Texas A&M University-Commerce Libraries Public Domain Clearance Project

INCREASING USE OF DIGITIZED PUBLIC DOMAIN MATERIALS AT THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY-COMMERCE LIBRARIES

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The Project

- In 2015, we decided to begin exploring public domain applications as they relate to our university's archive and our Northeast Texas Digital Collections.
- In 2016, we began a pilot project to identify and clearly label public domain materials in our Digital Collections, and also port them to Wikimedia Commons to facilitate their use on Wikipedia and other websites external to our university.

Two Primary Goals

- 1. To make public domain materials in the Northeast Texas Digital Collections more widely accessible and serve researchers by helping them discern copyright status more clearly.
- 2. To determine if clearly identifying such materials as being in the public domain would direct more traffic back to the source material in our Northeast Texas Digital Collections.

Copyright: Background

- United States copyright law is notoriously complex
- However, any materials published in the U.S. prior to January 1, 1923, are in the public domain
- Unpublished materials created more than 120 years ago are also in the public domain if the author's death date is unknown or the work was created either anonymously or as a work for hire

Historic ET Collection

Home >> Historic ET Collection

Historic ET Collection



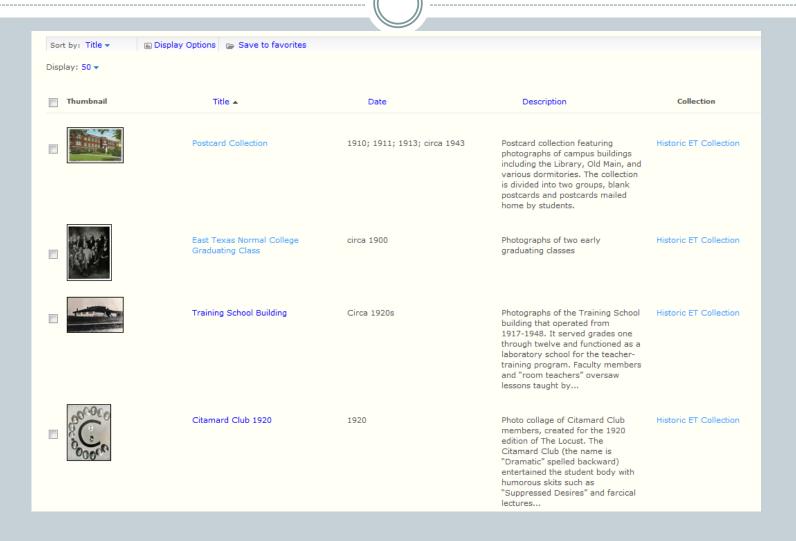
About this collection

The Historic ET Digital Collection contains photographs, scrapbooks, programs, and other items documenting over one hundred years of university history. The items in this collection provide a rich look into Texas A&M-Commerce's past, beginning with the formation of East Texas Normal College in 1889.

