



Bulletin

of the

Passaic County Historical Society

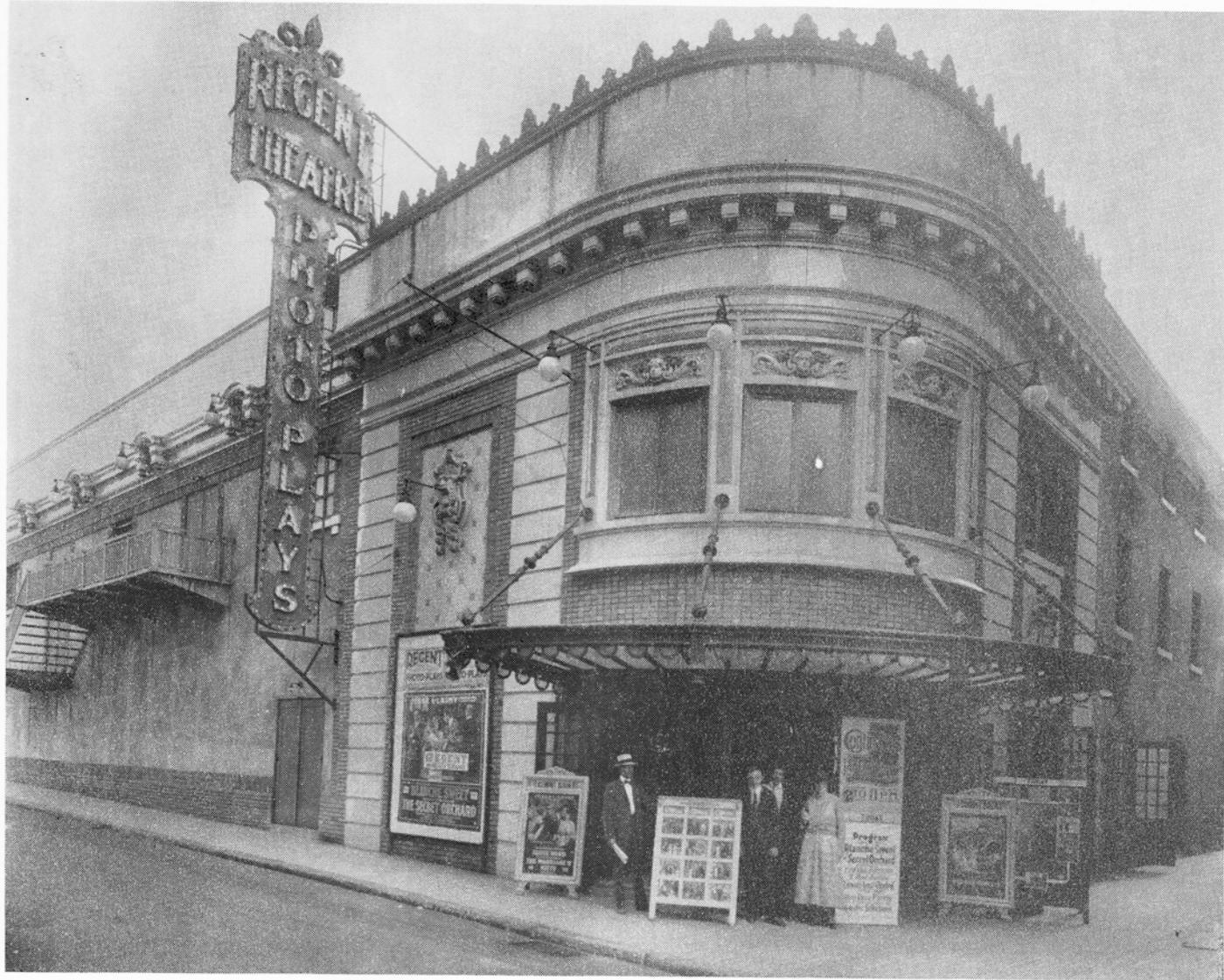
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Museum and Headquarters
LAMBERT CASTLE
Garret Mountain Reservation
Paterson, N. J.

Robert P. Brooks, Editor

The Birth and Early Development of the Motion Picture



THE FIRST MOTION PICTURE THEATRE IN PASSAIC COUNTY

The first theatre in the county built exclusively for showing motion pictures was the *Regent*. This beautiful, modern amusement house was conceived and erected by Jacob Fabian of Paterson who officially opened it to the

public on September 14, 1914. It stood between old Union Street (now called World Vet's Place) and Hamilton Street in Paterson.

