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Film HISTORY

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Front cover: A Columbia publicity portrait of its most important 1950s star. (p. 89).

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Introduction: Chasing Reality

This is not an issue devoted to documentary film, nor does it examine in any systematic way the ontological issues governing the relation of the mediated filmed image to its unformed subject.

Instead, the seven papers collected here trace something of the cinema's perennial concern with absorbing and improving upon any 'real' events, locations, performances or personalities that fall within its purview.

On one end of the spectrum, filmmakers who find their subjects in the everyday world have almost automatically been seen as operating closer to 'reality,' regardless of the style in which they approached (or represented) these events. The actuality and the news film were, at least in the beginning, understood as the opposite of the fictions and fantasies which eventually came to dominate the commercial cinema. But it has been a long time, of course, since anyone has regarded the non-fiction film quite so naively as this, and the first two papers in this special issue provide further evidence of the unique difficulties film audiences are faced with in distinguishing fiction from fact.

Daniel Kowalsky discusses the Soviet film offensive in Spain during the Civil War, not only through an analysis of the footage shot there by Roman Karmen and his associates, but by situating this work within the context of the Soviet theatrical features which were also mobilized for this battle. Revealing Spanish and Russian-language materials provide new insights into the significance of this conflict in the history of film propaganda. Exhibition as a locus of non-fiction cinema was also important in the American cinema, but despite the prevalence today of all-news radio and cable channels it is surprising how little has been written about the history of all-news motion picture theaters. The Telenews operation, designed to accommodate the active participation of local managers (who could thereby reorganize 'the

news' theater by theater), is the subject of a unique joint historical inquiry by members of the Aronson family, an account which draws in film history, local history and genealogical research.

When Paul Rotha set out to define the field in his ground breaking *Documentary Film* (1936), he pitched a much wider tent than is generally accepted today. In addition to certifying as 'documentary' such films as Eisenstein's *October*, Rotha also allowed an entire 'Naturalist (Romantic)' tradition. The centerpiece here was *Nanook*, but the foregrounding of nature in an active role was also identified in films like *The Covered Wagon* (James Cruze, 1923) and *Stark Love* (Karl Brown, 1927). Brown's film was indeed shot in the mountains of North Carolina, but apparently even that did not provide enough 'reality' for the Paramount publicity department. Using newly uncovered local sources, James White reveals how the studio passed off a well-known college athlete as a camera-shy, barefoot hillbilly. Historic recreations pre-dated *The Covered Wagon*, of course. In Louis Pelletier's account of the pioneering British-American Film Manufacturing Company and its efforts to create an 'historically correct' Canadian cinema, we see how this impulse to blend history, entertainment and education seemed, at a crucial moment in film history, the high road to cinema art.

Filming even fictional narratives on location was thought to add not only eye-catching spectacle, but the authentic texture and excitement of modern life itself. Many filmmakers deserted the back lots in the years immediately following the Second World War, including such studio stalwarts as Alfred Hitchcock, who shot *I Confess* in Quebec City late in 1952. But the issues of authenticity which immediately confronted that film turned out to involve ritual rather than locale, as Amy Lawrence demonstrates.

And at the far end of this continuum, about as distant as possible from the concerns of Ivens and

Flaherty, are questions of performance and personality as reflected in the life and work of the movie star. Moving from stage to screen, Robert Donat understood the ways in which mechanical reproduction might rob his performances of both immediacy and authenticity. Vicky Lowe reveals how Donat attempted to counter the Kuleshov effect by regulating the tone of his performance in *The Citadel* (1938) through the aid of an analytical 'emotion chart.' Problems were even more extreme on the other side of

the Atlantic. Many of Kim Novak's key films featured her in (explicit or implicit) double roles, from *Vertigo* to *Kiss Me, Stupid*. But as Vince Barnett shows, such roles were predictable extensions of the actress Kim Novak's Hollywood persona: an empty vessel with no authentic personality of her own, in which filmmakers, fans, or vertiginous detectives might find whatever sort of woman they were looking for.

Richard Koszarski

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***Film History* 19, 2 (2007)**

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***Film History* 20, 1 (2008)**

Experimental Film Before Brakhage

Edited by John Fullerton
(deadline for submissions 1 June 2007)

John Libbey Cinema Books

Fort Lee: The Film Town

Richard Koszarski

Richard Koszarski is a member of the Fort Lee Film Commission and Associate Professor of English and Cinema Studies at Rutgers University. His books include *An Evening's Entertainment: The Age of the Silent Feature Film* and *Von: The Life and Films of Erich von Stroheim*. He is the 1991 recipient of the Prix Jean Mitry for his contributions to silent film scholarship.

"The fields and woods around historic Fort Lee, just across the Hudson, are the scene nowadays of a continuous performance of extremely animated, open-air theatricals. On almost any fine day one may enjoy historic pageants, sham battles, tragedies, comedies, and the bill is changed daily. Few motorists are attracted to this region and they, with the native population, form the only audience. The manager of these one-night, or rather, one-day, stands is the moving picture man ..."

– *New York Times*, 19 December 1909

Over the next ten years, motion pictures came to dominate every aspect of life in this suburban New Jersey community. During the nickelodeon era, D.W. Griffith, Mary Pickford and Mack Sennett would ferry entire acting companies across the Hudson to pose against the Palisades. But as films became longer and more elaborate, permanent studios were occupied by men like Selznick, Goldwyn and Fox. Pearl White still clung from the cliffs, but Theda Bara, "Fatty" Arbuckle and Douglas Fairbanks now worked in the rows of great greenhouse studios that had sprung up across Fort Lee and the neighboring communities. Tax revenues from studios and laboratories swelled municipal coffers, and even the ferryboats were renamed after Mabel Normand and Mae Marsh.

Then, suddenly, everything changed. Fort Lee, the film town, once hailed as the birthplace of the American motion picture industry, was now the industry's official ghost town. Stages once filled to capacity by Paramount and Universal were leased by independent producers or used as paint shops by scenic artists from Broadway. Most of Fort Lee's film history eventually burned away, one studio at a time.

But why did the "moving picture men" establish themselves so firmly in Fort Lee in the first place? And what made them change their minds? Richard Koszarski recreates the rise and fall of Fort Lee filmmaking in a remarkable collage of period news accounts, memoirs, municipal records, previously unpublished memos and correspondence, and dozens of rare posters and photographs – not just film history, but a unique account of what happened to one New Jersey town hopelessly enthralled by the movies.

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Richard Koszarski



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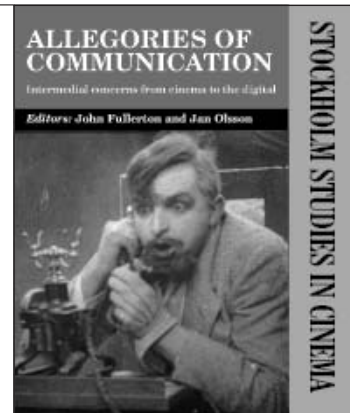
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Allegories of Communication: Intermedial concerns from cinema to the digital

Edited by John Fullerton and Jan Olsson

Allegories of Communication: Intermedial Concerns from Cinema to the Digital provides an array of analytical gateways to the cultures of mediated vision and the technologies of moving images from pre- to post-cinema. The contributors are leading international scholars addressing media phenomena and their contexts from a variety of vantage points – Tom Gunning; Michael Renov; Lynn Spigel; Stephen Mamber; Malin Wahlberg; Trond Lundemo; William Uricchio; Donald Crafton; Jan Olsson; John T. Caldwell; Erkki Huhtamo; Vreni Hockenjos; Anne Friedberg; Emily Godbey; J.A. Sokalski; Richard Abel.

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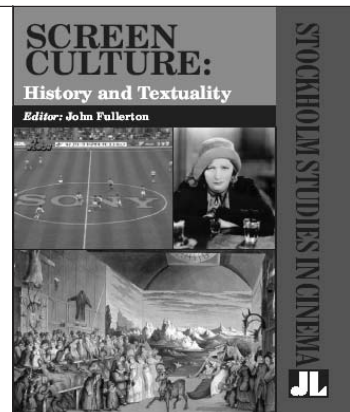
Screen Culture: History and Textuality

Edited by John Fullerton

Screen Culture: History and Textuality explores the impact of digital culture on the discipline of film and television studies. Whether the notion of screen culture is used to designate the technological platforms common to present-day digital media, or whether it refers to the support material on which moving images have historically been projected, scanned or displayed, *Screen Culture: History and Textuality* is primarily concerned with the intermedial appraisal of film, television and digital culture. Included are discussions of the interrelation of film and television with the nineteenth-century panorama, the 'dissolving views' of lantern technologies, radiophony, and the present-day immersive views provided by internet technologies and large-scale film presentations such as IMAX.

The anthology includes fifteen previously unpublished essays by Richard Abel, William Boddy, Ben Brewster, Douglas Gomery, Alison Griffiths, Vreni Hockenjos, Jan Holmberg, Arne Lunde, Peter Lunenfeld, Charles Musser, Jan Olsson, Barry Salt, Michele L. Torre, William Uricchio, Malin Wahlberg, and is edited by John Fullerton, an associate professor in the Department of Cinema Studies at Stockholm University, and finalist in the 2001 Kraszna-Krausz Moving Image Book Awards. His previous publications for John Libbey Publishing include *Celebrating 1895: The Centenary of Cinema* (1998), and in the Stockholm Studies in Cinema series, *Nordic Explorations: Film Before 1930* (1999) & *Moving Images: From Edison to the Webcam* (2000).

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The Soviet cinematic offensive in the Spanish Civil War

Daniel Kowalsky

If the Soviets neither invented the motion picture nor carried the first movie cameras into battle, their interwar achievements in advancing the inevitable marriage of cinema and warfare were unparalleled. To grasp how transformative Bolshevik cinematic mobilization would be in the decades following the October Revolution, one need only contrast efforts by the Imperial government in the First World War with those of the Soviets during the Second. Between 1914 and 1917, the tsar's army deployed just five cameramen up and down the seemingly endless Eastern Front, whereas in the course of the Great Patriotic War Moscow sent into battle thousands of filmmakers who shot some 3½ million meters of raw stock.¹ Indeed, in the Second World War, Soviet newsreel production reached a frenzied pitch, new additions appearing every third day. At the same time, the Soviet film industry churned out scores of feature-length propagandistic war films. Between these two extremes separated by a single generation – the Great War, to which the Russians mobilized practically no film resources whatsoever, and the Soviet-German war of 1941–45, made cinematic like no global conflict before or since – came Spain.

It has become a truism to see the Spanish Civil War as a prelude, harbinger or dress rehearsal for subsequent events or developments, but Spain was nothing if not a watershed in the evolution of the Soviet film industry. Moscow's cinematic offensive in Spain was a dual carriageway that reflected the two-front war the Soviets were waging vis-à-vis the Iberian imbroglio: the military effort in defense of the Republic, and a domestic mobilization campaign to rally the Soviet populace around the Loyalist cause. Film was central to both endgames. While the market in Re-

publican Spain was targeted with Russian feature films, Soviet filmmakers prepared newsreels and other documentary pictures for distribution within the USSR. The filmmaking experience Moscow gained in the Spanish war was not only built upon during the global conflagration that followed, but the celluloid legacy of the Soviets' Iberian adventure cast a long shadow over the landscape of Bolshevik film culture.

Despite rhetoric and aspirations to the contrary, in the years immediately following the October Revolution, Bolshevik cinema rarely breached the frontiers of the USSR. Given the pronouncements by the party leader, this was perhaps surprising. Had Lenin not declared the "worldwide socialist revolution" the morning after the storming of the Winter Palace, where the cinema, the "most important" of revolutionary arts, would surely occupy a place of pride?² The Soviet leadership, whether in internal or external campaigns, recognized the value of a focused and aggressive effort to mobilize the commitment of the population to the goals set by the regime. Central to these propaganda efforts were documentary and fiction films, genres that, in the Soviet Union, overlapped on several levels. Both forms, though ill-defined at the time – the term 'documentary' was

Before taking his current position in the School of History and Anthropology at Queen's University-Belfast, Daniel Kowalsky taught at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, The American University in Cairo, Egypt, and Bristol University. He is the author of numerous books and articles on the civil war in Spain, including *Stalin and the Spanish Civil War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), *La Unión Soviética y la guerra civil española* (Barcelona, Editorial Crítica, 2003), and is co-editor of *History in Dispute: The Spanish Civil War* (Detroit: St. James Press, 2005).



Fig. 1. *We of Kronstadt* arrives in Madrid, 18 October 1936.

[All illustrations from author's collection.]

only just coming into use in the late-1920s – were essentially revolutionary, and never meant to be purely diversionary or entertaining. In contrast to Hollywood products, and even the majority of feature films released in Nazi Germany, Soviet films always had inspirational, pedagogical or ideological goals. Moreover, many Soviet films that today would be considered fiction films – like Sergei Eisenstein's *October* (1927) – resembled more closely the non-fiction films of the era. Montage films, based entirely on archival footage, often transcended the domain of non-fiction *sensu strictu* and fell between two stools, if indeed the result was not an entirely new product.

Lenin was especially optimistic about the potential of non-fiction footage: "If you have a good newsreel, serious and illuminating photos, then it is of no importance if in order to attract the public, you also show some useless film of a more or less popular type".³ The formula worked well within the domestic market, but throughout the 1920s and into the 1930s, the Bolsheviks' twin anvils of newsreel and inspirational feature film traveled poorly outside the Soviet republics. Soviet newsreel production itself was devoted almost exclusively to coverage of events within the USSR. Apart from a small number of non-fiction films from hot spots around the world, most notably Yakov Blyokh's *Shanghai Document* (1928) and a brief episode produced by a camera team in Abyssinia in 1935, Soviet spectators were largely kept ignorant of developments occurring overseas. The war in Spain augured a transition in Moscow's cinematic operations vis-à-vis the rest of the world. Here, for the first time, Soviet ideological films found a captive market in the Loyalist zone,

while the conflict itself quickly became an image-rich plum ripe for the plucking by Moscow's hastily organized, still inexperienced itinerant documentary cinematographers.

That the Soviets' overseas cinematic operations would debut on the Iberian peninsula was improbable to say the least. Prior to the civil war of 1936, Spain had never loomed large in the Russian imagination. If during the Romanov period the Russian tsars had maintained diplomatic relations with the Spanish crown, these were rarely accompanied by normal economic or cultural exchanges. After the Russian Revolution, Spain withdrew its ambassador from St. Petersburg, refusing all overtures from the new regime. Indeed, it was not until 1933 that Spain formally recognized the legality of the USSR.⁴ In response to their poor reception on the Iberian peninsula, the Soviet leadership delayed in establishing even a small Comintern presence in Spain, and in general proved themselves as uninterested in Spain as their tsarist forebears. In July 1936, the two countries had no diplomatic or commercial relations, and very limited cultural contact; Castilian was not taught in Soviet language institutes, and Spanish history and literature was barely studied. On the eve of the civil war, Spain remained an unknown place to both the Soviet people and Kremlin leadership. Needless to say, the converse was true as well.

With the coming of the Spanish Civil War in July 1936, the Kremlin took a decision to link the Soviet Union closely to the Loyalist plight. Stalin soon dispatched diplomats and attachés to Madrid and Barcelona. From the end of October, military assistance flowed to the Republic in the form of tanks and planes, along with pilots, tankers, advisors, technicians, translators, and other support staff. In the USSR itself, beginning on 3 August of the same year, a series of large-scale solidarity campaigns were introduced through Politburo decrees, leading to the initiation of a subscription drive among Soviet workers to raise humanitarian relief for the Republic and public demonstrations and rallies through cities in the USSR.

Soviet cinema in the Republican zone

In Spain, the Soviet film industry would be inextricably linked to the Kremlin's war mobilization. Moscow sent to the Republic feature-length films whose function was at once propagandistic and commercial. In the fall of 1936 a new company, Film Popular, was

organized to oversee the production of propaganda newsreels and Spanish-language versions of Soviet films.⁵ Film Popular's first widely distributed Soviet film was Efim Dzigan's *We of Kronstadt* (1936), which premiered in Madrid's Cine Capital on 18 October 1936. The choice of *Kronstadt* to initiate the Soviet series was based on careful considerations of the film's value to the Republican war effort. Set during the Russian civil war, the film chronicles the transformation of an anarchistic band of marines into a disciplined Red Army unit. The film's arrival in the besieged city was accompanied by a massive propaganda campaign initiated by Dolores Ibárruri, the Spanish Communist Party's principal spokeswoman. The city center filled with advertisements for the picture; on the Gran Vía, these posters were strung across the lines of every traffic light.⁶ According to *Pravda* correspondent Mikhail Koltsov, the film's premiere was attended by the entire cabinet, leaders of various political parties, and many parliamentary deputies, who were greeted at the theater by a large crowd shouting "¡Viva Rusia!" A newsreel shot at the debut captures much of the excitement: advertisements for the film pasted all over town, and a long line of enthusiastic cinephiles queuing up to see the picture.⁷

In the weeks following its premiere, *Kronstadt* would be screened in dozens of Loyalist cities and towns. Republican schools sometimes arranged special showings in place of regular lectures.⁸ Even the inhabitants of dusty outposts in remote sections of the Basque country managed to see the film. This achievement was in part due to the efforts of the *Izvestiia* correspondent Ilya Ehrenburg, who, with a mobile cinema sent from Moscow, showed the film to thousands of Republican soldiers on the northern front.⁹ Elsewhere, the Popular Army's Comisión de Trabajo Social organized its own mobile screenings of *Kronstadt*; on a forty-four day tour between Teruel and Andalucía, forty-seven separate showings were conducted.¹⁰ The Soviets had, of course, pioneered mobile agit-prop cinema during the Russian Civil War, but Spain would be the first time the roving techniques were applied to an overseas operation.¹¹

Film Popular's next major presentation was Georgii and Sergei Vasiliev's *Chapayev* (1934), a picture released in the USSR to commemorate the seventeenth anniversary of the Revolution. First screened in Madrid on 2 November 1936, *Chapayev*, like *Kronstadt*, was a war story that strongly resonated with Republican soldiers.¹² The film recounts



the life of Vasilii Chapayev, a mythic figure of the Russian civil war who in 1919 terrorized White troops in the Urals and inspired the peasants to defend the Revolution. In the film, Chapayev is promoted to commander, brilliantly leads his men in an offensive, and then heroically falls in battle.¹³ *Chapayev* became the most frequently viewed film in the Spanish Republic; the Spanish Communist Party believed it held great pedagogical value, and many soldiers saw it repeatedly.¹⁴ Whether or not Franco considered the film a threat to the Nationalist advance, and deliberately shelled the Gran Vía as viewers emerged from screenings, is a matter of pure speculation.¹⁵ Equally unverifiable is the claim by a leading Spanish film historian that Republican troops were often heard to shout "Remember Chapayev!" as they stormed the Nationalist lines.¹⁶ These dubious claims aside, it is certain that one brigade elected to name itself after the fictional Soviet hero, and that an unusually brave British *brigadista* company commander was nicknamed the "English Chapayev".¹⁷ In connection with the film, Ehrenburg relates the following anecdote:

We organized film screenings in town squares, where a house wall took the place of the screen ... The anarchists worshipped Chapayev. After the first evening we had to cut out the last reel of the film: the young soldiers could not tolerate Chapayev's death. "Why should we wage war, they asked, if the best men must perish?"¹⁸

Fig. 2. 'The anarchists worshipped Chapayev.' Spanish poster for the hugely popular Soviet film.

Other Soviet films distributed by Film Popular were designed to serve a specific function. Ivan Pyrev's *The Party Card* (1936) demonstrated how to best expose saboteurs in the rear guard; Grigorii Kozintsev and Leonid Trauberg's *The Youth of Maksim* (1935) recounts the civic training and political indoctrination of young Pioneers, while Josef Heifitz and Alexander Zarkhi's *Baltic Deputy* (1937) illustrates the role of intellectuals in a Communist regime.¹⁹ Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* (1925) illustrated the ability of enlisted sailors to seize and command their own ships. Given the Republic's naval fortunes, *Potemkin* was an odd choice for agit-prop screenings. The Republic's sailors required little tutoring in overthrowing their superiors – in the opening days of the civil war they slaughtered over 500 officers.

A few Soviet films screened in the Republic had little or no obvious pedagogical value. For example, Film Popular distributed the Semen Timoshchenko comedy *Three Friends* (1935), Grigorii Aleksandrov's *The Circus* (1936), Grigorii Roshal and Vera Stroeva's *Petersburg Night* (1934), and Lulii Raizman's *The Last Night* (1936), none of which would appear to fit neatly into Soviet agit-prop goals in Republican Spain. Clearly, Soviet authorities and their Spanish allies wanted above all for Soviet film to become a visible presence in the Republic. As a result, numerous Soviet films were often playing at once in the same city. For example, in the second week of December 1936 alone, the film page of the Madrid daily *Claridad* listed five different Soviet films playing in separate venues.²⁰ The last Soviet film screened in the Republican zone, Aleksandr Faintsimer's *The Baltic Sailors*, premiered in Madrid on 16 January 1939, just six weeks before Franco's victory.²¹ In all, some three-dozen Soviet feature films were shown in Republican Spain during the war. Not a few were viewed many times by the same audience; Koltsov reports that in the village of Don Fadrique, the locals ordered Ilya Trauberg's *Blue Express* (1929) four times.²²

Soviet newsreels and the war in Spain

The distribution of feature-length films in the Republic was but one side of Moscow's broad cinematic front whose content and intended targets were at once Spanish and Soviet. To encourage a domestic solidarity campaign in support of the Republic, the Kremlin directed the state-run media to provide satu-

ration coverage of all aspects of the civil war. Already in early August, the government had sent Koltsov and Ehrenburg to begin covering the war directly from the Republican zone.²³ On 17 August 1936, a month after the Nationalist uprising, the Central Committee voted to dispatch two filmmakers to Spain, allocating \$5,000 for the mission. The men chosen for the assignment were Roman Karmen, a thirty-year-old graduate of the Moscow film school, and his young assistant Boris Makaseev.²⁴ In his memoirs, Karmen claims that, after having witnessed the large pro-Republican demonstrations in Moscow on 3 August, he sent Stalin a personal letter in which he stressed the importance of the Spanish war to the Soviet people and offered to go to Spain as a cinematographer. On 15 August, Karmen's superiors at the state film school informed him that the Central Committee was about to approve his assignment to Madrid.²⁵

Karmen and Makaseev's heady baptism in war cinematography is indicative of the high value the Kremlin placed on the potential for cinematic exploitation of the Spanish war. The Politburo ordered the State Cinema Board (GUKF) and the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs (NKID) to ensure that the two filmmakers departed for Spain on 18 August; that is, the day following the initial approval to fund them.²⁶ They traveled by air to Paris, then continued overland to Spain, arriving on the northern border of the Republican zone on 23 August, where they immediately started filming.²⁷ Two days later they sent the first 600 meters of film back to Moscow, which arrived on 3 September.²⁸ According to *Pravda*, on 4 September, one day after the film arrived in the capital, footage of the Spanish war was being screened in select Moscow theaters.²⁹ By 7 September, the first polished – albeit silent – 268-meter Soviet newsreel from the Spanish war, entitled *K sobytiiam v Ispanii*, or *Events in Spain*, was being shown in many large Soviet cities.³⁰

Given the great distance separating the two countries, the Soviets' rapid mobilization in the area of cinema was by any measure impressive. In the span of three weeks, the Stalinist regime had successfully incorporated edited film footage of the Spanish war into the unrelenting domestic campaigns of solidarity in favor of the Republic. The breakneck pace of the first newsreel's production was maintained for several months, and new episodes continued to be produced for the better part of a year. Karmen and Makaseev would stay in Republican Spain for eleven months, where they shot



Fig. 3. Roman Karmen, Ernest Hemingway and Joris Ivens filming the war in Spain, 1936.

footage for twenty newsreels, several documentaries, including *Madrid Defends Itself* (1936), *Madrid in Flames* (1937), and the feature-length *Spain* (1939), to be discussed below.³¹

From a technical point of view, the series was uneven. Though twenty episodes were produced and exhibited, *Events in Spain* never achieved anything approaching uniformity or consistency in length, look or tone. The first episode was composed of a single reel, and clocked in at 9'47", but the second was nearly twice that length, and spread over two reels. Subsequent updates could be as long as episode 17, which was 414.9 meters or 15'07", or as brief as episode 5, which was only 177.9 meters long or 6'29". Most episodes were between seven and nine minutes long. The successful incorporation of sound also varied.³² After the silent opener, the second installment included both voice-over and an upbeat revolutionary march, but the third episode had no soundtrack at all, nor did the fifth, ninth, twelfth, or fifteenth. Uniquely, episode seventeen included music but no voice-over. That said, the use of music in the *Events* series is at times quite effective. Spanish music is occasionally included, though

more often the viewer hears Russian music on Spanish themes, in this case the *Capriccio Espagnol* of Rimsky-Korsakov, with which five segments begin (episodes 4, 7, 10, 11 and 14). In the fourth installment, a revolutionary song is sung in Castilian, but the singer's accent is unmistakably Russian. Inexplicably, in episode 18 a tour of a Loyalist uniform workshop is set to Bruckner's *Second Symphony*. Some of the experiments with the soundtrack are whimsical, if not bold; the seventh newsreel, for example, ends with a song in Russian, the lyrics displayed on-screen so that the audience may sing along.

