

LCM

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS MAGAZINE
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SAVING CINEMA

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Finding Films Again

Preserving Cinema
In a Nuclear Bunker

Plus

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Mission of the Library of Congress

The Library's mission is to engage, inspire and inform Congress and the American people with a universal and enduring source of knowledge and creativity.

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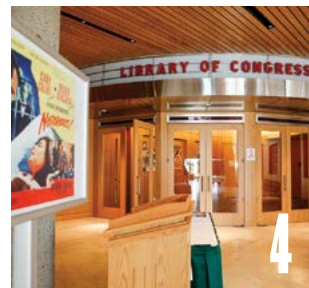
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■ On the cover: Frames from the nitrate film reel of the "Frankenstein" short made by Edison Studios in 1910. *Shawn Miller*

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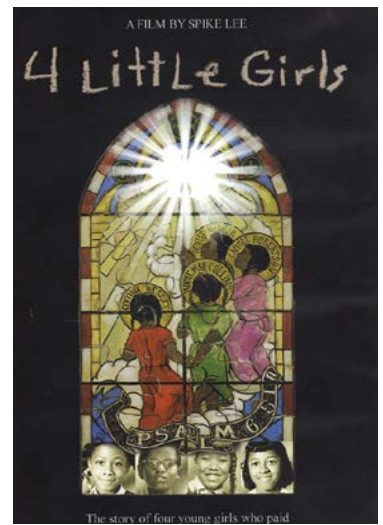
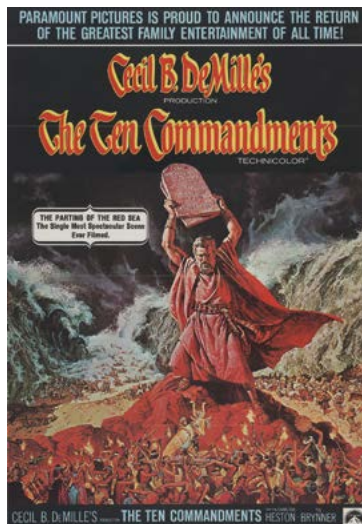


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#TRENDING



■ Promotional posters for National Film Registry inductees “King Kong,” “The Wizard of Oz,” “The Ten Commandments” and “4 Little Girls.”
Prints and Photographs Division, 40 Acres & A Mule Filmworks

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, FILM REGISTRY

This Library program marks 30 years of ensuring the survival of our cinematic heritage.

From an unexpected beginning, the National Film Registry has established itself as an important record of American cultural creativity, a modern-day Noah’s Ark of dazzling artistic icons. The registry, a Library of Congress program, in December marked its 30th anniversary – three decades of ensuring the survival and accessibility of America’s cinematic heritage.

Amid a national debate over the colorization of black-and-white films, Congress passed the National Film Preservation Act in 1988, recognizing motion pictures as a “significant American art form deserving of protection.”

The act created in the Library a 13-member National Film Preservation Board comprised of industry groups, artist guilds, film historians and archival organizations. It mandated selection by the librarian of Congress, after consulting with the board, of up to 25 “culturally, historically or aesthetically significant” American films each year to a National Film Registry.

Films are chosen in a three-step process: public nominations, discussion by the board and final selection by the librarian

of Congress after consulting with Library experts. Public nominations have increased over time (last year, over 5,200 individual titles were proposed) and often feature creative campaigns: One write-in effort used a full-court press by Indiana schoolchildren in support of “Hoosiers” – teamwork of which Gene Hackman would approve.

To narrow the field, the board holds spirited, candid discussions on the merits of titles and advocates forcefully for different types of films (Hollywood classics, silent films, documentaries, home movies, experimental works).

Once a film is chosen, the Library ensures it either has already been preserved or will be. Registry titles are saved by a conservation honor roll: film studios, preservation organizations and archives, including the Library’s Packard Campus. Almost all are now available in some format, be it DVDs, streaming, screenings or a mélange of cable channels.

Today, the board contains 44 members and alternates, and the registry numbers 750 titles. Neither a compilation of the best or most-popular films, the registry instead represents works the librarian and board deem significant and having stood the test of time. The registry’s incredible variety showcases the many creative paths American cinema has taken since its emergence in the early 1890s.

–Stephen Leggett

RED TAPE TO THE RESCUE

A bureaucratic decision inadvertently led to the preservation of thousands of national treasures.

By the early 1890s, Thomas Edison's labs had helped establish the technology behind motion pictures, and Edison wanted to protect his investment. Not only an inventor but an early content creator, he received patents on the technology, then sought copyright to secure the creative rights to the films he was making.

There was just one problem. "Motion picture" was not a viable category on the copyright form available from the U.S. Copyright Office in the Library of Congress. So, when presented with Edison's request to copyright this new medium, a registration reviewer stopped him cold. Sorry, Mr. Edison: no category, no copyright. It's not on the form!

But Edison was wily. Photos could be registered for copyright – the category, "Class J," was on the form. An Edison employee got the idea of exposing the film reel onto gelatin "printing out" paper, resulting in a long strip containing the positive images of each frame. The strips became known as "paper prints."

There was no guarantee the Copyright Office would go for it. But an employee whose name is lost to history accepted registration of the photo series as a single work. Precedent established and copyright protection ensured, the paper print collection was born.

The law changed to allow registration under a motion picture category in 1912. But in the interim, the Library had accepted some 6,000 titles as paper prints. As years passed, the newly accepted film deposits deteriorated – early film stock was volatile and subject to decay – but the paper prints survived.

Decades later, after much early film had crumbled, the Library restored and digitized thousands of early films via the paper prints. Many of these historical films can be viewed on the Library's website today.

■ A paper print of "The Untamable Whiskers," a film made by director Georges Méliès in 1904. Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division



MORE INFORMATION

The Paper Print Collection
[go.usa.gov/xpy84](https://www.loc.gov/xpy84)

FAVORITE PLACE

PACKARD CAMPUS THEATER

A small theater tucked away in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Virginia today evokes the glamour of 1920s and '30s cinema.

At the Library's Packard Campus theater, red-velvet curtains drape the screen, a ceiling painted like a starry sky arches over the 200-plus seats, and carved wood beams frame a space lit by four chandeliers – replicas of those in the Warner Grand Theatre, an Art Deco masterpiece in Los Angeles.

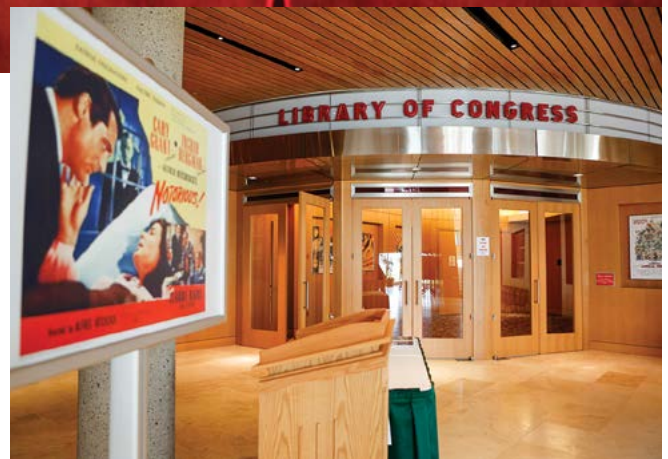
The homage to cinema's golden age extends beyond mere decoration: The theater is one of only a handful in the United States capable of showing original nitrate films – the way movies were screened before 1950 – as well as 16mm, 35mm and 70mm prints and “digital cinema.”

The theater, located in the small town of Culpeper, opened in 2008 with a showing of “The Maltese Falcon” (accompanied by a prop falcon from the film) and today hosts free, public screenings three days each week, as well as occasional concerts.