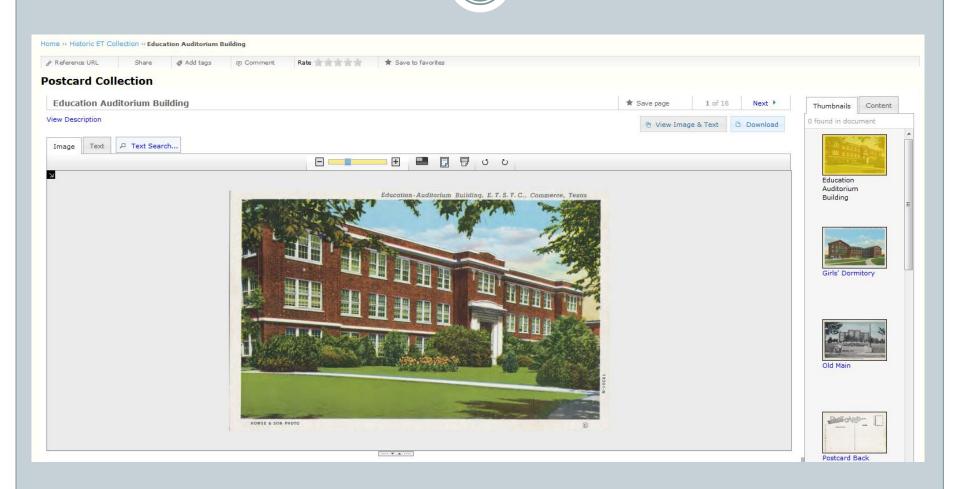
Historic ET Collection

- Consists of 392 individual items (neither too big nor too small for this project)
- Materials were originally produced by the university, so third party rights are not an issue
- The thematic nature of the material in the Historic ET Collection covers university history, which makes it very conducive for online uses that deal with the history of the university

Images from the Historic ET Collection



Example image from the Historic ET Collection



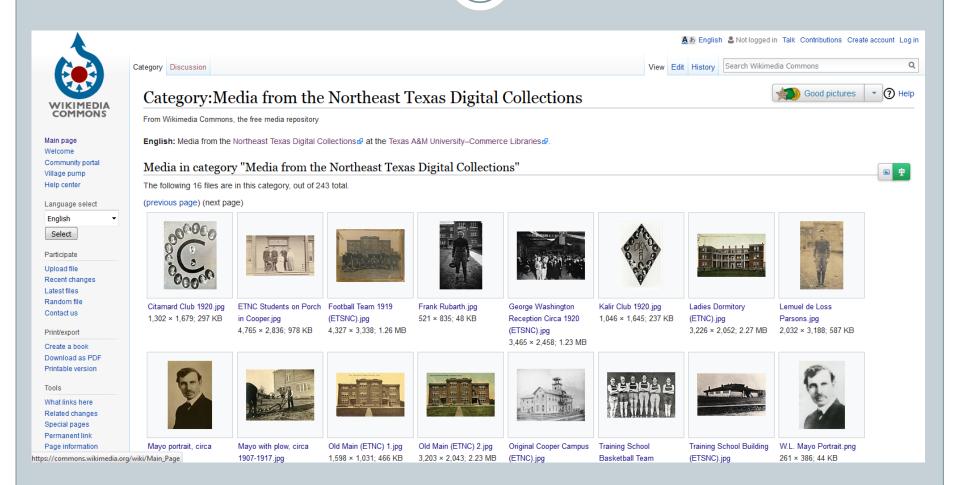
Determining public domain status

- We assembled a spreadsheet detailing all the pre-1923 photographic and textual materials in the Historic ET Collection, which totaled 80 separate files
- Copyright statuses were then ascertained and documented with a three-part "stoplight" model:
 - **Green "certain" status** was assigned to materials that could be proved beyond a reasonable doubt to be in the public domain (9 total files): *only these were flagged as public domain content*
 - Yellow "plausible" status was given to materials dated before 1923 in a form typically published, such as programs or postcards, but with no explicit proof of publication (19 total files)
 - Red "uncertain" status was assigned to materials with no substantive evidence of public domain status, such as personal letters (53 total files)

