A Rationale for the Film as a Public Library Resource and Service*

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VAST CHANGES HAVE TAKEN place in the use of film, from its earliest use as a promotional program device in the public library to its current recognition as an important part of a library's total information resource. By examining certain key periods in the development of film service and utilization in public libraries, a rationale will be extrapolated by looking at both library practice and its theoretical basis.

THE BEGINNINGS

In 1910, the Madison (Wisconsin) Public Library provided the first recorded use of film in a public library. A film was used in connection with a children's story hour to illustrate the tale, and thus promote the reading of the book.[1] Only four or five years later, the South Side Library in Milwaukee had "one of the most modern motion picture machines of the day" installed in its auditorium for the purpose of showing films "to interest people in library books."[2] In 1914, in Seattle, Washington, motion pictures were taken of an "airplane contest" conducted by one of the children's librarians; they were so successful that other Seattle Public Library activities were filmed and then shown in theaters to publicize the library. The Seattle Public Library was also experimenting with story-hour use, and it was noted that the books on which the films had been based had circulated well. During the same period, California State Li-

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brarian James Gillis was reported to be "making a tour of the Yolo county library system for the purpose of getting a series of moving pictures showing the work of the farm advisor and the county free library." This project was to be a publicity film for the Panama-Pacific Exposition. Significant at this early date was the forward vision of Gillis in his proposed plans for the California State Library to develop a film exchange to provide "schools, clubs, societies and the like . . . with industrial films and pictures treating educational and scientific subjects."[3] It was also reported that the public library in Edgewater (New Jersey) substituted a regular series of films for a lecture series that had been losing attendance, concluding that the films could "exert a wider influence, and one fully as educational."[4]

Two articles appeared in 1914 and 1915 by Orrin G. Cocks, advisory secretary of the National Board of Censorship. These have become published landmarks for their early perseverance concerning the role of libraries and the film medium, with special emphasis on the public library. In the earlier article, entitled "Libraries and Motion Pictures — An Ignored Educational Agency," Cocks censured the library profession in his opening statement for not responding properly:

> The libraries of the United States have failed to see the educational value of motion pictures during their period of growth in the last 15 years. These have now become overwhelmingly commercial and are supplied daily to over 17,000 motion picture houses. The libraries propose entering the field by exhibiting films which are peculiarly suitable for instruction and enlightenment. They just pay the price for their earlier indifference.[5]

He also anticipated the demands of program planning on the librarian by noting such contemporary details as creative selection, program balance, and content knowledge:

> A warning should be given to librarians against an attempt to furnish instruction at the expense of entertainment. A well-balanced program will produce a far more satisfactory result than a program which excludes laughter and thrills.
>
> It ought to be clear by this time that it is no easy work to provide a regular program of a high grade. It cannot be done by a librarian who looks over a stock booklet and quickly makes two or three selections from likely subjects. This business should be left to someone who makes it a large part of his or her duty . . . time, ability, patience, and money must be expended.[6]

A year later, Cocks pinpointed some of the differences between the book library and the film library from the standpoint of personal and mass audience appeal, predicting that the film library would eventually be self-supporting and "probably . . . in time a lucrative business." He concluded that "motion pictures are of public advantage and of public necessity" and should not be dominated by the commercial theaters.[7]

It was not until 1924, however, that the American Library Association (ALA) responded by appointing the Committee on Moving Pictures and the Library, and acknowledged a film service role for the public library in the committee's annual report for that year:

> The primary importance of visual instruction was never more clearly recognized than at this time. No means of Adult Education has greater possibilities than the film. Educational films are being produced in larger and larger numbers and the public library has a great potential field in the conservation and distribution of these films and in making them widely known.[8]

At the ALA conference in Seattle the following year, the committee recommended that urban libraries include information on sources of films; that a selected group of libraries should be encouraged to acquire and distribute films in their areas; and finally, that the office of "executive clerk" be established at either ALA or the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America to develop and launch a program of cooperation between public libraries and the motion picture industry.[9]

