Northeast Historic Film 19th Annual Summer Symposium
The Political / The Personal
The Global and Local Function of Regional Media
July 19-21, 2018
SCHEDULE OF PRESENTATIONS

Thursday, July 19th:
Opening Reception and Special Presentations

6:00 pm – Alamo Lobby
Social Mixer / Reception

6:30 pm - Presentation of the 2017 O'Farrell Fellowship winner
*Rethinking the Regional Screen: Amateur, Home, and Vernacular Lantern Practices in Northern New England*
Artemis Willis (University of Chicago)

Over the past few decades, a wide range of lantern slides have been donated to NHF. What can they tell us, and how were they used? Drawing on my research as an O'Farrell Fellow last summer, this talk will uncover several pathways to an understanding of the lantern’s regional life during the first decades of the twentieth century. First, the intersection of commercial and original slides exhibited by a local travel lecturer and photographer highlight an emerging amateur lantern aesthetic; second, the interaction between reduction prints (Kinetoscope films) and reduction slides produced by Edison Studios show the kinds of lantern images that were consumed in the home environment; and lastly, the interchanges between lantern slides and motion pictures created at a wilderness camp reveal the ways the lantern represented everyday experience to prospective campers. Taken together, these pathways shed new light on the lantern’s vernacular uses, while painting a richer picture of the Northern New England screen.

7:30 pm
*Movie Queens in Main Street Movies*
Special Screening and Lecture
Martin L. Johnson (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)

During the 1930’s itinerant filmmakers travelling around New England created “Movie Queen” films in small cities and towns. These films used the town itself as the setting and the population as the cast. Once the film was complete residents could see themselves on screen in the same theaters where they saw major Hollywood motion pictures. This presentation will offer a history of the Movie Queen films in Maine and beyond. Then a look at Northeast Historic Film’s discovery of these films, subsequent preservation efforts, and finally NHF’s homage to the genre with the film *Bucksport Movie Queen 2000.*
Welcome to Friday: The Local is Global + the Global Local

8:30 am – Alamo Lobby
Registration, Coffee, Breakfast, Chat

9:00 am

Local Politics as Global Propaganda: Gary Goldsmith and the USIA
Brian Real (Southern Connecticut State University)

This presentation, on educational filmmaker Gary Goldsmith, begins with a discussion of his 1963 educational documentary True Story of an Election. While Goldsmith made this film for secondary school students, the United States Information Agency discovered it and distributed it abroad to educate audiences about American democracy. This will lead to a discussion of the five works Goldsmith went on to make directly for the USIA, 1965's My Friend, the Enemy. This short work recreates the tension surrounding the management of a mill’s decision to introduce automated systems to the workplace. In both films, imperfect local situations act as positive reflections of American policy for foreign audiences.

10:00 am

Global Health Media from the 1960s to the 1980s in the Collections of the National Library of Medicine
Oliver Gaycken (University of Maryland)

This talk will present an overview of a collection of global public health films held by the National Library of Medicine. These films feature rare historical content on global public health, addressing overpopulation, family planning, sanitation, nutrition, poverty, and the environment in developing nations. Bracketed by fears of global overpopulation eminetized by Paul Ehrlich’s The Population Bomb (1968) and the emergence of such global pandemics as AIDS in the 1980s, these films are part of the story of how globalization and public health media developed in tandem over the course of the latter half of the twentieth century. Indeed, they are excellent examples of the one of globalization’s most prominent slogans: “think globally, act locally.” Taken together, they illustrate the shrinking world of globalism, with the US as a hegemonic source for knowledge. Prompted by the symposium's theme, however, the talk will counter the films’ tendency to present a “view from nowhere” in the form of disembodied health advice by locating the films within the regional context of the DC metro area’s nontheatrical media industry.
In the 1930s archaeologist Gerald Lankester Harding helped to excavate areas of present-day Israel and Palestine and filmed the activities of the British and local workers. Harding’s films include excavations, artifacts, and intimate encounters with the local populations. The exchanges recorded on screen suggest Harding’s familiarity with different Bedouin families as well as the explicit and implicit power that he wielded as a white, British man. This presentation puts Harding’s films in the context of political, imperial, and social histories and, in particular, recognizes the significance of these moving images to LGBT histories. The ‘queer digging’ it addresses includes the silly, social side of archaeology, Harding’s search for intimacy, and the tricky process of decoding data from a personal archive.

