

THANHOUSER COMPANY
Film Preservation, Inc.



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

FEB 5 1996

MOTION PICTURE, BROADCASTING
AND RECORDED SOUND DIVISION

January 28, 1996

Mr. Steve Leggett
Library of Congress
M/B/RS Division
Washington, DC 20540-4690

Dear Mr. Leggett:

Thank you for the invitation to comment on the current state of American television and video preservation. I have enclosed your questionnaire as my formal response to your request.

The primary purpose of Thanhouser Company Film Preservation, Inc. is to work with archives around the world to encourage the acquisition and preservation of films from the Thanhouser film enterprise. Through the fine work of institutions like the Library of Congress, approximately 168 Thanhouser titles have survived from the over 1,000 titles which were produced and released to worldwide distribution from 1910 through 1917.

My interests in video is centered around improved accessibility to surviving Thanhouser films. Over the past eight years, I have been working with archives to obtain high quality video copies of many of these surviving films. As a result, I now have a collection of 55 Thanhouser titles which are on various video formats (D2, Beta SP, U-Matic, VHS). I am currently in the production phase for a three volume VHS "collectors set" to be made available in 1996. This video set will allow greater accessibility for the study and enjoyment of these films. But, the goal is not to use video as a medium for preservation.

I feel it is important to reinforce that the role of these video copies to improve accessibility to materials which exists primarily in film archives or in the hands of a limited number of private collectors. Therefore, in this context, works such this "collectors set" should not be the focus of preservation efforts. It is most important that original materials (i.e. nitrate film or studio masters) be the first priority for preservation to insure the highest quality and most original medium are preserved. As new technologies and

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standards evolve (e.g. DVD) I expect new versions to be re-mastered from original materials to provide higher quality presentation, improved accessibility, plus the possibility of the added benefit for a "second" life for film with the use of digital formats.

Thank you again for the opportunity to participate in the valuable project

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ned Thanhouse". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Ned Thanhouse
President