Screenings of silent films frequently are accompanied by live piano or organ music: A custom-made organ rises from a pit in the stage to provide the only sound – like the theater itself, a way to preserve the experience of our cinematic heritage.



ABBY BRACK LEWIS



SHAWN MILLER

REEL TREASURE

Moving image curator Rob Stone chooses favorite items from the Library's collections.



REVIVING 'RAMONA'

Most silent films are gone forever, so it's nice when, once in a while, a film can be brought back to life. Using material from Gosfilmofond (Moscow) and Narodni Filmovy Archiv (Prague), the Library fully restored this 1928 feature starring Dolores del Rio. Based on the novel of the same name by Helen Hunt Jackson, the film tells the story of ill-fated lovers Ramona and Alessandro. Characterized as an American West "Romeo and Juliet," this restored version highlights what good filmmaking looked like in the silent era.



AT HOME WITH JERRY LEWIS

The Jerry Lewis Collection is the most comprehensive collection of any single filmmaker that the Library holds. From theatrical releases to home movies, television shows and nightclub appearances, the collection chronicles the entire career of "The Total Filmmaker." A highlight of the collection are the home productions that Lewis made. Fully scripted with titles such as "Come Back, Little Shiksa" and "Fairfax Avenue," the films show Lewis' embryonic directorial work with friends such as Dean Martin, Janet Leigh and Tony Curtis as featured players.



'GET YOUR MAN'

Directed by Dorothy Arzner and starring Clara Bow, this 1927 feature held by the Library lived in limbo for many years due to a missing second reel. Using footage found in a clip reel at the Museum of Modern Art as well as stills from the Margaret Herrick Library, the missing reel was reconstructed and the film given a new life. The restoration work conducted by the late James Cozart was his last after decades working to preserve the Library's film holdings.



THE ORIGINAL 'TRAIN ROBBERY'

Visitors to the Library's Packard Campus are amazed – and sometimes don't believe – that the Library holds the original camera negative of the seminal 1903 film "The Great Train Robbery." Often credited as the first film to extensively use editing to advance the narrative, the existence of the 115-year-old artifact is a testament to the level of care the Library provides our national treasures.



ALICE REDISCOVERED

Stan Laurel's favorite female comedian, Alice Howell was a contemporary and somewhat rival of silent comedian Mabel Normand. Though she never gained the popularity of Normand, she also didn't garner the notoriety of her often scandal-ridden cohort. Perhaps remembered more today for being George Stevens Jr.'s grandmother (the Library acquired his Kennedy Center Honors collection), recent discoveries at the Library shed new light on Alice's talent. A handful of thought-to-be lost films were found in the Rick Prelinger Collection and are now available for research and soon on DVD from the Library and Undercrank Productions.

LIBRARY IN HISTORY



■ The Library's Packard Campus facility, built into the side of Mt. Pony in Culpeper, Virginia. *Shawn Miller*

SAVING FILM IN A NUCLEAR BUNKER

The Library operates the world's top preservation center in a Cold War facility.

The planet's premier facility for film preservation lies deep inside a former Cold War bunker in the Virginia foothills, a structure built a half-century ago to survive a nuclear attack and that once housed billions of dollars in reserve currency.

Today, that facility, the Library's Packard Campus for Audio-Visual Conservation, holds a different treasure: the largest collection of films, sound recordings and radio and television programs in the world. The collection's 6.3 million items are preserved on nearly 90 miles of shelves and in 124 specially designed vaults that safely store the highly flammable nitrate film stock once commonly used in motion pictures.

The Packard Campus, located about 75 miles southwest of Washington, D.C., in the town of Culpeper, is the result of a unique partnership among the Packard Humanities Institute, Congress and the Library.

The Cold War bunker was decommissioned in 1993 and, four years later, Congress authorized the purchase of the property by the Packard Institute to create a facility that would consolidate the Library's moving

image and sound recording collections and preservation work in one place.

Congress appropriated \$82 million in start-up funding for operations, staff and equipment, and the Packard Institute provided \$155 million for design and construction – one of the largest private gifts ever to the federal government.

Construction began in 2003, when workers scraped away the hillside to reconfigure the existing structure. The earth was replaced over the top of the completed 415,000-square-foot complex and replanted with grasses, perennials and some 9,000 trees to form one of the largest green roofs on the East Coast.

Inside the new facility, cutting-edge technology enables the Library to transfer hundreds of thousands of hours of recorded sound and moving images from deteriorating analog sources to digital files: A robotic system works 24/7 to reformat the content of videocassettes, for example, while the IRENE system creates digital audio files of historical phonograph records using high-resolution images of the grooves.

On July 26, 2007, Packard Institute President David Woodley Packard officially transferred the campus to the Library. "Thanks to private and public generosity and this unique partnership," then-Librarian of Congress James H. Billington said at the transfer ceremony, "we will be able to sustain an audio-visual legacy that might otherwise be lost to the ravages of time or indifference."

THE SOUND OF SILENTS

Accompanist Ben Model brings music back to the films of cinema's early years.

What inspired your interest in silent film?

My folks tell me I discovered Charlie Chaplin on TV when I was a toddler. For some little kids, it's trains or dinosaurs; for me, it was Charlie Chaplin. Walter Kerr, The New York Times drama critic and author of the 1975 book "The Silent Clowns," lived in my town and had a huge 16 millimeter collection. I used to go to his house and he would show me silent comedies by Buster Keaton, Harry Langdon, Harold Lloyd and Raymond Griffith that weren't available anywhere else.

How did you come to be a silent-film accompanist?

As a film production major at New York University, I found that the silent films shown in the required "Film History 101" class were being screened without any music. It killed me that these films I loved were pretty much dying in front of a couple hundred film students every week. I'd been a pianist since I was a kid, and I wanted to help these great movies. My sophomore year, I went to the head of the film studies department and volunteered to play for the silent film screenings. I started shifting away from trying to work in film production and began focusing on silent film accompaniment. It became the "what I do" in terms of my career.

What's the secret to accompanying silent films?

Attitude and practice. First, you have to respect the work on the screen and have a desire for it to resonate with a contemporary audience the way it did during its original release. The other part comes from simply doing it a lot. Eventually, you get to a point where you're in a state of creative flow during the show, where the images come into your eyes and the music instantly comes out of your hands. It's the combination of this accumulated knowledge of the films and filmmakers and the accumulated experience of accompanying hundreds of films that make this happen.



■ Ben Model accompanies the screening of a silent film in the Packard Campus theater. *Shawn Miller*

What is the value of silent films today?

They're important, now more than ever, in the sense that silent film is cinema's original and pure form of visual storytelling. Cinema language was developed during the silent era, and a great deal can be learned about telling stories in a universal way from studying them. Silent films translate more easily around the planet than other types of film do. The lack of sound, color and real-time speed meant that silent films told stories of the human equation, the human experience, that anyone can relate to. That's why they're timeless. You can show "Sunrise," "The Gold Rush," "Safety Last!" or "Metropolis" anywhere and people will have the same response.

Ben Model is a professor of film studies and since 2009 has been a resident silent film accompanist at the Library's Packard Campus theater.

‘NATIVE SON,’ UNCENSORED

The Library brings to light the original, unsanitized film version of the classic Richard Wright novel.

In his classic novel “Native Son,” Richard Wright tells the story of a poverty-stricken young black man who takes a job as a chauffeur to a white family in Chicago, accidentally kills the daughter and tries to cover it up.

For decades, however, the film version of “Native Son” didn’t tell the whole story – the result of censorship before its U.S. release. Only in recent years has the original version been available, thanks to a restoration done by the Library of Congress.

The film was shot in Argentina by French director Pierre Chenal from a screenplay written by Wright, who also (and unusually) starred as the lead character, Bigger Thomas.

