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Preservation in the USA: A Case Study in Cooperation

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Introduction

As we began thinking and talking about our separate talks for this morning's session, we rather quickly came to the conclusion that our presentation should take a cue from its title and be as "cooperative" in its development and delivery as possible.

Everything that we will be saying today is therefore the product of a number of conversations that we have had over the past few months. It has been a fascinating exercise for both us to look back at the past twenty years; to recall what needed to be done to create a "national" preservation program in this country; and to consider what has been achieved thus far---and what still remains to be done.

Moreover, during the course of our discussions, we decided to order our remarks in the form of a "story". For in many ways this *is* a story (if not a saga). It has a chronology and a certain narrative structure. There were a series of defining events or activities that can be seen as crucial to the outcome of this story. These elements of the narrative were, in turn, the result of significant decisions and commitments made by cultural institutions and the government as well as by individuals: all of whom can be viewed to some degree as "characters" in a story. And, certainly, for those of us who found ourselves playing a role in this narrative, there were times when this experience reflected other traditional aspects of a story: a sense of crisis, surprise, and suspense; "trials" and obstacles to be overcome; frustration and disappointment; but, often too, the satisfaction that arises from a realization that there has been progress and success.

The Organizations Involved

To tell this story required a rigorous process of selection. This is a large and complicated subject. We are acutely aware of much that was interesting and important that had to be left out, if we were to tell this story within the time that was available this morning. Inevitably, perhaps, "our" story will tend, at times,

to focus on the role played by the two organizations we know best: the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Council on Library and Information Resources. But we do wish to emphasize, at the outset, the degree to which a United States preservation program represents the cooperative, if not formally linked, activities of a great number of institutions and organizations.

For example, a list of institutions, agencies, organizations, and associations involved in the history and current implementation of the preservation effort in the United States might include:

- The American Library Association;
- The Association of Research Libraries;
- The Society of American Archivists;
- The Council on Library and Information Resources (and its predecessors, the Council on Library Resources and the Commission on Preservation and Access);
- The American Association of Museums;
- The Association of State and Local History;
- The Library of Congress, the National Library of Medicine, and The National Agricultural Library;
- The National Archives
- The National Information Standards Organization;
- The Research Libraries Group and the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC);
- The American Council of Learned Societies;
- Regional Conservation Centers and Field Service Programs;
- The National Endowment for the Humanities;
- The National Historic Publications and Records Commission;
- The Institute of Library and Information Services;
- The United States Department of Education;
- State Preservation Programs (where they exist);
- Private Foundations especially the Mellon Foundation

And, of course, this list does not acknowledge the major role played by individual, non-federal libraries in mounting a successful preservation program in the United States.

Our story will concentrate on the period from the early 1980s to the present--and, since this is a session at IFLA, focus on the work of libraries, although it should be recognized that the story of preservation in the United States involves many kinds of cultural repositories and collections. Moreover, where relevant, we also will discuss the manner in which preservation activities in the United States has had an impact on the preservation of cultural resources of other countries.

The Landscape of Preservation

The preservation landscape in the early 1980s was far from tidy. Of the 3,000 plus American academic libraries and the additional 16,000 public libraries, only a handful had serious preservation programs. There were no national preservation programs, nor were there federal funding sources for preservation work. Since preservation work was viewed as a local issue, there was little coordination, and quite truthfully, little progress.

Yet, preservation was a recognized problem. Libraries in the United States—at least the large research libraries—have always been concerned about preservation. Unlike many other countries, the United States does not have a national library that is charged with preserving the intellectual output of the nation. Instead, we have a distributed system of research libraries, working alongside the Library of Congress, who have accepted responsibility for preserving those materials judged to be important for research and scholarship in the future.

Though coordination was lacking, many organizations had in fact taken note of the many books printed after 1865 that were crumbling to dust on their shelves. The Council on Library Resources, when it was formed in 1956 made one of its first grants to the Barrows Laboratory at the Virginia State Library to study the causes of paper deterioration.

The Library of Congress established a National Preservation Office that aimed to disseminate cost effective information about preservation techniques. LC believed that its special role was to preserve the artifact, and, subsequently invested a great deal in a deacidification facility that would allow treatment of hundreds of thousands of books annually. In an effort to understand the magnitude of its own preservation problem, LC in 1984 commissioned King Research, Inc. to do a condition survey of the general and law collections. This survey helped LC understand what portion of its collection was already so brittle it would have to be formatted and what portion would be stabilized and strengthened by mass deacidification.

