

*The Eye Beholds:*

Silent Era Industrial Film and  
The Bureau of Commercial Economics

by

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## ABSTRACT

**The Bureau of Commercial Economics** was one of the first systemized efforts to provide free showings of sponsored films to mass audiences. Employing an enterprising dissemination scheme – screening films in public spaces from projector trucks, and using universities as print circulation hubs to other willing exhibitors – the Bureau had a broad reach to domestic and international audiences with industrial, scenic and war propaganda films. Though based in Washington, D.C., the Bureau was not a federal agency, and paradoxically claimed both autonomy from and dedicated service to the government. Despite their distribution of hundreds of silent non-fiction titles, tangible evidence of their work is scarce today, the principal problem being that in the interest of providing merely instructional information to the public (as opposed to overt advertising), it is difficult to attribute the films’ sponsors to the titles they produced. The films themselves were by definition ephemeral, and not valued beyond their narrow use.

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## INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is not to contribute to the lament for the small percentage of surviving cinema from the silent era, though it will investigate a particular unheralded body of films that were doomed to obscurity and quickly orphaned once they served their limited function. Since the birth of cinema, countless manufacturers have produced films of their production processes, usually as an opportunity for thinly veiled advertising. In addition to the industrial film, other non-fiction works such as educational films, war propaganda, travelogues and other “scenics” were exhibited via the same non-theatrical circuits and met with similar fates. Rather than trying to present an authoritative view of this period, I will concentrate on a single non-theatrical distributor and exhibitor that incredibly, given their two decades of activity and international scope, has become just as lost to history as the films they represented.

**The Bureau of Commercial Economics** is both an intriguing case study in its specificity, but also serves as a somewhat arbitrary filter for investigating the industrial film in its first important era. Despite the implications of their name, and the fact that they were based in Washington D.C., the Bureau was not a government agency, but rather a quasi-federal operation that occasionally circulated government films, promoted the war effort and had an advisory board comprised of U.S. Senators and other dignitaries. Being a private institution, the Bureau was free to exchange films with different countries as well as exhibit films of specific industries that frequently included trademarks and trade names. While it couldn’t have engaged in the same scope of work, had the Bureau been an official federal agency, it may have improved the chances of survival for prints of the 750 titles they distributed. Indeed, the few Bureau films that are

known to exist only do so due to their other affiliations. The fundamental dilemma in searching for Bureau prints is that today they are not identified with their original producers, but with a distributor that has all but vanished.

The history of the Bureau is fascinating in its own right, and because a centralized repository of their papers, which must have been considerable, is not known to exist, their story is reconstructed here from historic newspapers and periodicals, the Bureau's own publications, and correspondence housed in various archives. This paper will trace the organization's history from its beginnings as an effort to provide vocational training with motion pictures to young men, to the traveling exhibitions in civic spaces via the Bureau's projector trucks, to bolstering support for the first World War, and finally to its far more exclusive private functions for the diplomatic set.

The appendices compile the Bureau catalogs from 1914-1923, attempting to match film titles with their producers (from separate lists of contributing manufacturers), as well as additional production and distribution information from other sources and notation of any surviving prints. Finally, there is the separate story of the "Madison News Reel" (Maine, ca. 1932), a collage film that appropriates footage from a Bureau program, and may include the only extant copy of their striking animated logo. The story of this one-of-a-kind artifact includes an account of the discovery and provenance of the print, biographical and anecdotal information about the film's subjects, and identification of some of the film's source material.

## I. A SHORT HISTORY OF SILENT INDUSTRIALS

The amusement films are of necessity ephemeral. Like current plays they run for a short season and go to the discard, never to be resurrected. On the other hand, the negatives depicting the making of a rug, the life of a bee, or the wonders of a drop of water, when once recorded, are good for all time, a permanent investment affording constantly increasing returns.<sup>1</sup>

—*Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, 1916.

The iconic “Workers Leaving The Lumière Factory” in 1895 is recognized for its significance to film exhibition history and the documentary genre, but the setting of the film is also portentous. Even without a glimpse inside, the factory in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century was an increasingly familiar place of human activity. It may have been a convenient and largely incidental location for the producers of the film, but in the coming decades audiences would become more fascinated by what went on inside the factory.

It is ironic that the industrial film, for being so ubiquitous to the full duration of cinema’s existence, remains so marginalized by the caretakers of that history. Of course, it may be that the very reason that archives and scholars have finally begun to consider the significance of these films is because of the sheer dearth (from the silent era anyway) of representative examples. These modest productions, with their limited funding and uncertain distribution, did manage to reach audiences via haphazard means<sup>2</sup>, but were never intended to last as any kind of historical record. This wholesale neglect of non-fiction can be attributed to the central assumption of film study, that cinema is an art form first and foremost, and that alone makes it worthy of consideration. Early cinema scholar Stephen Bottomore says that the implication is that “the documentary is art or it is

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<sup>1</sup> George W. Stevens, “The Use of Photography in Museums,” *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 11, No. 9 [September 1916]: 203-4.

