Home Movies, Genealogy, and Family History

by

Sarah V. Hartzell

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Abstract

Genealogists and family historians represent a huge portion of archival researchers, and home movies are by far the most common form of audiovisual materials ever created, yet these two modes of study have traditionally not crossed paths. The preservation of home movies has become a hot topic in libraries, archives, and museums in recent years with successful projects like the Center for Home Movies' Home Movie Day and the South Side Home Movie Project. Likewise, genealogy has captured the attention of a new generation through online resources like Ancestry.com, at-home DNA testing, and TV shows like *Finding Your Roots*. With these two areas gaining prevalence in both academic and popular circles, this thesis examines the potential uses for home movies in genealogy, improving the discoverability of these materials in archives, and how to start some of that work at home, drawing from my experience working on my family's home movie archive through the lens of genealogy.

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1: Introduction

In the last two years, there have been two additions to my family who I have only met in videos. Reynja and Jane, my first cousins once-removed, were born during the COVID-19 pandemic so our extended family hasn't been able to meet them in person. The only way I have seen them, and really know anything about them, has been via Facebook posts, Instagram Stories, and iPhone videos.

While that will not always be the case, it has been a technological blessing to be able to bond with them in absentia. Home movies, whether digital or analog, have provided this familial continuity for generations of relatives who have not been able to physically gather, whether for extenuating circumstances like ours, geographic distance, or not being alive at the same time.

I also lost two grandmothers in the last two years, who both spent much of their retirements studying genealogy. As their collected documents, photos, and writings made their way to my parents, their home movies came into my possession, as is the fate of many a MIAP student. As I wound through the films and digitized the tapes, I met my great-grandparents, great-aunts and uncles, and distant cousins for the first time, too. The names on the family trees that I had seen so many times before now had faces, mannerisms, personalities, and sometimes even voices.

Home movies represent the largest body of moving image materials ever made, and genealogists are among the more frequent archival researchers, yet these two modes of study have not been studied in tandem before. Home movies have gained stature in libraries, museums, and archives in the last decade or so. The Center for Home Movies has advocated for their preservation since 2005, succeeding in getting several films on the National Film Registry and instituting Home Movie Day, a global celebration and recognition of home movies in private and

institutional collections. The National Museum of African American History and Culture made collecting, preserving, and providing access to home movies part of its mission since before it opened in 2016, and has since taken its digitization lab on the road as part of the Great Migration Home Movie Project. The Museum of Modern Art engaged home movies as art with its *Private Lives Public Spaces* exhibit, which opened in October 2019 and went on view partially online due to the pandemic.

With the preservation and appreciation of home movies at the forefront of moving image archiving, it still remains somewhat distant from other forms of archival research. Genealogical collections are common in institutions large and small across the United States and have become even more accessible online. As genealogy becomes even more popular due to these resources, home movies are powerful documents that should be incorporated into genealogical research. As documents of people in certain places at certain times, they address the main goals of genealogy, and as audiovisual records capable of capturing the nuances of people and their lives, they are affective insights into the people who came before us.

To demonstrate some of these possibilities, throughout this thesis I will draw examples from my own family's home movie archive. In section three, I use two specific home movies as examples of the unique utility of home movies in identifying relatives and investigating and preserving family history and lore. In section five, I detail my personal archiving work on this collection as a model for beginning such a project, including inventorying, digitizing, and collaborative cataloging. I approached this project as a continuation of the many decades of genealogical work that my grandparents and great-grandparents conducted and shared with their family. As a humble and passive beneficiary of their work, I feel I have the responsibility and honor to enhance it with the unique resources at my disposal. As our family has gained and lost,

the importance of documenting these generational ties has become more pressing and significant. It is a great privilege that we live in a time when we can see the faces and hear the voices of our ancestors, and it would be a disservice to generations to come if we did not use that privilege as responsibly as we can.

1.1 Terminology

There are several terms that are often used in the fields of genealogy and home movie scholarship with some measure of interchangeability, but for the sake of clarity, my definitions are as follows. *Genealogy* is the study of one's lineage and ancestors according to data – birth dates, death dates, immigration status, census data, et cetera. This often takes the form of family trees, charts, or timelines. *Family history* is the more in-depth study of these ancestors as people (both individual persons and familial groups), telling their stories by collecting personal information, anecdotes, lifestyles, oral histories, and other means. This is more often written in prose, from short-form synopses to book-length chronicles, usually illustrated with pedigree charts.

The term *home movies* can have varied definitions in academic circles. Some avoid it for the connotations of it being an "unserious" medium, while others embrace that democratizing language. For the purposes of this thesis, I am distinguishing home movies from amateur filmmaking as a whole; home movies are a subset of amateur films, but are generally limited to the recording of family events, domestic life, and travel, and are meant to be exhibited to known acquaintances of the producers and subjects. For more thorough analysis of amateurism versus professionalism, see Patricia R. Zimmermann's *Reel Families: A Society History of Amateur Film* (1995), the first scholarly monograph on the subject. Some scholars and archivists

distinguish home movies shot on film from home video. For the purposes of this thesis, home movies will refer to any audiovisual format that meets the criteria listed previously. When the format is significant to the discussion, it will be mentioned specifically (e.g., "8mm film" or "MiniDV tapes"). I have chosen to collapse these terms under the umbrella of "home movies" so as not to privilege one medium over another. The majority of the discussion in this thesis will be regarding the images and sounds depicted in the home movies, not the material they were recorded on. Certainly, there are aspects of the materiality that are important to preservation and access, when it is helpful to refer to the medium more specifically – video spans some fifty years and small-gauge film over a hundred. Referring to those material components in greater detail will be important to their respective analyses.

1.2 Scope

In the definition of home movies laid out above, present and future technologies also qualify. The digital camera quickly evolved into camera phones, GoPros, livestreaming, and the like. Born-digital home movies have become the norm; in fact, they have reinvented the notion of the home movie in some ways, by their utilization of social media and cloud-based storage. Social media, in particular, problematizes the criteria surrounding the exhibition of home movies, which traditionally was an intimate audience in a private setting, but categorizing the audience and mode of presentation of a social media post blurs these lines. Is an Instagram Story a home movie? A Facebook Live of someone's birthday or graduation? These new forms also require a different framework for discussing preservation, stewardship, and access. As such, born-digital home movies will not be part of the scope of this thesis. They are more than worthy of a paper of their own and are a rich area for future research.

The geographical focus of this thesis will be the United States. Moving image archives around the world have different challenges, priorities, and cultural contexts. It would be inapt to speak of them all as monolithic and beyond the scope of this paper to discuss each individually. Likewise, genealogical traditions vary around the world, from the *why* to the *how* to the *where.* Ancient Chinese and Roman cultures, for example, recorded their own meticulous genealogies, while European family trees were often crafted to prove nobility or royalty. Of course, "genealogy in the United States" is itself a bit oxymoronic; even descendants of the earliest settlers will transcend the country's borders within only a few centuries. And in the twenty-first century, tens of millions of Americans were born elsewhere. But honing in on the United States means honing in on the diversity of stories within it; some genealogies can be traced to other countries hundreds of years in the past, many are searching only a few generations (or fewer) back, and others are fighting to recover the histories that the United States itself has taken from them through colonization and slavery. A more international approach to this research is certainly warranted, but beyond the scope of this thesis.

2: History of Home Movies and Genealogy in the US

2.1 Home Movie Making – Film

Amateur film as we know it today began with the introduction of 16mm film in 1923 by Eastman Kodak. While professional filmmakers and the more privileged amateurs did record home movies on 35mm film, as well as other less popular formats like 28mm. 9.5mm, and 17.5mm, the danger of nitrate film and the inconvenience of these cameras in size and cost prevented the average person from making their own films. By contrast, the patent for the 16mm camera written by designer Julien Tessier placed the technology firmly in the scope of the

amateur, with the objective of the design to be "compact, easy to load and operate, with sturdy construction, not likely to be easily damaged."[1] The Cine-Kodak kit of camera, projector, tripod, and screen was priced at $335 (over $5,000 in 2021 dollars). While the contemporaneous introduction of smaller 35mm cameras by several European companies cost about a third as much as the Cine-Kodak, the finished films cost more than four times as much; Kodak's 16mm was a reversal stock, meaning it produced a positive image upon development, eliminating the need to process a negative, then derive a positive. Still, the technology was very much limited to the "leisure class" with significant disposable income.

Alan Kattelle states that "the introduction of the 16mm system attracted thousands of people to home movie making who would not otherwise have taken it up."[2] Perhaps seeing this writing on the wall, competitors Bell & Howell and Victor Animatograph quickly shifted gears on their own smaller gauge systems to capitalize on the release of Kodak's 16mm direct reversal system. Bell & Howell's camera drove the standard to be lighter and smaller, while Victor's set the lowest pricepoint at $55. By 1928, *American Photography* deemed amateur film as the fastest growing branch of the motion picture industry with over 125,000 amateur cameras in use.

Still, in this first decade, moviemaking was cost prohibitive to most Americans. A significant development came with a novel, if ultimately unsuccessful, invention by the Kodel Electric & Manufacturing Company. Introduced in 1929, the Kemco HoMovie Camera employed a "boustrophedonic pattern" of transport, which moved both horizontally and vertically to fit four images in one 16mm frame.[3] The HoMovie system sold for slightly less than a typical 16mm system, but real cost savings came in film purchasing and processing. Kemco

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[1] Kattelle, *Home Movies,* 82.
[2] Kattelle, *Home Movies*, 83.
[3] "Doing Things Differently."

advertised that the system would essentially pay for itself in only 14 rolls of film – the equivalent of 56 rolls of screentime in conventional 16mm systems.

The HoMovie system demonstrated a need and desire for more economical means of home movie production. Kodak Research Laboratories determined that 16mm could be reduced to an even smaller size that, utilizing existing machinery for manufacturing, could sell at a lower price point. Taking inspiration from a rejected experiment to use 35mm film run through a camera twice, exposing half the film each time, Kodak built a camera that would replicate this experiment for 16mm film. The exposed film was then processed as normal, cut in half where the exposure changed, and spliced together into one roll. The resulting image was one-quarter the size of a 16mm frame, with only one row of perforations to transport the film. The Cine-Kodak 8 launched in 1932; a system of camera, projector, and one 25-foot roll of film cost $54.25 (down to roughly $1,000 in 2021 dollars).

Movie Maker, the publication of the Amateur Cinema League, the first international association for non-professional moviemakers, astutely observed that while Kodak's 8mm was not the first attempt to make amateur filmmaking more affordable, the name and infrastructure of the largest photographic company in the world certainly put it in a position to succeed that others did not have. It also compared 8mm to the introduction of cheaper consumer still cameras by Kodak in the 19th century, which similarly gave rise to a generation of new amateur photographers.[4] Kattelle cites the new gauge as opening home movies to "moderate income families" rather than the leisure class, and that the marketing of such devices posited the "'family record'… as a principal venue for the new technology."[5]

[4] Kattelle, *Home Movies*, 95-96.
[5] Kattelle, *Home Movies*, 125.

