

MOVING IMAGE REVIEW



Sage-femme de première classe, 1902, by Alice Guy Blaché, who appears on the left. This is, so far, the earliest title discovered by Northeast Historic Film.

Our Sense of Community

By Peter McDougall

Moving images represent our shared past. They document and interpret events, places, and people and provide a sense of who we were so that future generations can better understand the common themes that link us all together. But preserving our past requires a communal effort. Fortunately, Northeast Historic Film has a rather large sense of community.

For NHF, cooperation has always been the name of the game. Sharing information, keeping an eye open for titles that fall under the umbrella of another archives, and generally striving to recruit and support as many people as possible in the effort to preserve moving images—these are all elements of our cooperative effort.

Elders and Betters

“Before we even started NHF, we took a drive down to Washington, DC, to speak to our elders and betters. Along the way we stopped off in New York to meet with people at the Museum of Modern Art,” says David Weiss, NHF’s executive director. “They took us under their wings; we toured the MOMA Department of Film; they gave us samples of accession forms and were as nice and generous as they could be to show us how they did things.”

That generosity and openness is frequently paid forward as NHF provides advice and recommendations to other organizations and archives. NHF’s cold storage building (The Cube) and the Alamo Theatre provide working templates for organizations as far away as Appalshop in Kentucky and the Alaska Moving Image Preservation Association in Anchorage. NHF is now in the position of taking other organizations under its wing, thanks to the support it received early on.

What Goes Around Comes Around

Sharing goals means NHF alerts others to footage that doesn’t quite mesh with our mission, but is of interest to others. “We found five reels of early nitrate film—two 1915 films—and they had nothing to do with this region,” recalls David. “The Museum of Modern Art, however, was thrilled to get them since no other copies existed. We donated

Ways of Watching Tenth Annual Summer Symposium July 24-25, 2009

For two days this summer in Bucksport, scholars, filmmakers, archivists, students, and members of the public will gather to learn and discuss how and where art, educational, and amateur films have been shown.

Presenters this year will travel from as far away as Sweden, Norway, and Britain, to join other speakers from Arizona, Colorado, Illinois, Massachusetts, New York, Maine, Pennsylvania, and Texas. There will be screenings by Liz Coffey, Film Conservator at the Harvard Film Archive and Doug McLaren, of the Gene Siskel Film Center in Chicago.

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Foundation made a 2009 grant of \$2,500 in support of the symposium’s educational activities—a grant program that encourages the appreciation of motion pictures. Symposium organizers are Snowden Becker from the School of Information at the University of Texas, Austin; Janna Jones from the School of Communication, Cinema and Visual Culture Program at Northern Arizona University; and Mark Neumann, also from the School of Communication at Northern Arizona University.

Please register by July 10. Program details, registration, and lodging information at www.oldfilm.org or contact jessica@oldfilm.org, 207 469-0924.

See Presenters on Pages 10 & 11

Summer 2009

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Executive Director's Report

An archives must have the longest-term perspective. Northeast Historic Film's full value is not confined to what we do this summer. We are maintaining a legacy for hundreds of years that encompasses more than 800 moving image collections, along with significant ephemera, audio-visual equipment, and library resources. Strategies for successfully enduring recessions, depressions and other calamities have to be in place for our organization to fulfill its mission.

Reading Nick Paumgarten's article, *The Death of Kings* (*New Yorker*, May 18, 2009), I came across the acronym "ITE," which stands for "in this economy." The phrase is tremendously useful, now that I see it, because I have to say it all the time. The financial crisis is challenging everyone, NHF not excepted.

Agility and Dedication

The next hundred years starts every morning as we process collections, monitor vault conditions, digitize clips, respond to research requests, update databases, plan weekend movies and Archival Moments. That work continues with our core staff of 6. We'd like to have a minimum of 8 people on staff, but ITE we get by. Here's how: we have invested in a new phone system with voice mail and presently have no one on

the front desk. External Affairs Director Jessica Hosford joined us in mid-March; she will help us broaden and deepen our communications with members and the public. Thanks to a Maine Community Foundation grant, we're developing self-supporting annual events involving volunteers. We have achieved significant savings from monitoring our energy use and before next winter need to do more insulating. Increased electronic communications, including the regular cinema schedule, help us cut publication costs.

While we're streamlining, we are committed to giving people value in tough times. Late last year we noticed a drop in attendance at the weekly movies as families cut back on their entertainment budgets, so we added a Saturday matinee with a \$3 ticket.

Finding and Sharing the Truly Rare

Earlier this year, Sean Savage, our last technical services director, posted 35mm scans to the Association of Moving Image Archivists Nitrate Film Interest Group Flickr site, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/nfig/> where the images were identified as the work of Alice Guy Blaché, the pioneer woman filmmaker. Our 1902 film is *Sage-femme de première classe*, a fantasy depicting discovery of babies in a cabbage patch. The filmmaker appears in the film, dressed as the husband in

search of a child. For a while we thought it was Blaché's 1896 *La Fée aux choux* and though it turned out to be her later remake, it is still the earliest film we have ever found in our collections and appears to be the most complete print of this title in the world. The Library of Congress will accept it for preservation. There will be a Blaché symposium at NYU on October 24 and a Whitney Museum exhibition curated by Joan Simon, *Alice Guy Blaché: Cinema Pioneer*, from November 6, 2009, to January 24, 2010.

New Board Member

I'd like to welcome our newest board member, Judy McGeorge. She has been involved with NHF since the 1980s and brings nonprofit management and Maine ties.

Farewell Steinway

The Steinway Model A grand piano heard in our hall in Arcady Music Festival and ragtime concerts, piano recitals, and silent film performances since we opened, is sadly moving on. The piano was on loan to us and we must find a worthy replacement. Can you help?



NHF Statement of Purpose

The purpose of Northeast Historic Film is to collect, preserve, and make available to the public, film and videotape of interest to the people of northern New England.

Activities include but are not limited to a survey of moving pictures of northern New England; preserving and safeguarding film and videotape through restoration, duplication, providing technical guidance and climate-controlled storage; creation of educational programs through screenings and exhibitions on-site and in touring programs; assistance to members of the public, scholars and students at all levels, and members of the film and video production community, through providing a study center, technical services and facilities.



Donor Appreciation Night on Saturday, May 9 included a champagne reception and Paul Sullivan playing the piano to accompany Douglas Fairbanks. Party photos by Bob Brodsky.

2009 Calendar

Thursday, July 23 - Sunday, July 26
Bucksport Bay Festival, including Riverbend Players Vaudeville Shows at the Alamo Theatre on Thursday and Sunday, and Outdoor Movie at the Alamo Theatre on Friday, July 24. <http://www.bucksportchamber.org/festival.html>

Friday, July 24 - Saturday, July 25
Northeast Historic Film Symposium, Ways of Watching at the Alamo Theatre, Bucksport. Open to all, with presentations and time for discussion. See Pages 10-11 for presenters. Registration, http://oldfilm.org/symp_2009

Saturday, August 8
Pirate Day at the Alamo Theatre in collaboration with Fort Knox. A pirate ship with activities at the Fort across the Penobscot River, then a pirate movie and more fun at the cinema.

Thursday, October 1 - Sunday, October 4
Camden International Film Festival Camden, Rockland, and Rockport, Maine. <http://www.camdenfilmfest.org/>

Sunday, October 4 - Sunday, October 11
Fryeburg Fair
At the Farm Museum, in an 1832 barn: screenings and videos for sale during the agricultural fair in Fryeburg, Maine. <http://www.fryeburgfair.com/>



The event was made possible by a generous grant from the Golden Rule Foundation.

