Tuesday next, October 17th: CRIME WITHOUT PASSION (Hecht-MacArthur, 1934) with Claude Rains and Margo; THE EAGLE AND THE HAWK (Stuart Walker, 1933) with Cary Grant, Fredric March, Carole Lombard, Sir Guy Standing and Jack Cable.

October 10, 1967

The Theodora Huff Memorial Film Society

"VALLEY OF THE MISSING" (Irving Lesser-Maple Leaf Productions, 1921)

Directed by Irving Cummings; story by Robert Walker; Camera: A. Fried. Edited by Hal Kern. 2 reels

With Irving Cummings, Morris Johnson, Frank Whisen, William Quinn.

Like all of the Mountie 2-reelers that Irving Cummings directed and starred in (though it's an above-average specimen of the series) this is a fairly straight-forwardL camerawork and often simple-minded little actioner, given class by its fine camera work and often breathtaking outdoor locations. Logic is not a strongpoint, nor is documentary realism -- the latter exemplified by an unlikely order from HQ to the Corporal here, addressing him as "Dear Sir," in the form of the heroines' incredibly prolonged and exhausting battle in defense of her virtue, but it's a good to look at, and the local original print is a beauty.

"THE RELAY", ep. 7 of "The Collegians" (Universal, 1926) Director: Wealey Ruggles

Scenario: George Plympton; Camera: Ben H. Kinzie; 2 reels

With George Lewis, Dorothy Guiler, Hayden Stevenson, Churchill Ross, Eddie Phillips, and Bob Livingston and Andy Devine as extras.

One of the best and liveliest of the popular Collegians series, this is also a mild change from formula in that the big sporting event comes first, and the obsession by-play, including a spectacular free-for-all, comes second. As usual the pace is so frenetic, and the screen so jammed full of youthful faces, that one is constantly frustrated by the glimpses of faces in the crowd that one knows well, but has no time to identify. However, a slim Andy Devine has a recognizable bit near the end, and Bob Livingston -- one of the key cowboy heroes of the 30's and 40's -- is a tamed youth, hanging around behind George Lewis just as he was to hang around behind Cable when he played another extra role in "Notch on the Mountie" just prior to moving into stardom.

- intermission -

"THE MAD WHIRL" (Universal, 1924) Directed by William A. Seiter; from the story "Here's How" by Richard Wascbury Child (U.S. Ambassador to Italy); adapted by Frederic and Anna Hatton; Screen treatment by Lewis Milestone; scenario by Edward T. Lowe Jr; Asst. Director, Nate Watt; photographed by Harrold E. Corr; cast by Harley Swad; Art Director, E.M. Chessley; 7 reels.


The still from "The Mad Whirl" in Richard Griffith-Arthur Mayer's "The Movies" leads one to expect a typically frenzied essay in babes, boobs and wild parties. But while those elements are present to a degree, the film is by no means a film of the "Our Dancing Daughters" school. To the contrary, it is one of the most curiously gentle and even charming films of the jazz-age that I've seen; it is developed so casually that for a while the bath, story-line and action are even apparent; and when, at last, the thrill comes in the famous reel 6, it produces a power that is not at fault. Unlike most films of its period and its genre, it is civilized, non-hysterical, but firmly opposed to the standards of the day. If not exactly a condemnation, it is at least a stern lecture. As if afraid to paint too colorful, a picture of that era, it deliberately soft-pedals sex and drink. The titles imply orgies and refer to non-stop drinking, but little actual drinking is ever shown, and the basic liquor on view is soda water! Curiously, no one is ever shown handling a wine glass, and not until late in the film do we ever actually see anyone caught in the seamy act of imbibing -- and then only from precisely placed telescopes! William Seiter always had a wonderful flair for light comedy, both in silents and in talkies, and it pays off here in the hectic party scenes at home and on the beach. But he had fine dramatic stuff in him too, and a flair for unspctacular but pleasing groupings and compositions. He never milks a scene, but makes the very most of a quick image; the delightful scene of Mulhall examining a flapper's ankle as she sits in a tree, or the lively (and decidedly non-obscur) sequence of the heroine's runaway buggy. Seiter injects added scenes of dreams and speed with a bar-bug's eye view over it horizontally across the screen. He was never a showy director, and seemed most at home in trifles, but how well his direction holds up today! There are so many pleasing elements in this film: the crisp and partially visual subtitles for example, and especially the many "unnecessary" but pleasing little vignettes, like the scene in the ice-cream parlour where George Pescott comically sets a tennis split! To add to our pleasure, although the print is a little worn in spots, it's a fine original and toned print. But please don't ask us to sort out the various writing credits and intertitles just how much Lewis Milestone had to do with it all.