Program Two. Tuesday February 15th at 6.00 p.m. in the Marine Room on the 9th floor, Hotel Capitol, 11th Street and Eighth Avenue, New York City.

"THE LUCKY DEVIL" Paramount, 1925. Produced and directed by Frank Tuttle; story by Byron Horgan, screenplay by Towne and Martin. 30 minutes. Starring RICHARD DIX and ESTHER RALSTON with Edna May Oliver.

Paramount had an odd habit in the twenties of avoiding plots in their films; Seven, eight, ten reels would be devoted to the thimble of story-line which rambled along slowly without ever getting anywhere. Of course, occasional films ("The Ten Commandments", for example) went to the other extreme and were over-loaded with story content, but it was typical of Paramount in this period to avoid substance and to make up the length with sheer padding. Sometimes the results were justified; Von Sternberg's "Docks of New York" has, basically, sufficient plot for a two-reeeler and no more, and yet what a powerful, wonderful film it was! But the dearth of plot material really made itself felt in the programmers, denied the consummate of big budgets and production values, and yet of this species "The Lucky Devil" is fairly typical. As seven reels the film was frankly a bit of a bore (as far as any 1925 film can really bore us today) and even this shortened version, condensed to two reels, is lamely and unevenly. However, it is a pleasing little subject, a fine toned original print, and affords a welcome opportunity to renew acquaintance with the very beautiful Esther Ralston and the rugged Richard Dix. A good deal of the film is shot out of doors, and all told it makes for enjoyable light fare.

"MOVIELAND" Ludino Lane Comedian, 1926. For Educational Pictures. Written and directed by Jocutan S. Nucor. Photographed by Leonard Smith. Starring LUDINO LIEHE with Wallace Lombardo, Glen Grovenor, Kathyn McHugh, Tom O'Grady. 30 minutes.

Although Ludino Lane is regarded primarily as a British radio-ball and screen comedian, and is known chiefly for his "The Lambeth Walk", which is as British as they come, he probably did more film work in the United States than in England. He made a whole series of two-reelers for Educational in the mid-twenties, appeared prominently in D.W. Griffith's "Isn't Life Wonderful?", and over into the sound era, was top-lined opposite Lillian Roth in Lubitsch's "The Love Parade". "Movieland" is fast, non-stop slapstick which moves along at a breathless pace and is notable (a) for affording a free rein to Ludino for all his acrobatic stunts, and (b) for providing always fascinating shots of the interior of a studio in the silent period. Surprisingly, when Hollywood was at its peak as the centre of movie glamour and mystery, the comedy film-makers, and notably Semple, were doing their considerable best to satirise it by debunking films themselves, and by ridiculing film production methods. The debunking in "Movieland" isn't as subtle as Semple's, but it moves along just as quickly.

"THE FLOWER FAIRY" Paths, France, 1900. Two minutes.

This little gem is a real find, and Johnny Allen deserves a vote of thanks from us all for resurrecting one of these wonderful old hand-colored films and making a film color negative from it. It was an simple hand in 1900: every single frame of every single print had to be colored, meticulously, by hand. Despite the great beauty of this little film (and the labs today have recreated wonderfully well the quality and texture of the original colors) it was still a beginning in the hand-coloring field. Ten years later, the technique had been perfected until it was a fine art, and looking today at a film like the German "The Nargava's Daughter" (a full eleven minutes, still laboriously done frame by frame!) one finds it hard to believe that the film was not colorized in color. To say that, by those later standards, "The Flower Fairy" is a little primitive does it no injustice; it is a really fine little subject. In line with our policy of inviting guest program audience, we were pleased to find that the enthusiasm of Charles Shubik so matched our own that he presented us with two of the rarest of his own "This two-minute short really demands serious attention."The Flower Fairy" is one of the earliest examples of color in the film - and what beautiful color! It can make technicolor hide its head in shame. The film itself is a static display of a girl's flower garden, presented to us through dissolve, stop motion and double exposure. For both technique and sheer pictorial beauty, this 55 year old film is a film historian's choice item and a thorough delight.

"HERE TODAY, GONE TOMORROW!" Butcher's Film Service Ltd., England, 1924. Written and directed by James R. Anderson; narrator: Frederic Giese, Produced by Harry Fisher; camera - Billie Williams. Film loaned through the courtesy of Garden Films Inc., New York, J5 Minutes.

