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# FILM NEWS

WORLD WIDE NEWS OF DOCUMENTARY  
AND EDUCATIONAL MOTION PICTURES

## GOVERNMENT INFLUENCE DOMINANT IN 16MM FIELD

**E**VERYONE in educational films now looks first to see what OWI is doing, for the government's influence in the production and distribution of new films has become the dominant one in the field. At this moment the OWI's budget is up before the appropriations committee of Congress and nothing is being said about the details of its program for the forthcoming fiscal year.

No great change is expected in its non-theatrical film program. At the end of its first year the OWI will have about 50 subjects in circulation, and despite occasional withdrawals and a 3-month limit to active demand, another year on the present basis will see the program approaching its saturation point with about 40,000 prints of 100 subjects. This at any rate is a consideration in the minds of OWI officials. Anticipation of the development may slow down production with an improvement in quality to bring about long-term demand, or it may accelerate withdrawals; in either case it will certainly raise important policy questions concerning non-theatrical production and distribution.

The OWI has stimulated an unparalleled burst of state and community activity in the showing of 16mm

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### NOTICE

With this issue **FILM NEWS** becomes the official organ of the Educational Film Library Association. The next issue will appear on September 1, and from that time it will appear monthly ten times a year. Members of the Association receive copies as part of the Association's program. The subscription price is two dollars a year; 25¢ a copy. Present subscriptions are extended beyond the period in which publication was suspended. They expire when ten issues have been received and become renewable at the new rate.

We shall continue to bring our readers world-wide news of documentary and educational films as we have in the past. Our relationship with the Association brings to the fore a great fund of information from educational sources, which is of general interest to the field and of special interest to the community whose responsibility is the carrying out of an educational film library or a film program.

### LIBRARIES FORM ASSOCIATION

Stirred by the wartime need for broad, speedy distribution of educational films, a large number of the film libraries in schools, public libraries and museums recently formed a national organization, The Educational Film Library Association, Inc. (45 Rockefeller Plaza, New York 20, N. Y.) The move brings together the major educational film library resources of the nation in what educators regard as the most significant organizational development in many years.

The founding of the Association follows more than a year of consultation and joint work by 122 educational libraries in the Educational Film Lending Library Committee, from which the permanent association has grown. The committee represented the educational field at the war agencies in Washington, and cooperated in the distribution of war films.

L. C. Larson of Indiana University, Chairman of the new Association, outlines its history and program on page 11 of this issue. He reports that the Association emerged from the original Committee as a result of requests from educational institutions that the Committee broaden its base to include representation of all interested universities and colleges, state, county and city school systems, public libraries and museums, and expand its activities to include a general program for the promotion of the production, distribution and utilization of audiovisual aids in education.

# THREE STATE PLANS

## THE OKLAHOMA PLAN

By THURMAN WHITE

*Thurman White, Director of the Visual Education Department of the University of Oklahoma and State War Film Coordinator, is the originator of the Oklahoma Plan. The following is excerpted by permission from his report on the plan.*

THE participation of film libraries and local government institutions in the federal war film program has given rise to a number of state-wide distribution plans in different parts of the country. None of them is put forth as a national model, but they naturally have influence in other states and localities where conditions are similar. The best known of these plans are three: The Indiana Plan, The Oklahoma Plan and The Texas Plan. The Indiana Plan is based upon the State Defense Council in cooperation with the film libraries of four state schools. The Oklahoma Plan is based upon a state war film coordinator and local coordinators in cooperation with four educational and three commercial film libraries. The Texas Plan is based upon the distribution structure of the State Department of Education, with a state coordinator, and district and local coordinators, in cooperation with schools and adult

organizations.