Friday, October 16 - Sunday, October 18
Out of the Closet, Our Amateur Film Heritage, a three-day preservation workshop at Burlington College, Burlington, Vermont, led by Gemma Perretta. There will be a Home Movie Day observance in the workshop. For information and to register, <http://www.burlington.edu>

Saturday, October 17
Maine Home Movie Day
Organized by Northeast Historic Film and presented at Maine Historical Society, 489 Congress Street, Portland, Maine.

Home Movie Day is an international event, celebrating home movies, first held in 2003. Anyone with home movies is invited to bring their cans and boxes to Maine Historical Society, where they will be examined and prepared for projection. There is no charge. About HMD, <http://www.homemovieday.com/> Directions, http://www.mainehistory.org/about_visit.shtml

Saturday, October 31
Halloween screening of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* at the Alamo Theatre, Bucksport. Under 17 not admitted. <http://www.oldfilm.org>

Wednesday, November 4 - Sunday, November 7
Association of Moving Image Archivists Annual Meeting in St. Louis, MO
<http://www.amiaconference.com/> 🎬

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Thank You to NHF Supporters
On May 9 nearly 100 people gathered in the Alamo Theatre to be honored for their longstanding commitment to Northeast Historic Film. Attendees were treated to tours of the facility, a champagne toast led by board president Richard Rosen, a giant cake, and went home with DVDs from our catalog of Videos of Life in New England. Of course, a highlight of the evening was the silent film program with Paul Sullivan, Grammy Award winning composer and performer, bringing out the humor and excitement of *Manhattan Madness* and *Pass the Gravy*. *Manhattan Madness*, with dynamo Douglas Fairbanks, was made in 1916, the year the Alamo opened. The sounds of the piano and the laughter from the audience filled the auditorium throughout the evening, testament to the fun being had by all. 🎬



The Alamo Theatre auditorium. Phil Yates and Gemma Perretta are in the booth, preparing to show *Culture, Identity on video*, *Manhattan Madness* at 16 frames per second, and after a brief intermission with cake, *Pass the Gravy* at 24 frames per second.

Community Cinemas: Coming Together in Trying Times

By Jane Donnell, Marketing Manager

In the world of multiplexes and Netflix it has become much more difficult for small, independent community cinemas to survive. The Alamo Theatre is no exception. When we reopened in 1999, the community just seemed happy to have its movie house back. It didn't seem to matter that we were booking films that were very late first-run at best. After all, they had been waiting since 1956. The economy experienced a terrible downturn and the movie industry has changed. We have had to get creative in the way we do business.

We experiment with different show times, offer discounted children's movies, and are enticing customers displaced when the Ellsworth Twin closed (it was in a strip mall 20 miles from here) with a \$3 Saturday matinee. This is all on the heels of the biggest change we made a couple of years ago. Our film booker, Jim Blanco, who is the liaison between the film studios and the theaters, came up with an innovative way to get his clients more current releases and keep the local people from heading out of town to see

movies. Studios want their first-run features to play at a movie house for several weeks. It's cost-effective for them. Most small cinemas don't have the audience base to sustain shows for more than a week—or for more than a weekend in the Alamo's case.

Blanco convinced several of the major studios to let him book a film for several weeks but allow that one print to move around to several different theaters. The Alamo is part of what he refers to as the "Midcoast Consortium." (We've all threatened to get him a Maine map.) Our group consists of the Alamo Theatre in Bucksport, the Centre Theatre in Dover-Foxcroft, State Cinemas in Calais, Reel Pizza Cinerama in Bar Harbor, and the Milbridge Theatre in Milbridge. The group includes nonprofit and for-profit businesses alike. We are all quirky and small, and are worried about how we will be able to afford conversion to digital projection technology in the near future.

The movie business is fickle and unpredictable. It is a struggle for all of our little Main Street cinemas to remain open for business. The wonderful people in our group share common needs and a



The Alamo's Phil Yates troubleshoots with State Cinemas' Steve Leackfeldt in Calais, Maine. While the State uses a platter style projector, The Alamo has two variable speed Super Simplex projectors.

willingness to cooperate. We are getting many movies sooner than we would, are cutting costs and pooling resources. We are shuttling many prints ourselves, ordering concessions supplies together, sharing ideas and equipment, and helping each other troubleshoot. We are surviving on the main streets of rural Maine and have built a wonderful sense of community. And isn't that what your hometown cinema is really all about? ■

All that Glitters is Cold: Preserving Precious Films in The Cube

By Emily Hurwitz, Vault Manager

When one peruses the Northeast Historic Film website (www.oldfilm.org, for those of you who have yet to check it out), one may notice the words "Film Storage." Here one will see a breakdown of vault statistics, climate conditions, and storage rates for rental space in the NHF vaults (affectionately called The Cube by employees—because the three story building looks remarkably like one). But those rental clients who choose NHF to preserve their films receive much more than a place on a climate-controlled shelf.

As vault manager, I have dealt with several collections from archives spanning the Eastern seaboard and then some. One of our larger clients stores over 3,000 boxes of film with us, all

of which are tracked in our database system. When this archives requests that we pull one of their boxes and ship it (a semi-weekly occurrence), I find it in our records and secure it for shipping. This client represents the most basic kind of vault management: NHF will intake your film, enter it into our database by creating a box-level record, and ship it to you at your request.

On an entirely different scale, I recently processed four boxes of film for one organization. Each film was individually processed and recanned if necessary, and those films that had begun to decay due to vinegar syndrome were specially processed to delay the progression of decomposition. The film holdings for this particular organization are moderately small because they are not explicitly a film archives; it was up to us at NHF

to do what was best for their collection. In addition to processing their entire collection and entering it into our vault database, I also created a customized data set and sent that back to the client. Now they have an official record of their films, including gauge and title. This organization was so pleased with our work that they have asked us to digitize their collection. Thus the circle of media life goes on as it moves from box to can to digital file.

Vault rental services at NHF range from processing 40-pound boxes to single reels of Super 8mm film, from huge academic holdings to small personal gems, and from 2,000 ft. reels of 35mm film to 90-minute Digibeta tapes. Our rental clients know that we keep their media safe, preserved, secure, and of course cool—reel cool. ■

Collections Use: You Can Find Me at NHF – Bill Green

By Kelsey Abbott

For Maine television icon Bill Green, Northeast Historic Film is a vital resource. His shows, *Bill Green's Maine* and *The Green Outdoors*, focus on action and adventure and celebrate the people and places of Maine. While Green's goal is "to make a record of what was around here in 2009," his shows often include a glimpse into Maine's past—and for these, he says, "NHF is crucial to me."

NHF isn't just a treasure trove of Maine's history for Bill Green. It's also an archive of his life and his career. As a shy five-year old, Bill attended the unveiling of the Paul Bunyan statue in Bangor in 1959. Earlier this year, Green covered the statue's 50th anniversary on *Bill Green's Maine*. The segment included footage of the unveiling (from NHF's vault, of course) and an interview with Norm Martin, the statue's designer who also happened to be Green's childhood neighbor.

Bill Green grew up in the Bangor area and fell into the television industry at a young age. He was just 18 when he started searching for a minimum wage

job to help him pay for college. With minimal experience operating his father's home movie camera—and a promise to arrive early and stay late—Green managed to land a gig at WLBZ2 in Bangor where he earned \$1.70 an hour. He kept his promise and, after two and a half years, became a sportscaster at the station.

Green worked at Channel 2 from 1972 to 1981, the era of film. In 1979, at the age of 25, he covered a plane crash at Owls Head, Maine. Only one person survived the crash. Seventeen died. The night is still etched in Green's memory. His film is also preserved in NHF's archives. This May, WSCH6 will revisit the crash and talk to the lone survivor. While Green will not cover the story of the 30th anniversary, the piece will feature his original report of the accident, courtesy of NHF.

