#### **ORPHAN HOME MOVIES – AN INVESTIGATION**

The power of archiving moving images enables us to connect to the past through a contextualization of our history. Archiving unknown works or "orphan works" facilitate an expansion of our relationship to the past by increasing access to viewership of forgotten or neglected materials. Orphan works are defined by the Orphan Film Symposium as:

"all manner of films outside of the commercial mainstream: public domain materials, home movies, outtakes, unreleased films, industrial and educational movies, independent documentaries, ethnographic films, newsreels, censored material, underground works, experimental pieces, silent-era productions, stock footage, found footage, medical films, kinescopes, small- and unusual-gauge films, amateur productions, surveillance footage, test reels, government films, advertisements, sponsored films, student works, and sundry other ephemeral pieces of celluloid (or paper or glass or tape or . . . ). <sup>1</sup>

By studying orphan works, we are given the privilege of exploring a history that had been momentarily lost. In particular, the category of orphaned home movies opens a window to individual private experiences that when examined collectively, shed light upon our history. In the investigation of orphaned home movies, we are able to critically examine content and context to create a picture of what came before. Through home movies we can remember and learn from a perspective that we might not have had access to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> "Orphans 5: Science, Industry, and Education." *Orphans 5: Science, Industry, and Education*. N.p., n.d. Web. 19 Oct. 2013.

originally. It then becomes our job, the job of archivists, to research, preserve, and make accessible these orphaned works. In this paper, a group of NYU Moving Image

Archiving and Preservation students will present their examination of an orphaned home movie, *Sunshine Valley*.

#### SUNSHINE VALLEY

An issue when dealing with "orphan works" is the amount of metadata and information that is readily accompanied with the materials. This particular film is a silent home movie titled *Sunshine Valley;* the film was part of a home movie set<sup>2</sup> of two other home movies of families. This disc runs for 53 minutes about "a Jewish family from Chicago at a summer camp in 1959." This was all the information that was provided with the film, yet this does not make the information necessarily accurate.

The home movie is clearly divided into three distinguishable segments. First segment: there is a camp full of young children assembling into lines while waving the American flag and various other colored flags. The film cuts to children in a pool and then to a little boy playing with his dog. The family is next to a waterfall. They travel to Norris Dam; continue to The Narrows by Calderwood Lake; they visit Fontana Dam; they visit the Oconaluftee Indian Village; they pass through the Smoky Mountains; family crosses Cumberland Gap; the woman exits Boone Tavern with the four children. Second segment: there are children in the pool. The camera specifically focuses on a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> These home movies may or may not be related. It was suggested that the family is Jewish and were living in Chicago at the time. According to Ms. Lydia Pappas, the materials were found in a nitrate vault and thought to be part of the Sam Jaffe Collection at the University of South Carolina although there are doubts. Nothing can be confirmed or verified thus far.

young boy and girl as they are being taught how to dive. Third segment: the family is at a beach. The girls collect shells; they swim in the ocean; the boys play shuffleboard.

Family arrives at Horn's Cars of Yesterday; family visits Sarasota Jungle Gardens; family lounge and play at the poolside.

When we contacted Ms. Lydia Pappas, assistant director and curator of the Moving Image Research Collections of the University of South Carolina, she was able to confirm that the film was on 16mm color reversal film with a footage count of about 1300 feet. The fact that this family was using a 16mm camera to make home movies is different from what other families during the 1950s were using. The 8mm format was known as the "home movie camera" because it was cheaper and more accessible just as the "16mm film became almost exclusively a format of the professional filmmaker". The color reversal film was "found in both amateur and independent collections of 16mm and virtually all 8mm and Super-8mm film". Most reels (at least the Kodak ones) ran for "four minutes - as a standard one-hundred-foot length of 16 mm stock". No shot is longer than four minutes, but it can be concluded that a series of 100-foot reels and clips were added together to create this 1300-foot reel.

