

THE MOTION PICTURE,
BROADCASTING AND RECORDED SOUND DIVISION
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
WASHINGTON, D.C.

F.I.A.F. Activities Report, Fiscal Year 1982

ACQUISITIONS OF THE YEAR

Copyright registration for motion pictures and television in calendar year 1981 remained at about the same level as in 1980. Out of 6,554 titles registered, 4,143 were selected, or 63 percent of the total. 341 theatrical features were selected and television accounted for nearly half of the total registrations. We note a continuing, substantial shift towards deposits on videotape rather than 16mm film and a distinct upsurge in programs produced for cable and subscription television and for home-video. CBS continues to be the only network to register most of its news programming. The world of entertainment programming was as diverse as ever, but still dominated by programs first telecast during primetime (8 p.m. to 11 p.m.) by the commercial networks. 16mm copyright registrations were down by more than 25%, though the percentage selected remained almost the same (64%).

Section 407 of the new U. S. copyright law, which makes deposit in the Library of Congress mandatory for any work "published" with a copyright notice, again provided copies of interesting items in all formats. Among the titles received were the Hollywood features BODY HEAT and SO FINE; five complete operas produced by the Metropolitan Opera and telecast on the PBS series, LIVE FROM THE MET; and ABC-TV's complete coverage of the 1980 Winter Olympics (57 hours over 13 days).

In 1982, a number of outstanding documentary films, unavailable through copyright deposit, were purchased. Among these were the final 16 episodes (the first 10 were purchased last year) of the Canadian documentary television series, VIETNAM: THE TEN THOUSAND DAY WAR. Also included were two films of special interest to students of American culture: Bert Stern's celebrated feature-length film, JAZZ ON A SUMMER'S DAY (1960), documenting the performances of some of our greatest jazz musicians at the 1958 Newport Jazz Festival; and German filmmaker Werner Herzog's HOW MUCH WOOD WOULD A WOODCHUCK CHUCK (1977), a humorous and fascinating look at the highspeed incantations of livestock auctioneers in Pennsylvania. Other titles were purchased with foreign currency program funds, including two outstanding Indian features recommended by

Erik Barnouw, Bimal Ray's SUJATA (1959) and Satyajit Ray's PRATIDWANDI (1970).

The collections were also enriched by many generous gifts. Thames Television of London donated its 13-hour documentary series, HOLLYWOOD, which surveys the film industry before the coming of sound. The American Film Institute was instrumental in the additions of two major collections of recent film and television productions, one from an anonymous donor consisted of several hundred television programs from the 1950's and 1960's. A larger collection consisting of many negatives and other valuable preservation material was obtained through the bankruptcy proceedings following the closure of Triangle Film Laboratories. This collection consists of feature films, both domestic and foreign, and productions by independent filmmakers and other early television productions.

PROGRESS IN THE FIELD OF PRESERVATION

The Motion Picture Preservation Laboratory at Wright Patterson Air Force Base began moving into its newly rebuilt building in October of 1981. Installing equipment and making the laboratory fully operational proved to be a long and taxing process. A number of structural matters were not completed when the move began, the most significant being the installation of the very large film developing machine. This weighed several thousand pounds but included many delicately balanced parts. After it was delivered and installed, a wall had to be completed and then plumbing connections made. It was soon discovered that there was a major problem with particles in the water, which caused an unacceptable residue on the films being developed. The new filtration system which was necessary reduced water pressure below acceptable operational levels. It was well into the summer of 1982 before these problems were resolved and acceptable film copies could be developed.

In the midst of the disarray, the Laboratory staff, consisting of three experienced older members and seven new employees (all with experience in safety labs, but new to work with nitrate film), combined installation of equipment with training in all phases of nitrate preservation. It was not until March of 1982 that the first films were shipped to Washington. At this time the problems with the developing solutions had not been resolved and most of the films did not meet archival standards, resulting in a discouragingly high rate of rejection.

The Curatorial Section's Quality Control Unit has spent much of the past few years examining work done by the laboratory prior to the move to Ohio. Careful examination has revealed a number of flaws in the work of some of the printing machines. Since most of the printers being used in the laboratory are forty or more years old (one was in service in 1918), years of operation have taken a toll and parts are worn. During this current year we have devoted considerable effort to identify these problems and seek solutions. It became clear that an additional printer was needed and specifications were drawn up, bids requested and an order placed for a new printing machine.

Between March and the end of 1982 the laboratory converted 920,487 feet of nitrate film (1,950 reels) to 788,555 feet of safety film (1,133 reels). It is anticipated that during 1983 the laboratory will produce about 5.2 million feet of film (3.8 million feet being copied from nitrate to safety, the rest, 1.4 million feet being positive copies produced for quality examination and use as viewing copies for the public).