In an unpublished paper, Nadine Covert, executive director of the Educational Film Library Association (EFLA), surveyed the professional literature of the 1920s and early 1930s and concluded that most librarians considered their function to be that of provider of reviews and other critical material in order to raise the public's demand for better-quality films. Emphasis was placed on the linking of the books and authors popularized by current Hollywood film productions in order to promote more reading.[10] While some librarians feared that the influence and development of the motion picture industry would cause films to become a substitute for reading, others considered films beneficial in the stimulation of reading.[11]

In 1929 the Kalamazoo (Michigan) Public Library became the first public library on record to lend films. At that time, the Michigan Department of Conservation deposited several of its films with the intent of making them available to both community groups and schools.[12] According

to Flora Roberts, the person responsible for the Kalamazoo program, the deposit films were soon augmented by other purchases and by a subscription service and were also made available to individuals. The program seemed to grow with ease, and by 1940 the library was also providing a projector and projectionist for a modest fee of $1.50.[13]

A 1937 publication dealing with the library's role in adult education included a chapter on films in which its author looked forward to a changing role, from that of providing information about films to one of showing and circulating films to adult groups and educators. The only limitations would be the community involved and the initiative of the librarian.[14] Further allusion to the need for changing the librarian's passive custodial role was also made in a study by T.R. Adam:

> If public libraries are to become centers of distribution for informational films, librarians will have to change to some degree their traditionally passive role of custodians. If they are to circulate motion pictures for mass education, they must understand thoroughly the operation of all the agencies of adult learning in their communities, from women's clubs to trade unions. ... The library will have to enter actively into unaccustomed fields of social organization. ... It seems obvious that outside assistance must be given to the library if it is courageous enough to assume this new responsibility.[15]

The first significant study dealing with films and library service was Gerald McDonald's *Educational Motion Pictures and Libraries,* published in 1942 by ALA as a result of a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation. In essence, McDonald's rationale was based simply on the proposition that if the public library can bring books and people together, it could bring films and people together with equal success. Among the services that libraries could provide, he mentioned film information and sources, assistance in borrowing films, a film collection which meets community need, projection equipment and operator, and viewing facilities.[16] The study concluded that the library could fill the void which exists for a community agency to provide films as a valuable educational resource by serving as a film information center. It could supply not only sources but access to the films themselves, both for public use and for library-sponsored programming. Also mentioned was the necessity for self-study and assistance through the library schools for training in the utilization and evaluation of films if these skills were to become an integral part of library work.[17]

ALA's Film Forum Project, financed predominantly by the Carnegie

Corporation during the early war years (1941-43), provided much of the incentive and experience for the later development of public library film service. Designed originally to strengthen civilian morale through the use of films dealing with current social or economic problems, and followed by carefully conducted adult group discussion with supplementary reading lists and book exhibits, the project involved over 40 libraries reaching an audience of more than 15,000 people:[18]

> The film forum movement ... gained impetus from our entry into World War II and represented the first large-scale use of films in public libraries. By showing that libraries could be used to reach the people with information films, the movement led to public libraries becoming a locus for government deposit of civilian information films during World War II. This in turn led to the development of the first public library film collections of consequence.[19]

Although a film collection had been developed — in addition to the one at Kalamazoo — at Beaumont, Texas, by 1942, "no library in a large industrial city had attempted such service [and] the Cleveland Public Library's pioneer efforts in this direction were soon slated to pay off dividends," according to the late Virginia Beard, who had been curator of films at Cleveland for some 25 years. The Cleveland Public Library's Adult Education Director R. Russell Munn had had success with the film forums at both the main library and the branches. This success, combined with his belief in the film as a viable library resource, spurred support for an allocation of $1000 from the director and library board to begin a collection. Supplemented by deposit titles from local and government agencies, the collection soon grew to 101 titles, with a monthly circulation of up to 400 titles reaching an audience of 30,000. At the beginning of 1943, the Film Bureau was officially created as a division of Adult Education and was directed by Patricia Blair.[20] The program attracted national attention and by the end of the war, more than a dozen public libraries had film collections, including those at Dallas, Charlotte, Gary, and Milwaukee.[21]

