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Utilizing this new medium of mass-communication: the Regional Film Distribution Program at the Cleveland Public Library, 1948-1951.

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Abstract

In 1948, the Carnegie Corporation made grants of $25,000 to the Cleveland Public Library and $15,000 to the Missouri State Library to set up 3-year regional educational film distribution programs in northern Ohio and in Missouri. In Cleveland, films were distributed among a consortium of 10 library systems in the region; twenty library systems participated in Missouri. These successful programs served as models for other library systems, and lasted well into the last quarter of the twentieth century, when films in libraries were replaced with videocassettes and later DVDs. This paper explores the antecedents of the program at the Cleveland Public Library as well as the careers of the two women, Patricia Blair and Virginia Beard, who were responsible for the design of the program and for its success. Both became nationally-recognized experts on the use of films in public libraries and rose to national prominence in the American Library Association.

Keyword : public libraries, motion pictures, educational films, documentary films, audiovisual materials

Introduction

Although the first recorded use of film in a public library was at the Madison Public Library in 1910[1], there is almost nothing on the history of film collections in public libraries in the scholarly library and information science literature. Library historians have essentially overlooked the medium, and academics and practitioners alike appear to be almost completely unaware that there is such a history. Cocciolo, in his report on a partnership involving documentary film between PBS and public libraries, cites nothing earlier than 2005 in regard to public libraries and video and nothing at all about public libraries and film.[2] Those with an interest must look to the film studies and film preservation literature to learn about the long and rich history of this subject area.

In order to begin to rectify this situation, this paper will explore the antecedents of the regional educational film distribution program at the Cleveland Public Library, established in 1948 with a grant from the Carnegie Corporation. Films for circulation were distributed among a consortium of 10 urban library systems in the region, which served as a model for other library systems, and lasted well into the last quarter of the twentieth century, when films in libraries were replaced with videocassettes and later DVDs. A grant was made at the same time to the Missouri State Library to set up a similar program among twenty rural library systems statewide, and relevant aspects of that program will be included in the analysis.

Central to Cleveland's program were Patricia Blair and Virginia Beard, who were responsible for the design of the program and for its success. Both became nationally-recognized experts on the use of films in public libraries and rose to national prominence in the American Library Association (ALA). Their careers will be examined at length, both for what they can tell

us about the development of this program and about the changing role of women in librarianship.

Literature Review

In one of the very few articles in the library literature devoted to this topic, Ronald F Sigler traces the history of the use of film from the first decade of the 20th century, when it was used primarily to promote the reading of books, to its use as a means of adult education in the 1930s through the censorship problems of the 1950s and 60s to the revival of interest in audiovisual materials in the 1970s. The article provides a thorough, if cursory, overview of the major events and individuals involved, but lacks both depth and analysis. The article notes that it is a "condensation of a chapter of a book by Mr. Sigler to be published by the American Library Association,"[3] but no such book could be located.

The only other scholarly article that could be located in the library literature is Joseph W. Palmer's 1977 history of the Carnegie Corporation's 1941-1954 grants in support of various public library film programs, including the programs in Ohio and Missouri. Palmer demonstrates that the motive behind the grants and the movement was hegemonic, the desire to reach "the masses on an informational and emotional level, educating them about the world and society in which they lived and guiding their thinking into positive and socially constructed channels."[4] The focus of his article is on the Carnegie Corporation and its grants, as a whole, rather than any single grant.

Film archivist Elena Rossi-Snook provides a more theoretical and analytical analysis of the introduction of motion pictures into libraries noting that, at the turn of the 20th century, public libraries and motion pictures "were redefining both national leisure time and education,"[5] and by 1940, public libraries were using motion pictures to "present information on

contemporary public issues."[6] In particular, she emphasizes the importance of the libraries' freedom to acquire films not for their commercial value but for their educational, informational and communal value, but her primary focus is on issues related to the preservation of such films.

The most detailed history of film in public libraries is provided by film and media historian Jennifer Horne in the anthology *Useful Cinema,* where she asks to what extent libraries and motion pictures were "mutually affected by emerging habits of spectatorship, modernizing conceptions of information and knowledge, and the respective publicness or privacy of both media sites?"[7] Her purpose, however, is to strengthen film historiography, rather than examine the impact of educational films on the library and librarianship. And, in fact, her stated purpose of illustrating "how cinema pressured libraries to decide how they could be useful to their patrons or to the civic sphere more generally"[8] reveals an ignorance of the most basic American public library history. Her conclusion that the public library film circuit "addressed viewers as local citizens rather than American moviegoers" is contradicted by Palmer's statement above, that the purpose was "educating them about the world and society in which they lived and guiding their thinking into positive and socially constructed channels." It is also contradicted by the catalogs of films in the Cleveland Public Library collection, as will be demonstrated in this paper.

