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Scholarly journals online

- no-budget, low-budget, and higher budget film care: "Washington State Film Preservation Manual," <http://www.lib.washington.edu/specialcoll/film/preservationmanual.pdf> (accessed June 16, 2006); the National Film Preservation Foundation's detailed "The Film Preservation Guide," <http://www.filmpreservation.org/> (accessed June 16, 2006); and Film Forever's "The Home Film Preservation Guide," <http://www.filmforever.org/> (accessed June 16, 2006), aimed at individuals with home movies and independent films.
12. "Volunteers needed for the Community Archives Manual," Society of American Archivists Lesbian and Gay Roundtable Newsletter No. 27 [i.e., 28] (February 2006), http://www.archivists.org/saagroups/lagar/newsletters/LAGAR_newsletter27.pdf (accessed April 19, 2006).
 13. "Out of the Closet, Into the Vaults" took place in Los Angeles on April 10, 2006. The symposium program is at http://www.cinema.ucla.edu/pdfs/LGBT_SYMPOSIUM.pdf (accessed June 7, 2005). Persistent Vision 2006: Envisioning the Future of Queer Media Arts took place in San Francisco June 19–22, 2006. Conference details and blog are available at <http://www.pv2006.org/agenda.html> (accessed June 25, 2006).
 14. To find lists of queer archives, see Note 2. The MIC Web site may be accessed at <http://mic.imtc.gatech.edu/>; to browse MIC's archive listings, click on "Archive Explore" in the horizontal menu bar (accessed June 1, 2006).

The Library of Congress National Audio-Visual Conservation Center



by Mike Mashon

Seventy-five miles southwest of Washington, D.C., outside the town of Culpeper, Virginia, on a site once occupied by the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, a revolution in audiovisual preservation and access is taking shape. A building that once held sufficient monetary reserves to restart the American economy east of the Mississippi River in event of a nuclear holocaust now contains the more than 5 million film, video, and audio items in the collections of the Library of Congress. Next to it, a state-of-the-art conservation center will open in spring 2007, broad in scope, bristling with innovation, representing a paradigm shift in the way archives preserve moving image and recorded sound material and deliver them to patrons around the globe. Together with 124 vaults designed to house the Library's 130 million feet of nitrate film, the complex is known as the National Audio-Visual Conservation Center (NAVCC).

Funded primarily by the Packard Humanities Institute, the 415,000 square foot complex will contain not only state-of-the-art preservation laboratories but also space for the Library's moving image and recorded sound processing staff, an acoustically perfect critical listening room, and a 200-seat theater capable of projecting nitrate film.

Most strikingly, the NAVCC will usher in a complete redesign of the way the Library acquires and preserves film, video, and recorded sound, particularly in the

digital domain. The Library has already made the transition to file-based digital preservation of sound, and in Culpeper will do the same for videotape, using a high throughput, automated robotic transfer system. For now, large-scale digitization of film will wait until the technology matures and costs come down. Still, the Library remains committed to film-to-film preservation—especially for its nitrate holdings—for the long term.

But what does all this mean for researchers? The main access point for patrons will remain on Capitol Hill in the Library's Madison Building, and researchers will still need to request items two weeks in advance. The major difference will be in delivery of content. For the near term, film will be delivered from Culpeper to Washington, but patrons wishing to see a video or listen to recorded sound will access digital files created at the NAVCC, but streamed to Capitol Hill via fiber optic lines. In a very real sense, researcher demand will drive preservation priorities.

The increased capabilities and capacities of the NAVCC—an estimated 5-plus million gigabytes of digital information will be produced annually—means that access to collections can be increased exponentially beyond the confines of the reading room. The Library is studying ways to make copyrighted content available to desktops worldwide, but even as that study continues, plans are being made to provide thousands of hours of restriction-free moving image content in ways that are useful for researchers, including the use of folksonomies and other user-generated metadata, allowing users to tag files with their own descriptions (à la YouTube, etc.). Coupled with aggressive plans to digitize moving image-related microfilm and periodicals, the NAVCC promises to open up the Library's collections in unprecedented ways.

The NAVCC will also be home to the Moving Image Collections (MIC) project, which documents moving image collections around the world through a catalog of titles and directory of repositories, providing a window to the world's moving image collections for discovery, access, and preservation. This resource—a union catalog of moving images—is phenomenally useful for scholars, archivists, and even casual users, and it will continue to grow in depth and breadth in the coming years.

Further, the NAVCC will be, in the words of David Francis, former Chief of the Library's Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division, “a center of excellence where scholars, visiting archive professionals, and students from graduate courses in moving image and recorded sound archiving can meet to consider the curatorial, technical and ethical issues associated with audiovisual preservation and access.”¹

All the technological innovation employed to preserve moving images, recorded sound, and born digital content like podcasts and video games, is used for the purpose of increasing access to the collections, thereby having an impact on popular culture. While much of that access will initially be focused in the Capitol Hill reading room, it is the Library's intention to deliver content widely. We need more interaction with the scholarly community to build the twenty-first century archive, and we look forward to developing those relationships.

Note

1. Quoted in *The Library of Congress Gazette* 17, no. 23, June 9, 2006.

Contributors

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Lynne Kirste is Special Collections Curator at the Academy Film Archive, where she works with the archive's extensive home movie holdings. She is the chair of the AMIA's LGBT Interest Group and a member of the Advisory Board of the Legacy Project for LGBT Film Preservation.

Mike Mashon heads the Moving Image Section of the Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division at the Library of Congress. His essay on the relationship between NBC and J. Walter Thompson will be published in "NBC: America's Network" (University of California Press, forthcoming).

Rick Prelinger founded Prelinger Archives in 1982, a collection of advertising, educational, industrial, and amateur films now at the Library of Congress. In 2001 he partnered with the nonprofit Internet Archive to place 1,970 archival films online for free downloading and reuse. He is cofounder (with Megan Prelinger) of a private research library open to the public in San Francisco.

Eric Schaefer is associate professor in the Department of Visual and Media Arts at Emerson College in Boston. He is the author of "*Bold! Daring! Shocking! True!*": A History of Exploitation Films, 1919–1959, and is working on "Massacre of Pleasure: A History of Sexploitation Films, 1960–1979" and an anthology on media and the sexual revolution. He currently serves as secretary of SCMS.

Karan Sheldon is cofounder of Northeast Historic Film, a regional moving image archive covering Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Massachusetts. Her article, "New England in Feature Films," appears in *The Encyclopedia of New England Culture* (Yale University Press, 2005). She served as the first treasurer of AMIA and helped establish www.oudfilm.org.

Dan Streible is associate professor in the NYU Department of Cinema Studies and acting director of its M.A. program in Moving Image Archiving and Preservation. He represents AMIA on the National Film Preservation Board. His book, "Fight Pictures: A History of Prizefighting and Early Cinema," is forthcoming from the University of California Press.