“Native Son” premiered in Argentina in 1951 but was heavily censored for its U.S. release. Censors cut, among other things, comments about white “race hatred,” shortened sequences depicting Thomas’ consultations with lawyers and his murder trial and removed scenes showing a white lynch mob and police violence.

Those cuts resulted in another loss: the near-disappearance of the original version.

For some six decades, the censored version of “Native Son” was the only one available –

■ This “dialogue continuity,” acquired by the Library through copyright deposit, shows a transcription of the final version of “Native Son,” with the cuts marked for the U.S. release. *Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division*



until the Library restored the film to its original 107 minutes using a 16mm Argentine print and an international version discovered in an abandoned nitrate film vault in Puerto Rico.

The Library documents the original film in another way, too. Its Copyright Deposit Descriptions collection – material acquired through copyright submissions – holds the “dialogue continuity,” a transcription of the final version of the film complete with corrections, amendments and passages struck by censors. In one scene, censors cut an episode in which Bigger kills a foot-long rat in the family apartment, softening the depiction of brutal living conditions. In another, censors delete a discussion about smashing the Jim Crow system.

In the Library’s collections, however, Wright’s original vision lives on, both on film and paper, for future audiences.

went to school, see.

BIGGER Yessum.

MARY I think I can trust you. After all, I'm on your side. And so's this friend of mine I want you to meet tonight.

BIGGER But I don't want to meet anybody, M'am.

MARY Don't be silly. You'll like ^{Jan.} ~~him~~. He's got the answers to your problems. He's not like mother and dad, ^{and all,} doing missionary works. He fights for the colored people. Wait for me in this parking lot. I want to pick up Jan. I'll be in a minute. Bigger, I want you to meet Jan Erlone. ^{back}

JAN How are you, Bigger?

BIGGER Fine, ~~huh~~ sir.

JAN Come on and shake. Don't be scared. And don't call me sir. My name is Jan. Get in Bigger. I'm driving.

MARY It's alright.

JAN Say, Bigger, have you ever heard of a place called Ernie's Palace on the South Side?

BIGGER No^y, suh.

JAN They tell me they have ~~such~~ ^{floor} bang-up shows there. Good music and dancing, good drinks. Let's ask somebody where.

BIGGER Oh, ^{yes sir,} I know the place. It's out at 63rd. and South Park.

JAN Good.

~~MARY I guess we seem pretty strange to you, don't we Bigger?~~

~~BIGGER Yessum, No'm.~~

~~MARY Oh, you'll get used to us.~~

~~JAN We don't care about color, Bigger. To us a man's a man.~~

~~MARY When I think of what my people have done to your people I get so mad - I guess you feel the same way sometimes, don't you, Bigger?~~

~~BIGGER No'm. I don't know.~~

~~JAN Bigger, I know how it feels to walk the streets dressed like everybody else, feeling like everybody else, looking like they do, yet excluded for no other reason than that you're black. But one day we're going to smash this Jim Crow system and when we smash it'll be smashed.~~

ERNIE Good evening, M'am. You're just in time. The fight'll be over in a minute and the floor show starts.



AT MOSTLY LOST, FOUND AGAIN

An annual workshop provides an effective, if rowdy, way to recover the identities of silent films.

BY MARK HARTSELL

At any other theater, they would be the world's most annoying moviegoers –the last people with whom you'd want to spend a few hours in a confined space.

They talk endlessly among themselves as the film plays. They shout to acquaintances across the theater. They talk back to the screen. They forever check their phones and furiously type away on laptops.

This behavior, frowned upon anywhere else, is not only tolerated here at the Packard Campus theater but, for one week each June, is explicitly encouraged.

“Please talk loudly. Please bring out your laptops or iPads,” patrons are instructed just before the lights dim and the film rolls – the cinema equivalent of an airline steward ordering passengers to recline their seats, lower their tray tables, turn on all electronic devices and walk about the cabin during takeoff.

All that distraction would make for a nightmarish night at most theaters. But for the Library of Congress, it represents something productive and important: an effective, if noisy, way to preserve film history.

Each June, the Library's Packard Campus for Audio-Visual Conservation in Culpeper, Virginia, holds Mostly Lost, a workshop that enlists cinema experts and movie buffs from around the country to help identify silent films whose titles have been lost to history.

The four-day workshop taps, in real time, the collective brainpower of the historians, archivists and fans in the seats: As films roll, they shout out clues they see onscreen that might help identify the film and search online databases for titles that match the clues.

Out of the chaos, a more complete understanding of silent film emerges: Since their inception seven years ago,



the workshops have identified 403 films – just over half the number screened.

“Before each workshop, we preview the films submitted and often are able to identify a film prior to the workshop, so that submission doesn't make the final cut onto the workshop program,” said Rob Stone, who, along with Rachel Del Gaudio, organizes the event. “We try not to include any easy ones at the workshop; we want our Mostly Lost attendees to really work, and our high percentage of identifications show that they do just that.”

Moviemakers released some 11,000 silent feature films in the U.S. during cinema's first few decades. According to a 2013 Library of Congress study, about 70 percent of them no longer exist, and many that survived did so in an incomplete form.

Today, international archives collectively hold thousands of reels that – whether through neglect, human error or the ravages of time – no longer bear the markings that would reveal the identities of the films they contain.

■ Mostly Lost workshop participants gather outside the Packard Campus theater.
Shawn Miller



■ **Above and opposite:** Cinema historians and archivists use laptops to find information that might help identify the film they're watching on the screen. *Shawn Miller*

In cinema's early years, distributors provided films to theaters and didn't require them to be returned. After a movie's run ended, the projectionist might keep the whole film, throw it out or just save a few favorite bits.

Or, some reels from a multi-reel feature might get misplaced over the decades, leaving, say, only one title-less reel behind. In other cases, a film might deteriorate and the degraded sections get cut out, leaving a partial film with no opening title and credits.

Are these works masterpieces? Lost classics? Without doing some film archaeology, those questions would go unanswered.

The purpose of Mostly Lost is to uncover as much information about each film as possible and identify its proper title.

Nothing is known about some of the films screened. About others, archivists know a little – the name of an actor, perhaps, or the production company.

The workshop held last June drew 191 participants from seven countries to screen about 130 potential titles submitted by collectors and institutions from around the world: the Library of Congress, Lobster Films, the George Eastman Museum, the Packard Humanities Institute, Fondazione Cineteca Italiana, Cinematek, EYE Film Instituut Nederland and Centre national du cinéma et de l'image animée.

The films ranged in date from about 1900 to the 1960s, in length from about five seconds to nearly 25 minutes and in subject from Westerns to slapstick to travelogue



to animated clowns banding together to defend Earth from a Martian invasion.

Clues found onscreen help attendees identify unknown films or at least add to the knowledge about them. The typeface used in an intertitle helped date a silent film to the early 1920s. Recognizing a car as a Studebaker President Roadster and an actor as George LeMaire resulted in the identification of one film as the 1929 short “The Salesman.”

At the workshops, questions are raised (“Is that Andy Devine?” “NO!!”), observations offered (“The furniture looks French, but the acting doesn’t”) and jokes made (“The car is a ’39 Mercury, but what year is the fish?” someone quips during a 1940s fishing travelogue.)

After the workshop ends, the work continues. For weeks afterward, the screening notes are researched in databases such as the American Film Institute, the British Film Institute and the Complete Index to World Film, resulting in more identifications.

The workshops, it’s hoped, will not only restore long-lost information about these films but also restore the films themselves to public consciousness.

“I am constantly surprised by the knowledge and research skills of the Mostly Lost attendees,” Del Gaudio said. “They have been able to identify films that I thought would remain unknown forever. Films that seemingly have no visual clues still elicit responses from someone who recognizes that location or are familiar with that particular story. I receive emails years after the fact from attendees who come across helpful information that they want to impart in case it helps to identify a film. It is wonderful.” ■

SAVING THE SILENTS



In 2015, the Library scanned a 16mm print of “Daring Deeds” (Rayart Pictures, 1927) – a silent feature film that no longer exists on 35mm or in any archive. The only known 16mm print of the film was borrowed

from a collector as part of a project to scan films that exist only in private collections. “Daring Deeds” is just one of many previously “lost” silent films the Library has digitally preserved as part of its Silent Film Project (SFP).

