Tonight's program is designed mainly for the film "nuts" in our midst. It's a sort of roundup of oddities which would be difficult to program individually. We hope that together, they'll make a cohesive whole. If nothing else, it'll be quite an off-beat program!

HOW THEY GOT THE VOTE (Edison, 1913, one reel)

Although Edison made a lot of films in England at this period, this apparently isn't one of them. Despite its London locale, there are some fine and flavorsome shots of London of the time - Piccadilly, London Bridge etc. - but they are obviously cut in, and the studio material with Arthur Housman and the other Edison players was done on this side of the ocean. (Housman, by the way, also plays a policeman extra in a couple of scenes). A comedy dealing with the suffragette movement, it is particularly interesting in that its main comic plot gimmick pre-dates by several years the same idea in Rene Clair's "Paris Qui Dort". This little subject is a real rarity, and a beautiful print, having only just been made from the original negative.

MAGIC MEMORIES (footage from 1901-1923)

This rather ordinary title covers an exceptionally good one-reel compilation of early trick films, mainly from France. Zecca's "The Montmartre Mystery" is particularly good, and the camera trickery is amazingly polished. Technically it seems to be far more expert than the current "The Ten Commandments"! Also included is some interesting Melies material, and the British "A Big Swallow". The flickering in the "Lulu" sequence is occasioned by the fact that this is a black-and-white print from a hand-colored original. The monster footage credited to "The Lost World" is actually from a much earlier short subject, also made by Willis O'Brien. It's much cruder, but nonetheless an obvious blueprint of what was to follow -- with plenty of the blood-letting that was also so typical of dear old Mr. O'Brien! Finally, there's an enjoyable little hunk from a Snub Pollard-Hal Roach comedy of 1923.

PEACOCK FEATHERS (A Universal Jewel, 1925) 7 reels. Directed by Svend Gade.

Adapted from Temple Bailey's novel by Svend Gade and James A. Spearing; Assistant Director - Edward Dodds; photographed by Charles Stumar; titles by Walter Anthony; edited by Frank Atkinson; Art direction by E. E. Sheeley.

Starring CULLEN LANDIS and JACQUELINE LOGAN, with Ward Crane, Emmett King, George Fawcett, Helen Dunbar, Youcza Troubetskoy, Edwin J. Brady, Helen Carr and Aggie Herring.

"Peacock Feathers" belongs (as did "The White Tiger" and "Tom Sawyer") in that category of programmers which we show occasionally just because they were programmers, and because once in a while it's interesting to look at the typical bread-and-butter pictures as well as the more important ones. Too, it's a chance to get a look at the work of a now almost forgotten director, Svend Gade. Reputedly, Gade was at times a brilliant craftsman. Unfortunately neither this film (nor "Fifth Avenue Models," of the same year) do much to sustain that claim, but after all, one would not dream of judging Griffith by "Drums of Love," or Tourneur by "County Fair". Before one attempts any kind of re-evaluation of Gade, one should see again his "Hamlet" and "Siege". This latter, also made in 1925, seems to have been quite a remarkable production. It crops up on list after list of the best pictures of that year -- often very near the top of the list too. The critic of Hollywood's "Film Mercury," for example, put it in fourth place -- the first three being "Isn't Life
Wonderful?", "The Big Parade" and "Greed". Films on that same list placed after "Siege" included "Peter Pan", "The Last Laugh" and "Salvation Hunters"!

As far as plot goes, "Peacock Feathers" is a sort of "Woman's Home Companion" version of "The Wind"; a soap opera with more suds than guts. It seems singularly lacking in incident, and it is difficult to imagine the form of the novel from which it was adapted. Either it was the dullest novel on record; or an absolute sizzler which was neatly laundered for the screen! However, pictorially it is quite consistently interesting. Universal, as always, don't stint on the interior sets. Some of the photography is quite unusual, and there are hints of the familiar Scandinavian style in some of the outdoor scenes towards the end. And the toning is, as always, a delight - restful ambers for the interiors, deep rich blues for the night scenes. One gets the impression however, that Universal decided to cut the budget somewhere along the line, and the locations don't always match up. A lot of the film was obviously shot at Iverson's Ranch, in Chatsworth, some 40 miles outside Hollywood. It is drab scrub country, and doesn't match up at all with the snow-covered mountains which are supposed to be in the same location!

The acting is competent, rather than inspired, but it's nice to see old-timers Emmett King and George Fawcett, giving their all as always. Ward Crane, as the mild heavy, plays his role almost as he did a similar role in Keaton's "Sherlock Jr." Incidentally, an erroneous new title refers to Marion Nixon as being in the film -- don't waste your time looking however; she isn't there! All other titles are the original Universal titles, complete to the one that informs the audience that this film was advertised in "The Saturday Evening Post".

BRONCHO BILLY ANDERSON Interview (5 reels)

Actually "Interview" is perhaps a pretentious term for this film, as little interviewing is done. The film was shot in New York a few weeks ago, with the sole idea of getting Billy - and his anecdotes - on film. The interviewing merely consists of supplying Billy with a few pegs on which to hang more material. Anderson is still a colorful personality, and a fine yarn-spinner, and he comes through very well. There are obvious shortcomings in the film, principally a rather superficial quality in the questions put to Anderson. Unfortunately attempts to get him to discuss Edwin S. Porter, Griffith, the decline of Essanay etc. didn't pay off. Mr. Anderson is a little hard of hearing, and also by now a little at sea insofar as certain aspects of film history are concerned. His answers to such questions got more than a little garbled, and in fairness to him, it seemed better to edit these sequences out. We think you'll see what we mean in the opening sequence of the film, where Anderson discusses "The Great Train Robbery", and somewhat exaggerates his own contribution to it -- doubtless by now a sincere exaggeration, but an exaggeration none the less. It's quite surprising how so many of these grand old veterans, who have achieved so much, have convinced themselves through the years that they also achieved a little more. Anderson is no exception - at least insofar as "The Great Train Robbery" is concerned - but otherwise there is no attempt to impress or take undue credit, and he readily admits his shortcomings. The most interesting segment of course deals with his Essanay period, the Broncho Billy westerns (it's quite a moving experience to see Billy so completely identified with the Broncho Billy character as he acts out a couple of early plots) and his association with Chaplin. There are anecdotes too on Hart, Mix, Ben Turpin, Bushman and the others, and some very outspoken comments on current tv. The two interviewers seen briefly at the end of the film are Broncho Billy Everson and Don Malkames, Kr. Malkames, a top-notch cameraman who worked on such diverse films as "Hell's Angels" and "Jigsaw", photographed this unrehearsed interview session.