Next Tuesday, Dec. 19th: THE PRISONER OF ZENDA (1937) with Colman and Fairbanks Jr., and excerpts from other talkie swashbucklers.

Dec. 12 1967

Theodore Huff Memorial Film Society

"CROOKED" (Davis Distributors, 1925) Directed by F. Herrick Herrick
Asst. Dir: Frank Bates; Camera: William Miller; 2 reels
With Eleanor King, Reginald Simpson, William Calhoun, Harry Stone

This entry in the "Frangments of Life" series proudly boasts (as did the others) that it is a "tale told without titles". However, don’t expect too much for this release: the film is shot on location in Charles B. Ay vehicles. It’s no trick when you fall back on a long foreword, have frequent recourses to letters and newspaper inserts, and then just withhold vital information. But when visual imagination runs out and a title is essential! Motivation is obscure, and one isn’t even too sure what the factory is manufacturing. (Giant toilet rolls? Containers for tv dinners? That’s what the output looks like!) However, it’s interesting as an example of independent East Coast production, there’s a medium of suspense in the chase finals, some rather charming and well photographed pastorale scenes, an inept hero (who cases a cropper in his one Fairbankian leap) and most of all some genuine value and nostalgic interest in the locations of NJ and Connecticut suburbia.

"THE FATAL PLUNGE" (Eclectic, 1914) Directed by Louis Gasnier
Written by Charles Goddard; Camera: Arthur Miller; 2 reels
With Pearl White, Crane Wilbur, Paul Panzer, Jack Standing, Eleanor Woodruff

By now you all know what to expect of "The Perils of Pauline", and this episode - number 7 - is typical and up to standard, with a submarine lending it a little more novelty than usual. Jack Standing, the seduced-minister in Hart’s "Hell's Kitchen", is here an equal security risk, with Eleanor Woodruff as the vamp-villainess who betrays him. (Gerald McDonald has pointed out that it was extremely rarely that Miss Woodruff played anything but a good girl.

"THE LOST WORLD" (First National - Waddetson B. Rothacker, 1925)
Directed by Harry Hoyt; Research and Technical Direction, Willis O’Brien; Camera: Arthur Edson, Fred Jackman, Homer Scott. Sets: Milton Menasco
Script by Marion Marlowe from the novel by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle; 5 reels

This is the third time around for "The Lost World" at the Huff (though the first repeat in many years), and through the years we have written so many long notes on this film that we assume an equally lengthy repetition tonight is unnecessary. A couple of years ago though I did write some fairly detailed notes for Entertainment Films Inc. on all the missing footage in today’s existing prints (although the film is drastically cut, very little of the monster footage is gone) and I’m hoping to obtain extra copies of these notes to staple to these sheets. If they don’t materialize, then a stamped addressed envelope to that company - at 850 7th Avenue, NYC - should procure them for those of you who are interested.

Although O’Brien had some experimental monster shorts to his credit prior to this, "The Lost World" was of course his first major entry into the special effects field, and a remarkable forerunner to "King Kong" and all the subsequent monster epics. Likewise, the special effects are more mature, with the story development the real highlight of the film. The special effects are still very impressive, and the story is well-paced and entertaining. Overall, "The Lost World" is a classic of its genre and remains a must-see for fans of early special effects and adventure films.

Wm. K. Everson