

MOTION PICTURE SECTION

Prints and Photographs Division  
 The Library of Congress  
 Washington, D. C. 20540

F.I.A.F. Activities Report, Fiscal Years, 1973-1974

I. ACQUISITIONS

During the period under discussion, motion pictures were acquired at a record level. Contemporary films were added to the collection through the provisions of copyright law, through gifts, exchanges, and transfers. The continuing operation of AFI-LC agreements provided many nitrate American titles of historic interest. The growth of the collection during the two fiscal years is illustrated by the table which follows:

TABLE I

ACQUISITIONS

	FY 1973 (July 1972-June 1973)	FY 1974 (July 1973-June 1974)
TITLES	3,970	4,238
REELS	11,516	13,893
FOOTAGE:		
Acetate	3,963,317	5,437,784
Nitrate	4,953,916	4,744,148
Total	8,917,233	10,181,932

Among the titles added were copies of the following films: MASH, GOODBYE COLUMBUS, EASY RIDER, L'ENFANT SAUVAGE, RYAN'S DAUGHTER, 2001-A SPACE ODYSSEY, ISADORA, AIRPORT, THE ANDROMEDA STRAIN, SHAFT, DIRTY HARRY, MALCOLM X, and CHARLIE BUBBLES.

Television programs were also well-represented and included: CBS REPORTS: PICASSO, CHINA - THE EAST IS RED, VIETNAM: HINDSIGHT (NBC White Paper), HEALTH IN AMERICA, 22 episodes of ALL IN THE FAMILY, episodes from THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF DISNEY, and many episodes of the CBS Special Program, 60 MINUTES.

Short subjects, educational films, and films of a documentary nature were represented by titles such as BUSTER KEATON RIDES AGAIN, THE RAILRODDER, 1970 PORSCHE DOES IT!, STAINED GLASS: A PHOTOGRAPHIC ESSAY, GEORGE MCGOVERN BIOGRAPHY, METRIC SYSTEM: ENGLISH AND METRIC LENGTHS.

Non-film materials continued to be acquired including contemporary posters and stills from the National Screen Service and several

gifts of posters from private collectors.

## II. PRESERVATION

The large influx of nitrate titles arrived mostly in the form of original, pre-print materials (i.e., original negatives, masters, studio prints) and were shipped to the Library's nitrate vaults near Dayton, Ohio or to its smaller facility in Suitland, Maryland. The staff at both vault locations devoted itself to the inspection, sorting, re-canning, and labeling of these films; deteriorating film was removed during the two yearly inspection trips made by members of the Library's preservation office or, during the latter half of 1974, by college students from the Dayton area supervised by Library personnel.

Preservation statistics, reported on a fiscal year basis, are given in Table II.

TABLE II

### MOTION PICTURE PRESERVATION

	FY 1973 (July 1972-June 1973)			FY 1974 (July 1973-June 1974)		
	Tit.	Rls.	Ft.	Tit.	Rls.	Ft.
<u>Lab work from LC originals</u>						
a) Done at commercial labs	41	323	274,646	32	300	250,129
b) Done at LC lab	775	2,736	3,021,744	914	5,578	4,116,742
<u>Lab work initiated by AFI</u>	107	180	144,660	170	747	525,400
<u>Purchase of replacement film</u>	62	222	236,100	23	42	63,400
<u>Exchange Agreements with     Germany, Japan, Italy</u>	742	995	658,455	478	576	306,100
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1,727</b>	<b>4,456</b>	<b>4,335,605</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>7,243</b>	<b>5,261,771</b>

## III. CATALOGING

During the past two years the pilot cataloging project to convert two collections of films to machine-readable form was completed. More than 600 films were cataloged, assigned fields for archival as well as production entries, and the Section was provided with print-outs in several file orders and physical forms. This trial run, with the cooperation of the MARC Editorial Office and the Information Systems Office,

was a notable success; the motion picture cataloging staff is now making plans to use this system and the programs developed for it on a regular basis. To further this end, a grant application to the National Endowment for the Humanities has been prepared.

#### IV. REFERENCE SERVICES (Screenings, showing, contact with users)

A large and growing number of film-makers, film-oriented scholars, and members of Congress and their staffs in the Washington, D. C., area utilized the Section and its collections for official, scholarly, and non-entertainment purposes. The following table summarizes the reference statistics for the periods covered:

TABLE III

	Calendar 1973	Calendar 1974
Telephone calls	6,718	6,930
Reference request answered by correspondence	588	611
Screenings held	497	432
In-person research contacts	8,350	8,257
TOTALS	16,153	16,230

In addition to the many film-makers, film scholars, and film researchers who used the collections, visitors to the Section included motion picture archivists from Belgium, France, Australia, The Netherlands, Sweden, Germany, and Mexico. Other visitors came from Roumania, England, France, Holland. A motion picture archives committee meeting attracted participants from the AFI, George Eastman House, and the Museum of Modern Art as well as a representative from the National Endowment for the Arts.