John Grierson, one of the fathers of the documentary film movement, coined the word *documentary* in the 1920s and later defined it as the "creative treatment of actuality." Having written, "I look at cinema as a pulpit, and use it as a propagandist," he created the highly respected National Film Board of Canada for the Canadian government in 1939.[22] In an inspiring address to ALA in June 1946, he awakened the library world to film: "The old library outlook is over and done with.... New

problems involve new methods. . . . If libraries do not adopt these methods, the essential job of popular education . . . will pass to others. . . . I do not say that the day of the books is over, but the day of the books only is certainly over."[23] In a prophetic statement that could very well be a plea for the library outreach programs of recent years, Grierson called for librarians to "get out from behind [their] desks and institutions and make [their] various powers of enlightenment a dynamic force in our communities everywhere." He concluded by asking librarians to make use of the new media and techniques available "in an ingenious and amazing world of new illuminations and new skills."[24]

Later that year, Grierson approached ALA with a proposal for a 3-year demonstration project for public library film service at $50,000 a year and offered to approach the Carnegie Corporation as well, which ultimately discouraged the plan.[25] A basic justification for the public library's role as a distributing agency for films is found in this proposal:

> The unique qualification of the public library to act as a coordinator of the visual media lies in the fact that it is the only community institution which serves the whole public. . . . [It] could, if mobilized, become a powerful agency for the creation of an intelligent community approach to the visual media.[26]

MAJOR DEVELOPMENT — THE CARNEGIE GRANT PERIOD

The great strides that were made in public library film service development during the postwar period of 1947-51 were directly related to the degree and variety of support provided by the Carnegie Corporation and to the activity and insight of Florence Anderson, assistant secretary and later — for more than twenty years — secretary of the Carnegie Corporation. Although Grierson's original proposal was not accepted, the rationale for the public library as a distributing agency was concurred upon by both ALA and the Carnegie Corporation. Carl Milam, ALA Executive Secretary, was reported to have told Anderson that "the problem is to get more libraries into the business quickly." Anderson encouraged an earlier plan for a film advisor at ALA; a proposal was submitted to the Carnegie Corporation in April 1947 under the title "Film Service through Libraries," and was approved the following month. The grant proposal was for $27,000 over a 2-year period to "make possible the assembling of information and the giving of advisory service on the circulation of informational films by libraries." It indicated that Patricia Blair, who had been responsible for the successful development of Cleveland's

Film Bureau, was available, and Blair assumed the position of film advisor and the responsibility for the ALA Film Office on June 15.[27]

After four years' experience running a very successful program at Cleveland and providing such refinements as a film catalog, film advisory service, and library-sponsored programming for the community, Blair was in a unique position to take over the responsibility on a national level for ALA.[28] In several of her numerous articles, she described some of the accomplishments of the entire 4-year project at ALA. The first and second grant periods (1947-49 and 1949-51) seemed to divide themselves naturally, the first period being devoted to the development of larger individual libraries, and the second devoted to groups of smaller city and county libraries and state library agencies.

Film services were launched in such libraries as Enoch Pratt (Baltimore) and public libraries in Rochester, Toledo, Louisville, Peoria and Knoxville during the first period. In addition, in 1948-49, the Carnegie Corporation made additional grants to launch the first film circuits: the Cleveland Regional Project in 1948 (later called the Northern Ohio Film Circuit), and the Missouri Film Circuit at the state library in 1949. Florence Anderson can be credited with the development in American public libraries of the film circuit idea, which was based on a Canadian experiment of rotating packets of film to different locations. Patricia Blair can be credited with the idea of utilizing the strong city library of Cleveland and the Missouri State Library each to serve as the administrative unit and nucleus behind such a service. Both libraries had successful film experience and creative film librarians at the helm — Virginia Beard at Cleveland, and Janice Kee at Missouri State Library.