The sophistication and quality of 8mm film and apparatus grew steadily in the decades after its invention, primarily by Kodak and Bell & Howell. Color Kodachrome film was introduced in 1935, automatic exposure in 1957, zoom lenses in 1959, and battery-driven transports in 1961. Even amid the Great Depression, the user base grew in kind – by 1940, half of the Amateur Cinema League's annual awards were granted to films on 8mm, more than double from just the previous year.[6] *Life* magazine reported that from 1948 to 1958 the photographic industry grew ten percent each year, following the postwar trends of increased disposable income and leisure time for the American public at large. In 1959, the introduction to the first issue of *Home Movie Making*, written by Bruce Downes, editor of *Popular Photography,* claimed, "There never has been a phenomenon in the whole history of photography quite like the boom now boiling in home movies… Each year sees new models, both domestic and foreign, entering a market that appears to have no saturation point."[7]

In reality, that saturation point was met in 1958, when the small-gauge film market was at its peak. A market study by Bell & Howell reported that 15 to 17 percent of households in the United States owned a movie camera or projector and that the factors preventing people from buying movie equipment were largely based on the perceived difficulty and inconvenience of use. A second study determined that the market would never surpass 20 percent, which later proved true in Bell & Howell's efforts in European and Japanese markets.[8] The introduction of the Super8 system in 1965 -- with its larger image area, better projection, and drop-in cartridge loading – and the indoor-light-friendly XL film in 1971 would spark small upticks, but each

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[6] Kattelle*, Home Movies*, 97.
[7] Kattelle, *Home Movies*, 128.
[8] Kattelle, *Home Movies*, 128.

waned within just a few years.[9] By the time home movie filmmaking had advanced to its peak in convenience and capability, such technology had been supplanted by the video camera.[10]

2.2 Home Movie Making – Video

Much like small gauge film followed its larger, industrial counterpart, home video recording was born out of television broadcasting. The basic technologies for video recording had been honed for many decades, through evolving understandings of light and electricity, chemistry and magnetism, and large-scale information systems. The first television recorder in 1956 recorded image and sound to 2-inch magnetic tape for the purposes of tape delayed programming on the West Coast, and was roughly "the size of a large kitchen range" and cost $45,000 – far from feasible for the amateur.[11] Michael Newman posits that somewhere between this moment and the emergence of digital video in the 1990s, "video shifted its meaning from being synonymous with television to denoting an alternative to conventional television transmission and reception using technology against the purpose of life broadcasting," essentially becoming the medium of the amateur rather than the professional.[12] Sony introduced its Portapak in 1967, which recorded to ½-inch tape and was, as its name suggests, portable, as compared to the heavier recorders that preceded it. The Portapak was adopted largely by video art and educational communities. By 1968, the National Education Association had published a how-to guide on using portable video tape recorders for teachers, and the *Chicago Tribune* reported in

[9] Kattelle, *Home Movies*, 107.
[10] Kattelle, *Home Movies*, 125.
[11] Kattelle, *Home Movies*, 243.
[12] Newman*, Video Revolutions,* 18.

the late 1960s that videotape was being used in "education, industry, sports, business, medicine, and even the military."[13]

Sony introduced the U-matic cassette system in 1971, as opposed to the open-reel of ½-inch tape, and it was adopted mostly in industrial settings for training and sales. The cassette could hold one hour of color video plus two audio tracks and cost $30. By the mid-1980s, U-matic, Betamax, and VHS cassette systems were supplemented by more than forty models of video cameras, produced by electronics companies as well as photographic companies like Canon and Olympus. The features that had been added to film cameras in an effort to bolster sales – zoom lenses, electronic viewfinders, auto exposure – also made their way onto these cameras. Camera and recorder were still physically separated and purchased separately, but weights dropped to under ten pounds and costs were at the high end of consumer-grade (up to $2,000 for a camera and up to $1,300 for a VCR).[14]

In 1984, Kodak introduced its Kodavision system, which utilized an 8mm tape format in a video cassette and combined camera and recorder into one mechanism, dubbed a "camcorder." Both Kodavision camera models weighed five pounds and the tape cassettes could record 60 or 90 minutes. The more affordable model cost $1,599 (around $4,200 in 2021). The Sony Handycam followed the next year and replaced the bulky image tubes of Kodavision with the charge-coupled device that significantly reduced the size of the camcorder. By the year 2000, *Buyer's Guide* listed 86 models of video camera on five formats – 8mm (sometimes called

[13] Newman*, Video Revolutions*, 22.
[14] Kattelle, *Home Movies,* 245.

Video8 today), Hi8, VHS, VHS-C (compact), and digital.[15] Prices ranged from $300 for a low-cost analog tape camera, to $4,000 for a high-end digital camera.

These camcorders, along with others, had solved may of the downsides consumers saw to shooting on film for roughly the same upfront investment as the best Super8 sound camera, while the cost of tape cassettes was much cheaper than film. Kattelle lists the benefits of videotape for the home movie maker as: "almost unlimited footage without stopping to reload, effortless recording of synchronized sound, easy and immediate playback on a TV set without having to darken the room and set up a projector and screen, and the elimination of the cost and bother of film processing."[16] The camcorder made video recording more accessible physically and technologically to "ordinary people rather than just tech enthusiasts and early adopters" and further democratized the ability to "capture and document reality in ways that existing media systems had not accomplished."[17]

Of course, all notions of democratization, whether in film or video, are to a degree limited to economic discussions. The diminishing costs of these technologies over their lifespans certainly made them available to more people, but that does not divorce them from the reality of other social barriers. For much of the twentieth century, Kodak provided its photography processing labs with color balancing cards to calibrate "norms" for skin tones. For still photography, these "Shirley cards" were of a white woman, and moving image film leader often included "China girls," so named for their porcelain white skin, not their actual ethnicity.[18] Film

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[15] Digital itself can refer to a number of formats – Digital 8mm, and the DV family of formats, to name a few.
[16] Kattelle, *Home Movies*, 246.
[17] Newman, *Video Revolutions*, 65, 68.
[18] The etymology of this term is debated, with some crediting it to the original "China girls" being porcelain mannequins, others to the "Chinese-style" outfit worn by the model. "Leader Ladies."

emulsions were not designed with sensitivity towards yellow, brown, and reddish skin tones, and were especially insensitive towards such a dynamic range as human skin tones. In photos of people with different skin tones in the same frame, the lighter tone is privileged, as the film was designed to accommodate this higher light reflexivity. In the case of group photos, such as graduating classes, Black faces are all but erased. It was not until furniture and chocolate manufacturers demanded film stocks with fidelity to their products that this dynamic range was changed. North American and British television have done the same, with various light-skinned women serving as their Shirley.[19] To this day, vectorscopes used to monitor a video's color has a particular marker for "skin tone," noted by light, pinkish hues. So while the history of home movie technology does essentially follow the arc of economic democratization, and while people of color did employ the same technologies as white people, it would be irresponsible to claim such democratization occurred outside the boundaries of American racism.

2.3 Scholarship of Home Movies

Once deemed unworthy of critical scholarship, home movies have reemerged as important historiographic, ethnographic, and aesthetic documents. In the preface to *Reel Families,* Zimmermann states her purpose as "[retrieving] amateur-film history from the garbage dump of film and culture studies."[20] This reclamation began in the late 1980s, particularly with Richard Chalfen's *Snapshot Versions of Life*, which elevated the importance of amateur photography and filmmaking from the mid-20th century, both as social processes and the resulting visual artifacts. He coined the term "home mode" to refer to "a pattern of interpersonal

[19] Roth, "Looking at Shirley."
[20] Zimmermann, *Reel Families,* xv.

and small group communication centered around the home."[21] The term serves to place amateur media as modes of communication in contrast to mass communication/media, such that they can be discussed in the same theoretical language, but require different frameworks and contexts. The framework he establishes provides a useful demarcation for the bounds of the home mode. The practitioners include immediate family members, relatives, friends, and neighbors. The artifacts record special events, holidays, and rites of passage, which James Moran helpfully lists in his review of Chalfen's work: monumental events like births and weddings, physiological changes like first steps, spiritual rites, changes in social status like enlistment, moments of accomplishment like graduations, landmark accumulation of goods like houses, and gift-giving. These artifacts then serve a cultural function to the family as retainers of memory for people, places, events, relations, generational continuity, and connections to the land and goods.[22] While significant in establishing a need for academic analysis of the home mode and its artifacts, Chalfen's discussion is most relevant to snapshot photography and gives less weight to the distinctions between still and moving images, let alone potential complications across audiovisual formats that span the decades following his discussion.

Drawing from both cinema studies and discussions in mass media and communications, James Moran's *There's No Place Like Home Video* utilizes Chalfen's "home mode" to discuss media produced in the domestic sphere regardless of recording format. By collapsing some of the distinctions between media, Moran aims to deprivilege film over video and address the social, historical, and artistic factors of this genre of media. In particular, he seeks to counter the technologically determinist rhetoric that cinephiles have used to discredit home video. While some scholars accept the "home" in "home video" as placing it in the tradition of home

[21] Chalfen, *Snapshot,* 8.
[22] Moran, *There's No Place,* 37.

photography and home movies, others empathize the "video" as a break in that tradition, establishing the technological evolution as more powerful than the persistent cultural influences of the home mode. Moran cites the time period of early home movie scholarship, which focused largely on post-World War II films, as inscribing certain qualities onto the field as a whole. Celluloid, being the only home movie format of that time period, became standard, as did the valorization of the nuclear family. The popularization of home video and changing social and family structures in the 1980s complicate both of these ideals. Past analyses of the home mode during the post-war period serve as more of an anomaly than a benchmark, as the white, middle-class, nuclear family is a historical aberration outside of the 1950s and 1960s. Such an analysis, therefore, would not allow for the potentially revolutionary quality of, for example, home videos from a mixed-race family, a single-parent family, or a queer family. Writing in 2002, Moran gives credit to the term "families we choose," often used in the LGBTQ community, and that "by archiving events as diverse as roommates on vacation, promotion parties at work, and second marriage ceremonies of recently divorced spouses, home video libraries document changing cultural conceptions of home itself."[23]

Moran ultimately frames his view of the home mode as a taxonomy of functions. The first function of the home mode is to "provide an authentic, active mode of media production for representing everyday life." The second, "to construct a liminal space in which practitioners may explore and negotiate the competing demands of their public, communal, and private, personal identities." The third function "is to provide a material articulation of generational continuity over time." Fourth, "it constructs an image of home as a cognitive and affective foundation

[23] Moran, *There's No Place*, 46

situation our place in the world." The fifth function, drawing from folkloric traditions, "it provides a narrative format for communicating family legends and personal stories."[24]

Moran's taxonomy, while speaking most directly to the techno-sociological scholar, rings true for the genealogist as well. According to a recent study, common motivations for family historians include a sense generativity, or a desire to steward legacies and stories throughout generations, as well as the desire for self-understanding through the study of one's ancestors or ethnic background.[25] While traditional genealogical research does not rely on moving images, this correlation between motivations for the home moviemaker and the genealogist lays a groundwork for linking the two fields.

