

History of Vernonia Video Stores

By Michael Calhoun

The current video store at R&S Market used to be a Lincoln Savings and Loan in the 1980s; at that time it was Sentry Market owned by Gordon Smith. Lincoln Savings closed its branch there and the room for a brief period became storage. After Gordon attended a grocery store convention, he saw that adding video stores to grocery markets was a growing trend and decided to open one. He and his partner Chuck Hendrix built wooden shelves to hold both VHS and Betamax Tapes. In the early days of the home video market there was a format war between the Sony Betamax and the JVC VHS tape player, the story of which could be its own article but suffice to say VHS won the war.

Soon a checkout stand was installed, and movie posters hung in the windows. Ingram Entertainment Inc., a distributor in home entertainment products, would supply Gordon with pictures of the movies that lined the shelves where customers would remove a tag and present it to the store clerk in exchange for checking out the tape. This eventually gave way to having VHS box covers on shelves while the tape would be in the back sealed in a grey clam shell case. For new releases multiple copies would be ordered so “hopefully” they would not run out due to high demand. After a time, the multiple copies would be sold off to where only a single tape of a particular movie was left for inventory.

The video store needed a name, so a contest began for the community to



come up with the best one. The winning submission was 21st Sentry Video, a play on the name Sentry Market. While there you could enjoy popcorn, candy, a life size R2-D2, and a water tank coin donation game.

21st Sentry Video wasn't the only store in town. Vernonia Hardware used to be divided with a video section which is now occupied by the liquor store. Like Sentry's early days, tags would be removed from the box cover and exchanged for movies held in a blue clam shell. If you walk by the front of the store today you will see a bolted shut metal mail slot. That used to be where you would slide in the video for return. They even had their own logo of a blue log truck with Vernonia Video Express printed on stickers that adorned each tape. There was also a store that briefly opened in 2000 at the Variety building; it eventually was torn down and today is the grassy area with a fire pit next to Black Iron Grill.

Like many buildings in Vernonia, Sentry Market was affected by both the floods of 1996 and 2007. In each case the video inventory was able to be lifted to safety. Eventually Gordon Smith sold Sentry to Randy and Sharon Parrow and it became R&S Market. A few changes ensued including a flood

wall that was installed around the building to prevent water infiltration in case of future flooding. The video slot was moved to a wood box that now sits atop the wall. VHS inventory transitioned to DVD rentals and the wood shelves made way for metal racks.

The Vernonia Library may not be the first place that comes to mind when thinking of home video entertainment. Yet, they currently hold a large selection of movies, TV shows, and new releases. In my conversation with librarian Brittanie Fitch she explained the library is constantly evolving in ways to reach the community. Patrons can recommend movies they feel are worth a watch at the “Patrons Picks” section. Movies are given one to four stars and

a brief review.

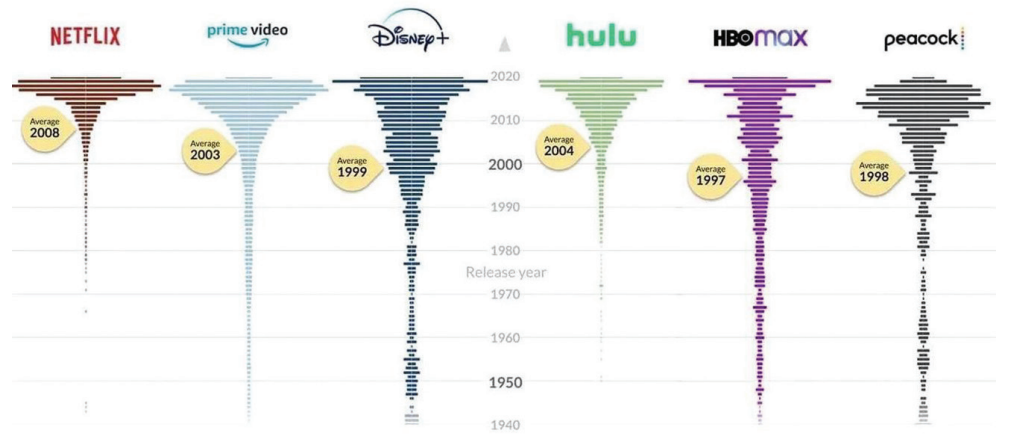
Today, streaming movies has become a standard for the average film viewer. Marketing campaigns by billion-dollar corporations like Amazon will tell you that physical media is all but dead and their service is the superior choice, Let's take a closer look at this. Netflix, one of the largest streaming platforms, on the surface appears to have an endless selection of movie choices. However if someone's only access to films is through a streaming service, they may not be aware that films existed before 1970. In addition, a survey from Deloitte's Digital Media Trend found that 43 percent of consumers give up on making a selection if they cannot find what they want in a few minutes. Frustrations mount when movie franchises are not only split up

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The population pyramid of SVODs

How old are the movies & TV shows on each service?

United States



Source: JustWatch.com – release year of movies and TV shows on the displayed streaming services as of 10/20

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