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## 11,000,000 SEE THE "MOVIES" DAILY

By J. C. JESSEN

Staff Correspondent of the Motion Picture News

WITH one of every ten persons in the United States now daily attending motion picture theaters, this form of entertainment can truly be termed the universal amusement. The films constitute the programs of more than twenty thousand theaters in this country attended by 11,000,000 people daily, and this great army of pleasure-seekers does not represent any one, but every class of American citizens—old and young, rich and poor, the highbrows and the untutored.

The gigantic amusement purveying organizations require the investment of more than a billion dollars in studios and factories in this country alone, and fully one-third of that amount is expended annually for the making of films. More than 65 per cent of the motion pictures of the world are produced in United States, and of these 60 per cent are made in and about Los Angeles, now known as the photoplay stage of the world.

But of matters connected with the motion picture industry none is more sensational than the fact that the present-day system of making, distributing and showing the films has been established and developed to a state of near-perfection in a period of less than ten years. Up to 1905 the film entertainment was but a novelty, there were but a few places where subjects could be rented, and the number of theaters showing motion pictures exclusively could almost be counted on your fingers.

Invention of motion pictures can partially be attributed to a California incident. Two race horse men argued as to whether a horse, while running had more than two feet on the ground at any time. To prove this, 24 threads were stretched across the track, and the end of each attached to a separate camera. A horse ran down the stretch breaking each thread separately and exposing 24 photographic plates. One of the men took copies of the photographs to Europe where they caused numerous experiments. Finally the task of making motion pictures was given up because no flexible substitute for glass could be found.

Years later a New Jersey minister, trying to discover a way of making nonbreakable stereopticon slides for use in his Sunday school, made the discovery that celluloid was suitable. The substitute was immediately employed by a photograph supply manufacturer, which enabled Thomas Edison to perfect his kinesiograph, or peep-hole machine, first shown at Columbian Exposition, Chicago, in 1893. Forty feet of ribbon film, with continuity of action rolled past the lens in a cabinet with an intermittent movement that retained each picture before the peep-hole twice as long as it required to move the picture to this spot. Back of the film was an electric light, and directly in front of the lens a small hole through which the people could peep for the sum of five cents. The film had sprocket holes in the margin on one side and a corresponding sprocket was placed on the rollers.

This device served as an idea for Robert W. Paul of London, the firm of Lumiere & Sons of Paris and a man named Grey of New York city. Simultaneously these men thought of attaching the film to a stereopticon lamp and projecting the picture on a screen, and began working out machines which would do this properly. The first projected motion picture in America was that of Grey's eidoloscope in a basement store-room in New York city in 1895. Paul perfected his projecting machine in March, 1896, and Lumiere in 1897. At a later date, William Kennedy Laury Dixon, formerly with Paul, now employed by Thomas Edison, perfected the Edison kinesiograph. This device was a combination of the "peep-hole" invention, with sprockets on each side of the film introduced by Lumiere, a more accurate intermittent movement for the film carriage, and a powerful lamp perfected by Thomas Edison. Other machines appeared in America about the same time, but later patent rights were all merged with that of the Edison. The projection machines were crude and it has required much time and mechanical ingenuity to bring them to the state of perfection.

With machines made, a still greater problem of securing new interesting subjects confronted the showmen who took up the novelty. There being no completed motion pictures for sale, it was necessary for each exhibitor to make all his own subjects. No one thought of making pictures of plays. Instead, they caught finishes of races, scenes in prize fights, and topical events of a sensational nature.

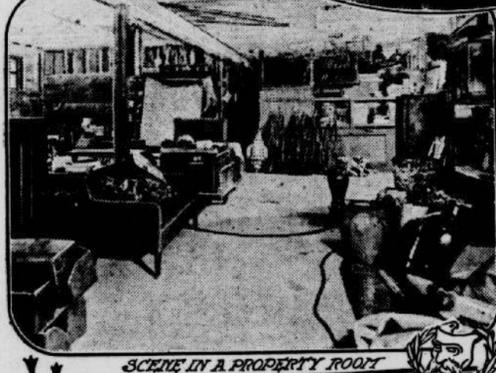
About this time a Kansas City operator of these machines, learning of the projecting machine, made plans for a concession at the Buffalo Pan-American exposition, which consisted of a railway illusion made possible by rocking the coach while pictures were projected on a screen in one end of the car. Later this was exhibited throughout the country in a specially constructed railroad coach, and the name, "Hale's Tour of the World," became famous.