During 1982 the Curatorial Section refined and implemented quality control standards for the acceptance of safety film copies of nitrate-based motion picture film held in the Library's nitrate film vaults. These standards are being applied to the laboratory's output with the objective of eliminating wasteful errors and reducing the amount of substandard copies being produced. The Quality Control Unit inspected more than 2,000 reels of safety film copies of nitrate-based motion picture film, many of them produced before the laboratory moved to Ohio. The review process is complicated because the three man staff is located in Washington and communication with the laboratory in Dayton is difficult.

Extensive remodeling and repair work has been completed in the work area at the WPAFB vaults in order to bring it up to full safety standards and improve general work conditions and remodeling is also being done at the Suitland, Maryland vaults. Repairs to vault doors, blowout panels and lighting fixtures disrupted work at the Ohio vaults, but have resulted in general improvement of the storage facilities.

Holdings of nitrate-based motion picture film have been reduced through the surplus of some 77,000 feet of film (c. 90 reels) because of deterioration, and the transfer of 151,000 feet (335 reels) to other organizations. This brings present holdings of nitrate film to 105,085 reels.

During 1982, a sophisticated video facility was opened and a program began to make videotape copies of some motion picture film and to duplicate videotape from the collections in order to make the viewing copies available to researchers. A technical staff has been hired which is now responsible for video operations and maintenance of Division equipment. These employees are also evaluating consumer videodiscs which are being purchased for experimental uses and which will become part of the Division's collections. The new medium appears to have valuable preservation and reference potential for material in the Division's collection which was not produced for theatrical screening.

The M/B/RS officially moved into the James Madison Memorial Building February 14, 1983. All of the Division's collections have been moved to new storage areas. The space allocated to the Division for storage of the collections in the Madison Building is extremely limited and the staff has spent a great deal of time planning and reviewing the prospects of storage to ensure convenience for the public and optimum quality of temperature and humidity necessary for the long-term preservation of these materials. Additional space was found in two locations in the Library's Capitol Hill complex, but much of the film is being stored in a large warehouse in Landover, Maryland. Prospects for improved storage conditions for the Division's collections are now considerably brighter than they have been for many years. The move to the Madison Building has improved the use of public facilities, but with collections in three locations in the Madison Building, one location in the Thomas Jefferson Building and two large storage areas in Landover (as well as nitrate film vaults in Suitland, Maryland and Dayton, Ohio), there will be continuing problems in maintaining correct storage conditions while providing efficient service to the public.

We are continuing to develop standard film examples for use in evaluating new technology. We have received permission from Columbia Pictures and United Artists Corp. to use segments from two of Martin Scorsese's films, TAXI DRIVER and NEW YORK, NEW YORK as standard test segments. We are at present ordering negative copies and are making the preprint and print materials as recommended by Eastman Kodak. These samples will be used in tests of cold storage, as well as transfer to other formats. Both videotape and videodisk are being tested. We are interested in learning more about image resolution, color quality and the formatting of the frame on the video tube. Tests will be made to determine the durability of videodisks, the effects of making many transfers of the same videotape, etc. We hope to

learn more about the use of new technology as an alternative preservation method and as a device to create viewing materials for researchers.

CATALOGING - DOCUMENTATION - RESEARCH

We had a full range of scholars, filmmakers, television producers, archivists, curators and researchers from all over the world. Producers from NHK (Japan), ZDF (West Germany), Radiotelevision Suisse Romande (Switzerland), RAI (Italy), BBC and Thames (England) and researchers from Egypt, Yugoslavia, Denmark, France, Australia and the University of Hawaii at Manoa came looking for footage to use in their productions.

Coming from less distant locations, producers and researchers from CBS, ABC and numerous PBS sponsored projects used our facilities. Hundreds of independent filmmakers and scholars kept the viewing machines busy. The usual wide range of subjects was researched, ranging from Porky Pig and Jackie Gleason to the acting style of Minnie Maddern Fiske, filmmaking in Florida and Hoboken, the image of Chinese in films, atom bomb testing, and the history of organized crime in America.

The reference staff became further involved with the Library's growing interest in video technology by participating in the testing of the new video transfer equipment. There are many questions to ask and decisions to make when transferring images from motion picture film to videotape, and the reference staff tried to anticipate user needs in discussions of the aesthetic and service aspects of the test transfers made in the Library's Recording Laboratory.

James R. Smart's Radio Broadcasts in the Library of Congress, 1924-1942, a catalog of broadcasts in the Library's collections, was published during 1982. The catalog of over 5,000 entries is arranged chronologically and indexed by performer and title. It is the Library's first publication devoted to its broadcast holdings and is expected to result in greatly increased use of the Division's holdings of radio broadcasts.

Iris Newsom of the Publishing Office is compiling a volume of articles which have appeared in the Library's Quarterly Journal describing activities in Film, Radio, Television and Recorded Sound. Several staff members have been revising and updating their contributions.

Work on the index to television materials acquired by

the Division through 1979 is in the final editing stages. The catalog includes an estimated 50,000 records, representing approximately 14,000 television program titles. Indexes provide access by alternate titles and broad genre-subject terms.