Most recently, the study of home movies has grown beyond arguing for its importance and extended into interdisciplinary analysis. *The Moving Image,* the journal of the Association of Moving Image Archivists, in the last decade and a half has published articles about collecting and preserving of home movie collections on the local level, reconstructing a commercial film through home movie footage, theorizing the family film as production genre, and documentation of major events through home movies from the 1939 World's Fair to the September 11th attacks. *Mining the Home Movie: Excavations in Histories and Memories,* edited by Patricia R. Zimmermann and Karen I. Ishizuka, is the first international anthology of amateur film scholarship. Its essays draw from a variety of disciplines and cultures to critically analyze the medium. In her introduction to the book, Zimmermann uses the term "history from below" to describe this mode of historiography that is grounded in a plurality of perspectives outside of state-sanctioned or commercially produced history. These "auto-ethnographies" are histories generated by participants that "provoke reexamination of issues of identity, culture, history,

[24] Moran, *There's No Place*, 59-62.
[25] Moore and Rosenthal, "What Motivates Family Historians?"

politics and memory from the point of view of images made outside the dominant channels of representation."[26] Genealogical practice, though often reliant on "history from above" through the creation and preservation of state documents, is also ultimately a historiographic challenge of turning a history from above into a history from below. It requires reexamination of this preserved history through the perspective of an individual or generations of a family in order to reconstruct memories that are grounded "in life, rather than the maintenance of state power." Zimmermann contends that this mode of historiography requires a corresponding reassessment of primary sources. She writes, "Given the developments in critical historiography over the last thirty years that have advocated for an expansion of what is considered primary evidence, amateur film can be seen as a necessary and vital part of visual culture rather than as a marginal area requiring inclusion."[27] If amateur film as a whole is deemed a necessary source of evidence in reevaluating history, in general, then it would only follow that home movies as a genre should be considered for evidentiary value in genealogy, essentially the study of the family and the home.

2.4 American Genealogical Practice

Genealogical research in the United States poses unique challenges to essentially every demographic that takes on the task. The so-called nation of immigrants or "melting-pot culture" in which "movement and self-reinvention have long been part of the national ethos" provides for rich personal and collective stories, but it also makes tracing people throughout time much harder. Katherine Pennavaria points out, "Except for those individuals descended 100% from Native American peoples, everyone in North America has immigrants in his or her ancestry who

[26] Zimmermann, *Mining the Home Movie,* 20.
[27] Zimmermann, *Mining the Home Movie,* 5-6

arrived within the past 500 years or so, whether those ancestors traveled by choice or were forced to make the trip."[28] That means, for those who are searching for those who made the trip by choice, information is likely scattered across the country if not the world. For those descended from enslaved people and Native Americans, the information may not exist at all, or will likely take a very different form from those espoused by dominant genealogical guides.

The modern mode of genealogy in the U.S. is indebted to the Mormon Church, which began recording the data gathered by its missionaries in the 1920s as part of the Church's belief in baptism for dead ancestors.[29] The Church has amassed some three billion pages of vital records, property documents, court records, and the like in its Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah. FamilySearch, an online search engine of the Library's digitized records, launched in 1999. In 2013, FamilySearch and Ancestry.com came to an agreement to digitize one billion records from the Family History Library's mountain vault.[30] The records available on these sites still generally follow the tradition of print research that preceded it. Many traditional genealogical resources prescribe an evidentiary approach to research. Pennavaria's *Genealogy: A Practical Guide for Librarians* describes it as the scientific method, while the American Genealogical Society's *Genealogical Research: Methods and Sources* compares assessing sources to the rules of evidence as applied in a court of law. Both espouse that, while there is room for interpretation, artifacts should come from verifiable sources (ideally those than can be cross-referenced), produced under documented methods, and preserved by trustworthy bodies. Pennavaria sums it up, "*Sources* give us information from which we select *evidence*. If our

[28] Pennavaria, *Genealogy*, xvii.
[29] Kenneally, "The Mormon Church is Building a Family Tree."
[30] Walker, "LDS FamilySearch."

research is thorough and we have soundly analyzed our findings, we might reach a conclusion. The *body of evidence* on which we base that conclusion is our *proof*."[31]

These trustworthy sources are often government documents: census records, vital records (births, deaths, marriages), court proceedings, naturalization records, passenger manifests, probate records, and military documents. Private institutions like hospitals, cemeteries, immigration travel companies, and churches are also common sources for information on a person's rites of passage. Artifacts from the home are generally considered less trustworthy, as they are created or kept under the subjectivity of an individual. Still, family Bibles, correspondences, newspaper clippings, published family histories, baby books, photographs, and other keepsakes can fill in gaps and provide "interesting biographical and human interest material."[32]

From a 21st century perspective, this hierarchy should raise some red flags. For one, many government documents were only recorded on behalf of the male head of household; free married women and children did not appear in census records until 1850. Women have never been subject to the draft and therefore do not have conscription records, and are generally less visible in the military and court proceedings for much of American history. Instead, women's life and influence is most apparent in the home, yet those documents are relegated to "human interest." Likewise, enslaved Africans did not have detailed immigration or naturalization paperwork like white Americans did, nor did they appear as people in census records. Slave schedules only counted the number of slaves in the household but rarely recorded names. Free Black and non-white people were identified by their race on the census during this time, but racial identifiers were only expanded to include "white, black, mulatto, Chinese, and Indian" in

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[31] Pennavaria, *Genealogy,* 51. Emphasis original.
[32] Rubincam, *Genealogical Research,* 68.

1870,[33] and was not changed to a self-identified descriptor until 1890.[34] These most trusted documents were created under a known racist and colonialist system, so to blindly revere them over, for example, the way one's own family documented itself within the home may be problematic.

A means of rectifying some of this mistrust of the past for recent generations has come in the form of DNA testing as a genealogical tool. The simple mail-away saliva test has become a booming industry – in 2017, Ancestry sold 1.5 million kits on Black Friday alone.[35] The tests reveal a wealth of genetic information, including ethnic background and, when linked with a genealogical service like Ancestry, can reveal specific individuals as relatives. This information can mean different things to different people, depending on their genealogical goals. Jaya Saxena in the *New York Times* observed, "…they don't truly reveal our origins so much as reveal who has similar DNA right now. Also, and perhaps more important: Culture does not come from DNA."[36] Saxena notes that she is a mixed-race woman of Scottish ancestry and has had success in traditional genealogical methods for that part of her heritage, but that for those descended from slaves it is not easy. Documents are harder to search through for the reasons noted above. DNA can lead a researcher down paths they may not have considered and can lead to other people who share that DNA, opening new doors to information. FamilySearch has nearly forty webinars on using DNA in genealogy, from general FAQ to specific sessions on endogamy, adoption, Native American ancestry through DNA, tracing ancestors lost to slavery, and more.[37]

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[33] NARA, "African Americans in the Federal Census, 1790–1930."
[34] Pennavaria, *Genealogy,* 17.
[35] Molteni, "Ancestry's Genetic Testing."
[36] Saxena, "Why You Should Dig."
[37] rootsTech, "How to Use DNA in Genealogy."

DNA exemplifies why it is important to distinguish between genealogy and family history. Each has its place in telling a story, but neither one tells the full story. DNA can provide for specific matches to biological relatives, ethnic groups over many centuries, or even refuting evidence to apocryphal family tales. Family history, though, fills in all the information that falls between those gaps: the *whys* and *hows*, the names, images, personalities, and cultures.

2.5 Emergent Genealogical Scholarship

While the field of genealogical scholarship – that is to say, scholarship about genealogy as a field, rather than the practice of genealogy itself – seems to be a fairly small one, recent research has sought to rectify some of the nationalist, white supremacist, patriarchal, and biologically determinist foundations of genealogy. In a study of queer and interracial genealogies, Cedric Essi writes, "The documentation of one's family history has emerged as a biologistic instrument in the service of nationalist white supremacy. Since the 1970s, however, genealogy has expanded formally as well as ideologically and also seen multiculturalist and queer appropriations." He specifically cites interracial and same-sex relationships as "fundamental taboos in the law of kinship" that were legally overturned in *Loving v. Virginia* in 1967 and *Obergefell v. Hodges* in 2015, respectively, but have a "legacy of prohibition [that] extends into ongoing social rules." The taboos around gay men, in particular, he claims are rooted in assumptions that they are non-procreative and, as a result of the AIDS crisis, encompass a "culture of death," both of which "[negate] the familial continuity of productive life that builds the foundational premise of standard genealogical practices."

Essi traces the history of genealogical practice in the United States as part of a formation of national identity, or perhaps more aptly as a reappropriation of British lineage-based values.

What was seen as anti-democratic in early America turned into a "patriotic hobby" in the early 19th century, as family trees often began with the ancestor who immigrated to the United States, thereby truncating any pre-colonial history. Genealogy after the Civil War sought to equate national affiliation with racial purity as a replacement for the institution of slavery. The early 20th century brought eugenic and white nativist ideologies, continuing the tradition of ableist, anti-Black, and anti-Native American prejudices that began the American practice of genealogy. A paradigm shift began in the 1970s, in part due to the success of Alex Haley's *Roots* and its television adaptation, which tracks an African American family over 200 years from West Africa to slavery in Colonial America to freedom in postwar Tennessee. Essi places this era of genealogy into one of autobiographical storytelling, rather than purely lineage-tracing, and a normalization of tracing ancestry across color lines and, eventually, outside of heterosexual-biological descent. In his discussion of children's books centered around queer families, Essi claims that the cultural work of intervening in the heterosexist world of children's literature as "multilayered acts of queer empowerment that operate on autobiographical discourse and a familial reading practice." In particular, he emphasizes the semantic value in the visual storytelling of these books as "an abstract, visual continuity, and coherence that resembles the function of ancestral lines of a genealogical chart" and that the books' illustration show that the "autobiographical family tree is rooted in reciprocal affection instead of biological descent." There is a sense of familiarity here for the cinema scholar – show, don't tell, what makes a family. Where traditional terms are not sufficiently inclusive, visual devices aid in breaking the bounds of familiar meanings to account for new understandings – or "truly queer, entangled

genealogies that 'out' the biologistic, hetero or homonormative ways we might understand and narrate where we are from and where we belong," as Essi puts it.[38]

3: Home Movies as Genealogical Sources

As new notions of family arise, new modes of genealogy must rise to meet them. As part of a "history from below" approach to historiography, home movies are powerful records for the study of genealogical connections and the broader history of a family. To investigate these potential uses, Moran's taxonomy of the home mode provides a useful framework for assessing their unique functions and value in this work. I will also demonstrate this approach with examples from two of my family's home movies: a video from 1992 of a large family gathering that depicts the relationships among the extended Hartzell family, and a film from the 1940s that becomes a part of a family legend regarding my grandmother, Prudy Todd DeLap.