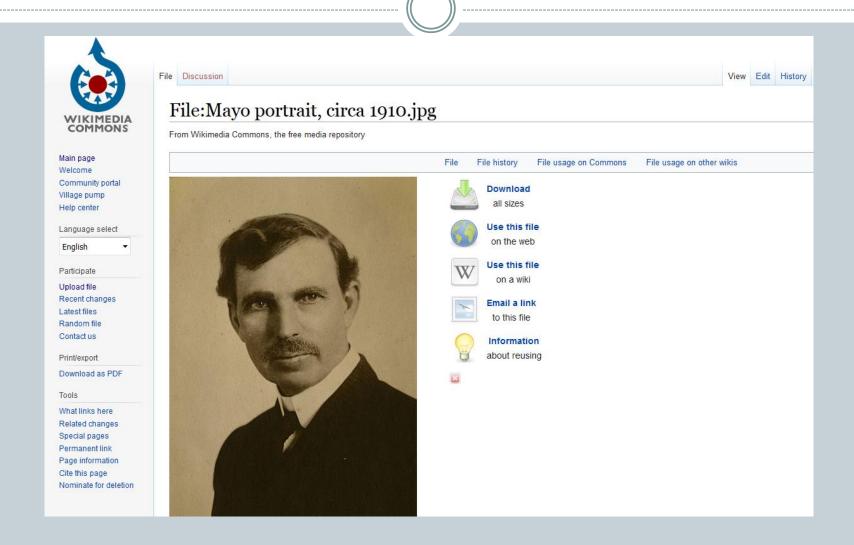
Yearbooks and Wikimedia Commons

- We decided to take a risk-averse strategy and only change the rights statements on the materials that were identified as "certainly" in the public domain, initially a total of 9 separate items.
- Later, the three *Locust* student yearbooks published before 1923 were added to the project, and many of their individual images were uploaded to Wikimedia Commons, greatly increasing the number of project files there.
- In all, this resulted in 243 individual files being uploaded to Wikimedia Commons, the vast majority being from the three yearbooks.

Images on Wikimedia Commons



Example image on Wikimedia Commons



Same image on the Northeast Texas Digital Collections

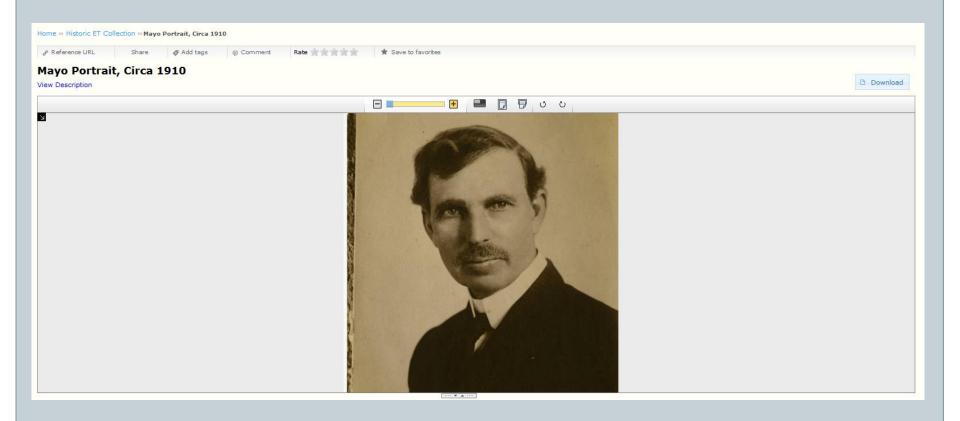


Image use metrics

- By March 2018, 35 distinct images uploaded to Wikimedia Commons for this project (representing 14.4% of all images) had been used in Wikipedia articles or other Wikimedia pages and a total of 49 "total image usages" had occurred (47 on English Wikipedia, and one each on Armenian Wikipedia and Hebrew Wikipedia)
- Also in March 2018, 26 different usages of these images on non-Wikimedia websites had been tracked using Google search functionalities, via both text string and reverse image searches (22 on English-language websites, with one each on websites written in French, Georgian, Korean, and Spanish)
- Also, a thorough analysis last month of views metrics to the Northeast Texas Digital Collections since it was created in June 2013 revealed that for the 18 images and image sets (such as yearbook files, which are counted as single files in these in-house metrics), 17 of them had higher rates of viewership after the uploads to Wikimedia Commons

Example image used on the English Wikipedia





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History of East Texas Normal College

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The **history of East Texas Normal College** (ETNC) comprises the history of the university now known as Texas A&M University—Commerce from its foundation as a private normal college in 1889 to its acquisition by the State of Texas in 1917. It was founded in Cooper by Kentucky native William L. Mayo, who served as its president from its foundation until his death in 1917, and moved to Commerce after its original campus burned down in 1894. A popular school for active teachers seeking state certification or recertification, it was largely shaped by Mayo's own personal beliefs about education, which focused on participation and hands-on learning instead of memorization or rote learning.

