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# .: Exclusive: Save Star Wars and Library of Congress Work to Preserve 35mm Star Wars Prints

In the last year, this website has spent a lot of time focusing on film preservation organizations, and the Library of Congress in particular. This is because the LOC (Library of Congress) has its National Film Registry branch, which selects 25 culturally-significant films each year to be preserved for the ages in state-of-the-art storage facilities. This is important for Star Wars, because the original 1977 film was among the first films included in the registry when it opened in 1989; in 2010, Empire Strikes Back was included. When this website decided to get in contact with the Library of Congress, however, we discovered this was not the case--unbeknownst to the public, Lucas dragged his feet about donating a print, and when he finally did give them one it was Special Edition. [See this article](#), for a bit of background on that. Ironically, Lucas himself helped create this organization. See his [film preservation lobbying here](#). The LOC does have additional 35mm prints of all three films that were deposited for copyright purposes around the time of their original release, but they could only be viewed for research purposes, in person.

So, Save Star Wars decided to take matters into our own hands and send a reporter out to the library in person--and, it turns out, we ended up inspiring high-definition digital scans to be done of all the films at the Library of Congress using a state-of-the-art 2K Da Vinci telecine suite. Not only that, those deposit prints are now under protected status and moved to the best storage the facility has to offer. This is an account of how that occurred and what happened during our visit--and what this means for the future of the films. It's also a largely unprecedented moment in the public's ability to safeguard our own history against whom Lucas once called "[barbarians](#)," those who destroy film heritage for their own personal gain. "I'm a public servant, and what we hold is public record," one LOC staff member stated to me.

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Much of the staff at the LOC, as it turns out, are huge Star Wars fans, and they know all too well the problems the films pose to their mandate to preserve our cultural heritage. In the fall of 2010, myself and another fellow fan, Peter Lopez, who has contributed to the site in the past, began talking about taking a trip to Washington D.C. to inspect and ascertain the condition of those copyright depository prints--the only prints of Star Wars known to exist in the hands of the American public, and therefore the one opportunity to ensure the films' survival. The wonderful staff at LOC was more than happy to accommodate us, and we began talking candidly with them about the issues with regards to preserving Star Wars. As it turns out, Star Wars and its two sequels have been a thorn in the LOC's side for some time.

After Lucas refused to co-operate with the foundation he himself helped create to preserve the originals, *even when the government was going to be paying for it all*, the library had to take matters into their own hands. When preservation archives do not have the adequate materials themselves--or, in this case, when the copyright holder refuses to donate them, something rarely seen--private collectors become a valuable resource (a private archive discovered in a museum in Argentina is what is responsible for *Metropolis* now surviving in its long form). In the 1990s, a great-looking 1977 Technicolor print of Star Wars in the hands of a private collector was loaned for copying. Like the print screened [here](#), it had no fading, excellent detail and was in good condition, although I am told off the record that it was in need of some repair. Unfortunately, this was in the days before high-resolution digital scans, and it turned out that the print could not be copied; dye-transfer release prints like Technicolor's are notoriously problematic to copy photochemically because of their density.

"My understanding is that there was every intention of embarking on a Preservation Project," an insider at the LOC told me, "but there were some obstacles. One, the Library of Congress lab in Dayton could not easily process color film. Two, the library lab was about to embark on preparations for the move to Culpeper, VA. I can't speak to legal obstacles or issues with the collector, though I do know as a Registry title the Library can embark on a preservation project. Ken Weismann, our lab manager, returned the print in good faith as he knew the Library didn't have the time or resources to devote to the project. Ken *does* consider Star Wars a lost film, precisely because of the fate of the original negative."

A few years later, Lucas followed up giving a copy of Star Wars to the LOC for its National Film Registry, saying he was waiting until it was "restored." The copy handed over was the 1997 Special Edition. The library declined, especially as it had a copy of

that version in its copyright depository anyway, but clearly Lucas' idea of "restoration" is different from most people's... and, really, the actual definition.

