

# **THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA HOME MOVIE ARCHIVE AND THE HARRIS ROSEN COLLECTION**

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

Since the invention of the cinema, people have been taking home movies. The ever-increasing popularity of this activity has produced a hundred years worth of amateur film culture which is in desperate need of preservation. As film archival and public history have coalesced in the past thirty years around the idea that every person's history is important, home movies represent a way for those histories to be preserved and studied by communities and researchers alike. The University of Central Florida is in a perfect position to establish an archive of this nature, one that is specifically dedicated to acquiring, preserving, and presenting the home movies of Central Florida residents. This project has resulted in the establishment of The Central Florida Home Movie Archive, and the resulting analysis will show that the archive will be a benefit for researchers from all areas of academic study as well as the residents of Central Florida.

To my family and friends for their continual support, love, and encouragement. I would not have completed this without you. I am a better student and a better person because of you all.

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## INTRODUCTION

The task of convincing most people of the importance of home movies is a difficult one. Traditionally, they have been a family affair, casually observed and often begrudgingly so. Inevitably, the questions always arise in the viewers' minds, "If I am not in any of these, why should I care about them?" And, "How much longer do I have to sit here and pretend to be interested in your vacation or birthday celebration or Bar Mitzvah, etc.?" For historians, though, the answers to those questions are bountiful, and it is with the hope of bringing those answers to light that this project has gone forward. Patricia Zimmermann explains that, "Home movies, too often, have been perceived as simply an irrelevant pastime or nostalgic mementos of the past, or dismissed as insignificant byproducts of consumer technology. In the popular imaginary, home movies are often defined by negation: noncommercial, nonprofessional, unnecessary."<sup>1</sup> This belief is beginning to change, however, and home movies are becoming relevant and eagerly sought after primary documents in the historical field. It is the goal of this project to provide an arena for historians, researchers, and the general public to come to an awareness of the importance of these treasures and to begin to think about home movies in a whole new way. Zimmermann and Ishizuka implore their readers to begin to think about home movies as "a visual practice *emerging out of* dispersed, localized, and often minoritized cultures, not a practice *imposed on them*."<sup>2</sup> Establishing a home movie archive at the University of Central Florida will aid the residents of Central Florida and researchers from all

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<sup>1</sup> Karen L. Ishizuka and Patricia R. Zimmerman, *Mining the Home Movie: Excavations in Histories and Memories* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 1. (henceforth, Mining).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

areas of academia in more fully realizing the vast wealth and potential of these documents. Home movies, by virtue of their amateur nature, lend themselves toward multiculturalism. They are documents produced by families from all walks of life, so the study of these films naturally lends itself to interdisciplinarity. Zimmerman and Ishizuka's text on home movies included writers from many disciplines including: semiotics, history, film history, film theory, filmmaking, philosophy, archives, and anthropology.<sup>3</sup> The analysis of this project involves references to several academic disciplines. Literature surrounding public history, film archival, travel and tourism, and memory studies contributed to the final analysis of this project. By taking an interdisciplinary approach to the study of home movies, researchers open themselves up to intriguing questions about how these films might speak to them. How can these films be viewed as legitimate sources of historical narrative, rather than simply as byproducts of amateur hobbyists? What kinds of questions, both historical and philosophical, do home movies provoke in terms of academic research? How can home movies bring a community together, and how would the University of Central Florida, in particular, benefit from an archive of this nature? These are some of the questions that this analysis hopes to answer in an attempt to prove that the project has been, and will continue to be, a worthwhile enterprise.

This project began with forty 16mm home movies which were generously donated by Harris Rosen, a well known Central Florida hotelier and resident. The films, which were in various stages of decay, depicted a lifetime of family memories. The first film was shot between 1940 and 1941 when Harris was a one-year old boy, and the last was shot sometime in

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 6.



the early 1980's when Harris was a grown man, now behind the camera shooting pictures of his own family. While the films were a wonderful resource and an obviously integral part of this project, they were literally the only component of what would become the home movie archive. The films, however, allowed the departments that were involved with the creation of the archive to learn exactly what needed to be done to fully develop it. What began with a box full of film, turned into an interdepartmental collaborative effort which has resulted in state-of-the-art digital film processing equipment; a workflow which allows for the collection, maintenance, transfer, storage, and viewing of future film donations; and a plan for student volunteers to make sure that this archive operates continuously, smoothly, and professionally on a year-round basis. As a result of this project, the Central Florida Home Movie Archive is fully operational and simply awaits donations to fill its shelves.

In order to explain the process of how the archive took shape, an effort must be made to provide some background information about home movie archives, and in order to convey the importance that the archive will have to researchers and the community, the Harris Rosen Collection must be briefly described and interpreted historically. What follows will be a step in that direction.

## FILM ARCHIVES AND THE NEW AMATEUR FILM MOVEMENT

Film, as an artifact, has required people to care for it since its creation. Penelope

Houston reminds us of the fragility of the film reel and the danger it often poses:

It began badly, with a fire in 1897 at the Paris Charity Bazaar which killed 180 people. Nitrate can ignite even in the care of archivists; there have been serious fires at, among other places, the Cinematheque Francaise in Paris, Eastman House at Rochester, New York, and particularly disastrously, the Cineteca Nacional in Mexico City, when lives were lost and much of the Mexican film record burnt. In 1993, a nitrate fire at a laboratory in South London destroyed films from the National Film and Television Archive, among others. ... Preserving a film heritage is no easy business.<sup>4</sup>

Clearly, film archival has traditionally been a difficult enterprise. In addition to being a precious resource for historians and researchers, film can be a dangerous artifact to store. All film stock before the year 1950 was manufactured on a nitrate base.<sup>5</sup> Nitrate is highly unstable and highly flammable, capable of self igniting at room temperature and burning so violently that it will even continue to burn under water.<sup>6</sup> After 1950, both feature and amateur film stock was produced on an acetate base which is so much safer than nitrate that it has come to be called Safety Stock; Kodak, the world's foremost film producer often prints the words SAFETY FILM along the edge of its reels.<sup>7</sup> With the problem of combustion solved, film archives became much safer, but the films within the archives continued to be in danger of decay.

In the late 1980s, archivists began to notice that the older acetate film stock, those films produced just after the introduction of acetate stock in the 1950s and 1960s, was beginning to give off a strong, foul smelling odor. These older films were showing the first signs of decay by undergoing a

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<sup>4</sup> Penelope Houston, *Keepers of the Frame: The Film Archives* (London: British Film Institute Publishing, 1994), 2.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Anthony Slide, *Nitrate Won't Wait: Film Preservation in the United States* (North Carolina: McFarland & Co, 1992), 1.

<sup>7</sup> Film Preservation Guide: The Basics for Archives, Libraries, and Museums" (San Francisco: National Film Preservation Foundation, 2004.), 9. (henceforth, FPG).

process that has come to be called Vinegar Syndrome.<sup>8</sup> The Film Preservation Guide explains that, “Water, high humidity, and heat can destroy the plastic base of acetate film. In the early stage of decay, the plastic releases acetic acid, which is chemically identical to vinegar, hence the name ‘vinegar syndrome.’”<sup>9</sup> This process of decay accelerates exponentially as the film begins to break down, and the vapors released by decaying films can “infect” other films and pose serious health risks to anyone who breathes in those fumes.<sup>10</sup> The discovery that films were beginning to decay so quickly raised serious concerns within the archival community, and it underscored the continued need for professional caretakers of these artifacts.

Penelope Houston reminds us, though, that “film archivists belong to a young profession.”<sup>11</sup> Indeed, film making is a young profession, coming into existence around the turn of the last century, and film archival is younger still, with the first archives taking shape around the late 1930s. In fact, in those early days, the word “archive” was rarely used. What would become the National Film Archive in London preferred the term National Film Library in order to maintain its tenuous relationship with the film industry.<sup>12</sup> The word Library suggested to the film industry that the institution had no interest in making a profit off of its holdings; the name lent an air of professionalism and strength to the institution as well. This need to position one’s archive on a sort of moral high ground grew out of necessity because in those early days, the archive was dependent upon the film industry for its holdings which could be taken back for any reason. “The rights remained with the donors of the films, or whoever inherited or

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<sup>8</sup> Houston, 4.

<sup>9</sup> FPG, 14.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Houston, 2.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

acquired them, and any suggestion that the archives were exploiting their holdings for their own benefit could have been followed by swift reprisals.”<sup>13</sup> Archivists, then, quickly adopted a policy of not rocking the boat. They were happy to have the films and quite content to keep their mouths shut when it came to issues of preservation or public service. This policy worked for several decades in terms of acquisitions, but it also severely hindered the profession in terms of public awareness and funding. The unspoken conflict between film archives and the film industry came to a head in the 1980s, however, as archivists began to realize that they actually did occupy the moral high ground that they had positioned themselves upon so many years earlier.

Patricia Zimmermann explains that, “By 1988 in the United States, there was an escalation in the conflict between public archives, interested in the preservation of historically significant materials, and the Hollywood film industry, which was intent on capitalizing on and creating new markets for archival films through new technologies.”<sup>14</sup> On one side of the debate were Ted Turner, who had been colorizing old black and white films and Jack Valenti, the head of the Motion Picture Producers Association, who were arguing the economic right of the studios to make a profit on the films in any way they deemed necessary, even if it meant re-editing them. On the other side, were the directors of the films including, Martin Scorsese, Steven Spielberg, and Francis Ford Coppola who argued that there was a moral right to preserve the films they made without changing them. Archivists threw in their support for the

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>14</sup> Mining, 10.

latter.<sup>15</sup> The resulting legislation enacted a federal law aimed at film preservation and created the National Film Registry in 1989.<sup>16</sup> Archivists were now in a position to become more vocal about their profession and attempt to solve some of the problems they had been facing for years in terms of film preservation and public funding.

Over the course of the following decade, new legislation was passed which showed the drastic need for archives to take up the cause, not only of theatrical preservation, but of amateur preservation as well. It has been estimated that since 1950, not even 1 percent of amateur film has been archived, and “The [resulting] hearings demonstrated the need for the film archive to move from the univocality of studio productions to the polyvocality of a diverse media ecology that also has a historical legacy.”<sup>17</sup> Amateur film includes many different kinds of productions: educational, travel, and training films; independent documentaries; experimental art pieces, and home movies. The signifying distinction between a studio film and an amateur film is based in economics. If a film was never intended to be distributed for profit, then it is considered to be an amateur film. Home movies fall under a slightly different class within amateur film because not only were they never intended to turn a profit, but they were also never intended for distribution.<sup>18</sup>

During the past twenty years, there has been a concerted effort on the part of scholars, researchers, historians and archivists to reach out to communities in order to obtain, preserve, and make available these home movies before they are lost forever. And the need is pressing.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 8.

If the lessons of the early archives have taught us anything, it is that film is a fragile thing and the longer home movies continue to sit in attics and closets unattended, the more quickly they will be lost forever.

It is with this understanding that some archivists and historians have come to take part in what is being called the New Amateur Film Movement. Zimmermann explains that:

Until the 1990s, home movies and amateur film were typically not archived; instead, archives around the world focused primarily on the preservation and restoration of feature films representing the various expressions of national cinemas, with secondary attention to documentary. A few public archives – most notably the Japanese American National Museum, Northeast Historic Film, the Human Studies Film Archives, and the Netherlands Archive/Museum Institute – and a few private collectors who were mostly experimental documentary filmmakers, have created an international movement to redirect film history and film archives away from an exclusive emphasis on commercial features and national art cinemas toward noncommercial works produced by everyday people.<sup>19</sup>

The New Amateur Film Movement, then, is a concerted effort, and a growing one, to combat the steady loss of amateur film from the historical record. Amateur films, and home movies in particular, provide unique access into the lives of ordinary people and offer rare historic insight into the recent past. Archivists are beginning to see the importance of these artifacts, and as the New Amateur Film Movement grows, so does the archival profession. Moving forward, archivists and historians will have to begin to work together before these artifacts are lost forever.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 13.

## HOME MOVIES AND PUBLIC HISTORY

The shift in focus within the film archival profession from theatrical films to amateur films coincided with an evolutionary trend within the historical profession. Patricia Mooney-Melvin, in her essay “Professional Historians and the Challenge of Redefinition,” explains how, since the establishment of History as a legitimate academic profession, historians had become increasingly isolated within academia and the university system, and the general public, as a result, had largely been marginalized by professional historians.<sup>20</sup> Amidst this marginalization, the 1970s brought a period of crisis within the profession. Historians once unified in their purpose and curriculum began to splinter into separate groups, some maintaining traditional historical canon and others espousing a methodology related to social science.<sup>21</sup> In addition to the fracturing of historical canon, the 1970s brought an employment crisis within the university system. “All of a sudden, there seemed to be too many historians for too few jobs in academe.”<sup>22</sup> Historians had isolated themselves so drastically within the universities that they had essentially taught themselves into a corner, and those who were fortunate enough to find themselves employed at a university were immediately embroiled in a curriculum controversy as the profession was quickly moving away from Great Man history toward a more socially oriented History From Below ideology. So, at nearly the same time that film archivists were beginning to discover the importance of amateur film, historians were beginning to discover the importance of the history-making general public.

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<sup>20</sup> Patricia Mooney-Melvin, “Professional Historians and the Challenge of Redefinition” in *Public History: Essays from the Field*, James Gardner and Peter LaPaglia eds. (Malabar: Krieger Publishing Company, 2006), 9.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

As historians began to move out of the classroom to focus their attention on public service, an array of new careers began to open up to a new generation of graduates within the profession. Constance Schulz explains how this new generation of historians would adapt to their new working environment. She argues that because public historians are trained to address a public, rather than an academic audience, they have developed different skill sets. Public historians' training, she claims, differs from academic historians' in that they are acutely aware of their audiences, they use alternate, or non-traditional primary sources in their research and writing, and they largely benefit from a high level of interdisciplinarity.<sup>23</sup> According to Schulz then, Public Historians, while they do have an academic background rooted in a classical historical foundation, the careers that they enter into after university will tend to be more community-based, and those careers will require them to be more acutely aware of their community and acquire a different set of skills from their academic counterparts. Public historians are trained to be conscious of and sensitive toward their respective communities, and their writing and presentation of history will, for the most part, specifically relate to that community. Schulz goes on, "Public historians can and do contribute to the monographic literature and the professional historical journals of their chronological, regional, or thematic historical specializations, but they also have a carefully nurtured understanding that a broad range of public communities have an interest and a stake in the past."<sup>24</sup> This interest in the community and focus on public service is the driving force behind public history.