The SFP is a digitization initiative of the Moving Image Section of the Library’s Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division – an outgrowth of a study on the survival of American silent feature films conducted by the Library and funded by the National Film Preservation Board. The SFP focuses on locating privately held silent feature films that the study found to either have no archival holdings or incomplete archival holdings, as listed in the American Silent Feature Film Database.

In the project’s first three years, about 40 private collectors loaned almost 400 films to the SFP for scanning. Two silent features from the project – “East Side, West Side” (1927, Principal Pictures) and “The Midnight Message” (Goodwill Pictures, 1926) – have newly scored versions available to stream on the Now See Hear! blog. With the help of private collectors, these once lost films are now accessible, for research as well as entertainment.

—Amy Jo Stanfill

More Information

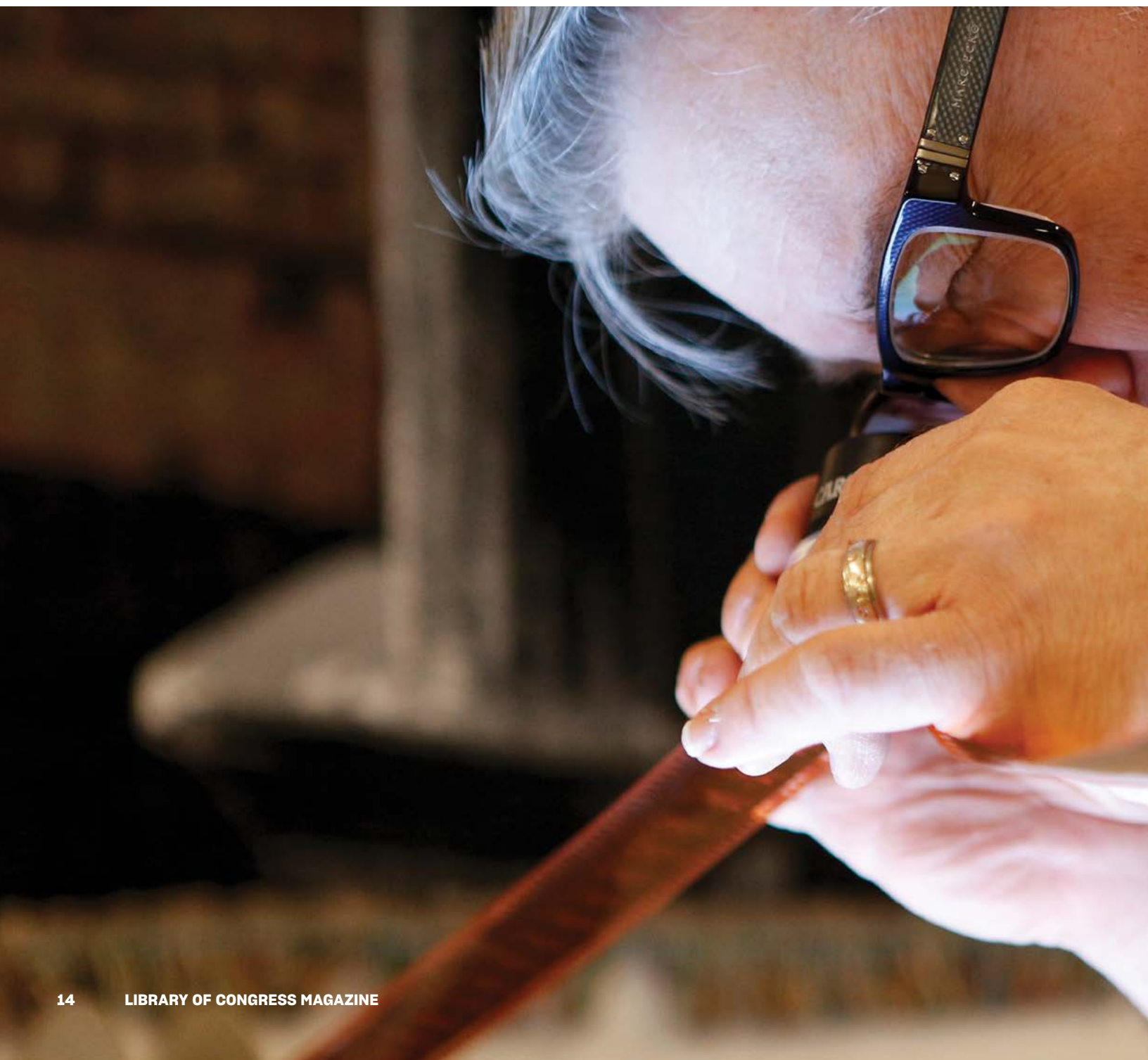
The Survival of American Silent
Feature Films: 1912–1929
bit.ly/2mKZqlh

American Silent Feature Film Database
go.usa.gov/xUymC

SFP on the Now See Hear! Blog
go.usa.gov/xUymb

SAV

■ Nitrate film vault leader George Willeman examines a reel of historical film at the Packard Campus. Shawn Miller



WINING CINEMA



The Library works to preserve America's fragile film heritage.

BY MARK HARTSELL

Preservationists have a nickname for this sad little reel of film in the Library of Congress motion picture collections: "the hockey puck" – a circular, rust-colored block of nitrate film whose strips couldn't be peeled apart if you tried, much less threaded through a projector and watched.

The hockey puck is the result of a regrettable, long-ago decision by a previous owner to store the reel in a damp place. The film's emulsion sucked in the moisture, gluing the strips together into an unsalvageable mass that today serves only as a cautionary tale about the perils of improper storage or, perhaps, as a symbol of the fragile nature of our cinematic heritage.

Over 125 years of motion picture history, the films that make up that heritage have found many ways to die.

They've been thrown away in large numbers by indifferent film studios, destroyed by archive fires and attacked by maladies that leave film with a gnarled, alligator-skin surface reeking of vinegar.

They've been misplaced and lost by the thousands, cut into pieces by projectionists, mis-stored in sweltering attics and garages and buried en masse in the frozen tundra beneath a small Alaska town (yes, that happened). They get too damp and then moldy, too dry and then brittle.

"It's amazing," Library film preservationist George Willeman says, "that any of this stuff survived."

In fact, a 2013 Library of Congress study revealed just how few did survive: Seventy percent of the roughly 11,000 silent feature films released in the early decades of U.S. cinema, the study concluded, no longer exist.

Many that survived did so in incomplete form. "London After Midnight," the legendary Lon Chaney silent horror film, exists only in still



■ A heritage at risk: A fine brown powder covers the reel above, the result of the chemical breakdown of the film over decades. At right, a dried-out, brittle segment of film. *Shawn Miller*

photographs – the last print was destroyed in an MGM vault fire in 1965. Only nine minutes of the great Greta Garbo in “The Divine Woman” still exist.

The Library’s Packard Campus for Audio-Visual Conservation seeks to ensure that as much as possible of our remaining cinematic heritage will survive.

“Movies are the people’s art form. They tell us who we were, who we are and, perhaps, where we’re going,” says Mike Mashon, head of the Library’s Moving Image Section. “But as much as this nation loves motion pictures, we have done too little to ensure their continued existence. We have embraced the history, glamour and storytelling splendor of moviemaking while ignoring the reality that films are physical artifacts that can shrink, fade and disintegrate into dust in less than a lifetime.

“Here at the Packard Campus, we work every day to preserve this country’s unparalleled cinematic heritage.”



