

APPENDIX B:

A SELECTIVE CHRONOLOGY OF

EVENTS RELATING TO TELEVISION

AND VIDEO ARCHIVES

A Selective Chronology of Events Relating to Television and Video Archives: 1949-1996

1949

The Library of Congress begins accepting television programs for copyright deposit.

1960's

Each of the television networks establishes its own internal archival or library program for films and videotape.

1965

The Academy of Television Arts and Sciences establishes an ATAS collection at UCLA.

The Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Foundation establishes a national television library to be maintained and operated by a consortium of American University, Columbia University, and University of California at Los Angeles. All items were subsequently consolidated at UCLA.

NET donates to the Library of Congress 550 16mm prints from its distribution center in Ann Arbor.

1967-1971

The William S. Paley Foundation commissions Dr. A. William Bluem to "conduct a preliminary investigation into the desirability and feasibility of establishing a master collection of documents representing the history of radio and television, with emphasis upon aural and/or visual recordings." Bluem's report finds:

- that there is an urgent and vital need to create a master plan and a centralized collecting institution to prevent destruction and loss;
- that there is a widespread need for information about radio and television, including the recordings themselves for educational use and by media professionals; and,
- that uniform retention policies should be established and applied and that some selective preservation be undertaken.

The Paley Foundation organizes a meeting of the Advisory Council Conference on the Feasibility of an Institution to Acquire, Restore, Conserve, and Make Accessible for Scholarly and Other Public Use Past and Present Broadcast Materials of Historical Significance. (1971)

The last phase of the study, funded by NEH, focuses primarily on the holdings of NBC. In an effort to establish a conceptual framework for selection criteria, Bluem's report indicates the following priorities:

- Class I: News, public affairs, and cultural programs should be retained, including actuality coverage and special events coverage.
- Class II: Sports and entertainment should be retained on a selective basis.
- Class II: Non-aired material should be retained on an item-by-item basis.

1968

Vanderbilt University begins systematically recording and cataloging network television news and making copies available for loan.

1969

The National Archives and Records Administration accepts a donation of kinescopes of the CBS "Chronoscope" series, 1951-55 from its sponsor, the Longines-Wittnauer watch company.

1972

The National Television Library at UCLA surveys more than 200 institutions and organizations, including private collections, to identify the location of television materials and measure their quantity.

The Board of the American Film Institute makes a policy decision to include television in its activities and interests.

1974

The American Film Institute holds a meeting in Washington in an effort to establish a National Coordinating Committee of Television Archivists. The AFI holds a subsequent meeting in order to form a steering committee.

Prompted by the American Film Institute, the Ford Foundation convenes an Ad Hoc Committee on Television Preservation to provide guidance to the Foundation that may be used in the subsequent awarding of grants in the field of television. The Committee's work was divided into three areas, each assigned to a subcommittee: selection criteria, acquisition techniques, and technical preservation. Draft recommendations were submitted by each subcommittee, but no final report was issued.

The National Archives and Records Administration signs a license agreement with CBS News for the off-air recording of CBS television news; the agreement was revised in 1975 to provide for the direct donation of videotapes and distribution through inter-library loan. (NARA also signed similar license agreements with ABC and NBC but discontinued off-air recording after several years.)

Publication of the NEA/CPB influential study, *Preserving the Moving Image*, by Ralph N. Sargent, which contained a gloomy forecast for the preservation of videotape and recommended the transfer of tape to film.

1975

WNET, NY, donates 96 NET titles to the Library of Congress.

1976

The Copyright Act of 1976 also authorizes the Librarian to establish the American Television and Radio Archives (ATRA) for the purpose of preserving a permanent record of the television and radio programs which are the heritage of the people of the United States and to provide access to such programs to historians and scholars without encouraging or causing copyright infringement.

The Museum of Broadcasting opens in New York.

UCLA establishes the "UCLA Film and Television Archive."

University of Georgia establishes the Peabody Award Archives, which contains copies of Peabody entries and award-winning broadcasts.

1977

The Library of Congress hires eminent media historian Erik Barnouw as a consultant to assist in establishing policies for ATRA; he subsequently is appointed Chief of the Library's Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division.

The National Archives and Records Administration acceions Department of Defense kinescopes of television network news broadcasts relating to the Vietnam War, 1965-1976.

1978

The Copyright Act of 1976 prompts a flood of television registrations, among others, in the Library of Congress.

The Library of Congress hosts a large meeting of institutions involved in collecting and preserving television materials.

1979

The American Film Institute administers the Television Archives Advisory Committee (TAAC) comprised of a number of institutions and organizations. TAAC was modeled after the Film Archives Advisory Committee (FAAC) which periodically convened to discuss issues relating to nitrate film preservation.

