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## WORLD'S HISTORY IN FILMS NEW WAY OF RECORDING IT

David Wark Griffith Proves  
Value of His Method in  
"Birth of a Nation."

There is a new way of recording history. Carlyle, Motley, Macaulay, Hay, all the historians of all time, have placed the results of their research on paper. David Wark Griffith, actor, dramatist, scenario writer and director of motion pictures, places his results on a film. His plan for history making is to set up again in reality the scenes and actions of the past so that they may be visualized in a manner quite beyond the scope of type. Jacob Wark Griffith, his father, commanded a Confederate brigade and all his kinsfolk endured the terrible suffering of the post-bellum days. For years young Griffith has been planning ahead, silently devising ways for putting that epoch in our country's history on the screen, until finally as Director-in-Chief of the Mutual Film Organization he got a free hand, put his own capital and much cash from friends into the enterprise and started to "make a picture." The result is "The Birth of a Nation."

...served through his field glasses the disposition of the troops by his field lieutenants and then gave his directions over telephone wires run underground to all parts of the scene of action.

In staging Sherman's march to the sea, a small village of frame houses was built for the sole purpose of being burned down; Ford's Theatre at Washington was rebuilt in replica to the last detail in order to stage the assassination of Lincoln; the Assembly Chamber of the South Carolina Capitol was reproduced in the same way in order to get a scene lasting thirty seconds and showing the negro Legislature in session.

When he wanted to show the thrilling ride of the Ku Klux Klan, Griffith found that the roads in that section of the country were all oiled macadam. He needed dirt roads, so he went to the County Supervisors, obtained exclusive use of the roads in an area of three square miles for one whole day, hired a force of laborers to lay ten or twelve inches of dirt on the roads, and ran off his actors in the ordinary sense of the word. Then the workmen removed the dirt.

He staged an endless series of interior views showing Lincoln with his Cabinet, the surrender of Lee to Grant in the Wilmer-McLean house at Appomattox, the military hospital in the Patent Office at Washington, the homes of the South, the Southern and the other of the South, in which the love interest of the story centres, and he took a number of amazing scenes at night by the light of exploding incendiary bombs.

His choice of actors is based on his own ideas of what motion picture photography demands. "I don't want actors in the ordinary sense of the term," he says. "For the great historical characters I select people who 'act' as little as possible, but who look the characters and convey sincerity." The striking success of the principle is evidenced in the work of Joseph Hensberry as Lincoln. While he is on the screen the "great, far-seeing, silent man" seems alive before us.

What has hampered motion picture art in the past has been a lack of the big creative imagination that could visualize its possibilities and use commercial resources to make the vision an actuality. The young and indomitable Griffith had the vision and procured the resources. If he has not provided a pedantic history of the Civil War and the Reconstruction, he has at least linked history with poetry and produced an achievement which ranks favorably with that of any historical novelist of the past or present.

## Lithographs, Wood Blocks, Etchings Shown

The Berlin Photographic Company, No. 30 Madison Avenue, is showing, until June 30, original lithographs by Malvina Hoffman and Albert Stern; wood blocks in color by Edna B. Hopkins and Herbert M. Baer; etchings by George E. Burr, Ernest Haskell, Voigt Preisler, George Florman and Roy Partridge, and flower decorations by Mrs. Lawrence Wright.

Perhaps the most interesting of the group is the work of Mrs. Wright, who lacks the equipment of academic instruction, but who has nevertheless produced some striking results. Her pictures resemble the paintings on glass that were decorative units in some of the old-time clocks. They also suggest the colonial bandboxes with their quaint decorations. They

recall Rodon, as well. These are high-keyed and novel.

One notable contribution of hers deals with a fan, decorated after the French style. Little cupids are seen fitting about decoratively, and a classic beaker, that serves as a container for garish flowers, is delightfully shown on a bit of bobbin lace.

The wood blocks by Miss Hopkins are concerned with floral subjects. These are done in the Japanese style, and the results obtained are good. Morning glories, thorns, nasturtiums, nicotianas, grapes, wood asters, succalyptus and chrysanthemums are all pictorially shown.

The lithographs done by Malvina Hoffman are confined to one color. They are from studies made behind the scenes of the Russian ballet. Pavlova is brilliantly shown in a floral dance.

The offerings by Albert Stern were all seen at this gallery last January, and since then in the West-ern street.

The wood blocks by Mr. Baer deal

with bird themes. They are from studies made at the New York Zoological Gardens, in the Bronx. They include the bronze pigeon, macaw, the stork, a white cockatoo, myias and magpies. Each introduced color is done with a separate block printing. Mr. Baer has attained some excellent results in this field.

There are a few etchings by Ernest Haskell, showing figures and landscapes, and some colored etchings by George E. Burr.

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