LUNCH 12:00-1:00 Alamo Lobby
12:30: Archive Tour / meet at the stairs adjacent to Alamo Lobby

1:00 pm
Coming Soon to Your Town! : Town and Country Film Shows in Aotearoa
Jane Paul (Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision [formerly known as the New Zealand Film Archive])

My job at Ngā Taonga has been curating and presenting film shows to local communities around New Zealand. First through the region-by-region Last Film Search (1992-1999) then The Travelling Film Show and Reel Life in Rural New Zealand projects. In addition shows were curated for local events and festivals. These compilation programmes drew heavily on the Archive’s large amateur film collection. This presentation looks at some of these film shows including the Reel Life in Rural New Zealand shows held in heritage wool sheds.
2:00 pm  
A Collaborative Network of Regional/Local Home Movie Archives in Italy  
Karianne Fiorini (Independent Film Archivist and Curator) and Gianmarco Torri (Independent Film Curator)

The situation of home movie archives in Italy is fragmented. Many archives, libraries, and associations have been collecting and preserving home movies in cities around Italy but are scarcely connected. Fiorini and Torri are responding to this situation through the building of an Italian network of home movie archives. On one side conducting a survey on the archival procedures and the preserved collections. On the other side, promoting a collaborative project to share methodologies, preservation standards, know-hows and best practices, and to foster the re-use of home movie collections by young filmmakers. The presentation will share the chosen strategy and the connected activities as possible models for networking regional archives.

3:00 pm  
This Is Our Home, It Is Not For Sale: Documenting the transformation of a neighborhood  
Emily Vinson (University of Houston)

This Is Our Home, It Is Not For Sale (1987) is a documentary that tells the story of one neighborhood’s struggle with forces seen across the U.S. in the 20th century: housing segregation, white-flight, gentrification. This presentation will describe a project to digitize and describe 113 filmed interviews made by director Jon Schwartz with residents past and present of Riverside, a neighborhood in Houston, Texas. Established as a Jewish neighborhood in response to restrictions which barred Jewish families from living in Houston’s most elite neighborhood, these interviews trace resident’s reactions to integration, block-busting, displacement, and gentrification.
4:00 pm
Real True Pictures: Filming ‘The Battle of Cameron Dam’ for Profit and Politics
Martin Johnson (University of North Carolina)

In the 1910s, as the motion picture industry was forming in Los Angeles, outsiders from all over the country thought that their experiences merited film treatments as well and paid significant sums to traveling filmmakers to realize their dreams of stardom. While most of these films were screened a few times and then forgotten, the 1913 film The Battle of Cameron Dam, based on a real-life standoff between a lumber company and a homesteader, John Dietz, who asserted his rights to block log traffic on his property, became a Midwestern sensation. After Dietz was sentenced to life in prison in 1911 for murdering a sheriff’s deputy, his family contracted a filmmaker to recreate the standoff. Myra Dietz married the film’s director, and they spent the next decade touring with the film, exploiting its anti-corporate politics for profit.

Saturday: Case Studies + the Politics of the Personal
8:30 am
Registration, Coffee, Conversation

9:00 am
Preserving Political Possibilities: Archiving South Carolina Women, Media, and the Power of Counter Narrative in Community Archives
Travis Wagner (University of South Carolina)

Archiving South Carolina Women emerged out of materials possessed by Dr. Mary Baskin-Waters, former director of the now defunct South Carolina Commission on Women. Through this, Waters promoted awareness of issues facing South Carolina women. Though short-lived, The Commission on Women stands as a radical voice for gender equity in a state historically coded as regressive. Though Archiving South Carolina Women began only with items possessed by Waters it has since expanded and this presentation uses the evolution of this project to track women’s activism in the state, focusing on political possibilities present within media-based counter narratives.
10:00 am

*The Woman Behind the Camera: Focus on Dorothy Stebbins Bowles*

Karin Carlson-Snider (Northeast Historic Film)

In the CLIR-funded Woman Behind the Camera project Northeast Historic Film, Chicago Film Archives, and the Lesbian Home Movie project are digitizing women-made home movie and amateur film collections and making them available to the public. This presentation will focus on one of these women filmmakers, Dorothy Stebbins Bowles. Bowles was an avid traveler and amateur filmmaker who shot home movies of her life and travels from the 1920’s through the 1960’s. She was the wife of politician Chester Bowles, and very active at home, in the community, and within his political sphere. As a result of her dual role as mother and political advisor/wife her home life often intersects with the political and these films capture the juxtaposition between the two.