The staff at the library did, however, inform me that there was a copy of Star Wars and one of each sequel in their copyright depository vaults, donated not long after their first release--there was even a second Star Wars copy with subtitles for the deaf. According to the LOC, all 35mm film elements related to Star Wars were acquired through the Copyright Deposit process. "Copyright law requires that two best copies of any work seeking Copyright protection to be submitted to the Library" within two years of publishing, according to Library staff. In recent years, unfortunately, it has become increasingly difficult to even get one copy of anything, according to insiders. Without a dedicated Moving Image Staff there is little enforcement of the "best copy" portion of the law as well. An insider mentioned to me: "The scary new development now is the disregard some studios have for submitting any print at all or the fact that we are being submitted digital hard drives on a variety of platforms that the library cannot support." The LOC has historically been underfunded and this is why federal investment in the arts is a worthwhile endeavour. "It is interesting to note," the source continues, "that thusfar Lucasfilm has submitted works on film. Someone is thinking."



My liaison at the LOC was Lynanne Schweighofer, whose title is "Preservation Specialist." "Basically," she says, "that means me and our other Moving Image Preservation Specialist are here to ensure and protect the physical integrity of the collection. Our positions were created around 2005-2006 and we are finding much of our work involves correcting and/or mitigating past neglect." Such a role is precisely what was needed for the 35mm copies of the trilogy there, which were literally rotting away. Lynanne, as it turned out, is a huge Star Wars fan and a champion of this whole effort, and had been attempting to get these

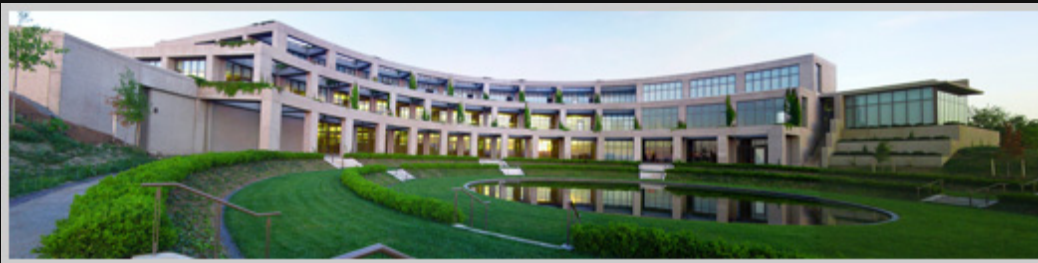
prints looked after for many years before we came around, along with other staff there, and in fact my interest helped her in a very specific way. She had been attempting to get them protected status, which would mean moving the reels to a better facility where they would be better protected against the forces of time, and, it was hoped, transferred digitally in high definition. This website, and other work I had done since late 2009 on the subject of Star Wars preservation needs, helped push this through.

"Speaking very personally," Lynanne says, "I am a very big fan of The Secret History of Star Wars and Save Star Wars. I even used the [web article about the fate of the O-neg](#) to justify the change of access and status of our Copyright Deposits on the original three films." Which is nice to know that we make a difference. Like other staff members and film buffs around the world, she has long recognized the cultural importance of these movies, even when the Library had other films in priority. "Star Wars was the first live action film I remember seeing in a theater, Princess Leia was my feminist role model, and I met my husband among friends in a Star Wars fan club," she states. "My brother says my nephew was named after Luke the Gospel writer, but I know better! He left a message on my answering machine the day he was born pretending to be Darth Vader. Like many people of my generation, Star Wars is woven into my life in strange ways. I've been appalled for more than a decade over Lucas' actions."

As LOC reports show, an inspection done years ago by the library revealed some mild wear on the first two films, with mild pink-shifting on Star Wars and heavy pink-shifting on Empire. The print of Jedi had never been inspected for its condition, until our visit a short time later when we threaded up the reels. According to LOC records, it also looks like there were DVD transfers made some time ago for viewing purposes, as the reels themselves are generally off-limits to the public--with our research trip being a rare exception. When Lynanne was pushing for the films to be under protected status she did some testing of the film materials. She states:

"Upon discovering that our Copyright Deposits of Star Wars, while color shifted a bit, still looked darn good and that it does not bear the Episode IV crawl, we had our datacine operator make a digital copy of the print. It's not a preservation, but it was a test of whether management would take us seriously about our copy being rare, for lack of a better term. I used the whole [dissertation](#) about the destruction of the original negative from The Secret History of Star Wars as evidence!"