During the second grant period, Blair held seven regional meetings across the continent at which the success of the circuit idea was discussed. As a result, film circuits developed in eastern Ohio, western Ohio, Tennessee, the Detroit suburban area, New York State Library's Watertown regional branch, Washington State, and southern and northern California. Other accomplishments of the ALA Film Advisor working with the ALA Audio-Visual Board included the publication of a film handbook entitled "Films in Public Libraries,"[29] the standardization and compilation of film statistics, and the availability of Library of Congress catalog cards for films.[30]

When the Carnegie grant began in June 1947, there were about 12 public libraries in the United States circulating films; they reported about 8500 showings to a combined audience of 462,000. The Film Advisor's first annual report listed fourteen public libraries known to be circulating

films at the start of the project: Akron, Beaumont (Texas), Charlotte, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dallas, Detroit, Kalamazoo, Milwaukee, Racine, Seattle, Sheboygan, and Stamford. By late 1948, the following libraries were in various stages of establishing circulating film collections: Boston, Canton, Dearborn, Enoch Pratt (Baltimore), Evanston, Knoxville, Middletown, Nashville, New Rochelle (New York), Portland (Oregon), Rochester, San Antonio, Santa Monica, and Weld County (Colorado). Shortly before the project ended in March 1951, 114 libraries were circulating films, 103 of which reported over 48,000 showings to an audience of over 3.7 million people. Of these 114 libraries, 58 were individual libraries, the remainder belonging to one of the film circuits. Thirty-two libraries were located in cities of over 100,000 population.[31]

Another landmark study entitled *The Information Film* was completed by Gloria Waldron with the assistance of Cecile Starr as part of the Public Library Inquiry. It utilized the same inquiry sample of sixty libraries, examined existing film service in eight libraries, and reviewed some of the procedures and problems. Waldron saw the function of films in a public library as "intimately related to the library's concept of its function as an institution." Thus, film selection and utilization would be affected by the established goals of the library, which might include library programming, as well as film circulation coordinated with other available library materials.[32] Of those who raised eyebrows at the thought of circulating films along with books and reference materials, Blair wrote: "It is part of the philosophy of the modern librarian. . . . [who] believes that the library must become a people's communication center, using all the new as well as the old tools to meet new and complex demands facing us and to give the pleasure which comes with the sharing of experiences and events."[33]

Grace Stevenson, former ALA Deputy Executive Director, launched film service at the Seattle Public Library in 1947, and wrote many articles over the years on her experiences, problems, suggestions, and philosophy of public library film service. In an article published in 1949, she quoted former ALA President Mary Rothrock as saying of public library film collections: "The way to begin is to begin." Stevenson did so with thirty-three films and a sound projector. She read Grierson, Eisenstein and Rotha, subscribed to film periodicals, attended workshops, but: "most of all, we looked at films. There is no substitute for looking at films. And we learned a great deal."[34]

According to Stevenson, one of the greatest contributions of the ALA

16

Film Advisor during the Carnegie grant period was the establishment of standards and procedures for public library film service, including such basics as evaluation, acquisition, processing, distribution, and community utilization and programming.[35]

When the grant period ended in 1951, Stevenson went to ALA Headquarters as its Assistant Executive Secretary. Because of her interest and experience in public library film services, she worked to keep film activities alive at ALA, but with her own pressing executive responsibilities and Blair's office closed, libraries were left to their own initiative without ALA leadership.[36]

PROGRESS WITHOUT LEADERSHIP — 1952-67

Despite the proven viability of film service in public libraries during the Carnegie grant period, ALA's role, although supportive, remained minimal and sparse with scattered publications, basic lists and meetings. ALA did recognize an early library role for films with its first committee in 1924, which changed names and functions several times, becoming the Audio-Visual Committee in 1940 and, through the efforts of the ALA Film Office, the Audio-Visual Board in 1948. The Audio-Visual Board was "charged with promoting the study and use of all materials of an audio-visual nature as they relate to public, school, and college libraries."[37]