History of Motion Pictures in Libraries, 1900-1951

Motion pictures have been used in public libraries in order to stimulate and promote the reading of books from at least 1910, with the Madison (Wisconsin) Public library's first recorded use of a film in conjunction with junior high school literary programs,[9] and continuing to the current day, with librarians connecting books and authors with current motion pictures through reviews, reading lists, exhibits and bookmark programs.[10] A few forward thinking librarians,

namely James Gillis in California and those in Edgewater, New Jersey, were also utilizing motion pictures as adult education materials as early as 1915.[11] However, Orrin G. Cocks of the National Board of Censorship criticized the majority of librarians in 1914 and 1915 for failing to recognize the educational value of motion pictures.[12] It would be another nine years before the ALA would officially sanction the use of motion pictures in libraries with the formation of the Committee on Moving Pictures and the Library in 1924, which declared that educational films held greater potential for adult education than any other medium.[13] In 1926, noted author, Charlotte Perkins Gilman argued that the motion picture was the highest art form, as it " takes from literature an essential message and conveys it farther and faster and to more people than books ever could" and called it the "greatest instrument for stimulating the imagination yet offered."[14] She called for public libraries devoted to motion pictures to provide "a steady series of good pictures, free . . . courses for children as yet beyond reach in small town schools; special courses for men, women, members of different trades. . . We could gather up a basic selection of general knowledge and give it to every child in the land. "[15]

Three years later, in 1929, the Kalamazoo Public Library became the first public library of record to lend informational films to schools and community groups for educational purposes.[16] During the next decade, the introduction of 16mm film stimulated the production of documentary and informational films for the general public by private corporations such as Encyclopaedia Britannica Films, Erpi Picture Consultants, and Bell-Howell. As early as 1937, educational films were promoted as the future of adult education through the public library, with books and film supporting and supplementing each other,[17] and in 1939, the Tyrell Public library in Beaumont, Texas began circulating these films to the general public in its community.[18]

With the entry of the U.S. into World War II in 1941, the movement gained strength as the Office of War Information and the Office of Civilian Defense deposited war-related civilian information films in public libraries as a means of strengthening civilian morale and the war effort, making the use of film as an instructional and informational medium for adults acceptable.[19] These collections became the nuclei of several large public library film collections, including Cleveland. It was not until the Carnegie Corporation financed the ALA Film Forum Project in 1941-43, however, that the movement really caught hold in public libraries. The Project involved more than 40 libraries, where film showings in the library were accompanied by book exhibits and followed by guided discussions and the distribution of supplementary reading lists. It demonstrated that public libraries were an effective means of distributing educational and informational films to the general public.

Although production of educational films soared after the War, having been recognized as the "GI way of teaching"[20] and "opened the eyes of millions of Americans to the tremendous potentialities of this new medium of communication"[21] and distribution was limited, due to commercial theaters' lack of interest. The success of the Film Forum Project and the establishment of circulating film collections in a dozen libraries during this period demonstrated that public libraries were a viable channel for the distribution of educational films.[22] And because public libraries had no requirement to turn a profit, they were free to collect a diverse range of independent, unusual and innovative films that met the educational needs of their community, regardless of their commercial potential.[23] The Educational Film Library Association (EFLA) included public libraries as one of the appropriate community agencies for the dissemination of educational films, along with churches, museums and organized youth groups,[24] while Hoyt R.