And so I was invited to visit the facility and take a look at the materials. As it turned out, the reels weren't in the main building in D.C. but in a storage facility in Virginia where many other films are stored. This meant that, because of the increased distance, I would be unable to personally go there, and so would Peter. Luckily, a friend of mine and contributor to the site, Jacob McClure and his wife Sarah, were about to travel there and approached me about acting as a researcher on my behalf.



As we all began discussing this with Lynanne and other staff members there who were onboard with our efforts, an option was finally discussed: using the new Da Vinci 2K digital telecine to make HD scans of the prints, in order to preserve them for all time. It was something many there had been wanting to do for some time, and when our discussions finally got staff members involved in the Star Wars prints the idea gained real traction: new high-def scans would be done.

At the time Jacob McClure visited the facility as an emissary of this site, this was just getting underway, and would not be done

until much later. Below is McClure's journal from his visit, along with photographs of the facilities and scans of the actual 35mm frames (taken just from a point-and-shoot camera, the quality is lacking, but it's cool to see all the same). At the end of this brief journal I will talk about the telecine to occur, and also offer some parting thoughts on this monumental moment of the public taking back it's own history.

### A Visit to the Library of Congress Packard Campus

by Jacob McClure

October 17, 2011

While the online **STAR WARS** preservation community had often discussed and speculated about what they might have, no one as yet had actually gone there to see in person what the Library truly held. My wife and I were already planning a vacation to Washington D.C. and I was more than willing to spend a day to find out once and for all. With Michael Kaminski's permission, I contacted the Library of Congress on behalf of [Savestartars.com](http://Savestartars.com). I was directed to Lynanne Schweighofer, an employee at the Library of Congress Packard Humanities Institute for Audio Visual Conservation, whom Kaminski had already been in contact with for some time before. This facility, also known as the Packard Campus, is where the Library now stores the majority of its audio and visual records, including all types of film. The following is the account of my visit to this incredible facility.

The day started around 8:30. My wife and I awoke and had a quick breakfast prior to heading out from our hotel. It took a little over an hour to drive the seventy or so miles from D.C. to Culpeper, VA., a beautiful drive through the country-side with the Blue Ridge Mountains as the backdrop. The building itself is a striking structure set atop a hill with a fantastic view of the countryside & mountains as it overlooks the town of Culpeper. It was originally a storage facility built to house cash in the event of a nuclear war so as to provide cash-flow to the east coast. It was bought by the employees of Hewlett-Packard under the leadership of David Packard and donated to the Library of Congress to be used as a film preservation vault and audio visual media conservation facility.



The gates were open when we arrived and we were able to drive into the parking lot--one of the cars had a Star Wars-themed vanity plate, which turned out to be Lynanne's. We walked in and met Lynanne in the lobby. She was a very friendly person with whom it was a pleasure to meet. She clearly has a tremendous passion for her job and the preservation of film as cultural history. She also shares many of the general views held by the [originaltrilogy.com](http://originaltrilogy.com) and [savestartars.com](http://savestartars.com) community regarding Star Wars preservation and the pitiful attitude Lucasfilm has taken towards it.