ETNC's relative success during this period led to rivalry with other nearby colleges such as T. Henry Bridges' Henry College in Campbell, a 1904 attempt by Denison to entice Mayo to relocate the college there for a considerable amount of financial aid, and praise from perhaps its most famous alumnus, future Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Sam Rayburn. By the time the 35th Texas Legislature voted to buy the college in 1917, it had educated more than 30,000 students, including more public school teachers than any other college or university in Texas during the same period.



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William L. Mayo, photograph circa 1910

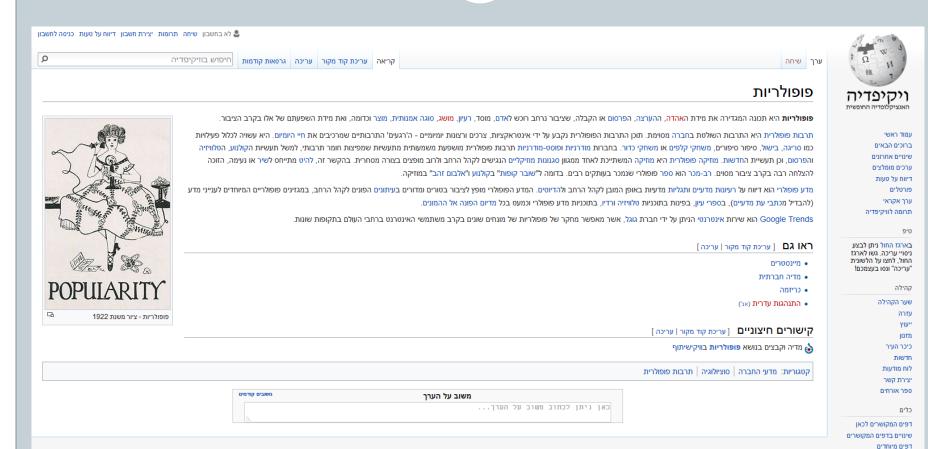
Contents [hide]

- 1 Background
- 2 Cooper
- 3 Commerce
 - 3.1 Curriculum
- 4 State acquisition
- 5 Notes
- 6 References

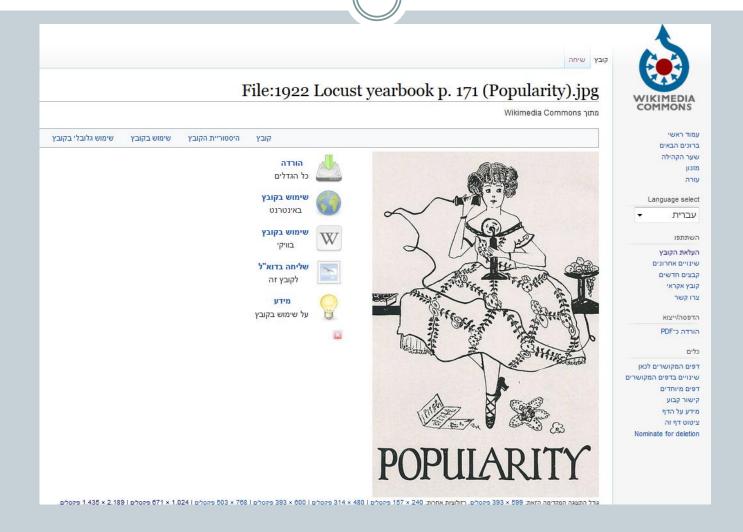
Background [edit]