Galvin, director of the Charlotte (N.C.) Public Library, declared that "an educational film service is the library's responsibility"[25] and that "distribution of non-entertainment films will be as much a function of public libraries as the distribution of books has been in the past."[26] He would later author the ALA Audio-Visual Committee's handbook on establishing film programs, *Films in Public Libraries*.[27]

To support and encourage the distribution of educational films through public libraries, the ALA applied for and was awarded a two-year grant from the Carnegie Corporation in May, 1947, to "make possible the assembling of information and the giving of advisory service on the circulation of information films by libraries."[28] When the program began, there were about 12 public libraries in the country circulating films for a total of 8500 showings to 462,000 people.[29] From 1947-1949, the Office concentrated on establishing circulating collections in larger public libraries, and by 1949, sixteen additional libraries had established or were in the process of establishing circulating collections, for a total of 28 libraries. It was also during this period that the Corporation awarded grants for the Cleveland Regional Project in 1948 and the Missouri Film Circuit in 1949. [30]

Thus, the history of film in public libraries followed a natural progression from librarians using films shown in theaters in order to promote public library books to showing the films in the public libraries to circulating the films to the library's immediate community to instituting a form of interlibrary loan of films among member libraries in order to reach the widest possible audience. Including films in public library collections was justified by references to their educational and informational uses, in particular, using them "to promote understanding of the nature and problems of other peoples . . . giving us intimate glimpses in to the surrounding in

which they live and work."[31] It was felt that one particular advantage of film was that it was a shared, group experience, which would both influence large numbers of people at one time as well as result in a more nuanced, complex change in society. Librarians would be "using all of the new as well as the old tools to meet new and complex demands facing us and to give the pleasure which comes with the sharing of experiences and events."[32] It was also expected that exposure to "quality" films would have the same effect that exposure to "quality" literature was intended to have, that of the "development of the discerning eye, on the part of large groups, for the complex art of the cinema" which would "inevitably result in a demand for better quality," such that viewers would not "ever again be really satisfied with pedantic or trite film treatment."[33]

Cleveland Public Library Film Bureau

The Northern Ohio Regional Film Circuit had its roots in the Cleveland Public Library film bookmark program instituted in 1924[34] to promote books and the library to film goers. Marilla Freeman, the motivating force behind that program, was chair of the Motion Picture Preview Committee of the ALA from 1949-1951 and editor of the *Library Journal* column "New Films from Books" through 1959.[35]

The Library participated in the ALA Film Forum Project during the winter of 1941-42,[36] showing a series of ten different films at two branches from October through March. It was also an "official depository for all Office of War Information films, of those from the Co-ordinator of Inter-American Affairs, and from various other groups of which the Office of Civilian Defense, the Czechoslovak Information Bureau and the U.S. Bureau of Mines are examples."[37] According to the Film Catalog for 1941, the collection strongly reflected its sources, being divided into the

categories of Everybody Sing, Training for Combat, Training for Production, When the Bombs Fall, The Fighting Fronts, Production for Victory, Towards Total Victory, Recreation, and Our Allies and Neighbors – Canada, China, Great Britain, USSR, Latin America. The next year subject included Fighting Fronts, the Home Fronts, Reporting War News and Activities, Production for Victory and Towards a Better World.

Russell Munn, then head of the Adult Education Department, and library director Clarence S. Metcalf have been credited with the vision of "the potentialities of the educational film as a new tool for learning" that led to the purchase of the first films and the establishment of the Film Bureau.[38] In 1942, Munn asked the Board to allocate $1000 to purchase additional films in order to begin a circulating collection of films, using the success of the film forum program as an argument. The Board, after consultation with the City Attorney's Office, who gave it as his considered professional opinion that "the purchase of the documented [sic] film and the modern projector with sound track for use solely for the same purposes for which books are purchased and used by the Library is a proper expenditure,"[39] authorized $500 to purchase a projector "solely for educational film forums in the Main and branch libraries" on January 21, 1942,[40] making Cleveland the first public library in a major city in the country to circulate films.

By 1943 the collection had grown and circulation increased to such an extent that a Film Bureau was established as a division of the Adult Education Department with Patricia Blair at its head on May 19.[41] Blair was promoted to curator of films effective June 1 of that year, and a booker and projectionist were approved for hiring.[42] According to the Annual Report for that year, the collection had grown to 244 films, including "judicious purchases selected from among the classic documentaries, historical films, travelogues of permanent value, children's pictures,

nature studies and the like,"[43] suggesting that the Film Bureau was meeting the City Attorney's requirement that the films be used "solely for the same purposes for which books are purchased." The objective was to create a collection of "material of permanent value to the community" from the very beginning, rather than to provide access to feature films and other popular materials.

