Audiovisual archiving in Lithuanian Central State Archive

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Lithuanian Central State Archive is the biggest one within the state archival service and the only state archive where audiovisual documents are stored. The main mission of the Lithuanian Central State Archive activity is collecting and safeguarding of paper based and audiovisual documents to future generations, providing permanent public access to its collections. Lithuanian Central State Archive consistently started collecting audiovisual documents in 1956, when the Department of Film-photo-phonodocuments was established. In 1965 the Department mentioned was separated from the Archive, thus establishing the separate Lithuanian State Archive of Film-photo-phonodocuments. After the restoration of Lithuania's independence in 1990 the name of the Archive was changed to Lithuanian Archive of Image and Sound. In 2002 the Archive was reorganized and became the part of Lithuanian Central State Archive again. Despite all these changes, audiovisual documents are constantly collected and managed, and the number of documents preserved constantly grows.

The number of audiovisual documents which are included into the official records' list – 457.744 units. Meanwhile the number of audiovisual documents which are not catalogued is also impressive – 343.431 units of documents. So there are more than 800.000 units of audiovisual documents in the Archive.

There are four big collections of audiovisual documents in the Lithuanian Central State Archive – films, photodocuments, sound recordings and video recordings.

The collection of films consists of 8.807 titles and 46.889 film boxes. It covers the history of Lithuanian cinema since the 2nd decade of XX century till nowadays. The oldest preserved films show the life and activity of Lithuanians in Chicago in 1919-1920. There is a big collection of Lithuanian newsreels from 1919-1940, among them – films of famous past filmmakers K.Lukšys, J.Milius, brothers Motuzai-Beleckai, S.Vainalavičius, S.Uzdonas. There are some films from the 2nd World War – German war chronicles. The largest part of archival films – documentaries created in Lithuanian Film Studio and Lithuanian Television in 1946-1990. These are the newsreels "Soviet Lithuania" and "Lithuanian Pioneer", film essays and sketches about famous Lithuanian people, their work, Lithuanian towns and cultural life. Besides documentaries there are also Lithuanian feature films created in Lithuanian Film Studio preserved in the Archive. The Archive also preserves new films created after the reconstruction of Lithuania's independence – the newsreels "Lithuanian chronicle" and other documentaries. In these latter years the Archive receives foreign Lithuanian films which reflect Lithuanian activity in the exile. In 2007 two archival film sketches "The funeral of Dr. Jonas Basanavičius" and "The 3rd Exhibition of Agriculture and Industry. The first Lithuanian Song Festival" were included to the national registry of UNESCO program "World Memory". Archival films are used for scientific, cultural, informational, popularisation and self-education purposes. Since 2004 we have noticed that people use to come to the Archive just to watch old films. It became a kind of leisure spending form. Films are also used while making new films or film sketches; students use films in their term papers and graduation dissertations.

The collection of photodocuments (389.072 units) consists of negatives, positives, glass negatives, albums, photo vignettes. The oldest documents - portraits and group photos made in various photo studios after 1860; portraits of Vilnius Jewish conscripts to Russian army; studio portraits made in 1900-1915 (photos – Galina Malinauskaitė, participant of the 1863's revolt; Vilnius Jewish conscript to Russian army; family photo from the beginning of XX century). The largest part of photodocuments from 1918-1940

consist of photos about Lithuanian military. There are many photos of past famous Lithuanian masters – K.Smečechauskas, A.Šulcas, B.Buračas, J.Miežlaiškis, D.Čibas, and J.Karazija. The largest part of all photodocuments' collection consists of documents from 1945-1990 – the photos of different newspapers. In 2000 the Archive received the large photo collection from former Institute of Restoration of Monuments, where you can find photos of Lithuanian town's and villages architecture – houses, streets, details of interior. The Archive also has a photographer who record nowadays life and events. In these latter years the Archive received a lot of photos of famous nowadays photographers who depicted the way of Lithuania to the independence in 1988-1991. In 2011 a unique collection of Siberia exile photos made by Vilhelmas Jeniselis was included to the national registry of UNESCO "World Memory" program. Archival photodocuments are used quite intensively for books, scientific works, graduation papers, different exhibitions.

