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When Film Went to College: A Brief History of the USC Hugh M. Hefner Moving Image Archive

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The Moving Image, Volume 13, Number 1, Spring 2013, pp. 33-65 (Article)

Published by University of Minnesota Press



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WHEN FILM WENT TO COLLEGE

DINO EVERETT AND
JENNIFER PETERSON

A Brief History of the USC

Hugh M. Hefner Moving

Image Archive

The increasing importance of films in education and industry . . . [has] provided great promise for the future film maker.

HERBERT E. FARMER, DEPARTMENT OF CINEMA, UNIVERSITY
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, 1959

The history of educational film is only beginning to be written. Educational films—nonfiction films with a pedagogical purpose—were produced and distributed throughout much of the twentieth century for exhibition in school classrooms and other noncommercial locations, such as libraries, museums, churches, public halls, and so forth. This wide range of venues falls under the umbrella category of “nontheatrical” exhibition. Educational film genres run the gamut of school curricula categories: biology, physics, math, history, sports, industrial manufacturing, music, art, and so on. Educational cinema forged a complex—and still largely unknown—history that runs parallel to the well-known story of commercial cinema in the twentieth century, featuring an entirely different set of key players and an entirely different economic structure. In fact, the production, distribution, exhibition, style, and purpose of educational films are so different from commercial cinema that it is tempting to assert that the only common ground between the two is the apparatus—camera/celluloid/projector—although such an assertion certainly overstates the case. Not only did Hollywood studios produce some educational films, but educational films borrowed heavily from the narrative conventions of commercial cinema. Nonetheless, at first glance, educational cinema’s difference from commercial, feature-length, narrative cinema looms large, and this difference (or apparent marginality) undoubtedly led to its neglect by earlier generations of film scholars. As new scholarship has begun to demonstrate, however, the time is now ripe for exploring educational cinema’s unique development in the twentieth century.

Unlike commercial Hollywood cinema, whose history is often told as a story of famous studios, directors, stars, and films, the story of educational cinema can perhaps be more productively traced through microhistories of specific institutions, companies, individuals, and their forays into cinema—for example, the Museum of Modern Art, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Ford Motor Company, ERPI Classroom Films, the YMCA, and Edgar Dale.¹ These accounts do not aim to tell a top-down story of educational cinema, which is still too unknown, too diverse, and too broad to be assimilated into one grand narrative; rather, they chronicle the smaller, ground-up histories of individual and institutional attempts to produce, distribute, exhibit, or interpret films in the classroom.

This article presents a brief history of what is today the Hugh M. Hefner Moving Image Archive (hereafter HMIA) at the University of Southern California’s (USC) School of Cinematic Arts. Under a different name, this unit once served as an important distributor and producer of educational films. Drawing from paper materials, oral histories, films, and other primary materials held by the HMIA, we focus on the collection’s core connection to nontheatrical cinema. The story of the HMIA can help us understand the role



universities played in the distribution and production of educational films in the mid-twentieth century, at a time when 16mm nontheatrical cinema was at its peak of expansion and usage.

Dan Wiegand, Herb Farmer, and John Norwood running the modified RCA projectors in 1939. Courtesy of Hugh M. Hefner Moving Image Archive, University of Southern California.

As recently published essay collections such as *Useful Cinema* and *Learning with the Lights Off* have begun to illustrate, although there were numerous attempts to establish a market for educational films in nontheatrical venues dating back as far as the 1910s, educational cinema did not achieve its most broad-based success until after World War II. Previously, 16mm educational films had been distributed to schools and other nontheatrical venues before the war; as Gregory Waller has shown, “the period between 1935 and 1945 . . . saw 16mm . . . rise to prominence as the chosen apparatus for an ever-expanding non-theatrical terrain that stretched beyond the classroom, home, and church.”² But the Depression and the war slowed the large-scale assimilation of films into the classroom until the late 1940s and 1950s. Educational films had been widely used by the military for training and informational purposes during the war, and newsreels had functioned as one of the most important visualizations of the war for

civilians. At the war's end, as millions of veterans began to enroll in college on the GI Bill, a large new demographic was already primed and ready to be instructed by motion pictures.

To meet the growing need for audiovisual instruction during the war and after, many universities and public libraries began collecting and distributing 16mm educational films. According to Elena Rossi-Snook, "of sixty-five university and college film libraries surveyed in 1947, thirty-eight had been initiated in the period between 1937 and 1947, with a steep increase in the years following V-J Day."³ Colleges and universities were not only exhibition venues for educational cinema; they also played a role as distributors and producers of educational films. Campus film libraries often distributed educational films regionally to locations outside the university. Additionally, what Rossi-Snook calls the "A-V service model" became commonplace by the 1950s, a model in which college and university film collections were organized around supporting on-campus classroom needs.

In addition to collecting educational films for distribution on and off campus, many university film programs also produced educational films in the postwar era. A 1959–60 study by the University Film Producers Association (UFPA) found that 623 reels of film classified as "educational" were produced in one year by the forty university film production units surveyed. Moreover, "thirty-three units reported combined production of over 29,000 reels of film during the life of the units."⁴ A 1963 report published by the *Journal of the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers* estimated that U.S. nontheatrical production expenditures totaled \$143 million that year.⁵

One of the film production programs surveyed in the UFPA study was the Department of Cinema at USC in Los Angeles, which produced more than seventy titles in the years 1960–63. The USC-produced titles listed in the study's accompanying catalog cover a wide range of subjects, from venereal disease (*A Respectable Neighborhood*) to food handling (*In Your Hands*). Produced by students, these films were made available for sale or rental by USC's Audio-Visual Services (A-V Services), the unit that eventually became the university's film archive.

Today, the HMIA comprises approximately seventy thousand motion picture elements, audio reels, videotapes, and digital files, along with some paper materials and an extensive collection of motion picture technology and artifacts. The archive's holdings are particularly strong in nontheatrical media: educational films, sponsored films, student films, and home movies. Perhaps because of this nontheatrical focus, the archive sees much less research traffic than other, higher-profile moving image archives. For example, on the USC campus, the Warner Bros. paper archive sees two to six researchers each day, most of whom are nonstudents, while

at present, the HMIA is lucky to get one nonstudent researcher every other month.

The USC School of Cinematic Arts's association with some of the most commercially successful figures in Hollywood—George Lucas, Ron Howard, Brian Grazer, Laura Ziskin, John Singleton, Judd Apatow, and Matthew Weiner are some of its many notable alumni—lends the school a reputation that tends to overshadow the archive's strength in films of a different commercial and aesthetic stature. It is perhaps ironic, then, that it was this very specialization in educational and sponsored films that partly subsidized USC's film program during the post–World War II era. While USC's film program has always maintained a strong connection to the commercial Hollywood film industry, in fact, the department was a hotbed of nontheatrical film activity for more than three decades after World War II. As we shall argue, this mid-century focus on nontheatrical film was largely overseen by Herbert E. Farmer, who was head of A-V Services from its inception in 1947 until his retirement in 1992. Although the cinema program at USC turned away from nontheatrical films with the demise of the 16mm educational film distribution circuit by the 1980s, its archive today contains rich holdings from this past history. This article chronicles the untold history of the HMIA and Farmer's role in its creation. Its larger goal is to make a case for depicting the complex history of educational cinema through local and institutional microhistories. Histories of individual moving image archives—or educational film production houses, or individual producers—when contextualized against each other, can help us begin to grasp the enormous diversity of nontheatrical cinema practices in the twentieth century.

CINEMA AT USC BEFORE THE ARCHIVE: 1929–46

The cinema program at USC began in spring 1929 with a single course titled *Introduction to Photoplay*. This course was sponsored by the newly created Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS), and Douglas Fairbanks, the first president of AMPAS, famously made a guest appearance on the first day of class.⁶ As Dana Polan has shown in his thorough account of the emergence of film studies at USC and other institutions, from the start, there were several competing ideas about what a film studies curriculum should look like. Polan argues that USC's first lectures on film "became veritable manifestoes for a specifically Hollywood way of making movies."⁷ Although AMPAS financial support of the curriculum at USC was short-lived, the Hollywood industry's connection to film studies at USC has always been an important part of the program's reputation and prestige. What is less known, however, is that alongside its celebrated connection to the commercial film industry, USC's film school also played an important role in

the history of nontheatrical cinema as a producer and distributor of educational films.

