

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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MUSEUM OF MODERN ART FILM LIBRARY ANNOUNCES FUND RAISING COMMITTEE TO SAVE THE FILM COLLECTION

John Hay Whitney, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Museum of Modern Art and President of the Museum of Modern Art Film Library, yesterday announced the formation of the new Committee for the Film Collection, the members of which are J. Cheever Cowdin, Ned E. Depinet, Stanton Griffis, and J. Robert Rubin.

The purpose of the new Committee will be to seek ways and means to secure the permanent preservation of the Film Library's collection of more than 10,000,000 feet of historically and artistically important motion pictures, through their transfer to the new tri-acetate film stock. Its specific initial task will be to raise the sum of \$20,000 to supplement the grant of \$25,000 already made by the Rockefeller Foundation for the purpose of preserving the Film Library collection.

In announcing the formation of the Committee, Mr. Whitney said: "The Museum of Modern Art Film Library was founded in 1935 to serve as a center for the preservation, study, and enjoyment of the art of the motion picture, the first new art form to come into being since ancient times, and one peculiarly American in its derivation, its major achievements, and its capacity to travel and make friends. Obviously, the Library's first task was to locate and rescue from chemical deterioration as many films of first artistic and historic importance as possible. The Film Library collection - now the largest of its kind in the world- grew rapidly, as D. W. Griffith, Douglas Fairbanks, William S. Hart, and many other producers and artists presented prints of their work for permanent preservation, and as other pictures were secured from film-making countries throughout the world.

"In a sense, the Film Library in recent years has become a victim of its own success and growing fame. To preserve films permanently, it is necessary to transfer them from the old and perishable nitrate film stock to new acetate stock, through the making of duplicate negatives or fine-grain prints, an increasingly costly process. As the Collection has grown, the urgent need to duplicate many of the Film Library's most important films has far outstripped its annual budget for this purpose. The curator of the Film Library, Richard Griffith, estimates that, in terms of the Library's normal appropriation, it would take at least 25 years to secure the preservation of just the most important films in the Collection by which time most films made before 1940, and many subsequent ones, would have turned to the yellow dust which is the final phase of film disintegration.

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"Accordingly, application was made to the Rockefeller Foundation, which gave major assistance in the founding of the Film Library in 1935, for help in the task of raising the sum of \$50,000 for film preservation. The Foundation granted \$25,000, on condition that the Museum secure the remaining half of the fund from other sources.

"This year, the Museum itself was able to present to the Film Preservation Fund the sum of \$5,000, which the Rockefeller Foundation then matched with an additional \$5,000. This total of \$10,000 has already been spent for preservation. I am now happy to announce that the new Committee for the Film Library Collection will undertake the pressing and important responsibility of securing the remaining \$20,000 which must be found. Its members, J. Cheever Cowdin, Ned E. Depinet, Stanton Griffis, and J. Robert Rubin have for many years aided the Film Library. The Museum is both fortunate and grateful to secure their help in what has become the Film Library's most immediate and important task."

Speaking for the Committee for the Film Library Collection, Mr. Rubin said: "My associates and I intend to seek help for this Committee's purposes from friends of the Film Library, from the producers and artists who made the films in the Collection, and from the public. I am confident that the American people will not allow so important a portion of their own contemporary history, and of an art so closely identified with the United States, to go down to dust."

Films transferred to tri-acetate stock with the first \$10,000 contributed to the Preservation Fund include: Edwin S. Porter's THE GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY (1903); D. W. Griffith's THE BIRTH OF A NATION (1915) and INTOLERANCE (1916); Douglas Fairbanks' THE MARK OF ZORRO (1921) and ROBIN HOOD (1922); Harold Lloyd's GRANDMA'S BOY (1922) and SAFETY LAST (1924); Buster Keaton's THE GENERAL (1927); William S. Hart's WILD BILL HICKOK (1923); Robert Flaherty's NANOOK OF THE NORTH (1922) and MOANA (1926); Thomas H. Ince's CIVILIZATION (1916) and others.