The Association of Research Libraries, reacting to a report compiled by Warren J. Haas, then the librarian at Columbia University, went on record confirming the importance of book preservation, and more to the point, resolving that preservation should be a national cooperative effort. Especially the largest and oldest of the research libraries were convinced that while they all shared a responsibility for preserving the important research materials, there was reason to be concerned about the cost of establishing independent preservation facilities.

The Council on Library Resources, of which Jim Haas had become president in 1978, continued to press the case for a coordinated, national strategy. In the early 1980s, CLR, along with the Association of American Universities, established five task forces on the most pressing problems confronting research libraries. One of the task forces studied the preservation challenges of these libraries. The group of scholars, university administrators, and librarians recommended that the preservation problem should be given more visibility and attention by creating a standing committee that initiated coordinated activities and monitored progress. The naming of the committee signaled an important direction for preservation activity in the United States—it was called the Standing Committee on Preservation and Access. After meetings in 1982, 83, and 84, the committee renamed itself to The Commission on Preservation and Access to reflect the true nature of the assignment. The Council on Library Resources agreed to fund the start up costs of what would become a separate organization, with the understanding that large university libraries and private foundations would pick up the ongoing costs. The first meeting of the Commission on Preservation and Access was held in April 1986, and by that time, it was a special-purpose, autonomous organization that was focused on preserving a significant portion of the intellectual record.

The first step was to involve an information scientist with a strong mathematical background to determine the scope of the preservation problem. Through an overlap study of bibliographic data, Professor Robert Hayes determined that of the 305 million volumes held in research libraries, some 11 million volumes were both unique holdings and at risk of embrittlement. Further, he estimated that it was economically feasible to microfilm, and thereby preserve, approximately one-third of the unique materials. Professor Hayes further calculated that thirteen percent of the target books had already been microfilmed, so the goal of the Brittle Books program was set at 3 million volumes.

Patricia Battin, who was the university librarian at Columbia University in 1985, was named the first president of the Commission on Preservation and Access. From the beginning of her tenure, Ms. Battin concentrated on the larger context of preservation. Although at the time of her appointment many of the preservation specialists questioned her lack of specialized preservation expertise, it quickly became apparent that someone of her caliber and reputation could do far more than anyone else in galvanizing the library community and in calling attention to preservation as a national, and ultimately international,

problem worthy of high level attention and serious funding. She used the Hayes study as the evidence needed to mount the preservation campaign.

Fortunately, at the time Ms. Battin began her work at the Commission on Preservation and Access, there were a number of existing cooperative organizations, networks, and traditions in the United States. In large part, cooperative networks developed in the U.S. in response to the need to create a comprehensive, national bibliographic database, and later, to develop a responsive interlibrary loan system for all libraries in the nation, and beyond. With an extensive bibliographic underpinning, libraries were able to move quickly to consider providing information about what was being preserved, and what was in the queue for preservation. The national network of bibliographic records created by OCLC and the Research Libraries Group made it relatively easy to graft preservation information onto the system.

In other words, the story of preservation is one of the success stories of library cooperation in the United States. In the 1980s, we had a number of organizations that had identified preservation as a major national problem, but it was federal funding through the National Endowment for the Humanities that provided the glue to hold these distinctive organizational efforts into a coherent national program.

The NEH Program

Our story has now reached the opening months of 1988 and an event that proved to be decisive in the history of preservation in the United States. The setting for this event was a Congressional Hearing, in which organizations and citizens were invited to testify on behalf of the annual budget appropriation for the National Endowment for the Humanities. At that time, the Association of Research Libraries, the National Humanities Alliance, and the Commission on Preservation and Access joined forces to present testimony to members of Congress about the millions of brittle books and serials in the nation's libraries and archives and the danger that the loss of these resources posed for scholarship and education in the humanities. They argued forcefully for increased funding that would allow NEH to alleviate this crisis.

To the delight of the library community, the chairman of the Appropriations Committee asked NEH to describe how the agency would use an enhanced Federal allocation to address the problem of brittle books. And this request, in turn, gave the NEH and its nascent Office of Preservation an unprecedented opportunity to present its own preservation plan to the United States Congress and to the country.