On the whole, *Events* is more satisfying as a broad panorama of the Spanish war than as a technical primer on early newsreels. From the opening images captured at Irún, the series follows the main events of the war, introducing the Soviet audience to the principal actors in the drama while accompanying viewers across the map of Loyalist Spain. Seeking to reveal the Republic's varied terrain and complex socio-political milieu, the successive episodes gradually move from the Northern front, where rebel troops commanded by General Mola have met

Loyalist militias, to the attack on the Basque port of San Sebastián. Next the series moves rapidly across northern Spain to Catalonia, where the first International Brigades are being formed. The autumn siege of the Alcázar de Toledo, one of the best known episodes from 1936, is given considerable attention, as is the central epic of the war, the Battle of Madrid. From the Spanish capital, the filmmakers follow the government to their new base in Valencia, then backtrack and head south to observe the Battle of Guadalajara. Along the way, Karmen and Makaseev take time out to teach the Soviet viewer about Spanish customs: in an extended sequence in the third installment, for example, a bullfight in Barcelona is depicted and explained. Oddly, despite the Soviet spectator's basic unfamiliarity with Iberian geography, a map of Spain is not included in the *Events* series until the twentieth and final installment.

Elsewhere, the filmmakers introduced the audience to Republican officials, popular heroes, and unnamed fighters, men and women alike. Dolores Ibárruri and José Díaz make appearances in an early episodes; the Loyalist General Enrique Lister, hero of the defense of Madrid, speaks to the camera in the fourteenth; Juan Negrín, the Loyalist premier from May 1937, delivers a speech in French in the twentieth. Interestingly, some of the coverage does nothing to advance Soviet ideological agenda: Buenaventura Durruti, the central figure in Spanish anarchism before and during the war, is given some good exposure in a sequence shot shortly before his death. We also meet the filmmakers themselves, who took turns capturing each other on camera, often in the company of their Republican subjects.

Viewing the series today, with an awareness of the standard post-war narratives of the war, and of Soviet propaganda generally, one is struck by a conspicuous lack of emphasis on the Stalinist regime itself and its position on the Spanish war. While it may be expected that the clandestine "Operation X", i.e. Soviet military aid to the Republic, would be concealed from Soviet audiences, one is nonetheless surprised to see only one reference to Soviet humanitarian aid delivered to Spain (in episode eight), and virtually no gratuitous celebrations of Stalin, the Soviet leadership, the Revolution, or the Russian Civil War. The hammer and sickle, for example, do not appear in the series until the fifth episode, and then only briefly. Only scant attention is drawn to the dissemination of Soviet propaganda and culture in Spain, and this is never belabored, but instead often

ignored over the course of several installments. The viewer is told at one point of the formation of a "Karl Marx" international battalion, yet the heavy Comintern influence on the International Brigades is fully concealed. Moreover, on reviewing the abandoned material preserved separately from the twenty-episode series, it is evident that some powerful pro-Soviet propaganda was ignored. For example, a meeting of Loyalist women taking place against a backdrop of posters for the Soviet film *Chapayev* was left on the cutting room floor.³³ If Spain was ever Sovietized, as observers on both sides have often claimed, it is not apparent in this Soviet-made newsreel series.

Of course, the Kremlin had obvious reasons to avoid giving the impression of a western European state under the sway of the Soviet regime. It was always Moscow's aim to bring the Western allies into the Loyalist camp, which meant propping up the Republic's image as bourgeois and democratic. Yet the newsreel series goes well beyond disguising Soviet activities on the ground in Spain, and often presents a version of the Spanish struggle that is sharply at odds with the Soviet Union's broader ideological orientation in 1936–37. Thus it is more than a little shocking to see some reels in the series giving prominence and respectability to Spanish anarchists, while in another a caption refers approvingly to "Barcelona: center of revolutionary Catalonia" – this despite the Soviet advisors' well-deserved reputation as fierce enemies of popular revolution in the Catalan capital.

The meticulously planned logistics of the Kremlin's newsreel operation, as well as its ambitious production schedule, are deserving of special mention. From the moment of their assignment and throughout their long sojourn in the Republic, the Soviet filmmakers were generously supported and funded through the Kremlin's direct intervention.³⁴ The two cameramen were also assisted by the Koltsov, who served as the script and caption writer. In Moscow, the *Events* project was overseen by a team of fourteen technicians and film editors.

The production schedule of *Event* tells us much about the evolving position of the Spanish war on the Kremlin's domestic agenda. The Soviet leadership waited just one month after the start of the war to mobilize its cinematographers in support of the already initiated solidarity and propaganda campaigns. In the following months, the pace of newsreel production was unrelenting. The first newsreel was

shot in the last week of August, premiering in early September. Over the next two months, until the end of October, seven additional segments were produced and exhibited. From November 1936 to January 1937, the Soviets shot another eight newsreels. Thereafter, however, production fell off rapidly. No new segments were shot or premiered in February, and between March and July 1937, only four additional episodes were made. As with Soviet military aid, which peaked in late 1936/early 1937, and declined sharply in the summer of 1937, newsreel production ended suddenly in July of that year.

The *Events* episodes were not the only Soviet newsreels dealing with the Spanish war. Equally successful, if less ambitious, were the short features devoted to the Spanish children evacuated to the USSR in 1937 and 1938. Let us recall that Franco's assault on the north and the destruction of Guernica in late April 1937 prompted the Basque government to authorize a general evacuation of women, children, and the elderly. Beginning in May and continuing through the summer, Basque civil authorities oversaw the emigration of approximately 20,000 children to dozens of locations throughout Europe. On four separate sailings, just under 3000 of these children were sent to the USSR, the largest group – some 1500 Basque youngsters – reaching Leningrad aboard the French-flagged *Sontay* on 24 June.³⁵

The children evacuated from the war-torn North to the safety of Soviet cities and towns were fortunate to be out of danger, but the Soviet regime had much to gain as well. The reception of Spanish children in the Soviet Union presented Moscow with an easily managed and endlessly exploitable propaganda subject. The arrival, reception, and subsequent upbringing of the Spanish children was the source of innumerable Soviet press and radio reports. The value of this variety of propaganda, supported by frequent public appearances by the children as well as published photographs, cannot be overstated. Indeed, the cheery news of the young Iberians happily studying and playing within Soviet borders was not only a foil to the general gloom that enveloped Soviet society during the height of the Stalinist terror, but it also did much to counter an older though hardly forgotten problem which had plagued the Soviet republics from the early 1920s until the first part of the 1930s: the wave of *besprizorniki*, or "homeless children," a consequence of the general chaos and dislocation of revolution, civil war, hunger, and forced resettlement. The *besprizorniki*

had for several years been an omnipresent and dangerous menace in every Soviet city until their eventual disappearance through mass arrests and deportations. Boris Pasternak's epic novel *Doctor Zhivago*, and David Lean's celebrated 1965 cinematic version, tell a story set in motion by one of these orphaned children of the revolution.

Moscow's most overt attempt to exploit the Spaniards' experiences in the Soviet Union was the production and distribution of newsreels and short feature films on the children's homes and the general activities and lifestyle of the refugees. These films were distributed in both the Soviet Union and the Republican zone of Spain, and are mentioned frequently in the press and archival records.³⁶ It is interesting to note the differences between two of these films, *Spanish Children in the USSR* (1937), prepared for the domestic Soviet market, and *New Friends* (1937), screened only in the Republic.

The longer and more polished of the two is the twelve-minute *Spanish Children in the USSR*. In the film's opening sequence, a Republican militia banner is displayed with the hammer and sickle transposed across the top. This image, overtly symbolizing the unity of the Republic and the USSR, gives way to footage of Franco's assault on Madrid. Brief scenes of urban destruction and widespread panic fade to close-ups of a dead child and a grieving mother. A caption now informs the viewer that, "thousands of children were evacuated from Spain to the USSR." The scene shifts to the Spanish north coast, where distraught parents are seen hustling their children towards a waiting ship.

The apocalyptic images of a darkened and terrorized Spanish Republic soon give way to day-break in sunny and tranquil Moscow. As the soundtrack segues to an upbeat march, a splashy and eye-catching circular wipe takes us to the station, where a euphoric local crowd is on hand to greet the Spanish refugees. Soviet Pioneers rush forward to shower their new Iberian friends with bouquets of flowers and Komsomol kerchiefs. The Republican children appear ecstatic, and several close-ups show ear-to-ear grins. The scene lasts just fifteen seconds, but it is sufficient to paint a sharp contrast between the sun drenched, joyful arrival in Russia and the panicked departure from the shrinking Republican zone.

In the next shot, the children have already been installed in their new residence at the Black Sea resort of Artek. The montage that follows continues



Fig. 4 (upper).

Young refugees leave the tormented homeland behind. *Spanish Children in the USSR* (1937).

Fig. 5 (lower).

An ecstatic welcome greets the new arrivals. From *Spanish Children in the USSR*.

to draw implicit comparisons between their Soviet sanctuary and war-torn Spain. We are treated first to images of a calm sea and clear skies before alighting on the manicured grounds of the stately, tasteful edifice where the children now live. An onscreen caption informs the viewer that the Soviet state is devoting "great attention and care" to the Spanish children. After close-ups of children lost in blissful slumber, a panning shot of their dormitory reveals an impressive (if improbably grouped) array of large and small toys. Behind this dazzling trove, the filmmakers have ensured that nothing obstructs the view of a decent-sized radiator.

A trumpet call sounds, and the children are seen marching outside to begin a vigorous routine of daily exercise. Again, the symbolism in the montage

is striking: the children parading in laundered, bleached-white athletic uniforms; their orderly calisthenics performed on a boardwalk abutting the glass-like sea; the sky, per usual, cloudless. This segment over, the viewer soon finds the youngsters in the classroom, where they are receiving instruction in both Spanish and Russian. In the Russian language lesson, the students are heard reciting effusive praise of Red Army Commissar Voroshilov. Before leisure time, the cameras take us to a violin lesson in a handsomely appointed music room.

Next the viewer is treated to an extended, expertly choreographed study of the children's recess hour. This section of the film is practically indistinguishable from a light Soviet musical comedy celebrating collective work, such as Grigori Alexandrov's *Volga-Volga* (1938) or Ivan Pyriev's infectious pre-war classic, *Tractor Drivers* (1939). The leisure sequence opens with the children skipping in semi-formation out of their classrooms, a sprightly, castanet-accented tune playing on the soundtrack. Next they form a circle on the lawn, and two children perform a traditional Spanish dance while the others clap in unison. Leaving this happy ensemble, a rapid montage takes us on a tour of playtime options available to the children: miniature railroads, model airplanes, dolls, and sewing. In one carefully composed shot, the camera pans downward from an enormous portrait of a smiling Stalin to a clutch of girls happily crocheting. The film ends with a public concert at which the children perform songs about the Soviet dictator. In a final montage, we are shown another poster of Stalin, a train passing over the Moscow River, and searchlights illuminating the night sky above the Kremlin.

Significantly, this short film on Spanish children in the USSR was produced for exhibition in the Soviet Union only. The extant copies contain only Russian titles; no Castilian version appears to have been produced. What is striking, if not necessarily surprising, in *Spanish Children in the USSR* is the prominent role of Stalin himself, and the implicit connection between the Soviet dictator and the rescue and nurturing of the Spanish war refugees.

New Friends, meanwhile, is more narrowly focused on the experience of the Spanish war refugees at the Artek resort and their budding friendships with Soviet Pioneers of the same age. While the general treatment, *mise en scène*, soundtrack, and location shots in *New Friends* are nearly identical to *Spanish Children in the USSR*, the former picture is intent on

demonstrating to a Republican audience the essential Spanishness of the children's upbringing in the USSR. To this end, most references to Stalin, whether titles or graphic material, have been omitted; his only visible presence is a brief shot of a poster filmed from a considerable distance. On the other hand, a portrait of Dolores Ibárruri can clearly be seen hanging over the main door of the central mansion. In similar fashion, some pains are taken to show the viewer that the children's studies are being conducted in their native language. Several close-ups allow us to read the Castilian script on the covers of the school's textbooks. The viewer is even taken into the kitchen to meet the children's Asturian chef. In sum, the overall impression is that the children's Spanish heritage is being carefully preserved and reinforced. Though destined for separate markets, both *Spanish Children in the USSR* and *New Friends*, as well as *Be Welcome* (1937) – a short feature that relied on much of the same footage – sought to bolster domestic and international support for the Stalinist regime. Moreover, the wide dissemination of these films indicates that whatever other geo-strategic or economic promise the Spanish Civil War may have held for the Soviet regime, the potential propaganda advantages at home and abroad were understood by the Kremlin as equally significant.

The shadow of Spain

Even in summer 1937, as filmmakers in Russia were documenting the arrival and care of the Basque children, Stalin's newsreel team left Spain to cover other flash points in the lead-up to the global war. Karmen was transshipped almost immediately to the Far East, where he would devote himself to a new documentary series covering the expanding conflict in China.³⁷ Stalin now decreased his military aid to the rapidly shrinking Loyalist zone, though he never completely abandoned Spain until quite close to the war's conclusion, which finally occurred on 1 April 1939. Yet though the guns fell silent, in Soviet Russia, as elsewhere, the war would rage on for years, now fought in speeches, demonstrations, conferences, pamphlets, books and (often) on the screen. Among all foreign powers, the Soviet Union had taken the keenest and most sincere interest in the Republic's fortunes. The solidarity campaigns and subscription drives, though decreed at the highest levels, succeeded in creating an atmosphere of genuine sympathy for the war's losing side. Even in defeat, the Spanish Republic would influence and in some



cases haunt the Soviets for the balance of the Bolshevik era, and several generations would revisit and reclaim this sad chapter in European history, when the destinies of the USSR and Loyalist Spain seemed to many intertwined.

For many Soviets, the Spanish adventure was characterized by a lack of closure that resulted from Moscow having bet on the losing horse. But there was also the material legacy – the uniformly high quality footage produced by Karmen and his assistant, as well as other Soviet cinematographers who dealt with Spanish themes. Already during the war, Soviet filmed evidence of the conflict was being borrowed or recycled. Luis Buñuel, for example, appropriated some of the Soviets' footage in *Madrid 1936*, a thirty-five minute documentary produced in 1937. The Russians themselves reworked parts of

Fig. 6 (upper).

A portrait of Republican leader Dolores Ibárruri watches over the children's calisthenics in the new land. From *New Friends* (1937).

Fig. 7 (lower).

Shots of Spanish language textbooks in *New Friends*, intended to reassure family members who must stay behind.



Fig. 8. One of Roman Karmen's Spanish images as appropriated by Andre Tarkovsky in *Mirror* (1975).

the amassed stock footage, as in *Between the Basques*, a ten-minute short produced by Soiuzkino-chronika in 1937, which reused the footage Karmen had shot in the Basque country for the newsreel series. Later, Soviet-made documentaries, such as *The Liberation of France* (1944), borrowed Karmen's scenes of the battle of Madrid to dramatize fascism's relentless march across Europe. The most ambitious treatment, however, was in Esther Shub's feature-length *Spain*, made with Vsevolod Vishnevskiy's collaboration, and which premiered in Moscow on 20 August 1939.

That Shub was charged with sorting through and reassembling into a coherent documentary the large quantity of material shot by the Russian camera crew was appropriate. For a dozen years, she had been a leading exponent of Soviet non-fiction cinema.³⁸ Shub's achievement was to create, through meticulous editing and the same montage techniques theorized by compatriots Lev Kuleshov and Sergei Eisenstein, a revolutionary film out of disparate archival material, much of which had no intrinsic narrative power. Shub's pioneering use of found fragments created a new film type, the compilation, or montage film, one that straddled the fine line between Soviet fiction and non-fiction pictures.³⁹ Her first montage films, *The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty* and *The Great Road*, both of which treated the revolutions of 1917 and appeared in the anniversary year 1927, gave her the technical expertise required to

edit similar material in *Spain*. Shub's Spanish film became a model for later conversions of newsreel material into feature-length documentary, and restored the genre to its former importance.⁴⁰ Building on the success of *Spain* in 1940, Shub produced two new montage films: *Twenty Years of Soviet Cinema* and *A Day in the New World*, the latter a cinematic snapshot of a single day in the USSR recorded by over one hundred camera operators.⁴¹ Following the 1941 Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union, Shub's wartime model would be widely replicated, most notably in Ilya Kopalin's *Rout of the German Forces Near Moscow* and *Stalingrad* (both 1943), Alexander Dovzhenko's *Battle for the Soviet Ukraine* (1943) and Yuli Raizman's *Berlin* (1945).⁴²

Thus Soviet newsreel production in 1936–37, and the subsequent montage reworking in *Spain*, paved the way for the more intensive operations of the war of 1941–45. Yet the rapid mobilization of the Soviet team in summer 1936 becomes even more striking when one considers the Soviets' reaction time at the beginning of the war with Germany. In the Spanish war, filming at the front began on 23 August, a Sunday. Despite the 3500 kilometers separating the Spanish frontier from Moscow, newsreels from the war were already being screened in the Soviet capital on Friday, 3 September – less than two weeks after the Russians had unpacked their cameras at Irún. In summer 1941, the Soviet cameramen's record in Spain was little improved upon, if at all. Though within hours of the 22 June invasion newsreel teams had been dispatched to cover the action, for the first three weeks of the campaign only stock footage of training exercises appeared in the episodes in distribution. It was not until 14 July that the *Film Report from the Front of the Patriotic War*, issues 66 and 67, showed actual combat sequences. It is also worth noting that the filming conditions of the Spanish Civil War were a fine staging area for the hardships the Soviet cinematographers would face in WWII. If the work of Karmen was complicated by the distance of Spain from the editing facilities in Moscow, during the Great Patriotic War Soviet film crews had to contend not only with the permanent closing of newsreel studios in Kiev and Leningrad, but the transfer of Lenfilm and Mosfilm to Central Asia in September 1941. Only the Moscow newsreel studio remained functional as before, though at times severely restrained by wartime conditions.⁴³

Roman Karmen, meanwhile, having made his name in Spain, quickly became Moscow's premier

wartime cinematographer. He captured some of the first pictures of the air battle with the Germans 250 miles south of Leningrad, at Velikiye Luki.⁴⁴ He was also largely responsible for the twenty-part newsreel series *The Great Patriotic War* (1941–45), in which he directed the first and last installments, while also contributing footage or editorial direction to many other short and feature-length documentaries. He not only filmed in Leningrad during the horrific siege, but produced *Leningrad in Battle* (1942), widely regarded as one of the most powerful and successful of all World War II documentaries.⁴⁵

After the war, Karmen's documentary career was rich and varied, and covered areas as diverse as Vietnam, India, Indonesia, Chile and large swathes of the fifteen Soviet republics. Spain continued to cast a spell on the pioneering filmmaker and he returned to the topic one final time, in the 1967 film *Granada, Granada, my Granada*. This seventy-four minute production, co-directed with the playwright Konstantin Simonov, retold the story of the civil war through on-screen presenters and voice-over narrative, while introducing a new generation of Soviet public to the most visually arresting of the archival footage shot by Karmen himself thirty years before. Interestingly, a quarter century before, Simonov's novel about a brash young tank commander who segued from Spain to the Great Patriotic War was made into *A Lad from our Town* (1942), a feature-length production starring Nikolai Kriuchkov and Lidia Smirnova that enjoyed some success abroad. But *A Lad from our Town* and *Granada, Granada* were certainly not the only nostalgic Soviet returns to the Spanish war. From the melodramas *Volunteers* (1958), *Nocturne* (1966), *This Moment* (1969), *Officers* (1971), *Spanish Variation* (1980), to the epic *Salud Maria* (1970), or the Soviet-Swiss co-production *Autumn Season* (1977) – all fiction films recounting the lives of communist youths who fought in Spain – to television documentaries such as *Skies of Spain* (1984) and *Spain Forever* (1985), whose subjects were the 204 Soviet interpreters who served in Spain, filmmakers in the USSR maintained steadfast interest in the civil war until the end of communist rule.

Occupying a special place among postwar pictures that transported the Soviet filmgoer back to Spain was Andrei Tarkovsky's visually stunning *Mirror* (1975). His eighth feature film, *Mirror* was the Russian auteur's highly spiritual, sometimes opaque autobiography, recounted episodically, and loosely concentrated in three interspersed periods: his late-1930s childhood, wartime adolescence, and 1960s adulthood. For Tarkovsky, the Spanish Civil War represents both the end of childhood innocence and the prelude to the cataclysmic Great Patriotic War. To convey the significance of Spain, Tarkovsky presents the viewer with an eighteen-shot, thirty-nine-second sequence whose provenance is clearly Karmen's archival footage. The most shattering of these rapid-fire images are those of the Basque children being evacuated in advance of Franco's conquest of the North. Most of this footage was shot on Sunday, 13 June 1937, at Santurce, the port of Bilbao. Here we see some of the 4500 children being put aboard the *Habana* and sent on to Bordeaux, whence many sailed to Leningrad. In addition to using material included in episode nineteen of *Events in Spain*, Tarkovsky employs a sequence captured on the Bilbao docks but never incorporated into the newsreels series. This final shot of Tarkovsky's civil war montage is a brief, haunting image of a Basque girl clutching a doll and staring straight into Karmen's lens.⁴⁶ Meticulously chosen, the image is iconic and unforgettable. The child stands in for the filmmaker himself. She is embarking on a journey that will carry her from innocence to worldly experience; from childhood to maturity. Like the other shots in the brilliant, slide-show-like exposition, the image is a visual and poetic metaphor for Tarkovsky's own wartime childhood odyssey, but it represents something even greater: a transcendent, emotionally charged moment of pride in the collective experience of the Russian people, when not only the rescue of Spain's children but indeed the cause of the Republic won back for the Soviets part of the dignity forfeited through endless post-revolutionary hardships.