1980's (some 1970's)

Numerous local television stations give their news film to state and local institutions including state archives and museums, historical societies, university-based archives, and others. For many, this represents the first time these archives have received large collections of moving image materials. The donations were prompted by the obsolescence of 16mm film in favor of the 3/4-inch video cassette; and, presumably, by tax considerations in cases where rights were transferred with the donations. Unfortunately, the decade is also characterized by the outright disposal of extensive amounts of 16mm news film by television stations due to the switch to Electronic News Gathering (ENG), where either a repository could not be identified or the broadcasters refused to enter in such arrangements. The trends in local television news archives led to the first National Historical and Publications Commission (NHPRC) grant for television preservation and to a national conference on the topic, convened by the National Center for Film and Video Preservation at the University of Wisconsin in 1987, and funded in part by the NHPRC.

1983

The U.S. House of Representatives begins systematic videotape recording of its floor proceedings and places copies on deposit in the National Archives and Records Administration and in the Library of Congress.

1984

The National Center for Film and Video Preservation at the American Film Institute submits its report "Preservation of Television and Video: A National Plan of Action" to the National Endowment for the Arts. The report describes the inter-dependance of film and television in archives and industry and argues that television and video materials should be elevated from their second-class status by enlarging the Center's mission to include television materials on par with motion pictures, creating greater public awareness, and having the Center coordinate the preservation activities of industry and archives. The NEA, however, refuses to play a major role in funding television or video preservation.

1986

The National Center for Film and Video Preservation conducts a survey of film and television materials in public archives and asks the networks for a voluntary moratorium on the disposal of television materials. The Center creates retention guidelines, with comments from the Society for Cinema Studies.

The U.S. Senate begins systematic videotape recording of its floor proceedings and deposits copies in the National Archives and Records Administration and in the Library of Congress.

The Library of Congress acquires the NBC television collection consisting of almost 20,000 kinescopes, 1948-1977.

The National Archives and Records Administration acquires the MacNeil-Lehrer Newshour videotapes, 1976-1983, from the Museum of Broadcasting.

1987

Museum of Broadcast Communications opens in Chicago.

The National Archives and Records Administration acquires its first accession of U.S. Information Agency WorldNet videotapes, an extensive and on-going series of satellite broadcasts dating from April 1985.

Purdue University Public Affairs Video Archives begins operations, recording C-SPAN programming.

1988

National Archives and Records Administration signs an agreement with C-SPAN for the deposit of its videotapes of C-SPAN-originated programs and of coverage of Congressional committee proceedings and other events.

1989

The Annenberg Washington Program convenes a colloquium on the subject of television preservation. More than thirty organizations are represented from the broadcasting, educational, archival, and technical fields. The occasion is used as an opportunity to articulate the importance of television programming as "factual evidence about the past and reflector of social and cultural values of the time." The discussions point to the growth of television archiving activities throughout the United States and identify the factors that militate against preservation such as the massive volume of materials, varied and obsolete formats, videotape deterioration, copyright issues, and the "lack of a national policy."

The Wilson International Center and the University of Pennsylvania Annenberg School of Communications host a conference on the "Historical Preservation of Broadcast News," aimed at defining the role of the Library of Congress and addressing the concerns of scholars.

The UCLA Film and Television Archive, Capital Cities/ABC, and the Museum of Broadcasting complete an agreement for the donation of 23,000 ABC entertainment programs (kinescopes and film prints) to UCLA.

1990

The Association of Moving Images Archivists is formally established as a professional association to serve as a forum for the exchange of information and the discussion of issues essential to the preservation of the moving image heritage in all its aspects.

1993

The Library of Congress enters into an agreement with PBS for the periodic acquisition of the "best copy" of all PBS residual (or noncurrent) programs known as the PBS TV Collection. So far all NET films and videotapes and 8,000 PBS 2-inch tapes have been transferred to LC.

1994

As part of the report *Redefining Film Preservation: A National Plan*, the Librarian of Congress in consultation with the National Film Preservation Board recommends a study of television and video preservation similar to one completed for American film in 1993. This study will cover technical problems, current practices in public and commercial archives, the concerns of copyright owners, and the access needs of educators. The Librarian decides to carry out the study within the framework of the ATRA legislation.

1995

Publication of the booklet "Magnetic Tape Storage and Handling: A Guide for Libraries and Archives," written by Dr. John W.C. Van Bogart for the National Media Lab and published by the Commission on Preservation and Access.

The Library of Congress begins a study on the state of American Television and Video Preservation, and under an Inter-Agency Agreement with the National Archives and Records Administration, secures the services of William T. Murphy, Specialist in Audiovisual Archives.

1996

The Library of Congress conducts three public hearings in Los Angeles, New York, and Washington, on the state of American Television and Video Preservation.

The Museum of Television and Radio opens a second building, located in Los Angeles, which contains a duplicate set of the collection of broadcast materials in New York.