This plan clearly built upon the strategies, the understandings, and the institutional structures and capacities (which Deanna has described) that laid a necessary foundation for the implementation of a viable Federal program.

NEH's preservation plan also reflected (and in some instances reaffirmed) a series of assumptions and policy decisions about the appropriate form and scope of a government grant program for preservation in the nation's cultural institutions.

Assumptions underlying the Program

Having assurance of Federal funding made possible a program that linked preservation and access. We took the position that it would do the country little good to spend millions of dollars on grants for preserving cultural resources if these resources could not be widely used because no one knew what had been preserved and where they could be found. Conversely, it certainly did not seem to be in the public interest to expend millions of dollars on cataloging projects and other kinds of intellectual access to

collections, which then could not be consulted because of their fragility. From the perspective of public policy, it seemed essential that preservation be undertaken in a manner that, wherever possible, would ensure broad access over an extended period of time to important cultural resources, even if such an approach resulted in more complicated projects.

A second major assumption governing NEH's preservation "plan" was that it should provide support for projects that sought to preserve and establish intellectual access to the full range of endangered humanities materials and formats: books, serials, manuscripts and other historical documents, photographs, sound recordings, film, and objects of material culture. The problem of brittle books---as important and "catalytic" as it was in focusing the nation's attention on preservation---was not the only preservation problem that required national support.

A third, related assumption was that a federal program should not only fund the preservation of significant cultural materials but also projects and programs that would help create a permanent "infrastructure" for the work of preservation across the country. This principle led to the inclusion in NEH's preservation plan of initiatives for education and training on a regional and national level, which would help the staff of our cultural institutions acquire the knowledge they needed to preserve the holdings for which they were responsible. It also resulted in a grant category for research and demonstration projects, which could engage as yet unsolved preservation issues or support projects that would develop tools that would reflect standards and best practices for the work of preservation.

In formulating its preservation plan, the Endowment also determined, as a matter of policy, not to confine its support for preservation to the United States imprint or to materials that focused solely on the history and culture of this country. Libraries in the United States have, fortunately, been in a position to form comprehensive collections, which reflect the history and culture of the world and contained materials that were also at risk. The citizens whom the National Endowment for the Humanities was specifically created to serve, as well as citizens of other countries, would inevitably be ill served by a preservation program that did not encompass the full record of human experience.

Cooperative Microfilming Program

The multi-year plan that NEH formally submitted to Congress in April of 1988 answered the original question posed by Congress by defining a microfilming initiative that (if funded to the requested levels over a twenty-year period) would enable the nation to salvage the intellectual content of approximately three million brittle volumes. Microfilming was at that time the most reliable technique for preserving large quantities of library materials. Projects funded by NEH would be expected to produce three generations of microfilm: a master negative for permanent storage, a print master (which must be stored separately in an environment that meets national standards), and a service copy, which must be available on interlibrary loan. Grantees must also agree (as copyright permits) to supply, at cost from the print master, copies of any film created with NEH support that other libraries may wish to acquire for their own collections.

U. S. libraries could participate in NEH's national microfilming program by submitting proposals that focus on their own holdings or by working in consortial arrangements with other institutions. Some libraries with large collections have done both. Applications must provide a detailed account of the scope, intellectual content, and distinctiveness of the subject holdings that comprise the focus of the project. In response to the concern of scholars that selection for preservation be as representative as possible and not be held captive to contemporary notions of significance, NEH encouraged applicants to select comprehensive subject collections that reflect a consensus of what scholars and academically trained

specialists in libraries have thought significant over an extended period of time. Every proposal must also demonstrate that it will follow national standards and best practices for the bibliographic and filming phases of the project.

Since 1989, the year that NEH implemented its expanded preservation program, 83 libraries and library consortia have participated in this initiative. When currently funded projects are completed, over 1,046,000 volumes will have been microfilmed and approximately 57,000 volumes from these subject collections that were not sufficiently fragile to warrant filming have been repaired.

The range of national imprints and subject matter encompassed by this effort has been extraordinary---and, frankly, too large even to recite without cutting too severely into the time we have available this morning. Let me just say that NEH-supported projects have addressed holdings important to the study not only of the United States, but also of the history and culture of numerous countries in Central and South America, Africa, Asia, India, Europe, Russia, and the Middle-East, as well as of Canada and the Caribbean Islands. With regard to Africa, for instance, I was gratified to find when I examined our records that this initiative has already filmed materials relating to the history of 15 nations that has been written in 10 languages.