Notes

1. V. Zhdan, *Kratkaia istoriia sovetskogo kino* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1969), 305.
2. Derek Spring, "Soviet newsreel and the Great Patriotic War," in Nicholas Pronay and D.W. Spring (eds), *Propaganda, politics and film, 1918–1945* (London: MacMillan, 1982), 271.
3. Ibid.
4. The topic is discussed in Daniel Kowalsky, *La Unión*

- Soviética y la guerra civil española* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2003), 13–17.
5. On the history of Film Popular, see Arturo Perucho, "Una organización cinematográfico nacido en la guerra," *Nuevo Cinema* (Barcelona) 2 (June 1938): 12–14.
 6. *El Mono Azul* (Madrid), 29 October 1936, 2.
 7. See the ninth installment of *K sobytiiam v Ispanii* ("On the events in Spain"), preserved in the Filmoteca Española, Madrid.
 8. This according to eyewitness testimonies collected in Alfonso Bullón de Mendoza and Diego de Álvaro, *Historias orales de la guerra civil* (Barcelona: Ariel, 2000), 107.
 9. Ilya Ehrenburg, *Menschen, Jahre, Leben: Memoiren* (East Berlin: Verlag Volk und Welt, 1978), vol. II: 379–80.
 10. Michael Alpert, *El ejército republicana en la guerra civil* (2nd edn) (Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno, 1989), 53.
 11. See Roman Karmen, "Agit Trains and Mobile Laboratories," in Kevin Macdonald and Mark Cousins (eds), *Imagining Reality: The Faber Book of Documentary* (London: Faber, 1996), 61–65.
 12. *Heraldo de Madrid*, 4 November 1936.
 13. The film's genesis, and its wide popularity within the Soviet Union, is described in Jay Leyda, *Kino: A History of the Russian and Soviet Film* (3rd edn) (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 314–321.
 14. Mikhail Koltsov, *Diario de la Guerra española* (Madrid: Akal, 1978), 123.
 15. Piers Brendon, *The Dark Valley: A Panorama of the 1930s* (New York: Knopf, 2000), 381.
 16. Carlos Fernández Cuenca, *La guerra de España y el Cine*, 2 vols. (Madrid: Editorial Nacional, 1972), vol. I, 315.
 17. On the Chapayev brigade, see Ehrenburg, *Menschen, Jahre, Leben*, vol. II, 359. The British volunteer was Jock Cunningham, a long-time communist and the leader of a 1920 rebellion in Jamaica. See Hugh G. Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, (3rd edn rev.) (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986), 479–480.
 18. Ehrenburg, *Menschen, Jahre, Leben*, vol. II, 391.
 19. On the reception of *Baltic Deputy*, see *Cultura Soviética* 2 (September 1938), 28.
 20. *Claridad*, 16 December 1936, 2.
 21. Fernández Cuenca, *La guerra de España y el Cine*, 312–313.
 22. Koltsov, *Diario de la guerra española*, 351.
 23. See Mikhail Koltsov, *Diario de la guerra de española* (Madrid: Akal, 1978), 1–7.
 24. Politburo Protocol from 17 August 1936. Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii (Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History, or RGASPI,; f. 17, op. 3, del. 980, l. 235. The two filmmakers have left memoir accounts of their experiences in Spain, unfortunately never translated from the Russian: Roman Karmen, *No Pasaran!* (Moscow: Sovetskaia Rossiia, 1972), and Boris Makaseev, "Iz khroniki geroicheskoi respubliki," in *My internatsionalisty: Vospominaniia sovetskikh dobrovol'tsev-uchastnikov natsional'no-revoliutsionnoi voiny v Ispanii* (2nd edn) (Moscow: Izdat. Politicheskoi Literatury, 1986), 158–64.
 25. Roman Karmen, *No Pasaran!*, 226–27.
 26. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 3, del. 980, l. 235; R. Karmen, *No Pasaran!*, 228.
 27. B. Makaseev, "Iz khroniki geroicheskoi respubliki," 158.
 28. R. Karmen, *No Pasaran!*, 228–229.
 29. *Pravda*, 5 September 1936.
 30. *Izvestiia*, 8 September 1936.
 31. Karmen's activities were also the subject of occasional articles in the Republican press, for example, the extended biographical sketch and interview in *Mundo Obrero*, 8 May 1937.
 32. Musical direction itself varied, and throughout the series four different individuals were charged with assembling the soundtrack: D. Block (episodes 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 18 and 20), A. Gran (5 and 6), A. Roitman (17, 18 and 20), and G. Gamburg (19).
 33. See *Descartes y materiales no utilizados procedentes de las filmaciones realizados para "K sobityam v Ispanii"*, (461)-II-4, AEURSS, discussed in Alfonso del Amo García and María Luisa Ibañez Ferradas, *Catálogo General del cine de la guerra civil* (Madrid: Filmoteca Española, 1996), 583.
 34. A Politburo meeting of 13 March 1937, for example, authorized increased funding for Karmen and Makaseev's living expenses and film costs. Politburo Protocols, RGASPI, f. 17, del. 984, l. 124.
 35. *Pravda*, 25 June 1937; Zafra, et al., *Los niños españoles*, 43–45.
 36. *Izvestiia*, 16 August 1937 and 5 October 1938; *Pravda*, 14 November 1938; and Archivo Histórico Nacional-Sección Guerra Civil (Salamanca) (AHN SGC), PS Madrid, leg. 452, exp. 97–98.
 37. Leyda, *Kino*, 359.
 38. Richard Taylor, *The Politics of the Soviet Cinema, 1917–1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 133–134.
 39. Jay Leyda, "Esther Shub and the art of compilation," in Kevin Macdonald and Mark Cousins (eds), *Imagining Reality: The Faber Book of Documentary* (London: Faber, 1996), 56–61.

40. Though *Spain* was not without its problems, including the careless insertion of a staged sequence from Milestone's *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930), an error discussed in Jay Leyda, *Films beget films* (London: George Allen and Unwin: 1964), footnote 1 on page 130, as well as Gubern, op. cit., 38.
41. Leyda, *Kino*, 224, 359.
42. Spring, 275.
43. Ibid., 274.
44. Ibid., 277.
45. Leyda, *Kino*, 369.
46. This cutting-room-floor clip is discussed in the del Amo catalogue on page 483, and archived as 461-II-3.

**Abstract: The Soviet cinematic offensive in the Spanish Civil War,
by Daniel Kowalsky**

This article explores Soviet cinema and the Spanish Civil War, 1936–1939. The article focuses on three separate components of Moscow's cinematic operations vis-à-vis the Spanish imbroglio: (1) the distribution of Soviet-made feature films in the Loyalist zone, (2) the production of Soviet propaganda newsreels on Spanish subjects intended for distribution within the Soviet Union, and (3) the significance of the Spanish war for Soviet cinema throughout the balance of the Bolshevik period. The narrative and conclusions herein are supported by new research from archives in both Spain and the Russian Federation, as well as analyses of films rarely if ever discussed in the scholarly literature, either within film studies or twentieth century European history.

Family history, film history: Dad & the Telenews Theatre Corporation

Michael, Jennifer and Nathan, Jr. Aronson

Although this essay is the result of collaborative research over a number of years, for reasons that will become soon clear, the actual writing is structured as explicitly three-voiced. Each of the author's various passages will be individually credited.

Nathan N. Aronson, Jr.:

In 1984 my father died. My two older brothers and I came back to our childhood home to join our sister and mother in Dallas, Texas to attend the funeral. Afterwards, while going through his only personal file cabinet, we came upon a plain Kraft envelope. Inside were a number of age-yellowed paper tapes on which were printed short messages of the kind that came from an old teletype machine. The messages dated 7 December 1941 declared a surprise attack by Japan on the American military at Pearl Harbor. As we discussed these fragile pieces of ephemera and how our father, a man who did not keep much, came to save them, my oldest brother John, who was seven years-old at the time, reminded us that during World War II our father had been the manager of an all-news movie theater in downtown Dallas called the Telenews. Obviously, the tickertapes represented to him a significant moment in the history of his country, and perhaps in the history of his own life. But, it was not until a decade later that my curiosity became rekindled about that more personal history and about the job my father had held at the Telenews. Over the last dozen years, spurred perhaps by the fact that my son became a film scholar and my youngest daughter a media archivist, I became an enthusiastic amateur historian on the subject of the Telenews theater and its place in history. Mostly, however, this

new pursuit was driven by my need as a son to learn past details of the life of my own father.

Michael G. Aronson:

We remember the people who have passed through our lives in different ways; some by the sound of their laugh, some by their smile, others by a gesture, or even by their scent. For me, with my grandfather, my dad's father, it was his handkerchief, a crisp breast-pocket fold of silk or cotton always perfectly matched to his suit and tie. Of all my grandparents I knew my *Papa*, Nathan Sr., the least well of all. In part, this was because he was the first of the four to die, at age 79, when I was still in high school. And in part, this was because he lived his life with my grandmother in

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Dallas, Texas, far away in both miles and psyche from the rural college town in Pennsylvania where I grew up. But mostly, this is because Papa appears in my memory as a formal man, the kind of man who wore a suit, tie, and matching handkerchief, seemingly every day of his life.

This essay, as it must be clear by now, is as much about family history as it is about film history. Or rather, it is about how the two entwined in late November 1941 with the opening of the Dallas Telenews Theater, an opening orchestrated by the theater's first manager, my grandfather. The Dallas Telenews was the ninth branch in an American chain of newsreel-only theatres that offered a unique multimedia environment in which (inter)national news was consistently retailed for local consumption. In total, fifteen Telenews theaters existed "coast-to-coast" from 1939–1967, but the chain was most successful in the 1940s during the news-fertile years of World War II. The company's slow demise came, not surprisingly, with the widespread broadcasting of television news in the early 1950s.¹ Although in recent years scholars have shown a rising interest in earlier forms of nonfiction film, the sound-era newsreel continues to be woefully understudied and the popular existence of exhibition sites like the Telenews remains virtually unknown and unexamined.²

The reasons for this historiographic absence are multiple and not uncomplicated, but arguably the types of experiences offered by environments like the Telenews theater are largely missing from current history because, at least at first glance, they do not appear to make much sense. The newsreel's function, as it has been traditionally described, was as "a ten minute potpourri of motion picture news footage," bound to the studio system, and homogeneously exhibited as a supporting element of a show whose main attraction was the feature (fiction) film.³ Within this limited definition there seems little space for a theater devoted to newsreels, for audiences devoted to newsreels, for media corporations devoted to building those theaters and drawing those audiences. But clearly the space and its experience did exist, and what filled it was not simply a longer version of the newsreel, but rather an entire environment designed, managed and promoted as a unique site in which patrons were invited to consume an ever-changing set of stories and images derived from many mediums in many forms. At the center of this experience was an hour-long moving picture show devoted to "news" edited "to local



tastes" by my grandfather and the many other Telenews theater managers.

If historical "objectivity" requires the ability to remain at a critical distance from the object of study, no doubt you will find these authors – my father, my sister and me – much too close for academic comfort. Instead we are explicitly subjective in our approach, a multi-voiced study of multiple histories both personal and public. The pursuit of this particular film history began as a desire for family history, began as my dad's need to recover and make sense of a moment from our family's past. Family history satisfies the need to remember the most intimate matters, the things of childhood, of love and of death, and we do not shy away from acknowledging the personal ways that history can be produced, and, critically, the ways in which such histories can produce us. But while related in the most familial sense our bonds are intellectual as well – as amateur historian, film scholar and media archivist. As categories of labor and of curiosity, all three avocations centrally

Fig. 1. Nathan Aronson, first manager of the all-newsreel Telenews Theater that opened in Dallas, Texas on 21 November 1941. [Collection of the authors.]

engage in the (re)imagining of a past for the present. Nevertheless, it is unfortunately rare for these related voices to align and ally themselves in the sustained production of scholarship. In large part this lack of intellectual interaction is because the amateur, the archivist and the scholar each see themselves as asking different questions and seeking different answers about history and its purposes. However, we believe that while the disparities in perspective, training and methodologies are real, they are often slighter and less substantive than they might first appear. In particular, we believe that the growing digital archive and its potential to radically reshape information access, knowledge production and community formation has begun to significantly alter the kinds of questions that can be asked of history, and, equally important, who might do the asking. In no small part, then, this essay is about making visible the rich potential for alternative practices and collaborative practitioners, for new forms of collective historical inquiry, even when the participants might not share the same DNA.⁴

Jennifer F. Aronson:

But of course the three of us do share a genetic code, and what you read here is a family history, our history. Family history, as librarian Elizabeth Yakel describes it, is a form of everyday life information-seeking, a particularly intensive kind of search that requires the extensive use of libraries and archives.⁵ While our family historian, my father, relishes this required intensity, he is happy to make the effort a collective practice, and so he was more than a little pleased when I decided to pursue a Masters degree in Library Science and become an archivist. Before I even finished graduate school, my dad had come to seek my help in pursuing a history of the Telenews. I happily agreed. The result was that I was slowly transformed into what any amateur historian would love to have at his disposal, an in-house (unpaid) informational specialist. But very early in my investigation I began to realize there would be significant challenges in unearthing information about the company, its theaters and newsreels.

My father first "invited" me to participate in his pursuit of the Telenews a few years before my sister, while I too was still in graduate school. I was less happy to volunteer my services. Initially, and many times thereafter, I rejected, with varying levels of civility, the very idea that my Grand/father's history was worthy of

(my) intellectual pursuit. Reflecting on it now, I realize I refused him on three grounds: One: My dad, as an amateur historian, and scientist by profession, really did not understand film history, what it is, or how to do it. Two: The Telenews postcards he had begun collecting did not constitute a substantial enough archive from which to write such a history. Three: Who really wants their dad to tell them what to do? Clearly, he overcame these objections (well, at least the first two), and in the following pages it should become clear how wrong I was about the history, and how, chiefly through his collaborative efforts with my sister, he was able to amass a still developing Telenews archive that these preliminary observations do not begin to exhaust. [MGA]

I first began building this archive in the mid 1990s while attending a monthly 'antique show' held at the local fraternal lodge near my current home in Mobile, Alabama. While there I came across a postcard dealer with a large collection of cards for sale, well organized by both place and topic. Out of curiosity I browsed through the 'Texas' box and then within it began to focus on the section full of cards from my hometown of Dallas. It was there that I came across a postcard entitled 'Theatre Row at Night.' Its image offered a view of Elm Street, down both sides of which were all the major downtown movie theaters. The theater in the foreground that dominated the card's image was the Telenews. Its marquee shouts to news-hungry customers: 'RED Snipers slay NAZIS in Stalingrad Streets.' This title helps us date the printing of the card, since the Battle of Stalingrad began in late August, 1942 and was followed by the German surrender to the Russians on February 1, 1943. It was this single old-postcard that started my investigation, giving me my first glimpse of the theater where my father had worked. However, truth-be-told, it was initially a pretty slow start. [NNA, Jr]

It was slow at first in large part because there currently exists neither a central film repository nor corporate materials archive for the Telenews Theater Company. By design the company's weekly newsreel was exceedingly ephemeral, with each of the fifteen theatres producing its own unique print through the process of disassembling and re-editing other newsreels provided from multiple sources. The results were truly

orphan films. It is very likely that the vast majority of these locally-created Telenews films were habitually destroyed, just like the ones from Dallas that my uncle remembers my grandfather bringing home to burn in a barrel in their backyard. It is our belief that if and where such Telenews footage survives, it may only exist in local archives or in private collections and is likely misidentified, undiscovered, or neglected.⁶ Although the significance the nonfiction film, across a range of genres, is increasingly institutionally recognized, few archives have the resources available to adequately contend with the difficulties of housing, documenting and making such collections readily accessible.

Lacking a specific depository, I began my research by attempting to find information about the Telenews Theater Company through traditional research methods. I searched my University's library catalog, paper indexes, and established online databases such as WorldCat and Dissertation Abstracts, locating surprisingly little information. Short passages found in the few books on the subject, in particular, *The American Newsreel 1911–1967*, published almost thirty-five years ago by Raymond Fielding, proved an early source of departure for the initial stages of our research. But the absence of conventional archives or much of an established newsreel historiography led me to begin exploring relatively new digital resources, many of which were primarily developed with amateur/consumer, not academic, interests in mind. Although most historians and scholars are now well-versed in academic databases typically accessed via University library systems, there are a growing number of for-profit internet-based businesses digitizing archival and resource materials for commercial public use. These online non-institutional resources would allow the three of us access to citations, photographs, and personal histories of the Telenews that would have likely remained unseen in more traditional microfilm and paper-based research. [JFA]

The Telenews Theater Corporation was founded in 1938 by a syndicate of wealthy young New York investors, a group that included banker Paul Felix Arburg, tobacco heir Angier Biddle Duke, and real estate investors Herbert "Buzzy" Scheftel and Alfred G Burger.⁷ All in their twenties and early thirties they came from families with substantial old-money fortunes, and so 'were able to think and act in terms of millions of dollars even in the disastrous depression



days.⁸ Ultimately, the group's investment resulted in a nationwide chain of newsreel theaters that utilized film from the five major newsreel services (Fox-Movietone, Hearst Metrotone, Universal, Paramount, Warner-Pathé) as well as footage from their own newsreel production and distribution company.⁹ But as the name chosen for their corporation signals, at the outset the Telenews group seems to have imagined a place for itself in the still-nascent medium of television.

Although the original reasoning for associating their company's name with the newest of new media in 1938 remains unknown, a later interview with one owner suggests a belief at the time that television would develop as a public rather than private experience. The Telenews, they imagined, might offer large audiences a new experience driven by cutting-edge teletechnology, 'flashing pictures of news events [from around the world] ... while they were happening'.¹⁰ Retrospective or not, the statement disrupts teleological notions of the home as TV's natural site, and the formation of the Telenews Theater Co. did occur at almost the same moment that electronic television was making its public debut in this country, at the 1939 New York World's Fair, with the live telecast of a speech given at the RCA pavilion by President Roosevelt.¹¹ Whether simply hoping to attach some of the excitement about the new medium to their own new enterprise, or a real desire to integrate televisual technology into their theaters, we can assume that the Telenews investors believed, like many other entrepreneurs at the time, that this Presidential address would mark the beginning of television's long-awaited commercial boom. But the boom quickly went bust. Continued struggle among

Fig. 2. Telenews and other downtown theaters (Capitol, Rialto and Palace) on Elm Street in Dallas in late 1942 or early 1943. [Collection of the authors.]

manufacturers, radio networks and the FCC, followed by America's entrance into WWII, would delay the successful introduction of television in this country for almost another eight years. The Telenews Company would not incorporate live telecasting, and although the company would eventually play an important role in the development of television news, it would delay its own entrance into any aspect of the broadcast industry until 1949, a full decade after unveiling their first newsreel theater. [MGA]

Instead, promoting itself as 'America's most unique theater,' the first Telenews commenced business on 3 September 1939, not in New York, where we might first expect, but instead in San Francisco on Market Street. The Telenews would in many ways be unique, but it was not the first company to offer a newsreel-only show. William Fox had, in 1929, programmed The Embassy in New York to exhibit and promote his sound-on-film Movietone to both potential patrons and doubting exhibitors. By 1934, Fox would sell the theater to a new concern, Newsreel Theaters, Inc., which, along with the Movietone program, offered its audiences newsreels from all the major producers.¹² One other small company, Trans Lux, run by two former Movietone executives, began in 1931 developing a minor chain of newsreel theaters, mostly located within New York City. As Fielding points out, Trans Lux devised several innovative practices to keep operating expenses low: retrofitting nickelodeon-like store front theaters with automatic turnstiles at the door, and installing rear projection units that could function in daylight, eliminating the need for both ticket-takers and flashlight-wielding ushers.¹³ However, in both its scale and scope the Telenews would be an entirely different type of moving picture enterprise. [JFA]

Although the Telenews may have been premature in its hopes for commercial television, the company's timing could not have been better to start a fresh newsreel venture. The opening of the San Francisco Telenews would benefit from the kind of morbid good fortune that anyone involved in the business of news might surreptitiously hope for – the outbreak of war. In this case the beginning of WWII, officially declared by France and Britain on the first day of the theater's operation, an official reprisal for Germany's 'surprise' invasion of Poland. Not surprisingly, actual battle images did not show up in the Telenews' inaugural show, although it did include footage of 'nervous

Londoners' being outfitted with gas masks. However, war news would soon govern the theater's programming, in San Francisco as well as in the other Telenews theaters soon to open around the country.¹⁴ War stories would predominate for the newsreel's next six years, and the Telenews actively capitalized on the very real 'thirst for news' in a time of conflict. But it wasn't only in its moving pictures that the company would utilize the (selling) power of war. In almost every aspect of the Telenews, from advertising and exploitation to the public environment of the theater itself, the war quickly became the central trope around which the Telenews experience was configured, promoted and situated within the daily life of its patrons across the country. [MGA]

The war was visible in that first street scene postcard I bought of the Dallas Telenews theater, and it remained central to virtually every piece of Telenews ephemera that I found myself bidding on, winning (and sometimes losing) in online auctions on eBay. From a material point of view one of the most interesting and informative kinds of Telenews memorabilia, and the most prolific form of ephemera that would turn up for sale in the 'world's largest marketplace,' are the weekly advertising postcards that were mailed to prospective patrons by a number of the local Telenews theaters. These cards appear to have been primarily sent out by the managers of the Chicago, Cleveland and Buffalo theaters, but unfortunately, never, it seems, from Dallas. My collection, which now numbers more than 75 postcards, includes a near complete weekly run from the Cleveland theater covering the critical war period 1944 to 1945 that the original owner had carefully saved and placed in a scrap album – perhaps made by the theater's manager, or a father or mother whose son was fighting battles somewhere revealed in one of those cards. Red, green or a bold black ink was used to highlight whatever newsworthy subjects would be shown beginning the coming Friday. A symbolic, eye-catching slogan, 'NEWS ADDED AS IT HAPPENS', is often printed at the bottom of the cards.

I cannot help but being struck by one particular card, dated 4 July, that currently resonates in our lives today. Its largest print reads: 'First Films ... IRAQ WAR.' In regard to the broader field of media studies and the newsreel

theater as a precursor to our own present model of 24/7 CNN-type news, it is worth noting that the single WW II Iraq-based battle announced on the card happened well over a month before it appeared advertised for the 4 July showing in the Chicago Telenews. The only significant battle in Iraq took place in May 1941 between the Iraqis and the British over a British airbase at Habbaniya, west of Baghdad. At the time, a British Royal Air Force Commander noted that 'this encounter was of brief duration and it was successfully dealt with by our forces and few were hurt. It is probable therefore, that it will soon be forgotten.'¹⁵ [NNA, Jr]

Images and news of the war, even when weeks old, were a powerful draw for American audiences in this period. This was a good thing for the Telenews founders, who purposely chose to place their theaters in busy business and entertainment districts in which more traditional movie houses were already located. No doubt this strategy was designed to attract the largest possible 'drop-in' audience but, as a 1952 article on newsreel exhibition points out, it also meant that the Telenews would compete for its patrons with the spectacle of Hollywood 'right next door'.¹⁶ Or, in San Francisco, one door down, for only a cigar stand separated this city's Telenews from the Marion Davies Theater, one of San Francisco's oldest large-scale movie theaters. Extant photographs of this first Telenews make visible S. Charles Lee's principle that the 'show starts on the sidewalk,' a truism apparently no less critical for the newsreel house than the traditional movie theater of this era.¹⁷ Long before reaching the box office, a pedestrian would see, that just like the Davies, the Telenews theater front was dominated by a multi-story tower, vertically announcing the show's presence day or night.