William L. Mayo was born in Prestonsburg, Kentucky, in 1861, and was educated at Prestonsburg Seminary, Cedar Bluff Academy in Tazewell County, Virginia, and Central Normal College in Danville, Indiana; he had planned to attend Indiana University until financial difficulties prevented him from doing so. [1][2] He worked as a teacher and principal at Cedar Bluff Academy before taking a public school position in Denver, although he resigned upon arriving and learning that the school was integrated. [1][2] Mayo then moved to Pecan Gap in Delta County, Texas, in 1886, where his aunt and uncle lived; he began teaching at the local public school, and by 1889 had become superintendent of nearby Cooper's public school system. [2][3] During his tenure in Pecan Gap, Mayo earned a reputation as a disciplinarian, but also as a sympathetic instructor. [4]

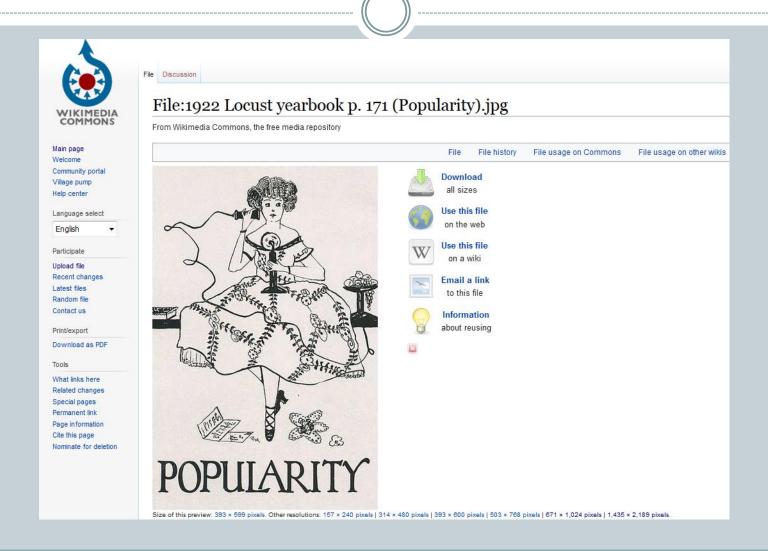
Example image used on the Hebrew Wikipedia



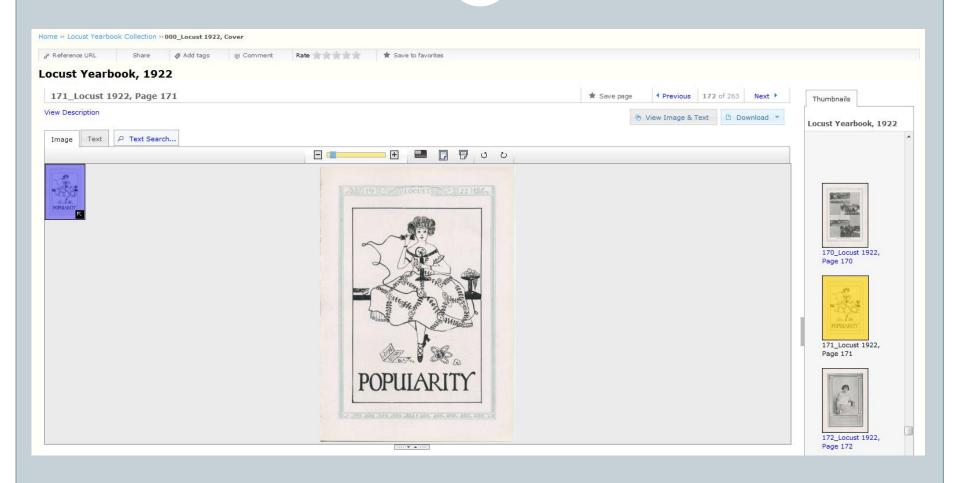
Same image on Wikimedia Commons (Hebrew)



Same image on Wikimedia Commons (English)



Same image on the Northeast Texas Digital Collections



Wikimedia use metrics

Category "Media from the Northeast Texas Digital Collections" has 243 files.