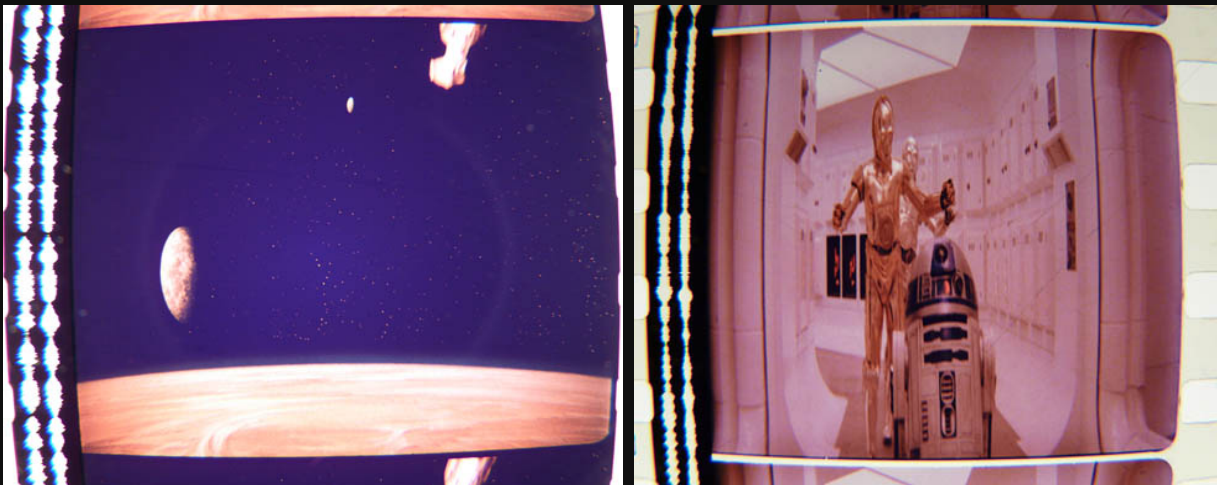


She first took us to her desk as we discussed our game plan for the visit. This was in a large spacious room that was sort of a cube farm, but very open and nice with a huge bank of windows on one side that had fantastic views. It was also incredible to see stacks of film canisters, video tapes of all different formats, DVD's and blurays all piled high on people's desks, rolling carts, in boxes... all over the place. There was film just everywhere and in all different formats. From her desk (which had a little collection of Godzilla figures on one shelf!) Lynanne called the telecine operator to see if he was ready to show me the telecine first; the telecine operator preferred not to be named, so we will just call him Matt. He said he needed another 15 minutes or so to get it ready. It's worth mentioning that during my visit I also learned that Matt worked on one of the very earliest telecines of *STAR WARS*. He thought it might even be the one that originally aired on HBO.

In the meantime, Lynanne decided to take us on a bit of a tour to explain the nature and purpose of the facility and show us the cold storage film vaults. Going to the vaults was a wild experience. As you enter, it feels like gaining access to some sort of nuclear missile bunker. You pass through huge heavy doors, enter codes on keypads and retrieve special keys from a locked box. Once in the vaults, it continues to get colder and colder as you move into deeper storage. The coldest vaults of course being for the highest priority preservations (of which the original trilogy copyright deposits are now included). Once in the film vaults, it looks like something from the end of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, except instead of wooden crates, there are metal racks from floor to ceiling that are jam packed with film cans as far as the eye can see. It was really shocking & somewhat of an overwhelming experience to stand there shivering in the cold and staring at thousands of film reels all tucked away for safe keeping. At that point I had not thought to ask Lynanne if it was ok to take pictures so, sadly, I have none of the film vaults. I'm still kicking myself for that.



After viewing the vaults, we headed to the telecine booth to meet Matt (the telecine operator) and some other staff members and see the copyright deposit print of *STAR WARS* on the machine to get an idea of what a transfer could look like. As we approached the door, we could already hear the main titles playing. Entering the room, I saw the movie up on the monitor. This was the copyright deposit print that the Library of Congress received from Lucasfilm in February of 1978. According to Lynanne, the dates on the film stock itself range from '77 to early '78 indicating the print was likely struck not long before being sent to the Library. Even so, it did show signs that it had been projected and was not a totally fresh print. It's worth mentioning, however, that said damage might have occurred after the Library received the print though that is something that's pretty much impossible to verify at this point. [ed: given the stock has 1978 dates and it came there in February of that year, it probably was struck by Fox for the library. Any damage was likely incurred from it being viewed there, which hopefully will not happen any more now that it is protected]



When I first saw the print onscreen, my initial reaction was to blurt, "Oh gosh, it's so pink!" And it was, but not to the point of being unwatchable. It showed a notable pink shift typical of Eastman film stock from the era, but there was clearly still other color information left intact. At my reaction, Matt said something to the effect of, "Oh, let me see what I can do to that." And with what seemed to me a magic wave of the hand, he tweaked the pink right out and I was now watching the most pristine looking version of Star Wars I've ever seen. The machine was a Da Vinci 2K with a 1080p monitor. It is capable of doing on-the-fly color correction as the film rolled. And Matt demonstrated just how adept he was at this correction as he continued to tweak and adjust the colors throughout our time screening the reels. He also demonstrated that, while pink shifted, the print was totally salvageable and that a beautiful copy of the film could be made by transferring the print. All this was done with only the first stage color correction. The machine has two stages of color correction, but the second stage was out of order during my visit. Because of this, Matt had not actually made a digital transfer yet as he was waiting for the machine to be repaired. But he does intend to make a copy once the machine is fixed and the details of it can be found in his email response to my inquiry about the specifics of the transfer he intends to make.