During the war years, a new kind of filmic horror was thrust upon British exhibitors and
paying customers - the three-reeal quota featurette. They were designed solely to meet the exhibitors' legal needs for more British features, the last requiring that a certain percentage of all product booked must be British. Anything over 3000 feet ranked as a full feature, and thus the British cinema became submerged beneath a welter of the most unutterably boring so-called "interweek" films running for approximately 35 minutes, and dealing almost exclusively with the sort of fodder usually relegated to lesser-grade one-reelers - such fascinating subjects as the training of dogs, the making of barrels and the picking of herrings were dealt with ad nauseam, and had more of an effect on British morals than the robot bombs. The passing of time, the remoteness of a long-suffering populace and the increase in the production of regular British "B" second features put a stop to the wholesale production of these quinaries years ago, and only one good thing emerged from all the years of suffering. Public and exhibitors alike had been attuned to three-to-four reel documentaries, and provided the subject matter was of sufficient merit, there was never any trouble in securing bookings. Films reenacting the past via old film - whether the past be historical, political, cinematic or otherwise - have always been tremendously popular in England, much more so than in America where films like "Fifty Years before your Eyes" have been comparatively rare. Productions along similar lines in England, often concentrating in some detail on a mere ten-year span, have been quite numerous, and many of the films have dealt almost exclusively with the early days of the movies.

HERE TODAY, GONE TOMORROW - given its American premiere by this society - is a rather off-beat member of this cycle of films. It deals with collectors - of old postcards, match-box covers, and the like - rather than with the cinema and other such film, which for illustration purposes, laps over into the other categories too. Since we have already spoken much about it in our midst, we know you'll find the film a fascinating and nostalgic one. It has a good deal of padding of course, to maintain it to a four-reeal length, but we are concerned not with its merits as a documentary after all, but with the interesting and rare things that it contains. It was written and directed by James M. Anderson, a prominent British film historian and collector, who has made one or two other films devoted exclusively to the history of the motion picture.

A collection of postcards is responsible for introducing more sequences from old films of Lillian Gish, Mary Pickford and Maurice Costello. Wonderfully preserved newsreel footage not only recalls the triumphs of Colonel Cody and the Wright Brothers, but also the less spectacular but perhaps more fascinating records of England as its leisure - at the Henley Regatta, at Brighton, at a monster carnival. Here too, we have an extract from Sarah Bernhardt's film of "Camille", and photographic records of many of the top theatrical and variety hits of the day - "Ruth Lynns" and "The Curse of Gold" being typical of the former, Marie Lloyd and escapade artist Harry Hood in the latter. Amazingly well preserved postcards of the 1905 era when in cinema records of "Aladdin", "Here" and other stage spectacles of the period. At least two of these sequences are reproduced from those that were originally hand-colored films. The hectic days of the serial film's peak are admirably recalled by fine highlights from "Zigman", Pearl White's "Phimies", "The Voice on the Wire" and other still-shuddering chapter-plays. Smooth transitions from a collection of cigarette-cards remind us of the value of the cinema in recording, or recrating, history. Interesting newsreel footage of King Edward the Seventh, Sir Henry Nicholas the Second and others are followed by intriguing extracts from catching-looking clips. (Alas, many of these are not identified by name, providing additional food for thought for historians in our midst!) Included in this section is an early British film dealing with the Battle of Trafalgar and the death of Nelson, the Battle of Waterloo, a well-staged charge of the Light Brigade (from "Pulcinella"), the San Francisco earthquake and some really spectacular civil-war footage. (Apart from the use of a phonograph background, it is almost worthy of Griffith). Finally, a visit to London Transport's Lost Property Office provides amply rewarded, amidst a clutter of the usual lost articles, an ancient projector and film are discovered. A rather nice touch this, both projector and can look ancient and rusted. We still shudder when we think of the otherwise admirable "Mary Movie Moments" from Warner's which got off to a rather phoney start by showing endless rows of thirty-year old films gracefully reeling in brand-new Eastern cans in a slick projection room! Needless to say, all of the cans must have been empty, their alleged contents, it still in existence, were doubtless nothing in themselves.Film concludes with a vigorous early Italian slapstick comedy, following the classic pattern of its time - a hectic chase, with more and more people joining in the melee as the film progresses.