Jump to details

Site	Images used	
en.wikipedia	48	
he.wikipedia	2	
hy.wikipedia	1	
Total image usages	51	
Distinct images use	d 36(14	81% of all images of category)

Details (top 1000 images)



Original Cooper Campus (ETNC).jpg used 5×

en.wikipedia : Cooper, Texas

: Texas A&M University–Commerce : History of East Texas Normal College : History of Texas A&M University–Commerce

Template: Did you know nominations/History of East Texas

Normal College



1922 Locust yearbook p. 171 (Popularity).jpg used 4×

en.wikipedia : Popularity

he.wikipedia 3שיחת_ויקיפדיה : בוט/בוט ההסבה/תיקונים בתמונות

פופולריות:

hy.wikipedia : Հանրաձանաչություն



1920 Locust yearbook p. 003 (Pres. Randolph B. Binnion).jpg used 4×

en.wikipedia

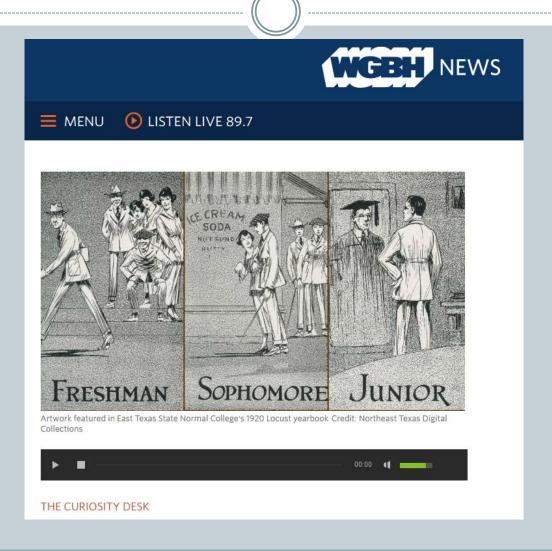
: History of East Texas State Normal College : History of Texas A&M University—Commerce