Believing that its huge cost would prove to be a great liability to Mr. Fabian, it was fre-

quently referred to as "Fabian's Folly" during the early days in its existence. It took but a few years, however, for Mr. Fabian to show his friends how wrong they were. This playhouse for the movies was the forerunner of many others of the same type in Paterson and throughout the county for by 1915, the great progress made in the motion picture had created universal interest in that form of amusement. The next year, Max Gold, one of the first men in Paterson to operate picture shows, built the *Garden Theatre* which he operated at first but later sold it to Jacob Fabian. Then in 1923, Mr. Fabian leased H. B. Kitay's *Rivoli* and in 1925, he erected the beautiful *Fabian Theatre* on Church Street, Paterson.

Jacob Fabian and his sons, who were affiliated with their father, had by this time demonstrated their genius in the motion pictures and their ability to foresee a great new era in the industry. On March 6, 1926 an AP release from Los Angeles stated that Jacob Fabian and Sons had acquired a large block of stock in the West Coast Theatres, Inc., the largest company of its kind in America.

Subsequently, the Fabians bought large interests in the Stanley Corporation of America to whom they transferred their interests in the great many theatres which they owned and operated in Passaic and other northern counties of the state.

The *Regent* theatre no longer exists. Gone too are the old films seen on the bill boards in front of it. Blanche Sweet, Fannie Ward, George Fawcett are names of a bygone era.

Time makes many changes in the vocabulary of a people. In Passaic County half a century ago, the words magic lantern, peep show, nickelodion and the less elegant "nickel dump" were universally understood. Today, these words are virtually unknown; they have been replaced by cinerama, television, video. All of the foregoing are a part of the vocabulary relating to the great world of amusement—the moving picture.

Since New Jersey is the recognized cradle of the motion picture industry, with Passaic County playing no small part, from the standpoint of history it might be worthwhile to consider some of the facts in its development.

Thomas A. Edison of West Orange, N. J. stands in the forefront, if not indeed actually the one person most vitally connected with the birth of the moving picture. On this point, there is some disagreement. For mechanically the motion picture is not a single invention but rather

a development in at least three large areas, viz., the camera, the film and the projecting device. Within each of these areas, many persons in Europe and in the United States, intrigued with the idea of making pictures seem to move, have been very active especially during the last three quarters of the nineteenth century. Many devices and gadgets resulted which bore strange names as: *Thaumatrope*, *Stroboscope*, *Phenakistoscope*, "The Wheel of Life," *Kinematoscope*, *Zoetrope*, *Kinetograph* and many others.¹

While the European inventors gave little or no attention to photography and screen projection, in the United States and especially in the Philadelphia area, considerable attention was placed on both of these features and applied in the early moving picture machines. In this country photographic magic lantern slides were projected upon a screen as early as 1848; and with the invention of the daguerreotype and gelatin dry plates great impetus was given to the moving picture enthusiasts.

In Philadelphia, Henry R. Heyl projected photographs on a screen at the Academy of Music. This was in 1870. The inventions of the *Kinematoscope* by Coleman Sellers of Philadelphia and William E. Lincoln's *Zoetrope* were great advances leading to the motion picture.

It was not until 1887 that Mr. Edison became particularly interested in moving pictures for his great interest at about that time was concentrated in his talking machine. He did state, however, that it had occurred to him that it was possible to devise an instrument which would do for the eye what the phonograph does for the ear; and by a combination of the two,* all motion and sound could be recorded and reproduced simultaneously.

Edison, with the assistance of an associate W. K. L. Dickson, an expert photographer, began work on a machine to produce moving pictures. This machine followed many of the ideas of his contemporaries. It consisted of a cylinder with cut-outs in which transparencies on glass were inserted. Inside was a light. When revolved with a crank, the viewer received an illusion of a moving picture. It was in 1888 when this ma-

1. References on the early history and development of machines and devices as well as in photography Lubschez, N. J., "The Story of the Motion Picture," 65 B.C. to 1920 A.D. The Reeland Pub. Co., N. Y., 1920. McCosker, M. J., "Philadelphia and the Genesis of the Motion Picture," The Pennsylvania Magazine, Volume LXV, Number 4 (October 1941).

*Eugene A. Luste of Bloomfield, N. J., who worked for Thomas A. Edison, developed a plan for the filming of the sound along with the picture. He actually made a short sound picture; but for the want of capital and encouragement, he never projected his invention. This was many years before the advent of the sound picture.

chine was completed. It proved to be very remote from a satisfactory moving picture so work on moving pictures was suspended.