11:00 am

*Artist-run Film Collectives: Connected by the Edges*

Brittany Gravely and Ethan Berry (AgX)

Emerging from the area’s rich history of filmmaking—particularly amateur, experimental and documentary, Boston’s newest film collective AgX enables those without access to engage in the particular beauty, equipment and processes of photochemical film while fostering a local artistic community now connected to other groups around the world—ultimately allowing the creation of films which may have not been made otherwise.

Our presentation will highlight the history of New England area film collectives, give a current overview of the international film collective scene, and include examples of AgX’s various undertakings, partnerships, struggles and discoveries.

LUNCH 12:00-1:30 on your own

12:30: Archive tour: meet at the stair adjacent to Alamo lobby
1:30 pm  
**Case Study: The Community Curator Program at VSW**  
Tara Merenda Nelson (Curator of Moving Image Collections)

The Community Curator program at Visual Studies Workshop in Rochester, NY invites representatives from community groups in the region to curate film screenings using VSW’s collection of over 9,000 film and video titles. Participants in the program work with the Curator of Moving Image Collections to research and select a full program of films that speak to the interests of the group, while opening a broader dialog with the Rochester community. The goals of the Community Curator program are to empower cultural organizations to create their own media programming, expand global and cultural awareness within the Rochester community, and strengthen ties between students, artists, and communities that will cultivate multicultural relationships.

2:30 pm  
**Video Rescues from the Surry Opera Company**  
Michael Grant and Ethan Gates (XFR Collective)

Last summer, members of XFR Collective spent a long weekend in Surry, ME, beginning work to digitize the video collection of the Surry Opera Company. The collection documents the SOC's missions of people-to-people diplomacy to the U.S.S.R. in the 1980s, as well as cultural exchanges with Japanese communities in the '90s. This presentation will walk through the history of the SOC, and XFR's project to preserve its videos, and will show examples of tapes preserved so far, including raw footage from an ABC News profile, performance documentation, local TV ads, and the Leningrad-made amateur documentary, *Thirty Days in One-Storeyed America*, about the Leningrad Amateur Opera's visit to Surry.
Discovering Infrastructure By Imploding a Forgotten Film: “Silent Nite” (Sic)
Melissa Dollman (University of North Carolina)

Around 1968, North Carolina regional filmmaker, O.B. Garris, created a film entitled "Silent Nite" (as per the handwritten label on the only existing work print.) From what I have discovered the final production was a thirty-seven minute prison staff training film in which the narrative explicitly discusses a white, male, teenage prisoner’s mental health and recidivism. Beneath the surface, there is a broader examination of the infrastructure of the penal system of a southern state during the Civil Rights era as well as Garris’s cast of actors which included family members, local officials, and the staff of the state's Central Prison in Raleigh. I will show excerpts from this bizarre artifact, provide some biographical information about Garris himself (whose work was often in the service of local and regional politics), and we, as a group, might hypothesize about the intended purpose and/or audience of “Silent Nite.”

SPECIAL SCREENING
Kurt Lancaster - The Foreigners of Maine (8min.)

This essay film examines the filmmaker’s relationship to his family while growing up in Maine and how his world-view expanded after traveling abroad. For example, the filmmaker’s mother always wanted to travel abroad, but it wasn’t until she was 70 that she was free of oppressive male figures that she had an opportunity to go. What is it like to stay in your hometown nearly your entire life? The familiar and the foreign—the local and the global—becomes the conceptual framework for intermingling family archive photos and digital 16mm Bolex travel footage in London, Paris, and Morocco.

6:00 pm – Cocktails at Farmhouse Inn, Blue Hill
7:00 pm – Lobster (or not) Dinner at Farmhouse Inn, Blue Hill