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<sup>23</sup> Constance Schulz, "Becoming a Public Historian" in *Public History: Essays from the Field*, James Gardner and Peter LaPaglia eds. (Malabar: Krieger Publishing Company, 2006), 34-35.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 34.



Community, cohesion, and social awareness of a shared past are recurring themes throughout public history's literature. Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen illustrated this point perhaps better than anyone else in their field when they discussed the idea of "popular historymaking" in their book *The Presence of the Past*, the idea that "Americans take an active role in using and understanding the past -- that they're not just passive consumers of histories constructed by others."<sup>25</sup> In that work, they position public history as a means to understanding a community's involvement with its own history. So the goal is not to find out what people *do not know* about history, but rather to find out *what they do know* and *how they know it*.<sup>26</sup> In their goal to understand how the American public understands or most closely identifies with history, they learned that Americans, and by implication anyone who is not a professional historian, tend to connect with the past when they can find a direct link between that past and their present, and they do this every single day in any number of ways. Between visiting museums and national parks, taking photographs or home movies, taking part in historical reenactments or even by listening to stories from parents or grandparents, people are constantly and consistently taking part in past-related activities. They are trying to connect with a personal past, and the great goal of the public historian is to recognize those attempts and aid a community in the best way possible. For the respondents in Rosenzweig and Thelen's study, "The most powerful meanings of the past [came] out of the dialogue between the past and the present, out of the ways the past can be used to answer pressing current-day questions

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<sup>25</sup> Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 3.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

about relationships, identity, immortality, and agency.”<sup>27</sup> In other words, people crave history in order to help themselves understand their own world.

Public historians can act as liaisons between an abstract past and a personal present. And they must. For as Rosenzweig observes, “The past is not only present – it is part of the present.”<sup>28</sup> The historymaking public is never without their history. It shapes who they are and every decision that they make, and it is up to the public historian to be conscious and respectful of that fact while providing service to his or her community. The fact that history is part of the present also means that history is happening all around us. History is the product of men and women living their lives, often without recognition or notoriety, and their stories deserve to be respected and preserved, if never fully told or understood. That idea is at the intersection of history and film archival, and it is represented by the home movie.

Home movies are important for the historical record because of the people they connect, not necessarily because of the images they portray. “Contemporary advances in critical historiography... have expanded the range and types of evidence, particularly those considered suppressed or at the margins of official events and practices, as well as promoted new explanatory models of discerning patterns, meaning, and significance with and between disparate events and artifacts.”<sup>29</sup> Home movies offer a way for historians to connect communities through a shared history by observing commonalities between the past and the public which created that past. They have the ability to bring people together by illustrating

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 178.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Mining, 1.

shared history. Harkening back to Rosenzweig and Thelen's study, home movies represent a way for historians to recognize and evaluate the past that is part of the present. They act as a cinematic history from below, allowing access to the lives of people who otherwise might have been denied a history.<sup>30</sup>

In addition to providing an avenue by which historians might bring together a community, home movies serve as contributions to the historical record for researchers from every background by both complicating and complementing the historical record. The historical profession is dominated by terms like Race and Gender, and Class, and these terms are often deconstructed so vigorously that they can become incredibly abstract ideas. "Amateur film artifacts present a materialization of these abstractions of race, class, gender, and nation as they are lived and as a part of everyday life, much valorized by cultural studies as a site for agency, fissure, and resistance to dominant modalities."<sup>31</sup> Home movies provide concrete examples of how life was lived at a given time and place by a racialized, gendered, and class-conscious culture. In this way, they are a tremendous resource for historical research in any branch of academia as amateur film can provide solid, unbiased, that is to say undiluted by memory, documentation of past events. However, as Patricia Zimmermann is quick to point out, "Amateur films and home movies negotiate between private memories and social histories in a variety of forms and iterations, but there is never a one-to-one correspondence between the empirical fact and the representation."<sup>32</sup> In other words, home movies offer a glimpse into

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

the events of ordinary people, but they never offer the whole story of their lives. These films must be used as evidence to support an argument just as any other secondary source might be used. The images represented must be weighed against the other facts surrounding one's case and placed in historical context. In this way, home movies complicate the historical record by providing often contradictory information into the evidence surrounding an event. This contradiction, in fact, was evident in one of the most important home movies yet uncovered, the film *Topaz*, filmed by Dave Tatsuno.

The footage of *Topaz* was shot by Dave Tatsuno between 1943 and 1945 while he and his family were incarcerated in an American concentration camp, officially known as the Topaz War Relocation Center, in Utah during WWII. The film shows the daily lives of the Tatsuno family and their friends while in camp and is shot very much in the style of a home movie, rather than a documentary. Because radios, cameras, and any other recording equipment were prohibited on premises, Mr. Tatsuno shot his footage secretly and in private. Thus, there are no images of barbed wire fences, armed sentry guards, or watchtowers because Mr. Tatsuno did not want to broadcast the fact that he had illegal contraband.<sup>33</sup> What makes this film so interesting is that it complicates the historical record of life in Japanese internment camps. The films are in color and are of Mr. Tatsuno's friends and family, so the footage looks bright and almost cheerful in the face of such bleak circumstances. Tatsuno explains, "Most of the shots look peaceful and almost happy, because whenever I took shots of evacuees, they would 'ham it up' and smile as you might do today...The camera shots, thus, do not fathom the emotions

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 130.

hidden within the evacuees – the fear, the loneliness, the despair, and the bitterness that we felt.”<sup>34</sup> So, while the written history of Japanese internment correctly offers bleak and bitter imagery, in *Topaz*, the viewer is confronted with a bright, cheerful and rather delightful display of family life and must find a way to reconcile those two sets of images. Karen Ishizuka, who championed the inclusion of *Topaz* in the National Film Registry, writes, “Rather than presenting the illegal incarceration and deprivation of freedom one might anticipate in concentration camp iconography, these everyday images instead remind us that we must unrelentingly find the contradictions of history in each image.”<sup>35</sup> Those contradictions are what make home movie scholarship essential to the history of a community.

The decision to include *Topaz* in the National Film Registry is important for two reasons, one very general and another which gets to the heart of why home movies are vital to the historical record. First, the inclusion marked a turning point in the history of the amateur film movement which signaled to the world that home movies were, in fact, worthy of being recognized, protected, and preserved for their artistic and historical merit alongside commercial cinema. *Topaz* was just the second amateur film to be inducted into the National Film Registry; the first was the Zapruder film of President Kennedy’s assassination.<sup>36</sup> And in the thirteen years since its induction, four other amateur films have been named to the registry for their artistic and historical value.<sup>37</sup> The other reason why *Topaz* is important is that it represents precisely what the study of home movies is all about. It is an illustration of a life

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 131.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 126.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 15.

whose story otherwise would never have been told. *Topaz* is representative of what historians should look for in all home movies which is the story of an otherwise voiceless actor creating his own history in the face of overwhelming odds. Mr. Tatsuno's story is one with a minority voice and about a time in America's history which the nation at large is keen to forget as quickly as possible. In response to *Topaz's* induction, Ishizuka explains,

It suggests that an ethics of remembering, and recovery of historical traumas that have been repressed, can balance the fantasies of Hollywood narrative... The inclusion of the *Topaz* footage, antithetical as it is among the others on the list, indicates that the Registry more accurately reflects a national film culture that is not bounded by white narrative, but can be expanded to include new, more complex views of American history, art, and culture.<sup>38</sup>

Home movies offer historians the opportunity to study countless stories like Mr. Tatsuno's. They are located at the intersection between history and memory, both recorded and unrecorded, and they are absolutely vital to understanding a community's past, no matter how large or small that community may be. *Topaz* is an illustration of how amateur film can both illuminate and complicate the historical record. Home movies hold the images of life lived under both banal and extraordinary circumstances. "They mobilize these images into a dialogical relationship with history, moving them out of the realm of inert evidence into a more dynamic relationship to provide historical explanation."<sup>39</sup> Home movies provide an arena for historians to discuss the fluidity of the past, the ever-evolving nature of history and memory.

The idea of history being a fluid concept, that someone has to *construct* a story, or stories, out of the evidence provided to them has evolved out of literary theory, classified in

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 139.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 5.

history as “the linguistic turn.”<sup>40</sup> Zimmermann explains:

These discussions have moved history away from a single, metanarrative, and omniscient viewpoint, based on referentiality, realism, and facts that repress heterogeneity, toward a more particularized, multicultural construct of plural pasts. [The] term for the structure of these plural pasts is *polyvocalities*, wherein more than one viewpoint is present and contradictions and disjunctures abound, opening up historical analysis to different explanatory models.<sup>41</sup>

Home movies represent a clear example of polyvocality in history. They are representations of the lives of the real people, in real time, participating in real events, but they are not a whole or completely accurate story of those lives or event. Nor are they wholly inaccurate. They are pieces of a puzzle that, when fleshed out and placed in context, becomes part of a more complete picture of a person’s life. Home movies position themselves within this idea of a constructed history, a history that is in dialogue with both present and past, history and memory. Zimmermann urges us to be mindful of the latent heterogeneity within amateur film and the polyvocality latent in the term itself.<sup>42</sup> Amateur, by its very definition, is something produced outside of, or in spite of, the professional, dominant, and homogenous discourse. “As first-person documentation of history and culture, home movies provoke reexamination of issues of identity, culture, history, politics, and memory from the point of view of images made outside the dominant channels of representation.”<sup>43</sup> Considering the advances over the past few decades in terms of “history from below” approaches and subaltern narratives in historiography, this idea of polyvocality becomes increasingly important. Zimmermann says

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 20.

that “amateur film can be seen as a necessary and vital part of visual culture rather than as a marginal area requiring inclusion.”<sup>44</sup> Home movies provide a voice to the common man, and position themselves squarely in line with the history from below framework of study. In the study of everyday life, amateur film is vital to the understanding of the human condition, as home movies must be constantly reexamined, reevaluated, and explored for new and more subtle information not only about the lives and cultures appearing on film but about the culture surrounding the movies themselves. The relationship between the people on the film becomes just as important as the relationship between the people on the film and the people watching the film. “Hayden White has argued that history is an imaginative and transformative act, one in which fiction and fact endlessly flow in and out of each other.”<sup>45</sup> Home movies are no different.

The evolution, then, of both public history which is based in service and shared community history and film archival which is based in the protection and preservation of a shared visual culture has brought both professions to the doorstep of amateur film. Home movies are as much about the viewer as the viewed, and as the research on the subject continues to grow, those relationships will be explored, allowing for more intricate and complex evaluations of the past. Home movies, like all cinema, are interactive, collaborative, and participatory; they require intensive, if non-verbal, dialogue between viewer and filmmaker.<sup>46</sup> The films become more interesting the less one focuses only on the images on screen and

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid,6.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 21.



begins to pay attention to the connections that can be drawn between film, viewer, event, memory, history, fact, and fiction. Andre Bazin has famously observed that, “If the plastic arts were put under psychoanalysis, the practice of embalming the dead might turn out to be a fundamental factor in their creation. The process might reveal that at the origin of painting and sculpture, there lies a mummy complex”<sup>47</sup> Cinema scholars and film theorists have recognized since the art’s beginnings that film is a way of preserving life after death. As a substitute for mummification, cinema serves as a way for life to continue in the memory of those left behind. In this way, cinema, and particularly amateur cinema, acts as a site of memory and a marker of historical trauma. Peter Forgacs explains that, “A significant quality of the private film is the comprehension of death. In a feature film, the character dies even as the actor lives. Conversely, in the private film, we are aware that the person who appears on screen may well be dead even as he/she seems to be alive on the screen. It is as if they have sent a message with skeletal traces for today’s viewer.”<sup>48</sup> It is up to the viewer to engage in a dialogue with the film and ask, “What are these images asking me to see?” This kind of dialogue is something that historians have been engaging in for centuries, but as home movies are a relatively recent addition to the list of acceptable source material, it is important to remember that these images portray real, living people who may be long dead. Their stories must be seen as part of a larger whole, and must not be judged solely by the few, often brief, events portrayed in their films. “[Home movies] remind us that the images we recover are always acts of mourning for

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<sup>47</sup> Andre Bazin, “The Ontology of the Photographic Image” in *What is Cinema?* Hugh Gray ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 9.

<sup>48</sup> Mining, 49.

those who have passed, markers of loss and trauma. It is our responsibility to name these ghosts and make them real through materialization.”<sup>49</sup> Historians must take this responsibility seriously and interpret home movies not only as a vital consequence of a visual culture, but as part of the surviving legacy of those who have gone before us because the more we can learn about them, the more we will learn about ourselves.

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 24.

## **THE FILMS**

Reel 1 was shot between 1940 and 1941. It opens on a one-year-old Harris Rosen playing on a foot locker or storage box and mugging for the camera. These are some of the first images ever taken of Harris, and they depict a happy, healthy child. They are images of a person and a family which, over the course of a lifetime of home movies, will come to look familiar: Happy, healthy, middle-class, and surrounded by loving family. Harris is age one in the first film, but he might as well be ten or twenty years old, as his life, his life on film at least, is depicted in much the same way as these first few images of him.

Reel 1 continues into 1942 as Harris, now two years old, plays with his mother and father on the sidewalk outside their Brooklyn home. There are several fantastic images of period automobiles, clothing styles, and general city life in the background. These are images of New York which could be used by researchers in a number of fields; they are depictions of real people in real time, living history. Harris and his family make their way out of the city for the boy's first vacation at a place called Camp Kingston. It is the first of many trips to a summer camp for the Rosen family; much of their home movies are of the family on vacation, either at camp or spending time together out-of-doors. Camp Kingston is also the place where we see the first images of Harris swimming. He enjoys being in the water and throughout the course of his life, we see him grow into a champion swimmer, excelling especially at the Breast Stroke and Butterfly.

