Introduction

The significance of the ability for motion pictures to record an event of local or regional importance has existed since the nascence of cinema. After a screening of the non-fiction “actuality” film *The Coronation Durbar at Delhi* in 1912, a reviewer for *The Bioscope* wrote that the film “may be left for future generations to realize the full extent of its importance – men and women yet unborn who, by the magic of a little box and a roll of film, will be enabled to witness the marvels of a hundred years before their age, in all the color and movement of life.” However, despite the fact that film archives have been established since the 1930s, the establishment of regional archives to accept, research and make available motion pictures made for and by members of their surrounding area has had a more uncertain history.

England is perhaps the only country that has been divided into regions with a single public archive responsible for the media material in counties that compose its region. In the United States, the existence of archives that function on a regional level is well established, however, only a small number of these archives consider themselves “regional archives” and no formal administrative body has been congregated to oversee the implementation, or at least the recognition, of the hundreds of state archives, university libraries, public libraries and historical societies as regional archives.

England

In 1919, the first film archive in the United Kingdom, now known as the Imperial War Museum Film and Video Archive, was established to preserve films of World War I. In 1935, the British Film Institute established a National Film Library, with the aim of creating a ‘repository of films of permanent value.’ In 1955, The National Film Library became the National Film Archive, its prime purpose no longer a service to lend films but to preserve them, its Committee noting that ‘every film has a historical value of some kind.’

Today, The British Universities Film & Video Council’s *Researcher’s Guide* now identifies over 400 moving image collections in the U.K. that are available to researchers. They range from stock footage libraries to newsfilm libraries to subject specialist collections to television libraries. Few are concerned with preservation. However, a handful of these collections are distinguished as Public Archives. These are archives that collect and preserve films and videos for study and research. They may be classified as a specialist archive, or may be devoted to a geographical area. They can be defined as national, regional or county archives. Their holdings contain works made by amateur and professional producers for cinema, television and other purposes. Their goal, to the extent that is legally and logistically allowable, is to make as much of their holdings available to see as possible. Operating upon the principle of respecting the integrity of the works in their collection above any commercial or short-term exploitation, all are not for profit institutions, supported either wholly or in part by public money.

Eight of these Public Archives are the regional archives of England: the Northern Region Film and Television Archive, North West Film Archive, Yorkshire Film Archive, Media Archive for Central England, East Anglian Film Archive, South West Film and Television Archive, Wessex Film and Sound Archive and Screen Archive South East. The first of these eight regional archives to be created was the East Anglian Film Archive in Norwich, situated about 10 miles off
the eastern coast of England. Funding came from the University of Essex, the University of East Anglia, where the archive was housed, and the Eastern Arts Association. A year later, the Manchester Metropolitan University project identified a significant amount of local film material, which led to creation of the North West Film Archive. It wasn’t until the mid-1980s that the third regional archive, Yorkshire Film Archive, was set up. It, too, found support from a higher education institution, this time at York St John College. In 1988, the Hampshire Archives Trust created Wessex Film and Sound Archive. In the 1990s, three more archives were established: Screen Archive South East at the University of Brighton in 1992, South West Film and Television Archive in 1993, and Northern Region Film and Television Archive located in 1998. The eighth regional archive, Media Archive for Central England, was designated in 2000. London is currently the only English region without a dedicated public sector moving image archive. The National Film and Television Archive has acted to some degree as a film archive for London, but the possibility for the creation of a separate institution is being investigated by ALM London, the strategic body for archives, libraries and museums in London. All regional archives were created independently of one another and without any intervention on a national level; as David Cleveland, founding director of the East Anglian Film Archive, noted at the 1998 Association for Moving Image Archivists conference, “none of us knew about one another at first. The idea of saving films of an area must have been ‘in the air.’"

All eight regional archives, in addition to the national archives of Scotland and Wales and the two U.K.-wide archives of the British Film Institute and the Imperial War Museum, are represented collectively as the Film Archive Forum. The Film Archive Forum (FAF) was established in 1987 with the aim of creating an informal network amongst British moving image archives and acts as a body on national moving image archive policy. In 1993, FAF was instrumental in identifying gaps in regional archive coverage and creating two new regional archives for the Northern Region and Central England to fill those gaps. The Forum also aided in the establishment of the graduate course in film archiving at the University of East Anglia in 1990, which, two years later, became an accredited Master of Arts in Film Archiving degree.