Like other more traditional houses, the Telenews was built with its share of 'now showing' cases in the outer lobby, filled with frame enlargements from that week's stories. However, it is unlikely that these were the first things to catch the eye of San Francisco pedestrians: walking down Market Street it would have been difficult to ignore the 'Telenews/Call-Bulletin WAR-O-GRAPH', a floor-to-ceiling map that took up much of the eastern wall of the exterior lobby. Unveiled in May 1940, the map was first revealed to a large crowd with great fanfare that included a Telenews cameraman and an odd-couple appearance by the popular singer Rudy Vallee and

WJJD "WHAT'S YOUR OPINION?" BROADCAST FROM THEATER FRONT WEEKDAYS AT 2:45 P.M.
 OPENS 8:45 A.M. SUN. & HOLS 9:45 A.M. STATE & RANDOLPH Ph: STATE 2321
TELENEWS
 THE NEWS REEL THEATER
 ONE WEEK STARTING **Fri., Dec. 12th** ON SCREEN 5:00 P.M.
U.S. AT WAR!
 Complete Newsreel Coverage of Momentous Events!
 F.D.R.'s FIRESIDE COMMUNIQUE
HISTORY OF THE MARCH OF JAP AGGRESSION FROM MANCHURIA TO PEARL HARBOR!
 HMS REPULSE, PRINCE OF WALES SUNK!
U.S. MEN RUSH TO ENLIST
SEE U.S. ON GUARD
 OTHER WORLD NEWS
 (PROGRAM SUBJECT TO CHANGE)
 NEWS ADDED AS IT HAPPENS
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famous local restaurateur George Mardikian.¹⁸ This map of Europe and the Soviet Union incorporated four different clocks and offered 'news-hungry pedestrians' the opportunity 'to plot the march of warring armies and to see at a glance the major theaters of action'.¹⁹ Marching armies were visible on the map as a set of handy icons representing airbases, various troop movements and, of course, the battlefront location of Telenews cameramen. The theater manager could update the map – move the icons – based on the 'international news dispatches' he received from the AP teletype machine located just inside the theater's doors.

The map was a classic piece of visual ballyhoo, designed to stop pedestrians in their tracks, turning every passerby into a potential patron. If it succeeded and the passerby did not pass but stopped and entered the theater, after paying the 28¢ admission, the first thing he or she would likely come upon was the teletype machine. The chattering device ran in the lobby throughout the day, and its 'flash' printouts were regularly removed and placed

Fig. 3. Chicago Telenews Theater advertising postcard for program that began on 12 December 1941, four days after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. [Collection of the authors.]



Fig. 4. Crowd watches Rudy Vallee and George Mardikian in front of the WAR-O-GRAPH outside the San Francisco Telenews theater, 20 May 1940. [San Francisco Public Library Historical Photograph Collection, photo AAA-9120.]

on display for closer examination. Not the kind of thing typically found in a traditional feature house, the teletype was a potent visible and aural reminder of the unique Telenews experience, as well as a persuasive indicator of the theater's ability to provide its patrons with 'news as it happens'. As it turns out, the sight and sound of that machine was truly memorable, something that the once-young boys who experienced it would nostalgically evoke some sixty years later in their reminiscent descriptions on internet bulletin boards – postings read by friends, strangers and my father. [MGA]

In December, 2000, while spending time 'information-seeking,' I read on my computer screen the words of man named Frank: 'My love affair [with teletypes] began at the "TELENEWS" theater on State Street – just down the block from the Chicago Theater. They used to show nothing but newsreels and they had a Model 15 (teletype) in the lobby on an AP wire. I wasn't able to look inside, but I sure longed to.'²⁰ I came upon this man's description of his devotion to the Model 15 on a message board dedicated to teletype aficionados, a result of one of my earliest 'Telenews' searches utilizing the now defunct Excite website. Frank had written these words four months before I came upon them, but my email to him that day soon resulted in a lengthier direct reply describing in more detail his memories of going to the Chicago Telenews. This early Telenews encounter via the internet

was exciting, as I then realized there might be other individuals who could report their own personal experiences with the theater. Frank's 'love affair' also made clear that this was not just my family's history, but a set of many interrelated histories connected in ways that I had not yet imagined. [NNA, Jr]

The news that Frank watched spitting out of the Model 15 came from the worldwide bureaus of the Associated Press, but the teletype itself received its data from a cable connected to the local newspaper offices of the *San Francisco Call-Bulletin*.²¹ This unusual hard-wiring of newspaper office and movie theater signals a much broader and institutional set of affiliations that linked the national Telenews organization with local media outlets. This type of platform synergy among contemporary multinational conglomerates has become a conventional part of our highly mediated everyday lives, but the Telenews was one of the first companies to so thoroughly integrate multi-source multimedia in its information gathering, exhibition environment, and promotional efforts. In each new urban market it entered, the Telenews Company policy was to institute working partnerships with local media companies that would encourage and foreground the mutual exchange of technology, information and advertising. [MGA]

The specific financial details of the various transactions are unknown, but collectively the resulting tie-ins were designed to offer reciprocal promotional exposure and information access, with each particular concern profiting from its representation in the other's medium. The Bulletin-Call provided the Telenews with its teletype services, and in return the Telenews offered the newspaper a promotional space that stretched from the lobby to its screen. And the deals that the Telenews struck were not limited to the local daily newspapers. Beginning with the Oakland Telenews, which opened in July 1941, every one of the company's theaters would also incorporate a live radio broadcast booth and listening lounge into their interior design. Each Telenews would, as a result, establish a commercial affiliation with a local radio station, which would fill the Telenews booth with its newscasters, commentators, and occasional quiz-show host. In Cincinnati, for example, the Telenews would open in the summer of 1942 with a "sound-proofed" glass-walled studio for station WSAI located in the center of the theater's interior lobby. Working in

plain view of the passing theatergoers, every day on the hour, from noon to six, the station's newscasters would lead into their regular five-minute update with: "From our studios in the Telenews Strand Theater Lobby, WSAI brings you the latest news".²² In return, the Telenews promoted WSAI with both a trailer before each newsreel show and a prominent place on the theater's large marquee.²³ Although such cross-medium advertising was no doubt a primary factor in the Telenews Corporation instigating these various partnerships, the inclusion of radio and print technology into the heart of the moviegoing experience, allowed the New York-based company to present its coverage of news as local, abundant, comprehensive and most important of all, timely. [JFA]

The war, and particularly America's entrance into it, made the speedy flow of information a cultural imperative, as well as an economic necessity for news producers of all media. However, motion pictures – physical objects requiring transport on planes, trains and automobiles in order to reach their audience – would always lose the battle of time against their ether and copper-wire mobile competitors radio and newspaper journalism. And if the Telenews' founders may have initially hoped to telepresently offer news 'as it happened', the reality was that the celluloid newsreel had not radically changed since the arrival of sound over a decade before. None of the 'Big Five' production companies distributed their newsreels more than twice a week, and some operated on an even slower release schedule. But Telenews, by foregrounding the rapidity of its blend of shared news-distributing technologies, was able to claim its 'continuous flow of news just off the wire' as significantly 'better' than what was offered by the traditional movie house.²⁴ [MGA]

Just like Frank, I first found Jim Hinson while searching on the web. Jim was nine years old and living in Dallas in 1941. He wrote to me:

The newsreel at the movie houses really gave us a notion of what it was like over there. Unfortunately the [regular] newsreels were only 10 minutes or so long and the news they showed was weeks, sometimes months, old by the time it got to the neighborhood houses. In my memory at least, the Telenews Theater filled a valuable need by supplying news in film form just about as fast as it could be done in those days.

They would show film of events that were still topical as well as more conventional documentary-type films that would provide interesting background information pertaining to the progress of the war. I mentioned the teletype machine chattering in the lobby all of the time. It was pretty thrilling to stand there and read the tape as the words appeared, describing events around the world that had just occurred within the last few hours or so. [JFA]

If the Telenews was a strikingly different kind of theater, so was the job of its exhibitor. As Thurston Wayner, the Milwaukee Telenews' first manager, explains, 'The standard theater manager's duty consists of managing the house ... but a [Telenews] manager ... has to produce ... each show. [L]ike the editor of a daily newspaper, the newsreel manager likes to acclaim his beats. Getting the news to his patrons while the news is still fresh with the public is the major job.'²⁵ It is this, exhibitor as film producer, which is the most distinctive and perhaps most radical aspect of the Telenews and the history of its show. For each week, managers like Thurston Wayner and my grandfather each selected and edited an hour-long newsreel program to show in their particular theater. Across the country, every manager was individually responsible for creating a one-hour show derived from stories from all five national newsreels, footage provided by local 'stringers', and the Telenews' own international team of cameramen. From approximately 10,000 feet of total film delivered to individual theaters every week, the Telenews managers, 'working in a proper amount of human interest and variety', would each edit together a unique program of approximately 3,600 feet.²⁶ Although scholars like Charles Musser have explored the role film's earliest exhibitors played in the production of cinematic meaning through the practice of re-editing films that producers offered them, the Telenews Company's systematic theater-specific re-editing of commercial film(s) for local audiences in the studio era appears unprecedented.²⁷ If the editing typically accomplished by an exhibitor of the earlier era was institutionally haphazard, the local Telenews managers labored within a highly organized and methodical system of (re)production. At the technological heart of this system was 'Oscar', a compact table-top editing machine located in every Telenews theater that was designed to allow rapid assembly of a 35mm projection print. The workings of Oscar are

worth illuminating here because they make clear the high level of investment the Telenews organization had in proffering a locally-specific product for its widespread patrons.

Hollywood film editors of the 1940s worked almost exclusively on Moviolas, large, heavy machines, and typically edited images and their accompanying sound tracks as independent, if synchronized, elements. But, of course, the Telenews managers received release prints, not negatives, from the newsreel producers, in which the soundtracks were already incorporated into the print, running alongside the film frame. This integrated soundtrack makes reediting cumbersome, due to the fact that on a typical release print with optical sound the picture runs some twenty frames behind the synchronized section of accompanying sound. But the Oscar, designed by Ellis Levy, the company's West coast chief, and two unnamed Telenews projectionists, allowed theater managers to easily cut the sound and picture of a release print in two places simultaneously, providing exhibitors with the accuracy necessary to edit a 'three syllable word ... at the end of the first syllable on one piece of film' and attach it 'to the last two syllables of the same word on another film'.²⁸ The resulting capacity is not insignificant to the show that the Telenews managers might offer their audiences. Each manager could choose from dozens of stories in the major newsreels, making selections based on their own sense that, '...what may be a hot newsreel for the ...theater in Dallas may carry little patronage strength in Milwaukee'.²⁹ Although each manager could then simply choose to insert or omit an entire story, the Oscar gave its exhibitor-editors a much broader range of possible creative options. A manager could, for instance, remove a wide shot from a Pathé account of a Kentucky train wreck and replace it with a closer dramatic shot from coverage that appeared on that same week's Movietone reel. The result, as one Dallas reporter who was given a demonstration of my grandfather's Oscar explained, was that 'three or four [newsreel] services may supply the whole footage' of any one story.³⁰ To what degree managers might have regularly gone to the trouble of re-editing specific stories from multiple sources remains unknown, as currently no extant example of a Telenews newsreel has surfaced from this era.³¹ However, the Telenews Company heavily advertised this ability to tell a story in more spectacular detail than any other exhibitor, foregrounding the speed of operating Oscar

which, when need arose, allowed any of their local managers to quickly 'yank a couple of newsreel shots ... re-edit the reel to give emphasis to the new picture story' and 'race to the newspaper office to change the copy of his ad'.³² Unlike a traditional feature theater, whose newsreel became increasingly 'stale' as the days, or weeks, progressed, Oscar gave the Telenews manager the potential to produce and promote a continuously up-to-date 'document of current history'.³³

Of course, in the 1940s, what dominated virtually all of the Telenews shows, regardless of their location, was the war. And once again the timing was darkly fortuitous, as the opening of the Dallas Telenews in late November 1941 would occur just a few days prior to one of the war's defining moments, the attack on Pearl Harbor. [MGA]

In attempting to locate my grandfather's role in Telenews history I initially had hoped that the Hoblitzelle & Interstate Theater Collection at the University of Texas contained primary materials from the Dallas Theater. Interstate, one of the earliest and the largest Texas theater chains had, for reasons that remain unknown, jointly owned and operated the Dallas Telenews with its parent organization and I anticipated that we would be able to uncover information about the theater. Unfortunately, I discovered the large collection contained no Telenews materials. But when my father and I subsequently learned that the Dallas Public Library also had its own Interstate Theater archive, we decided to travel to Texas to examine it in person and hopefully uncover additional facts about my grandfather.

When we visited the library in late December of 2003, initially we were only able to find a small amount of information, including a map of the downtown street showing the location of the Telenews, a listing of Interstate Theatre opening dates, and documents regarding a series of art exhibitions held in the theater's lobby sponsored by the Federation of Dallas Artists.³⁴ In addition to the intriguing evidence of the Telenews as local art gallery, these materials provided us with the opening date of the theater. [JFA]

With this date in hand, Jen and I began an old-fashioned, and not a little tedious, microfilm search of the Dallas Morning News. Significantly, the results of this hunt included an article from 21 November 1941 that described the opening promotional fanfare of the Dallas Tele-

news and gave detailed information about the show format and its production. However, despite our best efforts, we still could find no mention of the fact that my father was the manager. All of my efforts so far to become a Telenews expert, searching the internet, combing through eBay, personal visits to the Dallas public library, etc., had kept me endlessly fascinated with the resulting history. However, at that time I still had not learned much at all that would satisfy my initial goal of understanding where my father's place was in all of this. [NNA, Jr]

As a result of this small success in finding useful material in the Dallas paper, I returned to a more traditional search, slowly working through the microfilm of Variety for this time period in addition to local newspapers from the other Telenews cities. It was during this time that we finally had a breakthrough when I discovered a brief mention in the "Theatre News" section of the 26 November 1941 issue of Variety stating that my grandfather was the manager when the Telenews had opened five days before, 21 November 1941. Sifting page by page through the microfilm, I found considerable information about the company. But (not surprisingly) using it was time consuming and often frustrating. Although as a professional archivist I had the luxury at the time of spending my workday in a University library, its microfilm resources were limited and I had to wait (sometimes weeks) for the various reels to arrive through interlibrary loan. Many I received had poor image quality and because there are no indexes for most of these papers I often spent hours reeling through thousands of pages to find a small number of articles.

Luckily, during this time period my library got a trial subscription to ProQuest Historical Newspapers. Initially created in 2001, the database digitally reproduces the entire run of a number of major newspapers including the New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, the Chicago Tribune and the Washington Post. Derived almost exclusively from digitally scanned microfilm, the database allows users to view full-image pages and articles of the newspaper. Using OCR software and ASCII text the database productively allows searches not only of news articles and editorials, but photograph text, cartoons, and advertisements. As of May 2005, the database, designed for University and Public library markets, contained over 125 million fully searchable documents.³⁵

Using this database, I was able to rapidly

gather information about the company headquartered in New York as well as Telenews Theaters in both Los Angeles and Chicago. In seconds, a search uncovered articles that would have taken months of work using traditional microfilm. Significantly, because the entire newspaper page is searchable, I was easily able to locate advertisements for the Telenews weekly shows. Because we currently have no film to evaluate, these ads were critical in allowing us to compare the localized programs promoted at a number of Telenews Theaters across the country. [JFA]

What became increasingly clear as all three of us began evaluating these ads – as well as the newspaper and trade articles, my dad's postcard collection and other Telenews ephemera – is that each theater's promotion and production of localness was neither organic or accidental, but rather organized and efficient. If the tangible local results differed from city to city, if Chicago's program was somehow different from Detroit's, the practices that caused these differences were replicated across the company and its theaters. For the Telenews, promoting localness was a national corporate objective. If we now tend to imagine 'localness' as something characterized by uniqueness to a specific location or region, something we often tend to locate in opposition to the 'mass' or the national, the Telenews Company's operating procedures complicate this traditional characterization.

One aspect in particular of these company-wide 'local' Telenews practices became a focus of my interest as an amateur historian, and would soon provide me with the kind of moment of discovery that I imagine all historians, regardless of training, live for. The Telenews activity that caught my imagination was an unusual, seemingly personal touch, provided by the individual theater managers to those of their patrons who happened to recognize a loved one in the newsreel footage from the World War II battle scenes. Telenews managers apparently satisfied a deep desire of those customers to have a lasting view of their husband, son or relative by either cutting out a frame of the film for them, or by producing and providing the patron with a still-frame enlargement.³⁶ My daughter first found evidence of this unusual practice in a 1945 Saturday Evening Post article



Fig. 5. Clip of 35mm film cut from Telenews reel showing E.D. Stinson (with bandana) of Dallas during the South Pacific battle of Saipan.

that mentioned it occurring at the San Francisco Telenews, but the real advance in finding my father came via one of my seemingly endless 'Telenews' Google searches.

I had recently come across a web-based discussion forum operated by the Dallas Historical Society website, and on 19 October 2004 I found a post written by Ralph Black: '... in the forties I almost lived in the downtown theaters including the Telenews which few remember'. A search further down that same thread would lead me to two other people who would help me locate my father's personal history within the Telenews' public one. The first important source came from Jim Stinson, who had already answered Ralph with the comment, 'I also spent many hours transfixed in front of the teletype machines in the lobby of the [Dallas] Telenews'. The excitement that could be traced all the way back to my father's Pearl Harbor ticker tapes now came back again. As the Historical Society message board does not provide users the ability to reply directly via email, I decided to leave my own response on the same public thread.

Thus, my request for Telenews information appeared on the message board for all Dallas history buffs to see (along with my email address), and on 25 October the same Jim Stinson sent me a personal email reply that made me yell 'Eureka!'

What Jim Stinson wrote to me that day was of his own personal experience with the unique way that the Telenews provided film frames or prints to patrons seeing loved ones at war on the Dallas screen. As I slowly read, scrolling down to the bottom of Jim's email, I saw he had attached an image, a black and white scan of a frame-and-a-half of newsreel film showing three young, well-built soldiers. The bare-chested fellow in the middle with a bandana on his head was, as the email explained, the cousin of Mr. Stinson's dad. The cousin, Corporal E.D. Stinson, appeared in one of the weekly newsreels at the Dallas Telenews showing American soldiers fighting in the South Pacific. Coincidentally, his father was a projectionist at a neighborhood theater and, through a contact at the Telenews, he heard about and later watched the film clip of his relative. In a following email Jim attached a pdf of a newspaper article about the incident entitled, 'Newsreel Shows Dallasites' Son's Part in Saipan Battle':

Corp. E.D. Stinson may not be recognized by the Marine Corps as any more a hero than his buddies, but he was recognized in no uncertain terms by recent audiences at the Telenews Theater on Elm Street. D.H. Stinson ... dropped into the Telenews Theater to see the latest news and escape the sizzling heat. He watched the films ... saw his son and leaped from his seat. Mr. Stinson rushed home and brought Mrs. Stinson to the theater. They sat through the film several times ... His parents had not heard from Corporal Stinson in more than a month before seeing the pictures and had no idea where he was.³⁷

My post on the Historical Society's discussion board was also soon answered by another participant, Mr. Jim Wheat. In his reply to me, Mr. Wheat included copies of three Telenews articles from the *Dallas Morning News*. The first was one that Jen and I already had found on our trip to the Dallas Library. The second was a direct link back to my father's Pearl Harbor tickertapes, an article published on 9 Decem-

ber, two days after the attack. For the first time, I saw a contemporary account that specifically mentioned my father, less than three weeks on the job as manager of the Dallas theater:

The Telenews Theater, on Monday, had a field day with the crowds thickly clustered around the tele-type machine in the lobby, and upstairs, an equal number listening to radio news broadcasts in the lounge ... while the auditorium had its quota watching the news on the screen. The Telenews screen program has been changed four times since the news of the Japanese attack in the Pacific broke Sunday. Nathan Aronson, manager of the theater, has announced that all programs are subject to swift change, in order to give the public the latest developments on all fronts.³⁸

Jim Wheat's final attached article was dated 27 February 1942 and entitled, 'Son on Screen.' It begins:

When Mrs. H.E. Walker ... saw scenes of the United States Navy attack on the Gilbert and Marshall Islands on the Telenews' screen, she recognized her son, Homer E. Walker, Jr., naval radioman. She had just received a letter from her son, telling of the attack. Nathan Aronson, manager of the Telenews, gave her a clip from the film reel, showing her son, which she is having developed and enlarged.³⁹
[NNA, Jr]

My dad, of course, was thrilled, but I had to wonder: how was it that Jim Wheat happened to have these three articles about my grandfather at his easy disposal? Was he related in some way? Was he too researching the Telenews for some reason? When my father emailed him and asked about this seeming coincidence, Jim replied simply, 'DallasNews.com.' DallasNews.com is a commercial historical archive created and hosted by NewsBank, Inc. Completed in 2004, DallasNews.com allows individual or institutional users to pay for access to the archive by day, month, or year. Since none of us had a subscription to the paper through our various libraries, we were able to access the materials using the inexpensive commercial subscription site.

Once enrolled, a search of this database for 'Telenews Theater' almost instantly retrieved hits for over 800 articles. In the next few days, I was able to

sort through these articles that covered the theater's ten year history from its opening in November 1941 until it was transformed into an art-house movie theater in November 1951. A large percentage of the articles describe the week's new show that would open that Friday at 6:00 pm and highlighted any potential local angles. A 1 January 1943 article in the digitalized Dallas paper, 'Telenews to Have Special Showing of 112th Cavalry,' explained that the film would be shown to family members in a private screening in the manager's office so that they could see images of their loved ones. Interestingly, a number of the articles retrieved were of reviews by the newspaper's art critic, elaborating on our knowledge of the Dallas newsreel theater as local gallery, a practice started early on at the San Francisco, Cleveland and Oakland theaters that apparently continued throughout the Telenews Company history. The for-profit Dallas News online database, designed for amateur use, became the most important resource in our search for our family history and also provided our most comprehensive coverage of any Telenews Theater. [JFA]

In the middle of all this good news, and the energizing wealth of new material, we made a somewhat shocking discovery at the end of one small article published on 12 March 1942: 'Jack Tobin of Los Angeles has arrived [in Dallas] taking over as the new manager of the Telenews Theater'.⁴⁰ My father, it seems, only held the position as Telenews manager for a brief 112 days. Clearly, these were very exciting times for him, but we will never know why his stay as manager was that short. From our research it is apparent that Jack Tobin was a general executive with the chain and as such was brought in in the interim, until a new, local, manager could be found to replace my father. The Dallas paper later noted, in an article published on 19 May 1942, that John A. Alterman was now manager. Mr. Alterman apparently had some staying power, as he was the manager who provided Jim Stinson's film clip in June, 1944.