We watched reels one, three, and six on the Da Vinci 2K while I was there. It was somewhat overwhelming to actually see the original *STAR WARS* on film for the first time in my life (even if it was being put through color correction & displayed on a 1080p monitor). I took notes and asked questions as we all watched while also discussing the general state of *STAR WARS*, recounted memories, and I told the staff a bit more about fan preservation efforts. While I really would've liked to just sit and

watch the whole film, we had many things to do in a limited time and I did have specific things I wanted to look for in the print.

The print itself contained the original crawl, sans "Episode IV: A New Hope." It was quite pink, but not totally devoid of other color information. While I had to make my observations about color based on what I was seeing as Matt made on-the-fly adjustments, I feel like I got a fairly accurate idea of what it should look like.

I looked specifically for things I could remember there being discussion or debate about in various corners of the online community. One of the first was the many lights on the corridor walls of the Rebel Blockade Runner. They looked very natural and were diffused normally by the smoke and atmosphere, just as people would expect, but totally unlike what we see on the 2004/2011 transfers. The graininess of the scenes on Tatooine (specifically the shots of the droids in the desert) was nowhere near what we're used to seeing in things like the GOUT [ed: GOUT=the 2006 official DVD of the original version. See [here](#).] There was grain to be sure, but it was not overpowering or significantly more severe than the rest of the film. In fact, the grain structure of the entire film was quite fine. The composite shots, as one would expect, had a noticeably grainier appearance, but even they weren't bad.

The shot of R2 in the canyon that has been debated about being night or day was interesting. I mentioned this to Matt and he made several tweaks showing how he could brighten or darken it. He darkened it down and mentioned that that was what he remembered it being like for home video (I got the impression that he was referring to the home video master he worked on). But then he brightened it a bit to a more twilight or sunset look that he said was closer to what he thought it probably was originally. And in my opinion, that brighter-but-still-not-daylight version looked the most natural. He did the same thing for the shot of the Sandcrawler on the hill as the Jawas carry R2 toward it. Again, the darkened version was how he remembered the home video, but the brighter "twilight" version was what he thought it probably should look like. I completely agree with him and I was impressed with how much more detail you could see while it was still clearly sunset/early evening. [ed: this is probably because it appears to have been shot in daytime and darkened in post, which may be why the photography looks more "natural" under a brighter setting]

The infamous Mos Eisley flyby of Luke's landspeeder (with the Vaseline on the camera and the pedestrian whose legs disappear in the GOUT due to DVNR) was another interesting shot. It looked significantly better than the GOUT, but it was still a pretty bad looking shot overall. There are no issues with the guy's legs disappearing or anything, but it's just not a clean looking shot at all.

We also paid close attention to Luke's lightsaber during the training sequence on the Millennium Falcon. With Matt's initial color correction settings, the saber was plain white, much like what is seen in the GOUT. I mentioned the issues/debate about this and he toyed around with the settings. After some playing around we were able to find that there was indeed a blue edge to the composite (as is clearly demonstrated in one of the vintage "making of" shows when they show the various elements individually), but this blue was *very* faint and hard to discern. For what it's worth, everyone in the room who had seen STAR WARS on its initial release remembered it being blue in those scenes.

We finished up in the telecine booth by watching reel 6. Seeing the original Death Star battle in such high quality was a real treat. There were no crushed blacks, the detail was superb, and there wasn't a sign of DVNR smearing to be found like there is in the GOUT. It was sublime. We paid close attention to the end credits to check for a drop shadow, as was recently reported by someone with a private print. Even adjusting the brightness and contrast to extreme levels revealed nothing of the sort on this print. The credits looked just like what I'm used to seeing on every home video release of the original cut, but I should mention that I'm no expert on the credits and didn't even know there were different versions of the original credits until very recently. [ed: as [originaltrilogy.com](#) members have uncovered recently, there are at least two different versions of the end credits on different prints, and possibly a third.]