The collection of sound recordings (20.484 titles and 19.908 units) consists of shellac and vinyl discs, magnetic tapes, cassettes, CDs. The oldest shellac discs were recorded in 1907 in Riga. You can listen to the songs of famous past Lithuanian singers K.Petrauskas, A.Šabaniauskas, D.Dolskis as well as speeches of Lithuanian presidents A.Smetona and K.Grinius. The Archive preserves sound recordings about the events of 1940 as well as the extracts of Kaunas Radio programs from the 2nd World War years. The largest part of sound documents consist of sound recordings in magnetic tapes created in 1960-1990. You can find recordings about past events, talks with famous Lithuanian public men, writers, artists, musicians and so on. There are also a lot of music records. After the reconstruction of Lithuanian independence Lithuanian emigrants gave a lot of their sound recordings. One of the largest is the collection of Chicago Lithuanian radio program "Margutis" created in 1954-1990. There are also sound recordings of other Lithuanian radio programs from abroad preserved. In 2008 the Archive received a big collection of sound recordings from Lithuanian office of radio station "Voice of America".

The Archive started to collect video recordings since 1988, and there are 3.136 titles by now. Most of them are recordings of the Archive's video operators. Here you can see the newest history of Lithuania – first meetings, the reconstruction of independence, the events of January 13th of 1991, and other important moments from political and cultural life. There are around 600 units of video records with remembrances of former Siberia deportees, political prisoners and partisans. The Archive still makes video records about nowadays life in Lithuania.

In 2001 the Archive started to create the computer databases for audiovisual documents. Firstly they were based on Microsoft Access program, but a few years ago the single database for all documents was created on MySQL base. It includes paper-based and audiovisual documents, but there is a separate search engine for each kind of documents. The description of photodocuments also includes a small low resolution photo. After you read the description of sound recording you can listen to this recording. The same can be said about films – there are digital copies of low resolution included. Of source this possibility to view or to listen is quite limited as only a part of audiovisual documents has digital copy, but we do this work constantly.

In 1999 the Archive started to collect digitally-born audiovisual documents. The first of them were sound recordings on digital DAT tapes. At the same time the first digital copies of sound documents were created. Of course these DAT tapes were not suitable for long time storage, so it is good that the amounts of work were not big. Later the Archive started to make digital sound copies to CDs. Now all digital copies are kept in archival server. Sound recording are digitized in wav format. Now we have about 30 percents of all archival sound recordings already digitized.

Since 2000 archival photodocuments are constantly digitized, creating digital viewing and safety copies. Digital viewing copies are made retaking photodocuments with digital camera. These copies are only for viewing, so they are of low resolution (100 Kb, jpg format). These copies are used in database with the description. Now we have more than 220.000 viewing copies in our database. Safety copies are made scanning photodocuments, so they are of high resolution (up to 45 Mb, tiff format). Some of these copies are kept in archival server, while some of them in CDs or DVDs. Now we have more than 40000 high resolution digital copies. Since 2002 the Archive began to collect digitally-born photodocuments, and now there are about 12000 of them.

Since 2004 the digital copies of video recordings are created, copying VHS tapes to DVD and DV format. Now we have about 5 percent of video recordings already digitized.

The Archive started to digitize films in 2003, using self-constructed equipment. Films have been usually digitized for users as well as for film descriptions making. But we have noticed that more and more films can't be digitized using this equipment because of a poor physical condition of film tapes (big shrinkage and so on).