FRAGMENTS OF FILM HISTORY

The Library’s moving image collections today hold some 1.4 million items, including roughly 140 million feet of nitrate film that dates to the 1890s, the dawn of filmmaking.

The collections include some of film history’s great treasures: Thomas Edison’s 1894 film of a man sneezing, the oldest surviving copyrighted motion picture; the original camera negatives of the 1903 milestone “The Great Train Robbery,” considered the first American action film and the first Western; the personal collection of Mary Pickford, perhaps the silent era’s biggest star; virtually every film made by Disney before 1951; the only known nitrate print of Edison’s “Frankenstein,” the earliest film adaptation of the great Mary Shelley novel.

They also capture more than a century of real American life: African-American soldiers disembark from a ship during the Spanish-American War in 1898, tourists ride stagecoaches through Yellowstone National Park in 1899, Michigan takes the field for a football game in 1903, San Franciscans survey the damage following the great earthquake of 1906.

“

**MOVIES ARE THE PEOPLE'S
ART FORM. THEY TELL US
WHO WE WERE, WHO WE
ARE AND, PERHAPS, WHERE
WE'RE GOING...**





HISTORICAL FILMS, AT A CLICK

The Library of Congress' new National Screening Room gives visitors a front row seat to sample the nation's cinematic history in all its forms.

The online screening room, launched in September, offers hundreds of hours of digitized motion pictures – fiction, home movies, newsreels and actualities – that cover over 100 years, from 1890 to 1999.

The first phase of the project featured 281 titles, and more are added each month. Most of the content is in the public domain – movies the Library believes are in the public domain are fully downloadable. Permissions were granted for the inclusion of copyrighted motion pictures, which are available as streaming files.

A highlight of the first installment: the home movies of composer George Gershwin and his brother, lyricist Ira, from 1928 to 1939. The films provide rare glimpses of the Gershwins at work and socializing – sitting by the pool with actor Edward G. Robinson; at a birthday party for Judy Garland's young daughter, Liza Minnelli; watching as dancer Fred Astaire performs their song "Slap that Bass."

Other highlights include historical footage of figures such as Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and William McKinley and singer Frank Sinatra; 103 titles from the Library's Paper Prints collection of historic early films, including shorts directed by D. W. Griffith; and titles named to the National Film Registry for their cultural, historical and aesthetic significance.

More Information

National Screening Room
go.usa.gov/xPBXg

Each year, the Library acquires a wide range of film – many thousands of reels, encompassing everything from Hollywood pictures to industrial films to home movies.

Historically, much of that material was acquired through the Library’s copyright function – filmmakers submitted their works to the U.S. Copyright Office at the Library, some of which was retained in collections.

Today, most acquisitions are the result of a gift or purchase or a combination of the two: In recent years, for example, comedians Jerry Lewis and Danny Kaye donated their personal collections and the Library purchased the moving-image archive of J. Fred MacDonald, some 40,000 reels of film that made up one of the world’s biggest collections.

“There’s still quite an influx of material from private collectors, and that’s where the rarest of stuff comes,” moving image curator Rob Stone says. “We actually get in ‘lost’ films here. We count them each year by the dozens, not by like, ‘Oh look, we found one.’”

Vaults Full of Treasures

All that material is preserved at the Packard Campus, a state-of-the-art facility located in a former Cold War bunker in the foothills around Culpeper, Virginia (see page 6).

Inside Packard, moving image and recorded sound collections are stored on some 90 miles of shelving in 35 climate-controlled units. Highly flammable nitrate film – it shares the same basic chemical compound as gunpowder – is safely kept in 124 specially built, thick-walled vaults maintained at 39 degrees and 30 percent relative humidity.

To ensure the long-term preservation of the moving image collections, Packard maintains a laboratory that specializes in film-to-film and film-to-file preservation as well as a hybrid of the two.

Technicians in the photochemical (film-to-film) portion of the lab produce new 35mm master elements on a stable polyester stock that, lab supervisor Heather Linville says, will last 100 years or more when properly stored.

The film-to-file portion digitally preserves

a wide range of motion picture formats – 8mm, 9.5mm, 16mm, 22mm, 28mm and 35mm, among them – by recording films at 2K and 4K resolution using state-of-the-art scanners capable of handling even badly deteriorated reels of film. Technicians then can take the resulting digital files and remove scratches, ensure proper contrast and density of black-and-white films, improve faded hues in color films or use special software to replicate the tinting found in early silent films.

Recently, Linville says, the lab has used those restored digital files to record high-profile titles back onto film, creating both master versions of these restored works for long-term preservation as well as 35mm prints for public access.

Out of Cinema’s Shadows

In addition to acquiring and preserving films, Packard over the years has put great effort into restoring and reconstructing them as well.

Library preservationists, for example, restored missing scenes to the original, classic version of “All Quiet on the Western Front” from 1930. They discovered an unknown print of the 1933 Barbara Stanwyck pre-Code drama “Baby Face” and produced the first uncensored version of the film available to the public.

In recent years, they reconstructed some of Edison’s early attempts, made in 1913, to combine moving images with sound. The Library had the film and the Thomas Edison National Historical Park had the cylinder recordings that held the sound meant to accompany the images. The Library produced digital versions of the films that married images and sound – the first time in more than a century viewers could both watch and hear Edison’s films simultaneously.

Sitting at a Packard work station, Willeman illustrates the Library’s most recent work, a collaboration with Kino Lorber highlighting early women pioneers of cinema: little-known filmmakers from the turn of the century such as Alice Guy Blaché, Lois Weber, Grace Cunard, Marion E. Wong and others.

■ **Opposite: The Packard Campus houses 124 thick-walled vaults such as this one, which safely store the Library’s collections of historical, highly flammable nitrate films. Shawn Miller**



■ Andrew Whitmore and Jennifer Sidley inspect reels of 35mm film at the Packard Campus. Shawn Miller

“It’s a big part of film history that’s been totally hidden, and very deliberately hidden, I think,” says Willeman, who manages the Library’s nitrate vaults. “The more film became a business, the more it became the boys club. All the studio owners were men, most of the directors were. It was a male-dominated business. They pushed these women into the background.”

For this project, Willeman and preservation specialist Lynanne Schweighofer reconstructed about 50 films – including a few rescued from the frozen ground beneath that Alaska town. They restored titles, conducted research to fill in gaps in plot left by missing reels, returned misplaced scenes to their proper place and restored original tints.

One, a 1915 Weber film titled “Hypocrites,” had been available and shown at film festivals for decades. But, Willeman and Schweighofer thought, something about the film didn’t quite feel right. Researching contemporary accounts of the film led to a startling discovery: The opening scene had somehow been relocated to reel three and, for all these decades, audiences had been watching the movie wrong. Only now can audiences see the film as Weber intended.

“Our intent,” Stone says, “is to get something back as close as we can to how it was originally presented back in the day.”

Some of these movies likely haven’t been seen since they first were screened back in the early 1900s. Preservationists can’t always make films like them whole again. But they can ensure what remains survives for posterity, little pieces of film history and our history, brought to light once more. ■

FILM LOANS AT THE LIBRARY

The term “digital cinema” is often used today as a selling point to lure audiences into theaters. But even as some studios close their circulating print libraries in favor of DCP (digital cinema package) distribution, a growing audience still desires to see motion pictures that were shot on film projected on film.

Where can repertory houses, festivals and college film programs turn?

The Library offers a robust 35mm print loan program that fills this need for venues across the globe, from a silent film festival in Helsinki to a street festival in Schoharie, New York. Audiences new and old can see perennial favorites such as the Busby Berkeley classic “Gold Diggers of 1933” or rarities such as “Within Our Gates” – Oscar Micheaux’s answer to “Birth of a Nation.”