During the early years of film studies at USC, technical resources were sorely lacking, and students in the cinema courses taught by literature professor Boris Morkovin were given exposure to the practice of filmmaking primarily through visits to Hollywood studios. By 1932, when the film curriculum had grown enough to become a full-fledged unit called the Department of Cinematography, there was still little actual photography going on. According to Polan, in the early 1930s, Morkovin asked students to make assignments in collaboration with the Department of Dramatic Arts, “‘filmless films’ in which they acted out plays in live action but tried to make them approximate the look of films through lighting effects, rapid scene changes, actors going into slow motion, and so on.”⁸ These activities sound more like the early Soviet film workshops taught by Lev Kuleshov than anything one would expect to find in the USC film program.⁹ When the department did begin producing its first student films in the mid-1930s, most of the early reels were shot on 16mm reversal film stock and were primarily film exercises bearing titles such as *Effect Lighting and Movement* (1938) and *Camera Exercises #2* (1933).¹⁰

By the mid-1930s, film production expanded as a group of students began shooting a university newsreel using borrowed equipment. Although what was then called the *Trojan Review* was not technically produced by the Department of Cinematography, the newsreels were generally crewed by film students and were often overseen by advisors such as Morkovin.¹¹ Three students in particular—Herbert E. Farmer, Dan Wiegand, and Dave Johnson—started working on the newsreel soon after their enrollment in fall 1938. All three eventually went on to become professors at USC, but even in their student years, they played a significant role in shaping the department. This article focuses primarily on Farmer’s career, the figure most closely associated with the formation of what became the university’s film archive.¹²

What is remarkable about this story is how much it was driven by the involvement of a few individuals who were then film students. Several students, including Farmer, played a key role in acquiring camera and film processing equipment for the university’s film program. As they related in multiple accounts years later, Farmer, Wiegand, and Johnson had been frustrated when they found out they would not be allowed to take any cinema classes until their third year. Because of this, they got involved with the *Trojan Newsreel*, which was an alternative way to begin the hands-on training they sought; Farmer later said, “We might have quit except for the *Trojan Newsreel*.”¹³ While home in New York during summer 1939, Farmer purchased a 16mm Bell and Howell 70DA camera along with some additional photographic equipment, which he brought back to campus with him that fall.¹⁴ Farmer’s personal camera became the official camera for



Students Paul O'Keefe and Rudy Rowland prepare some posters to advertise a screening of *The Trojan Newsreel* (1941). Courtesy of Hugh M. Hefner Moving Image Archive, University of Southern California.

the department, which enabled the school to increase its production activity. This camera eventually became one of the first artifacts in what is now the Herbert E. Farmer Motion Picture Technology Collection, where it bears the serial number USC000001.¹⁵ At this point, most student-produced film footage was being processed off campus at former student William Poulson's film lab, which was housed nearby on Figueroa Street, although some was self-processed in the bathtub of Farmer's dorm room.¹⁶ Farmer, Wiegand, and Johnson also overhauled some previously donated portable 35mm RCA projectors so that visiting lecturers from the film industry could bring 35mm films to show in class.¹⁷

In fall 1940, Farmer officially began receiving credit as producer of the *Trojan Newsreel*. For a time, the production section of the department was even located in Farmer, Wiegand, and Johnson's shared apartment just south of campus.¹⁸ As these three undergraduate students began covering more campus activities for the newsreel, they also attempted to raise production values, such as adding sound. In spring 1941, they

produced the first USC sync-sound film with the Vol. IX no. 1 installment of the *Trojan Newsreel*. This episode included a roughly five-minute educational story about how the newsreel was produced, titled “From the Script to the Screen.”¹⁹ As these examples demonstrate, film production at USC began with a particular emphasis on nonfiction and educational cinema.

By 1940, when the film program was renamed the Department of Cinema, it had grown to offering nearly thirty courses a year.²⁰ In 1941, the Department of Cinema moved into a building that had originally been built to house the School of Architecture. This structure, known as the “Stables,” housed the Department of Cinema until it moved into new facilities in 1984. At first the building was shared between the cinema, drama, and music departments, and some specific modifications were needed so that these departments could avoid interfering with one another. According to more than one account, this remodeling work was undertaken almost entirely by students, especially Farmer, Johnson, and Wiegand, who, with a few others, rebuilt and rewired the building for the addition of film equipment. This included enlarging an area for the projection booth, installing improved projectors, and remodeling some spaces for a more adequate sound environment.²¹ This particular job clearly meant a great deal to Farmer, who kept a framed copy of the plans he drew up for the remodeling of the Stables hanging in his office until his retirement.

By 1941, when Farmer was still an undergraduate, he held responsibilities in the Department of Cinema that seem unthinkable today. In addition to playing a major role in the remodeling of the department’s new building, Farmer, Wiegand, and Johnson had unofficially taken on the job of acquiring film equipment for the department.²² The trio was possibly able to secure donations of film equipment through Farmer’s membership in the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers (SMPTE), which dated from 1941. One important acquisition came from a former Trojan: alumnus William Poulson donated equipment from his processing lab, which provided USC with a fully operational film lab.²³ Moreover, Farmer officially began earning income supervising technical operations for the other students in the Cinema Workshop class.²⁴

As the U.S. war effort went into high gear in 1942, all aspects of civilian life were affected, including school instruction. At USC, the Department of Cinema faced severe material cutbacks, and the *Trojan Newsreel* ceased production. During the war, USC’s cinema department was run as a shoestring program with shortened semesters and limited course offerings, as university resources were reoriented toward the war effort.²⁵ At this time, colleges and universities were utilized not only for war-related research but also for military training purposes.²⁶ Hundreds of naval cadets began



Herb Farmer drawing up modifications for the new Cinema Building, 1941. Courtesy of Hugh M. Hefner Moving Image Archive, University of Southern California.

living on the USC campus, and to entertain these troops, the Hancock auditorium was outfitted with a 35mm film booth through donations of equipment secured by Farmer.²⁷ In spring 1942, Department of Cinema chairman Warren Scott was called off to military duty, and Farmer was put in charge as the acting head of the department. In addition to this acting chairmanship, Farmer was contracted to teach the remaining five weeks of Scott's courses: Fundamentals of the Cinema and Screen Literature.²⁸ Owing to these wartime contingencies, Farmer was empowered to make departmental decisions and teach courses before he had even completed his bachelor's degree. Shortly after this, Farmer himself was called off for active duty in the navy, where he served as a photographic officer from 1943 to 1946. While Scott, Farmer, and many other university personnel and students were away during the war, there is no evidence that films were shot at USC.

During the war, Farmer was dispatched to photographic operations in Hawaii, Guam, and Okinawa, before finally being sent to Pensacola, Florida, to become officer in charge of the Navy Motion Picture Camera School, where he remained until 1946.²⁹ While in the navy, Farmer witnessed the extent to which the military used films to both educate and entertain the troops. Hollywood feature films were shown to U.S. troops overseas, while the U. S. Army Signal Corps, the Office of War Information, and other units made training films, propaganda films, and newsreels that were shown to both military and civilian audiences.³⁰ As Gregory Waller has shown, it was the portability of 16mm projectors that enabled such widespread screenings of feature films and shorts for military audiences in the field during the war, screenings that reached over a million servicemen on a daily basis.³¹

The military's use of film as an educational tool during World War II was influential not only during the war but after, as many servicemen and servicewomen returned home having seen the effects of educational films in action. As Willis H. Miller of the U.S. Veterans Association stated in 1946, "a considerable part of the success of visual training in the military field is due to the availability of especially prepared films of professional quality. Students are used to seeing the finest motion picture products in their neighborhood theatres. To be effective, training films must be equally good. Virtually no such films presently exist for general use in schools and colleges."³² The military use of educational films made a significant impact on Farmer, who briefly discusses military training films in his 1955 master's thesis. There Farmer states that military experience has given many "leaders in . . . education . . . a new vision" and that the military trained a new generation in the production of instructional films. Farmer quotes another writer's summation of the military training film: "In developing films



for . . . important educational purposes, the Army applied to educational films the dramatic techniques hitherto used only in entertainment films.”³³ Many of the educational films produced at USC in the postwar period adopted this hybrid dramatic–educational approach.

Herb Farmer teaching at the Navy Motion Picture Camera School, 1946. Courtesy of Hugh M. Hefner Moving Image Archive, University of Southern California.