One of the defining roles of the Film Archive Forum is to represent the best practice in film and moving image archiving. To this extent, FAF’s constitution was drafted with objectives towards which all the regional and national archives of the U.K. direct their efforts. The constitution declares that members of FAF are dedicated to the preservation of film and videotape, the training of archivists, acquisitions policy, standards for archives, copyright, cooperation with film laboratories and foreign archives. In addition, all FAF members support the 1998 FIAF Code of Ethics, which states that archivists will deny access rather than expose unique or master material to the risks of projection or viewing if the material is thereby endangered; that archives will resist pressure to remove or to destroy material already in their collections or to refuse or accept material on offer to their collections for any reason outside their institution’s declared preservation or selection policy and that archives recognize that the materials in their care represent commercial as well as artistic property, and fully respect the owners of copyright and other commercial interests.

Another distinction of the Film Archive Forum is that it acts as an advisor on national archive policy. The Film Archive Forum’s Executive Committee has been actively involved in lobbying for the creation of government policies that recognize, resource and fund regional film archives in England. In 2000, FAF published the document Moving History: Towards a Policy for the UK Moving Image Archives, which outlined ten principles as the basis of a fundamental policy for all
public sector moving image archives in the U.K. The ten principles are concerned with the recognition that the care of moving images is a specialist activity that holds a distinctive place within the wider archive community; coordination of policy between such archives; need for supportive legislation nationally and regionally; standards for acquisition, preservation, documentation and access; use of these archives in teaching, learning and research; funding; and ethics. FAF was also involved with the 2004 publication *Hidden Treasures: The UK Audiovisual Archives Strategic Framework*, which was intended as blueprint for the future development of audiovisual archives across the U.K. Produced by a steering group comprising members of the British Library Sound Archive and the Film Archive Forum, *Hidden Treasures* is primarily concerned with the lack of consistent government funding for the audiovisual archives to execute fundamental duties and seeks to ensure comprehensive coverage for audiovisual archive activity across the U.K.

**Holdings**

The definition of a regional archive is possibly best expressed by Dr. Heather Norris Nicholson, a film researcher in the U.K., as “a managed repository of film and associated material which contributes visually to an understanding of regional experiences, perspectives and memories over time.” The significance of regional archives is manifest in their two major functions: acquisition and preservation of orphan films- those films that fall outside the scope of commercial preservation programs- and their relationship with the community through collection access and development.

The footage that comes into a regional archive is special because it is a primary source, a testimony to their creator’s existence- not how their existence is perceived through studio narratives, but how they themselves wish to be seen. It is evidence of perspectives and lives often neglected by mainstream cinema, mainstream culture, mainstream society, mainstream religion, mainstream government. Regional material offers insight into what life in the regions is all about: clues to regional consciousness. Footage from filmmakers who traveled with their cameras, promotional films from locally based companies, home movies and local newsreels may unveil social or cultural aspects that may be poorly preserved, difficult to access or quite simply absent from the historical record. As a result of the unique nature of the footage located in the regional archives, archivists allocate a major portion of their resources - time, labor and money – to making their collections accessible, through programming, digital interfaces and duplication.

The regional film archives have a wide variety of material including artists' film and video, topicals, experimental films, documentaries, newsreels, industrial films, educational films, political and campaigning films, actuality films, home movies and other amateur productions, advertising films, travelogues, student productions, and, increasingly, local television productions. As Dr. Norris Nicholson described to AMIA conference attendees in 1999, “regional film archives typically hold footage that represents regional and local life, which may date back to the early part of the century. Their holdings were produced for public, private, commercial or charitable reasons by a wide range of filmmakers.” This type of footage, in addition to the method by which it reaches the regional archives, ensures that there is a geographical focus and character to collection development; people from the surrounding areas are aware that there is an accessible central repository for their region and, owning or seeking moving images that were made for or in the region, contact the archive.

All of the English regional archives share nearly identical collection characteristics. For example, the Northern Region Film and Television Archive holdings include television news,
documentary, regional and arts programming, amateur films, corporate promotional and advertising films, information and educational material. Approximately half of the archive’s collection is made up of regional television holdings from the BBC and the ITV regional station Tyne Tees. Two other substantial collections within the archive are the Turners collection of documentary, educational and commercial films from the 1940s to the 80s, and the Trade Films collection of documentaries and community films from the late 1960s to early ‘90s. Other smaller collections making up the archive’s holdings include amateur home movies and commercial films collections. There is an emphasis on film and television images of families and communities, the workplace, transport, leisure, events and the industrial and rural heritage of the region. The archive's collection spans the twentieth century with the bulk of the archive's holdings dating from the 1950s onwards through the television and documentary holdings.

The other seven archives are similar, with collections consisting of television programs and news material and including material covering issues of national and regional significance as well as featuring everyday life, work and leisure in their respective regions through newsreel items, professional and amateur documentary material, advertising and promotional films, as well as amateur home movies and fiction. Distinguishing differences exist where regional history is particularly dedicated to a specific industry or event. For example, the North West Film Archive has a strong concentration on industrialization. And because of its relationship with the pioneer British filmmakers and seaside tourism, those themes are emphatically represented in the collection at Screen Archive South.