3.1 Generational Continuity

Moran states that the home mode serves "to provide a material articulation of generational continuity over time."[39] This is essentially a definition of genealogical recordkeeping. While many of the documents used to craft a genealogy were not necessarily created for that purpose, their genealogical function is to establish generational relations. And while home movies may or may not be recorded with the forethought of their future uses, as Zimmermann writes, "As historical artifacts, home movies are deep condensations of the

[38] Essi, "Queer Genealogies."
[39] Moran, *There's No Place,* 46.

sociological, aesthetic, economic, and cultural spaces of the places and time periods in which they were created and the people who created them."[40]

Historically, home movies have captured individual and family milestones like birthdays; rites of passage like first steps and graduations; changes in location like new homes and vacations; special gatherings like family reunions; and, as technologies became more portable and cheaper, quotidian moments deemed significant by the creator. In comparison, typical genealogical documents have addressed the same issues: vital records account for births and deaths; immigration documents as well as property records track movement of people and families; and religious records document many rites of passage, from christenings to funerals. If the goal of genealogy is to trace certain people through certain places at certain points in time, home movies can provide a visual record of many of those facts. The interpretation of such images may be less straightforward in that there is not always a name or date immediately attached to the images being seen, but they also have the potential to transcend what has been recorded on paper. In a remarkable example, *Three Minutes: A Lengthening,* a 2021 film by Bianca Stigter, transforms three minutes of home movie footage shot in Nasielsk, Poland, into an investigation of a town and its people that were soon to be devasted by the Holocaust. The home movie is part of the U.S. Holocaust Museum's collection and when it was posted on their website, a user recognized her grandfather in the film as a child, before he escaped with forged papers.[41] While David Kurtz, the home moviemaker, was just visiting Europe from Brooklyn at the time, the home movie that he brought back is valuable documentary evidence of a town of 3,000 people who were the victims of a systematic effort to erase their existence. It would be impossible to know at the time that his capturing of that moment in time would be meaningful to

[40] Zimmermann, *Mining the Home* Movie, 19.
[41] James, "Three Minutes – A Lengthening: Film Review."

a number of families other than his own, but such is the research potential of home movies. Every viewer brings a unique perspective and wealth of knowledge that could aid every other researcher down the line. Having home movies available publicly, as the Holocaust Museum did, casts an even larger net for potential discoveries.

The case of *Three Minutes* is among the more extraordinary feats of archiving, history, and kismet, but even within one's own family, home movies can be useful evidentiary records that prove, disprove, complicate, or visually supplement information from more traditional sources.

Example: The Hartzell Cousins

I don't think I've ever met my father's cousins. I'm not entirely privy to the relationship he had with them growing up and if there are any reasons beyond geography for them not being close. In truth, I can never really remember how many of them there are and what everyone's story is. To start to piece together some of this puzzle, I utilized a video of my great-grandmother's 87th birthday, a rare gathering of the extended family. The visual aid is helpful to committing these facts to memory, and the context of the video as a whole gives some clues about the relationships among the family.

The video was recorded on August 6, 1992. The primary subject of the video is my sister, then an infant, visiting our midwestern family for the first time. From the cameraperson's perspective (my mother's), the surrounding events are incidental.

Those events are about my great-grandmother, Alice O'Dell Hartzell (also known as Grandma Hartzell). She is easily identifiable because she famously had jet black hair in sharp contrast to her redheaded children. There are about a dozen kids around who I don't recognize, and a few adults who I can pick out as family. In this regard, the synchronized sound that

videotape made common to home movies is invaluable, especially for the more gregarious members of the family. For example, Aunt Dee (Dolores Hartzell Bowman, my grandfather's sister) helpfully announces herself to my mother behind the camera (see figure 1).

Figure 1: Screenshot of home movie titled "August 1992"

Later in the afternoon, the families gather for photographs. The posing of these photos gives clues to the ages and relationships of their subjects. First, Grandma Hartzell sits in the center of her children, which helps identify the remaining aunts Eileen and Jeannie for the rest of

the video as the women in the purple pants and the gold necklace, respectively (see figure 2).

Figure 2: Screenshot of home movie titled "August 1992"

Then, Grandma Hartzell gathers with each of her children and their progeny. Only one of the families is caught on this video, but thanks to my dad heckling a confused family member – "You're a Bowman, not a Barnum!" – that family is identified as the Barnums, Jeannie's family. Going by age (or the appearance of age, at least) and placement in the photo, some identities start to fall into place (see figure 3).

Figure 3: Screenshot of home movie titled "August 1992"

Aunt Jeannie is identified from the last portrait and is in the center here with an older man, presumably her husband, Robert Barnum. They are surrounded by what appears to be six people of the next generation, likely three children and their three spouses, based on the way half of them follow the other half in the time leading up to this screenshot. That leaves six grandchildren, though the tall young man may be the partner of the young woman in front of him. Knowing this family, though, a non-married partner would probably not be allowed into this photo.

Despite only personally knowing a handful of the people in this video, using the audio and visual cues it presents allowed me to decipher further context and meaning about the people and relationships present. Even just this one home movie makes it possible to fill in some spots

on the family tree, and taken in conjunction with other home movies, photos, or the memories of others, the contextual and evidentiary value grows.

3.2 Legends & Storytelling

Moran's remaining functions speak heavily to the motives of family history. Most directly, he cites the home mode's mechanism for providing "a narrative format for communicating family legends and personal stories,"[42] defining home movies as family history in and of themselves. This folkloric interpretation follows in the tradition of oral histories and autobiography, with the home movie image, whether projected on a screen or emitted from a television, serving as a proverbial fireside. Moran writes that, "By focusing on the process of the family's ongoing creation and extinction … the home mode acknowledges the ephemera of individual life cycles while preserving them for posterity within a larger family biography."

This "family biography" or family history aims to fill in the gaps of the family tree beyond just dates and names. This is especially significant for women, unmarried people, people without children, people of color, poor people, and other marginalized groups whose stories often become a footnote to the rich, straight, white, and/or male people in their orbit. Even the lives of children are often minimized as insignificant, though who could argue that who we were as children affects the adults we become? Things like personalities, emotions, struggles, and triumphs are unlikely to appear in most written documents; at best, we can hope for a newspaper article or a thorough obituary. Home movies, on the other hand, are first-person accounts of moments in time that can reveal information about both the person behind the camera and those in front of it.

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[42] Moran, *There's No Place,* 46.

Example: Prudy Todd and Baylus Bramble

My grandmother, Prudy Todd DeLap, was very good at keeping records of other people but not so much about herself. I know that she was born in 1932 in Fayetteville, North Carolina, she had a brother ten years her junior who was very much the baby of the family, her father owned a tire shop, and her mother was every bit the perfect Southern gentlewoman. It wasn't until after her death that stories made their way down to me about how she left Fayetteville as soon as she could and essentially never looked back. It was clearly not an oft discussed topic; all my mother told me was there was a boy next door named Baylus who everyone wanted her to marry, accompanied by a childhood photo (see figure 4).

Figure 4: Baylus Bramble and Prudy Todd, circa late 1930s

This seemed like a meaningful relationship in this story, so I went looking for any clues in the Todd family home movies. The only copies I currently have are film-to-video-to-DVD transfers my grandmother made herself in the 1990s. The resolution is low, focus goes in an out, and a large number of reels were clearly spliced together, so nothing is in chronological order.

Even so, it was fairly easy to date the films to the late 1940s based on the relative ages of my grandmother and her brother. Most of the films star baby Joe, and Prudy only really appears as part of group functions with friends or family.

That is, except for one segment, which captures a casual day that Prudy did not expect to be captured on camera, if her body language is to be believed. The segment opens with a shot of a young man walking out of the house (see figure 5). I cannot overstate how unusual it is in the context of the several hours of footage I reviewed for there to be a shot of a non-family member alone, and in such a casual manner, as well. From there, he and Prudy pose for the camera, and walk together closely (see figures 6 and 7). Again, it's hard to emphasize enough how out of the ordinary this is for the movies I have seen – first, to have a movie only related to Prudy and not baby Joe or a group of other people, and then to have the primary action be inaction, just two people existing together. To me, this speaks heavily to the importance of this adolescent relationship to my great-grandmother as the one behind the camera, that this is what she felt was the thing to record about her daughter's life at this moment in time. This may then support the idea that there was a relationship being pushed upon my grandmother by her parents, whether she wanted it or not.

Figure 5: Frame from Todd family home movie, late 1940s

Figure 6: Frame from Todd family home movie, late 1940s

Figure 7: Frame from Todd family home movie, late 1940s

This kind of close reading of a home movie is not itself proof positive of anything, but they do provide a jumping off point from which to talk to other members of the family, jog their memories, and seek insight into an important part of the life of someone we care about.

3.3 Non-hegemonic Family Histories

Moran credits the home mode, in its intimacy, comfort, and safety, for creating "a liminal space in which practitioners may explore and negotiate the competing demands of their public, communal and private, personal identities," and "an image of home as a cognitive and affective

foundation situating our place in the world."[43] These notions of the home emphasize certain qualities of family life that extend beyond genetic bonds. As discussed earlier, genealogical traditions very much center Eurocentric, heteronormative, patriarchal structures. What constitutes a family has changed dramatically over the course of American history and even varies from person to person. One's genealogical goals may include blood relatives, legal relatives, both, or neither. Both Moran and Zimmermann acknowledge the power of the home mode as a means of self-representation, and Essi establishes the significance of visual representations to normalize queer and interracial families. Zimmermann specifically cites video works created by the queer community during the homophobia of the AIDS crisis, and Moran extends that notion to the new understanding of "chosen families" as falling within the realm of the home mode just as a blood-related family would. A genealogy of a chosen family – whether that refers to meaningful platonic relationships, queer romantic relationships, or other non-heteronormative bonds – would not be found in a municipal archive's marriage records, the sequence of one's DNA, nor the standard definitions within a census record of a household. But in Moran's framing of the home mode as a space to negotiate these public-private identities and one's place in the world, additional meaning can be gleaned from the documents created by those within the family. Who can be seen in attendance in a home movie of a graduation? Who poses outside a new home with keys in hand? Who walks down the aisle at a wedding not recognized by the government?

[43] Moran, *There's No Place*, 46.

3.3 Self-Representation

Moran writes that the home mode aims to "provide an authentic, active mode of media production for representing everyday life."[44] In this way, home movies provide a counterbalance to official, institutional narratives that proliferate through dominant modes of historiography. It allows the everyday person to take an active role in documenting their everyday life, rather than attempting to look in from the outside.

In her essay "Black Home Movies: Time to Represent," Jasmyn R. Castro discusses the role of home movies as countering dominant narratives about African Americans in the 20th century. She argues that traditional African American film history, "which is founded from a place of absence and whose surviving artifacts are complex in their racial figurings,"[45] cannot account for the diverse use of film in the African American community, which is itself more diverse than the monolithic representation it receives in mainstream cinema. Home movies, though, trace more authentic stories, like the growth of the Black middle class in contrast to typical stories about the Jim Crow south, and playful trips to one of the few "colored only" beaches in Miami-Dade County.

Castro's argument can apply to tellings of family history and collecting of genealogy, as well. Many of the documents genealogist rely upon are public – in terms of both being created by the government as well as being recorded or published to the general public – and to assume that Black, Latinx, Native American, or Asian American people have been as consistently featured in mainstream sources as white Americans would be naïve. Even in the most recent census, Black and Latinx people are the most likely to be undercounted.[46] Similarly, the *New York Times* has

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[44] Moran, *There's No Place,* 46.
[45] Castro, "Black Home Movies," 376.
[46] Wang, "The 2020 census."

only recently acknowledged its failure to write obituaries for non-white, non-male people.[47] Instead, these underrepresented stories are best – or least most frequently – told through private networks, oral histories, and home movies.