The greatest step of the industry following the perfection of projectors, films and cameras was made simultaneously by Miles Brothers of New York and Eugene Kleins of Chicago. They established film markets or exchanges, where negatives were bought and prints sold or rented. This system served to solve the problem of distribution, by renting films to exhibitors, for this method is successfully used today throughout the world.

The exchange system assured a permanent film



CONSTRUCTED SETTING DUPLICATING SCENE IN NEW YORK CITY



SCENE IN A PROPERTY ROOM



OPEN AIR STAGE SCENE SHOWING TWO COMPANIES AT WORK

supply to exhibitors and storerooms were converted into theaters in all parts of the country. In less than two years more than ten thousand picture theaters were opened in the United States. The number in New York city alone totaled more than 1,200 January 1, 1907, and in Chicago there were 800 of a mushroom growth.

Many motion picture producing plants were established in many cities, and the film supply proved abundant for the rapidly increasing number of theaters. But there was no system to the production, the making of prints, preparing advertising matter for exhibitors, or giving heed to what is today considered the most important phase of the business—that of arranging a well-balanced program.

Manufacturers saw the necessity of not only making the subjects, but also maintaining their own system of exchanges for the purpose of safeguarding their own interests by controlling the films, and merged their interests in releasing companies. Now there are no less than ten corporations composed of owners of producing companies that have national releasing systems, with exchanges in all principal cities. These are capitalized in the millions and one is reputed to have made 1,500 per cent profit, while on the other hand others have operated continuously at a loss.

With the formation of big releasing companies and the general improvement of conditions of the industry, with regard to all phases, the most important to the ten millions of people of the United States who daily witness the showing of motion pictures is the great change for the betterment of production, and the realization by the manufacturers of the possibilities of photoplays.

In the standardization of the film the celluloid strip was gradually reduced in size from one having a picture two inches wide and one and one-half inches deep, to uniform size of picture, three-fourths of an inch deep by one inch in width. There are sixteen separate pictures to each linear foot of film, or 16,000 to a reel of 1,000 feet, which, when properly projected, is "run off" in eighteen minutes. Few motion picture lovers know that every minute approximately one thousand separate pictures are projected on the screen, each one separated from the adjoining one by a black line of the thickness of an average calling card.

Still stranger, it may seem, is the fact that about one-fourth of the time the pictures are hidden from view of the audience and the screen is black. This is caused by a revolving fan wheel or shutter passing in front of the projecting lens each time the film is advanced from one picture to another by the intermittent sprocket movement. A thousand feet of film which passes through the projecting machine is stationary three-fourths of the eighteen minutes required in projecting it, and in action but approximately four and a half minutes. This prevents blurring of the pictures and makes each individual picture or "frame" sharp from point of focus. The pictures are magnified from two to four hundred times their actual size by the projection, according to the size of the screen, distance from the lens and the lens itself.

The making of motion pictures is most interesting, and all studios are visited daily by hundreds. At a few visitors are permitted, but at the majority a "No Admittance" sign hangs over the entrance and no amount of talk or money will get the stranger past the gates. The studio in reality consists of an open-air platform, one enclosed entirely by glass, or a hall-like building with movable electric lights of such candle power as will make it light as day.

Birth of a Nation," adapted from the historical novel, "The Clansman," of thirteen and one-half reels, one realizes the thousands of details that must be considered in writing the scenario, arrangement of sets or scenes, and in the making of the picture.

Receiving the scenario, the director and players read the story and rehearsals of all scenes are held to give the players a keen insight into their respective parts.