Since May, 2010 till April 2013 Lithuanian Central State Archive implemented the project „Lithuanian documentaries on the Internet". The Archive has received of about 2.7 million Euros for this project from EU Structural Funds. The objective of the project was the preservation of Lithuanian documentary heritage by digitisation as well as its accessibility for everyone via the Internet. The result of the project – digital archive of Lithuanian documentaries and it's access in the Internet. By the end of 2010 new equipment for film tapes preparation to digitization has arrived in the Archive. Now we have new film rewinding tables; film viewing table CINE8; ultrasonic Cleaner LIPSNER-SMITH. Such kind of equipment was implemented in Lithuania for the first time. At the beginning of 2011 the new digital storage facilities have been made in the Archive. Here we have the equipment for digital storage and Internet access – disk storage system, tape library and so on. The new facilities are equiped with modern air conditioning, fire extinction and monitoring systems. On May 2011 the new equipment for films digitization has been installed in the Archive. It consists of image scanning equipment ARRISCAN, sound digitizing equipment SONDOR, the softwares DIAMANT and ADOBE PREMIERE for digital restoration and editing. Such film digitization equipment is also the only one in Lithuanian and in Baltic States. The new information system or database of the project was created this year according to the new European standards – „CEN 15744:2009 Film identification – Minimum set of metadata for cinematographic works" and „CEN 15907:2010 Film identification. Enhancing interoperability of metadata. Element sets and structures". These standards have been accepted by Lithuanian standartization department as the English versions of Lithuanian standards.

When we have been preparing the documentation for this project, the main question was what films should we digitize and make accessible via the Internet. As you know the publication of films can be restricted by the copyright laws. So we decided that the best solution would be to choose the films which are in public domain. According to Lithuanian laws public domain starts after 50 years from the production of films.

During the project the Archives digitized and transferred to the Internet 1.000 titles of Lithuanian documentaries, created in the period 1919-1961. In the project website every user can see the collection of Lithuanian chronicles from 1919-1940,

newsreels from German occupation time, the documentaries created in Lithuanian Film Studio and Lithuanian Television in 1946-1961, the newsreels „Soviet Lithuania" and „Lithuanian Pioneer". In the website www.e-kinas.lt you can find film descriptions in both Lithuanian and English, view these films freely and order their copies by the Internet.

Lithuanian Central State Archive wants to popularize its collections, so we participate in various international projects.

In 2008 the Archive has participated in the international project MIDAS (Moving Image Database for Access and Re-use of European film collections). The project was coordinated by German Film Institute. The main objective of this project was to create the European database of films descriptions in order to centralize data about European archival films collections for better access. The project started in 2006 with 5 European archives, while in 2008 there were 18 project partners. Lithuanian Central State Archive provided descriptions of 1000 film titles in both Lithuanian and English. The website of the project – www.filmarchives-online.eu

In 2008-2011 the Archive has participated in the international project EFG (European Film Gateway), also coordinated by German Film Institute. During the project the website www.europeanfilmgateway.eu was created which offers fast and easy access to hundreds of cinema history documents in European film archives and cinematheques: photos, posters, programs, periodicals, censorship documents, rare feature and documentary films, newsreels and other material. During the project the Archive provided for Internet access 130 titles of films – war chronicles of the 2nd World War; the newsreels "Lithuanian Pioneer"; films essays and sketches of Lithuanian Film Studio; first Lithuanian feature films. We plan to provide more archival films in the future.

Since the 1st of March, 2013 Lithuanian Central State Archive participates in the EUscreenXL (European TV and radio archives on the Internet) project, financed by European Commission. EUscreenXL – the follow-up of the international EUscreen project, joining together 32 partners – archives, TV companies, audiovisual institutes and other organisations which create, preserve and popularise audiovisual documents. Lithuanian Central State Archive is one of the new partners. During the project the Archive expects to provide 600 titles of sound recordings for EUscreen portal as well as 600 titles of the newsreels "Soviet Lithuania" for Europeana through EUscreen portal as an aggregator.