4: Archiving Home Movies and Genealogy

On the whole, no one medium or source is enough on its own to create a thorough family history or genealogy. Traditional documents as well as untraditional documents like home movies should be used in tandem to craft a narrative. Unfortunately, it can be difficult to search among all of these sources in archives, libraries, and museums. Moving image archiving is still a relatively new field. Many institutions with audiovisual holdings do not have proper staffing to care for them, and those that do still face unique challenges. On a technical level, film and video differ from paper documents in that they require special equipment to view and the artifact must be in stable enough condition to run through that equipment. Equipment itself can be hard to find, can be expensive, and requires maintenance. Oftentimes it is easier to outsource digitization, which still requires significant funding.

If the content is made viewable, cataloging and description is not always seamless with existing collections. Metadata standards that were crafted and adopted for manuscript collections do not always apply to moving images in such a standardized manner. Likewise, the durational nature of moving images simply takes more time to comb through and a thorough description may call for a shot-by-shot breakdown. By contrast, genealogical collections that are comprised of government documents, city directories, published family histories, and the like have been catalogued in archives for decades if not centuries, and fit within existing standards and schemas

[47] McDonald, "From the Death Desk."

across institutions. There are many more trained librarians and archivists for these kinds of collections than for moving images, so audiovisual collections often become siloed from the other holdings in their institutions. Perhaps more commonly, home movies end up in archives that specifically care for moving image materials and collect based on geographic region or subject matter. As such, home movies and genealogical collections that may relate to the same family are rarely linked to each other and can be difficult to find.

This section will assess common practices in describing and providing access to home movies and genealogical collections. It will highlight the challenges that face each department, challenges in bridging the divide between moving images and manuscripts, and some potential opportunities for improved discoverability.

4.1 Home Movies in Archives

A common challenge in cataloging moving image materials is the lack of a widespread metadata standard that accounts for the specific needs of audiovisual items. Standards have historically been tailored to print materials and can be difficult to apply consistently to moving images. A standard like MARC (Machine-Readable Cataloging), which records very specific information in very specific fields in a very specific structure to maximize ease of transmission, is more widespread in bibliographic spheres, but is difficult to learn for both the cataloguer and the researcher. More broad standards like Dublin Core, which distills metadata to fifteen key fields, are more human-readable and allow for more flexibility, but that flexibility also means less transferable data due to potential deviations in word choice or subjective descriptions. Name and subject authorities are helpful in this regard, but when it comes to home movies it is quite

unlikely that the average person will every appear in, say, the Library of Congress's name authority, and the relevant subject headings are likely far too broad to be meaningful.

As a result, many moving image catalogs utilize some homegrown blend of other systems that best serves their holdings. These can range in detail and specificity based on the resources of the institution as well as any other materials that the institution is responsible for. For example, Northeast Historic Film, one of the more prominent film archives for home movies, has collection-level records with detailed biographical/historical notes and content summaries, as well as item-level records that can include detailed shot logs, "anecdotal comments & reflections," and specifications of all digital and physical copies. By contrast, the Wolfson Archives at Miami Dade College, though also a significant repository for home movies, only publicly records a title and a short description. At the other end of the spectrum, the Rhode Island Historical Society, which has traditional manuscript collections, moving image collections, and museum objects, utilizes notions from all three of these branches; materiality is very specifically noted as a museum object would, descriptions include brief shot lists when they have been viewed, and locally notable people, locations, and subjects are linked within the catalog.

Moving images also provide unique access challenges on several fronts. First, producing digital surrogates as a means of access beyond the physical walls of the archive requires significant funding. The digitization process itself can be costly, especially for older and more degraded media, and the storage of such large files also adds up quite quickly. Mass digitization projects often rely on large grants rather than a regular operating budget, so few institutions have all, or even most, of their holdings available digitally. Second, many home movies are assumed to be still protected by copyright because they are considered unpublished works, which were

granted extended copyright protection by the Copyright Act of 1976. Donor agreements can formally transfer copyright to the collecting institution, but such agreements are not always possible. In truth, it can be incredibly difficult to decipher when works such as home movies will enter the public domain; determining that date requires knowledge of the movie's creator and their date of death. If the creator is deceased, copyright extends an additional 70 years and belongs to the creator's estate – yet another complicating factor in tracing copyright. If the creator or copyright holder is not known, a work is often considered an "orphan" – an important term in moving image archiving that is at once academically meaningful and actionably meaningless. The United States has yet to codify any exceptions for orphan works, so creating and disseminating digital copies of these works depends largely on an institution's risk tolerance should a copyright holder come to light and file suit. There are certain exceptions codified in the Copyright Act that allow archives and libraries to create copies under limited circumstances for access and preservation, but they do not allow for broad dissemination of digital materials, therefore limiting discoverability to those able to physically visit a particular library or archive.

4.2 Collecting Genealogy

Genealogical records lend themselves much more neatly to traditional archiving methods. For one, the issue of copyright is much cleaner. Documents created by the federal government such as census record are all in the public domain, though state and municipal documents differ across the country. Even so, all published documents automatically enter the public domain after 95 years, as are documents published before 1964 that did not renew their copyright after 28 years. Additionally, facts are not protected by copyright, only the expressions thereof, so information like birth dates or family relations are not protected. The same applies to

compilations of facts that are arranged in a non-creative way, like alphabetically or chronologically. These various exceptions account for much of the proliferation of genealogical information online and provide an easier legal landscape for collecting institutions. Generally, issues tend more towards privacy, which is why census records are not publicly available for 72 years, for example.

As far as description and cataloging go, there are many standards and best practices for manuscript collections. There is a significant theoretical background that guides the arrangement and description of such records. The arrangement process allows for collections to be described at various levels – collection, series, folder, item, etc. – which is an efficient means of balancing the archivists' time with the usefulness of the information they generate. A family papers collection, for example, may be described at the collection level with biographical information on the family, at the series level to differentiate between correspondence, diaries, and official documents, and further at the folder level to specify time periods, individuals involved, or relevant subjects. This hierarchical structure guides the researcher to the right area, without burdening the archivist with describing or transcribing every item. It also empowers the researcher to conduct a focused search, while allowing for further discovery by maintaining original order.

4.3 Opportunities for Discoverability

As discussed in section 4.1, the myriad of challenges that come with archiving moving image materials are compounded by the challenges of linking related materials in different parts of the archive, let alone bridging the gaps between different institutions. Any potential solutions will necessarily require investment in staff time, research, testing, and troubleshooting. Funds

and staffing for digitization of materials are also relevant, and making materials widely available to the public will inevitably lead to more information for the archive to utilize, but the goal of this discussion is not to treat digitization as the only solution to access and discovery. Existing processes and tools can be modified and expanded to aid in these areas.

One potential tool is the use of linked data in metadata fields. Linked data is defined as "a set of best practices for publishing and connecting structured data on the web" for the purpose of "making data on the web machine-readable and providing connections and links to other data sets."[48] Linked data has been an ongoing topic of discussion in library circles, in particular. The Library of Congress introduced the Bibliographic Framework Initiative (BIBFRAME) in 2011 as a potential replacement for the MARC standard that uses linked data techniques, like controlled vocabularies for resource relationships, item information, carrier descriptions, and subject terms.[49] The Library of Congress is also a hub for standardized subject headings, name authorities, and medium-specific cataloging terms. While these are more commonly used for bibliographic records, they seem to be less common in manuscript archiving and moving image archiving, possibly due to the unique nature of these materials for which it is less likely that a bibliographic record will be needed or recreated at another institution.

Even so, there are certainly common metadata fields in these kinds of archives that can utilize linked data as a means of connecting materials within an institution and across institutions. Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS) is a common description schema for manuscript collections; it is also the basis for collection management tools like ArchivesSpace, which is utilized in some moving image archives, as well. DACS calls for the creating of Archival Authority Records which hold additional contextual information about

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[48] "Linked Data."
[49] "Overview of the BIBFRAME 2.0 Model."

individuals, families, or corporate bodies related to archival holdings, such as creators or subjects. The Archival Authority Record can then to be linked to the archival description. The DACS documentation says that "the practice enables the linking of descriptions of creating entities to descriptions of records from the same creator(s) held by more than one repository, as well as to descriptions of related library and museum materials, websites, and so on," as well as calling for the use of existing standards like the Library of Congress Authorities wherever possible.[50] However, for smaller institutions that focus on local or regional collecting, like the aforementioned Wolfson Archive and Rhode Island Historical Society, there must be a means of creating name authorities that would not be significant enough to make the Library of Congress's list. At the very least, this could start as an in-house registry at a particular institution to link their own collections. Thinking bigger, it demonstrates a need for a subject-specific authority file for genealogical research. Such a dataset could create standards for family names or individuals as authority records are created for them.

Utilizing data in this way would be an elegant means of connecting genealogical information about a family or an individual to other holdings concerning that family. With a public catalog platform that supports such linking, a user could explore the linked Archival Authority Record for contextual information as well as viewing a list of other records that link to that Archival Authority Record. Worldcat.org is a good example of this kind of platform, as it is able to link bibliographic records, subject headings, and author names and find items available in libraries around the world.

An incredible example of the potential of linked data is the Artist Archives Initiative (AAI), an interdisciplinary project from NYU and the Museum of Modern Art that aims to

[50] Society of American Archivists, "Introduction to Archival Authority Records."

collect and disseminate knowledge about contemporary art that problematizes traditional notions of works and their categorizations. The David Wojnarowicz and Joan Jonas Knowledge Bases serve as hubs for information about the artists amassed from their personal archives, museum archives, exhibition documentation, and academic research. AAI's approach to the challenge of documenting the complex relationships between non-static works like performance art, creators, audiences, and scholars is to utilize linked data. The MediaWiki platform behind the David Wojnarowicz Knowledge Base allows for narrative text akin to a scope and content note, as well as links to every page on which the entity appears, as seen in figure 8. This web-like structure allows for fast, easy, and unending discovery.

The Wikidata structure of the Joan Jonas Knowledge Base utilizes linked open data, in which every entity has a unique resource identifier and relational data to other URIs that is openly editable, similar to Wikipedia. The openness of the data "provides a hosting environment that defies cultural, national, and institutional boundaries, allowing smaller organizations to participate in large cultural heritage projects and studies."[51]It also allows for robust querying using SPARQL, a query language compatible with linked data, and robust data visualization based on those queries, as seen in figure 9.

[51] "Introduction to LOD."

Olsoff, Wendy

With Penny Pilkington, Olsoff founded PPOW Gallery in 1983, which began representing Wojnarowicz in 1988. When Wojnarowicz successfully sued the American Family Association over copyright infringement in 1990, Olsoff introduced him to her brother, Jonathan Olsoff, who represented him. P.P.O.W. gallery currently represents the Wojnarowicz Estate.

Sources

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Pages on Knowledge Base that link to this person

- Alphabetical List of People
- P.P.O.W. Gallery
- Painting--Paint and Mixed Media on Canvas, Wood, and Masonite
- Installation--Multimedia Installations
- Bibliography--Exhibition Catalogues
- Category:Text
- Pilkington, Penny
- Bibliography--Books on Wojnarowicz

Categories: People | People--Gallerists

Figure 8: Page for Wendy Olsoff in the David Wojnarowicz Knowledge Base, captured February 2022

Joan Jonas Knowledge Base

SPARQL Query: All instantiations of Mirage including materials used

Note: Click on a node in the graph to highlight its links to other nodes and get additional data. Use the orientation buttons at the top center edge of the window to see alternative layouts of the graph.