Meanwhile several people in the United States were attempting to devise a flexible film coated with a photographic emulsion. In 1888 John Carbutt of Philadelphia developed a film of celluloid and sent it to Mr. Edison and several others, who were also working on moving picture machines, for them to try. George Eastman of Rochester at about the same time developed a film which Mr. Edison tried and used; however, it was the Rev. Dr. Hannibal Goodwin of the "House of Prayer," Broad Street, Newark whose recent photographic film invention gave Mr. Edison the greatest encouragement. Dr. Goodwin had been working for a time in the attic of the Manse, adjoining the church, trying to devise a film less fragile than the glass slides which were used in the stereoptican in his Sunday School.

THE EDISON COMPANY PRODUCES MOTION PICTURES

With the development of the flexible photographic film, Messrs. Edison and Dickson began work all over again in 1889. Edison had been very successful with his penny-in-the-slot phonograph and now he and his assistant concentrated on a machine which would provide a look for a penny.

Their first effort was the production of a camera with which to photograph on a celluloid film. A camera was developed that would photograph a series of pictures as the film was pulled past the lens opening. It was hand-cranked and portable. In shape and size it resembled a small upright piano. With its completion, work was begun on the machine for showing the pictures. For this a huge box about 20 feet square and four feet in height was made. In an opening was placed a magnifying glass through which one could peep and see a picture moving as it was cranked. Thus the peep show came into being. After some refinements Edison applied for only U. S. patents in 1891 for his *Kinetograph* (camera) and his *Kinetoscope* (projector). Failing to acquire international patent rights, these machines were duplicated and improved in various parts of Europe.

FIRST MOTION PICTURE STUDIO IN THE U. S. A.

By February 1892, the motion picture industry was launched in New Jersey with the erection of the world's first motion picture studio

on the Edison property in West Orange. This was a small, frame building, black inside and out and mounted on a revolving base so that the sun might be followed. This studio cost in excess of \$635 and was called the "*Kinetographic Theatre*" but was better known as the "*Black Maria*". Here were made and shown some of the first motion pictures ever made. Among these was "*The Execution of Mary, Queen of Scots*" filmed in 1893 and the film ran almost a minute. A peep showed Mary kneeling at the chopping block with the headsman swinging his axe and the spectacle of Mary's head rolling in the dust (the head of a dummy, of course). Fred Ott, an employee of Mr. Edison was able to produce a "lovely" sneeze with funny facial contortions. "*Fred Ott's Sneeze*" was probably the first comedy released to the world. Scenes like a man shaving, a shoemaker at his bench working, a horseshoer in action, girls dancing and the "infamous" "*Long Kiss*"² were among the first "peeps."

THE PEEP SHOW ERA

Following the development of the *Kineto-scope* there was great activity at the Edison plant both in manufacturing the machines and in taking pictures. By 1894, the Edison Company had completed 10 *Kinetoscopes* with enough short subjects on film to launch them commercially. They opened their first "*Kinetoscope Parlor*" at 1155 Broadway, New York on April 14, 1894. Here the machines were set up with each showing a different picture for approximately 30 seconds. Long lines of people waited with coin in hand for a look at the peep show. The Edison invention was an immediate success.

While Mr. Edison concentrated on peep shows some others were working with screen projection of motion pictures. In Philadelphia, which for years was a center for motion picture and photographic development, several inventors set up their projection machines in make-shift halls and projected moving pictures on a screen. Among these was C. Francis Jenkins, a native of Indiana who patented his machine November 25, 1895. On December 18, 1895, before a distinguished audience in the Franklin Institute, Jenkins showed pictures life size on a screen. For this he was awarded a medal.

And ten days later in Paris the Lumière ma-

2. "*The Long Kiss*" is the first "shocker" of note. This "outrageous" short bit appeared in a peep show in 1896 and broke all previous records for attendance. The clergy denounced it as a "lyric of the stock yards" and demanded that it be withdrawn. It was a short scene taken from a popular play on the Broadway stage, "*The Widow Jones*" in which May Irwin and John C. Rice starred.

chine was used to present pictures in a theatre for which admission was paid.

Thomas Armat of Washington, D.C. had collaborated with Jenkins in the development of the machine exhibited in 1895 and he also made considerable improvement on Edison's *Kinetoscope*. But, lacking capital Mr. Edison procured this improved machine from Armat and presented it to the public in a demonstration at Koster and Bial's Music Hall on Herald Square, N. Y. (where Macy's now stands) in April 1896. The improved *Kinetoscope* became known as the *Vitascope* and its main feature was its adaptation to longer films which would run about five minutes. These two moving picture machines were most popular for several years.

Then competition came with the *Veriscope* in 1897 and the *Mutoscope* and many other variations for the peep shows both in the United States and in Europe.