The Film Bureau printed its first film catalog that year, issued a "combined book and film list entitled *Global Reportings Through Films and Book,"* instituted the Friday Noon-Hour Film Showings at the Main Library, and presented other regular film programs at the Main and branch libraries that featured either guest speakers or reviews of related books and other materials. "They were designed with the specific purpose of informing the public at large of the state of the Union and the progress of the war effort both at home and abroad."[44] The total number of showings for the year was 7,834, with an aggregate audience of 762,474.

The next year, the Office of War Information lauded the Film Bureau's "setup for showing informational war pictures" as the "best of any library's in the country."[45] That year also saw the Library's first Film Institute, which attracted "representatives from 74 local agencies, all of whom were genuinely interested in effective film utilization, discussion techniques, and the mechanics involved in putting on successful film showings and demonstrations."[46] Two film forums on racial and religious tolerance demonstrated to the library administration beyond "a shadow of doubt that this type of discussion program – preceded by or built around a motion picture related to the topic under consideration–was an ideal medium or exchanging information and formulating intelligent attitudes and opinions."[47]

According to the 1945 annual report, the collection had grown to include 621 films, 4,000 slides, and 30 filmstrips. There had been 12,395 showings to 850,000 people.[48] Blair noted that

"We have pioneered in this field, and gone forward with vision," which "has given the Film Bureau a respected place of leadership not only locally, but nationally."[49] Among the services which they had pioneered were those of "answering of reference questions in the specialized fields of visual education, the making of film bibliographies on special subjects, assistance with film program planning, screenings of specific films for community groups,"[50] establishing the librarians of the Film Bureau as experts on documentary films both locally and nationally.

When Blair resigned in late 1946, Virginia M. Beard was promoted from first assistant in the fine arts division to curator of films effective.[51] The Director's Report for 1947 reports that 1,000,319 viewers had attended showings at the Library, including the series "March of Time Films" and four evenings of travel films which played to an average of 90 people a week, for a total of 5500 people to both.[52] The collection had grown to 850 titles, with 18,517 bookings and 23,918 showings, an increase of 6637 over 1946.[53] The Film Catalog for 1946 reflects the increased size and diversity of the collection. It is divided into two parts : Part 1 the General Collection : Documentary Films, Children's Films, Travelogues, and General Information Films, which include the war service films from earlier years. Part II is Films About Latin America, Part III. Filmstrips and Part IV. Civilian Defense. The catalog also includes a subject index for the first time.[54]

Beard noted that the statistics "do not tell of the program of counseling and constant stimulation of film use which is consistently furthered by the Bureau"[55] and argued that the growth of the collection and the public services associated with it "has been so great that it has reached the point where it is seriously handicapped by inadequate space."[56] That did not prevent the Bureau from purchasing new films "interpreting such humanitarian themes as inter-cultural

understanding, the United Nations, atomic power, housing, racial and religious tolerance, the American scene, parent-child relationship, mental hygiene, sex education, sanitation, public health, supervisory training . . . many new titles in the field of literature, the dance, music, art, and allied crafts."[57] The Bureau was also active in organizing the Cleveland Film Council in the fall of that year.

Northern Ohio Regional Film Circuit

So, by 1948 the Cleveland Public Library was ideally suited as the test library for the Carnegie Corporation's project in film lending through public libraries : it had the administrative structure in place, a sympathetic board, a significant collection of films, a film lending program, and a viewing audience.[58] There were also a number of libraries in surrounding towns that were willing and able to participate in the regional film circuit.

Encouraged by Patricia Blair,[59] both the Cleveland Public Library and the Missouri State Library applied for and received grants from the Carnegie Corporation. Cleveland received a 3-year grant of $25,000 in May 1948 set up the regional film circuit, which was officially instituted on October 1 of that year. The Corporation's motivation in providing the grant was to "demonstrate the value of library film service in small communities, and by doing so, thus eventually make the formal and informal educators recognize their effectiveness as a new media of mass communication."[60]

ALA likewise supported the project in order to demonstrate that such a film-lending service was feasible on a community level, where it would offer a "potent means of spreading information on world and community problems, the atomic age, popular science, mental hygiene, human relations, family ethics, child care and health, and our American culture and heritage."[61] It

was also intended to develop a pattern or blueprint that could be used by other public libraries to establish similar services, and to support the use of state funding for the development and maintenance of such projects.[62]