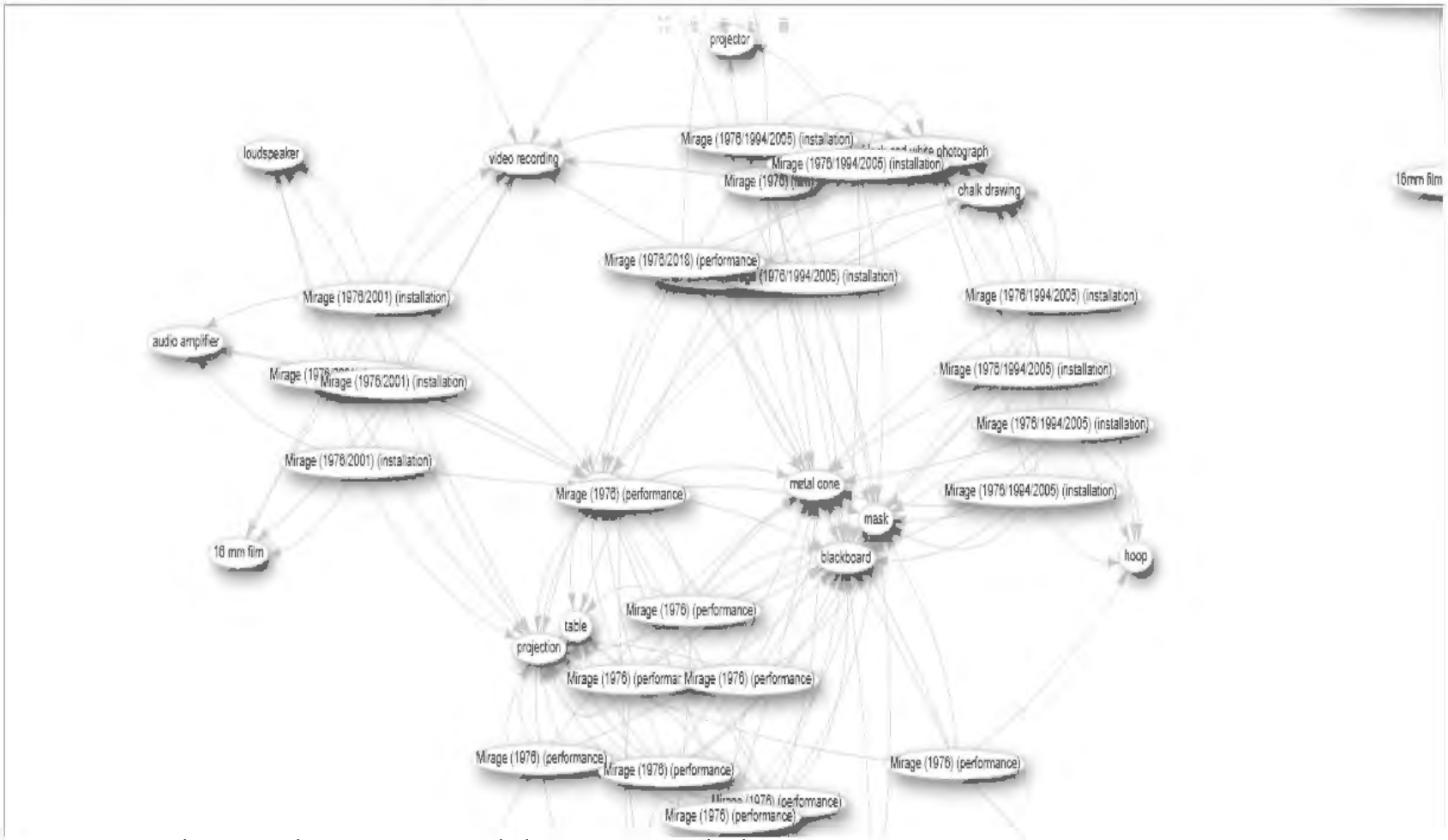

Figure 9: Data visualization in the Joan Jonas Knowledge Base, captured February 2022

Many online genealogical databases are already using a similar data structure for public records. Ancestry.com links to an individual's parents, children, spouses, and siblings on their individual page, as well as the documents from which this information comes. It is quite easy to fall down the rabbit hole and trace grandparents and cousins as far as the documents can lead with just a click of the mouse. While these websites do not constitute archives themselves – the documents they draw from do all exist in an archive somewhere, whether official or a family archive – one could argue they do constitute a type of authority record that could be utilized by other institutions. It is not a perfect system, as some individuals have multiple entries created for them due to conflicting or misinterpreted data points, or merely by accident by a user unaware of an existing entry. But in general, the information is well sourced, easily verifiable, and already has a unique identifier via its URL.

Interestingly, Ancestry.com already has a Gallery feature for individuals and family trees. It is commonly used for photographs of gravestones, newspaper clippings, or other genealogical sources that do not fall into the public documents utilized by Ancestry.com's backend, as well as some family photographs. It also has specific tabs for Audio and Video, though I have yet to see any users who use it. This could provide a platform for an online compiling of home movies specifically as genealogical resources, providing linked access to relevant written and photographic documents produced in different parts of the country, by different people, at different points in time.

It would be irresponsible to suggest that a for-profit web company is the solution to all our archival problems, and that is certainly not my argument here. There are still significant concerns in this model, even if it is able to bypass the hurdles of access and description that archives face. For one, uploading a video to a website is not preservation. Like many websites,

Ancestry.com is not forthcoming about how or where it stores this data, what kind of compression may occur upon uploading, or what security measures it employs.

Additionally, privacy is a prominent concern for both archives and online platforms. Because the nature of genealogical research is collaborative and about discovering people you don't know, there is an inherent risk of invading the privacy of others or having your own invaded. This is why government records are sealed for decades before being made publicly available and why archives may be hesitant to make more recent records easily accessible. Home movies can be even more sensitive, as they were likely created for only an intimate audience, often feature children, and may even include people who did not know they were being recorded. Within in a collecting institution, professional archivists weigh these issues according to documented codes of ethics,[52] internal policies, and contemporary scholarship in the field.[53]

A platform like Ancestry.com, however, has different ethical, legal, and financial obligations. Genealogy websites have already come under fire for their ties to law enforcement; DNA submitted by users has implicated non-users in decades-old crimes, with police collecting the data from some databases without a warrant.[54] For images and videos uploaded by users to Ancestry.com, restrictions are murky, as well. Family trees can be made private, and people marked as living are not shown publicly, but documents from those trees can still be saved by other users. Photos or videos of living people are against the site's Community Rules, but there does not seem to be any initial oversight, only a mechanism for reporting such content by the individual depicted to be investigated for removal.[55] These files do not have an option for being

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[52] Society of American Archivists, "SAA Core Values."
[53] Michelle Caswell and Marika Cifor's "From Human Rights to Feminist Ethics: Radical Empathy in the Archives" has shaped much of this conversation.
[54] Payne, "Genealogy Websites Help to Solve Crimes."
[55] Ancestry Support, "Requesting Content Removal."

made public or private; the setting applied to one's family tree applies to all the files within it, rather than individually controlling access to each aspect.

Overall, the relationship between archives and emergent technology is one that requires more discussion and assessment. Digital preservation in many institutions relies heavily on Amazon Web Services for inexpensive cloud storage, but Amazon's poor labor practices and environmental impact cannot be denied. Similarly, Google's search engine powers some repositories behind the scenes, giving the for-profit tech giant some measure of control over archival discovery.[56] Artificial intelligence and machine learning have been deployed in archival settings for audio transcription, optical character recognition, and content description of large-scale digital projects. This includes tools like facial and speech recognition for audiovisual materials, but these algorithms are known to exhibit biases based on race and gender that can further inequities in archival processes.[57] These ethical questions require serious consideration and weighing of their potential benefits to aid discoverability and preservation versus their negative impact on marginalized people and communities.

5: Recommendations

5.1 For Archivists

I am well aware that the solutions laid out in previous sections are likely unrealistic to most moving image archivists at present. I have yet to encounter an archive that isn't doing its best with a lack of staffing or resources. The goal of this discussion is not to merely say what any

[56] For example, the David Wojnarowicz Knowledge Base is no longer internally searchable due to a lack of agreement between NYU's webhosting and Google.
[57] "Audiovisual Metadata Platform."

archivist "should" do, or to vastly change existing practices. Instead, I aim to tap into one of the strongest qualities I have witnessed in the archival community: curiosity.

As mentioned previously, moving image archives are often siloed from the other parts of an institution due the specialized requirements of their care. That also means it's quite likely that the moving image archivist is not intimately involved in other parts of the archive, and the librarians or paper archivists are probably not terribly familiar with the audiovisual collections. While it will never be possible for anyone to become an expert in all areas, it is worthwhile to get to know the whole archive on more than a surface level. It is fair to assume that all the materials collected by an institution relate to one another in some way and understanding the relevant histories, communities, narratives, and absences in the archive as a whole can bring a more acute focus to one's own collections. Likewise, understanding the users of other collections, who they are and what they are looking for, can realign one's perspective on their holdings to better serve the community. If the most common researchers in the paper archives are genealogists, for example, then the moving image archivist may shift their attention to materials that represent families of the community, describing them in terms of people and relationships, and seeking connections to other collections. In the reverse, if moving image researchers seem interested in home movie collections, the librarians or archivists can work towards creating finding aids or libguides of manuscript items that relate to those collections.

Users and researchers are incredibly powerful resources in and of themselves. Members of the community, whether that is the faculty of a university, patrons of a public library, or the residents in a historical society's region, as a group will always have more knowledge than any individual archivist about the world relating to its collections. Crowdsourcing metadata for archival materials has largely been a digital pursuit – the National Archives, the Smithsonian, the

American Archive of Public Broadcasting, and others have engaged "digital volunteers" to correct audio transcriptions, transcribe handwritten documents, and tag items for descriptive categories. The infrastructure required for a digital crowdsourcing project is significant and likely out of reach for most archives, but crowdsourcing need not be limited to digital. It can be built into public programming and outreach, as well. Consider an archive with home movies of unknown origin, starring unknown people in unknown places. Depending on the era in question, odds are fairly high that someone in the archive's community will be able to identify the location and/or the people in the movie. An event like Home Movie Day is the perfect setting for this kind of crowdsourcing event: typically, patrons bring their home movies for inspection and screening with members of the archive and members of the community. This model could easily be reversed as part of Home Movie Day programming – the archive screens its home movies as part of the celebration of the medium and solicits information from those present. Part focus group, part midnight-movie-style audience participation, such an event fulfills the mission of a collecting institution to serve and engage the community, while gathering invaluable information about its own holdings. Loni Shibuyama's MIAP thesis "Sharing Our Visions: The Essential Role of Outreach in the Preservation of Home Movies" provides several thorough examples of outreach leading to improved preservation and access to home movie collections, especially among underrepresented communities.