In 1981, Green became the weekend sportscaster at WCSH6 in Portland. He dreamed of moving on to a Boston station and then to Monday Night Football, but his idea of sports was (and still is) broader



Bill Green, somewhere in Maine. Scan from program video.

than most mainstream markets. Green grew up following Bud Leavitt—the executive sports editor of the Bangor Daily News and host of *The Bud Leavitt Show*—who covered outdoor pursuits like hiking, fishing, hunting and skiing on top of the typical "stick and ball" sports. Green believed that today's sportscasts should cover outdoor life as well, especially in a state like Maine where so many tourists come for outdoor adventure.

Green continued to cover the weekend sports desk until 1993, but in the mid-1980s he started his own show, *The Green Outdoors*. A few years later, he added *Bill Green's Maine*. In 2008 and early 2009, Green has tapped into NHF's resources for four stories (including "Paul Bunyan Turns 50"). His May, 2008 segment on the 1968 presidential race in which Maine senator Ed Muskie was selected as the Democrats' vice presidential nominee included footage from the NHF archives. Film from the NHF archives also played a crucial role in Green's December 2008 "Arlington Wreaths" story and his April 2009 "Sardine Packers" piece.

While Bill Green is not the only one bringing NHF's archived footage to the small screen—every Wednesday morning WCSH6 runs a feature called "Time Warp Wednesdays" that often features an NHF clip—he is perhaps the one whose life is most entangled with the NHF archives. He says, "When I die, I don't know if I'll go to heaven or hell, but you can find me at NHF (because everything I do goes there)." 🎬



Furloughed Verso mill employees use down time to help at NHF for a week. Greg Saunders and Chris Remick in the vault.

Distribution: The Long Tail of NHF

By Peter McDougall

Every now and again, a term that relates to social and economic forces makes its way in to everyday language. Malcolm Gladwell's Tipping Point is one such example. Another is Chris Anderson's Long Tail.

The Long Tail describes a shift in how products are sold. Online shopping has effected marketing strategies so that forgotten items have a second chance at retail life—major blockbusters are no longer the only way to make big money. The Long Tail is relatively new as a concept and is still being debated by academics and experts. But it is not unfamiliar to us at Northeast Historic Film. The value of special interest moving images is the very reason that NHF exists.

A Marketing Strategy

According to Chris Anderson, the Long Tail is an approach to sales and marketing that aims to sell small quantities of a large number of diverse items. Instead of focusing on the sales of a handful of top-selling items, such as the hottest music and movies, Anderson argues that a significant amount of revenue can be generated from the Long Tail of less popular products. In order for the Long Tail approach to work, however, retailers have to keep costs low and need to provide a very large selection of titles.

For stores with a traditional physical presence, the Long Tail is a difficult strategy to adopt because of the physical limitations of shelf space. Online stores, however, offer the opportunity for almost unlimited selections. In the case of purely digital sales models, such as iTunes, there's no difference between a sale of a popular song versus a sale of an all-but-forgotten oldie. The profit can be the same because the reproduction and storage costs are identical for each title.

With a Twist

Though NHF already benefits from the economics of the Long Tail, it does so with a slight variation on the marketing strategy: all of the titles offered by NHF would be considered niche products.

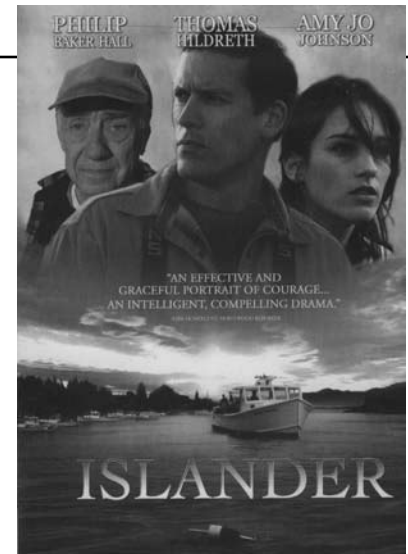
The titles offered on the distribution list are derived, in most cases, from titles stored safely in the organization's archives. We also provide cooperative distribution services to some independent media makers and organizations. Given that distribution and sales are part of our access strategy, tied to the primary purpose of preserving the moving images, the rules governing the content offered to consumers are different. "We don't have a business model that pares our selection down to what sells best," says Jane Donnell, NHF's marketing and membership manager. "We respect film. We offer things that don't make money. We wouldn't be selling more than 10 titles if we did otherwise."

But by offering more than just the ten top-selling titles, NHF is able to greatly expand the number of sales it makes and the number of titles that reach eager viewers. "The more titles we offer, the more people perceive that the things we sell are special," says Donnell. "They still pretty much just buy one or two titles, but it gets people to stop and peruse all of what's offered. More so than if we just displayed the few things that we know are most likely to sell."

Of the 144 titles sold, the five top-selling titles account for close to a third of all sales. The popular titles, such as *Dead River Rough Cut* and *From Stump to Ship*, each sold more than 100 copies last year, and have remained popular year after year. Meanwhile, less popular titles, such as *Cherryfield, 1938* and *It's the Maine Sardine!*, sell only a handful or fewer copies per year but drive nearly two-thirds of the total sales. It's NHF's Long Tail at work.

A broad selection is just one of the elements of the Long Tail strategy that NHF applies to its distribution process. The other is keeping costs low. Shelf space isn't a problem, since most orders aren't filled from a standing inventory, but rather as small-run duplications of in-house titles. Jacket covers are generated inexpensively while maintaining a professional appearance and even the shrink-wrapping is kept in-house.

The distribution part of NHF is the third leg of the mission to collect, pre-



Islander, just one of the 144 titles sold by NHF that benefit from the economics of the Long Tail—where revenues are driven by selling many copies of a number of titles, rather than selling a large number of just a few.

serve, and make available to the public, film and videotape of interest to the people of northern New England. And while the Long Tail has worked to breathe new life into long-forgotten titles on Netflix and iTunes, providing access to unique and special materials has always been at the core of what NHF does. That it is a contemporary idea in social and economic circles is just icing on the cake. ■■■

Islander A Maine feature film

Off the coast of Maine, families have lived and worked the sea for generations. Everyone knows each other. Birthright is akin to law and fishing territories are inherited. Eben Cole (Thomas Hildreth) continues his family's legacy of harvesting lobsters, but after causing a tragic accident at sea, Eben loses everything. After serving five years in prison he returns determined to win back the way of life he fought so hard to protect. Only now he is an outcast, his ex-wife Cheryl (Amy Jo Johnson) wants nothing to do with him and fishermen see him as a harbinger of bad luck. Popper (Philip Baker Hall), an old fisherman, gives Eben a chance to become an islander again.

101 minutes
\$24.95

Collaboration: Open Source Tools for Moving Image Archivists

Collaborative problem solving is exemplified in “open source” software—computer code written and shared among programmers, which is different from proprietary software developed by companies and sold to users.

Open source philosophy and practice is gaining attention from moving image managers. Last November at the Association of Moving Image Archivists conference in Savannah, Georgia, a group gathered to discuss the use of collaboratively developed tools. Karen Barcellona, chair of the AMIA Cataloging and Metadata Committee, reported that the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences will be testing the open source museum tool CollectiveAccess in a Science and Technology Council project. Jack Brighton, AMIA News, Documentary and Committee chair from Illinois Public Media, finds that Drupal—a content management system for online databases—provides core functionality. David Rice from WNET praised the PBCore data structure that ensures consistent exchange of information. He said that community development ensures widespread adoption and that many nonprofits, including National Public Radio, are adopting open source solutions.