The film comes to a close with Harris continuing to play with his family and camp friends. They dig in the sand on the beach by a lake, go on a hike and a picnic; they play with

some small dogs. The final seconds of the film are too overexposed to make out any clear understanding of what the family is doing, though it is clear that they are outside. These last few black-and-white images stand in stark contrast to the bright, crisp, full-color images of the Rosen family swimming and playing by the beach. The end of the film stands as a reminder of the necessity for these home movies to be protected and cared for by an archive as quickly as possible. The longer these films are left to sit in closets and basements, the more images will be lost forever.

Reel 2 begins in 1944 with the Rosens on a vacation at Martha's Vineyard. Harris and his family are seen piling out of the family car, unloading several large bags, and hauling them into a small cabin. The cabin is presumably near the beach because the family is all wearing bathing suits. Harris' mother, Lee, and several other women are carrying picnic baskets, and Jack, Harris' father, is playing with the boys. Again, we see Harris and several of his friends or cousins playing in the water, swimming, and body surfing. The boys dig in the sand and roughhouse, one boy shows the camera how to eat sand, while the ladies sit together on the beach. While at their beach picnic, Harris finds a large horseshoe crab and holds it up for the camera to see.

Playing at the beach seems not to have changed much in the sixty years since this film was shot. Digging in the sand, carrying water in a bucket and dumping it on a friend's head, rolling around on the shore and relaxing on a towel in the sun are activities which any baby boomer or generation X-er can relate to. The beach seems to have its own set of rules and traditions, and the Harris family films depict them all clearly.

What is striking about this reel is the youth and vitality of the Rosen family. Harris, now a four year-old boy, is rambunctious and energetic and a natural swimmer. Harris' brother Ronnie had just been born in 1944. Jack is a young husband and father, fit and trim and athletic. He is always smiling and mugging for the camera, clearly pleased with his family and his ability to provide these types of vacations. And Harris' mother is a beautiful young woman. Invariably, when the camera is on her, she is smiling and joking with Jack or the children. Despite the stress of being a young couple with young children, this is a happy family.

The reel concludes with the Rosen family back at home from their Martha's Vineyard vacation. Harris has just turned five years old, and Ronnie has just turned six months old. Lee gives Ronnie a bath in the sink while wearing a frilly apron. She is the perfect picture of a 1950's TV sitcom housewife. Later, the film skips ahead six months as Harris and Ronnie are trotted out for their grandparents and other family members to see, while the family sits around the living room chatting and smiling for the camera during Ronnie's first birthday party. The women are dressed conservatively in long skirts and jackets, and the men are all wearing suits and ties, their hair neatly slicked back, except for Harris' mother and father who are more casually, though not shabbily, dressed. Harris looks bored but does his best to smile and pretend he is having fun for the benefit of the camera.

Reel 2 is also the first time we see Jack show affection to the boys. In the last few seconds of the film, he showers Ronnie with kisses on the cheek. It is something that the viewer, should he watch the entire collection, would witness over and over again. Jack is a very

affectionate father, often kissing and hugging his boys for several minutes at a time. Clearly the idea that fathers of this generation were stern or unemotional was not true of Jack Rosen.

Reel 3 is slightly different from the other reels in that it is a compilation of splices from several different years. The dates of reel 3 range from about 1943 to 1945. It begins with the Rosen family out on the sidewalk with some friends and their children. The boys play on the sidewalk with the adults sit on a bench and talk. Jack teaches the boys how to urinate on the street to the children's great amusement. They apparently had been waiting for a parade which we see in the next scene. The film continues with the Rosens again spending time together outdoors. They play together by a lake at a country club-style camping facility. There are nicely kept cabins in the background with many families all spending time together by a playground the waterfront. Jack and Lee splash each other in the water and laugh. Harris goes on a rowboat ride with his mother.

Toward the end of the film, we see the first images of the Rosen's Jewish culture as a Bris is performed on Ronnie. Several family members crowd around a doctor and nurse as the procedure is performed (without surgical gloves), and coffee is served in paper cups afterward.

Reel 4 introduces the first of many vacations that the Rosens took to the Circle Lodge camping facility with the Workmen's Circle organization. Workmen's Circle is a national Jewish social organization whose national headquarters are in New York.<sup>50</sup> The organization owns land in upstate New York called the Circle Lodge which is available for its members during summer

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<sup>50</sup> <http://www.circle.org/?page=about>

vacations, and that is where the Rosens spent many of their summers together. On this particular vacation, Ronnie learns to walk.

This reel also contains images of the family back at home. Harris is shown making sculptures out of modeling clay; he is quite talented, especially at such a young age. The boys' cousins Marvin and Seymour come to visit, and the boys enjoy this very much. Ronnie plays in the living room of his house and is fascinated by the radio. Later in the film, the family gathers for another of Ronnie's birthdays. This event is a much more raucous party than the previous one, lots of liquor and food. The guests (presumably family) are having a good time, mugging for the camera and moving around the room. Jack and some other men, who appear to be quite drunk, take several shots of liquor at the end of the film.

Reel 5 takes place sometime in 1946. The title card explains that the footage was shot at the Circle Lodge when Ronnie was 2 years old and Harris (he is called Harry in the intertitle) is six and a half years old. Baby Ronnie plays naked in a field, and later, back at the family's cabin, he tries to push a rotary lawn mower without much success. Lee splashes in a fountain and mugs for the camera as Ronnie switches his attention from the mower to some tennis racquets. Later in the film, the family takes a trip down to the lake, and Harris shows off his swimming skills. He swims around the lake from dock to dock, thrashing wildly, but it is clear that he is becoming quite a good swimmer, and he enjoys it. Lee tries to take Ronnie into the water, but he does not seem as eager as Harris and clings to his mother. Later, the family spends some time socializing with friends or family at a picnic where some of the girls at the camp are putting on a performance. It is unclear exactly what is happening in their play, but the theme

seems to be Independence Day or perhaps the end of WWII, as there are American flags draped everywhere. The children, which now include the camp's boys as well, sing and dance and march through the picnic area. Harris takes part in the festivities, marching with several other boys and waving a small flag in the air. Much of this reel is too overexposed to make out many details, but everyone seems to be having a good time, and a very large number of people are watching or participating in the performance.

The film cuts to another title card which reads, "A Day at Coney." The Rosens spend a day at the beach, lounging in the sun and sand. Harris is, as usual, swimming in the ocean. After the family is done at the beach, they get dressed and head out to the Boardwalk where they play games and look at all the rides. There is a giant Ferris wheel and a roller coaster in the background. Ronnie and Harris ride some horses around a small track, which Harris enjoys very much; then they go on a merry-go-round, which Ronnie seems to prefer.

The film then jumps again to the family back at home in Brooklyn. Harris shows off his bicycle to the camera by riding it up and down the sidewalk. Later, the two boys play inside. Harris teaches Ronnie how to balance a cup on his head. Harris finds this endlessly entertaining because young Ronnie has trouble keeping his head still enough for this game. Harris also teaches Ronnie how to make trumpet sounds with his nose and fingers, and the two boys show off their skills to the camera. These shots provide some great images of the two brothers bonding and playing together. They are heartwarming scenes.

Toward the end of the film, there are several cuts to random scenes. Jack (presumably) films his collection of caricatures of famous figures that he has drawn. Included are portraits of



Roosevelt and Churchill among others. The film then cuts again to Ronnie showing the camera how he has been potty trained and then again to a shot of the two boys playing together in their room. The final few minutes of the film show a visit from the Detroit relatives; they have gathered for Ronnie's third birthday. The men are dressed in suits and ties, and the women are dressed in long dresses and pearls. The family all sit around the living room talking and joking and hamming it up for the camera. Jack's mother holds Ronnie on her lap until it is time for cake. Jack feeds Ronnie a piece of cake and smears his face with frosting.

Reel 6 begins in 1947 with another family trip to the Circle lodge. The Rosens go to some sort of play or performance by the children at camp, and Harris plays with some of his friends. Ronnie has another birthday party with some extended family from Detroit. Back at home, Ronnie and Harris play in a box. Later, mom and dad join in but get stuck. Harris makes more sculptures out of modeling clay. There is more footage of the family on vacation at a camp named Camp Woodland. The reel continues into 1948 with another trip to the Circle Lodge.

Reel 7 begins with Harris' parents' eleven-year anniversary. They are affectionate with one another and clearly have a happy marriage. The boys play cowboys and Indians together in their shared bedroom. The family goes on another trip to the Circle Lodge in 1949. Much of this reel is too overexposed to see the family doing any activities. Towards the end of the reel, Jack and the boys play golf, badminton, and ping pong. At the end of the film, the family plays in the lake and takes turns dunking each other under the water.

Reel 8 was too damaged by time and improper storage to be viewed.

Reel 9 spans two years, and is quite “jumpy” between cuts, but it contains some of the best images of Jack and Lee’s marriage. It begins with Ronnie’s seventh birthday. Ronnie and Lee, are preparing trays of fruit and crackers to snack on during the celebration. The family sits in their living room and sings “Happy Birthday.” Ronnie receives a train set, and the whole family helps put it together. Later in the film, there are images of a summer vacation in 1951. The Rosens appear to be visiting a ranch or farm. There are several images of cows and other ranch animals. The person shooting, presumably Jack, makes a point to film the family car for several seconds. Much of the film is severely overexposed, but the family appears to be mingling with the cows and other animals. The film cuts to the Rosens sunning themselves by a lake and playing in the water; it is not clear if they have returned to the Circle Lodge or if they are at some other location. Jack teaches Ronnie to dive while Harris, as usual, swims around the lake. Later in the film, some relatives are filmed during a party; the clips are labeled, “[the] Bill Rosens on their Honeymoon.” The film then jumps to another birthday for Ronnie, his eighth, then jumps again to another family vacation in 1952. The family is camping again, surrounded by friends and family. Ronnie has become a much better swimmer in a year’s time, and he is filmed swimming around a lake. Toward the end of the reel, Jack and Lee are sitting together on the dock by the lake, holding each other. Jack leans in to kiss Lee and all the nearby children groan. The film ends with Jack and Lee sharing a chair in front of their cabin. Lee pats Jack’s belly and makes a joke, and Jack gives her a kiss.

Reel 10 has several abrupt cuts, and spans several years. It begins with Harris’ thirteenth birthday in 1952. It is a modest affair with a small cake, and only immediate family

are in attendance. The boys go around the room exchanging hugs and kisses with their parents and grandparents and smiling for the camera. Later in the film, the Rosens have a barbeque with some friends. Everyone enjoys themselves outside in the back yard. The film then cuts to another family vacation at the Circle Lodge. The whole family takes a rowboat ride around the lake, and the boys go swimming. Back on shore, there is a small birthday party with cake for a teenage boy, some friend or relative of the Rosen family. The film cuts again to a shot of Ronnie learning how to play his clarinet; the intertitles read, "Ronnie (Benny Goodman) Rosen." He is nine years old in this shot. In the next shot, the family is on another family vacation to the Circle Lodge, this time in 1954. This vacation footage focuses primarily on the adults. Jack and Lee socialize with their friends and family while the children tend to play on their own in the background. The film cuts again from a family vacation to a more somber occasion. The family has assembled together again, but this time under sad circumstances. Jack's mother, Celia, has died, and everyone has gathered for the unveiling of her gravestone. While it is a sad occasion, the family seems happy to see one another and socialize over coffee and cakes. The mood seems celebratory in the midst of their grief. Again, the film cuts; this time, Ronnie is turning eleven years old. The very last images of the film are of Harris, at age sixteen, shaving for the first time while Ronnie watches. They both look proud.

Reel 11 picks back up in 1955 with the first of many husband-and-wife vacations for Jack and Lee. This reel is labeled "Caribbean Vacation," and begins with a shot of Lee sitting on the balcony of her hotel room, looking out at the beautiful landscape of the Caribbean. She looks at the camera and mouths the words, "Oh, what a life I live!" Throughout most of the trip, the

couple spends their time doing fairly touristy activities. They spend a great deal of time at a resort hotel, swimming in a giant pool; at one point, they go on a glass-bottom boat ride. Unlike some of the other reels, this one is not labeled with intertitles, so the exact country they have chosen to visit is unclear. There is, however, a brief shot of a boat called "Presidente Trujillo" with a flag with colorings indicating that the boat is located in the Dominican Republic. The couple does manage to make their way out on the streets, occasionally posing for pictures in front of historic landmarks, castles and the like. Jack goes spear fishing in the ocean with a local man, perhaps a tour guide, and they catch a large fish. During the cruise back to the states, Jack films what appears to be an amateur beauty contest on the ship. Several women in one-piece bathing suits and high heels strut out onto platform on the deck of the ship, and pose for pictures and applause. Lee seems amused by Jack's interest in this show; she even holds the camera while he poses with some of the contestants. In the final seconds of the film, another passenger on the ship holds the camera while Jack and Lee pose together. Jack casts a glance in Lee's direction that seems suggest he is double-checking that he is not in trouble for the day's previous activities.

Reel 12 spans three years from 1955 to 1957 and begins with the Rosens family vacation to Camp Brooklyn and Camp Brookwood, two small camps a few hours from the city.<sup>51</sup> The family spends a great deal of time in the water, going on a speed boat ride and waterskiing. Harris has become a great swimmer and displays his skills for the camera; he completes a few laps in the lake, doing the butterfly and backstroke. Later in the film, and back at home, Harris

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<sup>51</sup> Camp Brookwood's Homepage. Accessed 21 August 2010 at: <http://www.brookwoodcamps.com/about.asp>

is filmed as he paints a picture in his room. Some of his other work, all landscapes, can be seen on the back of his desk, and it is quite good. He comes out of his room where there is a small celebration for Ronnie's twelfth birthday. The film cuts again to a visit by the family's relatives from Detroit. It seems to be a fairly formal affair. As the two families are sitting in the living room eating cakes and drinking coffee, they men are dressed in pressed shirts and ties, and the ladies are dressed in long dresses. The next cut in the film is to another visit by family members, but this visit is much more casual. All are dressed in comfortable clothing, and the atmosphere seems to be more party-like. The festivities spill over into the kitchen and dining room, and everyone smiling and joking. The film cuts again to a visit by one of Ronnie's friends in 1957. The two boys are playing in Ronnie's room, rough-housing and wrestling on the floor. Later in the film, Ronnie and Harris celebrate their thirteenth and eighteenth birthdays, respectively. These seem to be small affairs with just the four family members in attendance. The last images of the reel are of the Rosens touring the campus of Cornell University where Harris will attend college. There are some beautiful shots of the campus, and Jack and Lee seem duly impressed.