5.2 For Families

Throughout this discussion, I will refer to the archiving work I have done on my family's home movie collection. My inventory can be found in Appendix A, and a visualization of items

in a family tree can be found in Appendix B. Please note these documents are works in progress. A list of personal archiving resources can be found in Appendix C.

Getting Started

Creating and maintaining a family archive is an organizational task more than anything. Intellectual control over an archive – knowing what you have and where to find it – is extremely important to the care of the items themselves, as well as being able to utilize their contents. There are plenty of schools of thought on how to arrange materials but in short: any system is better than no system. There is no perfect system; there will always be complications with any numbering system, ordering system, cataloging method, etc. While a new system should certainly be thought through for pros and cons before implementation, putting off getting started due to feeling overwhelmed or intimidated does not help anyone. The Library of Congress's personal archiving guide calls it a process of constant refinement, in which more information will reveal itself over time, but you have to first start with the very rough edges.

The Library of Congress's personal archiving guide also suggests first approaching the archive as a single unit of stuff, rather than a hundred different items. Then, divide into "clumps," categories that immediately jump out. For my work, the clump I chose to start with was, naturally, the home movies. While the greater archive of my family is divided across different family members in different states who are all at different stages of working through their collections, focusing on just this one section of the archive provided a sample size large enough to account for potential differences, but small enough to be manageable in a reasonable amount of time. From there, I created additional clumps for each branch of the family. This

guided my numbering system: a four-digit number beginning with "D" for the DeLap family movies, or "H" for the Hartzell family.

Assigning unique identifiers to items is the starting point for collecting information about them. While that information may vary based on the material, the general categories for metadata to consider are:[58]

- Descriptive: "What is it about?" -- **title**, **description**, **dates**, creator, **subjects, locations**
- Technical: "What *is* it?" – **format**, material, runtime, dimensions,
- Administrative/Preservation: "How do I care for it?" -- **location**, condition issues
- Structural: "How does it fit in the archive?" -- **related items**, how a part relates to a whole or to other parts

The fields in bold are those I chose to utilize for my genealogical home movie archive. Of most importance were the information that would not immediately be apparent by viewing the materials, but which were obvious to me as a member of the family. The challenges of moving image archiving outlined in previous sections tend to be actually quite simple for the original creators or custodians. For one, I am only caring for one collection and I have a whole family of resources at my disposal so the challenge of time is much more manageable. This is applicable to "related items," as well; it is far easier for me to identify duplicates, items from the same event, or reformatted versions as I work through this collection than for anyone to try and do so somewhere down the line. Additionally, not enough time has passed for everyone familiar with the materials to be gone. Some of the older films require more digging, as my grandparents and great-grandparents have passed, but by and large a parent or an aunt/uncle were present at the

[58] Gilliland, "Setting the Stage."

event to begin with. Therefore, establishing the genealogical information in the form of names, dates, and locations is not difficult.

Not all of these apply to all items, some may require additional research to determine, and some may prove just unimportant to the project. Again, the process of refinement will make clear as work goes on what is important or feasible.

Many Hands Make Light Work

The boon of family archiving is just that: family. For many people, there will be multiple sources from which to draw information. This is one area where genealogy has a huge head start on family archiving; practices of interviews, oral history, and simply writing down everything you can remember are longstanding traditions in genealogy. Even more fortuitous for home movie archiving, visual aids are extremely helpful in jogging memories – "suddenly, the past is visually in the present and words come more easily," writes Katherine Pennavaria in her notes to beginner genealogists.

As MIAP students, Lindsay Erin Miller and I compiled a guide on creating, storing, and sharing data through three common programs: Microsoft Excel, Google Drive, and Omeka.[59] The possibilities for these programs range based on user expertise, but our guide lays out the basic functions and pros and cons of each. For the current phase of my family archiving project, I chose Google Drive for its collaboration tools. I created my inventory in Google Sheets, shared it with my family, and, as seen in Appendix A, various family members were free to add additional information and indicate themselves as the source through a different color font. We were also able to link to items in Google Drives held by other members of the family, like a letter to my

[59] Hartzell and Miller, "Google Drive."

mother describing a tape my grandfather had sent her. This allows for the discovery of information that one person would never have alone.

Digitization

All of this assumes you are actually able to view these movies, of course, which is not such an easy task. Home movies on film are likely old enough that they should not be run through a projector. The benefit of film is that with a magnifying glass and a light source, still images can be made out. Unfortunately, videotape requires equipment that is often considered obsolete in order to get any information at all.

These days, a necessary step for preservation and access is digitization. The original media, while important as artifacts and for their respective aesthetic qualities, will not last forever, nor will the equipment required to play it. Home movies have it especially rough since they have likely not been kept in ideal conditions. Very few homes are kept below 50 degrees year-round and common storage spaces are attics and basements – humid, damp, dusty, potential homes to vermin, and subject to big swings in temperatures. All these factors make film and video degrade more quickly. Digitization at least allows for the long-term care for their contents, if not their original media.

There are plenty of options for services that will digitize legacy media, ranging from mail-in services from big box retailers to professional restorationists to boutique laboratories. These companies range in price and quality, so thorough research should be done before making a decision. Mail-in services like LegacyBox may be convenient and cheap, but have received many complaints about items going missing or being returned destroyed.[60] Local businesses or

[60] IE Staff, "Has Legacybox Mishandled Families' Precious Mementos?"

more specialized companies may be more expensive, but the more personalized service will result in better quality care and more communicative service. In requesting a quote or beginning to seek a vendor, some good questions to keep in mind are:

- How are items received/delivered? Via mail, commercial service, or in-person drop-off?
- How are items stored when they are not being worked on?
- What kind of cleaning is performed on items?
- Do they offer color correction for faded films?
- What kind of files are delivered? (Don't accept only a DVD!)

Some of these answers may be boilerplate and listed on their website, but a good vendor should be prepared for deviation among items and have flexibility to address these issues. At the very least, a representative should be able to respond to questions and concerns as a sign of respect for your business and your materials. XFR Collective, a community-based video collective, has a thorough list of recommended vendors on their website, which is included in Appendix C.

DIY options have also grown in recent years. Public libraries have created "memory labs" for public use to digitize obsolete media. The Memory Lab Network, a project by the DC Public Library established in 2015, has a thorough map of libraries across North America that have these labs. They also offer workshops on digital preservation, personal archiving, photography, and other community events. Even if there are no memory labs in your area, or you simply choose a different route, there are a great deal of helpful resources available on their websites, referenced in Appendix C, for working through a personal archiving project.

The Future of Your Archive

All the research talked about in the previous four sections of this paper hinges on the long-term survival of information. While recording and preserving information in a family archive is incredibly important, potential discoveries exceed the physical and temporal bounds of the home. The history-minded family should consider donating their archive to a collecting institution that can make it available to researchers in the future.

Many institutions collect genealogies, but fewer collect home movies, at least as of this writing. The Center for Home Movies maintains a database of home movies in American archives and libraries, which, while incomplete, is a helpful starting point in looking for a repository for a collection. Outside of this list, places to look for include university special collections, large public libraries, and state or regional historical societies. Many institutions collect by geography, either state, city, or region, so begin by searching for archives related to the most relevant geographic location in your archive. Other institutions collect for certain ethnic groups (National Museum of African American History and Culture), religions (National Center for Jewish Film), or community (ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives). Read through any mission statements or collecting policies on the institution's website to gauge if your collection would apply. In the end, however, just contacting the archivist will yield far more information, nuance, and advice than anything posted online. Archives are complex beings whose priorities and capabilities wax and wane over time. The archivist will be able to provide you with realistic information about their ability or desire to care for your collection and make it accessible, or suggest other archives to consider.

There are several legal issues tied up in collection donation. To be clear, I am not a lawyer and none of this constitutes legal advice, merely an explanation of important concepts.

The Center for Home Movies has drafted a template for a living will with instructions for the care of your home movies should you be unable to care for them, including copyright information.[61] The copyright question is an important one for archives, as laid out in section 4, and the transfer of copyright should be carefully considered when donating a collection. The basic options are to retain all copyright, which hinders an institution's ability to provide access to materials; transferring all copyrights to the institution so they can make decisions about access and reuse and, potentially, receive licensing fees for certain uses; or assigning a Creative Commons license to the materials. Creative Commons licenses allow for standardized permissions for use of copyrighted material.[62] Outside of copyright restrictions, donors have some say in potential access restrictions, but should consider these very carefully so as not to impede access forever. Considerations like depictions of minors or personal identifying information are reasonable conversations to have with the archivist about access.

Memory Work and Grief Work

It can be difficult to talk about and work on these projects that are so tied up in loss, death, memory, and decay. Lack of time feels overwhelming when thinking about the time left – or lost – with our loved ones, and yet the broad expanse of time before and behind us can be cognitively overwhelming. Writing about a demonstration of color 16mm film in 1928, Hiram Percy Maxim, founder of the Amateur Cinema League, said, "It struck us dumb, even the most loquacious… It makes me wonder, if we were to throw onto the screen, in this fashion, the face

[61] Becker, "A Living Will for Home Movie Collections."
[62] Creative Commons, "About CC Licenses."

of a loved one who had departed, could we endure it? Would it be too near to coming back from the grave to health, vigor, and life?"[63]

There is certainly something to be said about trauma and potential retraumatization through records work – Eira Tansey did so quite notably in her recent essay "No one owes their trauma to archivists, or the commodification of contemporaneous collecting," as well as Katie Sloan, Jennifer Vanderfluit, and Jennifer Douglas's study "Not 'Just My Problem to Handle': Emerging Themes on Secondary Trauma and Archivists." As much as time is of the essence in preserving home movies and especially the memories tied to them, none of it is so urgent that it should come at the expense of one's mental health and happiness. For some, loss may spur on the desire to take on this kind of project and doing so can be cathartic;[64] for others, it may only bring pain. It is important to consider and respect these feelings before and during working on a family archive.

6: Conclusion

This wouldn't be a proper paper about moving image archiving if it didn't end with a forceful call for urgency in saving our audiovisual heritage. I am far from the first to speak about the lifespan of home movies, and I will not be the last as more video, with its myriad of preservation challenges, makes its way into archives. The material decay of these items is alarming and should be a priority, but there is another imminent loss that has not been discussed as much: the creators and subjects of these artifacts. The first generation of amateur filmmakers

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[63] Statement from the Amateur Cinema League published in *Movie Makers,* cited in Kattelle, *Home Movies.*

[64] Jennifer Douglas and Alexandra Alisauskas's study of grieving parents, "'It Feels Like a Life's Work': Recordkeeping as an Act of Love," cites feelings of catharsis and generally positive grief work among parents who collected items and records of their lost babies.

is already gone, but the prevalence of home movies on film from the 1940s through the 1960s means that we are on the cusp on losing another generation's worth of knowledge, stories, and expertise behind those films, if it hasn't been lost already.

It is for this reason that I urge the start of archiving within the family and about the family. Whether carried through blood or proverbial water, family bonds have carried information through centuries, with more nuance and significance than any archive can convey. Curiosity about one's predecessors and, through them, about oneself is a trait that tracks through time, geography, and culture. Technological advancements have made tracing those stories exceed their written bounds, so why shouldn't the advancements of the last century in capturing the moving image add to the tapestry of those stories?