Projects have focused on collections of significance for scholarship in history, literature, linguistics, philosophy, the social sciences, and the history of religion, the arts, education, mathematics, science, technology, medicine, and jurisprudence: in fact all the fields in the humanities.

NEH also supports a coordinated national initiative for cataloging and preserving on microfilm 19th and early 20th century newspapers, which document the civic, legal, historical and cultural events that occurred in small towns and cities across the country. The United States Newspaper Program is funded by NEH and administered in cooperation with the Library of Congress. A centralized bibliographic record of all newspaper titles published in America since 1690 will eventually be created and microfilmed copies of are made of those papers that are deemed to be of the greatest importance. All the 50 states, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and the District of Columbia have been involved in this effort (as well as the Library of Congress, which has supported the cataloging of its holdings with its own financial resources). Completed and current projects will produce bibliographic records of 151, 500 newspaper titles and will have microfilmed 62 million pages of fragile newsprint. NEH expects that the United States Newspaper Program will conclude in 2007, but each state project has made a long-term commitment to maintain the database and to continue filming current publications and newly-discovered titles.

NEH's preservation program also makes provision for the support of all types of special collections of unique materials important to the humanities. Since 1989, the Endowment has funded preservation and access projects in over 265 special collections and archives, whose holdings are important for an understanding of the history and culture of the United States, South America, Europe, Africa, and Asia. I should perhaps add that the Endowment also makes grants to preserve significant collections of material culture, primarily in museums. Since 1999, NEH has made grants for projects that have stabilized over 30 million historical and ethnographic objects.

I mentioned earlier that support for preservation education and training were a critical component of NEH's program. At present, the Endowment makes grants that support students in all four programs in the United States that offer advanced degrees in preservation and conservation. NEH also funds the work of six regional field programs in the United States that provide on-site preservation surveys, consultations, workshops, and other information services to hundreds of cultural institutions across the country every year.

In this context, it is only fitting that I mention the extraordinary accomplishments of one of these programs, which is located at the Northeast Document Conservation Center, and whose President is Ann Russell, the convener of this session. Over only a two-year period, the NEDCC mounted 111 workshops, lectures and talks; conducted 65 on-site preservation surveys; provided disaster assistance to 46 institutions; answered nearly 2900 hundred inquiries about preservation problems; and recorded over 1.3 million visits to its web site. It has not only confined its services to the United States, however. Staff from NEDCC has traveled to Cuba and Russia to help their cultural institutions address preservation problems. It has created a two-year exchange program for conservators from Argentina, Brazil, and Chile. And its manual, entitled *Preservation of Library and Archival Materials*, has been translated into Spanish, Portuguese, and Russian. A version of this manual in both Spanish and version is now available on the Web.

The content of this manual was drawn from a number of special leaflets that were funded as part of NEH's grants to NEDCC. These kinds of educational tools become a highly useful means of transmitting knowledge of appropriate preservation practice to audiences that may not be able to attend workshops or other training opportunities.

In recent years, in response to a series of hurricanes and other natural disasters, the Endowment supported the publication of an educational tool called the *Emergency Response and Salvage Wheel*. By turning various sections of this "wheel" to the relevant type of material, you can find the essential information you need to protect or salvage a collection during the first 48 hours of an emergency. This reference wheel was initially distributed to 47,000 libraries, archives, museums, historic sites and preservation organizations in this country free-of-charge. An additional 15,000 wheels have been sold since that time. It has now been translated into Chinese, Dutch, and French, and, with additional support from NEH, a Spanish version will soon be available.

Environmental Controls

We know that perhaps the single most important action that can be taken to increase the longevity of collections is the creation of appropriate environmental control. Yet, given the complexity and expense of such projects, it is often difficult to make those responsible for the budgets of cultural institutions understand the difference that such effort may make. The NEH has therefore provided major support for James Reilly, Director of the Image Permanence Institute at the Rochester Institute of Technology to develop a mathematical model for the effect of varying climatic conditions on paper-based materials, photographic prints and negatives, moving images, and CD-ROMs. These mathematical models were subsequently incorporated into a specially designed computer chip, which is imbedded in a datalogger that converts temperature and relative humidity readings into an index of longevity. You can thus demonstrate what the effect of current environmental conditions on collections will be over time and then how many years of increased longevity would be gained by improving these conditions by even a small change in temperature and relative humidity. The device, together with a searchable database of information about the environmental requirements of specific types of objects is currently being field-tested at 182 cultural institutions.

