THE LIFE OF CHARLES PEACE (Britain, 1905) Directed by Frank Mottershaw; 1 reel
Charles Peace was Britain's own Jesse James, a notorious robber and killer who was more than this "primitive" suggests. Among his tricks: staining his face with walnut juice and puffing up his face like a frog's belly as he pounced out of the darkness! However, there were no folk-lore or mythic qualities attached to Peace, and British films gave him only a passing glance, the most "elaborate" sound feature devoted to himstilling being only a small independent quickie. Although made two years later, this landmark film is however Britain's parallel to America's "The Great Train Robbery", and some of its more ingenious shots on a moving train is particularly well-staged for its period, although some inserts made when the train was standing still don't take into account the reflections of non-moving clouds in the windows. It's a tableaux-like film without much exposition, assuming (probably correctly) that the story was well-known, at least to British audiences, but it does keep on the move.

LIEUT. DARING AND THE PLANS OF THE MINEFIELD (Britain, 1912) Directed by H.O. Martin; written by Harold Brett; 14 reels; (U.S. title "The International Spies").
Lieut. Daring was something of a British "Don Winslow of the Navy", the hero of a dozen or more short thrillers like this one around the 1912 period, and later on turning up in a different costume - that source material specimen is "Lieut. Daring Avenges an insult to the Union Jack" but alas it does not seem to be presently available. Although this one lacks the ultimate finesse in editing techniques and use of the moving camera that one finds in Griffith's American chase thrillers of the same year ("A Girl and her Trust" for example) it is a lively and quite elaborate little film, and like its American counterparts, goes out of its way to exploit vehicles of ever-increasing speed, winding up with an aerial - the meticulous pointing of the secret plans on to a lady's back is not in the world of the basic plot device of Paramount's Paulette Goddard comedy "The Lady Has Plans", and footage of the Charing Cross-Folkestone-Boulogne trip is especially fascinating today, since neither the route - nor the rather drab and unpainted station backgrounds - have changed one whit in the intervening years, though it probably takes a little longer to make the trip today! Incidentally, the print carries the title "Lieut. Daring Captures a Spy", presumably a made-up title - Charing Cross-Folkestone-Boulogne would have the information at its fingertips, acquired a title-less print and seemingly couldn't track down either the original title or its date. The original cost for the film, not reproduced in the print, gives the villain (played by Charles Raymond) a marvellous if somewhat unlikely Germanic name, even though this was before the first World War. He is called Leon Schumwasser!

GOING CROOKED (Fox, 1926) Directed by George Melford; Scenario by Keene Thompson and Albert Shelby Le Vio; Camera, Charles Clarke; 5 reels
With Bessie Love (Marie); Oscar Shaw (Banning); Gustav von Seyffertitz (Merdaut); Lesbou (Debauch); John teamwork (Edgar Kennedy (detective); Lydia Knott (Mrs Rogers); Bernard Siegel (a crook).

While no more that a time-killer, this is such a good print of a totally unknown and otherwise unavailable film, that it needs no other justification for its showing! It's a handsomely put together little film, fast-moving, and with some real suspense and style in its climax. Bessie Love as always is a delight, and it's a pity that so few of her silents, and especially major ones like "Sundown", are available today. It's also good to see Lydia Knott - actress/mother of director Lambert Milerly - in one of her traditional mother roles. George Melford, its director, was a minor but efficient film-maker whose biggest hit was of course the original "The Sheik" with Valentino.
— Ten Minute Intermission —

THE COMING OF AMOS (Producers Distributing Corp.-Gecil B.a&Mille Productions,1925)
Directed by Paul Sloane; screenplay by James Ashmore Creelman and Garrett Fort from the novel by William John Locke; Camera, Arthur Miller; Art Director, Chester Gore; 6 reels.
With Rod la Roque (Amos Burden); Jett Goudal (Princess Nadia Ramiroff); Noah Beery (Ramon Garcia); Richard Carle (David Fontenay); Arthur Hoyt (Bendyke Hamilton); Trixie Friganza (Dowager Duchess of Parthy); Clarence Burton (Pedro Valdez); Ruby Lafayette (nurse); William von Brinken (Henochman).
Even for its period, "The Coming of Amos" is exceptionally tongue-in-cheek, and its pace deliberately over-ripe, as in the 52dd Slaughter "The Pace at the Window" that we ran a few weeks back. A Abilities director than Paul Sloane might have mixed ed the thrills and satire to witter effect, but it's still fun, a good showcase for Rod la Roque, and with a marvellous oilmastic reel. I haven't read the novel by Locke, but he was a relatively serious writer, and I suspect that his work was much tampered with here. Arthur Miller, one of Ford's best cameramen ("How Green Was My Valley", "Tobacco Road") does an excellent photographic job, and there are some outstanding glass shots, most especially of Beery's fortress by the sea.

—— William K. Swenson
Program ends 10.15, followed by discussion session.
The two British "primitives" scheduled to open tonight's program are still somewhere between here and Berkeley, Calif. They were part of a whole program of early British films and were despatched in ample time, but somehow have become delayed on route. Thus they cannot be shown tonight, and will be added to our next Archive/Silent night, which is on March 6th.

As a literal last-minute replacement, we decided to add a film recently discovered and salvaged — as far as it could be — by the American Film Institute. It's called THE RISE OF SUSAN, was filmed by Peerless in and around Fort Lee in 1916, and stars Clara Kimball Young, Eugene O’Brien and Warner Oland. The director: S.E.V. Taylor; the writer, Frances Marion.

The first three reels had decayed beyond saving; fortunately the last two reels, covering a remarkably gamut of melodrama, survive, and once you get into it, it is fairly obvious what the preceding plot was. Every so often there's a title saying "Six Years Later" or something like that and we seem to be in for another four or five reels — but the involved plot does peak and resolve itself within these final two reels.

We apologise to those who may be disappointed at not seeing the two British shorts, but you will be able to see them early in the Spring — and an Archive Night framework such as tonight is obviously the ideal place to slot two abandoned but now rescued reels.

Quite incidentally, it's a pretty wild film just to see; to see it for the first time, and absorb it to the extent of improvising a musical score to go along with it, is quite a challenge, so if occasionally --- Mr. Oderoom --- is playing the Wedding March when the scene has shifted suddenly to a motif of madness and drug addiction, bear in mind that he has not seen it before!

--- Who ---

Running time is possibly a few minutes less than for the two one-reelers it is replacing, so there will be no basic change in end-of-program time.