It's a well-known fact that Harry really paid off the mortgage for the做字 Warner on many a costly flop, and this grand little melodrama is a good sample of how and why.
Obviously a cheaply made picture, it nevertheless delivers the entertainment goods with a vengeance, mixing sentiment and action, throwing in a baby for good measure (dads and tots always mean more to the ticket than driving rooms and boudoir dramas) and working up to a rousing action climax. And despite its cheapness, it isn't a shoddy production either: the photography is a joy, shots are nicely composed, and the camera is consistently mobile.

The print uses amber and rose tints throughout, and the few "exterior" sets constructed in the studio put to shame a lot of the sets that are churned up today. For Ruby, it is in a comparatively leisurely film with less of the frenzied service that usually accompanies the film, and as always, acts to the hilt. Here he has the opportunity to play the gamut of love, hate, jealousy, grief and joy: one scene in which circumstantial evidence indicates that he has eaten the baby (I) brings forth from me only guy-grade emotion. Make no mistake about it, Ruby was more than just a well-trained animal (later in the year when you see Dynamite, Universal's equivalent, you'll know what I mean). But a really fine little trouper, and, with Shirley Temple, one of Hollywood's most remarkable stars.

Darryl F. Zanuck got his start writing scripts for Ruby; this is one that he didn't write, and, coincidentally, it is one of the more sober scripts with which the coming star was confronted. The two writers were Fred Hyman (later one of the most prolific writers of cheap and lonesome westerns) and Willard Webb, who soon after became a director ("The Sea Beast", etc.) Producer Harry Rap, who died in 1929, became a slick maker of A-minus and B-plus action pictures, two of his last being "Gallant Bear" and "Scene of the Crime" for MGM. Director Chester Franklin continued as much on more imposing properties, and also became one of the 2 best 2nd unit directors in the business, specializing in animal material ("The Yearling").

Good old Charles Stevens, here seen as "The Fox", one of the lead heavies, is still going strong in minor roles, "Heller Leopard" being one of his latest.

Our print incidentally is in fine shape, and in the full original six reels.

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Thoughts in Passing. . . . our apologies to those of our members who were confused by a typing error in our last notes that had our second show scheduled before our first. Several members were kind enough to write and point it out, and we'd like to add the following appropriate comment. . . . in our contemporary "Film Experiment" the cryptically wrote "You goofed!" other and errors that should be corrected. Rain's "Wild Bill Hickock" was of course directed by Cliff Smith, not Lambert Hillyer - and it is Wesley Barry, not Junior Coghlan, who appears in "Spurs Across". . . . silliest story of the year - that "Stagecoach" is to be taken off the market so that it can be remade. . . . where do these idiotic stories start? . . . Back issues of FILM CULTURE and FILM IN REVIEW can always be purchased at our meetings. Getting a new magazine started is always a tough proposition, so FILM CULTURE, which is certainly worth supporting, can use all your support, both moral and financial. . . . the new issue should be out before our next show, and good things are promised. . . . when FILM Experimentalists played "The Birth of a Nation" recently, this society got out a little by providing program notes. This is quite an elaborate brochure, weighing in at five pages, and containing additional material not used in our own program. . . . Spare copies are available, and we'll be glad to send one to any of our members interested enough to drop us a postcard. . . . watch the Museum of the City of New York for an interesting series of Saturday afternoon shows, among them D.W.Griffith's "Underworld of Pig Alley" with Walter Miller on March 24th, and Doug Fairbanks' wonderful "Manhattan Madness" on March 19th. This is one of his best - and as far as we know, exhibitors are floored . . . too bad the Museum had to cancel. Its planned evening screenings of "Blood and Sand," "Ham's Cannes" etc. . . . let's hope the plan will be worked soon! . . . are you as annoyed as we are that Columbia has dropped the "Sun Shines Bright" down to 65 minutes for release? . . . incidentally, a complete print of "Purd"'s "The Sun Shines Bright" can be obtained on 16mm. If enough members are interested we will arrange the film for a future program . . . and to report that the new version of "Illusions" with Hildegarde Knopf and Von Stroheim is quite atrocious. Not even Von can save it, although he has some good moments . . . signs of the times: a nickelodeon in Hollywood, playing old movies, has just installed a plant which can copier! We assure our members that this will not be repeated at our society. We haven't even gotten around to showing yet . . . three days of glamour on view at our society. On Thursday, Dec. 3rd, the Classics from the Clamming Shanties, and today's Vega Miles. By today's standards it would be a dull one, but . . .

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Program Notes and inquiries - WILLIAM K. EVANS: MANHATTAN TOWERS HOTEL
2166 Broadway, New York City 24, NY