In addition to the Cleveland Public Library, the circuit included libraries in Alliance, Canton, Elyria, Lorain, Massillon, New Philadelphia, Sandusky, Warren, Wooster, and Youngstown, each of which paid a fee of $100 for the service. The collection consisted of 170 films which were divided into ten groups of 17 films that were circulated among the libraries, a group remaining at a library for one month, then being sent to the next library in the circuit. Each library received a different group of films every month, and had received all 170 films within ten months. Films were transported either in a bookmobile or private car.[63]

The collection included "such classic documentaries as *The River, The City*, March of Time releases, RKO's *This is America* subjects, films for children and teen-age groups, films on human relations, international and community problems, science, safety, sports, travel, geography, as well as newsreels, arts and crafts, and music."[64] Classroom films were specifically excluded, as they were the purview of the Board of Education. Member libraries lent the films for 24 hours to organized groups, individuals, non-public schools in Cleveland, suburban libraries and schools, and Cleveland public library agencies, but not to Cleveland public schools, "commercial agencies or other groups which charge for their program service." On February 16, 1948, the board approved a lending charge of 10 cents per film to "cover cost of yearly insurance premium on our $50,000 film collection;" the insurance covered both repair and replacement.[65] On April 20, 1949, the service charge was changed to 1 cent per minute for black and white films, and 2 cents per minute for color, reflecting the increased number of color films available.[66]

Responding to the need for information on how to select appropriate films, obtain access to those films, organize those films, and make the best use of them to "further . . . larger program objectives,"[67] the Bureau quickly developed written lending policies and procedures as well as booking and reporting forms and legal contracts that would later form the basis for standard practice in libraries nationwide.[68] These incorporated many of the procedures and routines that had been developed by the Film Bureau under Patricia Blair's tenure, including those for selection, acquisition, cataloging, subject classification, repair, booking, and storage.[69]

Due to the success of the initial grant and the Cleveland and Missouri projects, the Carnegie Corporation awarded a second round of grants for 1949-1951, which saw the establishment of regional film circuits in eastern and western Ohio, Tennessee, Detroit, New York State Library at Watertown, Washington state, and northern and southern California.[70] By the end of the second grant period in March 1951, circulating collections had been established in 114 libraries, 58 of which were independent and the remainder members of film circuits, with 103 libraries reporting more than 48,000 showings to more than 3.7 million people in 1950.[71] The Northern Ohio Regional Film Circuit continued to function without Carnegie support until into the last quarter of the 20th century. In 1955 Cleveland withdrew[72] and the remaining ten libraries maintained the circuit until at least 1973, when it had become part of the Ohio Film Co-Op.[73] In 1991, when CPL phased out their film collection, many of the Cleveland-related films were acquired by the Cleveland State University Library.[74]

Critical to the success of the Cleveland and Missouri projects were the relationships and interactions among three important and notable women – Florence Anderson, Patricia Blair, and Virginia Beard – who were at the center of the project. Florence Anderson, assistant secretary of

the Carnegie Corporation of New York in 1947, was a 1931 graduate of Mount Holyoke College who had joined the Corporation in 1934. During WWII, she served in the U.S. Marine Corps Women's Reserve from 1943 to 1945. It may have been during this service that she was introduced to educational films and their use. In 1954, she would become one of the few women in the country to hold an executive position with her appointment as corporate secretary. The next year, 1955, she accepted the additional responsibilities of administering the grants for continuing education and non-traditional study for women for the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and served in that position until 1974. She retired in 1975 and died in 1985.[75]

Patricia Blair (later Cory) was born Patricia O'Connell in Cleveland in 1915. She graduated from Ursuline College in Cleveland, the first women's college in Ohio, in 1937 with a B.A in English and from the Western Reserve Library School in 1940 with a BLS. She became children's librarian at the East Cleveland Public Library that year, Young People's Librarian at the Cleveland Public Library in 1941, and head of the Film Bureau in 1942.[76] She married Vachel Lindsay Blair, nephew of the poet Nicholas Vachel Lindsay, in April 1942.[77] Vachel Blair, also a graduate of Western Reserve Library School, served in the U.S. Army Aircorps from 1942 through 1945. After the war, he studied film at the L'Ecole Cinematographie in Paris for a year, before beginning a career as an editor and a cinematographer in New York.[78] Patricia Blair resigned as head of the Film Bureau in September 1946 in order to join him in Rochester, New York.[79] That year, she edited the booklet, *Making Films Work for Your Community*[80] for the EFLA and wrote the chapter "What Constitutes Quality in Film?"[81] She advised those purchasing films to consider the intended audience, shooting conditions, subject, theme or message, and the

"Aesthetic Quality" which constituted four of the five pages. It included a consideration of the organization of the film, the pacing, cinematography, originality, quality of the acting, and the sound track.