Reel 13 begins in 1958 with family trips to Tamarack Campground and Stissing Lake, two small camping sites in the New York area. The family spends some time together swimming, hiking, and sight-seeing before the film cuts to another husband and wife vacation for Jack and Lee. This section of the film is labeled "New England Trip." The couple films their trip to Plymouth Rock, the oldest synagogue in America, and the beach. This section of the reel is interesting because there are a number of shots of the two together. They must have asked

passing tourists to hold the camera for them while they posed for pictures together. This trip seems to have been a relatively short vacation because the total footage only last a few minutes before there is another cut to Harris' twentieth birthday. It is a daytime celebration and very small. The family is dressed casually, Jack is wearing short pants, and there does not seem to be much fanfare involved. Harris and Ronnie show off their Hula-Hooping skills, but their father is much less successful. Toward the end of the film, there are a few shots of family trips to Brookwood and Tamarack in 1959, but the last two minutes of the film are the most interesting. The family takes a trip to Freedomland amusement park in 1960, the inaugural year of the short-lived history-themed park, located in the Bronx, NY. There are a number of shots overlooking the park and one long shot of a speech being given by who appear to be theme park executives or local government officials. These pictures could prove to be extremely useful to researchers studying New York during this time period.

Reel 14 begins in the fall of 1960 with a husband and wife trip around Europe. The beginning of the reel has an intertitle that reads, "Rome has everything: Food, History, Women." Jack and Lee spend a great deal of time in the city, filming themselves at several locales. There is a great mixture of images in this reel, ranging from a bright and modern 1960s metropolis to ancient ruins. Unlike the Dominican Republic trip, there is almost no footage of the hotel where the two were staying; most of the footage is of the city and its architecture. The couple spends much of their time with another man, possibly a tour guide, and they seem to be enjoying themselves immensely. The film cuts to another city, as the intertitle reads, "Florence: Our kind of city." What this statement means is unclear, but it could be as simple as

the fact that the large city with stone buildings reminds them of New York. Like the Rome trip, all the footage is used to shoot the architecture of the city. The couple seems fascinated with statuary and monuments, as a good deal of time is spent panning up and down at several statues. The film cuts again to the couple's next stop in Venice. The title card reads, "Venice should be seen by everyone." The couple cruise the canals and waterways and continue to focus the camera on the stunning architecture of the city. Jack tries to feed some pigeons and is overtaken by a swarm of birds. Toward the end of the film, there is another cut to the couple's last stop in Italy; the intertitle reads, "Milan is the Italian New York." This section of the film is the shortest segment of the Italian excursion; only one building is filmed, though it is quite beautiful. The last few minutes of the reel are devoted to the couple's trip to Switzerland. The reel's title card informs the viewer, "Switzerland is mountainous and beautiful." Jack and Lee take a trip up a mountain in a skyride-type cable car, looking brave but nervous throughout.

Reel 15 begins where Reel 14 left off; Jack and Lee are now at the top of the mountain. The couple tries to film the mountain and the skyline, but camera struggles to capture any images because of the brightness of the snow. The film cuts to the next stop on the European tour as the couple visits Paris. The intertitle reads, "Paris: Wine, Women, and a Beautiful City." The section of the film, like the Rome trip, has a healthy mix of imagery. While Rome was divided up between modern images and ancient ruins, Paris seems to be divided between the concrete jungle of the inner city and the quiet stillness of nature outside the city. The couple does the typical touristy activities, including a trip up to the top of the Eiffel Tower, but they also spend a great deal of time outside the city looking at gardens and the natural beauty of the

landscape. The film cuts again to the next stop on the trip. The title card reads, "London: Friendly, Interesting and Shakespearean." Jack and Lee spend their time going to all the major tourist attractions. There are trips to Buckingham Palace, Parliament and Big Ben, and several castles. The film ends with the couple walking back into their Brooklyn home, though it is unclear who is holding the camera, probably Ronnie.

Reel 16 begins in 1961, and the film can is labeled, "Harris' last days at Cornell." These images are of Harris' college apartment during the winter of 1961, and they are taken in the midst of a major snowstorm. Snow covers everything in sight, and in places it is at least five feet high. Harris and his friends play in the snow on and off campus. The film cuts to springtime as Harris, now in his early twenties, gives his parents a tour of his college town during his last two days at Cornell. Harris, in preparation for his entry in the Armed Forces, has worked himself into tremendous shape. Where he was once a small, awkward boy just a few years prior to this footage, he is now a strong, lean and muscular man, and there are several shots of him working out and showing off his physique. The last few images of the film are of Harris in line for his commissioning and graduation. He wears his military dress-blues for his commissioning and, later, his regular cap and gown for graduation.

Reel 17 is filmed between 1961 and 1962 and begins with footage of the United States Pentathlon team training, possibly at Ft. Bragg in North Carolina. There are several images of Harris riding a horse, running, doing pushups and several other exercises. Later, Harris is stationed in South Korea, and there are several images of the barracks, and the surrounding village. When he was on leave, Harris took the camera further out into the city, and there are a



number of shots of the countryside and workers farming and working the fields. Several children seem particularly interested in the camera, and Harris is happy to film them and pose with them as someone else holds the camera. At one point, Harris helps a farmer plow a row behind an ox as some passersby stand by the side of the road and watch. Everyone, including the farmer and Harris, seem amused by the sight. The last few images of the reel are of Harris taking a martial arts class, dressed in a full Gi and belt. It is unclear whether this is on base or not, but Harris does seem to be the only American in the class.

Reel 18 continues with Harris' tour in the Army and spans the years 1962 and 1963. In this reel, Harris is stationed in Japan, and he is touring the Japanese countryside. Presumably, he is on some sort of extended leave because he is dressed in a suit and tie, rather than his military uniform. There are several shots of him posing next to fountains, natural springs, trees, temples, and the like. Harris seems to be impressed not only with the natural beauty of the countryside but with the Japanese architecture as well. Back at the base, Harris takes target practice with his sidearm. The film cuts to Harris back in the states for a visit. He spends some time with his parents and Ronnie, who, at this point, is now twenty-two or twenty-three. This seems to be a short visit, though because after a few seconds, the film cuts again to Harris touring the German countryside with his girlfriend. They drive a black Volkswagen Beetle.

Reel 19 continues with Harris' travels around Europe between 1963 and 1964. There are several minutes of footage of a bull fight in Spain. This footage, regardless of the controversy surrounding the practice of bullfighting, is fascinating because the violence is completely unedited. Several bulls are fought, killed, and dragged out of the arena by horses.

The film cuts to Harris and his girlfriend at a beach and walking around a city, presumably still in Spain. This film spans several seasons, moving from summer to winter and several countries, moving from Spain to somewhere in northwestern Europe. It is not always clear which country Harris is visiting, as there are no intertitles and very few street signs are filmed, but architecture very definitely changes in such a way as to suggest that he is no longer in Spain by the middle of the film. Later in the reel, Harris and his girlfriend film themselves skiing on a mountain at some European resort. Harris seems to pick up the sport quickly, and only falls once or twice during filming. Later in the film, Harris and his girlfriend visit a tulip farm in Holland.<sup>52</sup> The last few images of the film are of Harris and his girlfriend in the mountains. They take several shots of the countryside, and it is stunning. Presumably, they are still in Holland, but the terrain easily lends itself any of the countries surrounding Germany.

Reel 20 is shot in 1964, and it is the first reel in a set of three which feature Jack and Lee on an "Around the World Tour." The opening shot is of Jack hand-painting a title card which Lee holds up for the camera. It reads, "New York to London and on to Moscow." The images of Moscow are fascinating, and thankfully, they are filmed on color stock. The couple visits the Kremlin and Red Square. At one point during the couple's travels around the city, Jack decides that it would be a good idea to help a woman who is sweeping the gutters with a handmade broom. Jack finds this endlessly entertaining, mugging for the camera the whole time, but the

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<sup>52</sup> Harris was stationed in Germany in the last year of his military service and often toured the countryside and the surrounding areas in his off-time. He reminisces about this trip during a speech given at Cornell University in 2010. The video of this interview can be located and viewed on Cornell's website at: <http://www.eclips.cornell.edu/search?collection=16&title=Hospitality%20Businesses&id=16&clipID=9363&tab=TabClipPage>

woman looks perplexed and concerned that he will break her broom. The film cuts to another of Jack's hand-painted signs which reads, "Warsaw and the Ghetto." The two travel around Warsaw by bus, stopping once at a Holocaust monument where people have left flowers at its base. This footage feels appropriately dark to match the occasion. The sky is overcast, the streets are dirty, and the city is bleak. At one point, Jack is filmed while he speaks with two young boys, and he rides their bicycle for a few seconds. So the trip itself might not have been a depressing one, as Jack is clearly having a good time, but the footage casts a somber tone. The film cuts again to a title card reading, "Belgrade and on to Athens." There is virtually no footage of Serbia, but there are several minutes of film devoted to the Athenian ruins and ancient temples. Jack and Lee stand atop broken pillars and pose as if they were Greek statues. The film cuts again to a title card which reads, "Tel Aviv – Jerusalem – Teheran – and on to New Delhi." Much of this footage is overexposed or has deteriorated over time, but the couple appears to go for a swim in the Dead Sea and perhaps go on to visit the Dome of the Rock, but no signs or title cards can confirm this. The New Delhi footage is much brighter, and the couple seems to have attracted a great deal of attention with their camera, much the same way that Harris did when he visited the South Korean countryside. Many small children flock to the camera, and Jack and Lee pose with them for several minutes.

Reel 21 picks up where Reel 20 left off with the couple still traveling around India. Early in the film, there is a cut to a title card which reads, "Kashmir and the Taj Mahal in Agra." While in Kashmir, there are several shots of the city and surrounding countryside, and the couple appears to meet up with another American, or at least English-speaking, couple. The two

couples go on a riverboat ride and mingle with some locals. The country is beautiful, and the couple poses with the mountains in the background in several shots. The footage of the Taj Mahal is quite impressive, and Jack even points to it several times as if to make sure the viewer has taken note of its size and beauty. Outside the mausoleum, there are several shots of snake charmers and dancing bears, an eclectic array of performers and entertainers, all vying for tourist dollars. The film cuts again to a title card which reads, "Bangkok, Thailand and on to Hong Kong." The footage of Bangkok is fascinating, as the city appears to be on the verge of modernization, but a large portion of the population is desperately poor. There are several minutes of footage devoted to people living and working in ramshackle dwellings on the side of the river while in full view of the emerging city in the background. The Rosens spend some time on the river before moving deeper into the city. There is virtually no footage of Hong Kong. The film cuts again to a title card which reads, "Kowloon, Aberdeen, and the Red Chinese Boarder." Once the Rosens leave the bay area, it is difficult to tell exactly where they are in China, though they seem to navigate their way around without any problems. There is not much footage of their China excursion; the total amount of film devoted to this country lasts about two minutes. From China, Jack and Lee make their way to Japan; the title card/ itinerary reads, "Osaka, Kyoto, Hakone, Yokohama, Nikko and Tokyo." The couple goes sightseeing around these cities, stopping occasionally to pose for the camera or film some building or landscape that they find interesting. Jack tries his hand at street sweeping again, and the local woman, to whom the broom belongs, finds him much more entertaining than the Russian woman did.

Reel 22, the third and final reel of Jack and Lee's trip around the world, continues with the Rosen's trip around Japan. Jack, who was a cartoonist, draws some caricatures for a group of young children, presumably in Tokyo. The couple also visit several temples before the film cuts to another title card which reads, "Hawaii (Coney Island #2) and on to San Francisco." For the most part, the Rosens stay on the beach while in Hawaii. They go swimming and kayaking near their hotel, but they do venture into the mountains for a brief period and film the landscape. It is breathtaking footage. The film cuts to a title card reading, "San Francisco and on to Hoover Dam and Las Vegas." On their way to San Francisco, the couple stops at Muir Woods National Monument to see the giant sequoias. Disappointingly, though, there is no footage of the forest. The couple stops long enough to film the sign at the entrance to the park but no footage of the inside of the preserve exists. There are some nice shots of San Francisco including a trip to the Golden Gate Bridge and a view of the city as Jack struggles to walk up one of the city's many steeply inclined streets. The couple's trip the Hoover Dam is also inexplicably brief in terms of footage. The dam is never shown in its entirety, and the camera is only taken out for a brief few seconds to film Jack looking over the edge. One might guess that they were running low on film, and because their trip was almost over, they did not want to use it all up before they got home. Indeed, the last few seconds of film appear immediately after the Hoover Dam footage preceded by a title card which reads, "Back home in good ol' Brooklyn." Jack takes the suit cases out of the car and carries them into the house.

Reel 23 was also filmed in 1964, but this footage shows Harris back in Europe with his girlfriend skiing on a mountain resort. This footage is brief and may be a continuation from

Reel 19. Also, the footage is of poor quality, so much of the film is completely whitewashed, which could be a result of overexposure, deterioration, or simply that the camera could not focus through the bright white snow. There are a few images of Harris and his girlfriend skiing, but not much else. There is one shot at the end of the film where the car that the couple is driving, a Volkswagen Beetle, is filmed driving down the road. In order to get this shot, one or the other of the couple would have had to get out of the car and hold the camera while the driver turned around, driven up the road, turned around again, and then driven back in the other direction so that the camera operator could film the car. This seems like an awful lot of trouble to go through for three seconds of vacation footage, but it was clearly important to one of them to get that shot.

Reel 24 spans several years, from 1965 to 1970. It appears to be a compilation of spare film scraps that have been spliced together onto one reel. It begins at Coney Island where Jack, Lee, Ronnie and Harris are all back together for the first time, at least on film, since Harris was home on leave in 1963. They play in the water and on the beach. The film cuts again to some random scenes of the Rosens visiting with friends and relatives. They walk around the streets of New York and spend time in the house talking and lounging. There is another cut to a shot of a briss, possibly for a child belonging to one of their Detroit relatives. Twenty years after Ronnie's briss, the procedure is still performed in much same way.<sup>53</sup> The moyel wears a surgical mask but no gloves, and the family surrounds the child during the procedure and drinks coffee afterwards. The film cuts again to another family reunion with the Detroit relatives.