#### TIME AND LOCATION

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> "Super 8 Mm Film History." *KODAK*. Web. 19 Oct. 2013. http://motion.kodak.com/motion/Products/Production/Spotlight\_on\_Super\_8/Super\_8mm\_History/index.htm#ixzz2iHcTA9HO

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> The Home Film Preservation Guide. "Film Specifics: Stocks and Soundtracks." *Film Forever*. AMIA. Web. 19 Oct. 2013.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> "Super 8 Mm Film History." *KODAK*. Web. 19 Oct. 2013.

While the DVD had 1959 written on the cover, there are actually various years of the late 1950s shown in the home movie. While looking through the film for spatial and temporal indicators, we were able to note some key factors that helped us determine a range of when this film was created. The flag used during the children's assembly line had certain characteristics that differentiated it from the modern 50 star state flag used today. The alignment of the flag suggests that there are a total of 48 stars (6 x 8). The American flag had 48 stars since the addition of New Mexico in January 1912. This flag created on July 4, 1912 continued to have 48 stars until 1959, when the United States added Alaska and Hawaii soon after. This means the first segment of the film (at least) has to be before 1959. In a note located with the original film (provided by Ms. Pappas.) one of the entries had a date written – 1956 with an ineligible name and Danny at the Sunshine Valley pool. This marker is a good suggestion that the film may not just be from 1959.

Another entry was of Sunshine Valley Day Camp + trip to Fontana Village, NC + Smoky Mountains". This most likely refers to the road trip segment of the home movie. The geographical markers on the family's trip were well documented. The cameraperson recorded landmarks and signs during this trip, which we were able to use a spatial indicators. With this information, we were actually able to trace a route for every place the family visited. Many of their visits still exist today and even have websites.<sup>6</sup>

#### LANDMARKS AND THEIR HISTORY

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Each website had contact information which we used to email the institution. Responses are being received after a week and are found to be either helpful or supportive towards our research.

The Norris Dam and Fontana Dam are part of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) multipurpose system of dams project. In 1933, Congress established TVA as a federal operation to address the environmental, economic, and technological issues for most of Tennessee and parts of neighboring states. President Franklin Roosevelt created this New Deal idea to generate moral and finances after the Great Depression. Most of the projects and constructions built by TVA were funding by the government up until 1959 when Congress passed a legislation stating that TVA would be a self-financing power system.

The Great Smoky Mountains is part of the very well documented National Park Service. Information can easily be found on <a href="www.nps.gov">www.nps.gov</a> where photographs, directions and history are archived. Other landmarks such as the Cumberland Gap and Clingmans Dome Tower are also archived. In the home movie, Clingmans Dome Tower was dismantled and no views were available at that time. It wasn't until 1959 that Clingmans Dome was restored as part of Eisenhower's Mission 66. Mission 66 began in 1953 to restore national parks across the United States. Marcia Spencer writes in her book, "Clingmans Dome: Highest Mountain in the Great Smokies", that during the war years (1939- 1945) "maintenance labor was unavailable; funding was almost nonexistent; routine upkeep was nearly impossible.... building deteriorated and the wooden tower on Clingmans Dome was no exception. By 1950, the tower, no longer safe, was

dismantled". Many of these parks and landmarks are documented and found in photographs, websites and archives via Google or specific databases.

## THE CAMP AND THE FAMILY

We were unable to find any information about the camp from indicators in the film. Through a Google Search an excerpt was found of Mr. David H. Owens mentioning Sunshine Valley Day Camp: "...I went to Sunshine Valley Camp in Deerfield, run by John Thompson..." (http://www.pasty.net/~dowens/DHOBio.htm). Deerfield is a town in Illinois about 40 minutes northwest of Chicago. We sent emails to the Illinois State Archives and the National Archives at Chicago in hopes that someone might recognize the name or even the images from the film. Our email was circulated on the Chicago Area Archvists' ListServ via Glenn Longacre from the National Archives branch and Ms. Linda Lamberty, historian of the Ridge Historical Society in Chicago, was able to find via ProQuest two articles confirming that Sunshine Valley was a summer camp out in Deerfield, Illinois and further suggestions to contact the historians in the Deerfield area (Lake County, IL).