Working at the Packard Campus, a team of five provides free access to over 350 titles to over 200 venues around the world. Venues that meet archival projection standards may borrow prints from the Library’s vast collection, paying only shipping and rights-clearance fees. One title screened may have an audience of dozens or even thousands, seeing historical movies the way they were made and have been watched for more than a century: on film.

–Lynanne Schweighofer

More Information

35mm Print Loan Program
filmloans@loc.gov

Nitrate vault leader George Willeman helps preserve America's cinematic heritage.

Describe your work at the Library.

My official title is nitrate film vault leader. In that role, I oversee operation of the nitrate film vaults at the National Audio-Visual Conservation Center in Culpeper, Virginia. This entails inspecting and evaluating reels of nitrate motion picture film, which date from 1894 to 1951. Nitrate film is highly flammable and subject to chemical deterioration, which means the potential for media loss is very high. A secondary part of my job is working on digital reconstructions of rare nitrate films.

How did you prepare for your position?

When I was attending Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio, back in 1984, my film professor asked if I would be interested in inspecting films for the Library. It was then I discovered the Library stored its nitrate films at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, next to our campus. There was no such thing as film archive school then; pretty much everything was on-the-job training, plus the arcane knowledge I had stored up through personal research. By the time I graduated, my college job was turning into a career. I found myself – someone who had studied silent cinema since he was a child – as part of the group tasked with caring for these same films. Thirty-four years later, I still love the work, and there are new discoveries every week. I'm thrilled to have a small part in preserving our media heritage.

What projects have you especially enjoyed?

I have two favorite digital projects: First, the reconstruction of the Edison Kinetophone films, done in conjunction with the Thomas Edison National Historical Site. In 1913, Edison's studio began filming a series of "talking pictures" called Kinetophones – six-minute shorts shot in conjunction with a live soundtrack on a cylinder that were then played back in sync (sometimes). The system was cumbersome, and Edison quit production after a year. Between the Library and Edison, enough materials existed to recombine eight films with their soundtracks. I was given the job of doing this reconstruction, utilizing sound from Edison and digital scans from the Library.

The second project of which I am very



SHAWN MILLER

proud is pioneer women filmmakers, done with Kino Lorber. My colleague Lynanne Schweighofer and I worked for over a year preparing digital files on 50 or so silent films by women filmmakers, both famous and obscure. It was exciting work and satisfying to think we were helping bring these women back to light – they had helped create the film business but were pushed to the back by the growing "boys club."

What are your favorite collection items?

I truly love the very early films in our collection – in particular, the original negatives produced by French pioneer Georges Méliès. Though Méliès destroyed all of his French material in a fit of despair, the material he sent to his brother Gaston, who ran his company's U.S. arm, survived and made its way to the Library in 1974. New materials produced off these negatives show the great detail Méliès put into his productions and put lie to the idea that early films were blurry and scratchy. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Likewise, the original camera negative of Edison's "The Great Train Robbery" of 1903 is amazing to behold. This 115-year-old reel of film is one of the most important in U.S. cinema history, and it is part of the Library's nitrate collection. It is the one reel we most often show to film professionals – it's always met with a gasp.



■ Scenes from home movies: The Kelly family documents a day in their lives (from left), Sigmund Freud walks with family members and Judy Garland hosts a birthday party for daughter Liza Minnelli. *Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division*

REAL LIFE, CAUGHT ON CAMERA

The Library collects home movies for the individual lives they depict and for what we can learn about our culture and shared past.

BY DWIGHT SWANSON

These could be scenes from many home movies: a bearded older man plays with his grandchildren and his dog, a young girl celebrates at her birthday party.

What sets these two home movies apart, however, is their extraordinary casts: The cigar-smoking granddad in the first film? The founder of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud. And the other? The girl is future star Liza Minnelli, the cameraman is the great lyricist Ira Gershwin – and the party is typical only if you grew up in Hollywood as the child of celebrities.

Both films belong to the Library of Congress' collection of home movies, a collection full of famous names: Margaret Mead, Ernest Hemingway, Albert Einstein, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Carl Sagan, the Henry Ford family, Justice Felix Frankfurter, Danny Kaye and Patty Andrews of the Andrews Sisters. The home movies of comedian Jerry Lewis include 20 years of Christmas scenes, and Lewis playing baseball in exhibitions with the Los Angeles Dodgers and other major league teams.

Most of these luminaries' movies came to the Library as part of their personal manuscript collections and help document their lives, providing an intimate look at the real people behind the public image.

In the past two decades, however, film historians and archivists have started to look at home movies not just because of who made them – whether famous figures or average folks – but for what they show about the individual lives they depict and what we can learn about our culture and shared past.

Home movies provide supplements and corrections to the standard textbook historical accounts of people and events, with a special focus on scenes of everyday life.

It is “history from the ground up,” says Mike Mashon, head of the Moving Image Section at the Library’s Packard Campus for Audio-Visual Conservation.

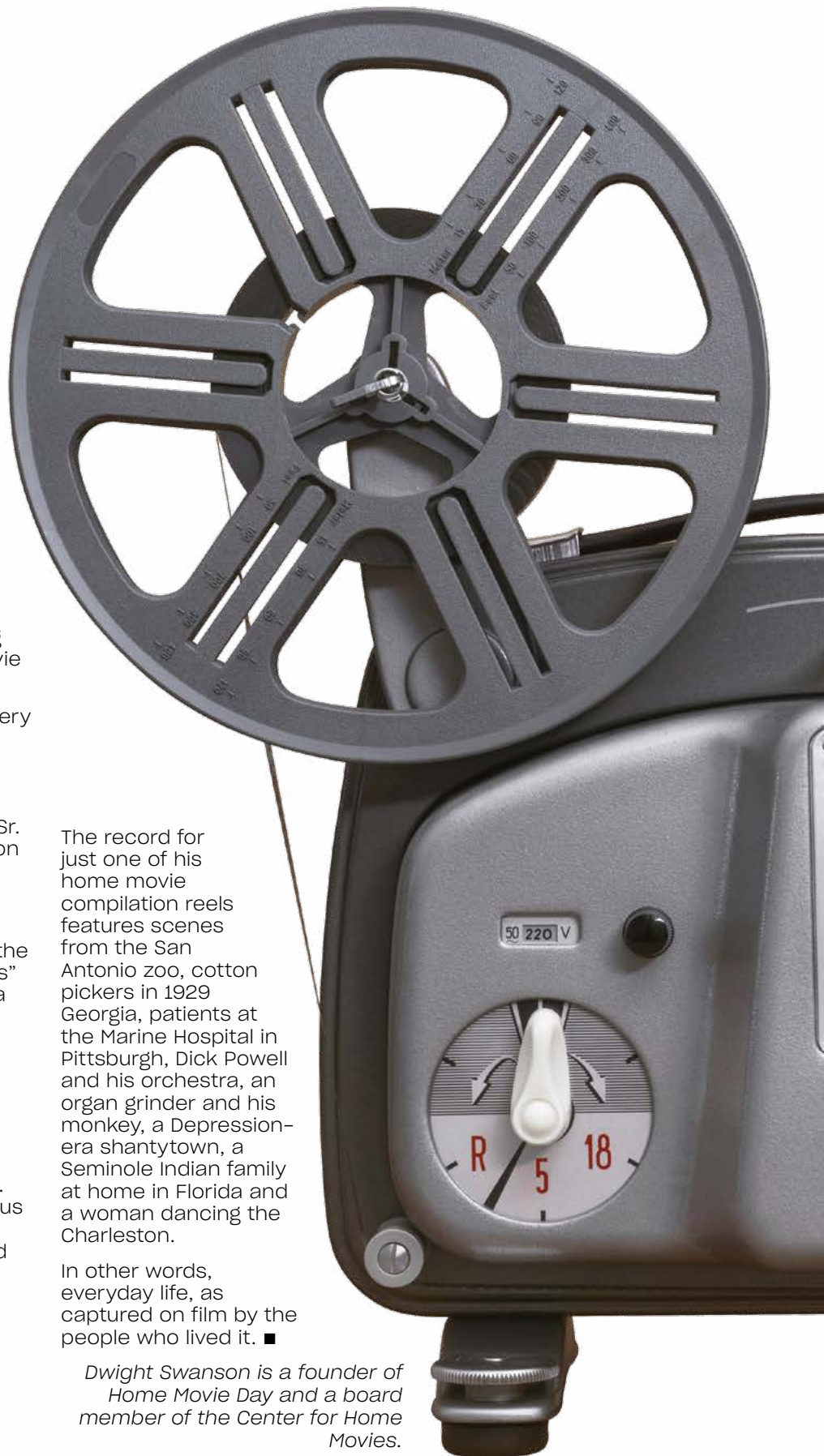
The Library has an ongoing relationship with the Center for Home Movies, a nonprofit organization that grew out of Home Movie Day, an annual international event that celebrates amateur filmmaking and educates the public about home movie preservation.