To stimulate collection growth and facilitate an open relationship with the community, the majority of the regional archives advertise themselves as local repositories, available for the deposit of media materials as well as non-media items that support and enhance the moving image collections. Most of the regional archives seek to acquire only non-fiction material; however, for some archivists, like those at the Media Archive For Central England, even edited commercial films that have been deposited along with home movies represent how people enjoyed films in the home in that region before video and DVD, and are therefore legitimate additions to the collection. Although not all materials brought before each archive are integrated into their holdings because of conflicts with collection policy, potential donors are welcome to have their materials evaluated by archive staff and are then directed towards the other existing archives. The relatively defined geographical boundaries of each archive’s jurisdiction determine acquisition policy, and so collections tend not to be burdened with irrelevant material. For those films that are accepted without appraisal and are discovered to be inappropriate for the regional archive at which they’ve been deposited, they can be, through professional relationships or through directories published by organizations like the British Universities Film & Video Council, re-assigned to the regional, commercial or national film archive for which they are best suited.

Another benefit to the definitive geography and collection policies of the eight regional archives is that there isn’t any competition for funding or acquisition with each other or even with private archives or collectors in the area. In regards to acquisition, donors tend to identify the regional archive as the most appropriate repository, and any private collectors are not eligible for the same pools of public funding as the public archives are. In general, the regional archives have been able to create a working relationship with collections and archives both inside and outside of their region.
One of the defining characteristics of the regional archives is to act as a hub for images that represent or reflect the history of the surrounding area. Unlike a national archive which may be preoccupied with military, government or feature film productions, the regional archives are open to collecting all of these productions- and more- in order to make accessible a historical profile of that geographical area and the people who lived there. But collecting material is only a partial function of the regional archives. For many decades, moving image archives have been, perhaps rightfully so, stigmatized by the stereotype of being intimidating, inaccessible, and unapproachable. But the English regional archives have striven to prove just the opposite. For the vitality of the institution, each offers a range of services to the community, from programming to on-site study to non-commercial duplication services. A number of the regional archives now have all or part of their databases accessible online and in print catalog form and the practicalities of creating a unified catalog that represents all eight regional archives are being discussed. Some archives, like the East Anglian Film Archive, have shot lists available online as well and aim to have part of their collections digitized and made publicly available via a digital film archive. Films are accessible to individual members of the public by on site viewing in study stations or public viewing rooms or material can be copied to VHS or DVD for a fee.

Programming and education are also major components of the archives’ function. Film shows run in museums, independent cinemas and visitor centers throughout the respective regions. Archives are also involved in various educational and cultural projects, for example providing footage to filmmakers working with young offenders or contributing footage to be used on stage in theatrical productions. To maintain the symbiotic relationship between archive and community, finding ways to raise awareness and improve acquisition of and access to materials of local interest is a priority for archive staff.

**Budget/Funding**

In direct proportion to the importance of regional motion picture archiving is the uncertainty of consistent funding for the archives. Most regional film archives face the same budgetary concerns, mainly that they do not have enough money to perform core duties, existence depends on temporary grants and a lot of valuable archive times is spent raising money. For many of the archives, external funding is the only way they can implement preservation programs. Because lack of funding is such a prominent threat to the public archives, one of the objectives of the Film Archive Forum is to lobby for the establishment of a line in the national budget that would adequately and consistently fund moving image archives’ core work of acquisition, preservation and access.

One of benefits of being classified as a public archive is access to public funding. Some of the archives are or have been in receipt of project funding from bodies such as the Heritage Lottery Fund, which was set up by Parliament in 1994 to give grants to projects involving the local, regional and national heritage of the United Kingdom. A number of the regional archives receive support in kind through host universities and colleges. For example, North West Film Archive is part of Library Special Collections at Manchester Metropolitan University, Media Archive For Central England housed by the University of Leicester and the East Anglian Film Archive is owned and operated by the University of East Anglia. But all eight regional film archives of England are primarily dependent on funding from the UK Film Council via the regional screen agencies: EM Media, Film London, Northern Film & Media, North West Vision, screeneast, Screen South, Screen West Midlands, Screen Yorkshire, and South West Screen. The purpose of the nine regional screen agencies is to support their respective region's film, television and interactive media (games, digital media and new media) through talent development, investment
and business support. While access to these funding organizations is guaranteed because of the nature of the public archives, receipt of funds is by no means certain.