After finishing up reel 6, everyone decided it was time to break for lunch. As we were leaving, Lynanne mentioned that she hadn't thought to pull it for inspection, but the Library also has a 16mm print of the 1978 documentary *The Making of STAR WARS*. My wife and I joined Lynanne and Carol Galbraith for lunch at a Thai restaurant. Carol is an inspector and printer in the Packard Campus film lab. After lunch we headed back and walked around the front of the building so I could take a few pictures of the exterior and the view looking out over town. Going back inside we were taken to the campus' in-house movie theater. It was absolutely incredible, one of the nicest theaters I've seen. It had a clearly art deco inspired design with fantastic chandeliers, a painted starry night ceiling, and wonderful woodwork (which, it turns out, is not wood at all but concrete painted to look like wood! And it's totally convincing!). There is even a Wurlitzer organ hidden under the stage on hydraulic lifts so it can rise from a trap door. They have the capability of projecting 16, 35, and 70mm film. The theater is even equipped to project nitrate, though they've apparently never done it.



We then made our way to a lab where Lynanne had pulled the copyright deposit prints of *THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK* and *RETURN OF THE JEDI*. Starting with reel one of *EMPIRE*, Lynanne loaded it on spools for viewing on a light table. The print showed clear signs that it had been run through a projector such as some light scratching but was still in relatively good shape. Unfortunately it is severely pink-faded, even more so than *STAR WARS*. It looked like there was very little other color information left so I'm not sure how much color correcting Matt would be able to do (though I'm hopeful he'll be able to work his magic as there was *some* color left). We also loaded reel six but there really wasn't much left to see given the state of color deterioration. I was able to look at the shot where the Millennium Falcon picks Luke up from the antenna underneath Cloud City. The radar dish was in the typical location we're used to and not missing like in some versions we've come to know about [ed: 16mm and 70mm copies, which were prepared before the standard 35mm prints]. Sadly that's really all there is to report about *EMPIRE*.



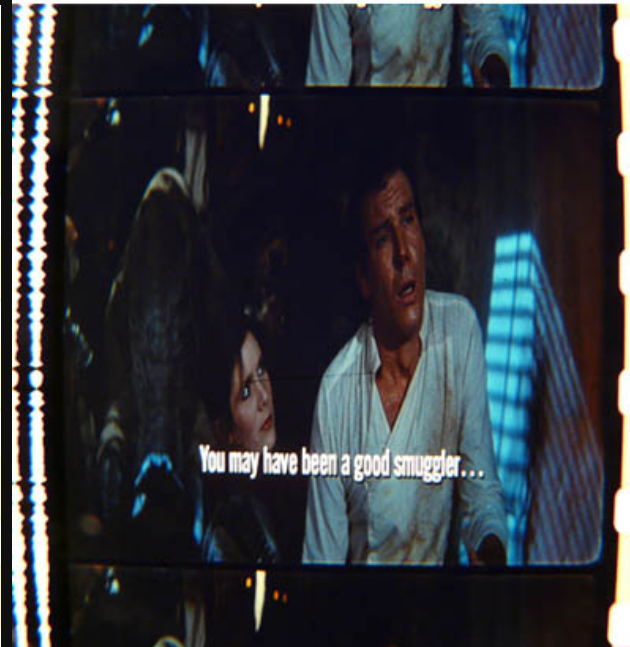
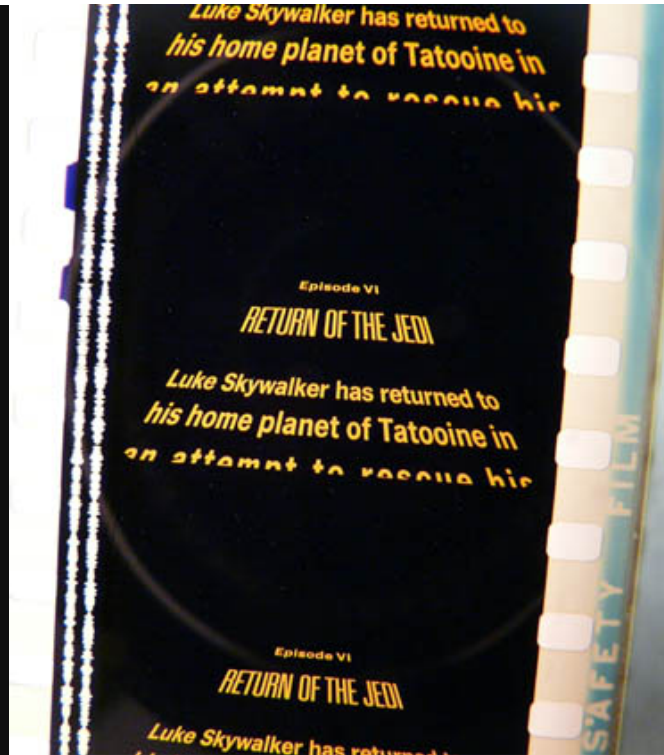


