



**NASHVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY**  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CORRECTION/UPDATE: INSTEAD OF TORNADOES, TONY SUDEKUM  
*Restoration of Film Thought to Show 1933 Tornado Damage Instead Unearths Part of  
Nashville's Theatrical History***

*(In a news release from Nashville Public Library on July 25, 2016, we incorrectly stated that the Library had found a 1933 nitrate film showing the effects of a series of Nashville tornadoes. We believed this to be the case at the time and had received a grant from the National Film Preservation Foundation to transfer, preserve and store the film.*

*Because nitrate is fragile and we did not have the proper equipment to verify the film's contents, we had only the word of the donor as to what the film depicted. Further inspection of the film by experts revealed that it contained footage of Nashville businessman, theater owner and philanthropist Tony Sudekum; however, the historic significance of the film's subject matter meant that the restoration grant was upheld.)*

**NASHVILLE, Tenn.** –The audiovisual conservancy staff at Nashville Public Library (NPL) thought they had a film of the destruction and devastation left from a series of tornadoes in 1933. It took a trip to Washington, D.C., to uncover the true contents on the fragile roll of nitrate film.

The film in question was donated to our collection, and the donor believed it contained footage of the 1933 tornadoes; however, because the film was nitrate--fragile, notoriously volatile, and unable to be played on modern equipment--the Library couldn't verify its contents. To preserve the film, digitize it, and arrange for safe storage, NPL applied for and was awarded a grant from the National Film Preservation Foundation (NFPF), with support from the Library of Congress.

Because no commercial shipping services would agree to transport nitrate, NPL Audiovisual Services Manager Michael Lusk drove the film himself to Colorlab, a film preservation and processing firm used by the Library of Congress, in Rockville, Md. After submitting the film for processing, Lusk was invited to watch the technician's initial viewing of the film and determined there was no tornado footage on it.

The film did contain some exciting surprises: sound, in addition to subtitles, very rare for a film from this time period; and a 35mm print depicting Nashville movie theater magnate and philanthropist Tony Sudekum's 31st anniversary party for the Crescent Amusement Company at Sudekum's Edenwald Farm.

While NPL staff are disappointed that the tornado footage is not on the reel as believed, they are also happy to find what appears to be unique nitrate footage, with sound, that is relevant to cinema history and Nashville history. Given the importance of the content and the fact that this is a 35mm nitrate with sound, the NFPF is upholding the grant and moving forward with the preservation of this unique footage.

NPL's Audiovisual Conservation Center, supported by the Nashville Public Library Foundation (NPLF), will continue to preserve and make accessible the most fragile, rare and culturally significant audiovisual recordings in our collections. With more than 4,000 analog assets and hundreds of born digital assets in our collections, NPL looks forward to the challenge of cataloging and conserving these important pieces of history.

### **About Nashville Public Library**

A Nashville Public Library (NPL) card is free, but it's also priceless. A [2016 study](#) by the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce calculated the value of NPL's services and collections at \$2,951 per Nashville family and the direct impact of NPL on Davidson County at \$94 million. NPL maintains a collection of millions of items, including books, periodicals, DVDs, CDs, audiobooks, and streaming and downloadable books, movies and music. The library also offers more than 800 public-use computers, free art exhibits, educational programs, events for all ages, 24/7 reference assistance, online databases, interlibrary loan and special collections. Metro Archives, located at the Main Library, houses 5 million historic documents. Equal access is provided by the Talking Library audio reading service for the print disabled and Library Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. For more information, call 615-862-5800 or visit [library.nashville.org](http://library.nashville.org).

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