HERBERT E. FARMER AND AUDIOVISUAL SERVICES: 1946–1976

The postwar period was a golden era for nontheatrical film at USC. This is in keeping with the larger expansion of audiovisual education in schools during the postwar years. Many other universities and libraries were also distributing educational films in this period. For USC, the two areas of greatest focus were the distribution of educational films and the production of educational films by students. What differentiates USC’s efforts from those of most other schools is the production side of the enterprise, or more specifically, the integration of the production and distribution of educational films. Distributing educational films became not only a revenue stream for the USC Department of Cinema but also a teaching tool, as students were able to get hands-on filmmaking experience making sponsored films, which were then rented or sold as part of the larger film library held by A-V Services.

After the war, film production finally became a regular part of the Department of Cinema at USC. Film production was enabled in no small part by the camera, projector, and lab equipment that Farmer, Wiegand, and Johnson had acquired before the war. In particular, having full-service production and lab facilities on campus meant that the department could produce its own films from start to finish. In the late 1940s, the number of films produced was still rather small: in 1948, fewer than ten films were produced. The titles of the films that were made, however, reflect a focus on educational output. Films such as *Yours for the Taking* (Frances Christenson and Frank Judson, 1946), about the Doheny Library facilities at USC, demonstrate an initial focus on outreach toward other units on campus. Similarly, *Music from the Mountains* (Bill Blume, 1947) was made as a fund-raising tool for USC's Idyllwild School of Music and the Arts.³⁴

Although production was slow at first, by 1949, enough films were being made for the department to make a commitment to expand into the distribution and sale of USC-produced educational films.³⁵ By fall 1951, the first film distribution catalog was released. The catalog included twenty-eight USC-produced films available for rental or sale and several pages of additional films produced by companies such as McGraw-Hill, Castle, and Coronet, available for rental only.³⁶ USC's Film Catalog quickly grew from this modest scope to become a large illustrated booklet issued annually. By 1957, A-V Services was producing one-hundred-page catalogs that listed educational films for distribution from a variety of producers, along with the USC-produced instructional films.

Farmer returned to campus in 1946 as an instructor teaching three courses in the cinema department.³⁷ In 1947, he became director of services for the department, which meant overseeing a newly created department called A-V Services.³⁸ The creation of A-V Services formalized a new business model for the department. The initial idea was to provide simple PA systems, projectors, and projectionists for various departments and programs across campus, for a fee. But A-V Services quickly grew beyond campus boundaries to become a significant distributor of educational films in the region.³⁹ With the creation of A-V Services, the cinema department formalized and expanded its distribution of films beyond campus to serve a larger constituency.⁴⁰ In 1952, the film sales division of A-V Services was created. By this point, the film library had become a revenue stream for the department.⁴¹ What was particularly unique about this program was its fostering of student-produced films.

In the 1950s, as Farmer was working both as an assistant professor and as director of A-V Services, he spearheaded several initiatives that helped the Department of Cinema become financially self-sustaining. One of the most important actions was Farmer's securing of a large amount of filmmaking equipment from the navy left over

from the war.⁴² The additional equipment allowed both staff and students to engage in more regular production work, and with more resources available, more students could be admitted to the program. The cinema department's production output went from three films in 1946 to nineteen in 1949, rising to sixty-one in 1952, thanks in large part to the new equipment. Along the way, in 1955, Farmer earned his master's degree through the university with a thesis titled "A Survey of the Distribution of Non-theatrical Motion Pictures," an information-packed overview of the nontheatrical field at mid-century.⁴³

USC's distribution of educational films was part of a larger nationwide trend in which colleges and universities became regional distributors of educational films. Lending libraries for 16mm film were growing by leaps and bounds in the 1950s. Some of these educational distributors had been around for decades already, such as Indiana University, which began distributing films in 1912; the University of Wisconsin, which began in 1914; and the University of California extension at Berkeley, which started in 1915. Others began later, such as the University of Michigan's Visual Education Bureau in 1939.⁴⁴ USC's entry into the nontheatrical field after the war, debuting with the publication of its first catalog in 1951, thus occurred relatively late. Farmer's MA thesis lists 2,660 16mm film libraries in the United States in 1953.⁴⁵ USC's film library was medium sized (it held five hundred titles in 1959), smaller than the largest university lending libraries (Indiana University's Audio Visual Center, one of the largest, held five thousand titles in 1953) but still large enough to issue catalogs regularly.⁴⁶

It is worth noting that most of the major lending libraries were public institutions of higher learning, and thus USC's role as a private university distributing films to the larger public is somewhat unique.⁴⁷ While other private institutions, such as Harvard University and Yale University, have been collecting films—including educational films—for decades, those two institutions, at least, did not function as regional distribution centers for educational film. Moreover, the dual production–distribution model appears to have been somewhat unusual. Indiana University distributed many educational films made by its faculty, but its collection contained few if any educational films produced entirely by Indiana University students.⁴⁸ The University of Michigan and the University of Wisconsin both produced educational films as well as distributing them, but more research is necessary to determine how coordinated their production and distribution units were or, indeed, if there were other institutions that followed an integrated production–distribution model.⁴⁹

Student-produced sponsored films became one of the most beneficial and lucrative expansions of the USC department in the 1950s. The turn to producing sponsored films was initiated by Lester Beck, who was chair of the Department of Cinema from

1951 to 1955. Beck came to the department following the release of his own film, *Human Growth* (1948), one of the first sex-education films. Beck's initiative was overseen by Farmer, who handled all the financial arrangements for the projects.⁵⁰ In essence, Farmer functioned as a de facto producer on the department's student-made sponsored films.

In a 1949 book found in Farmer's collection, Gloria Waldron described the sponsored film (or industrial film) as "a five-minute glamorization of the sponsor's product, or it may be a feature length history of the industry."⁵¹ With sponsored films, outside companies paid for the production and processing fees, not only enabling each individual production but supporting the cinema program overall. During this time groups such as the Association of National Advertisers issued pamphlets providing detailed checklists outlining the responsibilities for both the sponsors and producers of such films.⁵² One pamphlet, titled "The Dollars and Sense of Business Films," suggested that "the lifespan of a sponsored motion picture is unusually long. Five years for a film is not unusual."⁵³ This longevity is one of nontheatrical cinema's differences from commercial cinema, whose films typically circulated for only a few weeks or months in the era before home video.

Not all USC student films were strictly educational films, nor were they all sponsored, but many of them were. Two courses were offered that formalized student production of sponsored films. The "480 program," as it came to be known, referred to the 480-level course for undergraduates; 480 films generally covered campus activities. The films sponsored by off-campus entities were produced in the more advanced graduate-level production workshop, course number 580. As Farmer explained in 1959,

one or two of these films [in the Graduate Workshop] are usually "sponsored"—that is, the direct costs of production are materially aided by a grant from some individual, company, or foundation, and the film is designed to meet a specific need. Perhaps the governing factor on this class of production is the fact that the sponsor is allowed to purchase copies of the film, but the original and the right to distribute or otherwise circulate the film remains with the University. . . . In this framework, mature individuals are encouraged to make truly experimental films with new techniques and original treatments. Actual material costs for productions in the Graduate Workshop range from 300 to 2500 dollars and occasional surpluses on one budget are used to help finance others.⁵⁴

Student-produced sponsored films included titles such as *Planning the Museum Trip* (Richard Shoemaker, 1951), sponsored by the Los Angeles County Museum, and *Progress*

through *Unity* (Joseph Mazzuca, 1956), about the California Teacher's Association.⁵⁵ These films were in many ways typical of sponsored films produced elsewhere, except that they were crewed by students. A letter from Farmer regarding the production *Your County Health Department* (Flora Willett, 1956), for example, lays out a typical agreement that allowed students to gain full production experience without incurring the daunting personal expenses familiar to film students today. The university's resources covered the costs up front, but these costs were soon paid by the sponsor: "Reimbursement of costs for film, lights, laboratory work, and all necessary materials involved in the production of a 16-minute color sound film for the Los Angeles County health Department: \$2000.00."⁵⁶ For two thousand dollars, the Los Angeles County Health Department received one film print, with the ability to purchase more if desired. USC in turn was able to rent and sell the print for profit.⁵⁷ This arrangement had obvious benefits: it enabled the university to give students the nuts-and-bolts training they sought to go out into the film industry, and it had the ancillary benefit of generating revenue for the department on both the front and back end (sponsor fees up front, rental and sales fees later). The 1950s were thus a productive era for the school in terms of its educational film production and its nontheatrical distribution through rentals and sales. The late 1950s also marked the era in which the film library first began to be referred to as the cinema department's film "archive."⁵⁸ As the distribution side expanded over the coming years, the school's film holdings grew from hundreds of titles into the thousands. The school's own productions required storage for not only the eventual completed composite film prints but the earlier elements, such as A and B negative rolls, optical sound tracks, and magnetic quarter-inch sound backups.