After we put *EMPIRE* away, we pulled out reel one of *RETURN OF THE JEDI*. It had already been sitting on a shelf in the lab waiting for Lynanne to have time to go through it and do a new condition report. As she opened the canister, she told me that this was going to be a new experience for both of us as she hadn't even looked at it yet. She put the reel on a machine that would unwind it from its current spool and onto a new one so we could load it onto the light table. As the reel unwound, we could hear a clicking, sticky sound. We all had concerns as it didn't sound good, but on closer inspection it turned out to be just slightly gummy projector oil left on the film. Even so, she unwound it at a fairly slow speed just to be safe. Once the film was up on the light table we could see the residue from the projector oil and some very minor scratching that indicated it too had been through a projector at least once.





But the good news is *JEDI* was in overall fantastic condition. It was, of course, on the newer Eastman film stock that had come out in the early eighties and corrected the fading issues and the colors were superb. It honestly looked brand new. I didn't have much specific that I wanted to look for on *JEDI* other than color and general condition so we finished with it fairly quickly. Lynanne told me that once she had done her condition report she would clean the print and transfer it to modern archival film cans (like she had already done for the first two films) and it, with the rest, would be stored in the coldest vaults they have.







By this point in the day it was getting late and we were running out of time. At my request, Lynanne had also pulled the 1997 *Special Edition* prints and had them on her cart. I asked her about them and she told me that based on their age and the fact that they were brand new prints when received they should be in very good shape. Just to be sure, we opened one of the cans and did a quick visual inspection. The film looked brand new just as she had said.



With that my wife and I concluded our visit and said many thanks to the staff for the fantastic visit and all the trouble to which they went for us. Lynanne saw us to the exit where we turned in our visitor badges and headed out (but not before briefly discussing some Godzilla news and info). It was a really wonderful experience that will likely remain a highlight of my travels. The staff members were all extremely nice and eager to help. They were also almost unanimously *STAR WARS* fans who shared similar opinions to my own about the near criminal neglect with which George Lucas has treated these classic movies. It was clear they were having just as much fun as I was digging these prints out of the vaults and viewing them.

--Jacob McClure, October 2011

Brings a tear to your eye, doesn't it? Many thanks to Jacob (and Sarah!), Lynanne, Matt and all the other staff who spent the day showing the site around and running all those reels. It is the combined passion of fans like these who will surely make it impossible for these films to ever disappear.

Afterwards, I spoke off-the-record with some of the staff there about some of the legal issues surrounding this and the various policies the library has to deal with. Here is what one of them said:

" My roughest take [on the legal side] is that we can take steps to preserve items in our collection. [ed: the Library has been systematically digitizing its collection for some time now, with the goal to have digital copies of everything by some point. Many

libraries are doing the same]. Making the telecine transfer is a step to protect that particular copyright print. That print [Star Wars] has been given a higher protective status so that it cannot be called in for a researcher to look at on a flatbed. Once the telecine is done a researcher can view the digital transfer. Anyone presenting a solid reason for needing to see the actual print would be allowed to do so with the curator's permission. ESB looks like hell--red as red but the editing is the version we all (who were alive back then) saw in the theater. ROTJ still looks splendid. I find it a miracle that these prints were not worn out under the research policies of the past when anyone could call them in and watch them. Many of our copyright prints have become terribly damaged by poor handling in the Reading Room over the years. We have become really tight over the past several years with sending any print of any title to the reading room. This is the American people's collection, and we are doing our best to protect it so that it lasts!