So, as it turns out, the historical intersection of my Papa and the Telenews was short-lived, a passage of time that could be counted in weeks or months. But the Telenews Theater Company lasted much longer, almost 28 years, until August 1967, when its very first theater in San Francisco became its very

last. It had persisted long enough, and made enough impact on the city, that on its closing the Telenews received its own eulogy in the city newspaper, a remembrance of its place in the local past. It was, the reporter wrote, 'A place of entertainment,' but also a 'place where history unfolded before the eyes,' a place that was 'many things to many people'⁴¹ And, clearly, the Telenews remains 'many things' to the three of us, a history that is both personal and public, family and film.

I don't know why my father left the Telenews after less than four months, but in this period just after the Depression with the war economy rapidly improving, it's likely that he found better opportunities. We know that at some time around that same period he started up a soap

company called ARTCO with his brother-in-law. For me, regardless, the twisting trail from those fragile paper tickertapes to the digital database of the *Dallas Morning News* has stayed exciting and deeply rewarding the entire way. While we've learned much, many things remain unknown, about both my father and the Telenews, but happily my curiosity for their now-connected pasts continues to the present and future. [NNA, Jr]

Acknowledgements: We'd like to thank Greg Waller for his gracious participation in the otherwise all-Aronson panel at the 2006 SCMS conference where this essay was first presented and, of course, Judy Aronson, our mother/wife, whose gracious participation in our lives has made this and everything else possible.

Notes

1. Although the rapid popularity of television in the 1950s was a significant factor in the demise of the Telenews Theater Corporation, a subsidiary, Telenews Production Inc., had a significant role in the development of television news programming. The production company was started by the Telenews owners in the late 1940s, and working in partnership with International News Service and International News Photos produced newsreels for both television and independent movie theaters, including daily newsreels, a weekly two-reel news review, a bi-weekly newsreel, and a separate sports edition for theaters and stations in the United States, as well as stations in Brazil, Cuba, and Mexico. Starting in the early 1950's CBS would come to rely almost entirely on Telenews Productions for both its national and international news footage. In January 1954, Hearst Metrotone News purchased Telenews Production Inc. See 'How Telenews Tells the News', *TV Guide* (7 April 1951): 14–15.
2. The primary text for the history of American newsreels remains Raymond Fielding's *The American Newsreel, 1911–1967* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972). The most extensive research into the newsreel theater itself is Maggie Valentine's history of theater architect Charles S. Lee, *The Show Starts on the Sidewalk* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 134–136.
3. Fielding, 3.
4. In regard to the case for collaborative research in the pursuit of film and media histories see: Donald Crafton, 'Collaborative Research, Doc?' *Cinema Studies* 44: 1 (Fall 2004): 138–143.
5. Elizabeth Yakel 'Seeking Information, Seeking Connections, Seeking Meaning: Genealogists and Family Historians', *Information Research* 10: 1 (October 2003): 1–12.
6. Telenews footage produced for television in the 1950s can be found in a number of archives including the Walter J. Brown Media Archives & Peabody Awards Collections at the University of Georgia.
7. Scheffel and Burger were partners in a number of real estate developments, the best-known being the erection of the Pan Am building in New York, now headquarters of MetLife Insurance.
8. 'No More Telenews', *San Francisco Chronicle (SFC)* (14 August 1967), 3. Scheffel and Burger had a number of prior real estate holdings in San Francisco, which is perhaps why this otherwise New York-based organization looked to the West coast to begin its operations.
9. Warner-Pathé became RKO after 1931 and Hearst Metrotone was distributed by MGM and renamed 'News of the Day' in 1936.
10. 'Theater Is Hoping to Use Television', *The Milwaukee Journal* (10 July 1947): 22.
11. Although television had been technologically viable since the late 1920s, its recognized commercial launch coincided with this RCA broadcast from the 1939 World's Fair. David Sarnoff, then president of RCA, hoped to use this NBC telecast to initiate a regular programming service and generate accompanying sales of the company's television receivers. See Albert Abramson, 'The Invention of Television', in Anthony Smith, ed. *Television: An International History* (London: Oxford University Press, 1995), 30–31.
12. Fielding, 200–201.
13. Fielding, 202; Valentine, 135.

14. 'Telenews Hails 20 Years', *San Francisco Call Bulletin* (4 September 1959): 26.
15. 'The Battle for Habbaniya – The forgotten war.' *Royal Air Force*, 20 September 2005 <http://www.raf.mod.uk/history/opsrep.html>
16. 'The Newsreel Boxoffice', *Fortnight* (1 September 1952): 14.
17. Valentine, 9.
18. See the San Francisco Public Library Historical Photography collection. Markidian was an Armenian immigrant who was the owner of the city's renowned Omar Khayyam restaurant.
19. 'Gathering of World News Demonstrated in Display', *Los Angeles Times* (2 September 1941): A3.
20. QTH: *Amateur Radio*, 01/12/2000 <http://www.qth.net/archive/greenkeys/199908/19990822.html>
21. *Variety* (8 July 1942): 12.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. 'The Telenews Operation', *Boxoffice* (23 August 1947): 19.
25. Ibid.
26. 'Edits Telenews Shows Like a Newspaper', *Cleveland Press* (11 June 1942): 26.
27. Charles Musser, *The Emergence of Cinema* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 318.
28. 'News Theater Banks a Lot Upon Oscar', *Dallas Morning News* (16 November 1941): 12.
29. *Boxoffice*, 18.
30. *Dallas Morning News*, 'Contemporary History as Film Entertainment' (22 November 1941): 10.
31. Recently, through an Ebay auction, we were able to purchase a 2000' 35mm nitrate Telenews newsreel that dates from the late 1940s. However, as it is titled 'The Telenews Digest' we believe this was a product developed by the company in 1949 specifically to distribute to non-Telenews theaters. There is no evidence that this particular footage was re-edited or assembled from multiple sources.
32. *Boxoffice*, 18.
33. Contemporary History as Film Entertainment,' 10.
34. Although initially we believed the practice of turning the theater into a local art gallery was a unique aspect of the Dallas branch, more recent research has shown that this practice of promoting regional artists began either in San Francisco or Cleveland. At the Oakland Telenews opening, the local paper positively described the 'novel feature' of 'an art exhibit by Karl Kasten, prominent Berkeley artist.' *Oakland Tribune* (22 July 1941): C19.
35. The resulting PDF article files of this database can be viewed individually or in context as part of the full page of the newspaper and can be printed, saved, or emailed. The database has also been able to comply with the *Tasini et al. v. the New York Times et al.* legal decision. This judgment caused articles written by freelancers to be removed from other news databases such as Lexis-Nexis, but they are still available at ProQuest, which only allows users to view them in full-page format.
36. I later located an excellent description of the process in Thomas Doherty's *Projections of War. Hollywood, American Culture, and World War II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 240. This reference was gained by using the recent 'Inside Books' search option now available at the Amazon internet site. 'Eager to spot a son, husband, or father, women attended avidly to the newsreel screen. Paramount News provided relatives of fighting men with still-frame enlargements of their sons, fathers, and husbands while small-town theater managers usually obliged locals a private screening of the reels after hours. Exhibitors experienced some awkward moments when several girls-back-home requested clips of the same boy-over-there.'
37. Email correspondence from Jim Stinson, *Dallas Times Herald*, date unknown.
38. *Dallas Morning News* (9 December 1941)
39. *Dallas Morning News* (27 February 1942)
40. *Dallas Morning News* (12 March 1942): 8.
41. 'No More Telenews', *San Francisco Chronicle* (14 August 1967): 3.

Abstract: Family history, film history: Dad & the Telenews Theatre Corporation, by Michael, Jennifer and Nathan, Jr. Aronson

The Telenews Theater chain flourished in the United States between 1939 and 1967, offering its audiences continuous newsreel presentations in an age before CNN and other cable news services. While not the first newsreel chain, Telenews was unique in providing local managers the ability to personalize each theater's program by splicing together selected clips from various competing reels. By adapting to the needs of local television stations, Telenews survived well into the video age. The authors relate the history of Telenews through an account of their own investigations of its role in their family history.

An experiment in 'historically correct' Canadian photoplays: Montreal's British American Film Manufacturing Co.

Louis Pelletier

On 25 June 1912, the *Montreal Daily Star* announced the creation of a new company dedicated to the production of 'All-Canadian films', the British American Film Manufacturing Co. (or 'Briam', as the company was generally referred to).¹ The purpose of the company was stated by its managing director, Ben. Greenhood:

Moving picture houses, of which there are thousands throughout the country, now all get their reels from the United States of [sic] American stories, American scenes, and, in fact, everything American. Fresh films can be produced here in Montreal of Canadian stories ... at a cost to the picture houses no greater than what they are now paying, and the public should benefit more in seeing Canadian tales pictured than in studying animated American history.²

A few weeks later, several Montreal newspapers started publishing regular reports from Briam's 'moving picture camp', which was located on a vast property known as Johnstone's Point situated on the South-shore of Lake St. Louis, just a few miles west of downtown Montreal.³ All through August and September of 1912, readers were treated to stories of 'the historical romance of Dollard [des Ormeaux]' and of the exciting daily life of a moving picture company.⁴ Briam was then busy shooting what would be its sole released film, the historical drama *The Battle of the Long Sault*.

Although lost, this film has been acknowledged by film historians as being the very first fiction film produced by a Canadian film company.⁵ Briam's place in Canadian film history has thus long been ensured. Still, several documents newly discovered by the 'Silent Era Quebec Filmography' research project led in Montreal by GRAFICS⁶ now permit us to tell a much more complete and detailed story and, consequently, to argue that Briam's place in film history should not rest solely on its pioneer status. Indeed, close scrutiny of contemporary discourse on the company – of why it was perceived by many Canadians as a necessary enterprise – can only lead to a better understanding of Canadian society and identity in the years leading to the First World War. Many salient features of cinema's transitional era are furthermore emphasized by Briam's case. It will more particularly be argued here that, while Briam seems to have been a pure product of the uplift movement generally associated with the transitional era, its eventual demise as a commercial enterprise was

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hastened by cinema's rapid evolution during this critical period.⁷ Briam's case demonstrates that in the early 1910s cinema was primarily viewed in Canada as either a propaganda tool or a commercial opportunity. Entrepreneurs and government agents were in charge, as the new medium had yet to be appropriated by Canadian artists and storytellers. As a result, the first Canadian attempts at fiction film production seem to have been from the start outmoded by the new, properly cinematic stories and narrative devices featured in the US film productions already prevalent on Canadian screens by 1913.

A contested identity

Briam appeared in a period of intense turmoil for Canadian identity. The year before the company's creation, the negotiation by Wilfrid Laurier's Liberal government of a reciprocity trade agreement with the United States had provoked an important national debate on the nature of Canadian identity. The proposed agreement had immediately been met by strong resistance: opponents argued that it would undermine Canada's place in the British Empire and would eventually lead to annexation by the United States.⁸ The issue had dominated the following federal election, held later in 1911, and permitted the Conservative Robert Borden – who had pulled no punches in his campaign in favor of Imperial preference – to put an end to Laurier's fifteen-year reign.

As this debate opposing Canada's imperial and continental identities was taking place, moving pictures were fast becoming an integral part of urban life and popular culture. A new type of exhibition space, the moving picture palace, was increasingly successful in attracting middle class audiences. American film producers, having launched into the industrial production of increasingly sophisticated narrative films, were rapidly gaining ground in this market. In April of 1913, an article published in the *Montreal Herald* was already reporting that 'The complaint is made that the United States supplies Canada with 90 per cent of the films exhibited in the Dominion.' The newspaper proposed 'to substitute in England and the British colonies pictures of English scenery and waterfalls for the dashing, animated, storytelling supplied by American and continental firms'.⁹ The problem was further compounded by the fact that several leading Montreal movie houses were run by American chains: Keith-Albee controlled the Nickel and its successor, the Imperial, whereas Buffalo's Mark and Brock controlled the Théâtre



Fig. 1. The *Montreal Daily Star* ran a series of seven cartoons in May 1913 denouncing the influence of American moving pictures on Canadian children. The caption to this one (12 May 1913, page 3) read: 'The youngsters are regaled with films in which the flag is carried and vigorously waved when a bad Indian is captured or bandits chased and cornered, for train robberies, detective triumphs, alleged war scenes, balloon ascensions, burglaries, sheriff arrests, sentimental scenes and every possible occasion'.

Fig. 2. 'Pictures showing the surrender of Cornwallis with a horde of brutal British soldiers to an American army fills their young minds with wonder.' *Montreal Daily Star*, 8 May 1913, page 3.



Français, the Scala and the Family.¹⁰ Many defenders of the Empire, including the members of the Montreal branch of the Overseas Club, strongly resented this situation. As a result, several campaigns opposed to the prominent display of the Stars and Stripes in American moving pictures were organized in Montreal and Toronto.¹¹

The handful of Canadian film producers active prior to the advent of the British American Film Manufacturing Co. had all specialized in actualities, travelogues and local films of the 'factory gate' variety.¹² A few fiction films had actually been photographed in Canada before 1912, but they had all been commissioned to foreign film producers by Canadian railroads wishing to attract 'the right kind of immigrants' (i.e. British or Northern Europeans) to the still largely unsettled Dominion.¹³ These productions, however, remained at best marginal on the North American film market. What's worse, American films dealing with events from North American colonial history were perceived to be skewed in favor of the Republic, while other American films set in Canada were found to be severely lacking in authenticity.

Briam's formation

Ironically, the first Canadian company dedicated to the production of Canadian fiction films seems to have been the creation of an individual, Frank Beresford, who unambiguously described himself in an interview with the *Montreal Herald* as 'a loyal American, and a native of the golden West'.¹⁴ Very little is known of the man who would become Briam's 'producer-in-chief and general manager'.¹⁵ Newspapers simply describe Beresford as 'a man whose experience in the moving picture business makes him well qualified to start a new company'.¹⁶ Beresford himself reported that, after a good deal of inquiry and 'scouting', he and his partners had decided to establish their headquarters in the vicinity of Montreal.¹⁷ It remains unclear who his partners were at this point, but Beresford eventually convinced three Montreal business men with no experience in the moving picture field to incorporate the British American Film Manufacturing Co. on 2 July 1912. These men were: Alexander G. Cameron (Major, advocate, and Briam's president), Ben. Greenwood (Briam's managing director) and Jas. G. Ross (president of the Ross Realty Co., and Briam's third director).¹⁸

Beresford then made a short trip to New York City to hire personnel for Briam's Canadian films. There he recruited Frank Crane, an actor and director

with both stage and film experience who had previously worked for the Thanhouser Film Corp., the Comet Film Co. and the Independent Moving Picture Co. of America (IMP).¹⁹ Briam's cameraman, Jere Austin, was also most likely hired in New York by Beresford. Though he subsequently worked mainly as an actor, Austin was said to have 'recorded the burial of the Maine [victims] and a thousand other events of international importance during his long career in the field of motion photography'.²⁰ Several actors were also contracted by Briam in New York, including Fred Ledoux and Miss Clifford, the male and female leads of *The Birth of the Water Lily* (an unreleased Briam film produced concurrently to *The Battle of the Long Sault*).²¹ The actors hired for Briam's Canadian pictures were not all Americans, however. Some were French. The man hired to play Dollard des Ormeaux in *The Battle of the Long Sault*, Castel Legrand, had supposedly once been connected to Paris's famous Théâtre Odéon.²² The only Canadian actor of any notice employed by Briam was Sleek Kearney, known to Montrealers for his performances in *The Habitant* and Gilbert Parker's *The Right of Way*.²³

Briam's most important Canadian collaborator, Louis Olivier Armstrong, was not an actor, but a colonization agent for the Canadian Pacific. An amateur ethnologist, Armstrong was said to be a 'walking goldmine of Indian lore'.²⁴ He was consequently put in charge of Briam's scenario department, and spent his summer vacation at the company's camp during the shooting of *The Battle of the Long Sault*.²⁵ Armstrong had long been involved in the production of outdoor spectacles in Canada. Back in 1901, he had written the libretto to the *Hiawatha* pageants presented by the Ojibwes of Desbarats, Ontario, which he also produced and directed every summer for many years. As a Canadian Pacific representative, Armstrong had also played a key role in the early years of cinema in Canada. He had collaborated in 1902 and 1903 with London's Warwick Trading Co. and Charles Urban Trading Co. in the making of a series of films aiming to bring settlers to Western Canada.²⁶ Armstrong had made sure that the team led by the celebrated cinematographer Joseph Rosenthal would stop by Desbarats to take moving pictures of the *Hiawatha* pageants.²⁷

Armstrong subsequently collaborated on several projects with the Kahnawake Mohawks, who also eventually became Briam collaborators (their reservation was located a mere two miles east of the

company's moving picture camp). The Kahnawake Mohawks had long been involved in show business. 'In and around Caughnawaga [Kahnawake]', remarked a journalist in 1912, 'there are a considerable number of show Indians, some of whom have been all 'round the world with circuses and "wild west" shows, and who have acquired the rudiments of stage-craft'.²⁸ These most likely included the three Mohawks who had danced in front of Gabriel Veyre's cinématographe Lumière in 1898.²⁹ In 1908, Armstrong and the Kahnawake Mohawks had participated to the pageants celebrating Quebec City's tercentenary, an event filmed by British Gaumont, Urban, Vitagraph and Montreal's Léo-Ernest Quimet.³⁰ Later, on 22 June 1911 – Coronation Day – the Mohawks had presented the *Hiawatha* pageant between the quarters of a lacrosse match held on the Montreal Amateur Athletic Association field. This performance had also been filmed, this time in Kinemacolor by the British Natural Colour Kinematograph Co. This shoot had once again been commissioned by the Canadian Pacific railway and, most certainly, supervised by Armstrong.³¹

Briam's project largely relied on the Kahnawake Mohawks' contribution, as the company's marketing campaign made abundantly clear. According to a newspaper article:

the British American Film Co. ... hit upon the idea of posing real Indians, in their native scenery, so that there could be no possibility of the absurd incongruities springing up which so often occurs when ordinary actors pose as redmen. The style of picture will be different from the average picture palace film. ... Instead of imaginary conflicts between settlers and Indians, the British American Film Company plan [*sic*] to depict the great battles of Canadian history, and they are taking the greatest care that the picture shall be historically correct.³²

According to beliefs widely held in the moving picture industry around 1912–1913, the production of pictures connoting authenticity, education and patriotism constituted a sound commercial proposition. Many producers and exhibitors were then courting middle class patrons and, to that end, producing films or building theaters featuring various markers of gentility. Briam's own strategy was to emphasize the 'authenticity' of its moving pictures by foregrounding their production on actual Canadian loca-

tions, its collaboration with a renowned 'expert' – L.O. Armstrong –, and its hiring of the actual 'thoroughbred descendants of the Iroquois who terrorized the early French and English settlers'.³³

Obviously, this 'authenticity' was, and remains, highly debatable. The 'buffalo hide tepees ... decorated with gay Indian illustrations' conceived by the company's 'scenic superintendent' and the costumes worn by the professional show Indians employed by Briam certainly constituted a liberal interpretation of Iroquois traditions.³⁴ (For a start, buffalos always were rather scarce in Quebec). As a matter of fact, local historian Johnny Beauvais explains that Kahnawake's 'show Indians' had to learn to pass as Sioux from the Western Plains, since white audiences did not find their own traditional dresses and customs convincing enough.³⁵ A *Montreal Daily Star* article thus claimed that: 'Old Indian functions and ceremonies are rapidly dying out, and, nowadays are practically speaking, only remembered by natives who have been in the "show" business and have thus had their memories rubbed up a bit'.³⁶ This process was eventually institutionalized in Kahnawake by the creation of a sort of acting school, 'Chief Poking Fire's Indian Village'.³⁷

Michael D. McNally, a scholar specialized in the study of North America's aboriginal peoples's myths, has nevertheless argued that, for the 'Indians playing Indians' in the *Hiawatha* pageants: 'the indigenous language, music, dance, and humor in the pageants [had become] stealthy media for Native agency between the lines of the Longfellow script'.³⁸ In Briam's case, native agency may have been fostered by the hiring of four experimented 'show Indians'. Joe 'Whiteagle' Monique and his wife Moneola, Chief Joe Beauvais (who was said to have 'worked in motion pictures and [Indian] tableaux in France and England') and old 'Scar Face' are thus given much credits in newspapers.³⁹ The *Montreal Daily Star* reports that:

To Joe Whiteagle has been deputed the task of 'beating up' the Indians, and of rehearsing them in their parts. Whiteagle himself is a native of Caughnawaga [Kahnawake], where he is known as Mr. Joseph Monich [*sic*], and is a pure Iroquois Indian. For the past eight years, however, he has been engaged in the production of films in New York, and is an expert in the posing of Indians. Over fifty Indians have been engaged by him ...⁴⁰

Fig. 3. Chief Joe Beauvais with child on cradle board, Kahnawake, Quebec City, about 1910. [MP-0000.115.10, McCord Museum of Canadian History.]



It therefore seems likely that, while they were made to play the stereotypical parts of bloodthirsty Indians, the Kahnawake Mohawks were more than pawns in Briam's game. Still, one should be particularly wary, in the absence of any filmic evidence or testimony coming from the Mohawk actors themselves, to overstate their actual influence on Briam's production.

The Battle of the Long Sault: production

The shooting of Briam's first film production, a two-reeler entitled *The Battle of the Long Sault*, started at the company's moving picture camp around 20 August 1912. The film was set in the New France of 1660 and celebrated the heroic (and possibly mythical) deeds of Adam Dollard des Ormeaux (Dollard and his small garrison of sixteen men were said to have sacrificed their lives while saving Ville-Marie [Montreal] from an Iroquois attack). A long forgotten figure in Canadian history, Dollard had been rediscovered by historians in the early years of the Confederation. Curiously, many of the individuals who participated in the creation of this new national myth were either English-Canadians or Americans. In 1910, for in-

stance, the celebrations surrounding the 250th anniversary of Dollard's death had been led by the editor of the *Montreal Herald*, J.C. Walsh.⁴¹ Beresford and Armstrong readily acknowledged the influence on their script of 'the facts of the great [Francis] Parkman' and 'the romance of Mary [Hartwell] Catherwood'.⁴² The latter's historical novel *The Romance of Dollard* had met with some degree of popular success after its publication in 1889.⁴³ The works of these two nineteenth century historical writers seemingly provided most of the scenes and events depicted in *The Battle of the Long Sault*. The film thus combined a standard account of Dollard's fight with a tragic love story between a doomed soldier of fortune and a young settler.⁴⁴

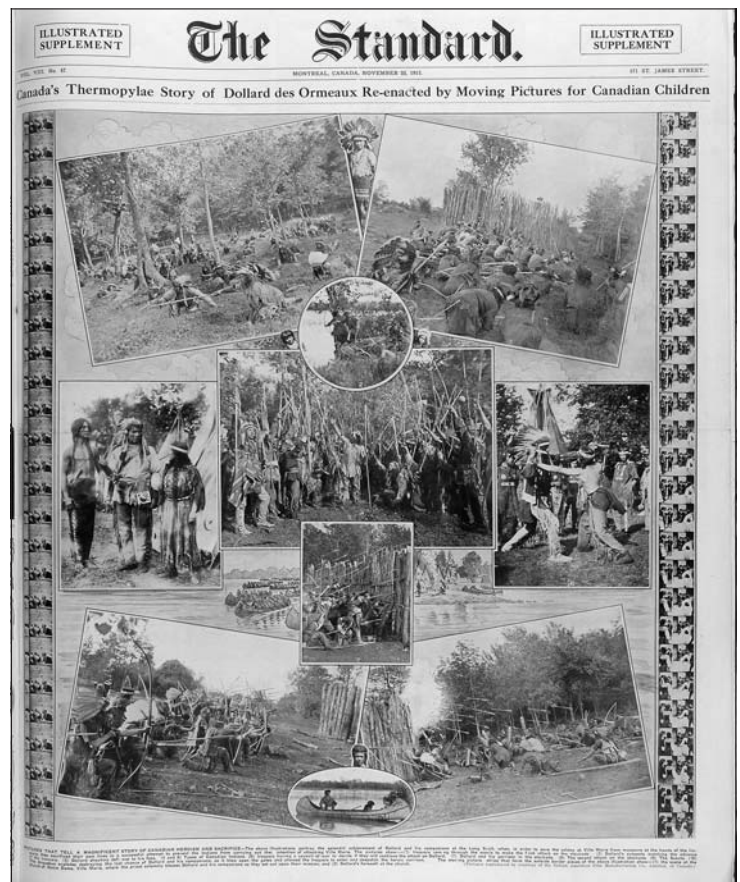
Clearly, the main selling point of *The Battle of the Long Sault* resided more in its spectacular battle scenes than in its narrative. The shooting of Dollard's last stand would prove, however, to be a first stumbling block for Briam. To shoot this spectacular scene requiring more than 150 Mohawk actors and extras, Briam needed a whole day of guaranteed bright sunshine. Unfortunately, the end of the summer of 1912 proved rather cloudy in the Montreal area. The scene's re-enactment, which Briam had

first scheduled for 23 August 1912, consequently had to be delayed until 28 September 1912.⁴⁵ While the company waited for the sun, the *Montreal Herald* reported that 'something bearing a strong resemblance to a gloom cloud is settling over the actors and cameras out at Châteauguay.' Managing director Greenwood complained that, during this time, the company's expense roll amounted to about \$3,000 a week – 'and nothing yet to show for it'.⁴⁶ Briam also brought upon itself another set of problems when it disclosed its camp's location. Following a newspaper announcement stating that the company was about to re-enact some spectacular battle scenes, 'a regular flotilla of sailing yachts, motor boats, skiffs and canoes made an assault upon the camp'.⁴⁷ As a result, Briam was forced to add a 'special guard' to its payroll.