Film censorship problems erupted for the first time in 1950 at the Peoria Public Library where Bertha Landers, now publisher of *Landers Film Reviews,* had launched the program. By the time the McCarthy era controversy was resolved in 1952, EFLA and ALA were involved, and ALA's Audio-Visual Board had been attacked as "incompetent to recognize Soviet propaganda in films" in connection with its basic list "Films for Public Libraries." Moreover, in 1951, the Library Bill of Rights was amended by the ALA Council to include all materials and media of communication used or collected by libraries.[38]

In March 1953, 166 public libraries were providing film service either through their own collections or circuit participation. During that one month alone, more than 70,000 films were circulated and shown to a total audience of more than 3.7 million people.[39] A study of public library adult education activities in 1954 noted sixteen state and regional film circuits and recommended a study of cooperative film services. Its purpose was to create necessary standards and procedures for the continued development and maintenance of public library film circuits and to make film service economically feasible for those libraries which cited prohibitive cost as

the primary reason for not having yet provided such service.[40] Such a study was completed in 1956 by Patricia Blair Cory and Violet Myer under the auspices of the ALA Office for Adult Education, and indicated eighteen functioning film cooperatives of circuits and several more in the planning stages. The two types of cooperatives included: (1) the film circuit, which is a rotation plan (packets containing a specific number of films on various subjects move from library to library on a 9-month or 1-year schedule); and (2) the central pool, from which individual requests or bookings could be made for specific periods, titles being returned to the center after each use.[41] By 1957, libraries were lending films; and in 1959, a dissertation reported that 25 cooperatives were then in existence, including 14 circuits and 11 of the central pool variety.[42] Early in 1958, the New York Public Library opened its Donnell Library Center Film Library in midtown Manhattan under the direction of William Sloan.[43]

During this period, questions arose within the profession of competition with print, as did the old excuse of more important library services to be rendered first. Cecile Starr, a film educator, critic and author, had been interested in library film development for years, beginning with her work on three chapters of Waldron's *Information Film*.[44] In 1956, she cautioned the librarian: "This must not be reduced to a battle between paper and celluloid. In themselves, both are worthless to the educator. What they can accomplish is the only important thing." She then questioned the pretense of previous aims and obligations left unfulfilled, and called for film service considerations whether it be advisory, programming or circulation "without regard to the completeness or incompleteness of ... other services." Starr considered film to be the "communications medium of our age [and] ... one of the important new 'languages' of our time," and quoted McLuhan's ideas about media and messages long before they were heralded around the world. She then justified the need for film "literacy" within the library so that films may be included among other library services as "part of the educational job that must be done."[45]

In his 1961 address at the ALA conference in Cleveland, Harold Goldstein, then on the faculty of the University of Illinois Graduate School of Library Science, found it necessary to cope with the same problem, remarking:

> There are still hundreds of librarians who will adopt a/v services only *after* they've solved all their print problems. They are convinced that a/v activity is no more than an extra which cannot be justified with present limited budgets and staff (and, I may add,

with their own limited conceptions of the possibilities of these services).[46]

Goldstein touched upon the problems of film utilization by librarians as follows:

> Certainly the film is the most expensive, complex and difficult material to select, administer, and evaluate. No other single tool is so capable of misapplication. . . . It is a substitute for a speaker . . . a filler-in when nothing else can be found. . . .
>
> We [then] attempt to justify the cost of films on something like a per capita use basis (if 1,000 people see a $100 film, it only costs ten cents per head to see, and you can hardly circulate a book for that). So we go after more showings to bigger audiences. This is phony.[47]

The problem of justification of film service in today's age of accountability forces circulation figures, per capita use, more showings, and larger audience requirements, and it is all too easy for public libraries to use the classroom as the quickest way to statistical success. This procedure was even questioned in the 1950s by Stevenson, who emphasized the intent of public library film collections for nonschool use:

> In many libraries classroom use of the film collection has been allowed to supersede all other demands . . . even . . . in communities where the school district provides films for school use. Unless there is agreement to this effect, and compensation therefor, it is no more the responsibility of the public library to supply classroom films than textbooks.[48]