No information could be found on the family. However, considering the type of camera they used to create home movies and the type of film stock, one may assume they were well-off family living near or from Chicago. With the recent development of locating the camp, we will continue to search for information about the names of the family members.

## PUTTING IT INTO HISTORICAL CONTEXT

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Spencer, Marci. Clingmans Dome: Highest Mountain in the Great Smokies., 2013. Print.

During the postwar economic boom of the 1950s, home movie production dramatically increased in the United States. As Alan Kattelle recounts in his seminal history of the home movie, the two decades following World War II saw an explosion in home movie production: the number of amateur filmmakers rose sharply, as did suppliers of amateur filmmaking equipment, as manufacturers from the United States, Europe, and Japan began to introduce one innovation after another, in an attempt to meet this new mass market demand.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, during the course of the 1950s, manufacturers doubled in number and models of amateur cameras tripled. A host of new magazines devoted to these "hobbyist" filmmakers emerged and discussions of amateur filmmaking also began to regularly appear in magazines addressed to the family, not just hobbyists or film and photography buffs, like Better Homes and Gardens, House and Garden, and Parents Magazine, 10 as corporations began to target the bulk of their leisure-goods marketing at the suburban nuclear family. 11 Indeed, as Patricia Zimmermann argues, it is in this postwar period that amateur filmmaking truly becomes "home movie" making, as these films are increasingly "domesticated," situated as a "leisure-time commodity," focused on the family and intended for private viewing in the home. 12

The family documented in the *Sunshine Valley* home movies may in fact have a longer history with amateur filmmaking than the typical 1950s consumers sketched in

<sup>8</sup> Alan Kattelle, *Home Movies: A History of the American Industry*, 1897-1979 (Nashua, NH: Transition Publishing, 2000), 190.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Kattelle, *Home Movies*, 192.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Patricia Zimmermann, *Reel Families: A Social History of Amateur Film* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995) 123.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Zimmermann, *Reel Families*, 114.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Zimmermann, *Reel Families*, 113.

these descriptions. These films were included as part of a larger collection of amateur films, dating back to the 1930s and presumed to have belonged to the same extended family. Additionally, the *Sunshine Valley* films are shot on 16mm color reversal film, rather than the cheaper, regular 8mm film that was overtaking the amateur market at this time, which may also be a sign that this particular amateur filmmaker had some experience or at least a well-developed interest in filmmaking. <sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, the *Sunshine Valley* home movies in many ways represent major trends in amateur filmmaking and American family life during this period quite well, in their focus on recording experience through the lens of the nuclear family and in its documentation of newly popular 1950s leisure-time activities such as the road trip and visits to tourist sites such as the Tennessee Valley region and Sarasota, Florida, which experienced a significant boom in tourism during these very years.

Unlike some of the earlier films associated with this family in the larger collection at University of South Carolina, the *Sunshine Valley* films focus intently on the activities of the nuclear family, much of the footage specifically documenting the experiences of its children. Zimmermann marks this as a distinctly 1950s development, reflective of larger cultural trends as well as changes in the amateur film market. "As the nuclear family became increasingly isolated in suburbia," during this period, amateur filmmaking became, for Zimmermann, "the visual equivalent of gardening: an activity in the family home, rather than in the streets."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Kattelle, *Home Movies*, 201-203.

