

FIAF Report, 1980 - Film Department - George Eastman House

1. Acquisitions during 1980 were limited to gifts from private donors and were primarily of acetate release prints.
2. Preservation activities resulted in an increase of acetate film generated from nitrate originals, compared to 1979, the total acetate generated was up 28% (980,177 feet). This footage represents the preservation of 70 titles, most of them feature length. Two laboratories were used, one in Rochester (416,686 feet produced) and the other in New Jersey (563,491 feet produced). Film Department staff participated in meetings on preservation in New York City, Washington and elsewhere in the continental USA.
3. Cataloguing, Documentation, Research: Work continues on the computer cataloguing of the collection, as well as on the more detailed data cataloguing for the card catalogue of films.

Further identifications of films have been made, and a great many dates on the films have been added. Records have been expanded to enhance our control of the motion picture still collection. Lists have been compiled to expedite the identification of stills with a minimum of marking. Stills pertaining to prints of films in the collection have now been completely transferred to acid-free envelopes, a requisite for long-term survival.

Questions and inquiries about the collection continue to be received and answered by telephone and mail.

4. Film showings: During the year the Film Department started a highly successful silent film series with accompaniment by the Eastman-Dryden Orchestra. THE LAST COMMAND (1928) and PETER PAN (1924) were each shown three nights in the Museum's Dryden Theatre in October and November, respectively. The orchestra, comprised of 15 carefully selected students from the Eastman School of Music was conducted by Dr. Donald Hunsberger. He also arranged the musical scores based on the original programs and cue sheets used in the Eastman Theatre when the films were shown there in the 1920's. The Department continued its regular film exhibition program throughout the year. A number of series were presented including favorites from George Eastman House's archives; films with Greta Garbo, Lauren Bacall, Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers and Rochester's own Lousie Books; films from the

Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum Biennial; motion pictures from Hollywood during wartime, 1939-45 and films from new American and Canadian filmmakers. It also participated in a special exhibition of films called TREASURES FROM GEORGE EASTMAN HOUSE at Filmex in Los Angeles in March.

5. Exhibitions-Publications: Activities in publications were concerned with the editing and production of IMAGE which was reduced to two issues appearing in June and December.
6. Administration: 1980 was a year of challenges for the International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House. Financial strain and management change placed unusual burdens on the Museum's Board of Trustees. As inflation escalated operating costs and income levels remained static, some harsh and sobering decisions had to be made. Drastic staff reductions and program curtailments were implemented in the beginning of the year to stabilize the financial situation. The Museum's position, aims and goals were studied by a committee appointed by the Board of Trustees. This was done with the assistance of an outside consulting organization. The committee's recommendations identified the following important directions for the future:
 - 1.) That George Eastman House be maintained and operated as a memorial to Mr. Eastman and necessary facilities for the storage, display and study of the Museum's rich collections be planned for construction, on the present site if possible;
 - 2.) That future exhibition and education programs be designed to broaden the Museum's constituency;
 - 3.) That preservation, conservation and cataloguing of the collection be accelerated;
 - 4.) That acquisitions of new materials for the collections continue in relationship to the Museum's ability to conserve, preserve and catalog its existing collections;
 - 5.) That the Board of Trustees be enlarged and diversified;
 - 6.) That a new director of the Museum be identified and employed; and

7.) That a broader base of financial support be developed.

7. International Relations: The staff of the Film Department replied to international requests from FIAF members and made several loans to FIAF members.
8. Special Events - Miscellaneous: A new director of the Museum joined the staff in December. He is Robert A. Mayer who comes to Rochester from the N.Y. State Council on the Arts, New York City.