

138

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 WEST 53RD STREET. NEW YORK

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 7-7470

32

FOR RELEASE Wednesday, October 9, 1935

Mr. John Hay Whitney, President of The Museum of Modern Art Film Library, announced today the acquisition of two important groups of motion picture films from Harold Lloyd and Warner Brothers Pictures. The Lloyd films cover the work of the comedian from his earliest days into his later dialogue films. The Warner Brothers group is made up of outstanding examples of both silent and sound films and includes an historically important series of experiments in sound film through the years 1925 to 1928. The Film Library has also acquired many examples of early films produced by the Vitagraph Company, which was later merged with Warner Brothers Pictures.

In announcing the acquisitions, Mr. Whitney said: "The Museum of Modern Art Film Library is greatly encouraged by this prompt response in the form of actual films given by two of the leaders in the film industry. Important gifts of outstanding films have been promised by the other motion picture companies and by individuals long connected with the film industry. These acquisitions will be announced as they are received.

"As it becomes available, all this material is being catalogued by Iris Barry, Curator, and reviewed by the Selection Committee of the Film Library so that the most illuminating and outstanding films may be chosen for the study of each step forward in the development of the art, and constructive program notes prepared for the museums and colleges to which these programs will be circulated."

In giving his films, Harold Lloyd made the following statement: "I am very happy to have included in the archives of The Museum of Modern Art Film Library the group of pictures which Miss Barry has selected.

"The motion picture has progressed to a point where it must be considered among the arts. In preserving the better works of the motion picture industry, the Museum is fulfilling a function of the great art museums of the world. From a purely physical point of view, the Museum, in preserving the negatives of the out-

standing motion pictures, will be doing a work of incalculable value, for without the attention the Museum is giving the film, it would be only a matter of a few years before these negatives might be lost."

Mr. Harry M. Warner, as spokesman for the Warner Brothers, said: "It gives me great pleasure to cooperate with The Museum of Modern Art Film Library by supplying certain films produced by Warner Brothers Pictures Incorporated, for permanent preservation, that they may be available to student groups in colleges and museums.

"An authentic record of the growth and development of the motion picture industry is, I feel, highly desirable, and I wish you all success in your enterprise."

In commenting on the gifts to the Film Library, Mr. Will H. Hays said: "The project undertaken by the Museum of Modern Art by which students for all time may study the progress of the film as a living art--the great modern art of the twentieth century--deserves and will receive, I believe, the cooperation of every responsible factor in motion pictures.

"The film as a medium of dramatic expression embraces universal entertainment, information and education. It is an infant in time but a giant in reach. In a single generation a world public has witnessed the development through photographic reproduction of a crude device that simulated motion into a great new art. It is an art that cannot be embalmed in marble, statically depicted on canvas, or recorded in a book. But its progress can be and is being studied through electrical and mechanical reproduction. To provide students and others with the means and facilities for such studies, organized upon a proper selective basis, is a service both to the arts and to the public which they stimulate."

The motion picture films given by Mr. Lloyd to the Film Library are as follows:

- Just Nuts, 1915
- Luke's Fatal Flivver, 1916
- Luke Joins the Navy, 1916
- Fireman Save My Child, 1918
- Pipe the Whiskers, 1918
- High and Dizzy, 1920
- I Do, 1921
- Grandma's Boy, 1922
- Safety Last, 1923
- The Freshman, 1925
- Welcome Danger, 1929

The gift from Warner Brothers Pictures is composed of the following motion pictures:

- Selections from the old Vitagraph Company films
- Beau Brummel, 1924
- Lady Windermere's Fan, 1925
- Early experimental sound films
- The Jazz Singer, 1927
- Lights of New York, 1928
- Outward Bound, 1930
- Little Caesar, 1930
- Public Enemy, 1931
- I am a Fugitive, 1932
- Wild Boys of the Road, 1933

In May 1935 the Museum of Modern Art, New York, received a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation for the purpose of establishing a department of motion pictures to be known as The Museum of Modern Art Film Library. The Film Library was organized the same month with the following officers: John Hay Whitney, President; John E. Abbott, Vice President and General Manager; Edward M. M. Warburg, Treasurer, and Iris Barry, Curator. The Library is making as complete a record as possible of all noteworthy motion pictures produced in this country or abroad from 1889 to the present day. Selected programs of these films will be circulated throughout the country to museums, colleges and study groups, just as The Museum of Modern Art circulates traveling exhibitions of paintings, models and photographs of architecture, and reproductions of works of art.