Private/Public Partnerships

Last year, NEH made 199 grants (totaling \$18.3 million) for preservation and access projects that involved 224 institutions in 41 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. Since FY 1989, when Congress increased its funding for preservation at NEH, the Endowment has expended over \$222 million. The

wards have, in turn, leveraged an additional \$12 million from private donors and foundations for NEH-supported preservation projects. Moreover, the division's grants have generated cost sharing of \$ 105 million from the institutions that received NEH grants. Last year alone, cost sharing by institutions participating in NEH projects equaled 87 percent of the Endowment's own investment. Such statistics indicate the degree to which, even financially, the United States preservation program has become truly a cooperative effort between the federal government and the private sector.

Preservation Infrastructure

The combined preservation efforts of the many organizations involved over the past ten to fifteen years have established a preservation infrastructure that has three components: cooperative reformatting programs along with the required standards for capturing content; education and training on a regional and national level; and increased public as well as professional awareness of the importance of preserving endangered cultural resources.

As you know from the NEH statistics, a sizeable body of deteriorating library materials has been microfilmed to high-level specifications, ensuring that those materials will be available to library users for generations to come,

Education and training was an especially difficult problem to tackle in the beginning because our schools of library and information science did not include preservation courses. We had to convince influential library educators that it was essential to incorporate preservation into the curriculum at many different levels, and we managed, with NEH and Mellon funding to establish a specific educational program for preservation administrators first at Columbia University and then at the University of Texas.

General awareness of preservation issues was greatly enhanced by the production of a documentary film, *Slow Fires*, that was broadcast on American public television to an initial audience of about 9 million viewers. Over the years, the film has been shown to a number of international audiences as well, and the film has been translated into Chinese, Spanish, Japanese, French, Portuguese, and Russian.

All of these efforts to build infrastructure had the effect of increasing preservation staff in research libraries. In the period from 1988 to 1999, the number of preservation programs in the nation's research libraries rose from 76 to 118. In 1999, these institutions collectively employed 1,825 staff working on preservation activities.

What Have We Learned?

One of the most difficult lessons is that preservation efforts, no matter how important they are believed to be, are hard to sustain over time. New challenges arise and make their demands for funds. Talented and creative library staff generally want to be involved in thinking about and implementing new projects rather than sustaining the old ones. Collaborative networks formed to create new programs are difficult to sustain, too, as committed individuals move on to the next challenge or retire. These challenges are not unique to preservation, but they must be considered by anyone thinking about what it requires to keep a preservation program viable.

Technological changes, funding priorities and competing interests have shaped the national preservation agenda, but at each turn, library organizations that hoped to keep the spotlight on preservation managed to find a way to find the right approach to bring attention to the issue. Some technologies are introduced

before they are feasible on a large scale; some never materialize. We have learned that just because a technology is not appropriate at one time does not mean it will never work. Consider mass deacidification. In the late 1980s, it was dismissed because the commercial vendors did not believe there was a mass market, but today, there are new and exciting signs of life for this technology.

The NEH preservation and access program recognized early on that preservation was much more than any single thing. Preservation of the intellectual and cultural record requires a multi-faceted, cooperative, and sometimes overlapping, approach.

Federal funding dictated that we put national interests above local interest, but participating libraries had to feel that their institutions' efforts were contributing to the national whole. Understanding this interrelatedness of institutional priorities and the national agenda has been critically important to the success of the preservation effort.

We have also learned that trends in technology, while important to monitor, have to be evaluated in terms of long-term preservation, not simply in terms of access. From the beginning of the national preservation program, there were critics of microfilming, pointedly described as an "outdated technology, one not friendly to users. Digital technology, while vastly superior as an access medium, has yet to prove itself as a long-term preservation tool. And those institutions that see themselves as stewards of the intellectual record, are forced to consider which technologies will be most reliable for ensuring the preservation of those materials for hundred of years.