This "domesticated" filmmaking may not have taken place "in the streets." but as in the Sunshine Valley films, it sometimes went "on the road." In her discussion of these postwar trends, Zimmermann includes home movies filmed outside the confines of the home, in the family car or at tourist attractions, as they similarly limit their scope to the nuclear family and its isolated experiences as suburban consumers. Indeed, Zimmermann points out that magazines often "suggested family-travel films," in this period, as tourism expanded after World War II and easy credit to purchase cars and cheap gasoline, along with the development of a superhighway system gave rise to the road trip as a major 1950s leisure activity. 14 Furthermore, for Zimmermann, these films privilege "the family and patriarchal power": "Fathers took more pictures than mothers, and children were photographed more than anything else, according to a marketing study conducted by Bell and Howell in the mid-1950s." <sup>15</sup> Certainly, this aptly describes the *Sunshine Valley* home movies, in which the family is viewed, often in isolation from any larger social context, as mother and children, sometimes accompanied by another mother (presumably a sister) and her children, the father always absent from the frame, holding the camera. In this regard, the Sunshine Valley films reflect and document the predominant social dynamics of the postwar suburban American family.

#### OCONALUFTEE INDIAN VILLAGE

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Zimmermann, Reel Families, 123.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Patricia R. Zimmerman, "Morphing History into Histories:From Amateur Film to the Archive of the Future," in *Mining the Home Movie: Excavations in Histories and Memories*, edited by Karen L. Ishizuka and Patricia R. Zimmermann (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 280.

It is perhaps for this reason that the visit to Oconaluftee Indian Village stands out as different from other sections of the *Sunshine Valley* home movies. A "living history" museum operated by the Cherokee Historical Association, Oconaluftee Indian Village is still in operation today. <sup>16</sup> In most of the other sections of the home movies, the family is viewed either in isolation at tourist sites or in the company of other families or other children, at camp or at the beach, for instance. The Oconaluftee section offers a fascinating glance at a tourist attraction founded and run by a Cherokee community. It is in this section that the viewer, although still viewing tourist attractions through the lens of this one family, sees a different set of Americans returning the gaze.

Although the Oconaluftee Indian Village is still in operation, it has doubtless changed in some ways over the decades, perhaps due to changes within the local Cherokee community or due to changes in how that community and the museum addresses its tourist visitors. (Its website currently promotes "Cherokee Haunted Adventures" and a "Cherokee Zombie Run," in the run up to Halloween.) This home movie footage captures the Oconaluftee Indian Village in its earliest incarnation. The Village opened in 1950 and was a popular destination for tourists visiting the Tennessee Valley in the 1950s. It was promoted over the course of the early to mid-50s in a number of newspapers and magazines, including in a couple of articles in the *Chicago Tribune* (perhaps read by the *Sunshine Valley* family, presumed to have lived in the Chicago

 $<sup>^{16}</sup>$  See their website: http://www.cherokeehistorical.org/Oconaluftee Village.html

area).<sup>17</sup> The Village footage, therefore, serves to document both a popular tourist attraction for largely white, middle class American Families in the 1950s and to preserve images of a unique Cherokee institution in its earliest years.

#### PRESERVATION PLAN

Through the process of researching *Sunshine Valley*, the importance of metadata was made clear. In the face of extremely lacking information, we saw how valuable metadata is. While we were able to provide some information about the content and context of this film, there is still more to be discovered. It is for this reason that we suggest a preservation plan be developed for this work. We do not currently know the full extent of this films relevancy. It is essential that this orphaned home movie gets saved and added to a collection of our cultural heritage. For researchers, historians, filmmakers, archivists, and everyone in between, this film should be made searchable and accessible. We have provided an appendix that displays as much metadata as we could collect. We suggest that the Moving Image Research Collections (MIRC) of the University of South Carolina Libraries apply for a National Film Preservation Grant <sup>18</sup> to preserve *Sunshine Valley*. The mission of MIRC is to "...preserve [it's] global moving image heritage, diversify understandings of moving image culture, and envision a better future by

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Hugh F. Hoss, "E. Sees Another Record Year," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 8 April 1951, F3. (ProQuest Historical Newspapers); "Cherokee Indian Village," *Chicago Tribune*, 6 June 1954, sec. 6, p. 20. (ProQuest Historical Newspapers).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> See their website for deadlines and requirements: http://www.filmpreservation.org/nfpf-grants/basic-preservation-grants

encouraging new interpretations of the recent past." This unique home movie does just this. It shows a distinctly personal yet oddly collective American family experience.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> "University of South Carolina Libraries | MIRC." *University of South Carolina Librariesm MIRC*. University of South Carolina Board of Trustee, 2013. Web. 22 Oct. 2013.