The *Kinetoscope* machines sold for \$200 to \$300 and they soon appeared throughout the country. In 1896, both the *Kinetoscope* and the *Mutoscope* machines were operating in a peep show parlor in Los Angeles with an Edison phonograph supplying the music.

In Paterson, as in most other places throughout the United States, these machines were installed in back rooms of stores and later in vacant buildings. There is a difference of opinion as to the first such "parlor" in Paterson. At any rate, among the earliest was the one in "Pete" Johnson's candy and soda fountain store on Main Street, near Broadway. Here any one purchasing a soda or candy would be entitled to a peep. Another very early "parlor" was located at a store on Market Street, Paterson, about opposite Church Street.

By 1903, Edwin S. Porter, a cameraman associated with Mr. Edison, noticing that the peep show craze, so popular since 1895, was slowly losing its appeal, developed the idea of a longer film with a story. With the assistance of another Edison man, James H. White, they produced a picture, 500 feet in length which was a real thriller. It was called, "The Life of an American Fireman." This being an immediate success, Porter then decided to write and produce through the Edison Company a longer film which would be a story quite complete and spectacular. This was in 1903. With this picture, made almost entirely in Passaic County, a new epoch was born in the great motion picture industry. It has been noted that with the exception of "*Gone With*

the Wind," and the "*Birth of a Nation*", no other picture has had a greater influence in the development of the industry than "*The Great Train Robbery*" which ushered in the nickelodion era.

A NEW EPOCH, BORN IN PASSAIC COUNTY

The train robbery was the first narrative ever made for a motion picture. It had an unbelievable length of over 650 feet with the story made up of 14 scenes ranging in length from 4 to 118 feet.

Mr. Porter secured a train from the D. L. & W. R. R. Its personnel³ was to run it to the vicinity of High Bridge, West Paterson where the major part of the action was to take place. A large cast⁴ was secured with the principal actors George Barnes, Gilbert Anderson (who played five different roles), A. C. Abadie, May Murry and others. One of the principals, who was to play the leading role in the first and tenth sequences as agent and telegraph operator, failed to appear so Mr. Fred J. Turner was prevailed upon to play the part.

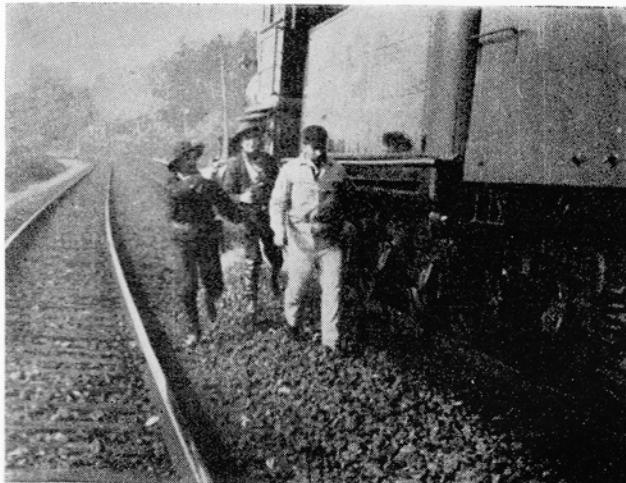
The story opens on an interior of the Little Falls Station with the agent sitting at the telegraph key. Two masked bandits appear. Pointing their guns at the agent, they tell him to set the block to stop the approaching train before it reaches the station. The agent complies. The train stops near the water tank. The bandits gag the agent, truss his arms and legs and toss him on the floor. (This scene is preliminary to Scene X).

As the train slows down, two bandits who are hiding behind the water tank, board the train between the tender and the express car and, at gun point, force the expressman into a corner and toss out the mail sacks. This being accomplished, they then approach the tender and cab just as the engineer is about to "run off" the train at high speed. One bandit grabs the engineer and orders him to stop the train while the other engages in a tussle with the fireman, who put up a great fight with his coal shovel. The fireman is finally subdued when he received a hit on the head with a chunk of coal. He (a dummy is used) is tossed down a 200-foot embankment.

The train is stopped, the locomotive is uncoupled, the passenger car is entered and the valuables removed from the passengers.

Taking their loot and the mail they compel the engineer to run the locomotive to the woods where the bandits have their horses hidden.

Meanwhile, in the station, the agent is mak-



THE GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY
Museum of Modern Art, Film Library

ing an attempt to rise from the floor so that he can, by leaning on the table, tap out an alarm with his chin. After several attempts he accomplishes this but again falls to the floor. He is found in a semi-conscious condition by his young daughter who enters with his dinner pail. The daughter revives him by throwing a glass of water in his face, releases his legs and hands and the agent wriggles free and dashes out to a neighboring dance hall where May Murry and many "westerners" are cavorting. The alarm is given. A posse is formed who follow the tracks of the bandits. The two groups meet. A gun battle is waged. One of the bandits and several of the posse "hit the dust" but the bandits ride on and think they have finally eluded their pursuers. Seeing that they were now in a lovely valley,⁵ beside a small stream and seemingly quite free from intruders, they stop to examine their booty, quite unaware that they have been tracked again by the posse who have hidden their horses in the woods and are approaching on foot.