The big legal area is exhibition. We could preserve, or not, this or any title. Where we would get into trouble is loaning the title out or exhibiting it to a paying audience. Theoretically we should be able to screen it here on campus, for no fee. This November and December we are showcasing only National Film Registry prints in our theater. Naturally we wanted to include Star Wars as the representative of sci-fi and fantasy on the Registry. I was very passionate about the fact that we would not run the SE's, as they were not what was voted on. I won the day and we then moved to the sensitive issue of whether or not we should ask permission to show the print. Technically we can show whatever we hold in our collection on our premises. Lucasfilm said we could show the Special Edition, no problem. We insisted we just wanted to show the original because we were highlighting the National Film Registry that month. They still said no. Legally, we probably could have shown it but there would have been enough trouble [from Lucasfilm] that we decided to show Back to the Future instead."

And, finally, here is Matt's own report of the telecine he intends to make once the suite's second-stage colour timing is repaired:

Currently our highest resolution coming off the Spirit is HD (1920x1080). I'll be mastering to HDCam (non SR) at 1080psf 23.98 with 2 channel optical stereo audio.

As I mentioned, our DaVinci 2K color corrector is not fully operative (no second color correction, no power windows, no Powergrade), so I won't be doing the mastering until those fixes are done (no date yet).

I usually do the absolute minimum amount of DVNR. Our system uses a SCREAM noise reducer which is primarily a grain reducer. It operates independent of resolution, and works on the individual RGB signals. I might possibly raise that noise reduction levels on some of the very grainy opticals, but I'm always conscious of what things may look like down a generation or two, including standards conversions.

Since we do not have any significant amount of HD file storage capacity (about 150 terabytes) we'll just keep the HDCam master around for internal use until such time as better file conversion software (JPEG2000 lossless HD) and more storage comes along.

We do have the capability of making HD clones, SD down conversions to all tape formats, and SD DVD. We do not have an HD/SDI BluRay recorder yet.

As far as color references, well, I primarily use my eyes and the scopes. Since we have a good copy of the film, that will remain the "archival master". The videotape master will be used as an access copy and for internal use.

Finally, we do have the capability of projecting the HDCam master in our theater. It is not a DCI compliant projector - it's used primarily for Power Point presentations, but does a reasonable job of 1080p projection. My understanding is that this title WILL NOT be shown in our theater.

When I do get started on the real transfer I'll keep in touch.

There are many internal issues at the LOC, however, that complicate things. This was being done by the LOC staff in their spare

time, which unfortunately meant that it kept being pushed back by higher-priority items. There is also a bewildering lack of telecine operators at the library, again because of budgetary reasons I must assume. Fortunately, the situation is changing. Lynanne Schweighofer reports in February 2011:

"Our curator has been getting (rightfully) rather irked that preservation and protective work keeps getting kicked to the back of the line by paid work (researchers and production houses paying for duplication on material not in copyright) that he demanded we get set days of the week where preservation and protection work are done regardless of whether 'Ken Burns' or 'Joe Schmo' have paid for something. *This* just got put into effect, literally this week. I will ask our curator if he can bump Star Wars back ahead."

And so, here we are, with the films under protectected status and a high-definition scan about to get going. The page will be updated with any details about it in the future, but I felt this was important enough news to break it at this point (I've been sitting on this since early October).

What does this mean for the future of the films? It means that if all else fails this copy *should* survive, even when the original negative has bit the dust. The downside: no one will be able to use this copy to make the film available for viewers until the film has at least gone into public domain. That will be the end of this century at least, but the way corporations keep changing public domain criteria it could be even longer. This is not good enough. While my great-great-great grandchilden may be able to access the original film, if only from a theatrical print, if they felt like taking a look at a two-hundred-year-old relic that is, this does nothing for the millions of fans alive now, and the millions more who will be born in the years to come. This is a small victory for the films' lifespan, but the battle is not over. But this does prove one thing: George Lucas, however much he wishes it, cannot fully control history, and he cannot fully destroy these films so long as there are those willing to fight for them.

Extra: A word document provided to me by the LOC listing it's Star Wars print holdings and their information. [Click here](#) to view or download.

Link: <http://www.loc.gov/avconservation/packard/>

If you can, write to your congress-man or -woman and let them know how important arts funding and film preservation is to society. The country needs more dedicated enthusiasts like the fine folk at the Packard Campus.