Perhaps the most important thing we learned is that focus is the key to program success. While the preservation problem was enormous in American libraries, including deteriorating materials in many different formats, we recognized that we had to choose one area in which to begin and show evidence of success. We began with Brittle Books, and the successes we have had there give us the credibility and courage to continue on with other formats that have received little attention thus far.

We recognized that projects of this magnitude require public/private partnerships. Private foundations joined the National Endowment for the Humanities in funding the national preservation program. Since 1989, awards from NEH's Challenge Grant program has generated over \$57 million in new money from the private sector for preservation. Notably, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation made substantial grants in support of education and training of preservation administrators and of preservation microfilming of special collections in the largest research libraries. More recently, the newly created Institute of Museum and Library Services has created a category of funding for preservation and digitization in its Leadership Grant Program.

The Commission on Preservation and Access recognized almost from the beginning of its existence that preservation programs cannot exist in isolation from the rest of the world. Scholarship does not observe national boundaries, so preservation necessarily becomes an international effort. The Commission established in the early 1990s a counterpart organization in Europe—the European Commission on Preservation and Access—and also assigned a full-time program officer to work with preservation groups in all regions of the world to promote the cause of preservation and to solicit substantive partnerships where appropriate. Here again, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation's funding made this international program possible.

Looking to the Future

There are many other wonderfully positive results from the preservation effort. But it would be wrong to give the impression that it has been always easy. If we have learned a single lesson, it is that concentrated attention over a long period of time on a single issue is very difficult.

Since 1989, digital technology has appeared on the scene, and libraries, large and small, are examining the possibility of employing it in the cause of preservation. In some institutions, digitization of existing collections as a means of extending access to library users has become a glamorous competitor of microfilming funds. Digital images and accompanying searchable texts are far easier to access and use than microfilm and can be made from film as well as from originals. Accordingly, digital projects are getting an increasing proportion of available library funds.

The appropriate use of digital technology has become a source of debate among librarians. Libraries that have deteriorating books continue microfilming because microfilm, more durable than computer tapes and disks, remains the best transfer-medium we have for long-term preservation. Among other preservation disadvantages, digitized texts require periodic migration, or transfer, to new systems as hardware and software needed to read them become obsolete. Yet, microfilming seems less urgent to libraries now because experience indicates that mass-de-acidification techniques and proper housing can give endangered books more time.

It is not surprising, then, that through a combination of time passing and technological developments, many librarians in the United States are now considering what the proper configuration of a preservation program should be for the new century

We recognize, too, that one of the important roles CLIR has made in the past has been the distribution of information about preservation research and trends. We acknowledge the need to continue to perform this service even as preservation efforts adapt and evolve to new conditions.

The Commission on Preservation and Access concentrated on identifying the most important preservation problems that could most effectively be addressed cooperatively and bringing together representatives of those institutions most likely to be able to solve the problems. With assistance and modest financial support from the Commission, many libraries have contributed to the overall preservation effort. The work of the Library of Congress' preservation division has been enormously helpful, but with NEH funding and private foundation support, we have been able to think about the needs of the richly varied institutions across the country.

In recognition of this diversity, and the fact that many small and mid-sized cultural institutions in the United States hold materials of importance to our cultural heritage, NEH recently inaugurated a new category called *Preservation Assistance Grants*. These awards of up to \$5,000 enable institutions to engage experts to assess the preservation needs of their collections, or send members of their staff to preservation training workshops, or even purchase equipment and archival supplies that will help preserve their collections. In the first two years of the programs' existence, NEH has received 454 applications and made 29 awards, a statistic that certainly seems to suggest that this category of support serves a national need. Moreover, the final reports that are being sent to NEH at the conclusion of these grants indicate that, small as they are, these awards are having a catalytic effect, in helping an institution for the first time to raise funds from private donors, increase the number of its staff, stimulate public interest in its work, and, on occasion, discover significant material in its collection that had been forgotten.

This story is far from finished. While the Brittle Books program is moving successfully toward its goals, new technology has appeared on the scene. The great interest in digitizing library materials to increase access has at times put access and preservation in competition with one another for resources. Collections of recorded sound, digital television, film, and visual images are growing rapidly in research libraries, and preservation specialists are painfully aware that the historical record of the 20th century and beyond will increasingly be found on these new media. So preservationists now look to the future, trying to identify opportunities, technological breakthroughs, new sources of funds to call attention to the problem and to continue their important roles of stewardship over the cultural resources that define our heritage.