And so, to supplement whatever operational grants they may receive, many of the archives seek to produce revenue from commercial activity. The availability of their collections for licensing is advertised on the regional and national level. Videotape compilations are made for direct sale to the public. Film presentations are given throughout the regions. There are services such as film printing and film conservation. All these help to bring in money. And while FAF members do not normally provide a commercial film-copying service, requests for DVDs or VHS tapes can be accommodated, where appropriate and legally possible, for a fee. The operative word being “legally.” Public sector moving archives do not, in general, own the materials in their collections. In a few cases they may own a particular collection or they may have been granted limited exploitation rights (e.g. showing certain films non-theatrically without having to pay a fee). But in most cases the films will be the property of an outside rights holder. Where such ownership rights exist, the archive cannot produce a copy without the permission of the rights-holder. Nevertheless, many of the public archives have produced compilation videos, usually of locally produced films, which are available for sale from those archives and some local retail outlets. The East Anglian Film Archive has produced 50 such compilations. Profits from the sale of the videos go directly toward the running of the archive and the conservation of its collections.

In general, income generated through this type of fundraising is considered a contribution to running costs. But in some cases, specific bids for money have had to be made if there is a large collection in need of attention, or a quantity of material in particularly bad condition and in need of urgent attention.

Problems

In addition to the lack of consistent funding, there do exist other drawbacks for the regional archives. Many of these problems, however, are not particular to the regionals or even to England.

One of these problems is that public relations efforts actually work and people do bring their materials to the archive. Since this is the objective for the archives, it hardly seems fair to call it a problem, but for archives that are based within a university, government or commercial building, space can be a major issue, and the question of where to put it all become a significant one. And it’s not just film storage that is needed. While little contextual material exists for some footage, other films arrive with or even attract, once in the archive, an array of associated papers and materials. And then there are the early family videos and substantial amounts of television material that are now beginning to be deposited. So, of course, the problem really isn’t in having too much material, it’s in having to fit it all in inadequate premises.

With very few resources, regional film archives in Great Britain do an extraordinary amount of work. The workload involved with finding funding opportunities, applying for grants, arranging film programs and outreach work, acquiring films, cataloging holdings and performing collection maintenance tasks like finding suitable homes for films that do not fit your collection policy requires a substantial, fulltime roster of personnel. But many of the archives exist with only a couple of full time employees and maybe a couple of volunteers. This makes it very difficult to provide the necessary services across an entire region.
The source of these problems, of course, points to lack of funding and government recognition. The regional archives, having been initiated independently of one another, are not represented by a governing body. The Film Archive Forum attempts to bring together issues of mutual concern and interest, but it is not a national governing body empowered to dispatch funding or unify the operations of the regional archives. And while the identity of nearly all the archives is associated with their host universities, those institutions do not necessarily fund them. Without a governing body, the archives do have a great deal of autonomy, which is a definite benefit, but this makes it more difficult for the English government to understand, and therefore fund, such a fragmented group of organizations.

Being American, I felt I needed to ask the regional archivists in England whether they thought the solution to these problems was privatization. All responded with an emphatic “no!” Some pointed out that archives would always need more money than they can earn through private business, that collections started off with public money and public support and freely donated material and so it would be unethical to privatize. But the most comprehensible reason for remaining public is that it would shift the focus of their work from the community to making a profit, and this is something that deeply offends the essence of regional archiving. However, while the dedication to being public organizations is strong, some archives have recently implemented private sector management techniques and administrative infrastructures in order to make their few resources more efficient.

Despite these drawbacks, the outlook for regional moving image archiving is positive. The creation of the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly in 1999 has intensified regionalist movements within England, particularly in those areas (for instance, Cornwall and Yorkshire) where there is strong resentment about the domination of and isolation from decision-making powers in London. Government agencies have established regional offices which are encouraged to set local priorities. And while support at this point is more moral than financial, the attention being paid to regional heritage will hopefully pay off for the archives.

United States

The approach to regional archiving in the United States is typically American: everyone is free to do what they want when they want. Instead of a system where orphan films are extricated from donations made to records archives, state archives, museums, and libraries and sent to a single film archive in the region, each institution has simply begun their own preservation program. Some film archives that collect and preserve films of a regional nature are state archives, some are public libraries, some are historical societies and some are universities. There has been no decision by the archives themselves to recognize only one archive per region as being the official regional archive, nor has there been any federal or legislative decision to group the states into regions. This has not caused media archiving anarchy, it just has lead to the peaceful coexistence of many similar archives within a single region throughout the U.S. But perhaps that is the most significant aspect to the question of whether regional archiving under the English model can happen in the U.S. How do you determine a region and who is doing the determining? Some archivists see the state in which they exist as a region. Others do not. Some see their general geographic area, for example the South or the West, as a region. Some see the state in which they exist and its contiguous states as a region. And some see their immediate city and its surrounding county as a region. Where England has two types of archives, public and private, with specific identities, acquisition and access policies and funding opportunities, the United States has many different types of archives, some with overlapping goals.
I once had an argument with a Danish friend over why the U.S. couldn’t keep its crime rates nice and low like Denmark. Denmark is roughly the size of West Virginia. Multiply Denmark by 132, and you get the U.S. It is an enormous country. So maybe the reason why we don’t have a nice, organized regional archive system like they do in England is because England is about 1/70th the size of the United States. Smaller sizes tend to make things, like crime and regionalism, more manageable.