3. The conductor of the train was Samuel J. Snyder who, in 1953 was living at North Caldwell, N. J., and was at that time aged 93.

4. The "passengers" were a train load of friends and acquaintances. They donated their services in order to get a close up of the thrills.

Gilbert Anderson was an obscure actor at the time. Born Max Anderson in Little Rock, Ark. At the time, he could not ride a horse and was harshly criticised repeatedly by Mr. Porter for mounting and dismounting from the wrong side. During the first day of filming, he was violently thrown from his horse. In 1907 while in Niles, Calif. he changed his name to "Broncho Billy" and was known as such thereafter—one of America's first great players of "Westerns".

5. Most of the data for the train robbery was secured from the Film Library of The Museum of Modern Art, New York City. Here were found, Porter's manuscripts for the story.

In Bulletin No. 1, Series 1939-40, Stories of New Jersey, entitled "New Jersey—A Preview of Hollywood," prepared by the N. J. Writers' Project of the WPA may be found a statement that, "South Mountain Reservation was the scene of the Wild West Riding, and the horses were rented from a West Orange livery stable." Knowing that area, this writer can see a resemblance in that location for Scenes XII and XIII.

Another gun battle takes place resulting in the death of the remaining three bandits as well as several of the posse.

A note-worthy feature of this film is a close up of George Barnes pointing his gun directly at the audience. In some cases, this feature was attached to the beginning of the film and in others at the end. However, it always created loud screams from the audience.

In the filming of this picture, Mr. Porter used for the first time colored celluloid film. A yellow tint was used for the dance hall scene and blueish-green for the woods. Porter also edited the film, another first in film making.

This film created a great sensation and has become a screen classic for it secured the future of the narrative film. The train robbery was a story complete in about eight minutes and it set the fashion for American film, especially for the westerns and for others photographed on location rather than in makeshift studios. Besides, the cutting bench was put into use that the director could better tell his story.

Now interest in movies revived throughout the world and in this country nickelodions sprang up in almost every village and town.

The Nickelodion Era

Mr. Harry Davis, of Pittsburgh, Pa. is credited with having opened the first "theatre" where the first stupendous attraction, "The Great Train Robbery" was shown on a screen in 1905. It was a 10c thriller. All over America, hundreds of Nickelodions were opened in halls, vacant buildings, back rooms of stores, tents and legitimate theatres. In the beginning, the rooms were fitted up with make-shift seats obtained from old trolley cars, benches and folding and other miscellaneous chairs. At one end a screen was hung; a booth where tickets were sold, was at the entrance. Windows were darkened, ventilation was absent but there was no lack of patronage. Gradually the fronts of these moving picture houses were remodeled so as to provide separate entrance and exit with the ticket booth between. As the price of admission was usually five cents, these places of amusement acquired the name, nickelodion. By 1908, there were more than 10,000 of these moving picture houses in the United States and the year 1910 saw them at their peak.

Early Nickelodions in Passaic County⁶

In 1906, there were several nickelodions licensed in **Paterson**. Among them were:
 "The Elite", at 201 Market Street.
 "The Gem", at 136 Market Street. This house was operated by Peter A. Adamopolis. From 1907 to 1915, this house operated under the name "Paterson Show" and it was operated by James A. Campbell in October 1907 when it was closed for a short time by the City as it was a fire hazard because the projector was covered with a cotton flannel cloth.
 "Daly's", at 269 Main Street; known as the "Royal" in 1913-14.
 "The Pleasant Hour," 213 Main Street; later called the "Lyric" with Walter Sibley the proprietor.
 "The Bijou", 34 West Street (later West Broadway) Butler, Jacobs and Lowry, props.
 "The Nicolet", 162 Main Street on the s.w. corner of Van Houten with Harry Metz and Harry Gold. Here French pictures, changed daily were shown for five cents in 1910.
 Another place was in Charles Feder's Clothing Store at 213 Main Street at the corner of Ellison.
 "Cuff Show", opposite Daly's on Main Street and in the Red Flag Dry Goods Store at Main and Ward Streets.

An open-air theatre, one of the first in the United States opened in 1907 or 1908 at 68 Ward Street (site of the Ward Street Presbyterian Church).