The next year, she began to "regularly review . . . . all first-class new films" for *Library Journal* and in her inaugural column warned librarians against free films which were nothing more than thinly-veiled advertising for the sponsor.[82] That same year she accepted the position of ALA Film Advisor in Chicago, a position she held until 1951. As such, she frequently wrote about the responsibility of public libraries for "spreading information and stimulating citizen action on the critical problems which must be solve if we are to avoid disaster" and the use of informational films to "reach thousands in the community hitherto untouched by any form of adult library service."[83]

She and Vachel Blair divorced at about that time, and in August 1951, she married John Mackenzie Cory, who was then executive director of ALA. They moved to New York City in October of that year, where he went to work at the director of branch libraries for NYPL and Patricia became the Director of library services and visual education for the Lexington School for the Deaf. She became a recognized expert on media services designed for deaf children and youth, and in 1966, she was director of the two-year School Library Survey Project of U.S. Schools for the Deaf for the U.S. Office of Education. For some years before her death, she became a reclusive alcoholic, dying sometime before 1978.[84]

Blair's successor, Virginia M. Beard, was a decade older than she. Born in Indianapolis in 1903, she also attended Ursuline College, graduating in 1926, and earned a BLS from Columbia in 1931. She began her library career in 1920 at the Cleveland Public Library as a student page in

the fine arts division, graduated to apprentice in 1926 and junior clerk in 1929. She worked as a part time assistant in the Avery Architecture Library at Columbia while a library student from 1930-31. On her return to Cleveland, she was made junior assistant of the fine arts division from 1931-1945, first assistant from 1945-46, and finally head of the Film Bureau in 1946.[85] She held that position for 28 years until her retirement in 1973. She died the following year at age 70.[86] During her career, she served on the board of the EFLA (1947-48), was president of the Cleveland Film Council from 1947-48 and of the Motion Picture Council of Greater Cleveland from 1954-55 and was a member of ALA's Audio-Visual Committee for several terms.[87]

In their mutual correspondence, Anderson is either "Andy" or "Florence," Beard is "Ginny" or "Virginia" and Blair is "Pat. The tone is conversational and informal, even intimate at times. This is in contrast to the correspondence with the Missouri State Library, which is always between "Miss Anderson," "Miss Kee," and, occasionally, "Mrs. Blair." That tone is always professional, formal and relatively distant.

The Carnegie Records include a handwritten letter from Beard to Anderson dated 11 October, 1947, which predates the initial request for funds by several months and presents ample evidence of an existing friendship among the two women and their mutual involvement with educational films and public libraries. The letter opens, "Dear Andy," and closes, "Affectionately, VB." Beard thanks her for her "long letter and prompt reply to my S.O.S. in late August," and encloses a two-page copy of a program for "5 Film Forums on International Problems Presented by the Cleveland Public Library and the Cleveland Council on World Affairs" to prove "that I took your advise [sic]." In a post-script, she notes that Roger Albright, director of the Division of Educational Services of the Motion Picture Association of America,

will be speaking in the city on October 31, and "I have written him a little note inviting him to visit C.P.L. In the way of bait I have also promised him a little liquid libation." She continues, "Wish you were going to be in Clev. at the same time - then we could really have some fun. By the way when are you coming out to see me?"[88] Anderson replied on 20 October 1947, and after remarks about the film program, concluded that "I fear I shall not be doing any traveling for a while, but I have not given up hope of getting out to see you sometime."[89]

Anderson seeks Blair's opinion and advice about the Cleveland proposal a few months later,[90] as ALA Film Advisor, as someone intimately familiar with the Cleveland Public Library, and as a personal friend, and Blair responds in kind. They also exchanged a series of letters in regard to the Missouri State Library project that provides further evidence of their close working relationship. Pat sends Andy a two-page letter in which she provides "some confidential comments on some of the Missouri film people" that Andy has asked for in advance of her trip to Jefferson City to meet with them.[91] The comments are open, frank and honest; she calls Elizabeth Golterman "the able administrator of one of the finest programs I have seen anywhere. She is intelligent, direct, honest," while Nelle Lee Jenkinson is "a bit skeptical about librarian's abilities. [She] feels that I over simplify film work and am responsible for overbuilding the State Library's confidence in itself." She describes Susan Faudi, the film librarian at the St. Louis Public Library, as "pitifully unprepossessing, shy and earnest," and remarks, "I understand Miss Kee had Susan weeping in a film meeting; since Kay Mier got me doing the same I have a new sympathy for her."