That being said, there are many wonderful archives in the U.S. that, whether they identify with being a regional archive or not, act as one. They share the same purpose, the same spirit, and the same problems as those in the U.K. Like in England, regional archiving in the U.S. is defined by the conservation, preservation and restoration of media that falls outside the scope of commercial preservation programs. Although they are almost entirely incorporated into larger institutions such as universities, historical societies, state records archives, media arts centers, and public libraries (the exception is Northeast Historic Film, perhaps the only definitive, freestanding regional archive in the U.S.), the American archives have the same collections as the U.K. regional archives: they, too, care for orphaned documentaries, newsreels, ethnic films, avant-garde works, home movies, animation, anthropological footage, industrial films and other independent works. Like in the U.K., archive staff search out films and videos to add to the collection, either by donation, deposit or borrowing and copying. Films and videos are kept in temperature and humidity controlled stores. Copies of films are made on film for long-term preservation, and videos have masters made. And like in the U.K., consistent national funding is notably absent. Any federal money that is available is through competitive grants or endowments. There is no budget line that funds, on an annual basis, motion picture regional archives.

So, currently, the nature of regional archiving in the U.S. is not in being appropriated a region or having an overseeing body or federal recognition or even a name that screams “regional archive” (Appalshop Archive, for example). It is in each archive’s function, primarily their collection and preservation of media of regional interest and/or origin.

**History**

The development of regional film archiving in the U.S. owes much of its existence to home movies. More than any other type of production, home movies in the United States have become synonymous with truth, justice and the American way. In an age when any image can be manipulated digitally, home movies are regarded, consciously or subconsciously, as truthful representations of existence, even if that existence is primarily defined by happy occasions like birthday parties, parades, family trips and weddings.

The most famous American home movie, the Zapruder Film, has never been questioned in its veracity for revealing what happened that day in Texas when President Kennedy’s motorcade rounded the corner of Houston Street. Today, that kind of trust in moving images is impossible; recently, we were collectively awed to discover a home video of Michel Gondry remarkably solving a Rubik’s Cube with his feet. It was later discovered that the footage was fraudulent, a product of clever digital editing.

Because of our national nostalgia for the simpler, more truthful times of moving images, home movie use or simulation has been applied throughout contemporary media. Home movies are in advertising. They are in broadcast documentaries. They are in major motion pictures. Maybe
it’s because home movies proliferated in the U.S. after WWII, during the baby boom, and now all those boomers are getting sentimental for all those parties and parades. Or maybe it’s because all we really want to see are some movies that haven’t been scanned, tweaked with Final Cut Pro, and then bolstered with computer graphics. Whatever the case may be, the interest in home movies has been a major factor in the establishment and recognition of regional film archives in America.

The first official sign of regional archive consciousness in the United States was in 1981 when the Human Studies Film Archives was established within the Department of Anthropology at the Smithsonian Institute to collect and preserve amateur films as documentation of cultural and historical activities. Five years later, Northeast Historic Film was founded as a regional moving image archive for the northern New England states of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and Massachusetts. Support of regional motion picture preservation increased exponentially in the 1990s. In 1991, the Alaska Moving Image Preservation Association, the only organization in the state whose primary mission is to save Alaska's moving image and sound materials, was established. In 1993, the Librarian of Congress published a report on the state of American film preservation, which included written submissions on home movies from the Japanese American National Museum, Oregon Historical Society, and Northeast Historic Film. The next year, the Library of Congress again recognized the significance of home movies by naming Zappruder Film to the National Film Registry. 1996 and 1997 were important years for the establishment of two major supporters of orphan film preservation: the National Film Preservation Foundation and the New York Women in Film & Television’s Women’s Film Preservation Fund. Both organizations have, since their inception, provided substantial funding through competitive and non-competitive preservation grants. 1998 saw the start of the Association of Moving Image Archivist’s Regional Audiovisual Archives interest group. That same year, NFPF gave its first Laboratory-Archive Partnership grants; recipients included Smithsonian Institution to preserve Groucho Marx Home Movies and Northeast Historic Film to preserve Albert Benedict Home Movies. The next year, AMIA again provided a forum for regional archive discussion when it hosted the group screening session The Richness of the Regions: Projecting a Global Picture of the Twentieth Century. 1999 also saw the first Orphans Film Preservation Symposium at the University of South. The theme: A Home for Home Movies.