Barbara Humphrys, Library of Congress, retired, wondered if this is a long-term solution and whether handling digital and analog records together is viable. Karen Cariani from WGBH-TV, however, offered that hiring a developer to create a custom application was, in fact, economical.

Discussion Continued in February

Following a storm postponement, 50 librarians, archivists and media managers gathered on February 2 at WGBH Educational Foundation in Boston to continue the discussion of open source management tools. WGBH Media Library and Archives and Northeast Historic Film hosted and organized the meeting. Presenters included Karan Sheldon of NHF, Karen Cariani of the WGBH Media Library and Archives, WGBH Interactive’s Chris Beer, WGBH Applied Technology’s Dave MacCarn, and Seth Kaufman of CollectiveAccess.

Karen Cariani gave an introduction outlining the challenges facing moving image archivists and how the group might benefit from sharing innovations.

Dave MacCarn then gave an update on the PBCore metadata schema for describing public broadcasting materials and invited comments from the group. Chris Beer presented WGBH’s experience with Fedora and discussed open source repository software. Finally, Seth Kaufmann gave an overview of CollectiveAccess, which is an open source collection management tool for cultural heritage institutions. The presenters’ slides are available at <http://info.wgbh.org/wiki/OSA/> and there is a Facebook page, AMIA Open Source Interest Group.

Thanks to Courtney Michael, WGBH, for meeting reporting.



At WGBH in February, Seth Kaufman speaking, Dave MacCarn and Karen Cariani looking at his slides.

CollectiveAccess

For museums and archives
New “Providence” version coming
<http://www.collectiveaccess.org>

Fedora Repository System

Storage and retrieval for digital objects
<http://www.fedora-commons.org/>
Chris Beer’s explanation,
<http://www.slideshare.net/cmichael/repositories-what-are-they-and-what-are-they-good-for>

PBCore Metadata Standard

Public Broadcasting Metadata Dictionary Project
Not just for public broadcasting!
<http://www.pbcore.org>
Now in version 1.2
A PBCore workshop will be offered at AMIA annual conference, Nov. 2009.

At the February 2 Open Source Meeting

Baker Library, Harvard University
Boston Neighborhood Network
Boston Public Library
Boston Symphony
Cambridge Community TV
Center for Home Movies
Children’s Hospital Boston
Democracy Now
Digital Commonwealth
Footage Farm
Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale
Harvard Film Archive
Lesley University
Manhattan Neighborhood Network

Mass College of Art and Design
MIT Libraries
National Fire Prevention Assoc.
Northeast Historic Film
Northeastern University
NYU
Preserving Digital Public Television
Roasted Vermicelli
Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe
Scribe Media Center, PA
Simmons GSLIS
Tufts University
WGBH
WNET

GRANTS IN ACTION

The Davis Family Foundation

As reported in Winter 2009 MIR, the Davis Family Foundation funded “Essential Information: To Provide Better Service,” \$15,000 to support an entirely new electronic accessioning process. We are working with Seth Kaufman, creator of CollectiveAccess, an open source application, to streamline our intake of collections. Kaufman’s mission, with NHF’s collections management team, is to convert our pencil and paper habits of recording materials entering NHF into an electronic database management system.

The accession process is integrated into the overall information needs of the staff while anticipating the creation and release of public records. The existing public records, which have been on our Website in the Online Collections Guide at <http://oldfilm.org/collections> database, have been exported to the CollectiveAccess database system where they will be converted to Encoded Archival Description, a standard maintained by the Library of Congress and Society of American Archivists. This will ensure that the collections will be more widely searchable. Going forward all new accession information will be created and managed electronically.

Meanwhile, Seth has begun trial exports of our item-level database. Currently, more than 30,000 records are handled in a data structure mapped to MARC, a process we established in the 1980s using ProCite bibliographic software. It’s time to say good bye to ProCite—which, although it served us well by providing excellent search capability and flexible fields—is unable to relate collections, items, and their many copies. With CollectiveAccess, we will integrate the detailed item-level records using the PBCore data structure. PBCore is a standard way to describe moving images including intellectual content, rights, and various generations of a given item.

NSF-Funded Language Keepers Project

The first phase of the National Science Foundation-funded “Language Keepers” project is complete. This project, led by Dr. Robert Leavitt at the University

of New Brunswick, Ben Levine and Julia Schulz, is part of an NSF effort to preserve endangered languages like Passamaquoddy. (See the Winter 2008 MIR for more information.)

“Language Keepers” captures conversations in the natural Passamaquoddy language spoken by approximately 50 individuals from three different communities. The conversations are available on seven 30-minute DVDs, having great value for the study of the Passamaquoddy language. The DVDs may be viewed in Passamaquoddy with English subtitles, Passamaquoddy with Passamaquoddy subtitles, or without subtitles.

Viewers can choose to see the online Passamaquoddy dictionary and transcripts of the text and translations on the screen simultaneously.

Now that the DVDs are complete, the project leaders are using outreach to further the language preservation efforts of the “Language Keepers” project. They are conducting workshops on reading and writing in Passamaquoddy and working with individuals who understand, but do not speak Passamaquoddy. In addition, the project leaders are viewing and discussing the DVDs with those that took part in the recorded conversations, who find that this project has brought back a shared linguistic and cultural memory.

The audiovisual record provides insight into the Passamaquoddy culture—a culture based on cooperation. In the films, the elders speak of going hunting, fishing and berry-picking together. Just 20 to 30 years ago, the Passamaquoddy people did not have refrigeration so they would have to share their food right away. One elder tells a story of putting fish in community members’ mailboxes. Passamaquoddy government also worked by cooperation, or more appropriately, by consensus. All issues were decided by complete consensus, not majority. In fact, the leaders would stay up all night discussing an issue until everyone agreed and, if an individual did not agree, he or she would have to leave the discussion.

We look forward to many more fascinating conversations.

Maine Arts Commission Wabanaki Bibliography


Micah Pawling, a Ph.D. candidate in History at the University of Maine, has completed a bibliography of Wabanaki film and video in the Northeast Historic Film collections. It is now a bound bibliography, and a Wabanaki database, with 190 entries describing primarily original or unique film and video footage, including 16mm television newsfilm. Pawling viewed materials and added to NHF catalog records; the resulting work allows us to begin to assess the strengths and weaknesses of NHF’s Wabanaki holdings.

Wabanaki is an all-inclusive term that includes the Penobscots, Passamaquoddies, Maliseets, and Mi’kmaq, along with other Abenaki groups. The bibliography encompasses a geographic region of tribal homelands that includes present-day New England, especially northern New England, and the Maritime Provinces and Québec.

The bibliography was supported by a Maine Arts Commission grant entitled “Passamaquoddy—We Are Seeing Together,” sponsored by NHF and the Passamaquoddy Cultural Resource Center. (See Page 13.)

Maine Arts Commission Artists in Community

Thanks to a grant from the Maine Arts Commission Artists in Communities program, Northeast Historic Film is fiscal sponsor of filmmaker Richard Kane for his documentary about the Schoodic International Sculpture Symposium. (SISS), a biennial event that invites sculptors from all over the world to produce pieces of public art from Maine granite and basalt. The symposium plans to produce 30-40 permanent installations of public art throughout Downeast Maine. The film follows the sculptors who took part in the 2007 SISS (the inaugural year) as they select stone from local quarries, create their sculptures and install them.

Richard Kane reports that the project is in post-production. He expects a release in mid-July, just in time for the 2009 SISS (<http://www.schoodic-sculpture.org/home.html>). 