Variations of these state plans have appeared elsewhere. Atlanta, Georgia and Birmingham, Alabama, have adopted city systems of war film coordinators. The OWI reports that Los Angeles county has a full time war film chief working with the schools, defense councils, the University of California and local film distributors. In Providence, Rhode Island, the school Director of Visual Education is operating the film service of the Defense Council, bringing war films from the school libraries to the community. The Connecticut State War Council has a film service working in cooperation with two distributors of OWI films. A regular war film circuit is operating in Iowa, developed by the visual departments of the State University of Iowa and Iowa State College. Other state and local plans will be reported in an early issue of FILM NEWS.

## THE INDIANA PLAN

The Indiana State Defense Council has created the Indiana War Films Council to handle and distribute films to county, city and local defense councils and to other interested agencies and groups. The Council is composed of representatives of the State Defense Council, the State Department of Public Instruction, Indiana University, Purdue University, Ball State Teachers College and Indiana State Teachers College. L. C. Larson of Indiana University is chairman of the council. The physical plant and personnel for distribution are provided by the film libraries of the four state schools, acting as state depositories.

Each county civilian defense director has received from the State Defense Council a list of owners of 16mm sound projectors which are owned in each county and believed available to county, city and local civilian defense directors for use in showing war and defense films. The

list was compiled from a state-wide survey conducted by the War Films Council. The State Defense Council has suggested that the use of films locally is the function of local information and publicity committees. Plans are under way for the coordination of film use with the activity of speakers, block leaders and others.

The four state institutions are cooperating in the preparation of discussion guides and other types of materials which will contribute to better utilization. Another feature of their cooperation is a referral service. On the first of each month each of the four institutions sends to the other three the advanced bookings on all prints of subjects in the state war film program. Whenever an institution is unable to meet a request for a particular film, the request is referred to the depository whose report shows that a print is available for the period desired.

At the start of the war Oklahoma had eight major educational film lending libraries and it is to these that we must look today for the distribution of the government's 16 mm war information films. Five of these are located in state institutions of higher learning—the University of Oklahoma, Norman; A. & M. College, Stillwater; Northeastern State College, Tahlequah; Southeastern State College, Durant; and East Central College at Ada. Three of them are commercial libraries and all are located in Oklahoma City—The Camera Shoppe, The Oklahoma Visual Education Company, and H. O. Davis.

Although the Golden Report shows only 275 projectors for Oklahoma, a rather common estimate by these library directors is that there are over 400 projectors in the state. The bookings of the various libraries reflect the names of several thousand persons who have used films for classes, groups, assemblies, parties, and other groups.

Normally occupied with the distribution of library owned films or those deposited by industry, these Oklahoma libraries now have the additional task of circulating government war films. The problem which they face is: How may the most effective use be made of such motion pictures? Closely akin to this is the supplementary problem: How may the widest circulation and largest aggregate Oklahoma audience be obtained for them?

In our country we are unsafe to the extent that we are uninformed. It is by the choice of the people that our government operates. War time decisions must be made upon reliable information and Oklahoma film libraries feel their responsibility to make available to all citizens the most powerful and informative media—the government's official war motion pictures. These libraries are therefore

# THE FORMATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL FILM LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

By L. C. LARSON, *Chairman, Board of Directors*

The Educational Film Library Association was organized by directors of film libraries in universities and colleges, state departments of education, county and city school systems, and public libraries and museums. Its incorporation on April 13, 1943, followed more than a year of consultation and joint action of directors, under the auspices of the Educational Film Lending Library Committee.

The forerunner of EFLA, the Educational Film Lending Library Committee, was formed at a meeting of representatives from 11 institutions maintaining educational film libraries in Chicago on March 27, 1942. It consisted of L. C. Larson, Indiana University, Chairman; L. W. Cochran, State University of Iowa; Russell Grumann, University of North Carolina; B. B. Rakestraw, University of California; Herbert H. Scott, University of Oklahoma; and Donald W. Smith, University of New Hampshire. In May, '42, the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs asked the Committee to submit recommendations for the allocation of films to member libraries. The Office of War Information, organized in June, 1942, likewise followed the recommendations of the Committee in the selection of member libraries which were to have the opportunity to serve as depositories of OWI films.

