

# Moviecraft, Inc.

Production, Syndication, Stock Footage

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**TV's Magic  
Memories.** Home Video

4-30-96

Attn: Mr. Steve Leggett  
Mr. James Billington, Librarian of Congress  
Library of Congress  
M/B/R/S/ Division  
338 James Madison Memorial Building  
First and Independence Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20540-4690

RE: Study of the Current State of American Television and Video Preservation

Dear Mr. Billington:

The mission of Moviecraft, Inc. is to preserve public domain works and offer historical motion picture material at an affordable price to the public, historians, scholars, film makers, and producers of derivative works containing archival footage. This includes early television material. We accept any motion picture film for our archive. However, we retain only the films we specialize in. Our specialty is early (pre 1963) orphan films, which include television, industrial, educational, theatrical and promotional subjects. We plan to actively seek other television material in our specialty area.

Our television material is either purchased or donated. This material spans 1948 to 1963. We are an *all film archive*, with approximately 5000 reels of television material, primarily 16mm. Our collection contains some complete series, such as the *JUDGE ROY BEAN* (1955, 39 episodes). However, most TV shows we have only represent a small portion of the original run, for example *BIG TOWN* ( 1953-1955, 26 episodes). There were 138 *BIG TOWN* shows made, but all elements and prints were destroyed in the 1970's because the original owner felt the series had no value. Many television series, unfortunately, met this disastrous fate and prints in any form do not exist.

The Video format is used for duplication and reference, but preservation of video is not a concern since we have the majority of our masters on film.

We are working with 16mm safety film. Films are in cans, on reels or core. Our major accomplishment is preserving films in a self supporting corporation/archive. We are self funding, and our home video line, which helps support Moviecraft, is a method of access for scholars and historians. At present we have 250 hours of programming available on home video cassette. Stock footage sales of archival footage also supports Moviecraft. Some of our television series are syndicated, but due to the age and content of this early material, syndication is limited. We do not receive tax dollars and are not externally funded. All duplication and transfers are done in house, which assures quality

of transfers. Our preservation priority is to increase access to the collection by increasing the number of home releases and further cataloging our material.

Our catalog is a good start for researchers. We also offer custom dubs to researchers and scholars of any film of interest in our archive for \$25 on VHS. A few television series we purchased in the past were with rights included, but primarily all of the material we offer is in the public domain. We do not archive any films under copyright. The automatic renewal of copyright term legislated in 1992 stopped our archiving of television works after 1963, even though we know they are abandoned, and orphan works. This was, and still is, a tragedy for commercial archiving and public access to orphan works.

We have not set up our database yet, and we do not have data available on the Internet. Our catalog is published, however, on the Microsoft Network. We are quite behind in cataloging, but we are working on it.

We are encountering problems with storage space and storage costs. We would prefer our materials be stored under controlled temperature, but this is too costly considering our 6000 square foot warehouse at present. The films are dry, canned, and inspected periodically for vinegar syndrome. Vinegar syndrome is an insignificant problem at present, but we are concerned that vinegar syndrome will effect our collection in the future.

It is important that the recognition of television preservation be coupled with access to historians and scholars. Because the Moviecraft collection stops at 1963, as is the case with many other commercial film libraries, I would like to take this recognition of television preservation a step further. We need commercial access also.

Working with film makers, there is enormous frustration regarding the lack of available television materials from the 60's, 70's and 80's for documentary use. Access from large corporations, not interested in bothering with smaller projects, hampers the creative film documentary community.

We propose a Special Library of Congress Television Collection, preserving newsfilm, programs, and other historically significant television footage. This collection, with the approval of consenting copyright owners, would offer access to this footage at a reasonable fee collected by the Library of Congress. The Library of Congress would distribute the footage and disburse monies received to copyright holders. The Library of Congress would keep a portion for preservation and maintenance of this television film.

Television preservation is needed now. Access through this special collection would help support an important preservation effort, while maintaining the integrity of copyrights for copyright owners who participate. This arrangement would benefit the the public, copyright owners, and the Library of Congress.

Sincerely,



Larry Urbanski  
President