Staff News

Jessica Hosford, External Affairs Director

Jessica Hosford is the newest member of the Northeast Historic Film family. She's filling the newly created position of External Affairs Director. "With Jessica as part of the team we can more effectively communicate with our members, users, and the public," explains David Weiss, NHF's executive director. "Jessica knows our region and has terrific experience in public relations, volunteer management, major gift solicitation, and annual appeals."

Jessica started working with NHF in March, and got into the thick of things right away. "We started off researching and converting to a new database system for donors and members on Day One," she says. "That system is responsible for all of the mailings and thank-you letters that we send out—it's the brains."

A true Mainer, Jessica grew up in Rockport and has lived in Bucksport for the last 13 years. She has been involved with capital campaigns and fund raising efforts all across Maine. She previously worked as a campaign manager for BHC Consulting Group and as Development Director for the National MPS Society.

"I am excited to be part of NHF, an organization that is forward-thinking in its approach to historic and cultural preservation," says Jessica. "They have strategically mapped their progression, and offer unmatched collections and innovative programs that many people have yet to discover. I look forward to helping spread the word."

Her favorite part of working at NHF is the "richness and variety of what happens here—from a local scale to the national stage, and everywhere in between."



Collections Use: Maine Memory Network

By Candace Kanen, Curator/Historian, Maine Memory Network

For several years, NHF and Maine Historical Society staff members have discussed ways to get some of NHF's moving images on Maine Memory Network, either as discrete items, or in support of online exhibits. Maine Historical Society, located in Portland, operates Maine Memory Network, a digital archive and museum of historical documents, images, and artifacts. Nearly 200 organizations with collections related to Maine History participate (with no charge by the Historical Society) by digitizing items from their collection and uploading them to the Website at www.mainememory.net

Our "test" case with NHF is the **Hackett Collection**, films of the Western Maine Sanatorium. Those films prompted a multi-part Maine Memory Network online exhibit entitled "Among the Lungers: TB Treatment in Maine" that includes the following:

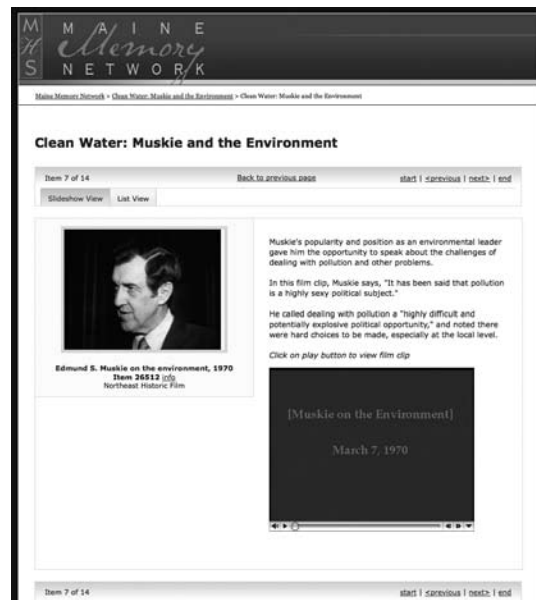
- an essay by Erik Jorgensen, director of the Maine Humanities Council
- an excerpt of film from the Hackett Collection
- still images from the Maine Historic Preservation Commission and Maine Historical Society
- a description and sub-exhibits of a patient's view of his time at the sanatorium
- architectural drawings
- a description of the concept of the sanatorium, which was originally known as the Maine State Sanatorium
- letters from prospective patients and their families
- documents and images about the financial challenges of institutional treatment for tuberculosis.

The exhibit will be online later this year as part of a larger project, Maine History Online, which will be part of the Maine Memory Network. You can see an in-progress preview at <http://users286.mainememory.net/page/549/display.html>

Gemma Perretta, NHF's Technical Services staff member, has provided clips of 21 other NHF collections that already have been digitized. These will be online as soon as cataloging is complete. To find them, go to www.mainememory.net and type "Northeast Historic Film" into the search box.

Many of these items also will be attached to online exhibits or used as individual items in support of Maine History Online, which will be launched in the fall of 2009. Another exhibit is Clean Water: Muskie and the Environment, <http://users330.mainememory.net/page/601/display.html>

The tests of getting the film clips online have been successful. Maine Historical Society is excited about the presence of NHF on Maine Memory Network and looks forward to much more historic film on the Website.



Ways of Watching, Presenters 2009

More than 90 presenters have shared their knowledge since the symposium was established in 2000. Our traditions include lively conversation, evening screenings, and a lobster dinner. The Northeast Historic Film annual symposium welcomes the class of 2009, the following authors, archivists, teachers, and researchers who will bring forward the immensely varied practices of exhibition and viewing of non-commercial film.

From Introspection to Convivial Participation: Departures from Black Box Topology in Contemporary Video Art Display

Cristina Albu, Ph.D. student, Department of History of Art and Architecture, University of Pittsburgh

Based on an analysis of spaces of video display and convivial modes of watching, this paper proposes a typology of alternatives to conventional cinematic environments and investigates the rationale for changes in video art spectatorship.

Western Ways Gone South: George Herbert as Failed Showman

Jennifer L. Jenkins, Ph.D., Division Head, Film and Television Studies, School of Media Arts, University of Arizona

George and Lucile Herbert founded the Tucson-based Western Ways Features Service in 1936. The Herberts produced 18 short subjects for television and two parts of a TV pilot for *Rawhide Riley*, a western set in Tucson. The operation collapsed when their head writer, Tom Bailey, absconded with the company's funds.

This Splendid Temple: Watching Films in the Wanamaker Department Stores

Caitlin McGrath, University of Chicago
J. K. Dixon, "Lecturer and Demonstrator to John Wanamaker," writes to Charles Urban in 1908 regarding "my educational work in chronicling historical events" and in showing films in the auditoriums of the Philadelphia and New York Wanamaker Department Stores, each of which contained screening spaces

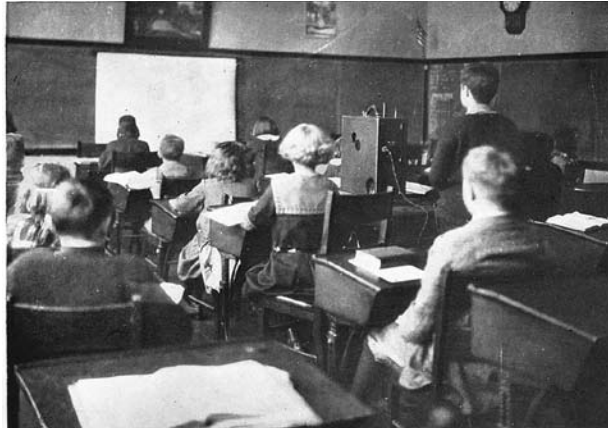


Photo courtesy Jennifer L. Peterson, from Motion Pictures In Education: A Practical Handbook For Users Of Visual Aids, by Don Carlos Ellis (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1923).

that could seat 2,000 people.

Purposeful Pleasures: Social Awareness and Amateur Film Practice in Britain, ca. 1927-1977

Heather Norris Nicholson, Ph.D., Department of History and Economic History, Manchester Metropolitan University, England

From the mid 1920s onwards, amidst other more personal family and holiday records, numerous amateurs used film as a means to engage with topical concerns and to create more purposeful or socially-engaged material. Such purposeful filmmaking can be considered alongside other prevailing socially-concerned activity and Britain's documentary movement as well as issues of media representation and regional identity.