A more detailed plan for the use of educational film libraries in the distribution of war films was approved at a joint conference of the Educational Film Lending Library Committee and the Executive Committee of the National University Extension Association in Washington on October 6, 1942. This plan, which was published in the November, 1942, issue of "Film and Radio Discussion Guide," defined in detail the responsibilities of depositories for obtaining the maximum distribution and optimum utilization of films deposited by governmental agencies. The Office of Civilian Defense and other governmental agencies approved the recommendations and made arrangements with the Committee for the allocation of films to member libraries.

Following the organization of the Committee in March, 1942, a number of county and city school systems and public libraries and museums asked it to extend the scope of its representation to include all educational film libraries. The need for a national association of film libraries was discussed by members attending the October conference in Washington, D. C. Following this meeting, Dr. George B. Zehmer and the writer conferred with Donald Slesinger, Director of the American Film Center; Dr. George Zook, President of the American Council on Education; and others who were concerned with the role of the motion picture in education. These men were aware of the need for an association of educational institutions and agencies interested in the use of the film medium and urged the immediate formation of a national organization.

Immediately following these conferences the writer undertook the responsibility of outlining a proposed plan for an Educational Film Library Association. This plan was sent to approximately 150 directors of film libraries on November 2, 1942. Following a discussion of the plan by directors attending the Sixth Annual Southern Conferences in Atlanta, Georgia, and a called conference in Washington, the first revision was sent to interested institutions and agencies on November 19, 1942.

During November, December, and January the writer corresponded with over one hundred directors. Insofar as it was possible, the criticisms, suggestions, and comments received were incorporated in a second revision of the plan and sent to members on January 25, 1943, together with a questionnaire requesting information on the need for an association, acceptability of the modified plan, expectation of applying for membership, and nominations for Board of Directors. Of the 84 members who returned the questionnaire, 78 replied in the affirmative on all questions and submitted nominations for Directors. Apparently, the time was opportune for the formation of an Association.

Six weeks later the writer sent mem-

bers another memorandum with a questionnaire which contained questions on the approval of the enclosed Constitution and the authorization of nominated members to serve as organizational Directors until the annual meeting of next year. Ninety-four directors gave their official approval to the Constitution and the nominated Directors. At the first meeting of the elected Board of Directors in Chicago, March 17-18, 1943, an agreement was concluded whereby the American Film Center would serve as the administrative office of the Association, and Donald Slesinger, Director of the American Film Center, would serve as Acting Administrative Director.

The Educational Film Library Association was organized by and for its members. It will provide services and undertake projects approved by them. A sampling of the types of service and projects suggested by members, which have been tentatively approved by a number of members in conferences and through correspondence, are as follows:

*Liaison*—Acting as liaison between government agencies engaged in producing films and member institutions whose resources are available for their circulation and utilization. Excellent films available from government agencies should be used to a much greater extent by educational and adult groups. EFLA will cooperate with college and school groups, the national offices of civic and cultural organizations, luncheon clubs, and labor and farm groups in organizing war film programs and film discussion groups. Publicity and program materials will be prepared for distribution by the Association and member institutions and agencies.

*Reference* — Maintaining a central reference service as a source of information for members. Films and other audio-visual aids dealing with a variety of subjects are becoming available in increasing numbers. The Association, by organizing a master catalogue of available audio-visual aids, will serve as a reference center for member libraries as well as for teachers.  
(Continued on next page)

## ASSOCIATION (Continued)

ers who want reliable information on materials available in a given field.

The Association, with the assistance of members and specialists in subject matter areas, will prepare a selected and annotated list of the outstanding films of the year. The Enoch Pratt Free Library, for example, publishes each year in the April or May issue of the NEA Journal a list of sixty outstanding books in education. A modification of the procedure used in compiling this list will be followed in the selection of outstanding films suitable for classroom use. Another type of evaluatory list might be prepared which would be based on the titles and number of duplicates purchased during the year by member libraries. EFLA will provide a service for films and other audio-visual aids comparable to the American Library Association's "Booklist," a semi-monthly publication that gives brief descriptive and critical notes on new books particularly suitable for small libraries.