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<sup>53</sup> Ronnie's briss was performed in Reel 3.

There seems to be some sort of small party going on, but there is not enough footage to tell for sure. This film is the most difficult in the collection to place in context. The reel spans many years and many locations but it is next to impossible to determine the family's location or develop any kind of chronology. The can that contained this reel was labeled with the dates 1965 to 1970 and lists places like Sheepshead Bay, Cape Kennedy, and Coney Island, but aside from the beginning of the film which is clearly Coney Island, the rest is nearly indeterminable.

Reel 25 is much simpler to decipher, as it is clearly labeled, "Red and Jack's Scandinavian Tour plus Scotland, summer 1967." "Red" was Jack's nickname for Lee because of her bright red hair. The trip begins in Norway where the couple goes sightseeing in a city before venturing out into the mountains. The landscape is stunning, and the Rosen's are clearly impressed. They spend a great deal of time outdoors and much of the film is used to shoot the country's natural beauty. The couple does manage to make their way in to the city of Oslo, though, and they film some of the sculptures in Vigeland Sculpture Park. The statuary in this park is all comprised of nudes, and the couple cannot help but chuckle a little and make a few jokes even as they admire the sculptures. The couple continues on to Sweden where the footage remains very much the same. They do stumble onto a sort of festival, though, where dancers dressed in costumes do a traditional Swedish dance routine. The couple watches politely but seems bored. In short order, though, they find more nude statues with which to amuse themselves. Jack was an artist, so it makes sense that he would find statuary and monuments intriguing, but each time a nude statue is filmed, whether it be in Rome, Norway, India, or Sweden, he chuckles and points. It seems an interesting point to make.

Reel 26 continues the Rosen's Scandinavian tour with a trip to Denmark and tour of Copenhagen. The couple sees the sights around the city streets and mingles with some locals. They visit an art museum and film some of the paintings and sculpture that they find interesting. Later in the film, they film the city at night. They are able to do this because a large section of the city is covered in decorative lighting and bright colored fountains. The imagery is quite a site. The film cuts to Jack and Lee at a zoo where several animals are filmed including an elephant, two bears, and some beavers. The couple continues to sightsee around the city, and Jack offers some advice to a street artist who is painting a row of buildings. The film then cuts to the next stop on their trip which is Holland. The footage of the Rosen's trip to the Netherlands is incredibly choppy. Almost every scene is no longer than two seconds in length; this footage, out of the entire collection, is the most reminiscent of a collection of snapshots. Viewing this section of the film is like looking through a roll of still pictures, a cityscape here, a flower garden there, etc. The film cuts to the last stop on their journey which is in Scotland. A large portion of this section of the film is too overexposed to make out any images, but the images that remain are quite beautiful. The Rosens seem more interested in the architecture than the countryside, as the camera pans back and forth from building to building, but the beauty of the Irish countryside is inescapable as a backdrop for the buildings in frame. This reel has a different feel than the couple's previous world-tour-type excursions. In their last trip around the world (reels 20-22), they seemed much more inclined to go exploring and interact with the local culture, but in this Scandinavian trip, they take many guided tours with groups of other tourists. There is a lot of footage from boats or from trains or from trolleys but very little



footage of the couple out, on their own, seeing the country for themselves. This footage feels planned and organized, whereas the previous reels had a more adventurous quality to them.

Reel 27 is one of three reels that take place in 1968. Jack was a member of the National Cartoonist Society, and in 1968, he and some other members of the society visited Vietnam combat area hospitals to draw caricatures for wounded troops as part of a morale boosting campaign.<sup>54</sup> At the beginning of the film the three men are given several rounds of inoculation by a doctor, they say goodbye to their wives, and take off. Everyone seems very excited to be going, and all are clearly impressed with their military escort. The men land in Saigon, and they seem eager to explore. They go sightseeing around the city, mingling with street vendors and taking lots of pictures. The group moves on from Saigon to a base just south of Pleiku where they set to work, sitting on the sides of wounded soldiers, talking to them, lifting their spirits, and sketching their portraits. There is little footage of these activities, presumably because all three men were busy drawing and visiting with troops, and there was no one to hold the camera. The film then cuts to an airplane ride to Cam Ranh Bay. Here, they are given a tour of the base by a female soldier. The men all seem to find this interesting and, throughout this entire section of the film, devote most of their time to flirting with her. The film cuts again to the men arriving in Qui Nho'n. Here, they do their work at the 8<sup>th</sup> field hospital and are escorted by a male soldier. Some local men are filmed entering the base, and they are patted down in groups of two. The film cuts again to the group's arrival at Nha Trang. The group spends some time with soldiers who are getting their boots shined by a local woman before the

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<sup>54</sup> Jack was a notable member of this organization, even winning the "Silver T-Square Award" in 1975. This information can be accessed at the Society's website at: <http://www.reuben.org/awards.html>

film cuts again to the men on the deck of the USS Repose, a naval hospital ship. Here, the three men put on a show for the soldiers. On the deck of this ship, surrounded by officers and wounded soldiers, these men put on a show using their artistic skills, drawing caricatures of the officers, teaching techniques, and playing drawing games. At several times, the camera pans over the crowd of wounded men, and they are howling with laughter. This footage is quite inspiring.

Reel 28 picks up with the group's next stop in Da Nang. The men spend some time with local villagers and fishermen. There are also several scenes of helicopters and planes arriving and departing for various missions. The film cuts to a new location, Go Cong, as the men continue to see the sights and mingle with street vendors at a local open-air market. Jack and a soldier eat some fresh pineapple with a local merchant. The group takes a helicopter ride; Jack uses the opportunity to film some of the countryside from the air. Thousands of acres of South Vietnamese farmland are visible in this brief shot; it is quite beautiful. Later, the group continues to tour the countryside, visiting some small farm villages. They socialize with some South Korean soldiers and draw portraits for them. At the end of the film, the men visit a local hospital that is run by nuns, but due to the wartime circumstances, is being used as a military hospital as well. The hospital also seems to serve as some sort of orphanage or children's home because there are several seconds of footage devoted to children doing exercises and being monitored by the nuns. The patients at the hospital range from soldiers to small children, to the elderly, and Jack and his group socialize with soldiers and civilians alike. They continue to draw large crowds with their artwork.

Reel 29 begins with the cartoonists' next stop in Ben Tre. The group goes on a tour of the base and spends more time with wounded soldiers and civilians. Jack sketches a portrait of a South Vietnamese soldier who is still fighting even though he has lost his right arm. Wherever the group goes, they continue to draw huge crowds, and they are happy to oblige anyone seeking a portrait. Later, there is footage of some Vietnamese soldiers playing a game where they are tossing stones or dice into a helmet. The film cuts to the next stop on the tour in Ben Hoa. This stop seems to be a more formal assignment, as the men are dressed in suits and ties. To this point, they had been wearing shorts and short-sleeved shirts. They are having a meeting with a Vietnamese man on the steps of a public building, and when they are done speaking, the men all shake hands and smile for the camera. The next stop on the tour is a visit to another army hospital in the Philippines. The group takes a tour of the hospital before going out to see the countryside. The men buy some fruit and vegetables from some roadside vendors and spend some time socializing with them. On their way back to the States, the group's next stop is in Hawaii. This stop seems to be more recreational than the previous stop in the Philippines. There are several shots of the beach and coastline, and the men go swimming. The group socializes with some locals before visiting a hospital briefly. Once the men arrive back home, they are treated to a White House visit where they are greeted by President Johnson.<sup>55</sup> Jack shows off a caricature that he drew of Johnson while the president presents the group with some sort of certificate of appreciation. Jack is well aware of the

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<sup>55</sup> There is no firm date for this White House visit. The can in which the reel was stored had a date of 1988 which means that it was clearly mislabeled. One might assume, however that because Lyndon Johnson's administration held office from 1963 to 1969, and most of the Vietnam footage was shot in the mid-to-late 1960's, that Jack met the president sometime in 1968.

importance of this momentous occasion, and his expression shows his excitement in the film. He is beaming. This footage is clearly valuable and quite exciting; it is a wonderful find for the archive.

Reel 30 begins in the summer of 1969 with a husband and wife trip to South America. The first stop is in Columbia. Jack and Lee take a trip to the top of a mountain in a cable car and pan the camera across the landscape so that the entire city is visible from the mountaintop. Afterward, they go down to the city to see the sights. They sample some street food and film some small children playing in the road. The next stop on their vacation is Ecuador where they visit the equator with several other tourists before taking part in a street festival. It is a massive parade with costumed dancers and music. Jack and Lee dance in the street to the amusement of some locals. Later, they spend some time in an open air market. There are hundreds of merchants selling everything from scarves to whole, roasted hogs. It is a confusing display, but the couple seems unfazed. They navigate the market expertly, amused by all the different kinds of people they come across. Their next stop is Peru where Jack's first order of business is to try his hand at street sweeping yet again. His task complete, Jack and Lee spend some time walking through the city streets, conversing with local merchants and filming people and landscapes they find interesting. Jack meets several llamas along the way. Later, the couple visits some Incan pyramids in Machupicchu. The images of these pyramids and of the valley from the top of the mountain are stunning and have been well preserved.

Reel 31 continues the Rosen's trip around South America. The footage of Peru continues as Jack and Lee meet local people and sample the culture. At one point, Lee holds up

a newspaper for the camera. The headline reads, "Luna a Visita!" One wonders if this paper was the couple's first knowledge of the lunar landing, probably not, as Lee does not seem surprised. Later in the film, there is footage of a herd of llamas in the Peruvian countryside. The film cuts to the next stop on the tour which is Bolivia. The couple goes on a speedboat ride where they are able to film some local fishermen in handmade canoes. Later, they walk around a market where they sample some local food. In Bolivia, the moon landing is major news, and it seems that everyone the couple meets is reading about it in the paper. The film cuts again to the next stop on the tour, Chile. The couple spends time looking down on a city from the top of a mountain and filming the landscape from above the clouds. They also visit an art museum and film some of the statues that they find interesting before the film cuts again to their next stop in Argentina. This portion of the film is rather brief. There are a few shots of city streets and a few statues, but that is all. The film abruptly cuts again to the couple's next stop in Uruguay. The couple spends some time filming the countryside and three or four massive statues and monuments. They also cause a small stir with some schoolchildren when the youngsters see the camera and begin to break out of their line and pose for pictures.

The film then cuts to the couple's next stop in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Jack and Lee visit the city at street level and devote several minutes of film to the waterways and coastline. They socialize with several people on the beach and photograph the ocean and beachgoers. They seem to be spending a day at the beach, laying in the sun and playing in the water; Jack spends some time bodysurfing. At one point, they buy some fresh fruit from a vendor who is walking the coastline. Later, they take a trip to the famous statue of Jesus called "Christ the

Redeemer.” The images of the statue and of the city far below are visually stunning. The very last images of the film are of Jack purchasing some more fruit from a roadside vendor. These last two reels show the couple on a vacation with other tourists. It must have been part of a package that they purchased from a travel agent because in many of the shots, the tour bus can be seen in the background and other English-speaking couples are milling about behind and around the Rosens. In this way, it is similar to the Scandinavian tour because it feels manufactured in some way. The earlier vacation around the world had an independent feel to it, and while this trip seemed more fun than the Scandinavian tour, it was similar because of its touristy vibe.

Reel 32 is another compilation reel which spans several years from 1969 to 1973. The first images are of Harris in Mexico doing his best to feed an apple to a donkey. The film continues with more footage of the Mexican countryside but cuts abruptly to a shot of Ronnie and his girlfriend visiting with Jack, presumably back in New York. The film then cuts again to a shot of the “Famous Cafeteria” in Brooklyn and another trip to Coney Island. Jack and Lee walk the boardwalk for a few seconds before there is another cut to Jack posing for the camera with Harris, who is dressed in a tailored three-piece suit.<sup>56</sup> The film then cuts again to Jack on another USO tour with the National Cartoonist Society. This trip is to the Azores and Germany. While in the Azores, Jack films a local soccer match and poses in front of the camera with some local people on the street. There are also several shots of the army base. The film cuts again to the Society’s next stop in Germany. Jack takes some time to visit the Dachau concentration

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<sup>56</sup> During the early 1970s, Harris was employed by the Walt Disney Corporation as the Director of Hotel Planning. by the time this film was shot, he had clearly found his niche was making a solid living.

camp. He films some beautiful monuments which surround the compound and takes a tour of the camp including the crematorium. These images are quite striking, especially because they are taken in the dead of winter. The rest of the reel is devoted to Jack walking through the streets of various cities in Germany, though most of the footage is the same regardless of location. Jack speaks to local men and women on the street and poses for the camera with them, Jack points to the buildings, Jack films the buildings, etc. It is unclear exactly what Jack was supposed to be doing on this trip, though. The can that the film came in was labeled, "USO tour of Germany with National Cartoonist Society," but aside from the few brief images of the army base in the Azores, no military is present. And Jack's cartoonist friends seem to be absent throughout his trip, at least as far as the film is concerned.

Reel 33 was filmed in 1971, and it shows Jack and Lee on a cruise to Europe. There are several shots of the couple on the ship and walking around city streets. The exact country that they have stopped to visit is unclear. At one point, a ship passes with a Norwegian flag on the back of it, but when the couple is walking around in port, all the street and shop signs are written in English. Later in the film, Lee poses next to a sign which reads, "Southampton Art Gallery: Free Admission," which would indicate that the couple has stopped in England. The couple continues to walk the city streets and mingle with locals. They stop and watch a protest for a few minutes; men are shouting and holding signs which read, "Save Angela Davis." Later, they visit a castle before getting back on the ship. At their next stop, Lee poses next to another museum sign which reads, "Musee du Vieux Honfleur exposition Collection D'Armes," which translates roughly to something like "Honfleur Museum collection of old weapons." Honfleur is

a port city in northern France. The couple walks around the city, filming sail boats and local architecture. They buy some fruit from a merchant. The film cuts again to the couple taking a bus tour of Deauville, a beautiful port city in France. They film the coastline as they wade into the English Channel; the water must be cold because they do not stay in the water long. The couple continues to walk around the city, taking in all the local sights and sounds. There are many shots of local merchants, vendors and artisans. There is a wonderful shot of a city street with hundreds of people walking toward the camera. It is the kind of shot one might expect to see in a Hollywood movie on the streets of New York City during rush hour, very similar. Later, the couple goes to another museum, and they film several sculptures. The last few images of this reel are largely the same as the first few images. The couple walks around the city and film the buildings and people that they find interesting.