The 1960s continued a period of expansive activity for both the school and the archive. The school had grown into prominence, and each student produced anywhere from one to five film projects. Likewise, the sales division, which was creating a steady source of income for the department, continued to grow, and by 1969, the film catalog ran over two hundred pages in length. One of the reasons for the extensive growth of the catalog was an initiative from the Educational Media Council (EMC), of which Farmer was a member, to publish the *Educational Media Index* in 1964, through a deal struck with McGraw-Hill, which followed its earlier publication, in 1962, of *Sources of Information on Educational Media*.⁵⁹

At some point in 1968, USC personnel wrote a successful grant for the National Information Center for Educational Media (NICEM) to begin a research project at the school for an "automated storage and retrieval system containing information on nonprint educational media."⁶⁰ This was one of the first computerized moving image

PURCHASE ORDER

PURCHASING AND STORES DEPARTMENT
 COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
 2011 N. SOTO ST. LOS ANGELES 32, CALIF.
 Capital 1-4121

To: The University of Southern California
 Department of Cinema
 University Place
 Los Angeles 7, California

DATE
 5/17/57

THIS ORDER NUMBER MUST
 APPEAR ON YOUR INVOICE
 T 55867

Ship To:

Health Department
 241 N. Figueroa Street
 Los Angeles 12, Calif.

SUB.
 MISC.
 STORES
 SERVICE TO
 CO. DEPTS.
 STORE
 GENERAL
 FUND

REGULAR
 Health & Sanitation
 Health Department
 Suspense
 M&O

General 1956-57

DELIVER 3 DAYS FROM RECEIPT OF ORDER

ESTIMATE

2000.00

THIS ORDER SUBJECT TO
 CONDITIONS ON REVERSE

F. O. B. DELIVERED

QUANTITY ORDERED	THIS ORDER MUST BE FILLED EXACTLY IN ACCORDANCE WITH INSTRUCTIONS	UNIT PRICE	UNIT	% CASH DISC'T
1 ea	Film-Motion-Picture-16MM-Color-800-to run 20 minutes. Tentative Title "Health-In-A-Day" Vendor to supply: 1. Script to the approval of the Health Department 2. All raw film and equipment to produce this motion picture 3. All titles and needed art work 4. All sound recording materials and equipment 5. All production personnel including writes, director, camera crews, sound recording crews, film editors and production assistants 6. All transportation needed for the production of the film 7. All editing and sound dubbing facilities 8. Narrator acceptable to the Department 9. Music acceptable to the Department and cleared for non theatrical and television use. 10. All necessary laboratory material and services 11. One Color release print and the option to purchase any number additional copies at producers cost. CONFIRMING 11/21/56	\$2000.00	lot	net

WLC:jm not SUBJECT TO SALES TAX a/c included in price

DEPOSIT ON CONTAINERS NOT SUBJECT TO
 SALES OR USE TAX.

DEPT'L
 REGN. NO.

116-D

SOURCE OF QUOTATION

Ltr

FILE NO.

SHOW ORDER NUMBER ON ALL SHIPMENTS

IMPORTANT NOTICE

INVOICES IN DUPLICATE MUST BE MADE TO "THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES" AND FORWARDED PROMPTLY TO COUNTY AUDITOR-CONTROLLER, HALL OF RECORDS, LOS ANGELES 12, CALIF.

INVOICES MUST BEAR UPON THEIR FACE THE ORDER NUMBER WHICH APPEARS IN THE UPPER RIGHT-HAND CORNER HEREOF. MUST STATE THAT SAME COVERS COMPLETE OR PARTIAL DELIVERY, AS THE CASE MAY BE AND MUST SHOW UNITS AND UNIT PRICES. INVOICES WILL NOT BE AUDITED OR APPROVED FOR PAYMENT UNLESS AND UNTIL THESE REQUIREMENTS HAVE BEEN FULLY MET. WHEN PRICE SHOWN IS A DELIVERED PRICE, ALL TRANSPORTATION AND DELIVERY CHARGES MUST BE PREPAID IN FULL TO DESTINATION.

ALL SHIPMENTS MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY PACKING SLIP AND COUNTY ORDER NUMBER MUST BE SHOWN ON ALL CASES AND PACKAGES.

FRED CALIN
 COUNTY PURCHASING AGENT

BY:

Fred Calin

Purchase order for the sponsored film
Your County Health Department
 (1956). Courtesy of Hugh M. Hefner
 Moving Image Archive, University of
 Southern California.

cataloging systems. The project was designed to build on earlier endeavors by the EMC and the Library of Congress, with the aim of correcting some of the deficiencies of cataloging (which Farmer had already pointed out in his MA thesis), such as the lack of standardization that exists between film catalogs produced by many different organizations. The EMC appointed Farmer as its liaison to the NICEM project. Glenn McMurry, who was in charge of the film distribution division of Farmer's A-V Services (and who had been compiling USC's film distribution catalogs for some years), assembled the database.⁶¹ Although it is not yet clear if Farmer was one of the original grant writers for the project, his dedication to standardization within the nontheatrical industry with SMPTE, and his plea (made in his MA thesis) for reducing the cost of producing so many different film distribution catalogs, were both successfully addressed with the NICEM database.

The 1970s began with the educational film market seemingly stronger than ever and with USC as an influential player not only regionally but nationally. Farmer was sitting on almost all of the nationwide councils dedicated to educational media as well as on the SMPTE Educational, Industrial, and Consumer Film Technology Committee, which was dedicated to producing standards for small-gauge film production. He was also heavily involved in other endeavors, such as providing data for the HOPE reports, which were the primary source for information on the business side of the educational media industry. Figures taken from Farmer's submissions to the HOPE reports indicate that A-V Services took in over two hundred thousand dollars in revenue from the film lab and distribution in 1969, followed by a 33 percent increase the following year.⁶² It seems likely that this helped with the operating costs of the cinema department itself, although as of this time we have not been able to track down documents verifying the department's operating budget.

On the archival side of things, Farmer was involved with early film preservation endeavors at USC, before the University of California, Los Angeles, even began its archive. In the late 1960s, Farmer teamed up with his colleague Kemp Niver, who had developed a method of transferring the paper print collection at the Library of Congress over to new 35mm film. At the time, Farmer was also heavily involved with the University Film and Video Association (UFVA). Farmer negotiated with Niver to put together a series titled *The First Twenty Years*, which compiled one hundred of the paper print films into twenty-six different 16mm reels that could be used to teach early cinema, to be distributed by the UFVA. The work was done at DeLuxe in Hollywood, and the films were housed at the USC archive. All orders and inquiries about the series went through Farmer. Farmer's influence loomed large over this project; one surviving note from the

Kemp R. Niver

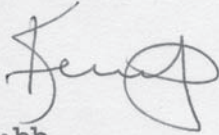
910 N. Fairfax
Los Angeles 90046

7 May 1969

Dear Herb:

Further to telephone conversation today, here are copies of two suggested enclosures to be printed up and put with the proper reel of film. Before we finish all 26, would you be good enough to look these samples over, and add whatever is necessary to identify the source - the University Film Foundation or whatever?

Many thanks.



KRN:bb

PS - The title on each is as it appears on the film itself.

Letter from Kemp Niver to Herb Farmer. Courtesy of Hugh M. Hefner Moving Image Archive, University of Southern California.

period indicates that Niver did not know the proper name of the distributor but instead was entrusting everything to Farmer:

Here are copies of two suggested enclosures to be printed up and put with the proper reel of film. Before we finish all 26, would you be good enough to look these samples over, and add whatever is necessary to identify the source—the University Film Foundation or whatever?⁶³

In 1973, Farmer was also involved in a collaborative project with SMPTE to restore the original three-strip Technicolor short *La Cucaracha* (Lloyd Corrigan, 1934). Farmer obtained the original nitrate negatives and elements for USC, and the group made hundreds of 16mm reduction prints, which became available for rental or purchase in 1974. Farmer and SMPTE knew of the impending closing of the Technicolor dye-processing plant and made the preservation into one of the final projects to use the original imbibition (IB) process. Two decades later, Bob Gitt and the UCLA archive borrowed the original nitrate materials to do a restoration of their own on 35mm, utilizing a more modern process. It is important to note that the preservation in which Farmer took part utilized not only the original elements but the original IB Technicolor process.