**Overseeing Organization**

Where the regional archives in the U.K. have the Film Archive Forum, archives in the U.S. have the Regional Audio-Visual Archives Interest Group. This is a support group formed by AMIA members to address the needs and concerns of archivists who find themselves responsible for preserving and providing access to audio-visual materials that document the history of geographical areas and local cultures. Although RAVA does not function as a lobbying agent, it does seek to enhance communication and collaboration between regional archivists and explore initiatives that bring greater attention to the value and challenges of regional audio-visual materials.

**Holdings**

Just as the United States represents the essence of cultural variety, so too do its archives represent various approaches to collection development.
Unlike England, not all of the archives that function in a regional capacity advertise themselves as a community repository. Many, in fact, have come into film archiveship only because motion pictures were mixed in with other archival documents already in their possession or brought in through transfers from other branches or agencies of the institution (this is particularly true in the case of State or Public archives).

Some archives, like the Alaska Moving Image Preservation Association, do seek out and accept material without qualification; they accept everything and then de-accession anything that doesn’t not pertain to their collection policy. In the case of AMIPA, they seek to acquire material on Alaska regardless of whether it is produced inside or outside the state. And, depending on the institution, some do accept original, primary source material as well (this includes photos, scrapbooks, journals, letters, etc.), but generally stay away from books and other printed matter that might be accessible at a library.

In general, collection policies set the standard for whether material is accepted or not. But again, depending on the nature of the institution, that policy can be all-inclusive, as it is at AMIPA or at Boise State University which seeks any and all material produced in or about Idaho, or selective, like at Iowa State University which collects primarily films produced by the university’s television studio. As is the case with most any archive, the goal is to keep the collections free of clutter and inappropriate materials; most archives will try to determine the nature of the material before accepting it and nearly all will find a more suitable organization at which it can be deposited if it does not meet their collecting criteria. As a result, many archives report 5% or less of their holdings as not fitting their collection policy. This percentage, of course, increases in organizations without a clearly defined collection policy for moving images and without proper funding or staff to inventory and assess holdings.

Those materials that are incorporated into archives’ collections represent the gamut of American production: small gauge, 35mm, acetate, nitrate, Beta Cam, newsfilm, television broadcasts, raw footage, Hollywood narratives, government films, amateur films, documentaries, shorts, interviews, educational films, sponsored films, field recordings, industrial, institutional and recreation sports films.

But where you will find the same types of films collected at each of the regional archives in the U.K., holdings in the U.S. appear to be more clustered. Not all archives welcome nitrate film or Hollywood productions while others, like Boise State University, do collect Hollywood feature films as long as they were shot in Idaho. Some archive collections, like those housed or sponsored by universities, are composed largely of films of the university athletic teams, film department or television station. There are those collections that are composed primarily of home movies, and those that are void of amateur films.

The common denominator appears to be that each institution performs one of the most significant duties typical of a regional archive: to preserve films that represent local or regional culture, society and experience. For example, Trinity College has preserved A Community Meets, a 1969 documentary of a community meeting in Hartford, Connecticut, organized by the Black Panther Party to enable residents to speak out after a week of destructive riots. The New York Public Library’s Donnell Media Center is preserving About Sex, a landmark sex education film made in 1972 and Crosby Street, a 1975 portrait of a New York neighborhood in transition. The Rhode Island Historical Society is preserving footage of Brown University’s Class of 1915 graduation ceremony and celebration while the Louisiana State Museum is preserving scenes of the French Quarter circa the 1960s.
Only a small number of American archives take an active approach to soliciting donations or seek to supplement their holdings with materials that contextualize items in the collection, such as documents or oral histories recorded on audiocassettes. One such archive, the Southern Media Archive, has one of the most inclusive profiles of the local or regional archives in the U.S. According to a presentation given at the 1998 AMIA conference, their purpose is to identify, collect, preserve and make available locally produced visual materials depicting the life of the region. But they also promote the donation of material by “road showing” a film program produced by the archive entitled *Picturing Home: Family Movies as Local History*. *Picturing Home* was designed to elevate the conception of the home movie film to that of an historic artifact requiring preservation, to teach basic film preservation measures, and to distinguish between the access value of videotape and the preservation/longevity value of motion picture film. The use of the film in community forums has resulted in the donation of thousands of feet of footage.

Perhaps one of the reasons that more of the American “regional-esque” archives do not take a more aggressive role in promoting acquisition through community outreach is because of the existence, or even abundance, of similarly themed institutions already present in each region. For instance, the American Heritage Center at the University of Wyoming, which is located in the city of Laramie, performs the traditional community-oriented duties of a regional archive only because, as they themselves point out, Laramie does not have a dedicated or professional museum or records archive. So the question of regional jurisdiction is not limited to geography, but extends to institutional jurisdiction. With all the museums and historical societies and universities and libraries collecting or preserving film, there is, once again, the question of who determines which should perform the vital role of community service and public education?