Beresford tried to recoup Briam's expenses by improvising a more humble production during the intermittent periods of sunshine. Armstrong obligingly provided 'an old Indian legend of love and tragedy' entitled *The Birth of the Water Lily*.⁴⁸ Set in an Indian village, it told the story of Wabunosa, a young brutish Indian who, in an outburst of anger, chokes and drowns his lover Fawn, a maiden 'charmingly modern enough to tempt any white settler with becoming a squaw-man'.⁴⁹ (It probably didn't hurt that the character was played by a New York actress.) Years later, a tormented Wabunosa returns to the site of his crime and finds a glorious water-lily blossoming where Fawn had sunk to her death. As he gazes upon it, Fawn's spirit rises from the flower and extends forgiveness to 'the wicked lover she loved even in death'.⁵⁰ The material shot for this story was probably found to be lacking in some way, however, as there is no trace of *The Birth of the Water Lily* having ever been exhibited.

The Battle of the Long Sault: reception

Three months elapsed between the completion of production work on *The Battle of the Long Sault* and the film's release in the last days of 1912. Two prints were first exhibited in Montreal. In the city's East End, the film was programmed for the week commencing Sunday 29 December 1912 at the Ouimetoscope, a respectable moving picture house catering mostly to Montreal's francophone community. The Ouimetoscope was owned by a central figure in Canadian film history, pioneer exhibitor, distributor and producer Léo-Ernest Ouimet. The francophone newspa-



per *La Patrie* could consequently claim that: 'For the first time, a "film" made in Canada and depicting a Canadian subject will be viewed in a Canadian theater by a Canadian audience'.⁵¹ In the city's West End, the Lyric Hall, a moving picture house set up in a converted church and advertising in both French and English newspapers, exhibited the film for the week commencing Monday, 30 December 1912.⁵² Though outclassed only a few weeks before by the new purpose-built Strand, the Lyric was still one of English Montreal's leading moving picture houses. During *The Battle of the Long Sault*'s first run, it introduced 'leading participants in the picture' on the stage.⁵³ The film proved to be so popular at the Lyric (the *Montreal Daily Star* reported that, on some nights, close to one thousand people had to be turned away) that management decided to bring it back for a series of encore performance the week commencing Monday, 3 February 1913.⁵⁴ An advertisement published by the theater on this occasion proclaimed that *The Battle of the Long Sault* had been the most popular subject ever shown at the Lyric.⁵⁵

Fig. 4. 'Canada's Thermopylae Story of Dollard des Ormeaux Re-enacted by Moving Pictures for Canadian Children.' Front page coverage of *The Battle of the Long Sault* in the *Montreal Standard Illustrated Supplement*, 23 November 1912.



Fig. 5. Leo-Ernest Ouimet advertises the premiere of *The Battle of the Long Sault*. 'Horrible fights with Indians, three centuries ago, reproduced by means of moving pictures at the Ouimétoscope.' *La Patrie* (Montreal), 28 December 1912, page 6.

LYRIC HALL

2 Shows Daily, 2.30 and 8 p.m.
 2 Hour Show—10c, 15c, 25c.

Latest and best in Moving Pictures

Special for next week the first great Canadian Historical Moving Picture shown for the first time

**DOLLARD
 DES ORMEAUX
 AND THE
 BATTLE
 OF THE
 LONG SAULT**

How Montreal was saved in 1660. Nearly 300 Algonquin and Iroquois Indians in the scenes recently made at Chateauguay.—No one should miss this historical picture. In two parts; also the Regular Show of Biograph, Edison, Pathe and other productions including

GLIMPSES OF MONTANA,
 THE OLD-FASHIONED ELOPE-
 MENT
 A CRY FOR HELP
 and many others.

Fig. 6. *The Battle of the Long Sault* opened at the anglophone Lyric Hall the day after its Ouimétoscope premiere. *Montreal Daily Star*, 28 December 1912, page 19.

Some evidences suggest that the film's local success did not rest solely on its aesthetic or narrative qualities. For instance, a very telling report pub-

lished by the *Montreal Daily Star* after the release of *The Battle of the Long Sault* at the Lyric Hall stated that:

It is seldom that prominence is given to the Canadian flag in moving pictures shown in Montreal, owing to the fact that most of the films are produced on the other side of the line, but the appearance of a waving Canadian ensign prefacing the feature picture of the New British American Film Company, '*The Heroes of the Long Sault*,' [sic] shown last night in the Lyric Theatre, brought from the audience even greater applause than did the historic picture.⁵⁶

While the film was being exhibited across Canada throughout the winter and spring of 1913, advertisements for *The Battle of the Long Sault* invariably appealed to the audiences's patriotism.⁵⁷ The management of the Toronto Strand (where, starting 24 February 1913, the film was exhibited for a week) thus described the film as 'The greatest patriotic event of the theatrical season' and exhorted the citizens of Toronto to 'Be patriotic! See how our forefathers defended our fair country'.⁵⁸ Of course, that argument was more than a little fallacious, as what the film actually chronicled was the defence of New France against the Iroquois allied to the North American British colonies.

Despite the eventual demise of the British American Film Manufacturing Co. in the spring of 1913, *The Battle of the Long Sault* seems to have circulated on the North American film market for a rather long period of time. In March of 1914 – more than fifteen months after its initial Montreal release – it turned up in Chicago, where the municipal bureau of censorship required a few shots showing 'Indians clubbing whites' to be cut and 'two scenes showing dead bodies' to be shortened.⁵⁹

After the Battle: Briam in the Fall of 1912 and Winter of 1913

Briam's management and personnel did not lay idle after the completion of *The Battle of the Long Sault*. Between September of 1912 and March of 1913, Montreal newspapers frequently reported on the activities of the company. On 24 October 1912, for instance, the *Montreal Daily Star* and *La Patrie* both printed an article stating that Alexander Cameron, Briam's president, 'had left for England and Russia in connection with the placing of the films in Euro-

pean centres'.⁶⁰ The facts behind this apocryphal story remain impossible to establish. One thing remains certain, however: if such a trip really was taken by Cameron, nothing ever came out of it. Frank Crane was nevertheless still telling journalists a few months later that: 'The demand for Canadian films is almost as strong in Russia, Germany, France and other European countries as it is in parts of Great Britain and the United States'.⁶¹

In mid-October 1912, Briam acquired an old school located at the corner of Berri and Pontiac streets, in Montreal's North End.⁶² The three floor building was converted into a town studio using artificial light, so that Briam could work on 'interior dramas' when the weather conditions rendered work at their moving picture camp impossible.⁶³ Clearly, the company wanted to avoid another weather-related fiasco. The studio seems to have been up and running by January of 1913, when journalists from the *Montreal Daily Star* and the *Montreal Standard* were given tours by Frank Crane (whose title was now 'producer') and a newly hired director, 'Dick' Sterling.⁶⁴ According to their reports, two shooting stages were set up on the top floor of the building. They relied for lighting on banks of incandescent bulbs installed on both sides and on rows of arc lights fixed to the ceiling. The *Standard's* journalist remarked that 'the heat from these powerful lights was almost intolerable'.⁶⁵ The middle floor was occupied by a laboratory, printing, assembling and dark rooms, and offices. Wardrobe and the vast property rooms – 'a regular museum of relics of the Indians and early French and English settlers' – were located on the ground floor. The vaults where the negatives were stored, as well as the carpenter and machine shops, were also located on that floor.⁶⁶ Crane finally explained that the piece of ground adjoining the studio could be used for some of the outdoor scenes unfit for production at the company's Johnstone's Point camp, such as street scenes.

Briam wasn't short on projects over the winter of 1913. Still, it remains almost impossible to ascertain which of these projects actually went into production before the demise of the company the following spring. Several articles published in Montreal newspapers refer to the making of a film based on Madeleine de Verchères's exploit. A heroine of the French colonies, Madeleine de Verchères was said to have single-handedly organized the successful defence of her family's fort against the Iroquois in 1692, when she was just fourteen years old.⁶⁷ The

film's outline seems to have been vastly similar to that of *The Battle of the Long Sault* – except for the fact the French heroes were to come out of this one alive Olive S. Pinckney, 'a woman of considerable experience on the legitimate stage' was hired to play an unspecified part in the film, as also were two child actors: seven years old twins Allan and Freddie Turner. The twins, who had most likely been hired to play Madeleine's younger brothers, had just taken part in the Famous Players Film Co.'s second production, *The Prisoner of Zenda*.⁶⁸ Sadly, these new hirings were soon to be followed by the loss of one of Briam's most precious collaborators, Chief Joe Beauvais, who died on 5 March 1913 of pneumonia. Chief Beauvais's obituary describes how, as the he was being buried in Kahnawake, more than fifty Mohawks were busy re-enacting the attack of Madeleine de Verchères's fort at Johnstone's Point.⁶⁹

A *Moving Picture News* article published in December 1912 lists several other Briam projects. Although no doubt based on an over-optimistic statement by a company representative (it states that the company was about to launch into a 'two pictures a week' release schedule), the article lists several titles – all centered on Kahnawake's show Indians – then scheduled for release in the near future. In addition to *The Battle of the Long Sault* and *Spirit of the Lily* [sic], these included *Indian Brutus*, or *The Battle of the Tribes*, *Indian Love*, and *Papoose's First Christmas*.⁷⁰ Another title listed in this article, *The Long Traverse*, or *The Trail of the White Beaver* ('a picture of life among the early fur traders in Canada') later was mentioned in several newspapers articles.⁷¹ Briam had also announced in the fall of 1912 its intention to produce a moving picture re-enactment of Samuel de Champlain's landing in Canada, as well as a new film version of *Hiawatha*.⁷²

More than any other aspect of Briam's story, this series of clichéd subjects expose commerce as the primary impulse behind the creation of this first Canadian fiction film producer. Clearly, Briam's patriotism and nationalism were no more than marketing ploys. In actuality – and contrarily to what the films of many leading US or French producers could do in their respective national contexts – these retreats into a largely imaginary past were entirely disconnected from the major issues of Canadian life in the early 1910s: urbanization and city life, industrialization, immigration and emigration, women's rights, etc.⁷³ Briam's stories had been conceived and developed by entrepreneurs striving to devise an exotic – that is,

exportable – form of nationalism, one where the subject recognizes an imaginary conception of himself.

The company vanishes

After having proudly announced in one last advertisement that it was 'now turning out several thousand feet weekly of film which is Canadian in every sense of the word', the British American Film Manufacturing Co. mysteriously vanished in the spring of the 1913.⁷⁴ There is no indication that any Briam production other than *The Battle of the Long Sault* was ever publicly exhibited. In May, a succinct post mortem assessment of Briam's accomplishments appeared in a *Montreal Herald* article announcing the creation of the Canadian Bioscope Co. in Halifax: 'The British American Film Company of Montreal only gave a public production of one historic film as the result of their season's work, but it was well received in Canada and the United States'.⁷⁵ The last contemporary reference to Briam most likely was a news item published in the *Moving Picture World* the following year. It announced that a new company, the Canadian Animated Weekly, had taken over Briam's studio and equipment.⁷⁶

The exact causes of Briam's demise remain impossible to ascertain. It is entirely possible that the company exhausted available financing before it could finally launch into a regular release schedule, or that key members of management and personnel quarrelled. Distribution, too, might have proved to be more difficult than expected to secure. Two factors can nevertheless be identified as having almost certainly contributed to Briam's failure. First, Montreal's northern climate obviously greatly hampered production work and caused costly delays. As Beresford and company had learned the hard way during the production of *The Battle of the Long Sault*, weather conditions were frequently overcast, even in summer. Still, that was nothing compared to the hardships suffered by the company's personnel in wintertime. Frank Crane notoriously wrote old Than-houser colleagues back in the United States that Montreal's weather was 'so cold that the film freezes onto the camera'.⁷⁷ All of this was happening as the great migration West was picking up speed: established film production centers such as Fort Lee (New Jersey) and Chicago could simply not compete with California's weather conditions. Rational organization of the film industry would moreover soon send most of the production work to the controlled envi-

ronment of the studios. This shift was particularly detrimental to Montreal, as it rendered the large variety of scenery which had been one of Briam's main selling points quite dispensable. In the absence of a critical mass of qualified personnel (performers and technicians), film equipment suppliers and laboratories, there was seemingly no economic advantage to film production in Montreal.

A second contributing cause to Briam's eventual failure might have been the company's inability to properly gauge the level of sophistication and professionalism already reached by its competitors by 1912, and more particularly by the fiction films turned out by the leading American producers. Contemporary accounts of the production of *The Battle of the Long Sault* and *The Birth of the Water Lily* often seem to describe a bunch of bumbling amateurs trying their best to make a real movie. On that regard, the testimony given by a *Standard* reporter is quite revealing. Having been instructed to 'find out how it feels to be a hero' for a day, the reporter got himself hired to play one of Dollard's companions and consequently spent a whole day on the set of *The Battle of the Long Sault*. His published account begins at Windsor station, where the seventeen actors hired to play Dollard's company board the New York Central train for Chateauguay. (One of Dollard's heroes, 'all out of breath, and carrying a small parcel, presumably containing luncheon', almost misses the train.) The reporter then proceeds to describe the 'motley throng' of 'dilettantes' (his choice of words) heading for Briam's moving picture camp:

A few of the seventeen were heroes as a plain business proposition, some of them because they are amateur actors, and two or three for the pure enjoyment of it. They were nearly all Montrealers, and some well-known professions were represented.⁷⁸

En route, Sieur Dollard confides to the reporter that the actors have only rehearsed their parts twice, and that 'the second time ... two of our friends from town nearly got drowned.'

At Johnstone's Point, the small band of actors dons costumes and wigs, and starts shooting a scene under Frank Crane's direction. The journalist reports:

A few were too eager or nervous, and stumbled and then it had to be done all over again. Others stepped outside of the two ropes which

show the boundary of the territory that is taken in by the eye of the moving picture camera, and this caused another repetition. Once we had to do it again, because the wig of one of the heroes had worked around without his noticing it in the excitement of acting so that the curls were partly hanging over his face.⁷⁹

Similar mishaps ensue later in the afternoon when the company tries to shoot another scene. Nevertheless, 'The big operator, Mr. Austin ... took the matter very philosophically, as he also did when the building of the stockade later on had to be repeated several times'. The reporter's day of glory ends with a stranded boat, a missed train and a tram ride home. For his troubles, the *Standard's* 'hero' received three dollars and a half from Briam, plus lunch and transportation.⁸⁰

Even though neither film nor script survive, there are reasons to believe that Armstrong's script for *The Battle of the Long Sault* was just as lackadaisical as the acting. According to Michael D. McNally, Armstrong's libretto for the *Hiawatha* pageants:

... took no pains to concentrate the audience's attention on a clearly developing plot, character development, or meaningful dialogue between characters. More spectacle than narrative, the pageants presented audiences with a series of tableaux that depicted key scenes but that assumed familiarity with Longfellow's poem in order to fill in the development.⁸¹

This description fits surprisingly well many animated views produced before the sudden paradigm shift brought by the onset of cinema's transitional era – that is, before 1907 or 1908. If Armstrong's script for *The Battle of the Long Sault* was anything like his *Hiawatha* libretto, the film must have seemed seriously outdated to 1913 viewers. Tellingly, the film's only known review does not mention stirring scenes, but interesting views:

In the picture there was much to interest the Montrealer: the little church in which Dulac [sic] des Ormeaux and his sixteen heroes received the last sacrament; the scenery along the Châteauguay; the brawny physique of neighboring Indians ...⁸²

As every Canadian already knew how Dollard's story would end, it seems only logical that the film's

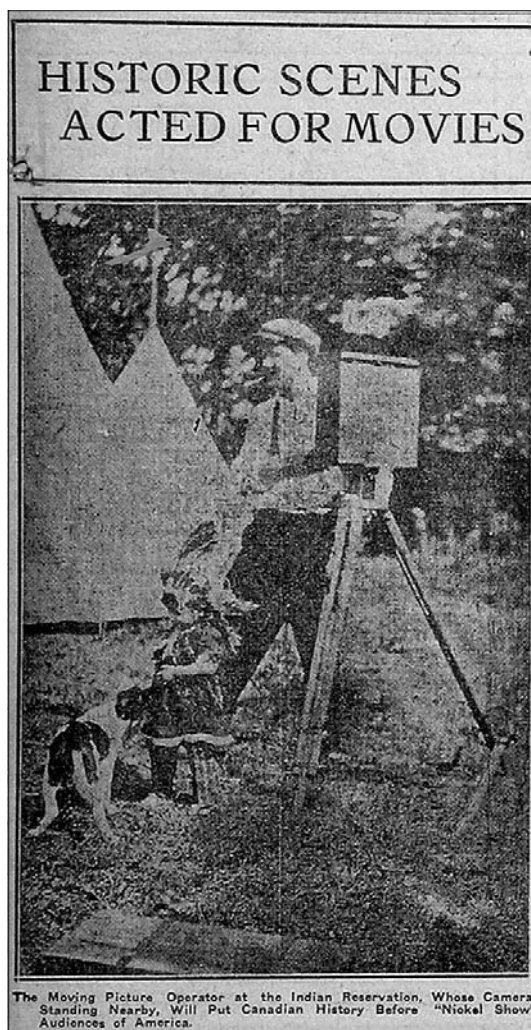


Fig. 7. 'The Moving Picture Operator at the Indian Reservation, Whose Camera, Standing Nearby, Will Put Canadian History Before "Nickel Show" Audiences of America.'

Coverage of the production of *The Battle of the Long Sault* featured in *The Montreal Herald*, 31 August 1912, page 13.

main attraction would reside more in the spectacle it offered than in the story it narrated.

Briam's legacy

Somewhat surprisingly, what could in a way be described as Briam's most significant accomplishment actually followed the company's demise in the spring of 1913. Indeed, one of 1914's most publicized feature film releases, Kalem's *Wolfe, or the Conquest of Quebec*, nearly was a Briam production. The film's genesis goes back to the announcement made by Briam in September 1912 that the following summer it would produce a re-enactment of the 1759 battle of the Plains of Abraham in Quebec City. The statement made by managing director Greenhood to the press on that occasion reveals that historical correctness still was on Briam's mind: 'We will not only

reproduce the old uniforms of the soldiers, but we will use the cannons which were used in those days, and in fact, many of the actual guns which were used in that battle.⁸³ Briam expected to spend between \$40,000 and \$50,000 on the production.

Wolfe, or the Conquest of Quebec went into production in and around Quebec City in late August 1913, almost one year to the day after *The Battle of the Long Sault*. Production was supervised by Frank Beresford, who had in all likelihood taken the project to Kalem following Briam's disappearance.⁸⁴ It was a logical move: as Gary W. Harner has demonstrated, Kalem's corporate identity had from very early on rested on its peripatetic personnel and on-location shoots.⁸⁵ Kalem had moreover released several 'Canadian', 'French-Canadian' and 'Canadian Indians' stories in the years 1909 and 1910. At least two of these films had been shot on location in Kingston, Ontario. Another, *Fighting the Iroquois in Canada* (1910), was based on Madeleine de Verchères's story.⁸⁶ Even though *Wolfe* was directed by Kalem veterans Kenean Buel and James Vincent, many key members of Briam's staff were involved in the shoot taking place in Quebec City. Jere Austin, Briam's cameraman, got his acting début playing *Wolfe*'s male romantic lead, while Briam's leading man, Fred Ledoux, became the production's casting director.⁸⁷ Several Kahnawake Mohawks were also hired by Kalem.⁸⁸

Wolfe, or the Conquest of Quebec perfected the formula established by *The Battle of the Long Sault*. The film's narrative once again combined a historical re-enactment based on the writings of Francis Parkman and a conventional love story, this time between a French maiden (played by Swedish-born Anna Q. Nilsson) and a British lieutenant.⁸⁹ The five-reel feature was quite well received when released in North America through the General Film Co.'s Masterpiece Service programme on 25 May 1914. W. Stephen Bush published a long laudatory review of *Wolfe, or the Conquest of Quebec* in the *Moving Picture World*. He attributed the film's 'unqualified success' to Kalem's decision to 'go to the very spots where the battles were fought'. 'Historic accuracy', Bush concluded, 'has been rarely attempted by producers and still more rarely has it been achieved'.⁹⁰ 'Accuracy' had nevertheless failed to guarantee Briam's success. Could it be that Bush's agenda – he, too, militated for a new, genteel, cinema – prevented him from acknowledging the storytelling abilities of Kalem's personnel as being

the main cause of *Wolfe*'s success? Clearly, by 1913, production values such as 'authentic' locations were no more than a welcomed bonus: exciting narratives constituted the real *sine qua non* condition of a film's success.

