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LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

MAR 15 1993

MOTION PICTURE, BROADCASTING
AND RECORDED SOUND DIVISION

March 12, 1993

Librarian of Congress
Attn: M/B/RS Division
Library of Congress
Washington, DC 20540

Dear Sir:


As a graduate student in the English Department of Rutgers University, I have a strong interest in film, its history and criticism. Motion pictures are an extremely valuable resource for scholars in a variety of fields, and the importance of preserving cultural artifacts like film cannot be over-stated. The study you are currently conducting on the status of film preservation and restoration in America will have a direct impact on me and other academics and a students across the country.

Additional federal funding for motion picture preservation through the National Film Preservation Board is imperative. Also, a national preservation policy should be developed to include the entire spectrum of American film: Hollywood feature films, documentaries, minority/ethnic films, shorts, newsreels, experimental and independent work, animation, etc.

Moreover, it is critically important that any film preservation effort include liberal access policies. Showings of preserved films could be arranged throughout the country with the assistance of scholars and academic institutions. In addition, film archives should make their contents available to scholars studying film and educators using film in the classroom. Film copies, rather than video, should be available, and repertory houses and museums should have access to 35mm projection prints. The National Film Preservation Board or your office might facilitate this kind of access by mediating between archives, producers, and users and by establishing policies respecting the rights of copyright holders.

While film may not be a uniquely American art form, it is central to our heritage. The enduring importance of motion pictures as documents of American culture is no longer in question, and steps must be taken to ensure that film and access to it are safeguarded for the future. As films continue to decay and degenerate, students and scholars lose the resources on which we base our work. It is critical that these important pieces of the American past not slip away.

Sincerely,


John H. Perry