Stevenson considered the film librarian's responsibility of programming for an individual borrower or for the library itself as one of the most important and time-consuming, akin to the work of the "reader's advisor." Like the reader's advisor, the film librarian was to provide "skillful counseling," which required that the librarian know the collection well enough to be able to follow through with the necessary advice.[49] Regarding selection, Stevenson urged librarians to: "Ask of a film the same things you would ask of a book — what was the objective and how well was it realized? Is the content valid? . . . Has it imagination and originality? . . . Technically good? . . . Useful to the audience my collection serves?"[50] She recommended consideration of the artists, directors and producers whose works were familiar and who add "a distinctive touch to a film that lifts it above the routine, the pedantic, the trivial, and the mediocre," and thus,

by maintaining high standards for films as for books the mediocre could be eliminated. She then asked:

> What does the poor film accomplish? Would the objective be served as well with a slide film ... a book? But, you say, "It's the only film on the subject." So what? Let them make a better one. As long as there is a market for the mediocre, films of poor quality will continue to be made. Unless a film can bring to a subject those special characteristics of which only film is capable, the cheaper media will serve as well.[51]

Only a few years later the late Julien Bryan, a highly respected and renowned documentary producer-director, repeated to a group of librarians his own theory of excellence for those films to be acquired and programmed by libraries. Bryan considered "mediocrity in the production of films" to be the greatest "tragedy," and believed that for libraries, quantity and a large catalog were not important, but the quality of the collection was of the essence. Bryan's advice to librarians was that they should have a "criteria of excellence and good taste."[52]

The 1960s witnessed greater development with the availability of LSCA funding, which contributed to the expansion of service to urban as well as rural areas. In New York, for example, Joan Clark, New York State Library's Film and Recording Consultant, reported massive development at state and system levels for the audiovisual program with a 600 percent increase in patron use between 1964 and 1967, and that since 1964, film collections had been established in eight New York library systems.[53] In 1965, the Los Angeles County Public Library initiated a systemwide development of its audiovisual program and published the first public library computerized film catalog a year later. It was based on a rudimentary version of the NICEM data base at University of Southern California.[54]

The ALA *Standards for Public Libraries,* published in 1956 and revised in 1966, provided for the acquisition of library materials which communicate ideas without regard to form, library-sponsored film programs, and the development of film collections as part of the system's collection, with minimum quantitative standards.[55]

At a workshop on "Films in Public Libraries" in 1966 at Drexel University, Violet Myer of the Enoch Pratt Free Library suggested that film library service was at a point in its development where it was "floundering to find itself and in need of philosophy." She recommended the utilization of ALA's *Films for Public Libraries* (1955) and *Films for Libraries*

(1962) so that public libraries could be the source of classic films which were likely not available elsewhere. She also raised the question of the library's responsibility for providing film literacy to enable its public to make better use of film as an art form and a source of information. She cited the failure of librarians to use films for information purposes, in addition to programming as an inhibiting factor in the development of film service. Myer felt it was most important to "provide the opportunity for the public to acquire, to analyze, to understand and to use quality films."[56]

A NEW ERA — 1967-78

During the previous period, librarians in public libraries working with films, without strong leadership from ALA, found themselves attracted to organizations such as EFLA, which began its well-known American Film Festival in 1969, a national competition for nontheatrical films. EFLA also published a variety of film reference materials in addition to its evaluation cards, and in 1965 came out with the first volume of the *Film Evaluation Guide* providing retrospective coverage of its evaluations from 1946 in book form.[57] In May 1967 at the American Film Festival in New York, a group of public library film librarians formed the Film Library Information Council (FLIC) "to promote wider and better use of audio-visual material in the communities served by public libraries in the United States and Canada."[58] They also launched a periodical as a communications vehicle; *Film Library Quarterly* began publication in early 1968, edited by William Sloan of the New York Public Library. Credit should also be given for the continuous and firm support provided to public libraries by Rohama Lee, editor of *Film News* (which incorporated *Learning Resources* recently, purchasing the publication in 1946 from the defunct American Film Center, from which EFLA had also developed). The news coverage, sample film programs, and feature series "Films in Public Libraries" prompted Fredric Krahn to compile an in-depth index to public library film articles from 1939 to 1966.[59]