While the *La Cucaracha* restoration by Farmer and SMPTE was not the first by any means, it remains extremely significant. Penelope Houston, from the British Film Institute, has stated that “restoration is seen as a somewhat pointless activity if it does not involve putting the film back into circulation.”⁶⁴ Farmer’s restoration of *La Cucaracha* on 16mm, which made it more readily available for rental or sale than 35mm, demonstrates his dedication to access via the 16mm gauge. Indeed, many of these 16mm restoration prints still exist today. This same thinking also prompted Farmer to bring the *First Twenty Years* project to the Educational Broadcasting Corporation (EBC) in December 1969 at no charge, so that it could be aired on television over the holiday break to an even wider audience, including children. The director of the EBC, Richard J. Meyer, stated in a letter to Farmer, “In the past we have done this kind of thing with various film festivals and foreign television before, but never for the school child.”⁶⁵ When it aired, Farmer made sure that Niver received full credit for the restoration of the films.

Despite all these successes, the 1970s also marked the onset of many changes in the nontheatrical field, and the beginning of the end for the 16mm educational film. In 1976, the 365-seat Eileen Norris Cinema Theatre was built on the USC campus; the HMIA now occupies the basement of this building.⁶⁶ In 1983, the Department of Cinema officially became the School of Cinema–Television, and in 1984, it moved out of the Stables and into



a newly built five-building complex, funded in large part by a new generation of recent USC alumni with growing power in the Hollywood film industry, including George and Marcia Lucas. According to multiple accounts, Farmer and others of his generation were supportive but melancholy about these changes.⁶⁷ This new era for film

studies at USC also marked the end of an era for educational cinema's importance to the program. The era of the blockbuster motion picture had begun, and students became more interested in launching careers in narrative film and television than in learning the craft of filmmaking through the step-by-step process of producing educational films.

Kemp Niver, Herb Farmer, and Carl Hunt, president of DeLuxe, roll out the first batch of 16mm prints for the First Twenty Years. Courtesy of Hugh M. Hefner Moving Image Archive, University of Southern California.

FROM CIRCULATING FILM LIBRARY TO MOVING IMAGE ARCHIVE: THE 1980S AND AFTER

USC may have begun distributing educational films later than many of the other institutions of higher education that once did so, but today it remains one of the few university-funded archives to maintain its educational film holdings. Many colleges and universities have deaccessioned their nontheatrical films, some relegating their prints to the trash bin and others managing to find a new home for their collections (for example, Iowa

State University's American Archives of the Factual Film closed to the public in 2002, but it was acquired by the Library of Congress in 2007).⁶⁸

By the 1980s, the educational film market was waning because of the growing popularity of video formats and the expansion of television into more specialized channels. The final catalog of circulating films put out by USC was for 1984–86, the same period in which USC sold the NICEM database to a private company.⁶⁹ Another often-overlooked aspect of the demise of educational cinema is the changing price of silver. Owing to the machinations of certain silver speculators, the price of silver increased dramatically in late 1979. This increased the price of motion picture film stock, slowed the business of film production, and encouraged an even quicker move to the relatively inexpensive new magnetic tape found on videocassettes.⁷⁰

It was not long before the film rental and sales division of the USC cinema program was shut down, leaving the educational films to sit in the archive.⁷¹ By this time, Farmer was approaching his fiftieth year at USC, and although he was still teaching and working on campus, many of the new staff and students probably had little idea how instrumental he had been in building film studies at USC. In 1992, Farmer officially retired and was no longer involved in any business decisions for the school. He stayed on at the university operating under the unofficial title of Archives and Historical Projects. This moment appears to mark the actual start of the film archive. Over the next two years, film prints were moved from the A-V Services building into the basement of the Norris Cinema Theatre, where they still reside today. The university also hired an official curator for the archive because Farmer was in his seventies by this time and no longer officially employed by the school.

In 2007, the archive received a major gift of two million dollars from longtime USC supporter Hugh Hefner for the protection of the archive and for the establishment of a Hugh M. Hefner Exhibition Hall to be used for displaying the roughly five thousand historical artifacts held in the archive and around campus.⁷² With this donation, the archive was christened the Hugh M. Hefner Moving Image Archive. This was a fitting match in more ways than one: in addition to being a long-standing champion of film preservation, and in addition to his venerable career producing a different sort of “non-theatrical” media through Playboy Enterprises, one of Hefner’s media productions had included a television film titled *Third Girl from the Left*, starring Kim Novak, who had donated her film collection to the USC archive some years earlier.

In many ways, one can follow the development of the HMIA by tracing the activities of Herbert E. Farmer. While he was teaching and involved in business decisions for the cinema department through his directing of A-V Services, Farmer headed

up a living, breathing, circulating film collection. Upon his retirement in 1992, the film library became something very different: an archive. Although the HMIA is evidence of Farmer's influence on film studies at USC, the school's historical connection to non-theatrical film has been otherwise largely erased. Most students entering the USC School of Cinematic Arts today know nothing of Farmer's importance to the school, nor of its past productions of educational films. Farmer's name remains on his old office door at the archive, but his legacy is little known. Students today are largely uninterested in educational media, dreaming instead of the commercial film industry. Farmer's story, along with the existence of the archive and its holdings, illustrates a lost aspect of the historical development of the USC film school. Perhaps with the growing interest in the history of nontheatrical and sponsored films evidenced by recent scholarship, these films will begin to attract more of the attention they warrant. Moreover, it is time for formerly unrecognized figures, such as Herbert E. Farmer, to be given the credit they deserve for promoting the art and industry of nontheatrical film in the twentieth century.

COLLECTION HIGHLIGHTS

Student Films and *Trojan Newsreel*

The HMIA's largest holdings are in student films. The earliest materials from the 1930s are mostly modest lighting and camera exercises or editions of the *Trojan Newsreel*. Student films in the collection number roughly twenty thousand titles spanning over eighty years. The most well-known of these are George Lucas's student films, but in addition, there are many other interesting films from famous and nonfamous alumni. Recently, the elements to John Carpenter's first USC film, *Captain Voyeur* (1969), were found and restored after forty years of obscurity. One of the earliest narrative films in the collection, *Torment* (1946), is a virtually unknown short about the challenges of making student films; *Torment* resembles the early experimental short *Even as You and I* (1937), which has been gaining attention since its release on DVD in 2005 as part of Kino Video's *Avant-Garde: Experimental Cinema of the 1920s and 30s* box set.

The *Trojan Newsreel* was produced semiregularly from 1933 until it ceased production in 1942 because of war cutbacks. Through these ten years, records indicate that somewhere between fifty and seventy-five editions were produced. The *Newsreel* covered a variety of campus topics, such as academics and sports events, and included rare glimpses of college life, such as Mickey Rooney at a fraternity party and the first American performance of an eighteen-year-old Cyd Charisse with the Russian Ballet. The *Trojan Newsreel* offers a unique vision of the 1930s college student from the eyes of the

students themselves rather than the Hollywood-style, Andy Hardy version of college.

The many different editions of the *Trojan Newsreel* present a challenging preservation project. These were all one-of-a-kind films made using early reversal film stocks, and the prints are currently in varying degrees of deterioration. Their one-of-a-kind status meant that, over the years, whenever a compilation reel was put together, the newsreels were broken apart, and individual clips were often removed. Because of this, they now exist in many partial, single-story reels. The reels are finally being pieced back together using whatever original documents can be located, such as old issues of the *Daily Trojan* newspaper.

Herbert E. Farmer Technology Collection

One of the most unique and archivally challenging collections at the HMIA is the Herbert E. Farmer Technology Collection. Farmer always recognized the importance of the equipment being used to make motion pictures, and early on, he began saving pieces when they had outlived their current use value. Although film prefers a cool and dry environment, older technology can become damaged by an overly dry environment. Because many old pieces of equipment have leather and rubber components, they need to be exercised and lubricated to protect them from drying and cracking.