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———. Reel Families: A Social History of Amateur Film. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995.

## APPENDIX I Metadata

#### Title

Sunshine Valley

#### **Item Title**

Disc #005524

#### **Production Dates**

Probably mid 1950s to late 1950s

## **Description**

Family home movie from the 1950s: Family of 4 (possibly 5 if including cameraman) are at Sunshine Valley Day Camp in Deerfield, Illinois. Children assembly line; jump rope; swim in pool. Family take a road trip to Fontana Village, NC and the Smoky Mountains. Family lounge on a beach; collect seashells; swim in ocean; play shuffle board. Visit to Horn's Cars of Yesterday; drive in early model T Ford. Visit to Sarasota Jungle Gardens; see flamingos and tropical botanical garden. Family swimming and diving at poolside.

## **Subjects**

See note.

## **Geographical Coverage**

Cumberland Falls (KY)

Boone Tavern (KY)

Norris Dam (TN)

Rice Grist Mill (TN)

Calderwood Lake (TN)

Cumberland Gap (TN)

Fontana Dam (NC)

Oconaluftee Indian Village (NC)

Great Smoky Mountains National Park (NC)

Clingmans Dome Tower (NC)

## **Temporal Coverage**

c. 1953-1965

## **Copyright Statement**

# **Notes: Subject**

Identifiers	States/Places	Landmarks					
Home Movie	North Carolina	Fontana Dam					
16mm		<b>Great Smoky Mountains</b>					
Color Reversal	Kentucky	Tennessee Valley					
American Flag		Cumberland Falls					
48 star American Flag		Boone Tavern					
Summer Camp		Berea College					
Camp	Tennessee	The Narrows					
Day camp		Calderwood Lake					
Swimming Pool		Norris Dam					
American Flag		Appalachian Trail					
48 Star American Flag		Eternal Flame					
Road trip		Cumberland Gap					
Bear		Clingmans Dome Tower					
Family	Illinois	Sunshine Valley					
1950s	Florida	Sarasota, FL					
Beach		Horn's Cars of Yesterday					
Cars		Sarasota Jungle Gardens					
Dams							
Rivers							
Lakes							
Nature Parks							
Gardens							
Flamingos							

# **APPENDIX II**

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			Moving Image Research Collections - University of South Carolina Assistant Director and Curator	Ridge Historical Society	Boone Tavern	Sarasota Jungle Garden	Sarasota Car Museum	Knoxville News Sentinel	South Carolina Department of Archives and History	The National Archives at Chicago	American Historical Association	University Archives of University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Visiting Archival Operations and Reference Specialist Cara Betram	Girl Scouts of Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois	Girl Scouts of the USA	Great Smoky Mountains Heritage Center	Western Carolina University	State Archives of North Carolina	North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources	Illinois State Archives	Tennessee State Library and Archives	Berea College	Institution	Α
			Assistant Director and Curator	Historian	Boone Tavern History and Green Tours:	•		Reporter	Director, Archives Services	Archivist	Administrative Assistant	Visiting Archival Operations and Reference Specialist	Research Analyst	Senior Archivist	Curator of Education	Director, Mountain Heritage Center	Audio Visual Materials Specialist	Director, Division of Archives and Records	Supervisor, Operations Division	Assistant Director for Manuscripts Services	Reference Librarian	Position	B
			Lydia Pappas	Linda Lamberty	•	•	Yvonne	Lance Coleman	Steve Tuttle	Glenn Longacre	Matthew Keough	Cara Betram	Hillary Blevins	Yevgeniya Gribov	Megan Griffin	L. Scott Philyaw	Kim Andersen	Sarah Koonts	John Reinhardt	John-Paul (Jay) Richiuso		Name	0
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