

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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William L. Jamison, motion picture pioneer and for many years field investigator for the Museum of Modern Art Film Library, died December 12 of heart disease at New York Hospital, in his seventy-third year

Well known throughout the film industry for his remarkable memory of its earliest days, Mr. Jamison had been a member of the staff of the Museum of Modern Art Film Library since its foundation. Many of the choicest items in the Film Library's collection of films of the past were brought to light through his knowledge and diligence. It was said of Mr. Jamison that he could identify any film and its maker just by feeling it between his fingers in the dark.

Mr. Jamison first became associated with the budding motion picture when, at the age of 16, he joined the staff of Thomas A. Edison in 1893. At this period Edison was developing his peephole kinetoscope which preceded the projection of films on a screen. Working in the primitive "Black Maria," first of film studios, Mr. Jamison, like all early movie workers, was by turns technical assistant, cameraman and film-laboratory worker, even acting when occasion demanded as in the 100-ft. film, "Cripple Creek Barroom." Before the first feature films were made in 1914, he had become head of Edison's film laboratory. He also was for many years the manager of the Edison studio.

When the Museum of Modern Art Film Library was founded in 1935, Mr. Jamison came out of retirement and offered his assistance to the Library in its task of compiling the history of the motion picture by restoring to view important films of the past. Mr. Jamison discovered and rescued from imminent destruction the entire produce of the Biograph studio where D. W. Griffith began his career, and which played so important a role in the development of motion picture narrative. In order to restore these films to the screen, Mr. Jamison and the late G. W. Bitzer, for many years D. W. Griffith's cameraman, salvaged and re-manufactured an ancient Biograph camera and printing machine which enabled them to transfer the old negatives to film which can be run through a modern projector.

Himself a part of motion picture history, Mr. Jamison was constant-

ly consulted by directors, writers and representatives of the major studios who wished to trace films of the early part of the century in order to re-make them today. During the war, the Film Library placed his services at the disposal of the government, for which he tracked down much enemy film of propagandist or strategic importance.

He is survived by his widow, Mrs. Dora Jamison, and by a daughter, Mrs. George Cook.