MIAP Intro Class Projects

Howard Besser, Director
Moving Image Archiving & Preservation Program
NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts
http://www.tisch.nyu.edu/preservation

Student Projects in Intro Class-

• Historical context for 1920s/1930s Fox Newsreels being preserved and presented at Orphans Symposium (as well as other unidentified works)
• Case History of Productions
• Final open-ended projects
Besser-MIAP Intro projects, 9/16/08

Fox Newsreels

NY Street Scenes & Noises

Engineers of Bell Telephone Laboratories

Dr. R.H. Galt, J.H. Parkinson, A. Meyer

Fox Newsreels (naming):

NY Street Scenes & Noises

The Noise Abatement Commission

Saying, "New York is old at heart, young at spirit."

Fox Newsreels (background):

NY Street Scenes & Noises

"Let us build a great home with great streets and squares and parks."

Fox Newsreels (shot locations):

NY Street Scenes & Noises

The Strand

1929  2003

Fox Newsreels (then & now):

NY Street Scenes & Noises

Besser-MIAP Intro projects, 9/16/08
Fox Newsreels (then & now):
NY Street Scenes & Noises

Television Pictures
March 12, 1931

Unedited material used in a
Fox Movietone newsreel

Project by Kara van Malssen, Sean Savage, Paula Felix-Didier,
Lindsay Herron

Clip #2
Ernst Fredrik Werner Alexanderson
in the General Electric “House of Magic”

• “We have succeeded to photograph
  the television image on a moving
  picture film. Important events that in
  the future may be intercepted by the
  television camera and broadcast to all
  corners of the world may thus be
  recorded on the film and kept in
  readiness in moving picture houses
  for projection of a lifetime some
  minutes or hours after the event.”

• Cuts to close-shot:
  “We hope that this will be one more
  step to widen our horizon and to
  make all people our neighbors.”

Early experiments with television

Limitations

• 48 lines of resolution
  (not a life-like image)
• Audio:
  synchronization &
  pitch
• Required the subject
  be in close proximity
to the apparatus
Case Studies of Production History

- Standing with Palestine: documentary film of interviews with members of U.S. activist groups supporting the Palestinian side of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, by the Paper Tiger Television Collective
- Memento Mori: A film by filmmaker and preservation specialist Jim Hubbard
- Divine Possibilities: Short Mini-DV by filmmaker M.M. Serra
- Maria Movie: Short film by filmmaker Joanne Lottis
- Radio Row: Radio production by New York based Independent producer Ben Shapiro
- Sid at 90: Video documentary by New York based documentary film and television producer Howard Weinberg

MIAP Projects (Paper Tiger)
MIAP Projects  (Paper Tiger)

Preserving Eyebeam’s ReBlog  (Pamela Smith project)

Preservation Plan for a small Video Archive  (L.A.V.A. by Paula Felix-Didier)

L.A.V.A.--Phase 1

- Risk assessment and prioritization scheme.
- Improve environmental conditions.
- Cataloging: consider IMAP template.
- Start a new access number system.
- Remove cardboard slipcovers.
- Move the Masters tapes from besides the air conditioner and the window.
- Separate working space from the collection shelves
- Try not to eat or drink near the tapes.
- Sample tape inspection and rewinding schedule.
- Dub Betacam masters.
- Stock on VCRs and VHS tapes.
- New items: keep track of provenance: / have a tape and documentation inspection routine.
- Make sure all tapes can be played back

L.A.V.A.--Phase 2

- Long-range preservation plan.
- Natural disaster plan.
- Insurance.
- Climate controlled storage.
- Regular tape inspection schedule.
- Plan on start collecting DVDs and migrating the most valuable VHS to DVD or other digital format.
- Digitizing plan for their Betacam Masters.
- Start collecting digital masters.
- Paper-based documentation preservation plan.
The Jerry Jofen Collection

At Anthology Film Archives

**Priorities**

- **Cataloging, General**: A full inventory of all film and audio elements should be created.
- **Intellectual Property Rights**: Anthology should draft letter of agreement, and have it signed by Ellen Jofen.
- **Micro environment, Film**: All elements should be housed in archival containers as soon as possible.
- **Micro environment, Audio**: Audio elements should be stored separately in acid-free individual archival boxes.
- **Film element preparation**: Leader, labeling, wind and inspection.
- **Further Film element recommendations**: - Cleaning  - Compiling  - Processing  - Creating Internegatives/Negatives
- **Audio element preparation**: Identify and remaster any unstable or deteriorating elements to new stock 1/2" reel-to-reel, and/or BWF digital file stored on server or hard-drive.