Though many of the items were acquired piece by piece from different individuals over the years, some have come in the form of large ceremonious donations. Farmer was a friend of Sol Lesser, who once attempted to set up a museum of motion picture technology that famously failed because of conflicting views about the purpose of such a museum. Owing to Lesser's failure to establish this museum, Farmer was given multiple donations of material Lesser had collected over the years, the first being a camera collection in 1969.⁷³ It is a well-known irony in the archival community that many film archives have developed because of Hollywood's disrespect for its own history. In her history of Lesser's attempt to establish this museum, Alison Trope quotes Arthur Knight on the failure of Lesser's museum, who stated, "Hollywood did not care about the past, showing interest and opening their pocketbooks solely for the present and the future."⁷⁴ Along with Lesser's personal donation to the collection, USC received a quarter of the material that had been earmarked for the Hollywood Museum in 1981. Other celebrated donations include a 1972 gift from Jack Warner that included many early Vitaphone pieces, such as the mixing board used to record *The Jazz Singer* (Alan Crosland, 1927).

The technology collection remained a hidden gem for decades at USC because it was kept under lock and key by Farmer for protection. In the early days, much of it was



stored off campus at great expense, but when the Norris Theatre was built in 1976, space finally became available for on-campus storage. The collection was expanded not only through donated pieces but through Farmer's habit of holding on to much of the equipment that was used throughout the years in the cinema school, beginning with his own aforementioned Bell and Howell 70DA 16mm camera.

Among the thousands of items held in the technology collection are some extremely rare items, including the third Bell and Howell camera ever made, from 1906. The collection includes magic lanterns and precinema artifacts, such as Zoetropes and Praxinoscopes, along with an original Lumière Cinématographe. The diversity of cinema is covered from all angles, revealing the multiple gauges that have existed over the years, such as a 17.5mm Ikonograph projector and a 28mm Cello projector. Unusual devices, such as the 35mm Graphoscope (which utilized a mirror for side projection) and Eric Berndt's complete experimental 3mm outfit (camera, optical printer, projector) that was designed for NASA, are also featured in the collection.

Educational Films

Of the many collections housed in the HMIA, none carries more importance to the history of the school, nor remains more underutilized, than the former catalog offerings of the

Kemp Niver, Herb Farmer, and Sol Lesser display the collection donated by Lesser in 1968. Courtesy of Hugh M. Hefner Moving Image Archive, University of Southern California.



Frame from *Smog Makers* (1956). Courtesy of Hugh M. Hefner Moving Image Archive, University of Southern California.

film rental and sales division. Thousands of educational films from the original circulating collection still reside in the archive, and other collections have been added over the years. In addition to the regular catalog offerings, which included educational films from an array of different producers, there are many USC student-created educational films. Titles cover a wide variety of subjects, such as *The Smog Makers* (John Apostolou, 1956), a docudrama about the Los Angeles smog problem.

The school produced a number of episodic educational films. One of the most noteworthy, *Patterns of Life* (1957), was directed by Dave Johnson for the USC Department of Biochemistry. Comprising fairly straightforward science instruction, the series features an opening title sequence from Saul Bass. There are also many Frank Baxter holdings, beginning with the original kinescopes from his three series of *Shakespeare on TV*, which began in 1953 as the first long-distance learning course. Students who enrolled watched the show off-campus and later came to campus on the final day to take the exam. The show was so successful that it spawned two follow-up courses.

Other parts of the collection have been acquired through donations. In 1988, David Shepard donated a collection of four hundred 16mm educational films, including numerous Eastman Teaching Films from the late 1920s and early 1930s. These films

came from a former rental library in Denver called Akin and Bagshaw; Shepard had acquired them from a second-hand shop in Van Nuys in the 1970s.⁷⁵ Another large group of educational films came from the Los Angeles Public Library, whose former circulating collection of films totaled over two thousand different titles.

Unfortunately, these educational films have been threatened with deaccession multiple times over the years. Certainly many of the prints are now faded and scratched, but more significantly, such films are often no longer seen as relevant to a modern cinema program. For now, the educational film collection remains in place; increased attention from scholars will help demonstrate its inherent cultural value.⁷⁶

Home Movies

Over the years, the archive has acquired a number of home movie collections, thus expanding its holdings in nontheatrical film. Some of these collections amount to only a reel or two from Hollywood notables such as James Wong Howe or Dick Powell. One such reel was found in a recent donation of John Hoffman and Slavko Vorkapich material. The Vorkapich reel, which features Vorkapich and his family, is currently being preserved through a grant from the National Film Preservation Foundation. Unlike other home movie filmmakers, Vorkapich utilizes many of the rapid cut montage techniques for which he was famous. Other collections are larger, such as the Vincent Price home movies, or the largest collection held in the archive, that of former Los Angeles surgeon Harold Lincoln Thompson. The Thompson collection consists of roughly one thousand short rolls of 16mm film, mostly Kodachrome travelogue content, which were shot all over the world from the 1950s through the 1970s.

Some of the home movie collections feature more unique material. The Las Floristas collection consists of footage shot at an annual fashion fund-raiser that showcases various Pasadena Rose Parade artists using the flowers to build highly elaborate headpieces. The twenty-five reels in this collection cover the years 1939–70. The Russell Saunders home movie collection documents the origins of Santa Monica's Muscle Beach. Comprising more than one hundred reels, this collection features color and black-and-white footage from the 1950s from a group of individuals who went on to be instrumental in developing Gold's Gym.

As these collection highlights demonstrate, the HMIA's holdings provide abundant evidence of nontheatrical cinema's significance and diversity in the twentieth century. As we move further into the twenty-first century and experience our own complex digital media-saturated culture, the history of nontheatrical film should remind us that cinema and media have always extended beyond the walls of the movie theater.

Dino Everett, beginning as a teenager running 35mm carbon arc projectors at a drive-in in the 1970s through earning a master's in the Moving Image Archive Studies program at the University of California, Los Angeles, has spent his life involved in the moving image field. The first half of his life was spent as a touring punk rock musician, and when that no longer paid the bills, he went to school and got a job at the UCLA Film & Television Archive for a number of years, before taking over the archive of the University of Southern California. He has published and presented articles on the moving image field, film preservation, and film history, while actively supporting the safe use of archival material for public exhibition. His personal research interests include silent cinema, obsolete film formats, and early moving image technology. He lives in Long Beach, California, with his wife, Sherra, and their three furry kids.

Jennifer Peterson is associate professor in the film studies program at the University of Colorado–Boulder. Her articles have appeared in *Cinema Journal* and *Camera Obscura* as well as in anthologies such as *A Companion to Early Cinema* (2012) and *Learning with the Lights Off* (2012). She is the author of the recently published book, *Education in the School of Dreams: Travelogues and Early Nonfiction Film* (2013).

NOTES

1. Haidee Wasson's *Museum Movies: The Museum of Modern Art and the Birth of Art Cinema* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005) is a model of this kind of scholarship, detailing the formation and early years of the Museum of Modern Art's circulating Film Library. Articles on each of the remaining topics have been published in the last several years. On the Rockefeller Foundation, see Victoria Cain, "'An Indirect Influence upon Industry': Rockefeller Philanthropies and the Development of Educational Film in the United States, 1935–1953," in *Learning with the Lights Off: Educational Film in the United States*, ed. Devin Orgeron, Marsha Orgeron, and Dan Streible, 230–48 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); on the Ford Motor Company, see Lee Grieveson, "The Work of Film in the Age of Fordist Mechanization," *Cinema Journal* 51, no. 3 (2012): 25–51, and Lee Grieveson, "Visualizing Industrial Citizenship," in Orgeron et al., *Learning with the Lights Off*, 107–23; on ERPI, see Heide Solbrig, "Dr. ERPI Finds His Voice: Electrical Research Products and the Educational Film Market, 1927–1937," in Orgeron et al., *Learning with the Lights Off*, 193–214; on the YMCA Motion Picture Bureau, see Ronald Walter Greene, "Pastoral Exhibition: The YMCA Motion Picture Bureau and the Transition to 16mm, 1928–39," in *Useful Cinema*, ed. Charles R. Acland and Haidee Wasson, 205–29 (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011); on Edgar Dale, see John Nichols, "Countering Censorship: Edgar Dale and the Film Appreciation Movement," *Cinema Journal* 46, no. 1 (2006): 3–22. The epigraph to this article is from

Herbert E. Farmer, "USC Cinema in Perspective," *Journal of the University Film Producers Association* 11, no. 2 (1959): 9.

2. Gregory Waller, "Projecting the Promise of 16mm, 1935–45," in Acland and Wasson, *Useful Cinema*, 126.

3. Elena Rossi-Snook, "Continuing Ed: Educational Film Collections in Libraries and Archives," in Orgeron et al., *Learning with the Lights Off*, 472.

4. Don G. Williams and Luella V. Snyder, "Production and the Product," *Journal of the University Film Producers Association* 15, no. 3 (1963): 23.