<sup>2</sup> Arthur Edwin Krows, “Motion Pictures: Not For Theaters. Part I,” *Educational Screen*, September 1938, 211.



nothing,” and the tremendous acclaim of Robert Flaherty’s *Nanook of the North* in 1922 established the idea of the documentary auteur.<sup>3</sup> “Real” documentaries were those that reflected a singular vision, and most actualities, “scenics” and other non-fiction films of this period were comparatively anonymous. Silent cinema has long been regarded as aesthetically primitive, but as the period is reevaluated, it becomes clear that certain stylistic developments, such as panning and other camera movement, first appeared in non-fiction film.<sup>4</sup> A cameraman’s intuitive impulse to move the camera to follow the action of machinery or unscripted human subjects may have made such effects conceivable for a drama or comedy. It’s no surprise that the wonders of industry would be ripe for the camera eye and appeal to the curiosity of early movie audiences.

The first important history of the industrial film is the mammoth series of articles by Arthur Edwin Krows that appeared in the journal *Educational Screen* from 1938 to 1944. Sprawling, tangential and largely anecdotal, “Motion Pictures: Not for Theaters” is still a useful account of early developments and key players in non-theatrical film. It would be many years before the period was taken up again in great detail, and Anthony Slide’s *Before Video: A History of the Non-Theatrical Film* in 1992 became the definitive chronological study. Just a couple years later, the Nederlands Filmmuseum held their first conference on non-fiction film from the 1910s, inspired in part by the many unidentified fragments in their collections. Finally, the National Film Preservation Foundation will publish their *Field Guide to Industrial and Institutional Films* in late 2006, including some entries from the silent era, and a useful introduction by Rick Prelinger.

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<sup>3</sup> Stephen Bottomore, “Rediscovering Early Non-fiction film,” *Film History* 13, No. 2 [2001]: 160.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 167.

The first films were actualities, and even after moviegoing habits became more institutionalized, these early documentaries still held their intrigue for theater audiences. While cinematic narratives began to emerge as the chief attraction in the teens, actualities remained an integral part of the program, appearing in a manifestation Krows identifies as “splits.” These were single reels comprised of two separate subjects, one of which was an educational or travelogue, and the term “split” implied that the other item was a story picture.<sup>5</sup> “Oddities, human interest subjects, revelations of how-things-are-done – all these were needed for the ‘educational’ half of the old split, especially now that the short story portion was being lifted out of such cramped quarters for an easier release on its own merits.” The split continued into 1916, until finally the educational half too became a reel of its own, and the “hodge-podge” of shorter subjects came to be known as a “screen magazine.”<sup>6</sup> One such magazine was the Edison Company’s *Conquest Program* in 1917, “a mixture of comedies, literary adaptations, travelogues, industrial and scientific shorts.”<sup>7</sup> One exhibitor noted in 1914: “As far as the ‘make-up’ of an ideal programme is concerned, the best possible selection of pictures for an average audience is, to my mind, one which has variety as its keynote. It should include dramas, comedies, scenic, educational and scientific subjects.”<sup>8</sup>

Non-fiction in cinemas would eventually fall out of favor (apart from the newsreels), as educationals became too didactic and advertising content of the industrials too apparent for increasingly sophisticated audiences. Francis Holley, co-founder of the Bureau of Commercial Economics, observed that advertisers were slow to discover how

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<sup>5</sup> Krows, September 1938, 212.

<sup>6</sup> Krows, October 1938, 250.

<sup>7</sup> Jennifer Horne, “Nostalgia and Non-fiction in Edison’s 1917 Conquest Program,” *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 22, No. 3 [2002]: 317.

<sup>8</sup> quoted in Bottomore, 164.

resentful an audience can become that's "paid to be amused [and] finds its dignity slighted and its feelings outraged by being forced to gaze for several minutes at some fool picture introducing a patent spark plug through the medium of a tea party in an alleged drama."<sup>9</sup> Theater owners too objected to advertising content within the films they exhibited, "grumbl[ing] that since the inception of the picture business 'millions of dollars' had been accrued by manufacturers exploiting commercial products on the screen of theater owners while the exhibitors received not so much as a cent of that money."<sup>10</sup> Such resistance would contribute to the development of the "non-theatrical" field, but the advertising and industrial pictures had in fact reached their first audiences outside of the traditional exhibition venues.

In 1897, in enterprising publicist erected a large outdoor screen on a building in New York City's Herald Square and showed the first sponsored motion pictures, those advertising the products of Haig & Haig Whiskey, Maillard's Chocolates, and Milwaukee Beer. The sponsor's name appeared on a banner above along the width of the set, "with short entertaining sequences" shown underneath. Screenings were from dusk to midnight, and after three days of blocked traffic and complaints from music hall owners about losing business, the police shut the operation down.<sup>11</sup> The Edison Company had produced a film for Admiral Cigarettes in 1897<sup>12</sup> and Biograph made advertising films for Shredded Wheat Biscuits and Mellin's Baby Food around 1903.<sup>13</sup> Some of the earliest industries to produce films included: Standard Oil of Indiana in the first decade of the

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<sup>9</sup> "Publicity versus advertising in the movies," *The Outlook*, No. 128 [June 8, 1921]: 234.