**Workplan**

**PHASE 1**

The steps to improve the storage, housing and intellectual control of the collection are:

1. Inspection/Rehousing & Labeling/Inventorying & Identification
2. Drafting letter of agreement
3. Cleaning moldy elements

**PHASE 2**

The steps to be taken towards a long-term preservation plan and an access policy are:

4. Re-format high-risk items (particularly mag strip films, and audio elements in danger)
5. Processing exposed film and slides

**TASK** | **WHO** | **WHEN** | **TIME**
--- | --- | --- | ---
Order supplies for rehousing, inventorying and reshelving | Archivist | Month 1 | 3-4 weeks
Clean storage space | Archivist | Month 1 | 2 weeks
Monitor temperature and relative humidity | Archivist | Ongoing task
Film maintenance | Archivist | Month 1 | 6 weeks
Inventory | Archivist | Month 2-3 | 6 weeks
Film re-imposition and rehousing | Archivist | Month 2-3 | 6 weeks
Reel checking, labeling, cataloging | Archivist | Month 3 | 6 weeks
Send out video elements to be housed | Archivist | Month 4 | 6 weeks
Send out high-risk elements to laboratory | Archivist | Month 5 | 8 weeks
Send out in need of laboratory work | Archivist | Month 6 | 10 weeks
Quality Control | Archivist | Month 6-10 | 8 weeks
Jeff Martin--The Dawn of Tape: Transmission Device as Preservation Medium

RCA-WBTV
Jeff Martin--The Dawn of Tape

Final Projects (2/3)

- Rebuilding Cambodia’s Audio/Visual History
- Organization of print files on Komath Bukter and Isan Mushar atau Anthology: Title Archive, analysis of oral of organization and arrangement at Anthology and another initiation
- Selection and processing of materials collected on “Film” by Samuel Beckett’s only film project in connection with Filmmakers Cooperative
- History of “Spanish Film” preservation funding, and implications for public access to the film given changing notions of intellectual property and copyright
- History and development of the 2” quadruplex format and subsequent archiving problems, and a cataloging of 2” program, 1956-1959
- Creation of an exhibition design investigating issues of authenticity in the work “Peggy and Fred in Bed” by video artist Leslie Thompkins
- Exploration through a series of interviews, of the technological and lexical aspects of MLB (Major League Baseball) Advanced Media games
- Academic review of literature on copyright in relation to media and the arts

Some class projects later turned into thesis projects

- Cataloging and assessment of video interview materials within the Abraham Lincoln Brigade collection in the Tamiment Library of the Elmer Holmes Bobst Library
- Examination of the technical, ethical and archival arguments surrounding film colorization
- Research and creation of a finding aid for US government films produced before and during the New Deal
- Creation of a treatment and fundraising plan for an unidentified 16mm film shot at the 1936 Summer Olympics that is part of the NYU University Archives,
- Assessment and preservation plan for audio and video materials in the Institute for Afro-American Affairs Collection, University Archives, Elmer Holmes Bobst Library
- Preparation of a film exhibition of contemporary Chinese independent documentaries and an analysis of the state of independent production, archiving and preservation in China.
- Creation of an accurate biography of the work of Joseph W. Xura, a key figure in sex-exploitation film production in New York City in the 1940s and 1950s.

Benefits
Fringe Wages and Salaries

The total budget cannot be estimated, as it can only be determined once the number of items requiring re-housing and in need of preservation laboratory work is determined.
Douglas Edwards News

Jeff Martin—The Dawn of Tape

Pamela Smith Thesis Project:
Videofreex—early 1970s experimental community broadcast television

Videofreex (Pamela Smith)

EAI Internship

Our Graduates

- We are training a new generation of custodians of our cultural heritage
- This training has to involve more than the kind of apprenticeship that has traditionally characterized this field
- To be an effective Moving Image Archivist in the future will require a combination of the professional and the theoretical, and the ability to apply important traditions and concepts to communications technology of the future that we’ve never even dreamed of today
- We want our graduates to act as “change agents” in the organizations they go into
- We want to instill in them a commitment to preserve the future as well as the past
- many of us will need to work together to make sure that the moving image artifacts of the 20th century and beyond are available to our grandchildren’s grandchildren’s grandchildren.
MIAP Intro Class
Projects

Howard Besser
NYU Moving Image Archiving & Preservation Program

http://www.nyu.edu/tisch/preservation/