

Microfilm, Invented by Clerk, Aids Record Keeping

New York—Few persons realize to what extent their personal lives are recorded on microfilm, a one-time bank clerk's invention which added photography to the evolution of man's record-keeping.

Chances are that every check you write to pay the butcher, the baker or the baby sitter is microfilmed by your bank. So are important papers such as your Social Security record, property titles, insurance policies, birth certificates, income tax returns and even your department store bills and sales slips.

Whenever you cash in a U.S. Savings Bond it is microfilmed and the bond is destroyed. If you are hospitalized, your case history probably is microfilmed. So is your registration at some hotels. And if you live in certain areas of the nation your children's school records are being kept on microfilm.

Modern microfilming owes its existence to the invention of a New York bank clerk named George McCarthy. McCarthy's imagination was stirred one day in 1923 when a large depositor claimed his account was charged with a \$300 check he had never drawn. At that time, the bank kept no other proof of payment when returning a depositor's cancelled checks with his monthly statement. So it had to make good the \$300. Knowing that this wasn't the first such occurrence, McCarthy sought a practical answer to the problem.

Photography Idea Occurs

While watching a slow-motion film of a pitcher throwing a baseball, he thought of the possibility of photographing cancelled checks. Though experts scoffed at his idea as impractical, McCarthy persisted and finally hand-built a

crude piano-sized machine called the "Checkograph" that would photograph checks quickly and inexpensively.

Banks remained for the most part unmoved, however, until McCarthy interested Eastman-Kodak in his project. Eastman technicians re-engineered the "Checkograph" principle for a more compact and efficient machine called Recordak and also perfected a special formula microfilm. In 1928, the first Recordak was installed in McCarthy's old bank—the first to use the new machine.

Now Much-Used

Today, microfilming is at work in many thousands of banks, insurance companies, public utilities, retail establishments, manufacturing organizations and public offices. The nation's vital records are being microfilmed in duplicate, with the duplicate films stored in underground vaults outside of possible target areas against the possibility of nuclear war.

World War II brought microfilming's biggest and perhaps most memorable job, V-mail. From the time it was started in 1941, to save cargo space on mail to British troops in Egypt, until V-J day, it is estimated the Allies delivered one and a half billion V-mail letters.

A space age application of microfilm is in the Project

ARIES space laboratory recently opened at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. There, eight tons of reading material,

representing more than 4 million pages of scientific books, literary classics, best sellers, even comics, are reduced to a 90-pound microfilm library.



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South Africa May Seek Scout Shrine

By NEIL SMITH

United Press International
Johannesburg, South Africa—The little out country town of Mafeking is launching a worldwide appeal to become an international shrine for the Boy Scout movement.

It was in Mafeking, 150 miles northwest of here, during the Boer war that Col. (later Lord) Baden-Powell first conceived the idea of the Scout movement. At the time Mafeking was besieged by the Boers. The first "boy scouts" assisted the men defending the town.

The impetus for the international shrine idea was economic. The future outlook for Mafeking is bleak.

The town now is the capital of Bechuanaland protectorate although it lies 16 miles inside the South African frontier.

But the Bechuanaland government has decided to move the capital to Gaborone, 80 miles to the north. With the move will go many of Mafeking's 4,500 white inhabitants and most of its former importance and prosperity.

One of the ideas suggested as a means of keeping Mafeking from becoming a frontier ghost town was the establishment of a sort of "holy place" for the Scout movement, which was born there.

The Mafeking town council has adopted the idea with enthusiasm. Plans are emerging for a worldwide appeal to Boy and Girl Scouts of all nations to contribute to a fund. The money will be used to build a museum-shrine in which relics of the siege and the Boy Scout movement will be housed. Some will be set aside to maintain in their original state the many buildings connected with Baden-Powell.

The buildings include the original dugout used by Baden-Powell (now a wine cellar), the old officers club (now the Mafeking Club) and the watchtower from where Baden-Powell used to observe the Boer attackers (now a lawyer's office.)

One factor dims the outlook for establishing an international shrine to scouting here. The worldwide movement embraces all races and colors. But in South Africa today rigid laws restrict non-whites in "white" areas.

The town of Mafeking is a "white man's" town. A non-white visitor would not be permitted to stay at local hotels, eat at local restaurants, or attend a white cinema show. He would be subject to all the rigors of the South African pass laws.

Will the thousands of non-white Boy Scouts and their governments take kindly to an appeal for a shrine which they may never be allowed to visit?

Maximal Breathing Capacity Test Noted

La Jolla, Calif. — Do you have enough wind to blow out a paper match held three inches from your mouth? Hold the mouth wide and — blow. Don't purse lips. That's cheating.

If you can't blow out the flame, your maximal breathing capacity is not up to the standard. Better have your lungs tested. Dr. C. Robert Olsen, of the Scripps Clinic and Research Foundation here, made that point in a report published in the American Review of Respiratory Disease.



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