



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

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January 15, 1993

MOTION PICTURE, BRIDGE  
AND RECORDED SOUND DIVISION

Mr. Steve Leggett  
Library of Congress  
M/B/RS Division  
Washington, D.C. 20540

Dear Mr. Leggett:

In response to the request by the National Film Preservation Board regarding the Library of Congress Hearing Study on the Current State of Film Preservation in the United States, we welcome the opportunity to submit for the hearings information on Lucasfilm's efforts in film preservation. We certainly hope that these hearings will result in legislation to protect film and make funds available for that purpose. The preservation of film, one of our country's most important cultural treasures, is a subject of great personal interest to me.

I have participated in hearings in Washington on this topic in the past, and in 1990, along with several colleagues announced the formation of The Film Foundation. This organization is dedicated to promoting awareness in the public for the urgent need to preserve motion picture history, and is raising funds for cooperative preservation projects.

I believe that Lucasfilm is quite unique in the motion picture industry in the extent to which we preserve film. As an independent production company, we have gone to great lengths to preserve elements which even the major studios do not retain. We recently built an archive building to house our film collection, with environmental systems to maintain those elements at recommended standards.

Although we keep the master cut negative of our films in the deep cold vaults that our distributors maintain, in Kansas and elsewhere, we essentially retain all other elements used in the production of our films. These include: B negative (film shot but not developed), A negative trims and outs (takes shot but not used in the final film), daily rolls, all sound elements (original sound recording, pre and final sound mixes), original negative of special effects photography, an archive print of each film, selected foreign versions of our films and numerous video masters. We have also produced several documentaries on the making of our films. In addition to the above elements, in some cases we also retain the final cut masters of these.

Our collection covers elements for the films: Star Wars, The Empire Strikes Back, Return of the Jedi, Raiders of the Lost Ark, Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom, Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade, Willow, all Lucasfilm making of documentaries on those films, and selected elements from Filmmaker, THX 1138, American Graffiti, More American Graffiti, and the animated television series The Ewok and Droid Adventures. We will soon incorporate elements from our television series The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles.

It may interest you to know that Lucasfilm also maintains an archive of non film elements as well. Our archive retains all original art work produced for our films, costumes, props, models used in special effects, matte paintings, and all still photography taken during production. We

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have a computer inventory of these objects, although our art work has yet to be logged on-line due to the enormous man hours this would entail. These items are often exhibited in museums and other traveling shows, and used for charity functions. Knowing that these artifacts are part of the popular cultural heritage, we have made them available to the best of our ability, largely at our own expense, so that they may be enjoyed. We have made permanent donations to the Smithsonian Institution and the Museum of the Moving Image in London as well.

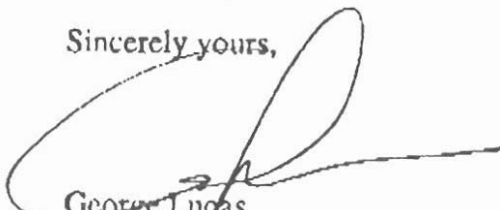
Our archive building has two environments. We have a cold vault with a 50 degree, 50% humidity environment. This is used for the archive print of each of our films, and any original negative. Our negative was recently transferred from boxes to metal cans and those cans put in new boxes. Those boxes are stored on open shelving. The other larger space contains positive film elements and all sound material, other theatrical prints and videos. The environment in this room is maintained at a constant climate of about 68 degrees, and 50-55% humidity.

We also preserve the paperwork. This includes the continuity script and editor's logs. Our inventory is partly on computer and partly on paper. We recently completed an inventory of all elements stored by outside laboratories, studios, etc. so that we do know the location of all elements not in our possession. We do not retain inter-negatives, color separation masters, and other printing elements here. We hope to convert everything on-line eventually.

We have an archivist on a part time basis only. Our archive work is exclusively internally funded, which limits our ability to complete all the projects we would like to. We have been unable to-date to do any restoration on the film itself, or make a complete examination of all our prints and other elements to prepare a condition report. Before the opening of our archive building in 1991, our materials were stored in various locations without environmental protection, and we are unable at this time to quantify what damage they may have suffered. A regular inspection process is beyond our means presently.

Although our archive project falls short of maximum ideal standards, I have made a major commitment in resources to preserving our film. I am proud of our efforts. We are fortunate to have the resources to have at least begun the process, something few independent producers have, even the major studios. I hope that our example inspires others to set new standards as well.

Sincerely yours,



George Lucas  
Chairman, Lucasfilm Ltd.