

Star Wars: Forty Years of Copyright Registrations

ALISON HALL

More than 3,600 copyright registrations and documents have been filed for Star Wars works of creativity. It all started in 1977 with the original Star Wars movie registration, filed just before the records went digital in 1978. At the same time, Twentieth Century-Fox Film Corporation filed registrations for movie artwork and the trailer.

Approximately two-thirds of the *Star Wars* registrations and documents were filed more than twenty years after the original movie was released, which of course has included two new sequels and the stand-alone film *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story*. After all that time, the original *Star Wars* still inspires creativity.

The *Star Wars* franchise has become so much a part of American culture that two of the movies are part of the National Film Registry at the Library of Congress. The Registry selects twenty-five films each year, showcasing the range and diversity of American film heritage to increase awareness for its preservation. The original *Star Wars* was among the first films added to the Registry in 1989, and *The Empire Strikes Back* was added in 2010.

John Williams composed and conducted the iconic soundtracks for *Star Wars* episodes I-VIII. His creativity inspired many recordings and arrangements registered with the Office, including the number one hit “Star Wars Theme/Cantina Band” space disco recording by Meco in 1977. *Rogue One’s* music was composed by Michael Giacchino, but it incorporated themes from Williams’ previous soundtrack compositions.

Many of the songs on the soundtracks do not have lyrics, but “Ewok Celebration” at the end of *Return of the Jedi* does. It was composed and conducted by John Williams, and it was registered with original English lyrics by Joseph Williams and Ewokese lyrics by Ben Burtt.

Each movie introduced new characters, which led to action figures, spaceships, and different light sabers, registered with the Copyright Office as sculptural works. Artwork featuring the characters also appeared on lunch boxes, bed sheets, and t-shirts, to name a few. Beyond artwork, the incredible popularity of the movies led to countless *Star Wars*-themed items registered with the Office. A few examples include coloring books, sticker books, calendars, trivia books, word puzzles, iron-on transfer books, fortune telling cards, growth charts, jewelry, bookmarks, posters, and card games. Several of the movies inspired video games as well, from the 1982’s *Empire Strikes Back* Atari game to 2017’s high-tech *Star Wars Battlefront II*.

Star Wars also inspired unofficial sequels, spinoffs, and themed sitcom episodes. Its popularity rarely fades, but in years new movies come out, the *Star Wars*-based creativity registered with the Copyright Office seems endless. ©

