

Obituaries



Geo. W. Colburn

Geo. W. Colburn, founder and Chairman of the Board of the Geo. W. Colburn Laboratory in Chicago, died 12 January 1973 at the age of 69.

He had been a leader in the motion-picture industry for more than 35 years. His inventive genius made possible many innovations in both printing and processing techniques that have benefited the entire industry.

Mr. Colburn joined the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers in 1938 and was made a Fellow in 1948. He was active in the Society's affairs and held a number of posts including those of Governor (1952-53) and Treasurer (1954-56). He was Manager of the Midwest section (1941) and served as Secretary-Treasurer (1948-49) and Chairman (1950-51) of the Central Section. He also served as Convention Vice-President (1963-64). He served on various Committees including Laboratory Practice, Admissions and Fellow Awards. He attended most of the Society's Conferences where he presented a number of papers. Among the papers of his authorship appearing in the *Journal* are: "A 16mm Process Control Sensitometer" (Sept. 1957); "Two 16mm Printers for Internegative and Color Positive Process" (Sept. 1959); "A Multiple-Head 16mm to 8mm Reduction Printer" (March, 1963); "Super-8 Processing With a 16mm Sprocket Machine" (Feb. 1966); and (with E. A. Cunningham) "A Multiple 8mm Magnetic Sound Printer" (Jan. 1963).

Geo. W. Colburn also was a founder, Past President and Treasurer of the Association of Cinema Laboratories and served on its Board of Directors for many years.

Stories highlighting the life of Geo. W. Colburn are inseparable from the history of the company ever since he converted his grandfather's gas stereopticon to a wonderful home movie projector. No minor feat this, accomplished as it was at the age of 16, with the aid of hairpins, Tinker Toys and George's Meccano set.

When grandfather passed away in 1928, the family turned to George to have copies made of some movies that were taken of grandfather on 9.5mm motion-picture film. After scouring the middlewest unsuccessfully trying to find a source to han-

dle this printing, he decided to build his own printing machine. Several months later he received his first inquiry from St. Louis requesting conversion from 9.5mm Pathe film to 16mm film.

By 1934, these inquiries were arriving from all parts of the world. There were 35mm, 28mm, 17.5mm and 9.5mm sizes to be transferred to 16mm and then the 8mm size came into existence.

By this time, George had built his third and fourth precision printer and could accommodate all three sizes of film. With this newly-designed and built equipment, George proceeded to put an ad in *Movie Makers* magazine that announced the new and special Colburn service of reducing 16mm to 8mm films. Before long, orders began to pour in.

In 1935, Robert A. Colburn joined his brother as a partner. The following year another brother, John, added his services and the laboratory moved from George's home quarters to Chicago's Merchandise

Mart. Shortly after, the fourth Colburn, Francis, joined the rapidly expanding new company.

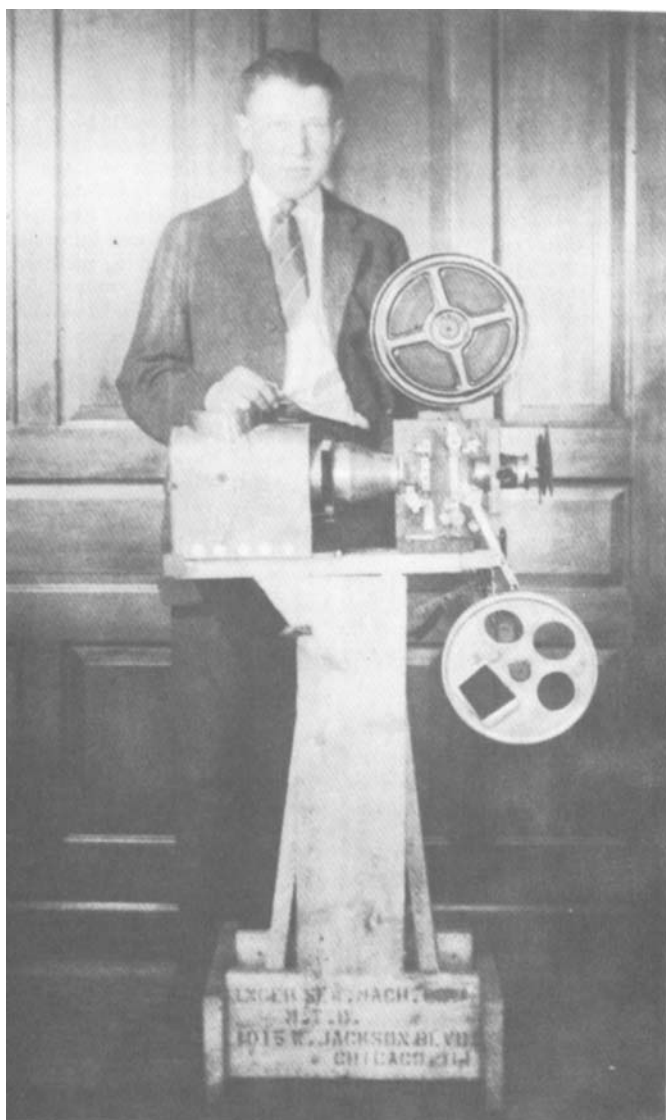
In 1940, sound recording and mixing equipment and a studio were added. During World War II, the Slide and Filmstrip Department grew while working on aircraft identification slides and other training devices.

Incorporation came in 1946 and the lab moved to its present location at 164 North Wacker Drive, Chicago.