Watching Medical Films

Kirsten Ostherr, Associate Professor of English, Rice University

Medical ways of watching with comparison of a 1929 film co-produced by Eastman Teaching Films and the American College of Surgeons: *Acute Appendicitis* (Lay Public) and *Acute Appendicitis* (Professional), their respective publicity materials, and documentation of specific exhibition venues.

Spectatorship in the Classroom

Jennifer Peterson, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Film Studies Program, University of Colorado

A 1929 study by Ben Wood and Frank Freeman using Eastman Teaching Films found that "the motion picture film contributes to both [direct and indirect] aspects of the child's education." For all their scholarly thoroughness, such studies do not take into account the concept of the "resistant spectator." Images and clips from a number of early classroom films, including *Planting and Care of Trees* (Eastman Teaching Films, 1928), which contains a segment in which a film is shown to a class.

What You See is What You Get: Watching Swedish Private Film Collections from the 1960s and the 1970s

Cecilia Mörner, Ph.D., School of Humanities and Media, Dalarna University, Falun, Sweden

In 2003 a special film archive was established in the small town of Grängesberg, Sweden. From hundreds of private film collections Mörner viewed and wrote about selected films for a Swedish Film Institute book; then she returned to interview donors in order to get complementary information. She re-analyzes the film collections, focusing on perceptions before and after the interviews.

Through Trondheim in a Time Machine: Local Film History as Part of Contemporary Audiovisual Practices

Bjørn Sørensen, Ph.D., Department of Art and Media Studies, The Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, Norway

Local film dating back to 1911 from Trondheim, Norway, was found in a projection booth. Questions of historiography, archival practices and provenance and how continuous screenings of selected historical scenes were exhibited at relevant locations during the 2005 Trondheim International Film Festival.

Continued on Page 11

Continued from Page 10

'Round the World and Back Again: An Examination of the Production and Exhibition of Adelaide Pearson Travel Films

Kimberly Tarr, NYU Moving Image Archives and Preservation Program

From 1931-1940, social progressive Adelaide Pearson traveled throughout the world. Wealth and social status granted Pearson and her partner Laura Paddock access to such influential figures as Mahatma Gandhi in 1936, capturing what is believed to be the first color footage of Gandhi. Influenced by the work of Burton Holmes, Pearson gained a reputation as a passionate and inspired storyteller.

Our Cameras, Our Lives: Lesbian Home Movies, ca. 1935 – 1999

Sharon Thompson, author, *Going All the Way: Teenage Girls' Tales of Sex, Romance, and Pregnancy*, Hill & Wang/ Farrar Straus Giroux

Three lesbian home movie collections filmed primarily in New England and including Maine material, the Ruth Storm Collection (mid-1930s-1960s); Caren McCourtney Collection (1970-1990); and the Shira Collection (c. 1990-2000). In addition to clips, the presentation draws on histories gathered from participants in the films as well as from their friends, relations, and acquaintances.

Watching on Cell Phones, Online and on Television

Bilge Yesil, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, CUNY-College of Staten Island

Turkish users have embraced cell phone cameras to photograph family and friends, and document personal lives—and photograph authorities' misconduct. Ordinary citizens have exposed the beating of children in orphanages, mistreatment of minors by security officers, police beatings of demonstrators on the streets. These citizen videos are first circulated online, then picked up by news Websites eventually making their way to television news programs. ■

the films to them, and later we got a postcard from Eileen Bowser at MOMA who had seen *The Sailor's Sacrifice*, 1909, starring Jean the Vitagraph dog, shot in Maine. We were able to get a copy of that film.”

A more recent example is the Alice Guy Blaché film found a little over a year ago. Thanks to a communal effort by NHF, the Nitrate Film Interest Group of AMIA and the Library of Congress, the film will be part of an upcoming Blaché retrospective. See Page 2.

Cooperation amongst archivists on a national and international scale is hardly surprising. After all, resources for preserving moving images are limited and much more can be accomplished by working together than in isolation. But NHF reaches outside the community of archivists as well and brings the footage preserved in its collections to the public. There is little value to moving images if no one sees them.

Scholars and Conferences

NHF frequently provides footage for viewings throughout New England. For an evening in April called A Media Archaeology of Boston, presented by Ph.D. students at the Harvard Graduate School of Design and the Film Study Center at Harvard University, NHF provided five items including the oldest one on screen.

This spring, footage from NHF's collections was shown at the Maine Fisheries Conference hosted by the Maine Maritime Museum in Bath. A symposium featured the past, present and future of the finfish fishery in Maine, and the hosts contacted NHF to provide visual context for the discussions. Approximately 50 people watched an hour of footage at the end of the symposium, and listened to commentary from Ben Fuller of the Penobscot Marine Museum.

“The people attending the conference were interested in every aspect of the fisheries,” says Nathan Lipfert, senior curator of the Maine Maritime Museum. “Everybody took something different from the experience—the scientists, the historians, the fishermen and the fisheries



Author Tess Gerritsen and bookstore owner Andy Lacher in the Alamo Theatre lobby, February 2009.

management people all got something out of seeing that footage. I had the feeling that they didn't really want it to end.”

Closer to Home

NHF understands the importance of cooperating with the broader community of archivists and film enthusiasts, and recognizes that cooperation can be just as important down the street. On February 19, NHF hosted an auction and a showing of *The Bucksport Movie Queen 2000* to raise funds to help offset medical bills for Main Street bookstore owner Andy Lacher. Andy fell at his home on Christmas Eve, injuring his knee and ankle. The event was a big success.

“We used the Alamo because we wanted to make the fundraiser a winter evening out for the family, and the Alamo is looked at by members of the community as a gathering spot,” says Dave Milan, Bucksport's economic development director.

Whether it's at the local, regional, national or international level, NHF has cooperated with organizations, communities, and individuals in order to accomplish its goals of preserving and sharing moving images.

“If we don't create a ruckus and get the material used, then it's harder to make our case and fewer people will help support the preservation part of what we do,” says David. “The use is what facilitates the preservation, and without cooperation there's no use. More to the point, without cooperation we won't survive.” ■

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Board of Directors

Sian Evans, Belfast, ME

Consulting producer for documentaries on science, nature and history including Discovery HD Theater, National Geographic, PBS. Twenty-eight years of experience, working nationally and internationally. Family roots in Kingman, Macwahoc, and Millinocket, ME.

Treasurer

Paul Gelardi, Cape Porpoise, ME

President, E Media, Kennebunk, a process development company specializing in plastic manufacturing and surface technologies.

Vice President

James S. Henderson, Harpswell, ME

Principal, Publius Research, a public affairs consulting firm. Author of *Maine: An Encyclopedia*, a DVD publication incorporating moving images. Consulting archivist to the Council of State Archivists. Ph.D. in political science from Emory University. Adjunct faculty member, Southern New Hampshire University. Director of the Maine State Archives, 1987-2007.

Donna Loring, Bradley, ME

Wabanaki Cultural Tourism Coordinator, Four Directions Development Corporation. Author and sponsor of the state law, "An Act to Require Teaching of Maine Native American History and Culture in Maine's Schools." Author, *In the Shadow of the Eagle: A Tribal Representative in Maine*. Vietnam Veteran. Graduate of Univ. of Maine. Graduate of Eleanor Roosevelt Global Leadership Institute.

Judith F. McGeorge, Ellsworth, ME

Background in banking and finance. Served as Executive Director and Board member of organizations including the Bagaduce Music Lending Library, the Seymour Papert Institute, and WERU community radio. Advisor on the Hancock County Fund of the Maine Community Foundation.

James A. Phillips, Bangor, ME

Co-founder of Trio Software Corporation, and an independent property assessment consultant. Former staff producer and director at WMTW-TV; studied film at George Eastman House.