Home Movie Day led directly to the discovery of films eventually added to the National Film Registry: “Our Day,” a 1938 portrait of a day in the life of the Kelly family of Lebanon, Kentucky, and “Think of Me First as a Person,” a short film by Dwight Core Sr. made from home movies he shot of his son with Down syndrome.

The late Robbins Barstow of Wethersfield, Connecticut, was a prolific amateur filmmaker who started making movies in the mid-1930s. His “Barstow Travel Adventures” shows the family’s travels around America and the world, including his most famous film, “Disneyland Dream,” named to the registry in 2008.

That film shows the Barstow family’s trip to Southern California and Disneyland in 1956 (the movie, it later was discovered, gives a glimpse of a young Steve Martin, who once sold guidebooks at Disneyland). Through charming narration and sumptuous Kodachrome, the film comes alive and conveys a “priceless and authentic record of time and place.”

The Library’s largest single home movie collection was compiled by the late film historian J. Fred MacDonald. Over the decades, his company, MacDonald and Associates, collected a vast archive of 16mm amateur films as well as television programs, educational films, commercials and more.



The record for just one of his home movie compilation reels features scenes from the San Antonio zoo, cotton pickers in 1929 Georgia, patients at the Marine Hospital in Pittsburgh, Dick Powell and his orchestra, an organ grinder and his monkey, a Depression-era shantytown, a Seminole Indian family at home in Florida and a woman dancing the Charleston.

In other words, everyday life, as captured on film by the people who lived it. ■

Dwight Swanson is a founder of Home Movie Day and a board member of the Center for Home Movies.

AROUND THE LIBRARY



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.

1. Workers install a new, state-of-the-art case for the Gutenberg Bible in the Great Hall of the Jefferson Building in November.

2. Jorie Graham, recipient of the Rebekah Johnson Bobbitt National Prize for Poetry, reads selections from her work "Fast" on Dec. 6.

3. Students join Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden in the Great Hall to examine the Nicolay copy of the Gettysburg Address on the 155th anniversary of Lincoln's historic speech.

4. A Christmas tree shines in the Great Hall on Dec. 12.

5. A visitor examines items from the Stephen A. Geppi Collection of Comics and Graphic Arts on display in the Great Hall on Nov. 9.

6. International Monetary Fund Managing Director Christine Lagarde delivers the eighth annual Kissinger Lecture on foreign policy, sponsored by the Kluge Center, on Dec. 4 in the Great Hall.

ALL PHOTOS BY SHAWN MILLER

High School Students Win Congressional Data Challenge

High school students won the top two prizes in the Congressional Data Challenge, a Library-sponsored competition in which participants use legislative data sets from Congress.gov and other platforms to develop digital projects that interpret congressional data in user-friendly ways.

The first-place winners, awarded \$5,000 by the Library, were Alan Gomez-Tagle and Carter Nielsen of Newton North High School in Massachusetts. Their winning project enables users to explore treaties in an interactive and visual way instead of as blocks of text. Through data visualizations, users are able to discover trends and find what they are looking for more efficiently.

Another high school student, Daniel Vebman of the Friends Seminary School in New York City, was awarded \$1,000 for developing a mobile application that helps voters measure legislative collaboration in Congress. The application presents three visualizations for the relationships between legislators that explore agreement between individual members, as well as by party and geographic region.

More: loc.gov/item/prn-18-082

Recent Graduates Inaugurate Residency Program At Library

In support of developing the next generation of librarians and information professionals, the Library last summer welcomed five librarians to its Librarians in Residence pilot program. The residency began in June and continues into 2019.

The program gives early career librarians the opportunity to gain meaningful work experience and receive mentoring from seasoned staff. The residents were selected from a pool drawn from the 53 American Library Association-accredited graduate programs, and they were required to have graduated within the past 18 months.

The residents participated in enrichment activities, received training and fulfilled job responsibilities as professional librarians.

The librarians in residence were Kelsey Diemand of Middletown, Connecticut, and the University of Maryland; Zachary Fannin of Madison, Wisconsin, and the University of Wisconsin; Amanda Jenkins of Saint Paul, Minnesota, and the University of Iowa; Hanna Soltys of St. Louis and Simmons College; and Jon Sweitzer-Lamme of Durham, North Carolina, and the University of Illinois.

More: loc.gov/item/prn-18-087

Library Receives Donation Of Historic Comics

Entrepreneur Stephen A. Geppi donated more than 3,000 items from his vast personal collection of comic books and popular art to the Library, including the original storyboards that document the creation of Mickey Mouse.

The gift includes a wide range of rare comic books, plus original art, photos, posters, newspapers, buttons, badges and related materials – including Beatles memorabilia, flicker rings popularizing comic book characters and political figures, Richard Outcault's The Yellow Kid printing blocks and the No. 2 Brownie camera model F from Eastman Kodak Company.

A signature item documents the birth of one of animation's most iconic characters. Six rare storyboards detail the story layout and action for Walt Disney's 1928 animated film, "Plane Crazy" – the first Mickey Mouse cartoon produced (though not the first released). The Library holds over 140,000 issues of about 13,000 comic book titles, a collection that includes many firsts and some of the most important comics in history.

More: loc.gov/item/prn-18-072

Law Library, The Hague Agree To Information-Sharing

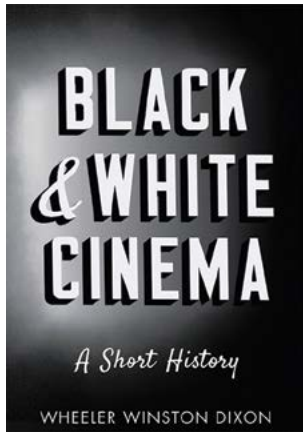
Two of the world's most comprehensive international law libraries, the Law Library of Congress and the Peace Palace Library based in The Hague, Netherlands, have agreed to form an information-sharing relationship to better serve users.

A memorandum of understanding was signed in a ceremony at the Library of Congress by Law Librarian of Congress Jane Sánchez and Peace Palace Library Director Jeroen Vervliet. The Law Library will benefit from this collaboration in fulfilling its primary mission: providing foreign, comparative, international and U.S. law research and reference services to Congress, the federal courts, federal agencies and legal researchers.

Under the agreement, the Law Library and the Peace Palace Library will share information regarding collection development, research and reference services and the preparation of written reports and other research products. They also can share information about cataloging, such as the system of classification and the subject headings that each has developed.

More: loc.gov/item/prn-18-094

SHOP



'Black & White Cinema'
Product #21109019
Price: \$27.95

More than just a history, this lavishly illustrated book is a rallying cry that inspires love for the artistry of black-and-white cinema.