(For your convenience we append notes on
Harold Lloyd and the Warner Brothers)

HAROLD LLOYD was born in Burchard, Nebraska, April 20, 1893. In his boyhood he did odd jobs around theatres in Nebraska and Colorado. After making his debut as Banquo's son in Macbeth in Beatrice, Nebraska, he gained considerable experience in stock in Omaha and San Diego.

Lloyd made his first appearance in pictures as an extra (made up as a Yaqui Indian) in San Diego for the old Edison Company on location in 1913. He did extra work at Universal Studios, met Hal Roach there, and when Roach began independent production Lloyd worked in his first one-reel comedy, a kid picture. Persuaded to become a low comedian, Lloyd developed his first character, Willie Work, which he finally adapted into a second character, Lonesome Luke - something of a dude in shabby morning clothes too small for him.

It was not until May 1917 that Lloyd at last developed his "glass character", the now world-famous Harold Lloyd with the horn-rimmed spectacles, who made his appearance first in one-reelers and then in two-reelers during 1917-1919. In 1920 I Do, which remains one of the comedian's favorite pictures, was made in three reels but cut to two before release. In his early films Bebe Daniels was Mr. Lloyd's leading lady. When she left the Roach Company to go into dramatic movies with Cecil B. DeMille in 1919, Mildred Davis became his leading lady and later his wife. Grandma's Boy, made in 1922, and Safety Last, in 1923, brought Lloyd to the front rank of film stars.

THE WARNER BROTHERS: The life-story of Harry, Albert, Sam and Jack Warner is an integral part of the history of the motion pictures.

Harry Warner, the oldest son of a Polish immigrant, when barely 14 started in business in Youngstown, Ohio with a shoe repairing shop in 1896. In 1900 he branched out into selling bicycles and doing bicycle repairs; his brother Albert joined him. Then a third brother Sam, while employed at an amusement park at Sandusky, Ohio, saw movies for the first time. As a consequence Sam and Albert toured The Great Train Robbery through Pennsylvania and Ohio towns and ultimately, in the winter of 1903-4, Harry's bicycle shop was closed when four Warner Brothers took a store in Newcastle, Pa. furnished with 91 chairs rented from an undertaker and opened it as a motion picture theatre. Sam operated the projector. Harry and Albert looked after the business, and fifteen year old Jack, besides being handy boy, occasionally sang songs to illustrated slides.

In 1904 the Newcastle store was sold and, for the next six years, the brothers were engaged in the rental and distribution of films. In 1912 they decided to become producers, and from 1913 to 1923 produced "quickies", when as Warner Brothers Pictures Inc. they branched out into more expensive and ambitious productions, including several starring John Barrymore and Lubitsch's memorable The Marriage Circle.

In 1925 they purchased the Vitagraph Company and at the same time first Sam and then Harry saw the sound films recently developed by the Bell Laboratories. The film industry as a whole had failed to be interested in the new device, but Harry Warner believed that there were great possibilities in "canned" musical accompaniments for silent films. The Warner Brothers in the spring of 1925 obtained the exclusive use of Western Electric's sound system for a term of years. From then until the spring of 1926 endless experiments were carried on by the brothers, first at the Flatbush studio and afterwards at the Manhattan Opera House on 34th Street, New York.

On August 26th, 1926 Don Juan with John Barrymore, a silent film with synchronized orchestral accompaniment was shown to the public. As a result, a number of theatres throughout the country were wired for sound and Warner Bros. went ahead with short musical and dramatic subjects and with synchronized musical scores to silent films. Finally, on October 6th, 1927 The Jazz Singer in which Al Jolson spoke once and sang often came to Broadway. It won overnight both the public and the industry as a whole to the new talking film.

None of the brothers were present to enjoy their triumph that evening. The day before, on October 5th, 1927 Sam Warner died, worn out by constant overwork during the years 1925-27 when the sound film was being carried from the laboratory into the practical realm of popular entertainment.

The first all-talking film The Lights of New York was released by Warner Brothers in 1928 and by the end of that year the era of silent films was ended.

#