Two years after *Wolfe*, in 1915, Frank Beresford brought still another film shoot to Quebec City when he convinced the Universal Film Manufacturing Co. (who was by then employing him as technical director) to shoot parts of *The Man of Shame* on location in the old city. This time, however, the first thing on the minds of the filmmakers was not authenticity, but economy and convenience. *The Man of Shame* was an adaptation of *Roger la Honte*, a famous French melodrama set in the eighteenth century, and the old city of Quebec was deemed to be a cheap but satisfactory substitute for many of the French locations required by the story.⁹¹ Unfortunately for Universal, its choice of location failed to impress some reviewers, including *Variety*'s Jolo, who commented that: 'All the interiors were excellent replicas of houses in Paris, but the exteriors were so palpably faked as to excite one's risibilities'.⁹²

Another significant part of Briam's and Beresford's legacy resides in what they may have helped inspire. Between 1913 and 1915, two other companies followed in Briam's footsteps and attempted to launch into feature film production in Canada. Based in Halifax, Nova Scotia, the Canadian Bioscope Co. released in the winter of 1914 a successful adaptation of Henry W. Longfellow's *Evangeline*, 'produced and staged at the original sites' of the great expulsion of the Acadians.⁹³ The Canadian Bioscope Co. released a few more films before ending its activities at the outbreak of the First World War.⁹⁴ In Toronto, the Conness Till Co., 'a Canadian firm established in Canada for the purpose of producing Canadian plays with Canadian settings and written by Canadians', attempted to launch into a regular release schedule of dramas and actualities in late 1914 and early 1915.⁹⁵ Its activities ended when the company's studio was destroyed in a fire on 31 May 1915.⁹⁶

Conclusion

The failure of the various Canadian film companies organized in this era did not put an end to the production of 'Canadian subjects' – far from it. In 1975, Canadian essayist Pierre Berton calculated that, 'since 1907, American film companies have produced 575 motion pictures in which the plot has been set entirely or mainly in Canada'.⁹⁷ These were

generally shot in Hollywood studios or on-location in California, and usually set in the Rocky Mountains or in that particular type of generic wilderness known as the 'northwoods'. Contrarily to Canadian productions such as Briam's *The Battle of the Long Sault* or the Canadian Bioscope Co.'s *Evangeline*, these American productions set in Canada consistently avoided dealing with characters or events from Canadian history. They resorted, instead, to the formulaic stories and well-worn clichés that would eventually come to be associated with 'programme' or 'B' productions. To the industry that was rapidly coming out of age in the 1910s, this form of standardization made perfect sense: in the realm of mass entertainment, efficiency in production and storytelling almost always trumps authenticity.

Just like the hiring of renowned stage actors by film producers and, to a lesser extent, the adaptation of great literary works, the Briam experiment in 'historically correct' Canadian photoplays belongs to the cinema's transitional era – those few short years where the new media's respectability was perceived as being paramount. As has convincingly been argued elsewhere, cinema's eventual redemption did not come from the class of moving pictures striving to conform to established genteel values, but from the movies doing 'those things which could not be done with any instrument but the camera, and could appear nowhere if not on the screen' (as Gilbert Seldes famously wrote of Mack Sennett's Keystone

comedies).⁹⁸ The increased production costs associated with film production in Canadian locations were consequently not warranted from an industrial point of view – especially if the films being produced were no more than semi-improvised historical re-enactments.

Hindsight suggests that Briam's project relied on an imaginary construction. Clearly, the imperial identity dearly defended by many Canadians belonged to the realm of ideas and symbols, of flags and letters to the editor. In the end, what lured most Canadians to the moving picture houses wasn't the prospect of taking part in a patriotic activity, but the simple pleasures derived from the consumption of thrilling narratives and the spectacle of glamorous movie stars – the same qualities responsible for endearing American cinema to film audiences all around the world. Maybe it wasn't so much that Canadians were becoming indistinguishable from their neighbors as that American films were becoming more universal in their appeal.

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I am most grateful to Paul S. Moore, who graciously contributed most of the data regarding *The Battle of Long Sault's* commercial career outside of the Province of Quebec and waded through an early draft of this essay. Lise Gantheret and Roxanne Chee also provided much constructive criticism.

Notes

1. The British American Film Manufacturing Co. Ltd. was incorporated in Canada by letters patent granted by the Secretary of State on 2 July 1912. Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, *Raisons sociales de Montréal 1849–1939*, 34:388. According to various newspapers reports, the company's capital was \$500,000, of which \$100,000 was paid up. See 'New Film Company Does Unique Work', *Montreal Daily Star* (24 October 1912): 21.
2. 'Open-Air Dramas to Be Enacted Near Montreal', *Montreal Daily Star* (25 June 1912): 9.
3. The site was said to be the property of Chief Johnstone, a Mohawk from the Kahnawake reservation. 'Seventeen Heroes to Die for Their Country the First Bright Morning', *Montreal Standard* (21 September 1912): 26.
4. 'Indians March On Montreal', *Montreal Daily Star* (23 August 1912): 3.
5. Peter Morris, *Embattled Shadows: A History of Canadian Cinema 1895–1939* (Montreal and Toronto: McGill and Queen's University Press, 1978), 47; Germain Lacasse, *Histoires de scopes: le cinéma muet au Québec* (Montreal: Cinémathèque québécoise, 1988), 39.
6. Groupe de recherche sur l'avènement et la formation des institutions cinématographique et scénique.
7. On the Uplift Movement see Lee Grieveson, *Policing Cinema: Movies and Censorship in Early-Twentieth-Century America* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004), 26–32.
8. Wilfrid Laurier, speech before the House of Commons, 7 March 1911 (http://www.collections-canada.ca/primeministers/h4-406_2-e.html, last accessed 6 May 2006.)
9. 'Replace British Picture Films for American – Combination Among Photo Play People Tired of Stars and Stripes – Also Weary of Domestic Scenes', *Montreal Herald* (26 April 1913): 1. A quick survey of the

- registers of the Board of censors of moving pictures the Province of Quebec (now held by Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec), which began its activities in April of 1913, and of advertisements published by film exhibitors seems to corroborate the ninety per cent estimate.
10. Dane Lanken, *Montreal Movie Palaces: Great Theatres of the Golden Era 1884–1938* (Waterloo: Penumbra Press, 1993), 54; 'Two New "Pop." Houses', *Montreal Standard* (23 November 1912): 26.
 11. *Moving Picture News* (11 November 1911): 30; *Ciné-Journal* (25 October 1913): 65; 'Object to Flags of United States at Local Movies', *Montreal Daily Star* (7 February 1913): 11; Henry Dalby, 'Moving Picture Films', *Montreal Daily Star* (10 February 1913): 10; 'Canadian Pictures', *Montreal Daily Star* (13 February 1913): 12.
 12. On the phenomenon of local cinema see Stephen Bottomore, 'From the Factory Gate to the "Home Talent" Drama: An International Overview of Local Films in the Silent Drama' in Vanessa Toulmin, Simon Pople and Patrick Russell, eds, *The Lost World of Mitchell and Kenyon: Edwardian Britain on Film* (London: British Film Institute, 2004), 33–48.
 13. These most notably included a series of eleven dramas and comedies set in the Canadian outdoors produced by the Edison Manufacturing Co. over the summer of 1910. "Our Lady of the Snows" on the Screen – Edison Company's Splendid Series of Western-Canadian Subjects', *Moving Picture World* (17 September 1910): 623; Morris, 41–45.
 14. 'Latest Invaders of Dominion Set Peaceful Indians at War', *Montreal Herald* (31 August 1912): 13.
 15. 'East Wind Woos Belle of Indians', *Montreal Daily Star* (28 August 1912): 3, 21.
 16. 'Latest Invaders of Dominion Set Peaceful Indians at War'.
 17. Ibid.
 18. Letters patent; 'New Film Company Does Unique Work'; *Lovell's Montreal Directory* (1913): 967, 1847; *Lovell's Montreal Directory* (1914): 1336.
 19. 'Engaging People of [sic] Canadian Pictures', *Moving Picture World* (3 August 1912): 455; 'Frank Crane a Comet Director', *Moving Picture News* (2 December 1911): 22.
 20. 'East Wind Woos Belle of Indians'. Austin claimed to have taken part in the invasion of Cuba as a Commissioned officer. 'Operator Stands Washed of Lake St. Louis', *Montreal Daily Star* (30 August 1912): 17.
 21. 'East Wind Woos Belle of Indians'. One should therefore not be surprised to find the director of this 'authentic' Indian picture quoted in a newspaper report as instructing his male lead in the following fashion: 'By the way, Fred, remember about your arms – don't crook your elbows ... You look as if you were walking along 42nd street.' 'Latest Invaders of Dominion Set Peaceful Indians at War'.
 22. 'A Great Battle Was Fought To-Day on the Banks of the St. Lawrence', *Montreal Standard* (28 September 1912).
 23. 'Dollard's Men Await Approach of Wild Indians', *Montreal Daily Star* (27 August 1912): 2.
 24. 'East Wind Woos Belle of Indians'; 'Latest Invaders of Dominion Set Peaceful Indians at War'; Michael D. McNally, 'The Indian Passion Play: Contesting the Real Indian in *Song of Hiawatha* Pageants, 1901–1965', *American Quarterly* 58:1 (March 2006): 112; 'The Film and Canada: The Motion Picture Played a Part in Populating a Country', *Canadian Film Weekly* (11 July 1951): 4–5.
 25. 'Dollard's Men Await Approach of Wild Indians'.
 26. 'The Film and Canada: The Motion Picture Played a Part in Populating a Country'. Warwick's series was entitled *Canada 'England's Premier Colony'*. Following Charles Urban's departure from Warwick, the series's title was changed to *Living Canada*.
 27. *The Charles Urban Trading Co. Catalogue* (November 1903): 31.
 28. 'Caughnawaga Braves Ready for Picture Men', *Montreal Daily Star* (3 August 1912): 3.
 29. The resulting view was *Danse indienne*, No. 1000 in the Lumière's catalog.
 30. 'Hiawatha's Story to Be Told at the Lacrosse Match', *Montreal Daily Star* (22 June 1911): 4; 'Latest Invaders of Dominion Set Peaceful Indians at War'.
 31. The resulting film, entitled *Indians at the M.A.A.A. Grounds*, was exhibited in Montreal in September 1911. The footage was included the following year in a Kinemacolor feature film, *Canada: Nova Scotia to British Columbia*. By then, the catalogue's description claimed that the footage depicted authentic 'ceremonial rites amongst the Iroquois Indians ...'. *Moving Picture World* (27 May 1911): 1183; 'Hiawatha's Story to Be Told at the Lacrosse Match'; *Montreal Daily Star* (8 September 1911): 2; *Kinemacolor Film Catalogue* (1912–13): 274–278.
 32. 'Caughnawaga Braves Ready for Picture Men'. See also 'Battle of the Long Sault – First Production of the British American Film Mfg. Co.', *Moving Picture News* (7 December 1912): 13–14.
 33. 'Battle of the Long Sault – First Production of the British American Film Mfg. Co.'.
 34. 'Caughnawaga Braves Ready for Picture Men'.
 35. Johnny Beauvais, *Kahnawake: une vision mohawk du Canada* (Kahnawake: Khanata Industrie, ca. 1985), 136–137.
 36. 'Caughnawaga Braves Ready for Picture Men', *Montreal Daily Star* (3 August 1912): 3.

37. Beauvais, 137.
38. McNally, 107.
39. 'Latest Invaders of Dominion Set Peaceful Indians at War'; 'Indian Chief Gone to Happy Hunting Ground – Joe. Beauvais of Iroquois Tribe, Figured in Motion Pictures on Two Continents', *Montreal Daily Star* (7 March 1913): 3.
40. 'Caughnawaga Braves Ready for Picture Men'.
41. Lionel Groulx, *Dollard est-il un mythe?* (Montreal: Fides, 1960), 11–12.
42. 'Indians March on Montreal'.
43. Mary Hartwell Catherwood, *The Romance of Dollard* (New York: Century Co., ca. 1889).
44. The film's synopses can be found in 'Fighting the Battle of the Long Sault Over Again', *Montreal Standard* (21 September 1912): 1, 3; 'Battle of the Long Sault, First Production of the British Film Mfg. Co.', *Toronto Star Weekly* (22 February 1913): 19.
45. 'Indians March on Montreal'; 'Big Battle Rages Before the Camera', *Montreal Daily Star* (27 September 1912): 3; 'A Great Battle Was Fought To-Day on the Banks of the St. Lawrence', *Montreal Standard* (28 September 1912): 1, 28.
46. 'Sunless Weather Is Costing "Movies" Men \$3,000 a Week – They Can't Take Any Pictures Out at Châteauguay While Old Sol Is Bashful', *Montreal Herald* (5 September 1912): 1.
47. 'Dollard's Men Await Approach of Wild Indians – Motor Launches Attack Picture Camp Expecting to Witness Big Battle'.
48. 'Camera Records This in Half Second's Time', *Montreal Daily Star* (29 August 1912): 3.
49. 'East Wind Woos Belle of Indians'.
50. Ibid.
51. 'Ouimetoscope', *La Patrie* (Montreal) (28 December 1912): 7.
52. 'The Lyric', *Montreal Daily Star* (26 December 1912): 2. While Léo-Ernest Ouimet fought for many years to keep his Ouimetoscope open on Sundays (a right he eventually secured for all exhibitors operating in the province of Quebec), the Lyric Hall chose to submit to the Lord Day's act. This simple fact illustrates the wide gulf dividing Francophones and Anglophones in the province of Quebec in the transitional era: whereas Francophone exhibitors fought to preserve their (mostly working class) patrons's access to leisure activities, many Anglophone exhibitors tried to signal their acceptance of middle class values by observing Sunday laws.
53. 'Battle of Long Sault Is Feature at Lyric', *Montreal Daily Star* (31 December 1912): 10.
54. *Montreal Daily Star* (4 January 1913): 19.
55. *Montreal Daily Star* (1 February 1913): 23.
56. 'Battle of Long Sault Is Feature at Lyric'.
57. See, for instance: 'His Majesty's Theatre', *Sherbrooke Daily Record* (12 March 1913): 7; 'The Princess Theatre', *Chatham [Ont.] Daily Planet* (26 March 1913): 8.
58. *Toronto Star Weekly* (22 February 1913): 19.
59. 'Censors Reject Four Film Plays', *Chicago Daily Tribune* (26 March 1914): 7.
60. 'New Film Company Does Unique Work'. See, also: 'Film Company Buys Property for Studio', *Montreal Daily Star* (17 October 1912): 21; 'Le cinema au Canada', *La Patrie* (Montreal) (24 October 1912): 13. Frank Beresford had stated to the press a few weeks earlier: 'We will take scenes in the streets of Montreal – and we may be able to depart a little from the Canadian field we have laid out for ourselves, and create some Russian views – for there is a good deal in the streets of Montreal in the winter time that is similar to Russia.' 'Latest Invaders of Dominion Set Peaceful Indians at War'.
61. 'Taking Moving Picture Films in Canada', *Montreal Standard* (25 January 1913): 23.
62. 'Film Company Buys Property for Studio'.
63. 'Make Moving Pictures in an Extensive Studio', *Montreal Daily Star* (18 January 1913): 34.
64. Ibid; 'Taking Moving Picture Films in Canada'.
65. 'Taking Moving Picture Films in Canada'.
66. Ibid.
67. In 1922, Joseph-Arthur Homier directed another film based on the same story in and around Kahnawake. 'Le Film canadien', *La Presse* (Montreal) (11 November 1922): 39.
68. 'In the World of Films', *Montreal Saturday Mirror* (22 March 1913): 15; 'Well Known Turner Twins' and 'Two Young Actors', *Montreal Daily Star*, (1 March 1913): 10; 'They Are the Turner Twins and They Pose for the "Movies"', *Montreal Herald* (1 March 1913): 19; *American Film Institute Catalog* (<http://www.afi.com/members/catalog/AbbrView.aspx?s=1&Movie=16332>, last accessed 2 June 2006).
69. 'Indian Chief Gone to Happy Hunting Ground'.
70. 'Battle of the Long Sault', *Moving Picture News* (7 December 1912): 13.
71. 'With the Movies', *Montreal Saturday Mirror* (1 February 1913): 15. See also 'Hudson Bay Story', *Montreal Daily Star* (1 March 1913): 10; 'Indian Chief Gone to Happy Hunting Ground'.
72. 'New Film Company Does Unique Work'; 'Battle of Plains of Abraham Will Be Re-Enacted', *Montreal Herald* (4 September 1912): 1.
73. On this most important strand of film production in the 1910s, see Kevin Brownlow, *Behind the Mask of*

- Innocence: Sex, Violence, Prejudice, Crime; Films of Social Conscience in the Silent Era* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990).
74. 'Motion Pictures Made in Canada – Watch for the Canadian Flag in "Briam" Films', *Montreal Herald* (15 March 1913): 95.
 75. 'In the Motion Picture Field', *Montreal Herald* (31 May 1913): 21.
 76. 'Notes of the Trade', *Moving Picture World* (3 October 1914): 78.
 77. 'Frank Crane a Canuck', *Moving Picture World* (7 December 1912): 957. Quoted in Morris, 48.
 78. 'Seventeen Heroes to Die for Their Country the First Bright Morning'.
 79. Ibid.
 80. Ibid.
 81. McNally, 112.
 82. 'Battle of Long Sault Is Featured at Lyric', *Montreal Daily Star* (31 December 1912): 10.
 83. 'Battle of Plains of Abraham Will Be Re-Enacted'.
 84. 'La Bataille des Plaines sur cinéma', *Le Soleil* (Quebec) (13 August 1913): 1; L.-H. Crépault, 'L'Histoire du cinéma au Canada', *Ciné-Journal* (25 October 1913): 65.
 85. Gary W. Harner, 'The Kalem Company, Travel and On-Location Filming: The Forging of an Identity', *Film History* 10:2 (1998): 188–207.
 86. The two Kalem films shot near Kingston in 1909 were *The Girl Scout, or the Canadian Contingent in the Boer War* and *The Cattle Thieves*. Other Canadian subjects include: *A Priest of the Wilderness: Father Jogue's Mission to the Iroquois* (1909), *The Perversity of Fate* (1910), *The Canadian Moonshiners* (1910), *White Man's Money the Indian's Curse* (1910), *A Leap for Life, or Trappers and Indians in Canada* (1910), *The Conspiracy of Pontiac* (1910) and *Her Indian Mother* (1910). Herbert Reynolds, letter to Charlie Keil, 3 October 1997.
 87. 'On ne peut expliquer ce triste incident', *Le Soleil* (Quebec) (11 September 1913): 10.
 88. 'Powder Explosion Hurts Man Badly – Quebecker Employed with Moving Picture Company Is in Hospital', *Quebec Chronicle* (10 September 1913): 5.
 89. Francis Parkman, *Montcalm and Wolfe* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1884).
 90. W. Stephen Bush, 'A Great Historical Subject – Wolfe, or the Conquest of Quebec, Admirably Done by the Kalem Company on Historic Ground', *Moving Picture World* (21 February 1914): 954–955.
 91. 'The Man of Shame Filmed in Quebec', *Moving Picture World* (9 October 1915): 292.
 92. Jolo, 'The Man of Shame', *Variety* (29 October 1915): 23.
 93. 'Canadian Bioscope Co. [ad.]', *Moving Picture World* (6 September 1913): 1095.
 94. Morris, 49–51.
 95. *Moving Picture World* (28 November 1914): 1257.
 96. Morris, 51–54.
 97. This figure does not include documentaries. Pierre Berton, *Hollywood's Canada: The Americanization of Our National Image* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1975), 16.
 98. Gilbert Seldes, *The 7 Lively Arts* (New York: Sagamore Press, 1957 [1924]), 16.

Abstract: An experiment in 'historically correct' Canadian photoplays: Montreal's British American Film Manufacturing Co., by Louis Pelletier

The British American Film Manufacturing Co. (Briam) was created in 1912 by entrepreneurs who saw Canadian nationalism as a commercial opportunity. In accordance with ideas widely held within the moving picture industry in the transitional era, Briam aimed to produce and market films connoting genteel values such as education, nationalism and patriotism. Its project was to re-enact events from Canadian history on the actual locations where they had taken place. For added 'realism', most of its films were to feature 'show Indians' from the Kahnawake Mohawk reservation. However, industrial rationalization and the increased sophistication of narrative films turned out by the leading US film producers soon put an end to this experiment in 'historically correct' Canadian photoplays.

Myth and movie making: Karl Brown and the making of *Stark Love*

John White

In 1925, Karl Brown was 28 years old and had been in the motion picture business for 14 years, having worked his way up from film developer at Kinemacolor (the early color movie studio) to cameraman for the D.W. Griffith company. His early days with Griffith were first spent as an errand boy, working from sun-up to well past sundown performing any task, however menial, for the legendary and innovative cameraman Billy Bitzer. This experience familiarized him with the camera's every spring and sprocket, enabling him to achieve a number of remarkable cinematic effects which, in due course, won him promotion to chief cameraman for actor/director Elmer Clifton.¹

After a short stint in the military at the end of World War I, Brown moved from the Griffith studio to Paramount where filming *The Covered Wagon* (1923) for director James Cruze promised to be his 'big break.' On the strength of the film's great success, Brown was able to convince producer Walter Wanger (then running Paramount's east coast studio operation) to let him direct an original story of his own. The key selling point: the picture would capitalize on the new trend in raw, semi-documentary films begun by Robert Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* (1922) and continued by *The Covered Wagon*.²

The September, 1925 issue of *Motion Picture Classic* had predicted that Cruze's dedication to a realistic portrayal of historic – rather than fictional – characters would 'make a \$2,000,000 difference in the business that the production will do ... Before it is finished, the James Cruze production should gross \$4,000,000'.³ *The Covered Wagon* had cost \$782,000 to make and eventually had a box office gross of \$3,800,000.⁴

This was a point the studio-savvy Brown knew

his bosses would understand: art for art's sake may be commendable, but art for the bottom line is the goal. In point of fact, after the international success of *Nanook*, Paramount's Jesse Lasky had commissioned Robert Flaherty to make a movie about life in the South Seas, *Moana*.⁵ In reviewing it, John Grierson famously wrote that, 'The film is unquestionably a great one, a poetic record of Polynesian tribal life', coining the word 'documentary' to describe its special qualities.⁶ However, not only were Flaherty's slow filming methods maddening to Paramount executives (as an amateur ethnologist, he preferred to get to know his subjects and to participate in their daily life and rituals before filming), but the movie was a box office failure, grossing only \$150,000.⁷

Despite the glowing reviews, after a screening of *Moana* for Paramount's publicity department, a sales staffer summed up the studio's disappointment in the picture: 'Where's the blizzard?' he asked. Flaherty never made another film for Paramount.⁸

In Brown's unpublished memoir, 'The Paramount Adventure,' he reveals his intimate understanding of the personalities and powerful egos that made up the studio's executive hierarchy: Adolph Zukor, founder and President; B.P. Schulberg, the Hollywood studio head; Jesse Lasky, Vice President of Operations and major shareholder; Walter Wanger, in charge of the rival New York studio; and various other middle- and lower-level functionaries. Brown deftly used this knowledge of the studio's political structure to mount a campaign over several

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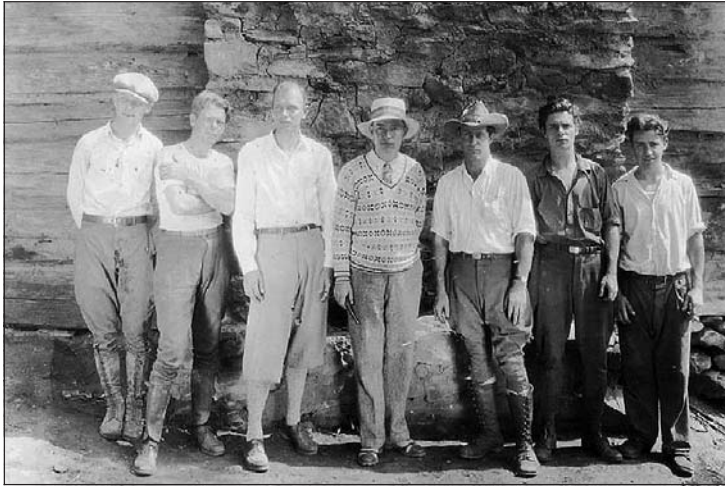


Fig. 1. The *Stark Love* film crew. Karl Brown is in the center, flanked by Paul Wing on his right and Jim Murray on his left. At the extreme left is possibly Bob Roberts, their Robbinsville 'chauffeur.' Murray was a former cavalry officer, therefore the cowboy hat, jodhpurs and riding boots. Brown's choice of headgear was probably inspired by his idol, D.W. Griffith.

months which ultimately secured Paramount's backing.⁹

Besides Brown's passionate sales pitch, three key points helped convince Walter Wanger to approve the film's initial funding: (1) the new movie would carry forward the pioneer theme of *The Covered Wagon*; (2) like the Flaherty films, it would feature non-actors in their natural, primitive, rugged environs; and, (3) perhaps most importantly, it would cost only \$40,000 to make. This would be a small investment in case the studio found itself backing another *Moana*.

