



Old Vermont Films:
Opportunities for Research,
New Films & Community Events

Fred Pond, MLS

University of Vermont &
Vermont Historical Society

Vermont Historical Society

- Leahy Library

- Books, Archives, Genealogy

- Moving Image Collection

- Deaccessioned Dept of Libraries films
- Donated home movies – including Coolidge
- Vermont Development Films of 1950s, 1960s
- 16mm or 8mm film
- Various video formats, most formats not readable with society equipment

Objective: Digitize Old Films

- ~150 16mm films in VHS vault
- At risk
- Not easily viewed, accessed
- Largely unknown, used or cataloged

The Plan:

- Specific titles selected
- Funding source identified
- Computer equipment
- Specs identified
- 'Best Copy' concern
- 'Chain of Custody' process

'Best Copy' Concern

- Most VHS films are 'well loved.'
- Attempts to find best copy successful.
- Several stored Vermont State Archives & Records Administration (VSARA)
- Agreement with VSARA to use their copies.
- VSARA helped with transportation \$\$; received digital copies.

Promotion

- Vermont Filmmaker Network announcement
- Meetings with UVM Special Collections, Vermont Archives & Records Administration
- Select films uploaded on Internet Archive
 - www.archive.org/details/movies
- Vermont Historical Society web page
 - www.vermonthistory.org/film

Challenges

- Film file size
 - 30 minute film = 250GBs uncompressed
- Storage space
- File Backup Plan
- Equipment Failures

Gratitude

- Only one film affected by vinegar syndrome.
- Cooperative filmmakers, archivists, donors.
- Enthusiastic viewers!

Outcome: New Films

- *Headline Vermont (2010)*
 - View on www.vpt.org
- *The Vermont Movie: Freedom & Unity (in production)*
 - View trailer on <http://thevermontmovie.com/>
- *Tunbridge at 250 (in production)*
 - Vt State Guard at fairgrounds.

Outcome: Community Events

- *Vermont State Guard in World War II*
 - *Special screening to VSG members, fund raiser, Montpelier, June 2009.*
 - *Premiere screening of digitized film, Stowe Historical Society, August 2010.*
 - *Waterbury Historical Society, October 2010.*
 - *Air National Guard, February 2011.*
 - *Middlebury Veterans Foreign Wars, March 2011.*

BACK TO THE LAND, AGAIN—on film!

Come see three historic films on
Vermont's farming heritage!

- June 26 • 7:00-8:30 pm •
- Tunbridge Public Library •
- Large screen • Air-conditioned •

Windy Wood Orchard 1935-1954, B&W, silent, Barre

In this history of a small family apple orchard, scenes depict planting, pruning and harvesting over a span of years.

Norel Farm 1950s-1970s, B&W, silent, Northfield

Selected shots of active "gentlemen farmers" Norman and Eleanor Appleget, new arrivals to Vermont. Bonus feature shows Interstate 89 being plowed through nearby.

Thanks to Vermont 1951, color, sound Vermont farm scenes

This state film features the marketing of a strong and scientific farm industry; includes many farm scenes, a state fair, concluding with a Thanksgiving table of bounty.

Supported:
John M. Bissell Foundation



Vermont History
EXPO 2010
History's Country Fair

Outcome: Research

- Raynor, Tom (in press). Vermont 1942: *The Summer of Idealism - Dorothy Thompson, The Land Army and its Legacy*. Sinclair Lewis Society Newsletter

Future Steps

- Advocate for film digitization
- Encourage oral histories
- Organize uncataloged Vermont film resources
- Foster use of Vermont film through academic & professional filmmakers