President

Richard Rosen, Bucksport, ME

Owner Rosen's Department Store, Bucksport. Maine State Senator. Board member, Bucksport Regional Health Center.

Karan Sheldon, Milton, MA

NHF co-founder. AMIA board member, 2007-2009. Author, "The Movie Queen and the Activist Archives" for the AMIA journal, *The Moving Image*.

David S. Weiss, Blue Hill, ME

Executive Director and co-founder of NHF. Previously media producer in Boston after graduating in film and semiotics from Brown University. Member, Maine Historical Records Advisory Board.

Pamela Wintle, Washington, DC

Founder, Smithsonian Institution Human Studies Film Archives. Member, National Film Preservation Board. Founding chair, Association of Moving Image Archivists' amateur film group, Inédits. Family roots in Skowhegan, ME. Member of Maine State Society.

Advisors

Individuals with interest in the work of NHF as an organization with a vision for film, video and digital preservation, with broad public access.

Gillian Anderson, orchestral conductor and musicologist.

Q. David Bowers, author of *Nickelodeon Theaters and Their Music*.

Peter Davis, director of *Hearts and Minds*.

Kathryn Fuller-Seeley, Ph.D. Associate Professor, Cinema Studies/Communications, Georgia State University.

Jan-Christopher Horak, Ph.D.

Director, UCLA Film and Television Archive.

Janna Jones, Ph.D. Associate Professor and Director of the Cinema and Visual Culture program, School of Communication, Northern Arizona University.

Alan Kattelle, author of *Home Movies: A History of the American Industry 1897-1979*.

Martha McNamara, Ph.D. Director, Art and Architecture Program, Wellesley College.

WRITERS

Peter McDougall and Kelsey Abbott, marine biologists and freelance writers. They live in Freeport, Maine, with their dog, Makai. <http://maukamakai.wordpress.com>



William S. O'Farrell (1955-2008) was a valued member of NHF's Advisors. On left, re-enacting a comedy scene with David Weiss.

Mark Neumann, Ph.D. Chair, School of Communication, Northern Arizona University.

Eric Schaefer, Ph.D. Associate Professor, Department of Visual and Media Arts, Emerson College.

Samuel Suratt, Founding member of International Federation of Television Archives.

Nathaniel Thompson, President of Maine Radio and Television Co. and CSP Mobile Productions.

Tricia Welsch, Ph.D. Associate Professor and Chair of Film Studies, Bowdoin College.

David Wexler, owner of Hollywood Vaults.

Patricia Zimmermann, Ph.D. Professor of Cinema and Photography, Roy H. Park School of Communications, Ithaca College. ■

The role of the Advisors and the composition of the group will be discussed over the summer and fall of 2009. As the demands of moving image preservation and access shift with changing technologies and user expectations we seek help with digital futures, technology transition, education, and scholarship. We look forward to continuity in our alliances and to new connections. The original establishment of the Advisors group in 1997 was based on the archives' need to move into new territory for public programs, archival storage, and educational outreach. Advisory leadership is needed all the more now to assist the staff and board in making decisions and alliances in order to carry out our mandate.

In 2010 we will announce the William S. O'Farrell Fellowship, awarded to an individual engaged in research toward a publication, production, or presentation based on moving image history and culture, particularly amateur and nontheatrical film. The William S. O'Farrell Fellow will be selected on the basis of the applicant's experience, the significance and interest value of the project, and the relation of the proposed work to the collections of Northeast Historic Film.

Lots Going On

In March we hosted a concert for Bucksport bookstore owner Andy Lacher with a performance: *Tree by Leaf & Marie Moreshead*. *Supported by a Maine Community Foundation grant.*

In April U.S. Representative Mike Michaud spoke about Fair Trade.

Also in April, the Abundant Life Church began Wednesday night services, renting our cinema.

The documentary feature *The Way We Get By* had three screenings including an evening hosted by Bangor Savings Bank, sponsor of the film. Aron Gaudet of Old Town, Maine, and Gita Pullapilly follow three elderly people committed to greeting outgoing and returning troops at the Bangor International Airport.

Filmmaking in Maine, Can it Help our Economy? A discussion organized by the Bucksport Bay Area Chamber of Commerce with Cameron Bonsey, film advocate, and Barney Martin, actor.

Sixty MIT engineers, lunch at the Alamo Theatre, tour of the Penobscot Narrows Bridge and Observatory. A talk by Jane Donnell and screenings of the short about NHF, *Culture, Identity*, and *Penobscot River Crossings*, a compilation of new and archival bridge footage.

Castine, Maine's Adams School field trip with visiting French students from St. Castin, near Pau, which borders the Basque region. Castine and St. Castin have a historical ancestor in the Baron de Saint-Castin (1652-1707).

Note By Note: *The Making of Steinway L1037*, documentary film with a piano concert by Eric Stumacher—the last concert on our lovely Steinway grand. See Executive Director's Report. *Supported by a Maine Community Foundation grant.*

Wabanaki Bibliography Notes from the Introduction by Micah Pawling

The compilation of Wabanaki film and video items at Northeast Historic Film contains about 190 entries and was created to permit researchers to conduct searches with key words. Index terms have been expanded to include individual names, place names including reservation communities, and tribal affiliations. In some cases, film entries have been viewed to provide a more detailed and helpful description of the footage.

The compiler prioritized viewing the film based on perceived research value, if the footage had sound, whether or not Native people spoke about their experiences, and finally if the medium of the work was easy to view during the research period.

Maine Indian Land Claims Settlement

In contrast to the few films made before 1960, there appears to be a sharp increase in the number of Wabanaki materials from the late 1960s to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act of 1980 (MICSA). After 1980, there are a few professional moving image materials about the Wabanaki peoples. The MICSA is a watershed event in Maine Indian history. Given the lack of works on twentieth century Wabanaki history, NHF's considerable coverage of events leading up to the settlement act is promising for researchers.

Penobscot

Some of the film on the Penobscots that may interest community members would be Indian pageant footage on Indian Island from 1940 (Patricia W. Messler Collection), Indian Island's Women's Club marching in the National Recovery Administration parade in Bangor in 1933 (Maher Collection), a copy of H.P. Carver's *The Silent Enemy* (1930), starring Penobscot actress Molly Spotted Elk (Molly Nelson), and news broadcasts from the late 1960s to the settlement act in which Penobscots were interviewed about

various political and social issues (WLBZ Collection, 1140.0038 and MPBN Collection, *Stepping Out #5*).

Passamaquoddy

Some films on the Passamaquoddies that may interest community members would be *Maine Centennial* (1920), a celebration in Portland (John E. Allen Collection); David Westphal's *So We Shall Stand and Fight* (1970s?); William Kenda's *A Question of Survival: Washington County, Maine* (1976); Eton F. Churchill's *In and Out of Maine: The First Mainers* (1976); and the MPBN Collection on socio-economic and political issues, including remarks by Passamaquoddy Indian Commissioner John Stevens (1970s). Many of the more current moving image materials in the bibliography are widely circulated in Native communities today.

The Wabanaki film and video database and bibliography, which represent NHF's collections, will require additional entries of future acquisitions, uncataloged findings, and donated material. ■■

Annual Fund 2009

By Jessica Hosford

We launched our first Annual Fund campaign in 2008 with a year-end appeal. Our supporters contributed more than \$12,500. Thank you to those who made an investment in moving image preservation. In 2009 we will send out the first appeal in late summer. Why donate? Your contribution might help to support a new community event at the Alamo Theatre, the transfer of a collection in the vault to media readily available to the public, or the purchase of new equipment to keep pace with changing technologies. Your gift helps to maintain essential funding that sustains the health of the organization.