Template: Did you know nominations/History of East Texas

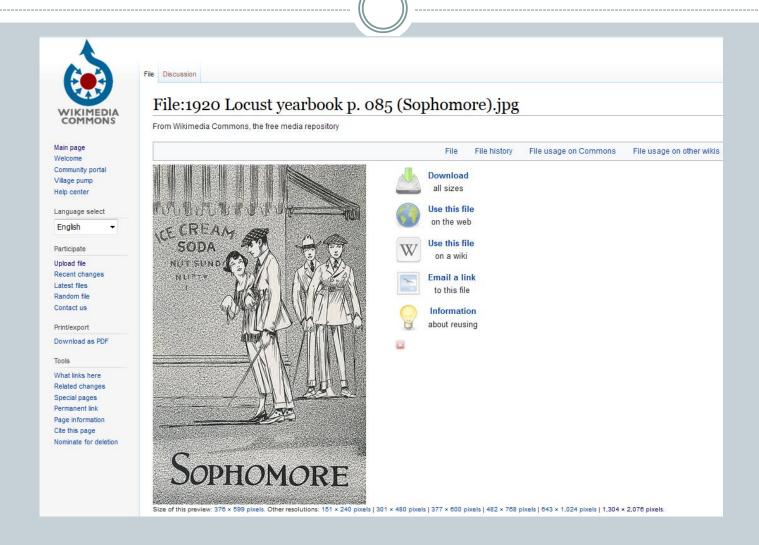
State Normal College

Wikipedia: Recent additions/2016/August

Image used on the WGBH website



Same image on Wikimedia Commons



Same image on the Northeast Texas Digital Collections

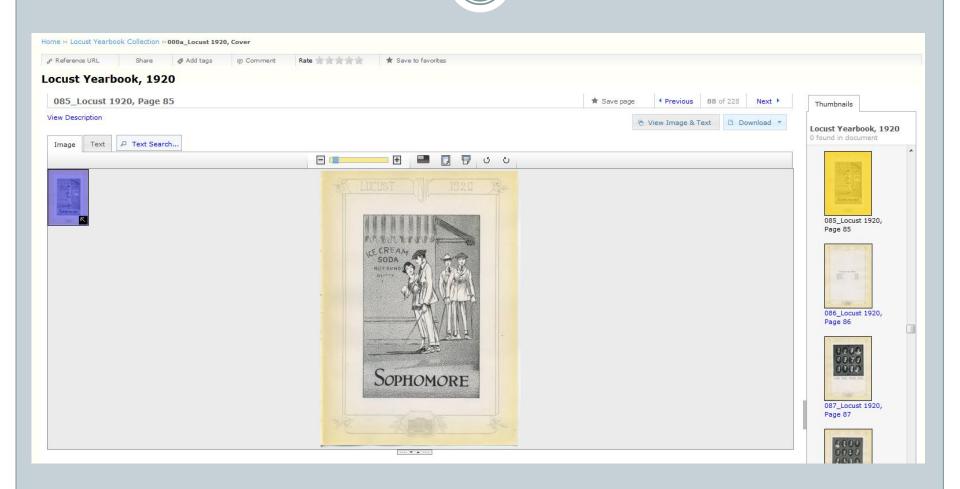


Image used on a Georgian-language website

საბავშვო ბაღებში, სკვერებსა თუ პარკებში განთავსებული პატარების ერთ-ერთი ყველაზე საყვარელი გასართობი მოწყობილობა - "ბავშვების სასრიალო" გამოგონებული იქნა ინგლისელი ინჟინრისა და მეცენატის – ჩარლზ უიკსტიდის (1847-1931 წლები) მიერ. (ავტორი გენია.ჯი) თუმცა უნდა შევნიშწოთ, რომ "ბავშვების სასრიალოს" არა მხოლოდ გასართობი დანიშნულება გააჩნდა, არამედ იგი იმთავითვე განკუთვნილი იყო პატარების სპორტული გაჯანსაღებისა და განვითარებისათვისაც. პირველი თანამედროვე ტიპის "ბავშვების სასრიალო", რომელიც ხისგან იყო დამზადებული, უიკსტიდმა 1922 წელს განათავსა ინგლისის პატარა ქალაქ კეტერინგში არსებულ პარკში. საყურადღებოა, რომ ვაჟებისათვის განკუთვნილ პირველ "ბავშვების სასრიალო"ებს" გაცილებით მაღალი დასაშვები (ჩამოსასრიალებელი) გააჩნდა, ვიდრე გოგონებისათვის განკუთვნილს. მოგვიანებით ეს დისბალანსი გათანაბრებული იქნა. უწინდელისაგან განსხვავებით, დღეისათვის, ჩარლზ უიკსტიდის მიერ სპეციალურად ბავშვებისათვის გამოგონებულ ვერტიკალურად დასაშვებ სასრიალოებს სხვადასხვა მეტალისა და პლასტმასებისაგან ამზადებენ. ისინი არა მხოლოდ ბაღებში, სკვერებსა და პარკებშია განთავსებული, არამედ — აკვაპარკებშიც, სადაც ბავშვების მსგავსად, ერთობ დიდი მოწონებით სარგებლობს უფროსი თაობის ადამიანებშიც. — (ავტორი გენია.ჯი)