Reel 34 was also shot in 1971 and continues the couple's cruise footage. This reel opens with Jack riding a camel which is quite a different image than the end of the previous reel. One might guess that the couple has traveled farther south toward the Mediterranean, perhaps they are in Spain or Portugal or even Morocco. There are many images of women wearing burqas, which would make Morocco the most probably choice. Jack and Lee walk around an open air market, and sample some spices. Jack lets a snake charmer put a large snake around his neck. Later, they take a tour of the coast, and there are several shots of the coastline and beaches. Jack befriends some local teenage boys and poses for pictures with them. As the couple leaves, all the boys wave goodbye. The film cuts to the next stop on the tour, but it is unclear exactly where the Rosens have landed. The architecture and culture have certainly



changed, but there are no images of any signs to indicate where they might be. The Rosens take a trip around the city; at one point, they take part in some kind of ceremonial or instructional dance with some local performers. It is interesting that every cart and wagon that is filmed is being pulled by ox and that none of them have any wheels. They are essentially just wooden sleds being pulled up and down the city streets. It seems a strange practice. The last minutes of the film show the Rosens on the deck of the ship mingling with other passengers and sunbathing on the deck. Jack goes for a swim in the pool and does some skeet shooting over the side of the ship. When the ship pulls into New York Harbor, the very last image on the reel is of the World Trade Center's Twin Towers.

Reel 35 is filmed in the fall of 1972 and shows Jack and Lee on another trip to Europe. This reel opens in Prague. Jack takes a tour of the concentration camp at Terezin, and there are several shots of the camp including the giant sign at the entrance which reads, "Arbeit Macht Frei" (Work will make you free). Later, the couple visits the city with their tour group, and there are some beautiful shots of the city's skyline. Jack offers to help a man who is plastering signs onto a pole. The couple goes on a horse and buggy ride out into the country and visit a farm. Some men put on a show on horseback; they stand up on the backs of the horses as they gallop at a quick pace. The film cuts to the couple's next stop in Split, Croatia, where they visit the Mestrovic Gallery. There are also many shots of the coastline which is beautiful. Jack and Lee spend quite a bit of time looking out over the bay and filming the stunning landscape. These images are some of the most beautiful in the entire collection. The film cuts again to the couple's next stop in Vienna where they visit the Sigmund Freud House. The last few images of

the reel are of Jack and Lee spending some time in the city. They poke around some local shops and film some of the local architecture. There are some nice scenes of the couple walking around the city with the skyline in the background, but there they do not visit any places of note.

Reel 36 is a compilation of footage that was shot over the course of two years, 1972 and 1973. The opening scene is of a woman graduating from college. If the information on the can in which the reel was stored is correct, her name is Arlene, and she is receiving her Master's degree from Columbia University. She appears to be some relative of Jack and Lee, maybe a niece from the Detroit family or perhaps even Ron's girlfriend. The footage shows a large portion of the commencement ceremony. It is a large outdoor affair, and there are several extra shots of the campus in the background. The film cuts to a segment where Jack and Lee are going on a "Tauck Vacation Tour" to Quebec. Here, they visit Parc Montmorency, which is a national park and home to Montmorency Falls. There are quite a few shots of the falls as the couple takes in the site. The couple takes a tour of the coastline, and there is footage of a cliff that is teeming with birds, thousands of white birds nesting on the face of the cliff. The film cuts again as the couple have made their way to Maine. They film a giant statue of Paul Bunyan and much of the local landscape. There are several minutes of footage which show the beautiful fall foliage before the film cuts again to the Rosen's trip to Disney World. This section of the reel has footage of Disney's Main Street in 1973 with Cinderella's Castle in the background. Harris, who by this time, is employed by the Walt Disney Corporation, seems to be giving his father a tour of the park. There are a few minutes of footage of a parade with several

Disney characters walking by the camera. In the last few seconds of footage, the family is all back together for some occasion. They play on some playground equipment and mug for the camera.

Reel 37 was shot in 1974. In this reel, Jack and Lee are on a trip to the Pacific Northwest. They begin their vacation at Banff Springs which is in Alberta, Canada. There are several images of a river valley surrounded by mountains. The scenic views of this area are quite striking. The couple spends some time surrounded by nature before retiring to the swimming pool at their resort hotel. Here, they sunbathe and lounge in the water. Later, they take a day trip to Lake Louise which is short drive from their hotel. The images of the lake from a mountain vantage point are beautiful. The film cuts to the couple's next stop at the Butchart Gardens which is located in Victoria, British Columbia. Jack and Lee spend some time in the gardens, and there are several minutes of film devoted to the rows upon rows of colorful flowers. This footage is in near perfect condition and the bright colors really stand out. The film cuts again to the couple in Seattle. They take a trip to the top of the Space Needle and film the city from inside the landmark's restaurant. The couple also visits an aquarium and a zoo; Jack feeds a giraffe. The film cuts again to the final stop on the Rosen's trip. They are now in Oregon visiting Cooks Chasm, a series of tide pools on the coast. The last few images on the reel are of Jack and Lee spending some time visiting the coast of Oregon. There are several minutes of footage showing the coastline and local scenery.

Reel 38 was filmed between 1975 and 1976. The reel opens with a tour of Shenandoah National Park and some of the surrounding areas. Jack and Lee visit the Barter Theatre and the

State Theater of Virginia. The couple spends some time walking around on the streets and visiting local shops. The film cuts again to the Rosen's trip to Stone Mountain near Atlanta. There are several minutes of footage of the monument itself and also some footage of the valley below, filmed from atop the mountain. They also visit Underground Atlanta. The film cuts again to the couple back in Virginia where they visit Fort Monroe. Later, they watch a Revolutionary War reenactment at Colonial Williamsburg. Here, they spend some time walking around the living museum, visiting shops and taking in the sites. Jack puts his head in some stocks. Also, there is some footage of a group of protesters with signs reading, "Save the Whales." It is unclear why there are conservationists protesting outside of Colonial Williamsburg, perhaps simply because there are large crowds of people coming in and out. The original Colonial Williamsburg tour pamphlet that the Rosens used on this trip was stored along with the reel. The film then cuts again to the couple in Washington DC. Here, they visit the Washington Monument, the Lincoln Memorial, and the Capitol Building. This footage is also in great condition, and the images of these national monuments are crisp and bright. The film then cuts again to the Brooklyn home of Jack and Lee. They are visiting with Ronnie and Arlene, the woman from the Columbia graduation ceremony in reel 36, who by this time is clearly Ronnie's wife. Jack shows off some of his artwork. His walls are covered with caricatures of celebrities and famous historical figures. The film then cuts again to Jack and Lee visiting Harris in Orlando. They are staying at a resort, though there is no signage indicating which one. Jack, Lee, and Harris all spend some time together swimming in the resort's pool and sunbathing by the edge of the water.

Reel 39 was shot in 1977. This reel is one of the shortest in the collection with a running time at just over five minutes. It appears to be another husband and wife trip for Jack and Lee on a tour of Nova Scotia. The majority of the film is devoted to capturing the natural beauty of the region. The fall foliage is quite striking, and the camera pans back and forth from mountaintop to valley to catch as much of the landscape as possible. They are visiting Cape Breton Highlands National Park. The last few images on the reel are of Jack and Lee taking a tour of the coastline. Here, they visit a lighthouse and film the surrounding harbor.

Reel 40, shot between 1981 and 1982, is also a very short. It may actually be the shortest film in the collection at just over 3 minutes in length. In this reel, Jack and Lee are visiting Ronnie and Arlene who, by this time, have two small children. The whole family plays in the backyard. The children play on a jungle gym, and Jack pushes them on the swing set. Lee holds a baby and feeds it a bottle.

## THE PROCESS

This footage was collected as part of a cooperative collaboration between the University of Central Florida's film department and the special collections department in the school's library. The film department had been involved in several National Home Movie Day events prior to the acquisition of this footage. "In 2002, a small group of film archivists that included Snowden Becker, Brian Graney, Chad Hunter, Dwight Swanson, and Katie Trainor launched Home Movie Day, an annual grassroots event focused on screening and collecting amateur films from regional communities in the United States."<sup>57</sup> These annual events involve a group or institution reaching out to a community and asking for that community's home movie footage. The institution in charge, will then clean and screen those home movies at the event which offers potential donors the opportunity to see films which, often times, they have not seen in years. After the screening, the institution will offer the potential donors information on archival services. In many cases, they will offer the donors DVD copies of the footage in exchange for the original 8mm or 16mm prints. UCF had participated in two of these events with some success, even though no films were donated. The events were successful in that the university was reaching out to the community, and some good will was generated. Any time that the university can interact with the community in a positive way, the result is an overall benefit for both the school and the community. The fact remained, however, that the school did not have any films with which to begin working on the archive. The film department then

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<sup>57</sup> Mining, 15.

reached out to Harris Rosen, who has close ties to both the school and the Central Florida community. As a result, Mr. Rosen generously donated his family's collection of films.

With the films now in hand, the question of exactly what to do with them arose. This project is a result of that question. Mr. Rosen, in exchange for DVD copies of his films, donated the machinery necessary for the film department to transfer those reels to DVDs. The equipment, manufactured by a small company in Texas, is hand-made and quite expensive. The department could never have afforded it without Mr. Rosen's generosity. Each film was cleaned by hand with a film cleaning solution and re-spoiled onto a new, archive-friendly, plastic reel. Once this process was complete, each film was placed in a machine that acts like a modified projector. The film is played through the machine, where the images are projected into a mirror that condenses them. While the film is playing, a high definition video camera captures the images out of the air and records the captured images into a computer. This process sounds complicated, but it really is rather simple. A normal projector will "throw" its images onto a screen. This projector simply "throws" its images into the lens of a camera. Once the footage has been safely transferred into the computer, two files are made, one set of condensed files for safe storage and possible later use and one set of files which are used to create DVD copies. This entire process takes roughly two hours per film, and it is not automated. This means that someone must be in the room with the machine throughout the entire process, as the film is prone to slip through the machine and jam. If a film jams in the machine, the entire process must start over because there is no way to simply pause the footage on a reel of 16mm film. Over the course of forty films, there were obviously several

delays. The entire process which included cleaning, re-spooling, copying, and transfer to DVD, took nearly five months to complete. The positive that came out of this process, though, aside from the films themselves, was that it was an intensive learning experience for future acquisitions, and it served as a starting point for a program and workflow to be completed.

Once the film transfer was completed, there was some confusion as to who exactly was in charge of holding them, collecting them, and storing them. A valuable lesson was also learned when word came from Harris Rosen that he was still not certain that he wanted to donate all the films or just a portion of them. As a result of this new information and as a means of answering previous questions about where responsibility for the archive fell, a workflow was created. It is as follows:

- 1) Film department meets with Special collections to get all forms and paperwork necessary for patrons to donate films to archive.
- 2) Film department, through home movie days and various other events throughout the year, collects home movies from patrons around central Florida.
- 3) Patrons donate and sign over films, on the spot, to the archive.
- 4) Film department cleans, re-spools, and transfers films to video files. Puts films in archival containers and transfers video files to DVD's.
- 5) Film department delivers reels and DVD's to Special Collections while retaining the backup video files for possible future use.
- 6) Special Collections takes reels and DVD's and determines their value in relation to the Library's collection policies.
- 7) If the films meet Special Collections standards, they are retained and catalogued. If they do not meet Special Collections standards, the reels and DVD's are returned to patron via film department.



- 8) Special Collections department will work with library staff and History department staff through the RICHES program to set up a website where video files of the films can be seen by the general public.<sup>58</sup>

This workflow was designed with the successes and failures of the Harris Rosen project in mind, and it is meant to accentuate those things which worked well and decrease those things which caused problems during the project.

In addition to the workflow, the film department is prepared to implement another strategy to help the archive run more smoothly. Students will be asked to volunteer in the film department to help ease the pressure caused by time management issues related to donation and transfer. These students will be properly trained on all the necessary equipment, and they will also be given access to the transfer room after hours, which allows for the transfer side of the archive to run continuously and on a year-round basis. This will effectively solve the problem which arose with the Harris Rosen Collection, where one person was working on the films for a few hours every day. Now, no donation, regardless of size, should take longer to transfer than a week or two.

The only other addition to this project comes in the form of a recommendation. This is an interdepartmental project, and rightfully so. But there were many times throughout the course of the completion of this project that one department had no idea what any other department was doing. The workflow was partly designed to solve that problem, but in the probable event that some misunderstanding arises, there should be some single party or

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<sup>58</sup> Regional Initiative for Collecting the History, Experiences, and Stories of Central Florida.

committee who each department knows to contact. An interdepartmental liaison, someone with a working knowledge of the history department, the film department, and Special Collections, and the home movie archive, seems to be a necessary addition to the project, so if there is a problem, all three departments are not spending a whole day calling each other instead of solving the problem as soon as it arises.

## THE PAST IS PRESENT

This analysis has argued in favor of a home movie archive on the campus of UCF not only for the potential benefit of the citizens of Central Florida, but also for researchers from all fields of study. In an effort to provide an example of this benefit, an attempt at some historical interpretation must be made. While any number of scholars from a wide array of fields would benefit from the Rosen footage, the most easily identifiable activity in which the Rosens participate is vacationing and tourism, so that will be the focus of this section. Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen have argued that the past is always present.<sup>59</sup> It informs our decisions and shapes our worldview each and every day. This idea is particularly well represented in the Rosen footage. When the family traveled, either together on a family vacation or independently on tourist trips, they were participating in a long tradition of American travel history about which they were more than likely unaware. In doing so, the family footage validates much of the literature surrounding hundreds of years of American travel.

For scholars of American vacation and travel, the Rosen footage is a veritable treasure trove of information. Cindy Aaron argues that Americans, around the turn of the last century, began to establish a culture of vacationing in order to demonstrate their middle-class status.<sup>60</sup> “By the turn of the twentieth century, the middle class had established vacationing as a requirement for its physical health and for its spiritual and emotional wellbeing as well.”<sup>61</sup> The Rosens participated in this tradition of vacationing, and throughout the footage, clearly

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<sup>59</sup> In the Presence of the Past, 178.