Keep your eyes on your mailbox later this summer and please make a gift to the Northeast Historic Film 2009 Annual Appeal. ■■

Collections: Movie Queen Documents Found

Movie Queen, *Lubec*, a 16mm film made in 1936 on the coast of Maine, arrived at the archives in 1989. It is a short film starring a local girl on the boat from Eastport “returning from Hollywood,” followed by a parade through town and a tour of Lubec businesses, finishing with an attempted kidnapping and comic heroic rescue. Over the years, Northeast Historic Film received eight more *Movie Queens* from three states made between 1935 and 1940, adding the towns of Bar Harbor, Bath, Lincoln, Newport, Van Buren in Maine; Middlebury, Vermont; and Groton and Norwood, Massachusetts. They arrived one-by-one, having been unearthed by libraries, historical societies, service clubs, and individuals.

The *Movie Queen* phenomenon has become widely known, and is part of a public and scholarly interest in itinerant filmmaking. Andrea McCarty gave a presentation on *Movie Queens* at the conference Orphans of the Storm II: Documenting the 20th Century at the University of South Carolina in 2001, and at Orphans West in Los Angeles in May 2009. Dwight Swanson has identified *Movie Queen* productions in Indiana, Montana, New York, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Wisconsin.

We had failed to locate a *Movie Queen* director who could help explain the genesis of these related films, a failure despite numerous discussions with 1930s participants and multiple newspaper stories that provided directors' names: Margaret Cram or Margaret Cram Showalter and Doris Hamel, both associated with the Amateur Theatre Guild. So it was a Eureka moment in April when we located the papers of

Marion Angeline Howlett at the Harvard Theatre Collection, and discovered background on the Amateur Theatre Guild, Boston, and its leader Lauren Kenyon Woods.

Marion Howlett was a Bostonian who enjoyed a long association with the Boothbay Playhouse in Maine. In her early days, she had been under contract to the Amateur Theatre Guild in 1937-38 to direct a production titled *The Circus*, which did not have a film component. Her boss, Lauren Kenyon Woods, dispatched young women to small towns to direct his productions. We were delighted to read the 16-page “*Movie Queen*” *Daily Procedure*, instructions on how to land in a town and run a *Movie Queen* film and live show in under three weeks. The secret to success? Committees! The film and show required an advertising committee, ticket committee, talent, parade, property, publicity, and program committees, along with a music director, a fashion director, and a costume director.


Howlett saved scripts for the stage plays *Movie Queen, A Musical Comedy in Three Acts* and *The Circus*.

She kept documentation of a dance routine, along with *Plot Shots “Gangster Pictures,”* outlining 37 individual shots for the kidnapping drama. *Film Data for Movie Queen Directors* instructs directors to order film stock from E.M.F. in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and process it at Agfa Laboratories in New York. (Thanks to Albert Steg of Cambridge, we recently received the film collections of E.M.F., which include some home movies.)

John M.R. Bruner of Groton, Massachusetts (1925-2008), who received funding from New York Women in Film and Television to preserve *Movie Queen, Groton*, sought Margaret Cram diligently for years. Lost *Movie Queens* included the towns of Bucksport, Dexter, Camden, Eastport, and Madison in Maine; and Exeter and Manchester in New Hampshire. Finding Howlett's documents encourages us to keep looking for the missing films and all things *Movie Queen*.

Eager for More?

Copies of *Movie Queen* films from Bar Harbor, Lincoln, Lubec, Newport, Maine, and Middlebury, Vermont, are available from Northeast Historic Film's loan program, www.oldfilm.org/borrow. These and four more *Movie Queens* may be viewed on site at Northeast Historic Film.

Moving Image Review images and articles on *Movie Queens*: Bar Harbor and Lubec, Maine, Winter 1989, Page 2; Middlebury, Vermont, Summer 1992, Page 8; Lincoln and Newport, Maine, Summer 1998, Pages 4 and 16; Groton, Mass., Summer 1999, Page 9; Van Buren, Maine, with a map of located and lost *Movie Queens* in northern New England, Winter 2003, Page 7. Back issues at <http://oldfilm.org/imagereview> 

Amateur Theatre Guild, 7472 Boylston Street,
Boston Mass.
Bulletin 1-200-80
FILM DATA FOR “MOVIE QUEEN” DIRECTORS.
ALL “MOVIE QUEEN” DIRECTORS PLEASE PAY CAREFUL
ATTENTION TO THE FOLLOWING:

With “Movie Queen” your primary drawing power is in the film. Therefore, the details regarding your film is of vast importance, and the information disclosed in this bulletin must be carefully studied by each “Movie Queen” director.

Always make it a point to take your pictures just as soon as possible, and get them off so that they will be back in plenty of time for your show. The mental agony and strain a director goes through when she doesn't send her film out until the last minute does great damage to her frame of mind during the last few days of her show. Also, when your film doesn't come back early, there are many wires and telephone calls made, which could have been prevented had you sent the film in on time. Imagine the situation you would be in if the film didn't come back in time for her show!

From a bulletin on pink paper pasted by Marion Howlett into a small album labeled Amateur Theatre Guild 1937-38.

She wrote in red ink. Did not stage “Movie Queen.”
Marion Angeline Howlett Papers, Harvard Theatre Collection.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

All NHF members receive these basic benefits:

- *Moving Image Review*, the only periodical with information on northern New England film and video research, preservation, and exhibition.
- Two Alamo Theatre movie passes.
- Discounts on admissions to many Alamo Theatre and NHF sponsored events.
- 15% discount on more than 140* **Videos of Life in New England**.
- Access to more than 450* videos through our Video Loan Program. Each NHF member may borrow shipments of up to 3 tapes or DVDs at a time. Postage fee of \$5 will apply if items are mailed.

*Check the directory for available format (VHS or DVD) when selecting titles.

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS AND BENEFITS PLEASE CHECK ONE:

- Individual Member, \$35 per year.** Basic benefits.
- Educator/Student Member, \$20 per year.** Basic benefits. Applies to teachers, homeschoolers and students at any level.
- Nonprofit Organization, \$50 per year.** Basic benefits plus additional copies of *Moving Image Review* upon request.
- Household Members, \$60 per year.** Basic benefits plus 2 additional movie passes. Discount admission applies to the entire household.
- Associate Members, \$100 per year.** Basic benefits plus 2 additional movie passes. Discount admission applies to the entire household.
- Corporate Membership, \$150 per year.** Basic benefits plus 2 additional movie passes and additional copies of *Moving Image Review* on request.
- Friend, \$250 per year.** Basic benefits plus 2 VIP passes to any Alamo Theatre or NHF event and 1 Individual gift membership to a person of your choice.
- Sponsor, \$500 per year.** Basic benefits listed above, plus 2 VIP passes to any Alamo Theatre or NHF event and 2 Individual or 1 Household Gift Membership(s) to persons or family of your choice.
- Patron, \$1,000 per year.** Basic benefits listed above, plus 2 VIP passes to any Alamo Theatre or NHF event and 2 Individual or 1 Household Gift Membership(s) to persons or family of your choice.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ New Renew

Email _____

Seasonal Address _____

City/State _____ Zip _____

Seasonal Dates (from) _____ (to) _____

Seasonal Phone _____

Please charge my credit card: MC VISA

Account # _____

Exp. date _____ Signature of cardholder: _____

Name as you wish it to appear on membership list: _____

My check is enclosed. (Please make check payable to Northeast Historic Film.)

Gift Membership

I would like to give a gift membership at the _____ level to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Repeat this information on a separate sheet of paper if giving more than one membership.

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