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THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART  
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THE "VAMP" AND MICKEY MOUSE JOIN THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART FILM LIBRARY

The Museum of Modern Art Film Library announces the acquisition of three important groups of films: one group from Twentieth Century-Fox Film Corporation composed of thirteen motion pictures produced from 1915 to 1933; a group of animated cartoons from Walt Disney Productions including Plane Crazy, the first Mickey Mouse, which has never been released commercially, the first Silly Symphony, Skeleton Dance, and the first cartoon in Technicolor, Flowers and Trees; and the LeRoy Collection, a remarkable assemblage of motion picture memorabilia which includes old and rare books, photographs, slides, manuscripts, articles, letters and documents relating to the early days of the films, "stills" of motion pictures made in this country and abroad in the 90's and 1900's, and more than 350 films, short and long subjects, produced here and abroad between 1893 and 1910, all of them rare and many of them extremely important as landmarks in the development of the motion picture.

In presenting the Twentieth Century-Fox Film Corporation gift to the Museum of Modern Art Film Library, Mr. Sidney R. Kent, President, said: "I have looked into the activities of the Museum for the founding of a Film Library by the preservation of films made by different companies in the motion picture business, which have proven their outstanding merit by continuing to be of value in the future study and improvement of motion pictures. I find that this has received wholehearted support and it gives me great pleasure to include a number of the films of Twentieth Century-Fox Film Corporation for the use of the Museum." The films from Twentieth Century-Fox are as follows:

A Fool There Was (Theda Bara) 1914  
Carmen (Theda Bara) 1915  
A Daughter of the Gods (Annette Kellerman) 1916  
Cleopatra (Theda Bara) 1917  
Riders of the Purple Sage, 1918  
Sky High (Tom Mix) 1921  
The Iron Horse, 1924  
Three Bad Men, 1926  
Sunrise, 1927  
Movietone Newsreel (Mussolini, Shaw, Tilden) 1927  
Sex Life of the Polyp (Benchley) 1928  
Cavalcade, 1933  
Special Cavalcade film, not issued commercially,  
taken of the London stage production

Walt Disney, creator of Mickey Mouse and the Silly Symphonies, in giving his films, said: "The aim and purpose of the Museum of Modern Art Film Library are highly commendable and it gives me great pleasure

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to cooperate by supplying certain of our cartoon films selected by you. Good luck and success." Walt Disney Productions gave the following films:

First animated cartoon made by Walt Disney, produced in 1920 for the Newman Theatre in Kansas City.  
Plane Crazy, 1928. First Mickey Mouse.  
Steamboat Willie, 1928. First Mickey Mouse in sound.  
Skeleton Dance, 1929. First Silly Symphony.  
Flowers and Trees, 1932. First cartoon in Technicolor.  
The Band Concert, 1935. First Mickey Mouse in Technicolor.

In addition, Mr. Disney has presented the Film Library with material selected to show step by step the various processes in the production of Mickey Mouse and Silly Symphony cartoons. The material includes the original rough story sketch; the scenario suggestions; the scenario changes into final form; scene layouts; completed scenes of animation with exposure sheets, music sheets, and the corresponding completed scenes with backgrounds; and painted celluloid sheets ready for the camera. Two scenes are followed through completely even to clippings from the finished film. The Museum of Modern Art Film Library plans to exhibit the step-by-step creation of a Disney cartoon later in the season.

The LeRoy Collection has been acquired by the Film Library through the courtesy of Mrs. LeRoy, widow of Jean A. LeRoy, American film pioneer, who assembled the Collection during a long period of years. Foremost in interest in the Collection are negatives and prints of the famous "trick" films of the Frenchman Georges Méliès, whose highly original and imaginative productions from 1896 onward marked the transition from the earliest foreign motion pictures of scenic views or simple action to the story-telling era. The Méliès films acquired include the famous Trip to the Moon and Arabian Nights, fantastic film stories produced with many camera and scenic tricks. Other notable old films in the LeRoy Collection are the first pictures ever taken out of the kinoscope and shown on a screen: The Execution of Mary, Queen of Scots (1893) and Washing the Baby; short reels showing Houdini performing his escape tricks; street scenes and news reels of the nineties such as the inauguration of President McKinley; early comedies and melodramas; and films showing celebrities of thirty and forty years ago.

Beginning January 1936, the Museum of Modern Art Film Library will circulate selected programs of noteworthy motion pictures to museums, colleges and study groups throughout the country.

**Some Memorable American Films  
circulated by  
The Museum of Modern Art Film Library**

**Program I: The "Western" Film**

*In the "Western", as in the newsreel and the documentary film, the fundamental nature of the motion-picture is evident. From the start, the very plot of the "horse-opera" called for panoramic longshots in which the camera follows the movement of horsemen through mountain and prairie. These longshots had to be alternated with closeups, so that the identity of man and horse could be established and shy heroine could gaze at strong, silent man.*

*To a marked extent, therefore, the Western film helped to develop a technique proper to the cinema.*

**The Great Train Robbery**

**1903**

Produced by The Edison Co. Directed by Edwin S. Porter. Cast: George Barnes, "Broncho Billy" Anderson, A. C. Abadie, Marie Murray and others.