Movie Posters Puzzle
Product #21504103
Price: \$16.95

This puzzle is filled with posters from classic movies, from Garbo in "Queen Christina" to Hepburn in "Breakfast at Tiffany's."



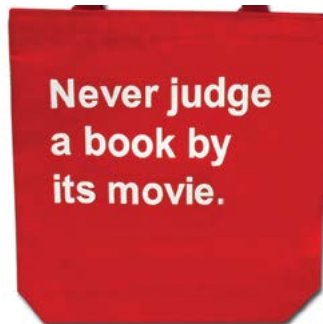
Library of Congress Hoodie
Product #21303013
Price: \$29.95

Keep warm and show your devotion to libraries and reading with this heavyweight Library hoodie. Available in navy and red.



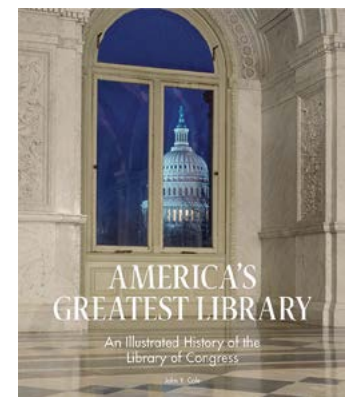
Mixed-Up Movie Lines
Product #21504085
Price: \$12.95

Create the funniest script never written: Mixed-Up Movie Lines features favorite movie lines made for hilarious rearranging.



'Judge' Tote
Product #21301569
Price: \$20

This sturdy canvas tote – "Never judge a book by its movie" – is perfect for a trip to the library or a bookstore.



'America's Greatest Library'
Product #211107187
Price: \$19.95

This illustrated guide by Library historian John Y. Cole highlights the history and personalities of this singular institution.

HELPING HANDS FOR PRESERVATION

Private-sector support makes many important projects possible.

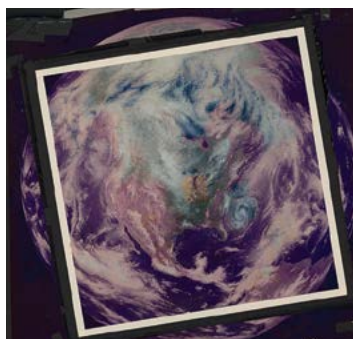
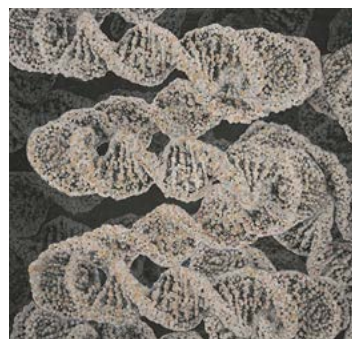
The National Audio-Visual Conservation Center, headquartered at the Library's Packard Campus, is responsible for preserving the world's largest collection of film and other moving image and recorded sound materials. Over the years, much of the success achieved in that effort has been the result of collaborations and partnerships with numerous organizations, foundations and corporations and with the support of many private individuals similarly dedicated to preserving the nation's audiovisual heritage.

Congressional funding is supplemented by the support of private-sector foundations, such as The Film Foundation, headed by Martin Scorsese, which has helped the Library fund the preservation of films ranging from rare early silents to the works of such diverse filmmakers as Alfred Hitchcock and the team of Charles and Ray Eames.

Ongoing collaboration with most major film studios has been instrumental in preservation efforts, with direct support through cooperative agreements with two studios – the Walt Disney Co. and Warner Bros. Studios – providing funding for several full-time staff at Packard.

But many activities described in this issue of the Library of Congress Magazine would not be fully possible without the support of private individuals with a personal dedication to film preservation. To give just a few examples:

- The launch of the current effort to digitally preserve the Paper Print Collection (see page 3) is made possible by an individual committed to making these early American films – including seminal works by D.W. Griffith – more broadly available to the public.
- Other individuals contribute financially to the annual Mostly Lost film-identification workshop at Packard, which helps identify unknown and under-identified titles held by



film archives around the world (see page 10).

- The success of the Silent Film Project (see page 13) would not be possible without the private collectors willing to send their copies of rare or, in some cases, only-surviving prints to the Library for preservation scanning.
- Over the years, many individual financial contributions have helped support the restoration of individual titles, often in collaboration with other archives.

If you would like to support the Library's film-preservation work, please visit loc.gov/philanthropy. All donations to the Library are tax deductible.

–Gregory Lukow is chief of the National Audio-Visual Conservation Center – Packard Campus

■ Artwork from the film "Powers of Ten" by Charles and Ray Eames. Private support has helped the Library preserve the work of a diverse group of filmmakers. *Prints and Photographs Division*

LAST WORD

LEONARD MALTIN

I learned a lot of what I know from a great man named William K. Everson: film scholar, author, teacher and self-proclaimed eccentric. (He maintained that all Englishmen were either eccentrics or bores.) Stories about Bill abound and are usually told with great affection. One day when a friend of mine was driving him somewhere he drifted into sleep, but continued moving his hand in an unusual fashion. When Bill woke up he explained that he was focusing his projector.

Bill had a 16mm film collection filled with obscure and little-known films from the silent and talkie eras. He dipped into that archive once a week at his secret-handshake Theodore Huff Film Society, named for a late colleague who wrote the first important book about Charlie Chaplin. It was nice to see a great film like “The Big Parade,” but there were other places to find it. He preferred the odd and obscure, from E.A. Dupont’s “Atlantic” (1929) to David Burton’s “Lady by Choice” (1934). This Monday night ritual was attended by the most serious film buffs on earth. The Huff’s existence was never documented in print; you only found out about it if you knew somebody who attended already. I was lucky enough to meet Bill at the age of 13 and wangle an invitation.

Bill was generous to a fault. One night, a student he’d never met knocked on his apartment door and asked if there was any way he could see Frank Capra’s “Lost Horizon.” Anyone else would have thrown him out or insisted he make an appointment. Bill welcomed him into his home, cluttered with stacks of film cans, dug around for his print and showed it to the young man.

No one had coined the phrase “pay it forward” at the time, but that explains Bill’s approach to film education and preservation. He believed that having a film, or saving one, was meaningless unless you showed it to an audience. That was the missing ingredient in the agendas of certain archives and many Hollywood studios back in the 1960s.

As should be obvious by now, I took Bill’s word as gospel and adopted his outlook. Fortunately, in the half-century since my first encounter with him, many good things have happened. Archives opened their



BECKY SAPP

eyes to the jewels they possess and their doors to film buffs and scholars who yearn to view them. The advent of home video fueled funding, and identified audiences, for rare titles that have recently been rescued. Turner Classic Movies became a haven for movie lovers and, we hope, a recruiting ground for the next generation.

One thing remains a constant: the presence of dedicated preservationists who go above and beyond the call of duty to make sure films of all ages are saved, and seen. As the articles in this magazine illustrate, films strike passions of all kinds in the people who get to work with them. In my eyes – and those of movie lovers everywhere – these people are heroes.

Leonard Maltin edited the paperback reference “Leonard Maltin’s Movie Guide” for 45 years, and its companion volume “Leonard Maltin’s Classic Movie Guide” is still being published. He has taught at the USC School of Cinematic Research for 20 years and spent 30 years on television’s “Entertainment Tonight.” He appears regularly on Turner Classic Movies, hosts a weekly podcast with his daughter and holds court at www.leonardmaltin.com.



■ Thomas Edison's kinetoscopic record of a sneeze (1894), the oldest surviving copyrighted motion picture. *Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division*

CURRENT
EXHIBITIONS



**GEPEI COLLECTION
OF COMICS AND
GRAPHIC ARTS**
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2019

**BASEBALL
AMERICANA**
Through June 2019

**ECHOES OF THE
GREAT WAR:
AMERICAN
EXPERIENCES OF
WORLD WAR I**
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2019

More information
loc.gov/exhibits