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Film Inspection/Prep Workshop

Objective: Introduce concepts for film inspection and preparation for safe projection. Using 16mm, provide an opportunity to perform light film repair. Allow participants to examine signs of film decay/damage, and to learn from a history of past inspections.

I. Prepping for Inspection

- a. Find corresponding Inspection Card for reel being inspected.
 - i. If none, create a new one. (Refer to example on following page)
- b. Open film can safely.
 - i. Take note of film gauge, mold, and vinegar syndrome (could also smell like cleaning solutions or mothballs – you'll know).
- c. Is film wound on a projection reel or core?
 - i. If on a core, very carefully put onto a split reel.
- b. Fix reel onto rewind.
 - i. Use spring clamps on universal rewinds
- c. Add and label new leader if needed.
 - i. Use at least 4' of leader at both head and tail (footage is marked on bench)
 - ii. IS Lab, Title (Reel Number if applicable), Filmmaker (if applicable), Head
- d. Thread onto take-up reel.
 - i. Use tension wind; do not tape leader to hub of reel
- e. Find (or create) notch to place in synchronizer. Set at Zero.

II. Inspecting Film

- a. Reel through film stopping every so often to sample images and sections/examine any inconsistencies/make light repair to bad splices, perfs, tears, etc.
- b. Possible notes for inspection:
 - i. Base: Nitrate? / Acetate? / Polyester?
 1. Diacetate? / Triacetate?
 - ii. Positive? / Negative? / Reversal?
 - iii. Edge Code
 - iv. Black & White / Color
 1. Sharpness/contrast/fading?
 - v. Silent / Sound

1. Variable Area? Variable Density?
 - vi. Is film shrinking/warping/curling? (may just need to acclimate)
 - vii. Is film dirty? Make note of any cleaning or removing of surface dirt.
 - viii. Is film oily? Just take note.
 - ix. Emulsion scratches? Where? Light, moderate, or heavy?
Vertical/Horizontal?
 - x. Base scratches? When? Light, moderate, or heavy? Vertical/Horizontal?
 - xi. Take note of location of perf damage and repairs made.
 - xii. Note location and number of splices.
 1. Indicate whether splices are tape or cement
 2. Note any repairs.
 3. Re-check edge code, stock, etc. after every splice – it may be an entirely different piece of film!
 - xiii. When making splices, do you notice shrinkage?
 - xiv. Find (or create) end notch and note length. Does it match card?
 - xv. Feel free to take note, research, ask about other markings/decay/questionable or frightening findings.
 - xvi. Initial
- c. Add leader at tail if there is none.
 - i. IS Lab, Title (Reel Number if applicable), Filmmaker (if applicable), Tail

III. Rewind film

- a. Projection orientation
 - i. Heads-out
 - ii. There is no preferred emulsion orientation for 16 mm and 8 mm. Original reversal films, such as those used in cameras, are wound emulsion out. Prints from negatives and reversal dupes are normally wound emulsion in.
- b. If the wind is too tight, too loose, or uneven (film pack is ridged), wind through it again.
 - i. No cinching (pulling the end of the film to tighten the wind)! It is tempting to do this rather than winding the film through again, but cinching can damage emulsion, and is very bad film handling practice.
- c. Tape down leader.
 - i. Use a “courtesy tab” —turn the last ¼” or so of tape over on itself, and put that end of the tape on the leader. This makes it easier for the next person who handles the film to completely remove the tape.

IV. File for projection

Example Film Inspection Card:

Title	Guage, Color/B&W, Sound/Silent
Frame Count:	
Date of Inspection: Edge Code (symbols & date), Base: (Nitrate, Acetate, Polyester)	
Tape Splices: (list foot/frame & and any repairs), Cement Splices: (list foot/frame & any repairs). Perf Damage and Tearing (list foot/frame of repair). Make note of any cleaning and removing of artifacts. Scratching/ware: (Light, Moderate, Heavy base and/or emulsion scratches. Note if vertical or horizontal). Other markings/decay/questionable findings. Or, if a really nice print - note that :)	
	Initial
Date of Inspection: Anything different from last inspection?	
N/A if no new inspection notes.	Initial
ETC. ETC. ETC.	