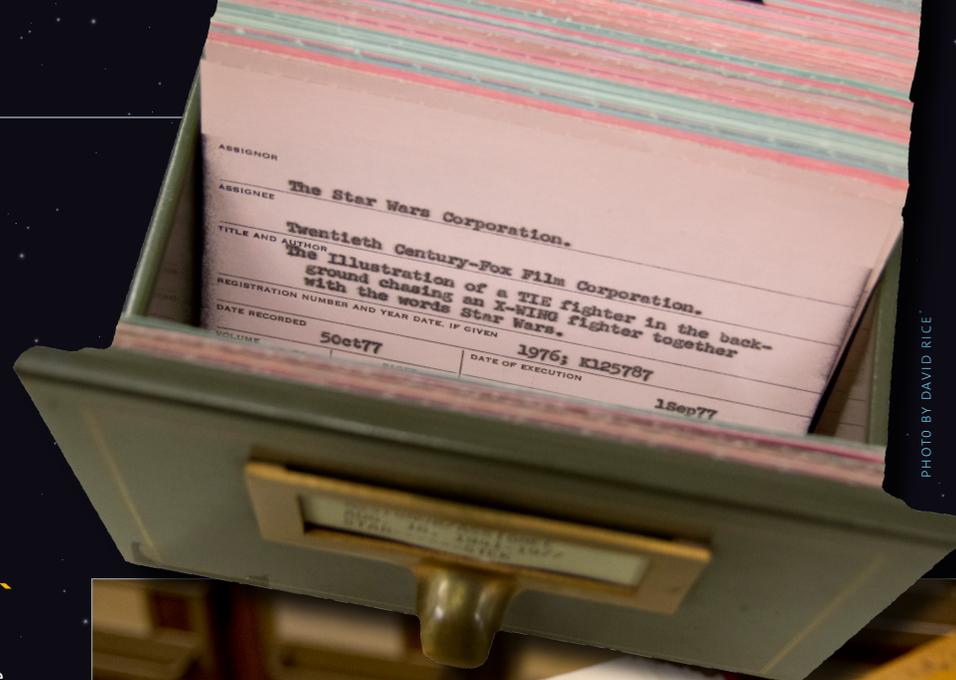
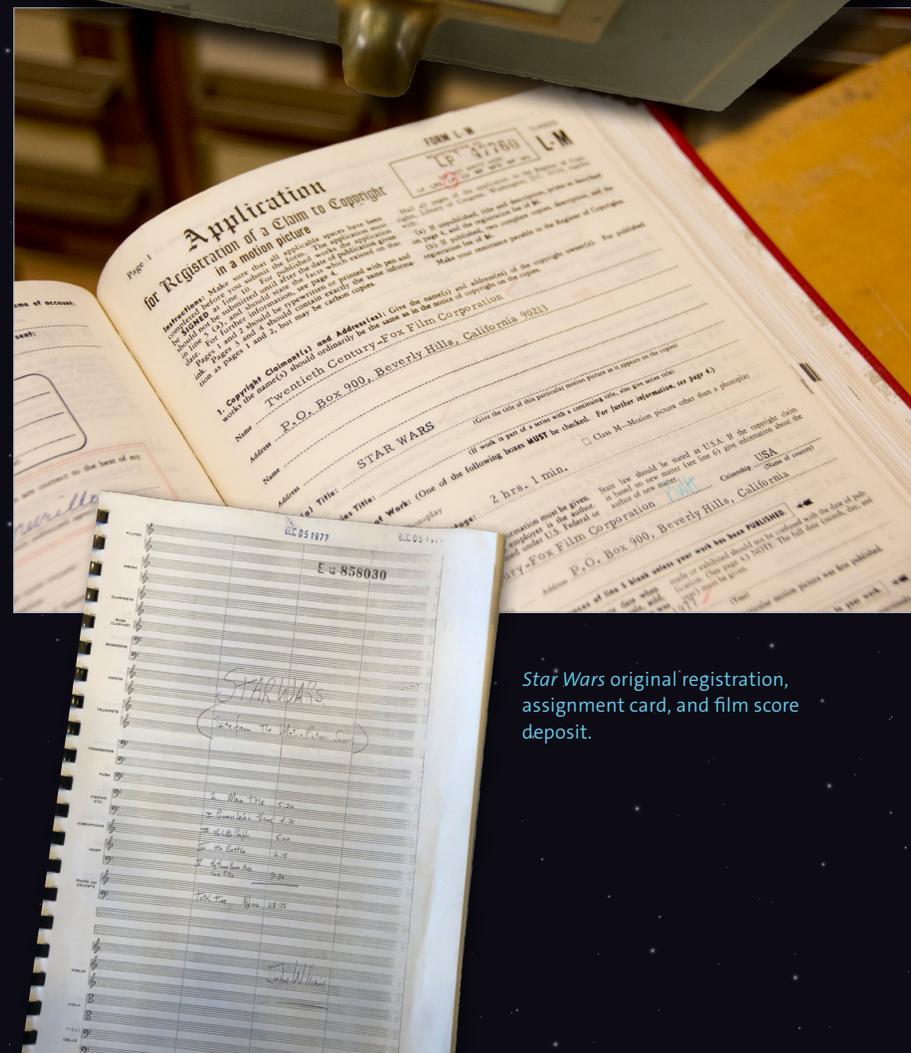


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Star Wars original registration, assignment card, and film score deposit.