Since its founding in 1935, Geo. W. Colburn Laboratory has grown to become one of the nation's leading motion-picture processing and printing laboratories.

To assure the continuation of the laboratory's tradition of excellence and provide for the future growth and success of the company, a major reorganization of management structure occurred in January 1972.

Geo. W. Colburn, founder and President of the Company, was elected to the newly



Tinker Toys, a Meccano Set, Grandfather's gas stereopticon — Geo. W. Colburn at 16, with his homemade projector (from Colburn 25th Anniversary Newsletter).

created position of Chairman of the Board. Succeeding him as President and Chief Executive Officer was Robert A. Colburn, who had served as Executive Vice President since 1958. Francis W. Colburn was re-elected Secretary-Treasurer of the Company.

Geo. W. Colburn's contributions both to the industry and to the Society have been many and varied. In a well-deserved tribute, the first John Grierson International Technical Award was awarded to him posthumously, the presentation being made to his widow, by Gerald G. Graham, Director of Planning and Research, of the National Film Board of Canada. The new Award is sponsored by the National Film Board of Canada for presentation by the SMPTE.

The citation spoke of Mr. Colburn's development of 8mm printing and processing equipment for nontheatrical audiences and noted, "The dedicated amateur, the industrial photographer, the nontheatrical producer were always assured of a sympathetic and interested listener and advisor in Geo. W. Colburn."

Geo. W. Colburn will long be remembered for the energies and talents he contributed during his life time to the Society and to the advancement of professional laboratory service.

William H. Hadley, Jr.

William H. Hadley, Jr., died 1 March 1973 at Washington, D.C., at the age of 66. At the time of his death he was Senior Communications Program Officer for the Governmental Affairs Institute. He joined the Institute staff in 1959 after having spent 20 years in radio, newspapers and television in Boston, Providence, New York and Little Rock. He was a professional cinematographer for news and documentary films and produced a series of documentary films on other countries. In 1972 he made an around-the-world trip in behalf of the International Visitor Program, following which he wrote a highly valued report for the State Department. During the leave of absence which preceded his death he was creating a 12-part historical radio series, each dealing with a specific historical period.

His interests included educational television and for several years he served as on-the-air host for a weekend program over Washington D.C.'s ETV station.

He had been a member of the Society since 1953. He was also a member of the National Association of Educational Broadcasters, the Radio-Television News

Directors Association and the University Film Producers Association.

Earl Snyder

Earl Snyder, a veteran of the motion-picture industry for more than 50 years, died 16 January 1973, at Phoenix, Ariz., at the age of 65.

He began his career as a child actor in 1916; he was the first Spanky in the famous *Our Gang* series. In 1928, when he was 20 and had "retired" as a child actor, he became interested in the newly invented "talking pictures" and devoted the rest of his life to working with sound. He joined Sound Local 695 in November 1930, soon after it was organized. He had been a sound mixer on 50 feature films and some 400 television programs. He had more than 400 TV commercials to his credit. Two of the feature films he worked on, *Not As a Stranger* and *Cat Ballou*, received Academy Award nominations for sound.

He worked mainly for independent producers. In 1954 he worked as a sound mixer for Ryder Sound Services, Inc.; in 1956 he joined Kling Studios as Sound Director. At the time of his death, he was President of S.F.S. Studio Rentals, Inc., with headquarters in Phoenix.

"He was well known and liked in Hollywood and was so well informed in the independent field that many of us called on him and looked to him for information as to what was taking place."—*Loren L. Ryder*

Bert Easey

Bert Easey, until a year ago Head of the Camera Department at Pinewood Studios, Iver, Bucks, England, died early this year. At Pinewood, Mr. Easey was in charge of and ever ready to show to visitors the Studios' very wide range of camera equipment and even wider range of accessories, from anti-freeze pads to zooms.

Bert Easey started in the photographic world in 1918 when he joined Swain & Co., society photographers in London, as assistant office boy and general dog-sbody. Before long he was developing, printing, finishing and even helping with the portraits. He went from there to Fleet Street photographic agencies, where he learned about the optical and mechanical maintenance problems of focal-plane press cameras such as the 5- × 4-in Goerz Anschutz, Marion Ruby Reflex, Thornton-Pickard, Panross and other cameras then in general use. At that time, he occasionally had the opportunity to cover impor-



Bert Easey (right), former Head, Camera Department, Pinewood Studios, explaining a new lighting control panel to Charles Rosher in 1970.

tant sporting events, including making picture "scoops" at motor races. His earliest connection with motion pictures was in association with a fellow press photographer who owned an early Prestwich camera which was in use for topical films and for a series of bathing beauty comedies shot at Southend-on-Sea.

With the coming of sound motion pictures, Bert Easey entered film production as a camera maintenance engineer with Sir Alexander Korda's London Films, which was then operating at Worton Hall Studios, Isleworth. Later, when London Films moved to Denham Studios, Easey became head of the camera department; and for many years he provided crews and equipment to leading cameramen of Britain, France and America. After Denham Studios closed, Bert Easey became Head of the Camera Department at Pinewood, where he continued to cope with many photographic innovations in color, CinemaScope, VistaVision, 70mm film, improved optics, mechanics and electronic aids to filmmaking.

Bert Easey was one of the founding members of the British Society of Cinematographers and served as Hon. Secretary and subsequently as Hon. Treasurer for many years.—*Baynham Honri*, Pinewood Studios, Iver, Bucks., England.