5. Thomas W. Hope, "Nontheatrical Films—Interim Report No. 4," *Journal of the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers* 72 (August 1963): 632–35.

6. AMPAS supported film studies at USC for about three years. Four months after its creation in January 1927, AMPAS began meeting with USC president Rufus Bernhard von Kleinschmid to discuss sponsoring a film studies curriculum at the university. This first meeting of the AMPAS College Affairs Committee took place on May 24, 1927, but many months passed before a course was actually offered. Introduction to Photoplay debuted at USC in spring 1929 and was offered again in spring 1930, but AMPAS withdrew its financial support of the course by September 1930, after it had been offered only twice. For a thorough history of the emergence of film studies at USC, see Dana Polan, "Between Academia and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences: The University of Southern California Ventures into the Cinema," in *Scenes of Instruction: The Beginnings of the U.S. Study of Film*, 175–235 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007). See also Samuel Eugene Gates, "A History of the University of Southern California 1900–1928," MA thesis, Department of History, University of Southern California, 1929.

7. Polan, *Scenes of Instruction*, 196.

8. *Ibid.*, 227.

9. One ambitious student named Richard Bare, who already had his own 35mm camera equipment, did manage to negotiate with Morkorvin and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer to shoot an adaptation of Edgar Allan Poe's *The Oval Portrait* in 1934, but this was an exception to the rule.

10. Both titles are held in the HMIA collection.

11. "Newsreel Film of Campus to Be Seen Today," *Daily Trojan*, March 27, 1933, 1. Opening title cards of existing newsreels in the HMIA collection credit students for production and Morkovin for advising.

12. This is not to shortchange the work of others who also helped shape the Department of Cinema in the early years, a number of whom started as students and returned later as faculty. Any list of these many influential figures should include Ken Miura, Bill Mehling, Dick Harber, Gene Moriarty, Mel Sloan, Bernie Kantor, John Norwood, and Glenn McMurtry.

13. Quoted in Michael Goldman, *Reality Ends Here: 80 Years of USC Cinematic Arts* (San Rafael, Calif.: Insight Editions, 2009), 46.

14. Much of the information here is from a draft of an article written by Farmer for a book on Art Greenfield. This book was eventually published as Dick Woolen, ed., *Fridays with Art* (Burbank, Calif.: Parrot Communications International, 2003). Farmer's published chapter is titled "Art Goes Back to School," 367–72. Because Farmer's unpublished draft actually contains much

more detailed information than the published version, we quote from the unpublished version, except in cases where the published version also repeats the same information. The unpublished five-page document was found on a backup of Farmer's personal computer. The top of the first page is labeled "Herbert E. Farmer's chapter Draft 3." For brevity's sake, we cite this work as Farmer, unpublished chapter draft, HMIA collection. In this chapter draft, Farmer wrote, "We went home to Buffalo for the summer of 1939 and in the fall I brought back my Bell and Howell 70DA camera, tripod and more photo equipment and became producer of the Trojan Newsreel." Farmer, unpublished chapter draft, HMIA collection, 3.

15. "SCA Celebrates Herb Farmer's Incredible Seven Decades," *School of Cinematic Arts News*, September 9, 2008, <http://cinema.usc.edu/news/article.cfm?id=9747>.

16. Transcription of cassette recording made by William R. Poulson in September 1996, HMIA collection.

17. Farmer wrote, "We desperately needed a 35mm projection room. Since Dan and I previously had experience installing such in the projection booth in our high school, we started by overhauling a pair of old RCA portable sound projectors which had been given to Cinema. As the films most guests from the industry wanted to show came made up on 2000ft reels we mounted the projectors on a pair of Powers 6B pedestals and then mounted the 2000ft magazines on top. They worked but fortunately it wasn't too long before I was able to promote a pair of Simplex E7 Projectors, Western Electric sound heads, amplifiers, loudspeakers, and Magnarc lamps." Farmer, unpublished chapter draft, HMIA collection, 3.

18. According to Farmer, before the cinema department moved from the basement of Old College into the Stables, "the *Trojan Newsreel* had a small office space in the Student Union Building and the production section was in our residence court apartment (Dan, Dave and myself) just south of the Coliseum on what was then Santa Barbara Ave." Farmer, unpublished chapter draft, HMIA collection, 3.

19. This episode is in the HMIA collection.

20. Goldman, *Reality Ends Here*, 50.

21. According to at least one account, Farmer and Johnson, who were still undergraduate students at the time, were in charge of this remodeling job. Farmer wrote, "During the summer of 1941 Dan and I with the help of a number of very talented students started some rather major building changes. We enlarged the projection booth, installed the improved projectors which included putting together a pair of motor-generators as the sound heads had selsyn drive motors. The crew also made many other changes to the building fixing spaces for a more adequate sound operation." Farmer, unpublished chapter draft, HMIA collection, 3. A 1992 videotape interview with Farmer, Wiegand, and Johnson corroborates this. DICK HARBER: "After the war, you guys had your diplomas. Why did you come back?" DAN WIEGAND: "We felt there was a nucleus here that needed some sort of development. It was just a fascinating thing to try to do." DAVE JOHNSON: "Well, we kind of felt that the department was ours, because in 1939, the summer of 1939, we moved into the old building, which was the old Fine Arts building, that was built in 1924

out of scrap lumber. [laughter] We remodeled that place, redesigned, remodeled, built a projection room, built a stage, built a studio, built the classrooms and everything, and we kind of felt like the department was ours." Videotape interview with Herbert E. Farmer, Dan Wiegand, and Dave Johnson by Dick Harber, September 5, 1992, HMIA collection.

22. Some of the acquisitions are discussed in a video interview with Johnson, Wiegand, Farmer, and Dick Harber, dated September 25, 1992. Funding for these acquisitions remains unclear. Although there is no documentation to substantiate it, Farmer was fond of pointing out (as he does in this video interview) that he never paid for any of the equipment; rather, he just traded for it or found donations.

23. In an oral history from 1992, Farmer states, "The war came along and he [Poulson] turned around and decided that he wanted to go to law school to solve some personal problems, so he went to law school and traded the processing machine to the school for some tuition. How they did it then was quite easy. You couldn't do that now if you tried. But he finished his law degree, solved his problem, never entered the Bar or anything, but we had a lab. It was fun to have the group of us moving that processing machine on a 4-wheeled dolly from up on Figueroa Street, down 35th Street, and putting it into the old building, and building the room—the laboratory—around it." Herbert E. Farmer, September 5, 1992, HMIA collection.

24. Herbert E. Farmer's contract with USC, signed by USC president Rufus von Kleinschmid, December 5, 1941, HMIA collection.

25. Goldman, *Reality Ends Here*, 58.

26. See V. R. Cardozier, *Colleges and Universities in World War II* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1993).

27. "Without going into details when I returned [from a trip to Liberty Missouri] I procured a pair of Holmes 35mm sound projectors with baby carbon arc lamps and set the system up in the Hancock auditorium. With these and through contacts with the studios we provided regular entertainment to the 500 navy cadets living on the campus." Farmer, unpublished chapter draft, HMIA collection, 4.

28. Herbert E. Farmer's contract with USC, April 30, 1942, HMIA collection.

29. "I received dispatch orders to return without delay to Pensacola to become Officer in charge of the Navy Motion Picture School." Farmer, unpublished chapter draft, HMIA collection, 4.

30. See Thomas Doherty, *Projections of War: Hollywood, American Culture, and World War II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993); Richard Dyer MacCann, *The People's Films: A Political History of U.S. Government Motion Pictures* (New York: Hastings House, 1973); and Rebecca Robins Raines, *Getting the Message Through: A Branch History of the U.S. Army Signal Corps* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, U.S. Army, 1994).

31. Waller, "Projecting the Promise of 16mm," 137.

32. Willis H. Miller, "Visual Education and the Motion Picture Industry," *Bulletin of the American Association of University Professors* 32, no. 2 (1946): 356.

33. Charles F. Hoban Jr., *Movies That Teach* (New York: Dryden Press, 1946),

12–13; quoted in Herbert E. Farmer, “A Survey of the Distribution of Non-theatrical Motion Pictures,” MA thesis, University of Southern California, 1955, 33, HMIA collection.

34. Both films are in the HMIA collection.

35. Herbert E. Farmer, “USC Cinema in Perspective,” *Journal of the University Film Producers Association* 11, no. 2 (1959): 11.