In the period between 1909 and 1914 many moving picture houses sprung up in the city, and among those well known were:

"Palace", 122 Main Street.
 "Star Confectionery Company", 137 Main Street.
 "The Paterson Show", 136 Market Street advertised in 1910 in *The News*, "It's a comfortable place to spend an hour in."
 The theatres:
 "Lyceum", 123 Van Houten
 "Empire", 150 Ellison
 "Opera House", 284 Main
 "Apollo"
 "Folly"
 "Orpheum", on Van Houten Street, built by Billy Watson who broke from his partnership with Ben Leavitt as operators of the West Street Bijou. At the Orpheum, Watson conducted a burlesque and picture theatre.
 "The Washington Show",⁷ 137 Main Street.
 "Lyric",⁷ 213 Main Street.
 "New Grand", Main and Ward Streets.
 "Majestic", on Main Street, with vaudeville by Keith circuit and Edison's talking pictures was operated by Metz and Gold.
 "The Strand", 128 Main Street with its 800 seating capacity; Gold & Connor, proprietors.
 "United States Photo Play," Main Street (Later the U. S. Theatre).

During the nickelodeon days in the CITY OF PASSAIC there was an abundance of show places. Among the earliest recalled are:

The Nickolet, on Main Avenue.
 Nickolet, Second Street
 Nicolet, 187 Passaic Street.
 The Theatorium, Main Avenue, near Jefferson Street. Bijou, 58 Second Street.
 Gebbel & Rettinger's, at Rettinger Hall, Passaic and William Streets.
 Nickeldrome, Dayton Avenue, Clifton (near the Passaic City line).
 The Little Wonder, 332 Passaic Street, where "3000 feet of film is shown every day with the latest illustrated songs."

ADVENT OF THE AMERICAN MUTOSCOPE AND BIOGRAPH COMPANY

In 1896, Mr. F. W. L. Dickson left the Edison Company and with a few others formed the Biograph Company. At first Biograph produced shorts for the peep shows or penny arcades. It made its debut at Hammerstein's Olympia Music Hall in New York in the Fall of 1896 showing "The Empire State Express" and other pictures filled with action. Biograph generally used the *Mutoscope*, a most successful rival of Edison's *Kinetoscope*.

While many actors on the legitimate stage held the motion pictures in contempt, Joseph Jefferson made a scene from the popular stage play "Rip Van Winkle" in the early days for the *Mutoscope* and the great Sarah Bernhardt re-enacted the duel scene from "Hamlet" in 1910.

In 1908 a young, good looking actor from Louisville, Kentucky, David Wark Griffith, came to New York to secure employment on the stage. He soon found his way to Biograph and was engaged as an actor-scenario writer. During that Spring, he wrote several scenarios and played parts in them. His great energy and initiative won for him an opportunity to direct. The first picture which D. W. Griffith directed was "The Adventures of Dolly."

This picture was an immediate success and Mr. Griffith made practically all of Biograph's films from then on until December 1909, and all of the important ones from 1909 until 1913. What Mr. Edison was to the development of the motion picture machine; Mr. Griffith was to the art form of the picture.

During the early days in Biograph's history, most of their pictures were made on roof tops of buildings in New York but in 1906, they leased an old mansion at 11 East 14th Street and converted the former ballroom into a studio. Now, instead of depending on the fickleness of the weather, they were able to get correct and adequate lighting through the invention of the mercury lamp⁸ which was installed overhead. Many of the indoor scenes for pictures made on location in New Jersey were filmed in this studio.

6. The writer is indebted to Edward Graf, eminent historian of Passaic County for data on the early motion picture houses in Paterson and to William McBride for his data on early picture places in the City of Passaic.

7. In 1913 the Washington Show advertised that it had "the longest, best and coziest moving-picture theatre in the city."

7. The same year, the Lyric advertised "up-to-the-minute motion picture for 5 cents."

MR. GRIFFITH BRINGS BIOGRAPH TO PASSAIC COUNTY

New Jersey was favored by Biograph, as it was by other companies having headquarters in New York City. The great variety in terrain and scenery made the state ideal for films made on location. Many farms, hamlets, towns, hills and valleys and wooded areas of Passaic and other counties of New Jersey, readily accessible to New York, were often used in the early days of the industry.

The rural countryside along the Passaic River provided excellent background for westerns and Indian pictures. "Indians" were imported from New York and home made from local residents. Bedecked with paint and feathers they frequently made camp along the winding Passaic. Their paper wigwams, well painted with Indian symbols, were set up in open spots. Their war canoes, made by covering river canoes with bark or paper, were paddled up and down the Passaic before the cameras.

