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As the co-author of the original guide to the National Archives and Records Administration's (NARA) motion pictures, I take some pride in noting its durability, but no one can dispute the need for a timely revision. Since 1972, the audiovisual records and collections have dramatically increased in size and complexity. For example, in early 1970's there are few films about the war in Vietnam, and now NARA has thousands of reels transferred by the Department of Defense. Moreover, since NARA's on-line database, Archives Research Catalog (ARC), can never be comprehensive or up to date due to backlogs, new acquisitions, and chronic shortages of cataloging staff, only publications like this one can give the best overview. Finally, for those of us who may still be a little partial to research in old-fashion libraries, this publication offers the opportunity to browse and thus find unexpected subjects that spark the imagination and serve as the basis for new research projects.

In this new publication, Phil Stewart provides a convenient overview of NARA's motion picture holdings, one difficult to obtain from any other source. Only NARA's *Guide to Federal Records*, available on its website, offers this kind of detailed information, but the motion picture entries as well as those for other audiovisual materials are dispersed and buried at the end of long entries describing office files and other textual records.

This does not mean that motion picture records should be viewed in isolation or taken out of context. After all, the films themselves tell only part of the story. On the contrary, these images represent essential records of our national history possessing a unique audiovisual dimension of information that the written or printed word can never replace. And yet, as many researchers realize, documents and files give these films context and meaning that help us understand their historical value today. In the ideal world of research and scholarship, researchers should have all relevant documents accessible to them regardless of format. Databases, like NARA's ARC, make cross-media searches possible. Audiovisual researchers, though, the most likely group to benefit from this publication, often do not have the luxury of time to work with textual records due to production deadlines or other constraints.

Finally, in the ideal world all archival films will be individually cataloged, facilitating title and subject searches. NARA is nowhere near that level of description and probably will never be in view of other priorities for preservation and access. In the meantime, interim guides like this one serve a very useful purpose.

Bill Murphy retired from the NARA after a long career in the management of audiovisual archives. Subsequently, he established AVArchives Services, which provides consulting services for libraries, archives, and museums and for documentary producers. He has written books on documentary films on the preservation of American television.