The staff is continuing work on two publications which will aid researchers in locating material in our collections, the index to the Theodore Roosevelt Collection and a revision of Kemp Niver's useful catalog of the Division's Paper Print Collection, Motion Pictures in the Library of Congress Paper Print Collection.

Throughout the year work continued on design and implementation plans for the automated control system which will enable M/B/RS staff to provide up-to-date, centrally located inventory information about our holdings on nitrate stock. It will track materials as they flow through the preservation process and include information about preservation copies as they are generated. Processing Section staff members designed standardized authority files for all genre and collection names to be used in the system, and formal procedures for updating these files were put in place. Wendy White completed work on the Users' Input Manual in May, and testing began in the same month. By early June, the tests revealed problems and a crash program to redesign and retest began. By the end of September, the initial redesign was complete, and final testing was underway. The preliminary system, now much improved, was turned over to M/B/RS in November, 1982, and from there revisions are being made for the working system to be available some time during 1983. Plans are underway to train staff and begin operation.

An unusual cataloging project for the Division's collection of sound recordings may be of interest to FIAF members. During 1982, approximately 190,000 78 rpm records were put in final shelf order and their labels were microfilmed under a project funded and sponsored by the Association for Recorded Sound Collections. This project is creating a medium level finding list that contains not only our collection of 78 rpm recordings, but, also, those of the New York Public Library, Syracuse University, Stanford University and Yale University. The project is pioneering a technique which is unusual for archival collections. After microfilming, on high resolution film, the item is indexed from the data contained on the label, the National Union Catalog signal and item identifier is placed in each frame of the film. This data is MARC tagged and input into a computer where it can be searched on line or used to produce COM indices with various sorts. The technique is highly cost effective,

with each item filmed and indexed costing approximately \$1.00 as opposed to the roughly \$15 to \$20 per item to produce the level of data using traditional library technique and methods.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (FIAF and others)

In March, Chi Wang, Head of the Library's Chinese and Korean Section, attended a retrospective festival of Chinese film productions held in Turin, Italy. He prepared a very thorough report on the program and his recommendations are being considered as a core collection of Chinese films for the Library. Acquisition activities were also discussed with the Library's offices in Pakistan, Delhi and Rio de Janeiro. The plans for acquisitions are modest because of limited funding, and we hope to use the program to acquire viewing copies of films that are not usually available in the U. S.

A number of representatives from Film, Television and Sound Archives all over the world visited the Division. They included: Cineteca Nazionale, Rome; University of South Carolina; Israeli Film Archive; Imperial War Museum, London; British Film Institute; Film Archive of the University of the Philippines; University of Guinea; National Library of Venezuela; Cineteca Portuguesa; Staatliches Filmarchiv der D.D.R.; National Film Archive of India; Centre de Recherches sur La Conservation des Documents Graphiques, Paris.

In June, Harriet Harrison spoke to a group of librarians and archivists in Mexico City about cataloging film and television materials in moving image archives. The lecture was part of a series entitled "Los Archivos del Cine" sponsored by the University of Mexico. In April, Harriet Harrison chaired meetings of the Cataloging Commission of the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF). In June, Ms. Harrison attended FIAF's Executive Committee meeting, and Paul Spehr and Ms. Harrison represented the Division at the organization's Annual Congress in Mexico City. Paul Spehr represented the Division at the annual meeting of the International Federation of Television Archives (IFTA) in Rio de Janeiro. He also attended two sessions of IFTA's Technical Commission which is compiling information to establish archival standards for magnetic tape.

SPECIAL EVENTS--MISCELLANEOUS

Former Chief, Erik Barnouw delivered the Keynote Address at the opening of the American Film Institute's Video Festival in Los Angeles in June. David Parker was Curator for

the Dance program of AFI's Video Festival.

In November, several members of the Division attended the National Film and Television Cataloging Conference held in Washington, DC and sponsored by the American Film Institute. The Division hosted the annual meeting of the Television Archives Advisory Committee on December 1, 1981. Representatives of fourteen television archives in the U. S. and Canada attended the meeting and discussed mutual problems and achievements. Wendy White and Harriet Harrison attended meetings of the Machine Readable Form of Bibliographic Information (MARBI) Committee of the American Library Association. Together with staff members from the Audio-Visual Section of the Processing Services Department, they prepared extensive changes and interpretations for Byte 007 of the MARC Format which describes various physical characteristics of special format materials.

In March, M/B/RS hosted a meeting of cataloging experts under the sponsorship of the Council of National Library and Information Science Association's Joint Committee on Specialized Cataloging. With a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the group met to review a first preliminary draft of an AACR II interpretive manual for cataloging moving images in film and television archive which had been prepared by staff members from the Processing Section. Based upon the suggestions of the experts, the draft will next be revised for submission to the Library's Research and Processing Services Departments for further review prior to publication.