"A Transplanted Prairie Flower" (Edison, 1914) Director: not stated
Story by Beatrice Morgan; one reel

Most of the Edison one-reelers seemed rather inferior to Biographics that had preceded them by several years, and this one is really no exception. But it's rather charming in its artless and old-fashioned way, better acted than most of the Edisons, and with some good photography and lighting. The exteriors range from the Wild West -- quite obviously New Jersey -- to street scenes in New York.

"THE NIGHT CRY" (Warner Brothers, 1926) Directed by Herman Raymaker; scenario by Walter Morosco and Joe Klein, from a story by Ewart Adamson; photographed by Edwin DuParr. 5 reels.
Starring Rin Tin Tin, with John Harron, June Marlowe, Gayne Whitman, Bob Kortman, Mary Louise Miller and Baldy the Condor.

It has been over seven years since we last ran "The Night Cry", and the intermin has brought us many other Rin Tin Tin vehicles. Some of them have been better in terms of direction, production values and spectacular action, but somehow "The Night Cry" still seems to stand out as the "definitive" Rinty film, and the one in which he gives his best performance. Here there is no hesitation, no looking off camera for instructions from his trainer. He sizes up the situation and plunges right in -- and in such dramatic situations as the one wherein Rinty silently looks back and forth between master and mistress, trying to convince them that he is NOT guilty of sheep killing, he really ACTS in closeup, from the tip of his wet nose to those eloquent and soulful eyes! Possibly he might even be accused of a trace of ham in these scenes, but certainly he makes all his competition -- Strongheart, Dynamite, Napoleon Bonaparte, Peter the Great and all the other canine pretenders to his throne -- seem like rank amateurs by comparison.

Even apart from Rinty, the film is a delight throughout. Directed by old Sennettoman Herman Raymaker, it maintains a brisk pace all the way. Edwin DuParr's lovely camerawork is seen to fine advantage in this original toned print. And its astonishing climax, with some real Griffith inspired, excitement generating cross-cutting, is a complete throwback to Edison's "Rescued from an Eagle's Nest". "The Night Cry" is a real example of the triumph of cinematic mind over matter; the plot was old-hat in 1907, but the treatment is fresh and exciting even today. Only in the poor matching-up of studio sets to actual exteriors, and in the rather clumsy special effects, is there any real sign of the primitive. And today these weaknesses, if anything, add to the jolly spirit of the whole. Johnny Harron (Bobby's brother) makes an adequate hero, but none of the humans seem to matter much. Rinty's perennial girl friend Nanette isn't on hand this time, but Baldy the Condor -- a really vicious looking bird -- makes up for it.

"Motion Picture Magazine" of July 1926 reported: "Rin Tin Tin's very best picture -- and that's saying a lot" while the trade paper "Film Daily" also raved: "This is the dog picture of them all. Rinty better than ever in a picture that screams boxoffice from start to finish. Should be a cleanup... never has this dog's intelligence been tried to the extent that it is here... built of meller hokum, but it's the best, most sure-fire hokum that has come to
light in many a day. Story carries an unmistakable punch and unwinds amid an atmosphere of suspense and thrills that doesn't merely skim the surface. It gets down deep and the reaction of the audience was a genuine nervous tension which, through actual observation, brought about a physical unceasingness on the part of the spectators".

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**Intermission**

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"THE YANKEE CLIPPER" (Cecil B. DeMille Productions-PDC, 1927)
Directed by Rupert Julian; story by C. Gardner Sullivan;
Camera: John Mescall
5 reels
Starring William Boyd, with Elinor Fair, Walter Long, Julia Faye, John Miljan,
Lotus Long, Burr McIntosh, Junior Coghlan,

With so many silents missing altogether, it's odd that this one should exist today in several different versions. One or two prints still exist of the 9 reel original. A 3-reel version was made for "Silents Please". In the late 20's and early 30's, the Kodascope home-movie library issued a 5-reel version. Kodascope usually selected fairly short features that required little or no trimming to get down to their required 5-reel length. When they used a longer feature -- as for example, "Beau Brummel" -- they usually block-out rather carelessly, taking out huge chunks, and with an eye on the kiddie market at which they were aiming, they often edited out stuff that they considered too strong. Their 5-reel "Yankee Clipper" reflected this thinking.

Our 5-reel version, compiled some six years ago but never shown prior to this screening tonight, was designed for an hour-length tv show that was actually a predecessor of "Silents Please". It was very carefully condensed; no sequences or story elements were lost at all, and it was all done via meticulous trimming within sequences. This is one case where cutting has genuinely helped a film I think. At 9 reels, it was a padded programmer trying to be an epic. There were too many slow spots, too many over-extended scenes. The final race scenes were especially irritating in the longer form, since the use of obvious miniatures became much more apparent. I don't defend the cutting, for commercial reasons, of silent films. After all, even if a film is improved, it's still a distortion of the original in a sense, and there are many cases of course where the film will definitely not be improved. But the one-hour format did allow much more leeway than the half-hour. More of the original pacing could be retained, as could the subtitles; narration therefore could be kept to a serviceable minimum. Actually, this hour-length series compressed most of its historical comment and information into two or three live introductory sequences following the commercial breaks; these I have deleted from this print (apart from the opening one) so that it does have an uninterrupted flow. Several of these hour-length versions were made, and were extremely popular in Europe and Canada, but could never find a buyer in the U.S.

"The Yankee Clipper", one of the better films of a curious director, Rupert Julian ("Merrygoround", "Phantom of the Opera", "Walking Back", "The Cat Creeps"), reduces a fairly important historical theme (Queen Victoria vs President Taylor in a battle for the China tea trade) to a level of straight adventure melodrama. But it is all smoothly done, the chase on the yardarm (a steal from "Treasure Island"), the mutiny, the typhoon (invaluable as stock footage in "The Wreck of the Hesperus" the same year, and in scores of independent quickies ever since), slammed over with real gusto and showmanship. The sets (re-used in Pathé serials of the period) are quite elaborate, the miniatures serviceable, and if Catalina shows up as both the China coast and the Boston surroundings (!) it hardly seems important. Most of all, "Yankee Clipper" scores on its villainy: Nesars, Miljan and Long between them seem possessed of all the vices of silent villains - lechery, cowardice, brutality, sadism, greed. They snivel and sneer and bluster, with not a single redeeming feature between them.

--------Wm.K.Everson------