Possibly in response to the development of FLIC, ALA authorized an Audiovisual Task Force Survey in the summer of 1967, which began a few months later under the direction of C. Walter Stone. One realization was that there was no personal recognition or identity provided for this group. Recommendations were made to develop qualitative and quantitative standards for audiovisual services for all types of libraries, to increase emphasis in library education programs, and to establish a new office within ALA headquarters to maintain "national clearinghouse functions."[60] It is increasingly incumbent on library educators today to deal

with such techniques as film selection and utilization and cinema literacy within the curriculum, so that librarians will be equipped to handle the impact and power of such media in their collections properly.

Although a national office within ALA was never established after Patricia Blair Cory closed her door in 1951, nor were many of the other Task Force recommendations implemented, audiovisual committees and subcommittees now proliferate in the ALA organization. This indicates high interest, but still lacking are the strength, solidarity, and identification of a single audiovisual division. Film service has continued to grow and receive greater acceptance, recognition, and utilization by the profession. Film service was reinstated in spring 1976 after many years of dormancy at the Milwaukee County Federated Library System. In 1970, through the cooperative efforts of FLIC and the Public Library Association (PLA) Audiovisual Committee, the first standards for public library media services were published, entitled *Guidelines for Audiovisual Materials and Services for Public Libraries*. An expansion/revision was completed and published in two parts in 1975: *Recommendations for Audiovisual Materials and Services for Small and Medium-sized Public Libraries* and *Guidelines for Audiovisual Materials and Services for Large Public Libraries*. The 1970 and 1975 editions emphasize the necessity of equal concern and support from administration and staff for media and print and a common interest in all communication formats. They continue to recommend service to schools as a responsibility of the school district, and the new editions allocate budgetary support for a minimum of 15 percent for audiovisual resources or $1.50 per capita.[61]

According to the FLIC Survey of Film Libraries in North America in 1972, "Quality is now a major determinant in selection." Based on 1971 budgets and estimates, a figure of approximately 1000 public library film collections was postulated, with an average annual budget of $20,000 each and a total of $20 million.[62]

The importance of library-sponsored programming has increased in the 1970s with a 1974 report of the New York Public Library showing about 1000 films per month in its branches. In 1971, over 500 library-sponsored programs were run in the 93 community libraries of the Los Angeles County Library System.[63] With increased utilization of such a powerful medium of communication, challenges to intellectual freedom are likely to occur. One of the most important film censorship cases occurred in 1970-71 at Los Angeles County Public Library. As a result of a series of complaints concerned with a young adult film discussion series, the entire film collection was temporarily impounded; ultimately nineteen

films were withdrawn for a period of time, curtailing library service to 2.5 million people.[64]

Among the conclusions of a recently published survey of current practice and case studies in public library media services were an increase in the library use of films, greater interest by the public in serious film study, film as an art form, the social documentary and interest from all ages in the improvement of cinema literacy, and the ability to interpret the film, the language of the present.[65]

Credit has been duly awarded to the public library for its support over the years of continued distribution of the short film, classic documentary and independent film. Tom Brandon, former president of Brandon Films, was reported to have said in 1967 that "it has been the public libraries, with their high standards in taste and quality, that have kept the short film alive in the United States."[66] Five years later, Brandon commented, "I cannot refrain from offering the view — not fully recognized by the library people, generally, themselves — that the public library is one of the most important resources on this continent for the growth of film culture."[67] Leo Dratfield, then president of Contemporary/McGraw-Hill remarked that "great encouragement and support for growth over the years has come from the public library."[68] Finally, Barbara Bryant, former public librarian and presently vice-president of Phoenix Films, recently commented: "The public library is one of the few places where the independent film-maker can showcase his wares."[69]

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