Since producers of the different types of audio-visual aids are constantly seeking suggestions as to materials which are needed in various areas and for different educational levels, the Association will pass on to them suggestions received from educational institutions and agencies could be made available to all producers.

*Clearing House*—Serving as a clearing house for films and other audio-visual materials of unusual interest available from commercial, documentary, and educational producers. For materials available from either American or foreign producers which are of exceptional merit or of particular importance to some phases of education, the Association is in a position to help increase the income of the producer and lower the price to libraries by serving as a clearing house for prints. The Association is prepared to make arrangements with producers whereby negatives will be placed with specified laboratories, a royalty being paid on each print ordered. The Association will plan a national educational publicity program designed to reach all schools and colleges, civic and cultural organizations, and labor and farm groups. Discussion guides and other aids will be prepared for distribution to the classroom teachers and the leader of adult forums and discussion groups.

The Constitution of the Association provides for International membership for educational film societies and associations located outside of the United States. International members may obtain American produced films on the same bases as Constituent and Associate members in the United States. The Association likewise plans to apply for membership in foreign associations and will make available to members in this country the selected motion pictures and radio programs available through similar associations in other nations.

The number of desirable films and other audio-visual aids dealing with specialized subject matter or the less common issues will soon reach the point where libraries may be able to buy only one or two duplicates of each subject. This will make it increasingly difficult for the teacher or forum director to schedule aids at the time they are needed. Several directors of film libraries have suggested that the Association provide a Film Program Service. The teachers or adult leaders would be invited to direct requests for materials of a specialized nature which are not available from the local college or school film library to the Association. The Association, in turn, would refer the requests to the nearest member library with an available print on the date requested.

*Center*—Maintaining a center for exchange of experiences among members in solving problems of administering, supervising and directing a functioning program of audio-visual aids. The Association will cooperate with members in studies of practices and problems related to the selection, circulation, utilization, production, and evaluation of all of the major types of audio-visual aids materials. The obtained information will be made available to members through the Association's Journal and in published handbooks and manuals.

*Materials*—Preparing selected bibliographies, books, pamphlets, discussion guides and other materials.

*Journal*—Publishing a journal of general interest, serving the information needs of members and the interests of the field.

*Development*—Developing the public interest in audio-visual education. Harold L. Elsten has pointed out that rapidly changing patterns of living

have accompanied the Industrial Revolution. Economic, social and political problems have been intensified by the difference between the rate of increase of these problems and our ability to transmit quickly and effectively an understanding of these problems and various means for their solutions to the masses of men.

The Association and its members will undertake programs and projects designed to bring about a more efficient and effective use of the two newer mass media of communication—the motion picture and the radio—by those staff members of educational institutions and agencies responsible for the advancement of knowledge and for the communication or diffusion of this knowledge in the classroom or the adult forum and discussion groups.

The above projects and services are the result of suggestions made by members. Realization of the purposes of the Association will depend upon the active cooperation and support of members. New objectives will depend upon suggestions from members, who are urged to submit their ideas on projects and services which EFLA can render on a national basis.

## MUSEUM SHOWS

From the National Gallery of Art (Smithsonian Institute) in Washington comes word that a "first series of film showings . . . proved so successful as an experiment that we are planning to do similar programs in the future." Lamont Moore of the National Gallery writes, "My own personal feeling has been that often works of art could be more compelling if an earnest attempt was made on the part of educators to evoke either the period or the original setting for which works of art were designed. In this particular field, the motion picture is a useful device, and to that end we selected films which would throw light on objects in the Gallery's collection.

"The first series attracted over seven thousand people. In this group were many service men stationed near Washington or passing through the city. The lectures were also very popular with Government workers and new residents of Washington. . . ."

The results of this program prompted the National Gallery to make film shows a part of their general program.