gytis Padegimas and Valentinas Didžgalvis Debate the Legacy of the 1988 „Atgaiva“ Drama Festival. *Litanus*, Volume 63:3 (2017), p. 23–48.

In 2018, in commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the festival, an exhibition was prepared and the archive of the spoken history “Atgaiva” was presented. Later it was published on the library’s website www.savb.lt. The archive consists of 9 audio recordings and text translations by P. Chura into English. The archive also contains an interview of prof. Mr. Chura in English explaining why he is interested in the festival.

The screenshot shows the website interface for the 'Atgaiva' archive. At the top left is the logo of the Povilo Višinskio viešoji biblioteka. The navigation menu includes 'APIE SKYRIŲ', 'POVILAS VIŠINSKIS', 'RAŠYTINIS PAVELDAS', 'VIRTUALŪS IŠTEKLIAI', and 'SKAITMENINIAI IŠTEKLIAI'. The main heading is 'Sakytinės istorijos „Atgaiva“ archyvas'. Below it is a search bar with the text 'Paiėškos frazė...' and a green 'ieškoti' button. A sidebar titled 'TURINYS' lists nine interviews with green circular icons: Vytauto Juškaus, Gyčio Padegimo, Valentino Didžgalvio, Antano Venckaus, Juozo Bindoko, Irenos Liutikaitės, Nomodos Bėčiūtės, Arūno Vasiliausko, Sigitto Vaičiulionio, and Patrick Chura. The main content area features a logo for the 'LIETUVIŲ DRAMATURGIJOS FESTIVALIS 1988 ŠIAULIAI' and a title 'Sakytinės istorijos projektas apie lietuvių dramaturgijos festivalį „Atgaiva“'. The text describes the project as a collaboration with Professor Patrick Chura, involving interviews with festival organizers, directors, and actors. Below this is a sub-section titled 'Apie lietuvių dramaturgijos festivalį „Atgaiva“' with a small image of a stage and a brief description of the festival's history.

Figure 4. The archive of a spoken history “Atgaiva” on the ŠCPL website

In the future it is planned to add to the archive sound recordings made during the festival (1988), footage of the 30th anniversary of the festival “Atgaiva” filmed in the library, P. Chura’s English translations of existing interviews, etc.

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