

## How to Order Reproductions of Motion Pictures, Sound Recordings, and Videotapes from the National Archives in College Park, MD

- Information About Records
- Citations needed for orders
- Formats provided
- Copying restrictions
- Quality
- Returns

### Information About Records

The Motion Picture, Sound, and Video holdings at the National Archives in College Park are vast and diverse, spanning more than:

- 150,000 reels of film
- 160,000 sound recordings
- 20,000 videotapes

Materials derive from public and private sources as disparate as MCA-Universal Pictures and the U.S. Air Force; encompass the full range of audiovisual formats, obsolete and active, from memobelts to digital video formats; and pose varying preservation requirements.

As a result, ordering reproductions involves a variety of technical, financial, legal, and time considerations.

For any item, details of origin, condition, and preservation history hold important implications for:

- copy format and quality
- reproduction turnaround time and expense
- use rights

Reproduction options and procedures are described below. For ordering information concerning the separate audiovisual holdings of the Nixon Library in College Park, consult the Nixon Library staff. Reproduction work involving any films, videos, and sound recordings in Presidential Libraries is handled through the respective library holding the items to be copied.

### Citations

Regardless of the media or format involved, researchers interested in ordering reproductions will need complete item-level citations. These generally consist of:

- Record group number, with or without an alphabetical series designator
- Production (film, video, sound recording) control number
- Production title or subject
- Individual reel number (or designated portions for stock footage)

#### Examples:

200-HF-112X, Hampton Institute Presents Its Program of Education for Life, Reel 4.

128.1, President Lyndon B. Johnson: Full Inaugural Ceremony, Reel 1.

Such citations can sometimes be found in descriptions in the National Archives Catalog. However, the National Archives Catalog does not cover all Motion Picture, Sound, and Video unit holdings, and many of the descriptions that are included do not reach the reel level.

For those items not described in the National Archives Catalog, citations are obtained through:

- on-site work in the Motion Picture Research Room
- inquiries to Motion Picture Reference staff

#### *Inquiries*

##### Mail:

Motion Picture Reference (NWCS-Motion Reference)  
Room 3360  
National Archives at College Park  
8601 Adelphi Road  
College Park, MD 20740-6001

Telephone: 301-837-3520

FAX: 301-837-3620

E-mail: [mopix@nara.gov](mailto:mopix@nara.gov)

(Please include a complete mailing address, facsimile number, and a daytime phone number in your E-mail)

**Formats provided are:**

**Motion picture film (16mm and 35mm)**

- See instructions: How to Order Moving Image Copies

**Videotape (commercial formats, standard-definition (SD) and high-definition (HD), and exhibition and home formats, VHS and DVD, use)**

- Videotapes can normally be made of any film in the collection
- Procedures for ordering commercial, exhibition and home (or "viewing") copies are identical
- See How to Order Moving Image Copies

**Sound Recording (open reel, audiocassette, and compact disc [CD])**

- Audio tape will be copied onto either 1/4" open reel, standard audiocassette or CD
- Some original recordings have poor or only fair sound
- In generating intermediates for vendor copying work, the National Archives lab may filter noise and correct some defects but does not attempt major enhancements of sound quality
- See How to Order Sound Recordings.

**Quality**

*Condition of originals:* While the National Archives and Records Administration makes every effort to provide the best quality copy, some originals or copies of originals may exhibit physical defects due to fading, deterioration, a history of poor environmental storage conditions, or handling damage. Copies purchased from an approved vendor therefore may show the same visual and/or audio defects. All copies of National Archives records are purchased with the understanding that they may not be returned for credit refunds, or exchanges.

**Commercial Reproduction Quality**

- Meets F.C.C. standards (limited by the quality of the original film, which may include scratches, splices, or other defects)
- Used in television and feature film productions
- Provides the best images that can be made from an archival intermediate copy
- Is often expensive
- Copies are made by off-site private vendor laboratories in cooperation with the National Archives and Records Administration.
- Customers must select a laboratory from a list provided by the National Archives and Records Administration.

**Exhibition and Home Reproduction Quality**

- Fair to good copies suitable for public and home presentation
- Videotapes may contain a visible flicker but may be acceptable for study, classroom, preview, or home viewing purposes only

**Returns**

Unsatisfactory reproductions must be returned within 30 days for replacement. Such returns will be honored only if we have made an error or the vendor processing or vendor transfer is faulty. Returns will not be accepted if, in our judgment, the defects are attributable to the condition of the original materials. Please note that exhibition and home use quality copies are purchased with the understanding that they may not be returned for credit, refunds, or exchanges.