36. “1951–1952 Film Catalog,” *Bulletin of the University of Southern California* 46 (September 15, 1951): 16. Many of these first twenty-eight films are still in the HMIA collection.

37. Farmer’s contracts indicate that he taught the following three courses in 1946: Cinema 100ab, Fundamentals of the Cinema; Cinema 115a, Basic Cinema Techniques; and Cinema 140, Principles of Sound. Herbert E. Farmer, contract with USC, May 15, 1946, and December 30, 1946, HMIA collection.

38. Farmer writes, “My responsibilities included what might be called the business management of these projects working through the University’s Business Offices and contracts and Grants system.” Herbert E. Farmer, “Art Goes Back to School,” in Woolen, *Fridays with Art*, 370.

39. Carl Clausen, “Audio-Visual Services—A Close-Up,” *Journal of the University Film Producers Association* 11, no. 2 (1959): 13.

40. Herbert E. Farmer, “USC Cinema in Perspective,” *Journal of the University Film Producers Association* 11, no. 2 (1959): 9.

41. *Ibid.*, 11.

42. Because of Farmer’s wartime position in the navy, he knew of its postwar surplus of film equipment. Goldman, *Reality Ends Here*, 77. Alumnus Craig Curtis corroborates this in a feature-length documentary made by USC in 1986 titled *The First Fifty Years*, held in the HIMA collection. Curtis states, “Well, Herb was an expert at war surplus. If you can imagine a University had the drag to get the war surplus, but Farmer had the knowledge, and horse trading expertise to get this war surplus, so the next thing we knew Herb Farmer had all these extra printers from war surplus, all these processors, all the cameras.”

43. Farmer’s unpublished MA thesis is in the HMIA collection.

44. Elena Rossi-Snook, “A Select Guide to Educational Film Collections,” in Orgeron et al., *Learning with the Lights Off*, 478–94.

45. Farmer, “A Survey of the Distribution of Non-theatrical Motion Pictures,” 68.

46. Carl Clausen, “Audio-Visual Services,” 13; Farmer, “A Survey of the Distribution of Non-theatrical Motion Pictures,” 88.

47. It is also worth noting that USC was officially affiliated with the Methodist Church until 1952. Perhaps coincidentally, Herbert E. Farmer was a Methodist. More research would be necessary to connect USC’s educational film activities to its religious background, and perhaps there is no connection. But after schools, churches have historically been one of the major proponents of nontheatrical cinema. See, e.g., Terry Lindvall and Andrew Quickie, *Celuloid Sermons: The Emergence of the Christian Film Industry, 1930–1986* (New York: New York University Press, 2011).

48. Rachael Stoeltje, Film Archivist at the Indiana University Libraries Film Archive, e-mail correspondence with the author (J.P.), September 10, 2012.

49. The best resource so far on educational film collections at universities is Rossi-Snook, "A Select Guide."
50. Goldman, *Reality Ends Here*, 77. Because he was the director of A-V Services, much of Farmer's correspondence involved financial transactions associated with the production of these sponsored films.
51. Gloria Waldron, *The Information Film* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1949), 18. For more on sponsored films, see Rick Prelinger, *The Field Guide to Sponsored Films* (San Francisco: National Film Preservation Foundation, 2006).
52. See, e.g., "Check-List for Producer and Sponsor Responsibilities in the Production of Motion Pictures," Association of National Advertisers, New York, April 1948, HMIA collection.
53. John Flory for the Association of National Advertisers, *The Dollars and Sense of Business Films* (New York: Association of National Advertisers, 1954), HMIA collection.
54. Farmer, "USC Cinema in Perspective," 11.
55. These films are in the HMIA collection.
56. Herbert E. Farmer to anonymous at Health Department, May 16, 1957. Production file, *Your County Health Department*, HMIA collection.
57. Unlike many other universities that teach film production, USC has always required students to sign a waiver giving the university the rights to their student films. All films produced by USC film students for university credit remain the property of the school. While the origin of this policy is unclear, it is entirely plausible that Farmer helped shape it because it meant that if the department owned the copyright to the films, A-V Services would be able to freely use them for rental and sales without having to negotiate with each individual student filmmaker. Likewise, a file in Farmer's papers titled "Release Form Project" includes a letter dated January 5, 1956, from Farmer to then university controller Paul Walgren, which states, "If we are going to continue to make pictures which involve considerable sums of money and rather wide circulation, I believe that we should give this matter early consideration and so I am attaching another set of (talent, music, technician release) forms." Farmer was attempting to have more secure documentation on file for the university to protect the material that was being distributed. This initiative may have been prompted by the success of the Oscar-winning film *Face of Lincoln* in the previous year. By 1958, all graduate productions began compiling a production file or notebook, each apparently signed off by Farmer, which included all the necessary documentation to safely and securely distribute the USC student films. Shortly thereafter, this process was adopted for undergraduate films as well.
58. A-V Services, in-house catalog 1958–59, 6, HMIA collection.
59. Marketing flyer, Educational Media Council 2, 1966, HMIA collection.
60. *NICEM Index to 16mm Educational Films*, 8th ed. (Albuquerque, N.M.: Access Innovations, 1984), vi.
61. Glenn McMurry's autobiography, which discusses Herbert E. Farmer and the work they did at A-V Services, is online at <http://www.gregssandbox.com/mcmurphy/sec10/10-usc.htm>.
62. Taken from a handwritten confidential survey filled out by Farmer,

which was to be used for HOPE reports statistical analysis. A note by Farmer stapled to the survey was dated July 8, 1971. HMIA collection.

63. Kemp Niver to Herbert E. Farmer, May 7, 1969, Kemp Niver paper file, HMIA collection.

64. Penelope Houston, *Keepers of the Frame: The Film Archives* (London: British Film Institute, 1994), 127.

65. Richard J. Meyer to Herbert E. Farmer, October 23, 1969; Herbert E. Farmer to Richard J. Meyer, November 18, 1969. Correspondence file, Historical Films, Kemp Niver paper file, HMIA collection.

66. A-V Services was located at 659 West 34th Street until the 1980s. The building has since been demolished.

67. Goldman, *Reality Ends Here*, 151.

68. Rossi-Snook, "A Select Guide," 491–92.

69. This company, Access Innovations Inc., still operates the NICEM catalog on an online subscription basis. See <http://www.nicem.com/>.

70. In the 1970s, Texas oil brothers W. Herbert Hunt and Nelson Bunker Hunt got heavily involved in the buying of silver futures. They were able to manipulate the market and take the value of silver from roughly five dollars an ounce all the way up to fifty dollars an ounce in 1979, before the bottom dropped out. Even though the value came crashing back down to ten dollars an ounce, that price was still twice what it was before, which created a substantial rise in the cost of motion picture film stock. An article in the *Los Angeles Times* reported a steep increase in the price of film stock in early 1980: "Eastman Kodak Increases Ranging up to 75% Take Effect January 26." See the Associated Press story "Silver Prices Fog Picture of Photo Industry: Surge in Cost of Key Ingredient May Slow Business, Firms Fear," *Los Angeles Times*, January 14, 1980, D13.

71. Although it is difficult to track down the precise date on which the film library ceased to be a circulating collection, the final card catalog for the film library was stored in the archive by Farmer and is dated 1982. Inside the catalog are two handwritten notes. One dated 1988, a single sheet of paper, lists fifty-three "restricted films" and the number of times they were rented. On the opposite side of the sheet, a note states "VHS 88" and lists eleven titles and their totals. The second note is taped to the header for VHS in the catalog and states "6/1/89 Price remains as is for Cinema & Others." These traces indicate that rentals diminished to a trickle in the 1980s, with the last remaining material evidence documenting VHS rentals dated 1989.

72. John Zollinger, "Legendary Publisher Hugh Hefner Donates \$2 Million to the School of Cinematic Arts," *School of Cinematic Arts News*, November 15, 2007, <http://cinema.usc.edu/news/article.cfm?id=9686>.

73. "Famed Producer Makes Gift: \$150,000 Cameras to SC," *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*, December 23, 1968.

74. Alison Trope, *Stardust Monuments: The Saving and Selling of Hollywood* (Lebanon, N.H.: Dartmouth College Press, 2012), 77.

75. David Shepard, telephone interview with the author (J.P.), April 6, 2012.

76. When the author (J.P.) first did research on the David Shepard collection of educational films in 2003, they had not yet been cataloged. The film cans appeared to have been untouched since they were deposited in the archive.