

Obituaries

John W. Butler

John W. Butler, a member of the SMPTE, and one of the pioneers of the motion-picture industry, who helped to guide it over the difficult transition from silent movies to "talkies," died on October 9, 1958, after a short illness. He leaves two daughters and four granddaughters.

Mr. Butler, a native of Newport, R.I., spent most of his boyhood days in Norwood, Mass. He attended schools at Cambridge and Boston, Mass. In 1920 he joined Paramount and served as senior accountant until 1926, when he became assistant to the producer in charge of the New York

production office. In 1928 he became Executive Manager of the Paramount Studios in Astoria, organized the production and technical staff, and guided the installation of the first sound equipment there. Many stars made their debut in sound pictures in Astoria during that period—notably Eddie Cantor, Jeanne Eagles, Walter Huston, Edward G. Robinson, Claudette Colbert, and the Marx Brothers.

Mr. Butler left Paramount in 1930, and after various independent activities joined the Army Pictorial Center in 1942, shortly after the Army took over the Paramount Astoria Studios for the production of training films. He served first with the Comptroller Division and later



was successively Chief of Service, Studio, and Production Divisions. From 1955 until his death he was Chief, Operations Advisory Office, on the staff of the Commanding Office.

I shall always be grateful to John Butler for giving me my first job in the motion-picture industry back in 1928 when Paramount was just getting started with its first sound equipment installation in Astoria. He gave me much encouragement in those early years. Later it was my privilege to work under him again under Army auspices. For the past three years when we were closely associated in staff work his wealth of experience in production and administrative problems was a continual source of inspiration and guidance. The motion-picture industry and the Government have lost a faithful and valued leader.—George Lewin.

Stephen Szeglin

Stephen Szeglin, a member of the SMPTE for many years, died on September 19, 1958, at the age of 55.

He was born in Hungary but came to this country at an early age and worked for various projector manufacturers and also as a projectionist. He was a member of the IATSE, Local 306.

It was my privilege to work with "Steve" for the past fourteen years at the Army Pictorial Center where he was employed as a sound equipment technician. He was a skilled craftsman — with a wealth of ideas and the enthusiasm to put them into practice. He played an important part in the various projects we undertook to improve technical operations at the Center. He was of great assistance to me in the preparation of the papers describing this work which I prepared for presentation before the SMPTE and publication in the *Journal*.

He will be sorely missed by all of us who were privileged to have been associated with him as fellow-worker and friend.—George Lewin.

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