**Access/Community**

While there are many archives in America that fulfill the need for the preservation of regional material, the degree to which the archives are connected to the community varies. Some archives duplicate footage onto VHS and then show the cassettes at community gathering’s and in people’s homes in order to collect identifications of who, what, where and when is being represented in the footage. Some, like Northeast Historic Film, will even store production elements from filmmakers in the region. Most, however, are only able to provide the service of being open and accessible to the public.

**Problems**

One of the core issues surrounding regional archiving in America is a definition of region. Multiple archives occupy the same region, all preserving films and building collections representative of that region. North Dakota, Oklahoma and Wyoming all have collections that represent the region in which they are located, but is that region limited to their respective states, or does it include the West? There are at least three archives for the Appalachian region. Northeast Historic Film is defined as a regional archive for northern New England, and yet Maine Historical Society also has films from the area. The State Archives of North Carolina has a collection pertaining to North Carolina, but does not consider that North Carolina constitutes a region. And yet Austin Public Library’s Austin History Center does consider the two counties from which most of their media is derived a region.
And then there are the “specialty” archives, which preserve local or regional material but only as it applies to their specialized institution or collection. For example, Clemson University preserves non-fiction films from the state of South Carolina, but only those that document various aspects of agricultural activities.

This overabundance of archives may not lead to turf warfare or archive gang violence, but it does beg the question Who gets what? How is the public supposed to know where to go? And what if prospective donators do not want to divide a single family’s collection? Northeast Historic Film notoriously collects home movies and equipment, but does not accept still images or photographic slides. Regional archives thrive on displaying the true nature of the area as documented by its inhabitants, but what happens when those inhabitants do not limit themselves to a single medium?

Personally, I have found this question of who and where to be a problem. My mother’s family owned and operated movie theaters in upstate New York from the 1930s to the 1980s. They wrote to the trade magazines. They communicated with producers. They shot home movies, some on the sets of major Hollywood pictures. But there is no New York State Archive that accepts moving images, photographs and documents. Some of the films have been deposited with the Academy Film Archive in Hollywood, but what about the rest? What about the story that is told through the collection as a whole? Without an answer to these questions, the collection has been stagnant, sitting in the attic because there is no single location to which we can donate.

Related to the problem of geographical ownership is that of regional identity and archive identification. Some historical societies serve in the spirit of a regional moving image archive, while others do not. Ohio Historical Society primarily serves internal users and state agencies and Maine Historical Society does not connect with the community through its film holdings at all. But the Oklahoma Historical Society and the State Historical Society of North Dakota do work with the community to add to and make available their collections. The same identity inconsistency can be found amongst state archives. In Colorado, the state archives do not work with the public in regards to its film holdings, but at the Tennessee State Library and Archives and State Archives of North Carolina community service is a main focus. How would any researcher or donator know which historical society or state archive to approach? How do you discern which is active in collection development, preservation and programming and which simply takes in media as another document to be filed away, never to be seen again?

So, in conclusion, maybe regional archivistship does need to be specified as something more concrete than simply owning or preserving films that are regional in nature. Perhaps we do need characteristic guidelines and subscription to those guidelines as overseen by a single body. Not all problems of collection development, access and funding can be resolved by divvying up the country into regional plots and planting an archive in each region. I’m sure that you will find pockets of material in England that ought to have gone to the public regional archives but instead found its way to private institutions, businesses or collectors. But in clarifying the role of the regional archive in the United States- in building into the activity of preserving films an understanding of public outreach, service and access- perhaps channels for funding can be cleared and access to material can be improved.

Bibliography

A Short History of Film Archiving by Luke McKernan http://www.bftv.ac.uk/events/archhist.htm
HOW TO APPLY

1. Identify film or footage collection to be preserved
Identify materials in your collection that meet the criteria listed above and decide what laboratory work needs to be done. For guidance on planning a preservation project, please consult The Film Preservation Guide: The Basics for Archives, Libraries, and Museums.