The outdoor plot dictated an untheatrical type of film. That fact is clear in this famous ancestor of all "Westerns", made near Dover, N. J. The action and the area covered by the camera are unrestricted in most of the scenes with railroad engines or horses, and short scenes, taken from diverse points of view and dealing with diverse moments in the narrative, are instinctively joined together in cinematic fashion. In the indoor scenes, on the other hand, both action and camera are confined to the limited area set by stage conventions, and there is no cutting. In neither case are subtitles used.

This film was overwhelmingly successful. "Broncho Billy" Anderson from 1908 on played the chief role in 375 cowboy adventure films thereafter issued weekly.

## **The Last Card**

**c1914**

Produced by the W. H. Production Co. Directed by Thomas H. Ince. Cast: William S. Hart, Louise Glaum, Margaret Thompson, Herschell Mayall, Gordon Mullen.

In 1911, Thomas H. Ince, a stage actor recently become film director, made his first "Western" in California, using real cowboys and Indians. To him goes the credit for the "Western" as we know it, the type of film of which William S. Hart, with his horse "Pinto Ben" was a famous exponent.

The formula of the "Western" became fairly constant: very good men shoot it out with very bad men to preserve the property, honor or happiness of a young female in wild surroundings where earth and sky are often dramatic, as well as picturesque, factors and the horse is as much of a hero as man. The Western films outrivalled the dime novel in catering to the desire for escape and it was this quality, rather than their idealization of frontier morality, which accounted for the universal popularity of these pictures.

## **The Covered Wagon**

**1923**

Produced by Famous Players-Lasky. Directed by James Cruze. Scenario by Jack Cunningham adapted from the novel by Emerson Hough. Camera work by Karl Brown. Editing by Dorothy Arzner. Cast: J. Warren Kerrigan as Will Banion: Lois Wilson as Molly Wingate: Alan Hale as Sam Woodhull: Charles Ogle as Mr. Wingate: Ethel Wales as Mrs. Wingate: Ernest Torrence as Jackson: Tully Marshall as Bridger: Guy Oliver as Kit Carson: Johnny Fox as Jed Wingate. Acquired through the courtesy of Paramount.

This glorified "Western" is deservedly famous. Except for *Nanook of the North*, it was the first "outdoor epic" of the screen. It stands in an important line of succession in the history of the cinema. Deriving from *The Birth of a Nation* as well as from the standard Western films, it and *The Birth of a Nation* alike are ancestors of the great Soviet films such as *Potemkin* and *Turksib*. On the other hand, *The Covered Wagon* and *Nanook* heralded as well the series of documentary pictures like *Grass* and *Tabu*.

*The Covered Wagon* was made at a time when the American studios seemed obsessed with pseudo-cosmopolitan and pseudo-American drawing-room and dance-hall nonsensicalities, and before the influence of the German post-war directors had revitalized them. Here appeared an honestly and typically American film in which a large impersonal theme superseded the usual narrowly human theme of amatory or financial success. Cruze had utilized the power of the screen to conjure up mass emotion as an instrument for propaganda in its best sense.

In *The Covered Wagon*, many of the best functions of the cinema are combined. There is the element of actuality, such as occurs most commonly in topical or travel pictures, for real cattle swim a real river, mountains and skies and dust are authentic. There is also the ability of the cinema to reconstruct past as well as to mirror present life, for this glimpse of American pioneer endeavor as scrupulously resembles the real thing as possible. The film was made in carefully chosen natural locations, far from Hollywood and studios. The extra players who took part in it were non-professional actors, simple residents of Snake Valley, Nevada, where all but the final sequences were made. Quite remarkably, most of the professional actors also preserve this same spirit of authenticity: Ernest Torrence as Jackson, Tully Marshall as Bridger are whole-heartedly "natural" and almost as free from staginess as players in Pudovkin's or Eisenstein's films. It is only the heroine and the hero who suggest the film studio or wear palpable make-up.

The spurious romanticising element too common as a rule in our films creeps in only so long as the story dwells on the love-affair of this pair. Their presence must be regretted since, each time they obtrude, the story stands still, the technique is dulled and the interest of the spectator flags.

The excellence of this picture was no accident. Emerson Hough's novel had captured much of the essence of pioneer tradition. In translating the novel into visual terms, Cruze had profited by the technical discoveries of D. W. Griffith, particularly as displayed in the cutting of the open-air sequences of *The Birth of a Nation*, made nine years before. Cruze himself had had considerable experience, at first as a director of serial films, in the making of

which he undoubtedly acquired his peculiar skill in handling exterior shots and moving his characters easily in them.

Photographically, *The Covered Wagon* is remarkable, for this was taken before the days of panchromatic stock. Especially rich are the night-scenes at the fort before the Indian attack, and the shots of the livestock and wagons crossing the river. In both, photographic brilliance is combined with considerable editorial skill—the shots are timed and assembled most excitingly. The music, so important a factor in enhancing the emotional content of silent films, was, of course, arranged specially. Though the theme-song has often been abused, in this case it seems legitimately introduced to add flavor and bind the whole epic of territorial expansion into shape.

Iris Barry

The music for *The Great Train Robbery* and *The Last Card* was arranged by Alden Beach. The music for *The Covered Wagon* was composed and arranged by Hugo Reisenfeld.

The next program in this series will be  
"Comedies."