Her comments on Janice Kee fairly seethe with sarcasm and restrained anger. "Miss Kee reported officially to the State Librarian . . . that Mrs. Blair was not interested in the Missouri

project and had made no suggestions. As a matter of fact, Miss Kee to date has not accepted the suggestion to give the participants enough training to keep the films revolving on the circuit." Blair had also "commented adversely on their tie up with the Modern Talking Picture Service," a source of the sponsored films she had warned about earlier, and the two "had such a blow up over those two items" that Blair "never did get to express my horror at the fact they wrote Max Corey and asked him for additional funds" for the Carnegie project.

She hopes that Andy and Virginia saw each other at Christmas and regrets that the Blair apartment in Chicago is "about the size of a postage stamp," so she and Vachel cannot invite Andy to stay with them at the end of January, when he will be visiting from Rochester, "but we certainly could have get together and have a few friends in."

The purpose of the correspondence among the three women is always to exchange news and information about the Film Circuit, but few letters do not also touch on personal subjects. Beard – Ginny – begins a letter about the Cleveland Film Council Film Festival with thanks to "Florence" for "making it possible for me to relax and enjoy the comforts of your apartment"[92] and in another letter about the Regional Film Circuit, refers to "P.B." and also "our conversation that day at lunch."[93] In a "short personal note" dated July 23, 1948, Ginny notes that Bertha Landers, whom she does not know well, will be her roommate at the EFLA convention, and "from past reports from Pat" she's sure that they will "hit it off very well together," suggesting that there was already a small, connected network of film librarians.[94]

Beard wrote to Anderson on September 27, 1949 about "that last jolly evening together in New York," a "long chatty letter from Pat," and making reference to "Vach's good fortune. Paris for a year! God, how I envy him!" The lack of detail makes it obvious that she assumed that

Anderson already knew about "Vach's good fortune." The letter includes several paragraphs about the regional film circuit activities, then concludes,"How goes the apartment situation? Is your roommate still with you or are you holding the fort alone?"[95] Anderson's response concludes "The apartment situation has not changed, but I still hope it may before the winter is over . . . I hope we shall meet again here or elsewhere before long."[96]

The final letter in the files between Beard and Anderson, written April 11, 1956, concerning the use of about $1000 of residual funds, ends with, "How is the family? And did you succeed in disposing of the old family homestead?" and is signed, "Affectionately yours, Ginny."[97]

Conclusion

The development of film collections in public libraries was the result of a confluence of international, national, and local factors. The American public had begun to turn its gaze toward Europe and Asia during the second World War and the subsequently developing Cold War. Returning veterans increased local interest in learning about the history and culture of both our former allies and our former enemies. The military and the Office of War Information had established motion pictures as a legitimate means of educating and informing large groups of people at once. They trained hundreds of new film makers and gave others the chance to hone their skills making training films and shooting battlefield scenes that were used in newsreels and documentaries.

Cleveland was well-situated to become a pioneer in the use of films in public libraries as a major industrial city with a large, well-funded and -supported public library which had a long history of involvement with motion pictures. That involvement attracted librarians with an

interest and background in art and film, including Patricia Blair and Virginia Beard, who continued and expanded the library's film programs. Far from being pressured by cinema "to decide how they could be useful to their patrons or to the civic sphere more generally," Cleveland's librarians had actively sought to demonstrate how cinema could be useful to their patrons and the civic sphere for decades, beginning with the bookmark program. They were among the first to recognize the potential of this new medium for providing for the informational and educational needs of the local community. They justified the inclusion of motion pictures in their collections by referring to films' educational and cultural value, purchasing them "solely for the same purposes for which books are purchased." They addressed their patrons as citizens of the world, and used film to expand their horizons beyond their local concerns, and, far from neglecting them a moviegoers, they hoped that exposure to quality films in the library would lead inevitably to an appreciation of and demand for films of equal quality at the cinema. They went beyond mere spectatorship, with the discussions and lectures and panels which accompanied the film programs, all designed to create a shared, public experience that would result in positive social change and improvement.

Notes

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