During the Summer of 1908, Mr. Griffith brought his company to Little Falls for the filming of his second picture. This was called, "The Redman and the Child." Charles Inslee played the Indian chief and Johnny Tansy was the child. The picture made little Johnny very famous. "The Redman and the Child" was considered at the time to have been "the acme of photographic art."

Another feature picture which Mr. Griffith made for Biograph along the Passaic was one entitled, "They Would Elope." One of the elopers was "Little Mary" Pickford who, while trying to escape, was to meet with an accident through the overturning of her canoe. When the director gave her the cue, Mary didn't hesitate for an instant but obediently overturned into the muddy waters of the river. She was fished out, we are told by Linda Arvidson,⁸ wrapped in a warm blanket, and placed in Mr. Griffith's waiting automobile.

During the Summer of 1910, Biograph filmed a great many pictures in New Jersey. "Little

8. The inventor of this light was Mr. Cooper Hewitt, son of Hon. Abram S. Hewitt, former Mayor of New York City, and grandson of Peter Cooper. Although born in New York City and living in the Winter there, Cooper Hewitt spent his Summers, when he was in the United States, at the Cooper-Hewitt estate in Ringwood, Passaic County, N. J.

After Mr. Hewitt developed his famous light, he sold it to George Westinghouse and the General Electric Company. Mr. Hewitt was an inventor of considerable talent having invented a tube used for transmitting wireless, a fluorescent screen the forerunner of the fluoroscope, and many other practical and noteworthy inventions.

9. "When the Movies Were Young" by Linda Arvidson (Mrs. David Griffith), E. P. Dutton & Co., New York, 1925. A very readable book.

Mary"¹⁰ played in most of them. As was the custom in those days (and the custom to a lesser extent, still persists) the movie actors were to use fictitious names. Among the great lights of the Biograph Company were Arthur Johnson, Frank Powell, Mack Sennett,¹¹ Dell Henderson, Jack Pickford (Mary's brother), Lionel Barrymore, Owen Moore, (secret husband of Mary Pickford), Blanche Sweet, Mae Marsh, Mabel Normand (beloved comedienne, Linda Arvidson, Lillian and Dorothy Gish, Theda Bara (at her climax in 1917 in "Cleopatra").

THE CALL TO ARMS (Filmed at Lambert Castle)

For the residents of Passaic County one of Biograph's most interesting production was "The Call To Arms." This picture, a drama of romance and mystery of mediaeval times, was filmed on the grounds of Lambert Castle. It has to do with a marvelous jewel. The setting is a mediaeval castle. During a spell of very hot and humid weather in late June 1910, Mr. Griffith brought his company to Paterson including Owen Moore, Mary Pickford, Dell Henderson, Mack Sennett, Linda Arvidson and others.

Here at a little hotel,¹² near the station of the D. L. & W. R. R. Mack Sennett (often somewhat difficult) said it was too hot to don his suit of armour but when he found that Dell Henderson, the principal, was putting his on in spite of the heat, he complied. "Little Mary" waited on the lawn, clad in tights—the costume of a page. Soon action took place. Mary mounted her horse, with its mediaeval trappings, set out for her ride to bear a message. Soon she became exhausted and before the end of her journey, she fell in with a band of gypsies. This picture was completed and licensed on Monday, July 25, 1910 by the Biograph Company. The reviewers rated it as "an excellent picture."

THE RISE OF COMEDIES AND THE SERIALS

Mack Sennett's Keystone Comedies became very popular from 1910 to 1915 and Vitagraph's great comedian was John Bunny—the Charles Chaplin of later years. Bunny was formerly a shoestring salesman but later became a minstrel and a stage actor before entering the motion pictures.

Paterson's great contribution to comedy was its native son, Lou Costello (born Louis Cristillo). His early days were spent in Paterson and before he left to join the Hollywood Colony,

he lived on East 33rd Street, Paterson. Besides bringing laughs to millions he brought comfort and cheer to thousands through his great beneficence and philanthropy. He was never too busy to visit a sick or crippled child at home or confined to a hospital. Most of his charities have not been publicised. His untimely recent death has been a great loss to many and his native city has lost one of its greatest boosters.

New Jersey and Passaic County has contributed a large share in the making of serials. One spot chosen for a thriller was the famous "Mine Hole" along the Wanaque River in West Milford Township. Here was a great hole about 60 feet deep and 40 feet wide used as a mine shaft prior to the Revolutionary War and into which the waters of the Wanaque River now tumbles.