2. Complete a proposal with laboratory cost estimates
Write a proposal in the form of a letter (4 to 6 pages), with two laboratory estimates. Your letter should cover the following points and may include illustrations or tables as appropriate:

   a. Research significance
      • Why is the film material in your proposal important for cultural, artistic, or historical study? If your material pertains to a particular region, locale, or culture, please explain how this material is an example of broader national trends or is a significant illustration of your organization's cultural mandate. Please check Films Preserved Through the NFPE for examples of regional films funded in past years.

   b. Physical film description
      • What is the title, length, gauge, and subject matter of the proposed film or collection?
      • From what type of source material will your archive be working?
• How did your organization acquire the material?

c. Uniqueness of your archive's film copy
• What organizations, databases, and other resources have you checked to make sure that your archive's copy represents the "best surviving material" for that film and that the proposed work does not duplicate efforts by others in the public/nonprofit sector?
• For independent documentaries and avant-garde works, indicate if you have contacted the filmmaker, the production company, or the filmmaker's heirs.
• Are rental or video copies of this film available through commercial distribution or video channels?

d. Description of preservation work and cost estimate
• What laboratory work is requested? For sound films, indicate how you propose to preserve the sound.
• Provide written estimates for the preservation work. These should be obtained from two preservation laboratories, except in cases where the technical specifications can be readily handled only at a specific laboratory.
• As applicable, outline the preservation work already completed on the film or that would still need to be done after work funded by the grant. Please be specific; include the date of the original preservation work and condition of the original.
• If you are collaborating with another institution, include a letter from that institution briefly outlining its involvement with the project.

e. Storage
Describe your archival storage facilities (including temperature and humidity levels) and confirm that any new preservation masters created through the project will be stored under archivally acceptable conditions. If your organization does not have an archivally acceptable storage area for film, please include your plans for off-site storage.

f. Access plans
• Does your institution have permission to show this material for on-site researchers and/or on-site public screenings at which no admission is charged? Be sure to indicate if there are any other relevant donor restrictions regarding public access to the proposed material. (These are important considerations, given the public access mission of the NFPF.)
• Has your archive plans for sharing the completed access copies outside of your institution? Do you plan exhibition loans or dissemination on video, television, or the Internet?

g. Public service mission
Briefly summarize your institution's mission, collections, and public programs; include your Web site address and any brochures.

h. Tax-exempt status
Nonprofits, list your institution's tax identification number; government/public sector archives, provide some record or a letter demonstrating that your institution is part of state, regional, or local government.
i. Matching funds
Please indicate if your institution is prepared to provide matching funds to complete the project.

j. Contact information
Provide the name, title, phone number, fax, e-mail, and professional biography of the project coordinator (one paragraph).

Preservation Checklist

To prepare an accurate cost estimate for preservation work, laboratories need a good deal of information about your film and what your archive needs. Before requesting an estimate, we recommend that you examine the film closely and begin thinking about the desired products.

Shown below is an informal checklist to guide your assessment (checklist from http://www.filmpreservation.org/grants/checklist.html).

1. What is the film title or identifier?

2. When was the film made?

3. What is the gauge of the film? (8mm, Super 8, 16mm, Super 16, 35mm, other)

4. What is the approximate length in feet of each reel?

5. On what type of film stock is the film?
   Nitrate, Acetate, Polyester
   Brand: Kodak, Agfa, etc.

6. Is your film color or black-and-white?
   If color, what kind of film materials do you have?
   Positive (interpositive, print)
   Reversal (Kodachrome, Ektachrome, original, duplicate)
   Negative (original, internegative)

   If black-and-white, what kind of film materials do you have?
   Positive (fine grain positive, print, tinted print)
   Reversal (original, duplicate)
   Negative (original, duplicate)

7. What kind of sound materials do you have?
   None: Silent
   Sound on film materials (magnetic, optical)
   Separate sound track
   Gauge
Length
Magnetic, Optical

8. Describe any physical damage to the film.
Color fading
Deterioration of image
Shrinkage (Approximate percentage?)*
Stickiness or tackiness
Tears, splices, and perforations
Vinegar syndrome
Warping and curling
Other:

9. Will you be adding intertitles, credits or other introductory material?

10. Does your archive have special exhibition or projection needs?

11. What are the desired end-products from your preservation project?
Internegative/Fine grain
Print
Video master
Video copy
Sound masters (reel to reel, DAT, etc.)

12 Please provide contact information for the person who will be handling the project at your archive (name, phone number, email, fax number, address)

Classwork

Students are to be divided into four groups. Each group will be given an “archive identity.” The archive identities are:

- Historical Society
- Public Library
- University Archive
- State Archive

Each group will receive a packet with a “Preservation Assessment Checklist,” grant application and film description. They will then be assigned a film clip.

It is each group’s assignment to apply for funding to preserve their film. Each grant application must take into consideration the nature of each of the four types of “regional” archive found in America and use that information to convince the funding agency of their eligibility for the grant. Particulars of each group’s clip are included in the film description and must be integrated into the grant application to the best of their abilities. The best applications will be those that demonstrate research of the film’s production date, location and subjects.

The reason for this assignment is to prepare students for a practical introduction to operations in an American “regional” archive. They will need to consider the laboratory process of creating archival masters, access, and collection policy in order to successfully apply for funding.