Perhaps the most unusual element of Brown's approach was that an idea was all he had to sell. The script was not written, nor was it clear in Brown's mind exactly what he would film. He had read Lucy Furman's 'The Quare Women', in the *Atlantic Monthly*, and fortunately Walter Wanger liked *The Atlantic Monthly*, although he had not read Miss Furman's story.¹⁰

Lucy Furman was a teacher at The Hindman Settlement School, located on Troublesome Creek in the Appalachian Mountains. Her stories were observations of mountain families: '... baptisms, feuds, sudden deaths, and murder ... reports on mountain preachers with their stern creeds and...the humor that arises when children fostered by one culture are confronted by their teachers ("quare women") of another culture'.¹¹

Brown told Wanger he wanted to make a movie about the kinds of people Furman wrote about, primitive, mountain people – present-day 'pioneers.' He wanted to film a story about how they lived, particularly what their lives were like *inside* those log cabins. *The Covered Wagon* had been about the vast, grand

exteriors of pioneer life. His next movie would focus on the interior lives of those same kinds of people.¹²

In an excerpt from 'The Paramount Adventure' published by J. W. Williamson in *The Appalachian Journal*, Karl Brown tells how, after Walter Wanger gave him a \$1,000 advance to film scenes for the proposed location, he literally 'took the money and ran.' Before another executive such as B.P. Schulberg could cancel the project, Brown located Jim Murray, his camera assistant, and they dashed off to New Orleans by train to begin their search for a location, actors, and a story.¹³

Eventually, he and Murray found a suitable base camp for their film crew in the Santeetlah Mountains of Graham County, North Carolina near Robbinsville, now the site of the Santeetlah Dam and a 3,000 acre lake. Finding a site for their camp, which they christened 'The Polo Field', was in large measure due to the help of Horace Kephart, the great outdoor writer who lived in Bryson City, not far from Robbinsville.¹⁴

Brown had happened upon a copy of Kephart's *Our Southern Highlanders* in a bookstore in Asheville, North Carolina.¹⁵ The book is an account of the author's early years in the Smoky Mountains when, in his forties, he turned his back on civilization to return to a more primitive, rugged existence such as experienced by America's first settlers and pioneers. Kephart was a highly educated lover of literature and languages. As a librarian he had worked at Yale and Cornell and major libraries in Italy and Munich. At the time of his exodus from the modern world he was the librarian for the St. Louis Mercantile Library. He had chosen this position over one offered at Princeton University because the Mercantile Library specialized in holdings about the West and he wanted to oversee the expansion of a library devoted to America's frontier history.

Kephart was no average Appalachian character. By the time Brown sought him out, Kephart had lived in the area for more than 20 years. He had not only studied the mountaineers and written about them, he had lived their way of life and had earned their trust and respect.¹⁶ Kephart secured drivers for them, a mountain guide, and an introduction to the Robbinsville sheriff, as well as providing advice about how to deal with the mountaineers. 'Do whatever you do honestly and openly, without the slightest trace of pretense. You never know what eyes are watching you from the nearest thicket.' Brown could not have asked for a better advisor and consultant.¹⁷

Kephart's influence on Brown's film cannot be discounted. Indeed, mountain dialect identical to passages found in *Our Southern Highlanders* often surfaces in the onscreen titles of *Stark Love*:

'You wimmen folks skin up this hawg.'

'Gimme that sack, I wouldn't have Dad and the boys see fer nuthin'.'

'[Barb'ry] You're different and hadn't oughter be let git wore out with work and babies. You got a right to live and be loved and respected and pleased, even if you are a woman.'

Even in Brown's memoir one can hear Kephart's voice in several of the passages. In telling how he finally hit upon the story for his film, Brown recounts a confrontation in the Snowbird Mountains with the father of a potential leading lady. The father is a large, bearded, threatening brute, enraged by the Paramount group's dubious intentions:

'You leave my wommern-folks be. They ain't none of 'em agoen to be no movie Jezebel for you or nobody else ...'

According to Brown, someone then took him aside and said, 'Don't pay no mind to him ...'. It was explained that the father was a widower who had been promised a neighbor's young daughter for marriage. He now was 'sour' because his own son and the girl had run away to Berea College after a fight between the two men. Unexpectedly, Brown had been handed the story for his movie.¹⁸

J.W. Williamson questions the reliability of this anecdote. Ollie Mae Holland, then a student at Western Carolina Teachers College, told Williamson that the incident actually took place on the main street of Robbinsville, not high in the mountains. Miss Holland, a comely young teenager, had been stopped on the street by Brown or one of his crew and asked about trying out for the film's leading role. A family friend witnessed the conversation, interceded, and fetched Miss Holland's father. In 1990, Ollie Mae Holland Stone told Williamson that her father said to her, 'Young lady, you cannot have any part in it'. Then she added, 'My father was a nice looking, well-educated man, but he didn't want his daughter anywhere near the movies'.¹⁹

Brown, in fact, told reporters more than one version of how the story originated. In newspaper interviews soon after the film's release, Brown said that the idea for the movie came to him while he was



reading Appalachian stories on the set of *The Covered Wagon* during breaks in the filming in Utah.²⁰ However, the story actually may have been inspired by yet another source: Horace Kephart. Brown acknowledges that *Our Southern Highlanders* so enthralled him when he first discovered it that he read it from cover to cover at one sitting in his hotel room in Asheville. The essential question of Brown's movie, 'What happens in those log cabins in the mountains?' was also addressed from time to time in Kephart's book. As a lone wanderer of the mountains, Kephart often sought shelter in the one- or two-room log cabins of the mountain people. He wrote about the necessary disregard for modesty at bedtime:

Naturally, there can be no privacy or delicacy in such a home. I never will forget my embarrassment about getting to bed the first night I ever spent in a one-room cabin where there was a good-sized family ... I just 'shucked off my clothes,' tumbled in, turned my face to the wall, and immediately everybody else did the same.²¹

The idea for the movie's central conflict, the battle between father and son for the affections of a young girl, may also find its origin in Kephart's chapter on 'The Blood Feud.' In this section of his book he discusses the fighting nature of mountain people (both men and women), how women often purposefully instigated fights among men, and the various forms of blood feuds:

The average mountain woman is as combative in spirit as her menfolk. She would despise any man who took insult or injury without showing

Fig. 2. Brown's film set out to reveal 'what went on inside those cabins.' Forrest James and Helen Mundy in *Stark Love*, working on location in the Santeetlah Mountains.



Fig. 3. The central conflict in *Stark Love*, where Rob Warwick (Forrest James) battles his father Jason (Silas Miracle) over Barbara's affections, was rooted in Horace Kephart's stories of Appalachian life, *Our Southern Highlanders*.

fight. In fact, the woman, in many cases, deliberately stirs up trouble out of vanity, or for the sheer excitement of it ... Three of this woman's brothers had been shot in frays. One of them killed the first husband of her sister, who married again, and whose second husband was killed by a man with whom she then tried a third matrimonial venture.²²

In *Stark Love*, the leading lady is all the above. She is the cause of the conflict between father and son and, near the end of the film, when the son is unable to protect her from his brutal father, she takes the matter and a sharp axe into her own hands.

Regardless of the story's source, and in spite of Brown's possible misrepresentation, it cannot be denied that *Stark Love* is a fine film. Reviews of the time spoke of 'the magnitude of Brown's accomplishment' in shooting in the 'remotest ranges of the Smoky Mountains', and using non-actors chosen from 'the most primitive people to be found in America'.²³

Yet, according to Brown, the film was a 'palid ghost' of the original movie submitted to Paramount. Rocked by recent scandals and fearful of severe censorship now being imposed by local and State governments, the studio insisted that Brown cut a violent rape scene which he considered important to the narrative. In its place he was directed to end the picture with a dramatic flood. Brown always considered this sequence as 'a cheap, melodramatic trick, completely out of key with the picture'.²⁴

Regardless, critics praised the film, often comparing it to *Nanook of the North*, or *Moana*, or *Grass*

(Cooper and Schoedsack, 1925). But while lauding Brown's achievement, a few writers noted that not all the 'actors' were authentic mountaineers. The *New York Times* acknowledged that Helen Mundy was not a mountain girl and that she was discovered at a downtown Knoxville 'soda fountain'.²⁵ In fact, she even had show business experience, dancing in *George White's Scandals*. This had been duly noted by Paul Wing, Brown's business manager, who discovered Mundy and recommended her to Brown.²⁶

Stark Love would be the only film in which Helen Mundy, or leading man Forrest James, ever appeared. In Helen's case she wore out her welcome with Paramount. During the filming, sensing her importance to the picture, she became unreliable and demanding. Karl Brown said that she was the most difficult actress with whom he had ever worked. After the filming, she was even worse. At one of the movie premieres, when asked her opinion of *Stark Love*, she told reporters, 'I don't care for it myself ... You might, but I can't find anything appealing about it ...'.²⁷

In spite of everything, she was offered a six-month contract by the studio and a chance to star in a movie about the South Seas. During this time she even dated William Powell, a hugely successful actor, who later gained movie fame as Dashiell Hammett's Nick Charles in *The Thin Man*. Yet once in New York, the studio and Helen came to a parting of ways over her headstrong manner. Surprisingly, she didn't seem upset: 'It may all seem like roses and honey ... but it's awfully hard work and awfully dull sometimes. I don't believe I want one of these "careers" you hear about. I believe I'd rather be married'.²⁸

Soon after, she did marry band leader Donald Barringer. They moved to Kalamazoo, Michigan and reared two girls and two boys. Donald eventually became manager of a clothing factory and they had, according to Helen, 'a wonderful marriage, almost a perfect marriage'. At the time of her death in 1987, at the age of 78, she had 11 grandchildren and 24 great-grandchildren.²⁹

Forrest James, *Stark Love's* leading man, was Helen's polar opposite, although he, too, seemed uninterested in a film career:

The youth [Forrest James] engaged as leading man was described by Mr. Brown as a good film prospect. He was paid \$30 a week, and he thought Mr. Brown was mad to pay him so much money for doing such silly things ...

Mr. Brown says that [Forrest] James would not

consider acting in another picture, and that to get away from the producer James went into the woods with his gun after finishing his film work, saying that he would not return until Brown and his assistants had left. James gives an astoundingly appealing performance.³⁰

After the film became a critical success Paramount seemed concerned about losing this new young talent who simply had walked into the wilderness, away from a promising screen career, and purported to launch a campaign seeking his whereabouts.

What is truly strange about this is that Karl Brown knew exactly where to find Forrest James: on the campus of the Alabama Polytechnic Institute in Auburn, today known as Auburn University. More than likely, it was Brown himself, in the company of Jim Murray and Paul Wing, who had discovered Forrest (Fob) James, probably in a hotel restaurant in Nashville just before Fob, his twin brother William Everett (Ebb), and the rest of their baseball teammates were to play Vanderbilt in the Spring of 1926.

Fob was spotted by one of the Paramount men and asked to come up to their suite to talk about the movie role. After an extended conversation, Fob politely thanked the men, then rejoined Ebb to recount what had happened. Fob thought the men were frauds and Ebb tended to agree with him – but he wanted to find out for himself, firsthand. So he went to the hotel room, posing as Fob and ‘resumed the talks.’ After talking with them for awhile, Ebb shook hands and politely left, more than ever convinced that the men were charlatans. The twins then conferred with an ex-Auburn pitcher, Pat Moulter, who had traveled to Nashville with the team. In due course they decided that Pat should slip on an Auburn sweater, go up to the suite, and pose as their Coach Morey in order to get a third opinion about the trio. Pat followed through, went up to the suite, had a pleasant chat, shook hands, came back down to the restaurant and assured the James brothers that their assumptions were absolutely correct – the men were obviously grifters.

Later at dinner, the story made the rounds among the ballplayers and they started harassing Fob, calling him ‘Rudolph’ or ‘Ramon’ or ‘John Gilbert,’ some of the names of the day’s leading actors. This caught Coach Morey’s attention and he asked the brothers what all the commotion was about. When they related the story to him, Morey checked



Fig. 4. ‘Helen Monday Barringer, Knoxville’s moving picture star and heroine of *Stark Love*, is playing her greatest role. Location is in Kalamazoo, Mich., and her present contract stipulates the loving care of a ten-pound daughter’ Unidentified newspaper clipping.

with the hotel clerk and found that, indeed, these men were Paramount filmmakers and they had just departed for Knoxville. Somehow, Morey was able to locate them, resume genuine talks, and it was he who negotiated Fob’s contract. By the way, Brown did not consider twin brother Ebb as a good ‘movie type’.³¹

So, who was Fob James?

Fob and Ebb were the twin sons of James Edward James and his wife, Willie Edmond Bedell James, and were born on their father’s plantation in Waverly, Alabama in 1905. Waverly is a small village 70 miles northeast of Montgomery and 12 miles northwest of Auburn. Their father died when they were 12 years old and Mrs. James then moved Fob, Ebb, and two other sons, Edward and Louis, to Auburn. There she established a boarding house serving meals to 100 students from the nearby university. She also accepted 15 college student boarders at \$26 a month. An early tenant was the legendary Auburn football coach, Ralph ‘Shug’ Jordan.³² In this manner Mrs. James maintained ownership of one thousand acres in Waverly and sent all four sons to college.³³



Fig. 5. Studio publicity insisted that Forrest James was a barefoot hillbilly who had vanished back into the mountains. Unidentified clipping.

Fig. 6. The James boys playing baseball for Auburn in 1926. Fob is third from right, his twin brother Ebb on the extreme right.

Fob and Ebb excelled in athletics. A sportswriter of the time noted that, although they weighed a mere 165 pounds, they made up for their lack of size with 'plenty of pluck, aggressiveness, and keenness in athletic maneuvers'.³⁴ In college, they were



the first Auburn athletes to letter in four sports: basketball, baseball, football, and track. A special award, The Porter Cup, was presented to them upon their graduation.³⁵ 'Shug' Jordan remembered them as two of the most famous Southern athletes of the 1920s, known for their athleticism, their sportsmanship, and their good looks: 'If they had played today, there's no telling how much publicity they would have gotten'.³⁶ In their senior year at Auburn, Ebb was captain of the baseball team while Fob was captain of the 1927–28 basketball team which, after posting a 20–2 won/loss record, was runner-up to Ole Miss in the Southeastern Conference. Auburn's only defeats were two one-point losses to Ole Miss (a team that also featured a set of twin players, Ary and Cary Phillips).³⁷

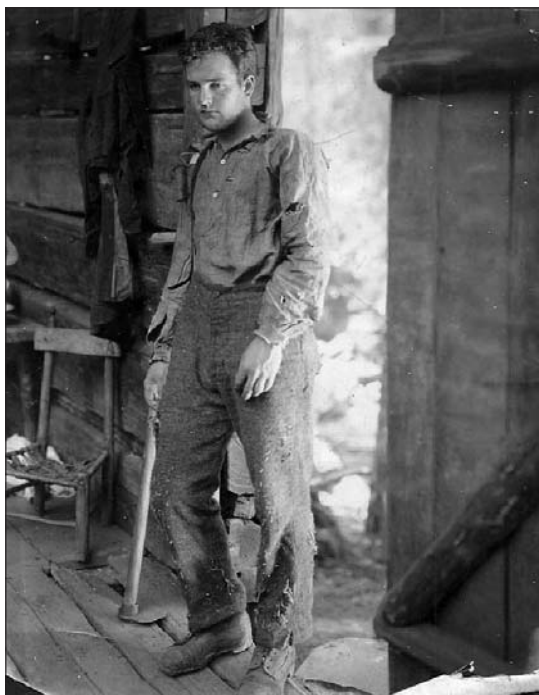
Frank Dubose, a basketball teammate of the James twins, recalled them fondly nearly 78 years later at the age of 100. 'What they lacked in ability, they put forth in fight. They were really a ball of fire'.³⁸

After graduation, both Fob and Ebb played minor league baseball, then became high school coaches. Ebb coached basketball at Walker County High in Jasper, Alabama, then settled in Tuskegee, Alabama as a timber farmer and owner of a garden- ing business.

Fob married Rebecca Ellington of Opelika, Alabama and became a history teacher and coach, first at Enterprise, then Lanett where his teams won several state championships. He also managed Lanett's semi-professional baseball team. The team's sponsor was the West Point Manufacturing Company, later to become West Point Pepperell. It was through this association that Fob eventually made the transition from education to business. In 1940, Fob founded Community Services, Inc., a concessions company which provided food, snacks, soft drinks, even headache powders, exclusively to the huge West Point Manufacturing mill. It was very hard but profitable work. In time, Fob became one of Alabama's largest Coca-Cola retailers.³⁹

Fob and Rebecca raised three sons: Fob Jr., Cal, and Bob. The eldest, Forrest Hood (Fob) James, Jr., was an All-American halfback at Auburn in 1957 and became Governor of Alabama twice (1979–1983 and 1995–1999). Incidentally, Cal played football for Auburn's great 1950s rival, Georgia Tech, under Hall of Fame Coach Bobby Dodd.

Far from being an illiterate mountaineer, Forrest James, Sr. was a man of impeccable manners, a dedicated family man, and a community leader (he



lost a Lanett mayoral race by a mere six votes). Most essentially, he was a devoted student of history. His son, Bob, asserts, 'He could tell you the year, month, and sometimes the day' of an historical event.⁴⁰

Forrest James passed away on 3 July 1973 at the age of 67. He had lived a quiet, rewarding life in small-town Southern America yet, as a young man, he had had the opportunity to be a film star. Paramount wanted to sign him for more pictures. His reviews were good for *Stark Love*. So why did he turn his back on Hollywood?

According to Bob James and the late sports-writer Paul Cox, Willie Edmond Bedell James' disapproval of Hollywood and movie people played a large part in Fob's decision to walk away. In a scrapbook assembled and kept by Mrs. James, she chronicled the sports career of her twins, also devoting several pages to *Stark Love*. Brittle, yellowed, 80-year-old newspaper clippings, photographs, and movie stills document the events before, during, and after Fob's participation in the movie. At the beginning of this section she pasted a platitude, possibly cut from a magazine. In large black type it reads, 'I like to play a game in which I have a chance of winning. That is why I have nothing to do with liquor or with an athlete who drinks.'

This was a lady who had made hard sacrifices for her four sons. She expected them to finish col-

lege, find good jobs, and uphold the good name of James. At the time, Hollywood's reputation was at its lowest. The Hays Office had been instituted in 1922 to restore the good name of an industry rocked by scandals. The morphine addiction and death of top Hollywood star Wallace Reid, the trial of 'Fatty' Arbuckle, the murder of director William Desmond Taylor, gave many the impression that Hollywood – and particularly the Paramount Studio, home to Reid, Arbuckle and Taylor – was a modern day Sodom and Gomorrah.

So it is understandable why Ollie Mae Holland's father, 'didn't want his daughter anywhere near the movies'. Willie James felt similarly about her son. For that matter, Forrest James may have decided on his own that Hollywood was not for him.

According to an article in Mrs. James' scrapbook, probably from the local *Opelika-Auburn Eagle*:

They say that 'being an actor' made no difference to Fob. When college opened there he was studying books and athletics and making a success at both.⁴¹

Fob was a sophomore in college when he acted in *Stark Love*. So why would Karl Brown – and Paramount – perpetuate the myth that Forrest James was an illiterate mountain lad? Karl Brown was a storyteller, and studio publicity was an integral part of the *Stark Love* story. There were comments made in local Alabama papers about the studio's publicity department labeling sports hero Forrest James an illiterate mountaineer, but the newspapers seemed to accept this as standard 'Hollywood' procedure and no cause for outrage or litigation.

The zenith of Karl Brown's career as a director was his masterwork, *Stark Love*, considered by the *New York Times* and the National Board of Review as one of the top films of 1927, perhaps the best year for silent movies according to Kevin Brownlow.⁴² But despite its critical success and its three week run in New York, *Stark Love* fared poorly in 'middle America.' It turned out to be a box office disappointment for the studio and Karl Brown's contract with Paramount was not renewed. Consequently, he began working for less prestigious studios, eventually abandoning his directing career to become a hack screenwriter of Hollywood potboilers like *Phantom Killer* (1942), *Hitler – Dead or Alive?* (1942) and *The Ape Man* (1943).⁴³

Stark Love was lost for many years. Paramount had melted down their prints to recover the silver

Fig. 7. After his appearance in *Stark Love*, Forrest James returned to Auburn. He became a successful Alabama businessman whose eldest son, Forrest Jr., was twice elected Governor of Alabama.

content. In 1968, Kevin Brownlow the film historian, critic, and documentarian, discovered a print in Prague at the Czech Film Archive. Copies were made for the Museum of Modern Art in New York City and the Library of Congress. UCLA, the George Eastman House, and The Wisconsin Center for Film and Theatre Research also obtained copies. In the last 37 years the movie has been screened at film festivals, shown on Public Television, and written about by film historians, critics, and a variety of other writers.⁴⁴

Shortly after he discovered the film in the late 1960s, Brownlow, through a piece of determined, amateur detective work, tracked down Karl Brown and his wife, the former actress/aviatrix Edna Mae Cooper. They were living in a small house in Laurel Canyon 'with practically no possessions'. Brown hadn't directed a film since 1938. He hadn't worked in the business for more than 16 years.

Brownlow encouraged Brown to write his

memoirs and the result was *Adventures with D.W. Griffith*. The book was a success among movie buffs so he followed it with 'Paramount Adventure,' a manuscript never published in its entirety.⁴⁵

Until Kevin Brownlow entered their lives, Karl Brown and Edna Mae Cooper were two forgotten old people living on the edges of an industry they had helped to build. Brownlow gave them a stage and an appreciative audience once again. Karl Brown's restored reputation was based largely on the fact that, long ago, he had directed a film in the wilds of Appalachia using 'real' Southern mountaineers.

During Karl Brown's forty year career in Hollywood there had been good work, even innovation, for which he had received no credit at all. So in his twilight years he was now willing to accept credit for some things he had not actually done (not unlike his old boss, the legendary D.W. Griffith).

More to the point, it made for a good story.

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Abstract: Myth and movie making: Karl Brown and the making of *Stark Love*, by John White

A notable early example of the docu-drama feature, *Stark Love* (1927) was filmed on location in the North Carolina mountains with a local cast of non-professionals. Since its rediscovery in the late 1960s it has been of great interest to both film historians and students of Appalachia. Through the use of personal papers, memoirs and other local history resources, this paper clarifies many of the myths surrounding its production and reception.