There are two kinds of scenes in all photoplays; one is termed "interiors," comprising those that can be made at the studio and represent indoor scenes, and the other "exteriors," those that represent out-of-door settings. In practically all plays of present days the exteriors are made at rented homes, public buildings, beaches, in mountains, or at industrial plants, as the story may demand. When it is impossible to find such scenes as are needed they are designed and built to fit the requirements of the photoplay. In the case of filming "Damon and Pythias" amphitheaters and replicas of buildings in ancient Syracuse were constructed; for "The Rosary" an entire Irish village, with dwellings, churches, public and business buildings of early nineteenth century type were built; and for almost every play special buildings are erected. In some instances these have cost as much as \$5,000 or more, and were used only in one or two hundred feet of film.

The scenes of a photoplay are not taken in sequence, but according to convenience. At the studios from one to ten, or even fifteen, companies may be making scenes for different subjects all at one time, according to size of the stage and the size of settings in use. At the largest producing plant in the world, twenty to twenty-four companies of players are constantly at work.

The raw film is made in strips four hundred feet in length, wound on spools. After being exposed they are sent to laboratories, where they are developed.

The negative film is next threaded into a printing machine and an unexposed positive film is placed next to it but on the opposite side from an electric lamp. This machine operates automatically and "prints" the positive from the negative at the rate of several thousand feet per hour.

A motion picture studio is a veritable curiosity shop. In the wardrobe are to be found costumes of all ages and sizes, representing a great investment.

The "property" room contains almost anything that can be thought of. The pay rolls of the manufacturing companies range from \$1,000 to \$25,000 weekly where twenty or more companies are busy, the amounts varying according to number of producing companies, the class of professionals employed and quality of subjects made. In addition to this great expenditure totaling more than a quarter of a billion dollars a year for all companies in the United States, must be added cost of film, studio equipment and a hundred and one little items of expense that come up in the making of every picture. This vast amount constitutes the lion's share of production costs for motion pictures of the world, or 65 per cent.

The industry of the United States is centered at Los Angeles. Producers have found there are more sunny picture-making days in this vicinity than in any other part of the world, and, furthermore, any kind of scenery can be found within a radius of fifty miles of this southern California city. Mountains, sea, desert, tropical and frigid zones, metropolitan, village or country scenes are to be had by a short automobile ride.

In addition to the pictures made at studios there are hundreds of camera men employed or working independently traveling in all parts of the world securing travelogues or scenic pictures, and topical scenes of incidents that are used to make up what are termed "Weeklies." It is estimated that there are more than one hundred now with the various armies of the nations at war in Europe and scarcely a week passes that some traveling film makers do not market pictures depicting life and conditions in some remote part of the globe.

The principal educators of today have come to realize the importance of the motion picture for use in schools and colleges, and the time is not far distant when a projecting machine will be an important part of the equipment of our schools, the universities and many schools of the larger cities now having adopted this means of teaching.

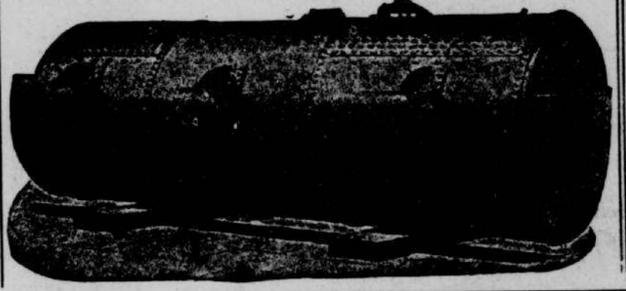
Motion pictures, fifteen years ago a novelty, ten years ago a feature added to vaudeville programs and termed "chasers" by the theater managers because they constituted the last number of the entertainment, usually causing people to leave, now serve as amusement to the greatest number of people. They have replaced, and the better subjects now command as high admission prices as comedy, drama and musical shows of the speaking stage in a majority of the best theaters of the large cities, and by their universal popularity have become known as the American amusement.

Neil Callahan

William McLean

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