ჩარლზ უიკსტიდი



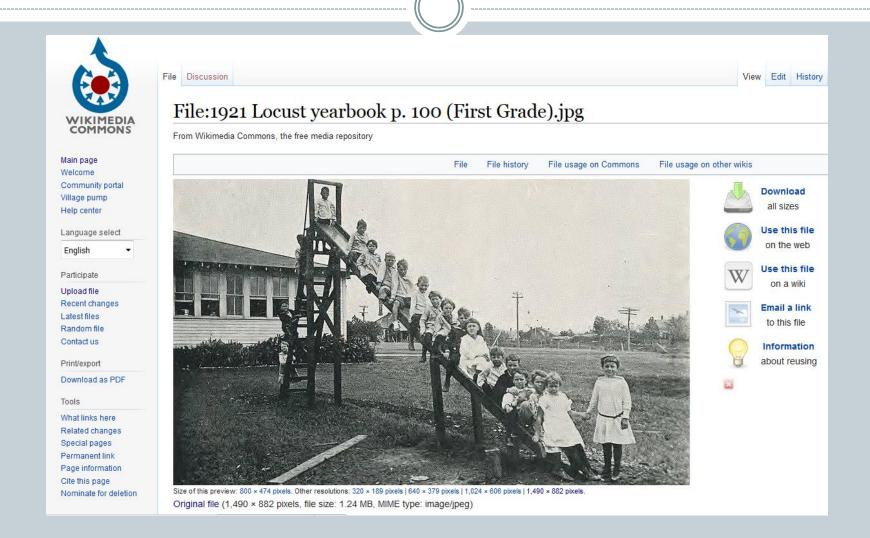
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- საინტერესო ფაქტები
- სამხედრო
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- ხელოვნება
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კალენდარი

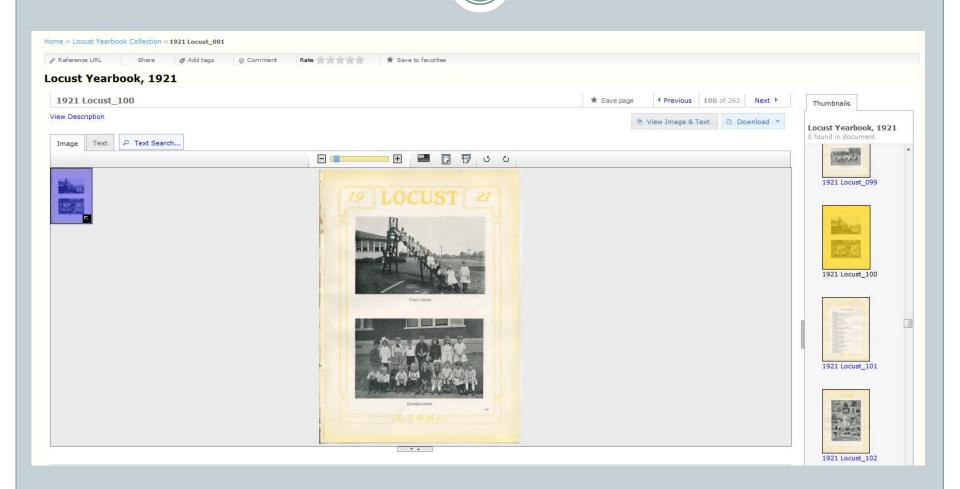
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Same image on Wikimedia Commons



Same image on the Northeast Texas Digital Collections



CONTENTdm use metrics



Plans for the future

- Going forward, we plan to flag and port materials that enter the public domain due to either of the two rationales laid out in this project, which resulted in a check for unpublished materials that were created 120 years ago in early January 2018 (there were not any) as well as plans to do the same every subsequent January.
- Starting in January 2019 (pending any further change to copyright law in this country), materials published between January 1, 1923, and January 1, 1924, and then a year at a time proceeding from that, will be "cleared" into the public domain.
- We may decide to expand the project to include other copyright rationales (such as materials published without a notice before 1977 or not renewed before 1963), or other collections in the Northeast Texas Digital Collections, but for now those ideas are not being actively considered.