<sup>60</sup> Cindy S. Aaron, *Working at Play: A History of Vacations in the United States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 5.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

demonstrate their middle class status. They vacationed nearly every year from 1940 to around 1977, either together as a family or in separate, smaller groups. It was obviously an important part of their lives, and throughout the footage Jack looks proud to be able to provide this type of leisure for his family. Aaron makes the case that as Americans began to travel, they rarely traveled outside their means. Not only did people from working class families, who could not afford to travel, not do so, but people from upper-and upper-middle class families, who could afford to travel, did so only by visiting places that they could reasonably afford.<sup>62</sup> Much of the allure of vacationing was to see and be seen, not simply to rest and recuperate after several months of hard work, and the price one paid for this privilege was diverse. The advertisement of status was the key. “A vacation spent at Mohonk (a small mountain resort in New York) may have reaffirmed status for those men whose class standing felt ambiguous or insecure and provided some compensation for the wealth and autonomy that remained out of reach.”

<sup>63</sup>However, by participating in the act of vacationing, even with a short trip to the hot springs or the seashore, middle class, white Americans distinguished themselves from the member of society who had to be concerned with the daily struggle of earning a living every single day. “Part of what distinguished middle-class people from those lower down the social ladder was the possibility, if not necessarily the guarantee, of a summer vacation.”<sup>64</sup> The Rosens, at the very least, belong to this tradition.

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 29.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 57.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, 46.

Another tradition to which the Rosens belong is their decision to spend time camping in the mountains of New York. At the turn of the century, discriminatory practices towards Jews were such that many Jewish Americans chose to build their own vacation resorts and hotels, usually in the Catskill Mountains near New York's large Jewish population.<sup>65</sup> The Rosens spent much of their vacation time, especially in the children's early years, at various camps and outdoor lodges, several of which are specifically designed for Jewish patrons.<sup>66</sup> Susan Sessions Rugh explains how this tradition of Jews vacationing in the mountains evolved over time. "From the end of the nineteenth century until the decline of anti-Semitism in the two decades after World War II, the Catskills resorts provided Jewish families with their own vibrant community."<sup>67</sup> These camping-style resorts, with bungalow cabins, allowed Jewish families to establish a vacation tradition for themselves without the discrimination and prejudices that came along with traveling the country outside of these mountain places. They offered a sort of home a away from home with the added benefit of offering a sense of community and familiarity, especially for immigrant Jews who could relate the communal nature of the resort to the small communities they had left behind in Europe.<sup>68</sup> The Rosens participated in a continuation of this tradition, and for any researcher who is interested in this material, the footage of these family vacations will prove invaluable.

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid, 218.

<sup>66</sup> The Rosens go camping in reels 1,3,4,5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, and 13. Much of this footage takes place at the Circle Lodge, operated by the Workman's Circle Organization which is a national Jewish social organization.

<sup>67</sup> Susan Sessions Rugh, *Are We There Yet?: The Golden Age of American Family Vacations* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2008), 169.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 170.

Regardless of cultural heritage or religious background, camping is another American vacationing tradition in which the Rosens participated. As early as the 1850's, American pleasure-seekers had been going off into the woods for sport and recreation. Aaron explains that, "the growing popularity of camping stemmed, in part, from an appeal that the wilderness in general held for American people by the last half of the nineteenth century."<sup>69</sup> One of the major problems associated with early vacations, Aaron explains, was the uneasy feelings associated with spending time at leisure. The strong cultural and moral associations which were assigned to hard work in the early nineteenth century were difficult barriers to cross, once the allure of vacationing began to take root in the country. People enjoyed getting away from work and the city, but they were wary of spending too much idle time, lest they lose their virtues which were grounded in a strong Puritan work ethic.<sup>70</sup> One of the ways in which turn-of-the-century Americans overcame this hurdle was to go camping. Aaron goes on:

Camping seemed to fit perfectly the needs of a growing vacationing public. It promised health, rest, and enjoyment –all for a moderate price. While much less self-consciously a time for intellectual self-improvement than a vacation at a chautauqua or even a touring vacation, camping nevertheless offered the spiritual benefits that allegedly came from close contact with nature and the physical benefits that accrued from fresh air and healthful outdoor living. Moreover, campers in remote woods or forests remained distant from the temptations and perils of fashionable resorts. And, most importantly, camping required enough effort to keep vacationers safe from the potential dangers of idleness.<sup>71</sup>

The Rosen footage mirrors this trend of middle class, urban families seeking refuge from city life in the outdoors. The Rosen's vacations were rooted in a tradition of American camping which had begun nearly 100 years before them. Rugh also adds some insight into the popularity of

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<sup>69</sup> Working at Play, 156.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, 157.

camping vacations in post-WWII America. “In a time of tight budgets for young families, the camping explosion was fueled by its affordability.”<sup>72</sup> This theme of affordability seems also to have been a camping tradition in and of itself. In the decades during and immediately after the Second World War, technological advancements for the home and family were attempting to make life easier for middle-class families, and camping was one activity that benefited from the increase in consumer spending. “The basic list of equipment [that campers would need] in 1958 included camp kitchen, portable ice chest, gasoline stove, cooking utensils, and a tent.”<sup>73</sup> All of these items were affordable for a middle-class family, and they made life considerably more convenient and vacations much more enjoyable than they had been when Americans were going camping in the 1870s. The Rosen footage, it should be noted, is almost outside the range of dates that Rugh is describing. They took most of their camping vacations in the 1940s, but they continued to camp and travel into the woods for recreation into the 1950s which is the decade in which Rugh begins her analysis. The Rosen’s last camping trip together as a family was in reel 13 in 1958. Regardless of the timeframe, however, it is true that the Rosens were participants in a tradition of American travel and vacation culture in which middle-class families took to the wilderness for sport and recreation. It offered affordable and comfortable time away from the city, and more importantly for post-WWII families, it offered and chance for family togetherness that many other vacation locales could not.

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<sup>72</sup> Are We There Yet?, 122.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 123.

Camping in the 1950s, says Rugh, was marketed as a family activity, especially for young families with young children.<sup>74</sup> It was affordable, because children did not have to wear a different outfit every day or even be particularly clean. There was no one to impress or pass judgment in the wilderness, so a few pairs of clothes were all that was needed. In addition, camping was marketed as a way for young parents to instill in the children the beauty of nature, a byproduct of which was patriotism. “Children were thought to be natural campers, curious explorers who needed to take only a few precautions for their own safety. Fishing, boating, hiking, and swimming drew children away from the campsite to a more immediate experience with nature.”<sup>75</sup> The Rosens clearly fit this mold of a young family with young children. The footage of their early vacations provides yet more proof of this type of vacation being a benefit for young parents. The footage offers images not at all dissimilar to what Rugh is describing, young families with small children playing in the woods or playing in the water. Camping seemed to provide, at least for Jack and Lee Rosen, an ideal vacation experience. They could take the children, and themselves, out of the city for a few weeks, and there were few, if any, social requirements. The children could play all day without too much attention and without significant fear of harm, and it was inexpensive. As the children got older, and Jack and Lee learned how to better handle their two boys, the vacations became more elaborate, but these early camping trips seemed to serve the family well in terms of vacationing on a budget and getting away for some much needed relaxation. As the boys (and Jack and Lee) got older, their vacations did, indeed, become more elaborate, but in some ways they also became less

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid, 122.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 121.



complicated. Once Jack and Lee began to travel by themselves to various locations around the world, they began to take part in an activity which is all together different from vacationing: tourism.

Vacationing is typically associated with a respite from work, relaxation and recuperation. It produces the experience of a new place or new scenery as a byproduct, but the end result, generally speaking, seems to be personal and/or spiritual renewal in the form of an extended stay at one place. Tourism, on the other hand, is an end in itself, where new places and new scenery are the goal and rest, relaxation, and renewal are the byproducts. "Tourists have a pretty bad reputation. [They], both popular and scholarly wisdom contend, are vulgar, superficial, provincial, gullible, and entirely lacking in taste or sophistication."<sup>76</sup> Aaron attempts to defend the tourist, though, especially the tourist of the early nineteenth century. She allows that the popular conceptions about tourists are probably accurate, and she admits that they do have their downfalls, not the least of which is an often destructive economic influence on the place in which they choose to visit. She is quick, however, to point out that, "it is important to ask what they might [be] doing instead."<sup>77</sup> Tourists, more often than not, seek as much or more personal growth and spiritual renewal than do their resort-going counterparts, but they are attempting to add some educational and experience-based knowledge to their list of activities. Tourists began to increase in the early nineteenth century, and they did so in a culture in which middle-class families were increasingly participating in vacations fraught with moral and spiritual dangers. "Tourists, on the other hand, were busy

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<sup>76</sup> Working at Play, 154.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid, 155.

vacationers, people with a purpose. They left home not only to enjoy recreation and amusement but to add to their stock of knowledge, experience, and information. Rather than idling away time at a resort, drinking juleps and flirting with strangers, a tourist could feel engaged in a constructive activity.”<sup>78</sup> Aaron allows for the possibility that most of the places in which tourists spent their time were manufactured amusements, created by business-savvy entrepreneurs, and the educational value that American tourists were seeking was somewhat less than what they bargained for. But she wonders if the activities associated with tourism were not still more substantial enterprises than spending a week or two at a beach or resort. When tourism’s faults and attributes are added together, she concludes that is a more noble activity than most people suggest.<sup>79</sup>

Hal K. Rothman, on the other hand, does not necessarily refute Aaron’s assessment, but he does not excuse tourism of the destruction it causes. Calling tourism a “devil’s bargain,” he explains, “From this one enormous devil’s bargain flows an entire collection of closely related conditions that complement the process of change in overt and subtle ways. Tourism transforms culture into something new and foreign; it may or may not rescue economies.”<sup>80</sup> Rothman argues in favor of the human element of a place, and says that tourism helps to disenfranchise the local inhabitants. Local governments, spectators, and various businessmen with economic interests often promote tourism as an investment worthy of consideration, but the resulting decay in the character of a town or community is usually more than anyone could

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Hal K. Rothman, *Devil’s Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth-Century American West* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 10.

reasonably expect or want. “The embrace of tourism triggers a contest for the soul of a place.”<sup>81</sup> Tourism simultaneously promotes a community and undercuts it by creating a mythologized version of itself that must continuously be redefined and propped up, and that is the basis for his argument against the practice. Locals are forced to play a role in the scripted drama of their own lives; they are cast in the part of Happy Native. Rothman argues that not only does this practice challenge precisely what tourists are there to do, educate themselves and learn about a community’s history and culture, but it also creates a standard of living that is demeaning and is both physically and emotionally exhausting for locals. He goes on, “Locals must be what visitors want them to be in order to feed and clothe themselves and their families, but they also must guard themselves, their souls, and their places from people who less appreciate its special traits.”<sup>82</sup> Still, his argument is not that tourism is inherently wrong. Rothman simply wishes to inform his readers that by accepting tourism as an economically viable source of income, or by actively partaking in tourism as part of a vacation or pleasure trip, tourist towns and visitors alike must understand that there are consequences of their relationship, and the goal of both accepting and spending tourist dollars never fully delivers on its promise. Both tourists and locals must be wary of the mythologizing aspect of the industry, and they must be ready for the consequences.<sup>83</sup>

Rothman’s arguments were centered around the American West, but they hold true for tourists in general, in all areas that promote themselves as tourist destinations. Marguerite

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, 12.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 125.

Shaffer explains that tourism by and large, but especially in the West, has a long tradition in America that is rooted in mythology, just as Rothman suggests. In 1906, the Governor of Utah, John Cutler, presented an initiative to a group of businessmen and politicians that was designed to bring tourist dollars into his state. The promotion was dubbed “See America First,” stemming from the fact that Americans had spend upwards of \$150 million on European vacations in the previous year, and it was designed to encourage Americans to bring their dollars to the “Intermountain West” rather than Europe.<sup>84</sup> This message served a dual purpose, according to Shaffer. In post-Civil War America, every region of the country was attempting to develop a unique sense of self and reassure their citizens that they shared a common history. Shaffer argues that, “the story of See America First was not simply about the development of tourism in the West, it was also about the negotiation of national identity.”<sup>85</sup> The creation of a new national myth, the American West, was crucial in the development of this shared national identity. Turn of the century America was tumultuous terrain for a class-conscious citizenry who, as Cindy Aaron has explained, were looking for ways to establish a culture and ground themselves in solid sense of self. Shaffer explains, “Urbanization and increased immigration precipitated by the forces of industrialization and incorporation, underscored by what seemed to be pervasive societal corruption, caused many urban Americans to turn nostalgically to the wilderness represented in the disappearing frontier for a simpler more robust life.”<sup>86</sup> National and state governments as well as large corporate interests were keen to provide vacation and

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<sup>84</sup> Marguerite Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940* (Washington: Smithsonian Institute Press, 2001), 27.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid*, 36.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid*, 64.

tourist locations to aid in them in their pursuit. National Parks and natural wonders like Yellowstone, Mt. Rainier, and the Grand Canyon became images of American strength and national pride, and the US government promoted tourism to these places in order that Americans might better know their own country.<sup>87</sup> The railroads also began to expand their lines to places like Glacier National Park and Yellowstone in order to cash in on tourist dollars, all the while promoting their vacation packages in terms of patriotic sentiment.<sup>88</sup> In other words, being a tourist meant being a better American.