#### V. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

The most significant single event of 1973 occurred on the last day of June with the retirement of Edgar Breitenbach as Chief of the Prints and Photographs Division. Having reached the statutory age, and with the requisite amount of government service, his 17-year term as Chief came to a reluctant close. None of his predecessors in that post served for as long, or with more energy, inventiveness, and effectiveness. His effect on the motion picture program was enormous.

Not quite a third of the way into his term as Chief, the Motion Picture Section was transferred to his control where it immediately underwent the Breitenbach treatment. The scope of the collection was progressively enlarged, the staff was expanded and upgraded, new

acquisitions and preservation programs were undertaken. Once a tiny holding operation, the Section became a major national center, and a primary resource for cinema scholarship.

He would be the first to insist on sharing these achievements with the staff of the Section and the Division, but without his bringing the staff into the Division in the first place, and supporting their ideas once he had--most of this activity would not have been possible. As an administrator, catalyst, negotiator, collector, and scholar, Edgar Breitenbach's contribution to motion picture archive work is incalculable.

He will be missed as Chief, but he continues to serve the Library as Honorary Consultant in Graphic Arts and Cinema and we anticipate his assistance in our motion picture acquisitions and preservation programs.

Edgar Breitenbach was succeeded as Chief by Alan Fern, who had served as Assistant Chief since 1964 and whose wide scholarly interests and talents include motion pictures. On June 24, 1974, John Kuiper was officially promoted to Assistant Chief for Motion Pictures, thus completing the previously announced (FIAF Report, 1972) reorganization of the Motion Picture Section into four units: Reference, Cataloging, Technical, and Laboratory; Patrick J. Sheehan was promoted to Reference Unit Supervisor, Harriet Aveney to Cataloging Unit Supervisor, David Parker and Vivian Armstrong continued as Technical Officer and Laboratory Supervisor, respectively. Paul Spehr was promoted to Motion Picture Specialist, and given certain administrative responsibilities in the Section (including formal designation as Acting Section Head, in the absence of John Kuiper); Pearline Ward and Constance Bloxson were advanced in grade as Section Secretary and Motion Picture Assistant. Provisions were made for additional promotional opportunities in the Section, and at year's end several staff members who had already qualified for advancement under the new scheme had been recommended for promotion.

#### VI. RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER FIAF MEMBERS

FIAF relationships were maintained during the period by contacts with the Museum of Modern Art, the American Film Institute, by exchanges of correspondence with other members, and by the service of staff members on the Copyright and Legal Commission, the Executive Committee, and the Film Cataloging Committee. David Parker and Sam Tyler attended the Berlin Summer School during 1973 and were enthusiastic about it.

#### VII. PROJECTS, MISCELLANEOUS

Staff members of the Section served on or attended national committees and meetings including the Society of American Archivists, the Mohonk Conference, a UN Conference on recorded materials, CINE, a TV News Conference at Airlie House, The Archives Advisory Committee, a National Archives - University of Delaware Conference on historical user of film, and Temple University's Conference on Visual Anthropology.

Paul Spehr was asked to consult with the Newark Museum on a Bicentennial Exhibit, a project which continues to occupy his extracurricular time. David Parker organized a series of Dance Film screenings at the AFI Theatre.

An interesting exhibit of American film posters, several from each decade represented in the Library's collections, was mounted in the display cases of the main Library building in honor of AFI's first Film Day (1973). The posters were displayed in Mylar envelopes, a new preservation device.

Laboratory operations were greatly facilitated by the addition, in 1973, of a Hazeltine electronic analyzer, specially modified to meet our needs.

Although vault temperature controls at Suitland and Wright-Patterson occasionally caused vexation, steps were taken to rebuild some of the equipment and long-range plans to replace outmoded machinery and to provide more satisfactory acetate storage space are being developed.

In retrospect, the years under review were ones of consolidation of changes resulting from the rapid growth of the Section and its responsibilities. Successful preservation activities, mainly directed to nitrate films, tended to dominate the concerns of the staff. Of increasing concern during the last six months were television archive work and the division of responsibility for it, color film and TV preservation procedures, cataloging work and the allocation of funds necessary for it, the most effective means of dealing with an ever-growing backlog of unshelved and uncataloged preserved films, and the growing reference demands placed upon the Section by the scholarly film world.

Undoubtedly, the search for solutions to the concerns just mentioned will consume the majority of our energy during the next several years.