

REPORT OF THE WESTERN MUSEUM COMMITTEE*

Summary.—A brief account of new accessions to the SMPE motion picture exhibit at the Los Angeles Museum, and a description of two new galleries added to the display facilities.

The Historical Committee has been active in collecting relics, memorabilia, and data concerning the past as well as the present of the industry and its personalities, so that complete records may be preserved in the SMPE exhibit at the Los Angeles Museum.

The historical exhibit and files have been of considerable help to authors preparing books on cinematic subjects, a number of authors having used the museum data in some of their publications.

A second gallery has recently been added to increase the display facilities at the Los Angeles Museum. In it are being exhibited paraphernalia and material illustrating many of the advances of cinematic science. The gallery serves a two-fold purpose: first, as the "Science of Motion Picture Production Gallery," it tends to give the visitors some knowledge of the functions of various studio departments in film production; second, it encourages engineers and inventors to make available apparatus and documents of their achievements for preservation. It is particularly desirable that exhibits representative of all phases of motion picture production be submitted. The gallery already includes displays illustrating many phases of motion picture making. One such exhibit covers the process of designing a set. In the latter display, chronologically arranged, are material illustrating the various steps taken in designing a setting from a manuscript, drawings ranging from the conceptual sketches of the art department to those of the final model, and photographs of the completed set.

Another exhibit includes equipment showing in a popular manner how sound is recorded. In this display are records made of soft wax, light-valves, tubes used in sound systems, paraphernalia for special sound effects, and other devices, as well as some historical relics.

* Presented at the Spring, 1937, Meeting at Hollywood, Calif.; received May 24, 1937.

Illumination and set lighting are demonstrated by devices and photographs. The application of color to motion picture film is illustrated by drawings and objective material. A prop department, reconstructed to represent a cross-section of a typical movie-prop department, has been built in one section of the gallery. Noted props and materials used for dressing sets of outstanding films make up the prop display.

In addition to the technical material and in order to make the gallery as comprehensive as possible, exhibits showing how films are publicized and campaigned are also included.

Space is available in the gallery for displaying all significant material. Material may be submitted on a temporary loan basis, although outright presentation is preferred so that the records and equipment may be regarded as permanent.

In the historical gallery the work of bringing together the memorabilia and relics has gone forward, and much new material has been added during the past year. An animated cartoon display using original drawings and score-sheets from cartoon films made by Walt Disney, the Harmon-Ising Co., and Walter Lantz illustrates the filming and departmental procedure in production. A case of original background paintings and drawings of cartoon characters from the representative producers of today has been added to the display. Material from cartoon films that have won awards and attracted much public attention has also been acquired and is on display.

Mr. J. R. Bray has made available a group of photographic enlargements from his first cartoon, *The Artist's Dream*, released on June 12, 1913, from which the entertainment possibilities of the cartoon film first became apparent, and the popularity of this form of cinematic medium first became evident. There were, of course, earlier cartoons, such as those made by Vitagraph as early as 1906.

Many catalogues of manufacturers of motion picture equipment have been acquired, dating back as far as 1898. This kind of material is valuable to research students who wish to investigate the progress of the industry.

A number of relics portraying the pioneer attempts to produce animated pictures have been obtained. One such relic is a motion picture of twelve exposures, with a single pin-hole between each frame instead of perforations for advancing the film. The pin-hole perforations are reinforced. Each frame is about $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches square. It was made by E. H. Amet on a piece of kodak roll film, and judging from

the general texture of the celluloid and from comparisons with other films, the 40-inch motion picture was made about 1894-95. Many other exhibits have been received, including early cameras, projectors, and other materials.

The Committee has been bringing together biographical records for publication and for future reference, and anyone having documents or records of pioneering activities is invited to submit the material for consideration.

To help preserve the relics of the motion picture industry, the membership of the Society is invited to send material and documents to the Los Angeles Museum for preservation, for depositing or on either a loan or gift basis. Cards crediting the donor with the gift or loan, and outlining the history of the piece are attached to the exhibits in the display gallery.

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