The Rosen footage fits squarely within this argument, even though the Rosens were touring in the succeeding century. Again, they were part of a tourist tradition in the United States, and because of this, their footage becomes invaluable to researchers in this field. Aaron and Shaffer are making two distinctly different, though not dissimilar, arguments, and the Rosen's home movies show that those arguments do not have to be mutually exclusive. Aaron argues that middle-class, white Americans used vacationing to express their class identity. They performed their class status by showing their peers that they could afford to take time off from work and a week or two at their leisure. Aaron, then, gives middle-class Americans a great deal of agency by allowing them the role of creating their own class rules. Shaffer, on the other hand, makes the case that touring and vacationing was heavily promoted by both the national government and the railroad industries as a way for Americans to express their patriotism and perform their American-ness. This argument takes a top-down approach, giving much of the credit for the spread of the family vacation to the government and large corporate interests. In

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid, 114.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, 59.

both cases, though, the authors are arguing that vacationing and tourism was a way for Americans (white, upper- and upper-middle class Americans) to perform a task. In much the same way that Rothman argued that locals must perform their identity for tourists, Aaron and Shaffer argue that tourists are performing as well, whether it be patriotism or class status. The Rosen footage proves that these two ideas can both be true. Jack and Lee were certainly taking part in a tradition of middle-class status when they went on vacations with their children. It must have been difficult for the family to afford to take off work for a few weeks every summer to go camping, but they did. And they did it year after year. It was important for Jack to be able to provide for his family in this way, and the footage of these family excursions into the mountains, certainly validates Cindy Aaron's argument. Likewise, once the boys were older, and the couple began to travel on their own, they took part in a tourist culture that undoubtedly allowed them to feel as though they were learning more about America and becoming more well-rounded citizens. Whether they were lured to certain places by government programs or corporate interests remains up for debate. They did, however, visit Plymouth Rock and Colonial Williamsburg, so their desire to learn about, or at least take part in, American history is evident.<sup>89</sup>

Lastly, the other readily identifiable tradition in which the Rosens participated was Dark Tourism. John Lennon and Malcolm Foley describe this practice as a mixture of tourist products both associated with and stemming from "the late modern world."<sup>90</sup> Dark Tourism, then,

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<sup>89</sup> Reels 13 and 38, respectively.

<sup>90</sup> John Lennon and Mark Foley, *Dark Tourism: The Attraction of Death and Disaster* (London: South-Western Cengage Learning, 1988), 3.

revolves around the post-modern struggle for people to come to terms with atrocity by visiting places like concentration camps, places of assassination, and the like. Jack and Lee take part in dark tourism by visiting several Holocaust monuments and concentration camps including the Warsaw Ghetto in reel 20, Dachau camp in reel 32, and Terezin camp in reel 35. Lennon and Foley make three assertions about this phenomenon, “first, that global communication technologies play a major part in creating the initial interest...second, that the objects of dark tourism themselves appear to introduce anxiety and doubt about the project of modernity..., and third, that the educative elements of sites are accompanied by elements of commoditization and a commercial ethic (whether explicit or implicit) which accepts that visitation (whether purposive or incidental) is an opportunity to develop a tourism product.”<sup>91</sup>

The Rosen footage provides insight into at least two of these assertions. When Jack and Lee visit these sites, they do so, presumably, because they have been educated about their location, significance and history. They did not simply stumble across these sites while they were touring other parts of Poland, Germany or Czechoslovakia. So, in this sense, Lennon and Foley appear to be correct that global communication plays a significant role in dark tourism. Their second assertion, that dark tourism provides uncertainty about the process of modernization, seems difficult to confirm based on the Rosen footage alone. When Jack and Lee visit these sites, they do so briefly and without much footage to document their stay. What little can be seen of them in these sites shows them to be appropriately somber and reflective, but afterwards, they go about their business of touring the countryside, seemingly without

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid, 11.

much thought to their previous experience in the camps. To suggest that they put those places out of their minds rather quickly after they left seems foolish, but the footage does not seem to support Lennon and Foley's argument that they spent any significant deal of time contemplating the nature or success of modernity. Quite the opposite, in fact, seems true. The couple left the camps on busses full of people to tour modern, industrialized cities then boarded a plane to go tour other industrialized cities, and it is well within the realm of possibilities that the whole trip was put together as part of a package by a travel agent, quite a testament to modernity. Lennon and Foley's third assertion, that these sites of dark tourism promote, rightly or wrongly, a sort of commoditization of disaster seems entirely plausible, based on the Rosen footage. As was previously mentioned, the couple was part of a tour group when they visited these sites. They specifically had to go to a travel agent, sign up, buy a ticket, and travel to these places with the intention of observing sites where atrocities took place. The footage, however, succeeds where Lennon and Foley's text fails. The authors take pains to express that they do not intend to pass judgment on the enterprise of participating in dark tourism, but one cannot help but assign an element of unseemliness to the practice when reading their arguments. The footage, on the other hand, shows a young, Jewish couple visiting places to which they no doubt feel a strong connection. The scenes of Jack and Lee walking around these areas always show them being pensive and respectful, and at no point does it feel distasteful. That is the benefit of being able to see an example of history, rather than reading an interpretation of it, and it is more evidence which supports the need for this type of archive.



David Simpson suggests that there is a human need to commemorate the dead as a way of coping, particularly when atrocities, cruelty, or massive casualties are involved. “Rituals of memorialization exist to assimilate these intense and particular griefs into received vocabularies and higher, broader realms than the merely personal.”<sup>92</sup> These rituals stem from the fact that, as he puts it, “Every death is horribly immediate and unrepeatable.”<sup>93</sup> There becomes a need, then, in the popular mind to represent what is essentially unrepresentable. There is a human need to memorialize, to remember, and to try to understand especially as it pertains to the Nazi genocide. There is a mental and emotional shock involved with events such as that crisis, and there is a mental and emotional need to make sure that those who died in an atrocity such as that are not forgotten.<sup>94</sup> The Rosens, by going to these sites, seem to simply be taking part in this human need to understand, rather than participating in any sort of cultural rejection of modernity. They are taking part in a ritual of remembering, and in a broader sense, it might be argued, they are taking part in a larger ritual of home movie making. Paul Connerton argues that, “images of the past and recollected knowledge of the past are conveyed and sustained by (more or less ritual) performances.”<sup>95</sup> In this way, home movies can be seen as a form of ritual. The filming of significant events is a repetitive form of respect for the event being filmed in an attempt by the filmmaker to remember or promote the authenticity and importance of the event. Home movies are markers for collective memory, and the filming is a sort of ceremony. Connerton asserts that, “the most important category for

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<sup>92</sup> David Simpson, *9/11: The Culture of Commemoration* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 2.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>95</sup> Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 40.

our understanding of social life, then, will not be that of cause and effect, but that of meaningfulness.”<sup>96</sup> The Rosens, by visiting these dark sites are on a search for meaning, but this quest is not limited to dark tourism. Whether they are visiting Warsaw Ghetto, going on a world tour, vacationing in the mountains, or throwing a birthday party, the family always has their camera ready to film the occasion, to display to themselves (and their friends with whom they will ultimately share the footage) that these events are important. Viewed in this way, then, home movie making as an *activity*, not just home movies as a *product*, becomes another way in which a community might be brought together through an archive of this type. Most people, to one degree or another, can remember taking pictures or filming events which are important to them. It is a ritual to which everyone can identify.

In their study of how people understand the past, Rosenzweig and Thelen discuss how many Americans use the past to live in the present. “Respondents seemed to circle back to some basic understanding of ‘experience’ as starting assumptions for their reflections.”<sup>97</sup> They observe that many people look to how their predecessors handled certain situations in order to better understand how they, themselves, should perform in similar circumstances. People tend to look for a tradition, an example of protocol, some reassurance that they are not alone in history. The Rosen footage does not necessarily show the family *searching* for tradition, but it does show them *acting* on tradition. Simply by living their lives, they take an active role in perpetuating a set of customs and practices that had been set up by generations long before them. They were, as Rosenzweig and Thelen might suggest, in the *Presence of the Past*. Their

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid, 31.

<sup>97</sup> Presence of the Past, 36.

footage shows them as active participants in a historical tradition, and it reinforces the purpose of this project. Not only will researchers benefit from being able to connect the Rosens and other families like them to historical narratives, but also, individual members of the Central Florida community will be able to connect the Rosens and other families to themselves. Everyone will be able to use this archive to bring the past into the present.

## CONCLUSION

This analysis has confronted a number of issues surrounding the goals and future of public history. Patricia Mooney-Melvin has explained that much of what historians before 1970 were interested in doing was training students in universities to become teachers of future students. The commitment to service outside the university system was lacking, and that problem was addressed largely by historians who moved history out of the classroom and into the community.<sup>98</sup> Public historians' primary goal, then, is to reach out to their communities in order to help people better understand, or better connect with, their own, shared past. A home movie archive on the campus of the University of Central Florida would certainly accomplish this goal, and the University is committed to that kind of enterprise. The university's mission statement reads:

The University of Central Florida is a public multi-campus, metropolitan research university that stands for opportunity. The university anchors the Central Florida city-state in meeting its economic, cultural, intellectual, environmental and societal needs by providing high-quality, broad-based education and experienced-based learning; pioneering scholarship and impactful research; enriched student development and leadership growth; and highly relevant continuing education and public service initiatives that address pressing local, state, national, and international issues in support of the global community.<sup>99</sup>

By promoting "public service initiatives," the university has positioned itself squarely within the boundaries of public history programs like a home movie archive. This archive would provide the community with a way for the residents of Central Florida to connect with their past and connect with each other by recognizing their shared history. In addition, the university would

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<sup>98</sup> Patricia Mooney-Melvin, 9.

<sup>99</sup> Located on the University of Central Florida homepage via <http://www.ucf.edu/mission/>

benefit by becoming a leader in an emerging field of research, another key tenet of the school's mission.

The Rosen footage itself also highlights the trajectory of several fields including public history and film archival. Both fields have been moving further away from a top-down style of analysis, recognizing the enormous potential for the common man to tell his own story. These two fields have intersected at the home movie, and they are beginning to work hand in hand in developing strategies to seek out and preserve this film heritage before it is lost forever. The films also raise intellectual questions relating not only to the images produced but about the act of producing the images. This collection exemplifies the notion that there is more to the home movie than an amateur pastime. Amateur film provides exploration into serious academic study in any field whose researchers are willing to take the time to watch, and the Rosen Collection proves that fact. The Rosen footage is exciting in its own right due to the size of the volume and the decades it covers. To be able to witness a man, especially a prominent Central Floridian, grow up on screen is a researcher's dream. Forty films spanning over forty years in the life of one family will prove invaluable to any number of researchers from several different fields of study. These films are a perfect example of what Patricia Zimmermann says is a "visual practice emerging out of localized cultures."<sup>100</sup> These films and this project have allowed for the development of an archive that will serve both the community and the university well. The project has provided a basis for future acquisitions and the smooth operation of a professional archive for years to come.

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<sup>100</sup> Mining, 1.

The fields of public history and film archival have coalesced to some degree around the same ideals that are represented in the form of home movies. The project of setting up a home movie archive at the University of Central Florida was, and will continue to be, a difficult task, but the rewards will be great. The Central Florida community has a need for an archive of this nature, and the University has the opportunity to provide a service to that community that is completely unique to the area. The National Film Preservation Board currently lists on its website only eight archives in the entire state of Florida who list amateur film as part of their holdings. These archives are located in Miami, Tallahassee, Palm Springs, Dania Beach, Ft. Lauderdale, and Gainesville.<sup>101</sup> Of those, only two, the “Lynn and Louis Wolfson II Florida Moving Image Archives” in Miami and “The Florida State Archives: Film and Video Collection” in Tallahassee, are actively pursuing home movies. The Wolfson Archives represents the largest moving image archives in the state of Florida, and their mission is to collect any and all relevant material related to the entire state.<sup>102</sup> Home movies are only one small part of a much larger collection of their holdings. The Florida State Archives have a similar goal, and like the Wolfson Archives, home movies represent but a small portion of their holdings. The archive’s larger concern is with the agricultural history of the state.<sup>103</sup> Not only is Central Florida conspicuously absent from the National Film Preservation Board’s list of accessible film archives, but the other archives in the state, even the ones dedicated to moving images, do not focus on home movies.

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<sup>101</sup> National Film Preservation Board website. Accessed on 17 August, 2010 via Library of Congress.  
<http://www.loc.gov/film/arch.html#fl>

<sup>102</sup> Lynn and Louis Wolfson II Florida Moving Images Archives website. Accessed on 17 August 2010.  
<http://www.mdc.edu/wolfsonarchives/>

<sup>103</sup> Florida State Archives: Film and Video Collection website. Accessed on 17 August 2010.  
<http://www.floridamemory.com/PhotographicCollection/catalog.cfm>

The opportunity for the University of Central Florida to be a leader in this field is clear and attainable. Not only would UCF join its academic counterparts in Gainesville, Miami, and Tallahassee by introducing a film archive to its campus, but the university could become a leader in the field of film archival and public history by focusing its attention on the area of Central Florida, bringing its community together through home movies. Establishing a home movie archive at the University of Central Florida will aid the residents of Central Florida and researchers from all areas of academia in more fully realizing the vast wealth and potential of these documents.

At the time of this writing, American news is often bleak. The War in Afghanistan has officially become America's longest war, the Gulf Oil Crisis has proved to be more costly and complicated a cleanup project than anyone anticipated, and the US still has not fully recovered from the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression.<sup>104</sup> Communities all over the country could use a sense of connection, not necessarily to remember better times but to aid in the knowledge that we are all in this together. Home movies remind us of that fact. They help us to remember that we are not so different; we share a common history, if not common cultures. Rosenzweig and Thelen urged their readers to "learn about the bridges people constructed between their personal pasts and larger historical stories."<sup>105</sup> If there is one great resource that can accomplish this goal, it is the home movie. This project was designed and

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<sup>104</sup>Rick Hampson, "Afghanistan: America's Longest War" in USA Today (published 5/28/2010) Accessed online 17 August 2010: [http://www.usatoday.com/news/military/2010-05-27-longest-war-afghanistan\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/military/2010-05-27-longest-war-afghanistan_N.htm)  
Ray Henry And Jay Reeves, "Gulf Oil Crisis Could Stretch into the Fall" in USA Today (published 6/6/2010) Accessed online 17 August 2010: [http://www.usatoday.com/money/topstories/2010-06-05-463110359\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/money/topstories/2010-06-05-463110359_x.htm)  
Barbara Hansen and Juan Thomassie, "Latest economic index forecasts slowing growth through December" In USA Today (published 7/28/2010) Accessed online at <http://www.usatoday.com/money/economy/economic-outlook.htm>

<sup>105</sup> Presence of the past, 115.

completed with that goal in mind, to connect people to their larger historical past by helping them connect with their own personal histories and memories.



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