Certainly, family trees can be traced back centuries before the invention of the moving image, and human beings have been recording their genealogies for millennia before photography, film, or video. But in thinking about the past we should also think about the future. Does genealogy end with recent memory? Is it only an act of recovery of information and memories, or is it also a creative and proactive act? When does the present become the past? It would be both egotistical and overly modest to think that our current lives are so well recorded that our descendants will not need or want to research us. The immense shifts in technology, mass media, and record-keeping in recent generations have changed contemporary practices and will not doubt affect the future of genealogy.

On April 1, 2022, during the writing of this thesis, the 1950 United States census was publicly released by the National Archives. This is the first U.S. census documenting a generation with widespread access to home moviemaking, which allows current genealogists and family historians to expand their research of this era into the world of moving images. With

every future census that is released, even more films, videos, and digital artifacts will correspond to names in our government records. Thinking through these possibilities now puts us – and by extension our successors – in a better position to preserve objects, information, and personal knowledge in unprecedented ways.

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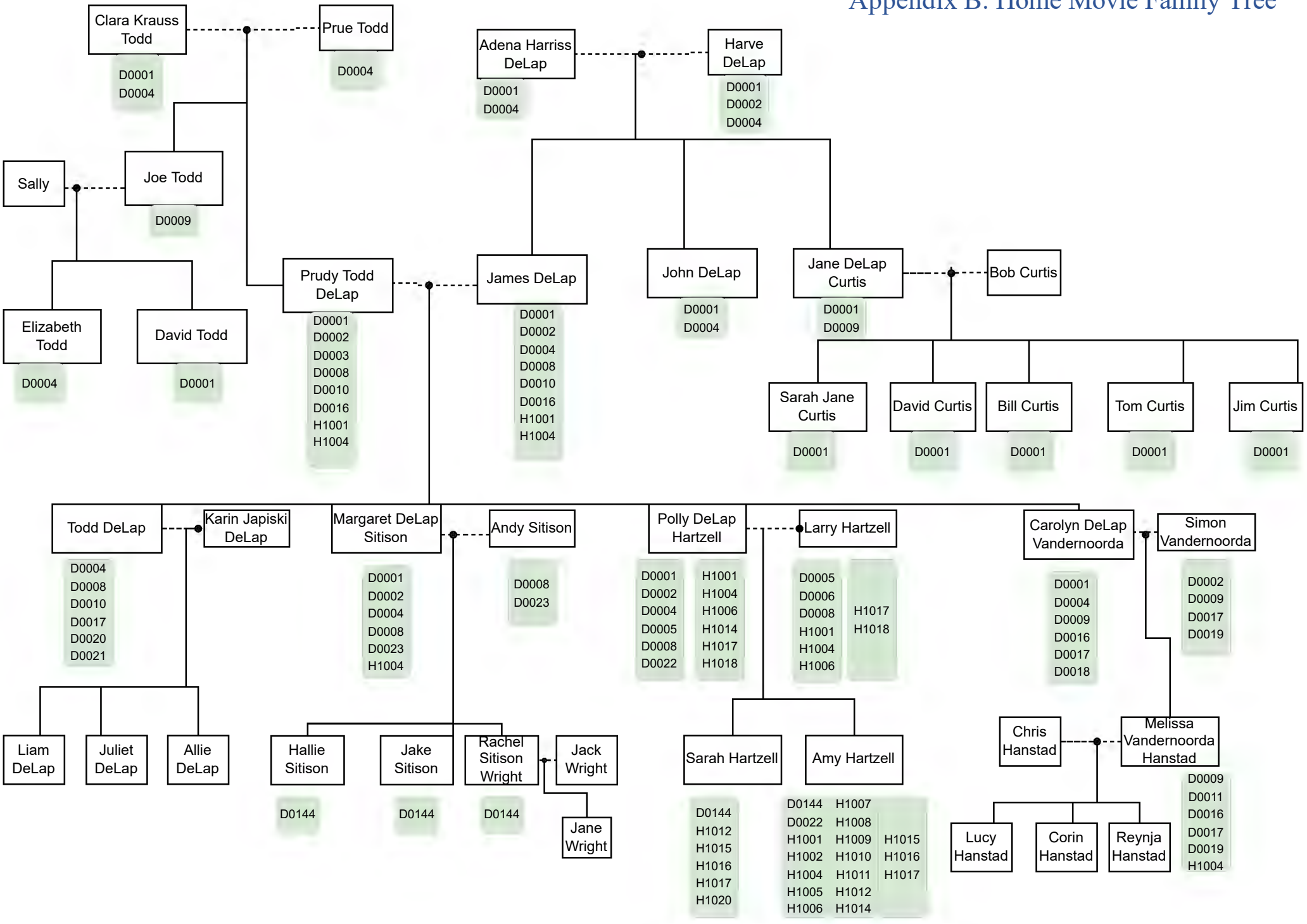
Appendix A: Home Movie Inventory

ID	Title	Description	Description Source	Content Date	Format	Family Subjects	Non-family Subjects	Locations	Related items
D0001	Polly	film to video transfer of home movies of Polly DeLap Hartzell 1. Polly infancy with Carolyn 1961 Durham NC 2. Easter 1962-Durham NC 3. Easter 1963-DeLand FL Valencia Village 4. Harrisburg Illinois with cousins 1964 5. Margaret infancy 1964 Boston Ave DeLand 6. Carolyn's 5th birthday 1964 7. Silver Springs FL 1966 8. Stone Mountain GA ~1966 9. Riding Star and Tina ~1966-1967 10. Marineland with Harve DeLap and Sarah Jane Curtis 1967 11. Long Beach NC Summer 1967	Sarah Hartzell, Polly Hartzell	1961-1967	VHS	Polly DeLap Hartzell, Carolyn DeLap Vandernoorda, James DeLap 4. Bill Curtis, David Curtis, Tom Curtis, Jim Curtis, Sarah Jane Curtis, Harve DeLap, Adena DeLap, Jane DeLap Curtis, John DeLap, Prudy DeLap 5. Margaret DeLap Sitison 6. Clara Krauss Todd (Pidgie/Gang) 11. Barbara Todt Todd, David Todd	6. Ellen Taylor in kerchief. 11. Ginny Reville and husband,older boy and younger girl Margaret Whiteside, Jane Bramble, Sally Hackney	DeLand, Florida;	original 8mm hon
D0002	Harve monologue and Kids with new videorecorder								

Appendix B: Home Movie Family Tree



Appendix C: Personal Archiving Resources

Starting a project

Mike Ashenfelder, "Your Personal Archiving Project: Where Do You Start?", Library of Congress, May 11, 2016. https://blogs.loc.gov/thesignal/2016/05/how-to-begin-a-personal-archiving-project/
Ashenfelder's post understands the realities of possibly being overwhelmed by an archiving project, whether it is taken on willingly or not, and the impulses to just put it off or get rid of everything altogether. The archivists he interviews also understand this feeling from their professional work, and the guide really hones in on realistic, approachable solutions. It addresses physical and digital media if not home movies specifically, but the concepts apply all the same.

"Preservation Self-Assessment Program," *University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign,* https://psap.library.illinois.edu/collection-id-guide.
PSAP is a tool used by professionals as well as amateurs to identify very specific media formats, including photos, paper materials, and audio formats. Format entries include photos, common sizes, dates the format existed in, and preservation information. This information is somewhat aimed at conservationists, so it can be quite technical, but the sections for risk level, common deterioration exhibited, and ideal storage conditions are worth reading through.

"How to Get a Handle on Your Stuff," *DC Public Library,* April 21, 2022, https://libguides.dclibrary.org/memorylab/resources
DCPL, as the host institution of the Memory Lab Network, has many tools for personal archiving. This guide is helpful for getting started with identifying objects, caring for digital files, and inventorying, even providing Excel templates.

Reformatting

"About" and "Personal Archiving Class Slide Decks," *Memory Lab Network*, https://memorylabnetwork.github.io/slides.html and https://memorylabnetwork.github.io/about.html
The Memory Lab Network is a group of public libraries that "receive training, mentoring and financial support to create digitization stations and curricula to build public knowledge and skills around the complex and paralyzing problems of personal digital archiving." The "About" page lists the libraries that are part of the network, and those from earlier cohorts are likely up and running for those looking for DIY digitization. The "Personal Archiving Class Slide Decks" make these past educational presentations available via Google Slides, and address topics like archiving via Facebook, preserving photos, and the basics of preserving home movies.

"FAQ," *XFR Collective,* https://xfrcollective.wordpress.com/faq/
XFR Collective is a group of knowledgeable, experienced video archivists, and the FAQ section of their website provides lists of trusted digitization vendors throughout the United States, as well as DIY preservation labs in several major cities. The remaining questions are also helpful answers to common questions about file formats, sharing videos, and DIY archiving.

Digital archiving

"Personal Digital Archiving," *Purdue University,* https://guides.lib.purdue.edu/PDA
Purdue's guide is a great starting point for best practices of maintaining a digital collection, from basics like file naming and backup methods to more complex practices like web and social media archiving.

Sarah Hartzell and Lindsay Miller, "Beginner's Guide to Personal Archive Management," *NYU MIAP,* November 21, 2020, https://wp.nyu.edu/tischschoolofthearts-digitalliteracyfall2020/
For the MIAP course on digital literacy, Lindsay Miller and I started a personal digital archiving guide based on our own experiences trying to combine our archival knowledge with the range of skills and abilities of our families. We provide tips and instructions on using Google Drive, Microsoft Excel, and Omeka for organizing materials and metadata, especially through the lens of collaborating with family members who may or may not have strong digital skills. We also address different kinds of storage for digital collections.

Donating to a repository

T Calvin, "Guide to Donating Archival Materials," *Black Metropolis Research Consortium*, 2020, https://bmrc.lib.uchicago.edu/resources/legacy-management-resources-portal/guide-donating-archival-materials/
BMRC's guide provides a helpful nuts-and-bolts approach of things to look for in potential repositories, including things like how they house their materials and what kind of access they provide, as well as points to assess within one's collection that will likely come up during the donation process, like the condition of materials, how well organized the collection is, and what kind of story it tells. It breaks down the more legalese aspects, too, like deeds of gift, restrictions on access, and copyright.

"Donating Your Personal or Family Records to a Repository," *Society of American Archivists,* 2013, https://www2.archivists.org/publications/brochures/donating-familyrecs
This post from the SAA breaks down what a repository is, what might belong in a repository, and how professionals work with materials and their donors. It addresses some of the common questions or concerns that families may have in considering whether to donate their collection and what happens during the process of donation.

“Home Movie Archives Database,” *Center for Home Movies,* https://homemoviearchives.org/category/archive/

The Center for Home Movies maintains this directory of American archives, libraries, and museums that have home movies in their collections. It’s stated purpose is to serve researchers and filmmakers who are searching for home movies, but it also serves as a helpful tool to begin assessing the possible repositories that may be suitable for your collection. Searching by keyword, state, or city narrows the possibilities significantly. It is far from comprehensive, and it is not immediately clear how often it is updated, so it should be the starting point for a search, not the end of it.