Garret Mountain became the locale for many of the exploits of the well known Pearl White whose breath-taking exploits will be remembered by the oldsters in her great "Exploits of Elaine," "The Adventures of Kathryn" and the better known "The Perils of Pauline". At the Elmwood Country Club in East Paterson one of her exploits took place in which the club house was "burned" and Miss White was rescued from a window, amidst smoke, flames and much screaming.

Those were the days when the movies were young!

ROBERT P. BROOKS

10. Miss Pickford, born Gladys Smith in Toronto, Canada, was a great child actor. Among her early successes were "Silver King" in which she played two parts; "The Littlest Girl," a play in one act; Eva in "Uncle Tom's Cabin". These stage productions were before she was eight years old.

In "The Fatal Wedding" she was billed as: "The Fatal Wedding with Baby Gladys Smith Is A Wonder." This play attracted the attention of the great David Belasco who secured her for his productions but dubbed her MARY PICKFORD. (Gladys' middle name was Marie and Pickford was a family name).

Belasco opened "The Warrens of Virginia" in New York in 1907 which played in that city until the Spring of 1909. In this production Mary Pickford had a leading role. In May 1909, Mary thought she would like to try acting for pictures and applied at Biograph.

Mr. Griffith gave her a screen test and accepted the lovely little golden-haired, hazel eyed, five-foot child, promising her five dollars a day for her first picture and told her to come back the next day when he would cast her as "Giannina", the pretty daughter of Taddeo Ferrari, in "The Violin Maker of Cremona."

After this picture was completed, she was offered twenty-five dollars a week of three days, an unheard of salary in those days, and Mary accepted. She played the child of twelve in Mack Sennett's "The Lonely Villa." This was followed by a series of pictures, "The Way of Man," and several comedies such as "Sweet and Twenty," "They Would Elope," "His Wife's Visitors."

She was universally known as "America's Sweetheart" also as "Little Mary" and "Goldilocks."

Today she is still beloved in her retirement at Pickfair, Beverly Hills, California. Always a great actress and a person of sterling character is Mrs. "Buddy" Rogers.

Her autobiography, written in 1955 and published by Doubleday and Company, New York, under the title, "Sunshine and the Shadow" is highly recommended.

11. Mack Sennett's real name was Michael Sinnott. He was one of the first great motion picture personages. He began his movie career with Biograph as an "extra" but made his first great hit in a 750-foot comedy, "The Curtain Pole," in the woods of Fort Lee in February 1909. He was soon to be known as "The King of Slapstick Clowns."

12. This little hotel stood at 67 Barclay Street, Paterson and it was managed in 1910 by Wm. J. Ruffing. Today it serves, considerably altered, as the office of the Medlin Lumber Company.

SOCIETY NOTES

The Society was the recipient of a bequest made by the late Mrs. Ida Van Riper-Ellis.

At the last regular meeting of the Society, Mr. Martin Weiner of Clifton requested a life membership in the Society. His application was granted.

The Board of Trustees would be delighted to have many others follow Mr. Weiner's example.

Mr. Martin Weiner, through the "good offices" of our valued member, Mr. Harry B. Haines, presented the Society with four framed letters of considerable import to the history of this county.

One dated: "Philadelphia Sep. 6, 1792" was sent by Alexander Hamilton to "William Seton Esqr New York." This letter among other things states that:

"I find that I have overdrawn my account by a late draft for 200 Dollars—Dollars 24.67—This I will shortly remit. The unnecessary multiplication of Banks is an interesting circumstance; but I hope if the solid institutions maintain a good understanding with each other, a misfortune of any of the excrescences will be but a partial evil and perhaps a cure for the excess."

Two letters are from the pen of Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant, a French soldier with the American Army during the Revolution, engineer and designer of the City of Washington, D.C. and engaged by the Society for Establishing Useful Manufactures to plan the industrial city (later to become Paterson) and to superintend the Society's operations.

One letter is dated:

"Philadelphia february 88 1793"
and is addressed to "Richd.law Esqr
Governor of the Society for promotion useful
Manufacture"

Major L'Enfant asks to be excused from attending at a meeting of the Society "on next tuesday, at Paterson due to Business of Some Importance" He also suggests that the meetings in the future be "in New Wark Newark) to better obviate the Inconveniency of the distance (from Philadelphia) andn the badness of the Road to Paterson"

The other letter is written from:

"Maidenlane New York Sept. 12-1793.
At this time, Major L'Enfant is no longer in the employ of the Society at Paterson and he asks for an accounting. "I must request," says he, "you will let me know the amount of money paid to me of accounts agreeably to the Engagement Betwix me and the Society for Establishing manufactures having an Immediate occasion for the Ballance remaining due Me."

This letter was addressed to "Nichlas. Low Esqr. Governor of the Society for Establishing usefull manufactures"