

ACTIVITIES REPORT  
THE AMERICAN FILM INSTITUTE

1982

Acquisitions of the Year

More than 2,000,000 feet of film were acquired in FY 82. This extraordinary amount, which includes over 144,000 feet of nitrate film and numbers nearly 850 titles, came about as the result of the acquisition of several large collections. The largest of these was from the Triangle Laboratories Estate, acquired through the bankruptcy proceedings of a laboratory which held several AFI films when it ceased operations. The court was persuaded to allow the institute to acquire all materials which other claimants did not retrieve. AFI recovered its films and, after sorting at a large warehouse, acquired hundreds of reels of acetate reference prints, negatives, and some nitrate. A large number of kinescopes were included in the collection as well.

Another large collection was donated by Elizabeth Taylor. Pre-print and master materials on AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS and other films were acquired in this donation.

Other highlights of the year's acquisitions include:

THE BLIND MAN'S DOG (Miliano, 191?)

THE ARCTIC HUNT (Frank E. Von Keinschmidt, 1911)

THE NEW ARRIVAL (Lubin, ca. 1908)

THE JAILBIRD AND HOW HE FLEW (Vitagraph, ca. 1906)

YANKEE CLIPPER (Demille Pictures, 1927)

THE WAITER'S BALL (with Roscoe Arbuckle, ca. 1914)

In addition, AFI acquired a number of pre-1910 films, including a particularly important collection from one donor which contained several Lubin and Pathe films, all dating about 1905.

One of the highlights of the year's acquisitions is a collection of 16mm "home movies" of Ralph Barton, a prominent illustrator and designer of the 1920s.

A one hour mock version of CAMILLE, written and filmed by Barton and Anita Loos, stars Loos and many prominent individuals including Paul Robeson, Sinclair Lewis, Theodore Dreiser, Clarence Darrow, Charles Chaplin, Ethel Barrymore, Rex Ingram, Max Reinhardt,

Dorothy Gish, and Somerset Maugham. Chaplin appears in two of the film's memorable moments, one in which he does an extended "dance of the rolls" as in THE GOLD RUSH, and another when he does a parody of Nazimova's "Dance of the Seven Veils" from SALOME. Other Barton films acquired include scenes of Chaplin in front of and behind the camera on the set of CITY LIGHTS. AFI helped to set up an arrangement by which this latter material appears in the Thames Television series THE UNKNOWN CHAPLIN.

#### Progress in the Field of Preservation

A total of \$357,875 in grants was awarded by The American Film Institute/National Endowment for the Arts Film Preservation Program to eight organizations for film preservation projects. The program is funded by the National Endowment for the Arts and administered by AFI, and is part of the coordinated national effort to acquire and preserve a broad representational cross-section of the American film heritage.

The organizations and projects funded this year include:

- Anthology Film Archives, New York, NY; \$27,100, in support of the Independent Film Preservation Program.
- Florida A&M University, Black Archives, Tallahassee, Fl; \$8,000 , in support of the preservation of unique footage of important events and personalities in Black cultural, athletic, and social history.
- International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House, Rochester, NY; \$90,500, in support of the ongoing nitrate film preservation program.
- Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; \$96,185, in support of the ongoing nitrate film preservation program.
- The National Center for Jewish Film, Waltham, MA; \$5,000, in support of the ongoing program to preserve films which document the Jewish-American experience.
- New York Public Library, New York, NY; \$7,500, in support of the ongoing program to preserve unique dance performance footage.
- The UCLA Film Archives, Los Angeles, CA; \$121,190, in support of the ongoing nitrate film preservation program.
- YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York, NY; \$2,400, in support of the preservation of rare America-made films documenting life in Jewish communities in Eastern Europe destroyed during WWII.

### Cataloging and Documentation

AFI Archives has been working with Linda Kowall and Joseph Eckhart and the theater collection of the Philadelphia Free Library to assist the researchers on their extensive study of the Lubin film company. The project is one of the most significant studies of an early film production company to be attempted and will take years to pursue.

The staff has compiled and updated lists of ethnic films in the AFI Collection at the Library of Congress for use by archives and individual researchers with special interests. During FY 82, the list of black-interest films and all-black-cast films was updated, and an inventory of films which reflect the Jewish experience in American films was created.

### Film Showings

The American Film Institute Theater at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts continues to show two to four films each evening, including American films that are difficult to see through the commercial distribution network and foreign films made available through embassy cultural packages.

Films were provided for foreign and domestic film conferences and festivals. 35mm prints of OTHELLO and TOUCH OF EVIL were shipped to the Lisbon Film Festival, and THE CRIMINAL CODE was sent to the Venice Biennale. Silent film programs were presented by Archives staff to The Society for Cinephiles, Cinevent, and Cinefest, major get-togethers for film collectors and film enthusiasts. Included were two silent Richard Dix feature comedies released by Paramount in the mid-1920s and A MESSAGE FROM MARS, a 1913 British feature film.

### Publications

The preservation program continues to be the North American distributor for The International Index to Film Periodicals.

The archivist has been writing a regularly featured column on film and television preservation for Classic Images. The column has been very successful in helping to determine those films that are considered "lost" which actually do survive in private collections.

Foreign Relations

A MESSAGE FROM MARS (Great Britain, 1912) was acquired by the Archives Program. Believed to be the earliest surviving British feature film, the nitrate was copied by the Museum of Modern Art (since it fits within their collection guidelines) and placed in their circulation library, and the nitrate original was shipped to London for preservation at the National Film Archive.

Karr and Kupferberg attended the FIAF Congress in Mexico. The week following the FIAF Congress, Kupferberg gave a seminar on preservation at the University of Mexico, Mexico City.

A 1936 Chinese feature film entitled NU CHIEN TIEH (GIRL SPY) was located and acquired. The China Film Archive has been informed, and plans are under way to make the film available to them for preservation.

A Norman C. Dawn film from the 1920s, THE ADORABLE OUTCAST (BLACK CARGO OF THE SOUTH SEAS) has been acquired by AFI Archives, and the National Film Library of Australia has been able to acquire acetate negative generated from the nitrate original. Unfortunately, the quality of the original nitrate is only fair.

Archivists who visited AFI Archives included Annella Manalo (Philippines), Caterina Lima (Brazil), Orly Ofrat (Granada Television London) and Wolfgang Klaue (GDR). Kupferberg met with Lia Van Leer (Israel in New York.