<sup>10</sup> "Against advertising films," *Variety*, December 5, 1919, 65.

<sup>11</sup> Henry Clay Gipson, *Films in Business and Industry* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1947), 2-3.

<sup>12</sup> Anthony Slide, *Before Video: A History of the Non-Theatrical Film* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1992), 2.

<sup>13</sup> Kerry Segrave, *Product Placement in Hollywood Films* (Jefferson, North Carolina: MacFarland & Company, 2004), 5.

1900s, General Electric in 1907, and International Harvester and the National Cash Register company in 1911.<sup>14</sup> National Cash Register had utilized lantern slides for training and sales in the early 1890s<sup>15</sup> and would go on to be one of the biggest producers of educational and industrial films, covering a broad scope of subjects.

In addition to advertising, industries quickly caught on to the cinema's other potentials. A number of trade publications in the teens – such as *Variety*, *Reel and Slide*, *Iron Age*, *American Machinist*, *Engineering Record*, and *American Industries* – counseled manufacturers on how to utilize the industrial film for the purposes of promoting products, improving production, training sales personnel, and raising investment capital.<sup>16</sup> As film scholar Donald Crafton noted at the Orphans 5 Film Symposium in March 2006, the sponsored film is “fundamentally rhetorical”<sup>17</sup> – its purpose is to motivate the viewer towards a specific attitude or action. One of the films screened at the symposium was a 1950s Hills Bros. Coffee industrial. The film was a generic account of how coffee makes its way into the consumer's cup, and could have been produced by any company, but the hope was that it would leave an impression on the viewer so that the next time they consider coffee, they would recall Hills Bros. Even in the silent era, there was much investigation, scientific and otherwise, into the effectiveness of film to communicate these messages.

One educator in 1909 feared the mechanical movement of the cinema apparatus itself provoked “cerebral excitement and perhaps even irritation... [and probable] strain

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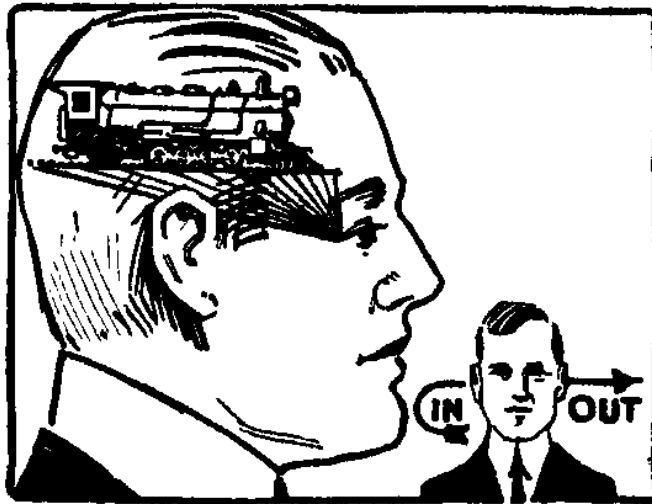
<sup>14</sup> Walter J. Klein, *The Sponsored Film* (New York: Hastings House Publishers, 1976), 24.

<sup>15</sup> Rick Prelinger, *The Field Guide to Industrial, Institutional and Sponsored Films*, 2<sup>nd</sup> draft, forthcoming from the National Film Preservation Foundation, 2006.

<sup>16</sup> Steven J. Ross, “Cinema and Class Conflict,” in *Resisting Images: Essays on Cinema and History*, eds. Robert Sklar and Charles Musser (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), 72.

<sup>17</sup> Donald Crafton. *Orphans 5 Film Symposium: Science Industry & Education*. Columbia, South Carolina. March 24, 2006.

and damage to the eyesight.”<sup>18</sup> In 1916, the Bureau of Commercial Economics stated that they were conducting “an exhaustive investigation of the effect of motion pictures upon the eyes, for the purpose of determining whether there is any impairment of sight, and the nature of it, if any.”<sup>19</sup>



Others were more enthusiastic about the promise of the medium. In 1913 Thomas Edison predicted: “Books will soon be obsolete in the public schools. Scholars will be instructed through the eye. It is possible to teach every branch of human knowledge with the motion picture. Our school system will be completely changed inside of ten years.”<sup>20</sup> Making the leap from education to reaching consumers, in 1919 the publicity manager of the National Cash Register Company reported: “Sight is by far the most important of the senses. It has been proved that 87 percent of what we know is learned through the sense of seeing. Only 7 percent of our knowledge is gained through the sense of hearing.”<sup>21</sup> The

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<sup>18</sup> A.J. Mundella, quoted in: “Education and the Bioscope: Can Moving Pictures Be Used in Schools?” *The Bioscope*, February 11, 1909, 5.

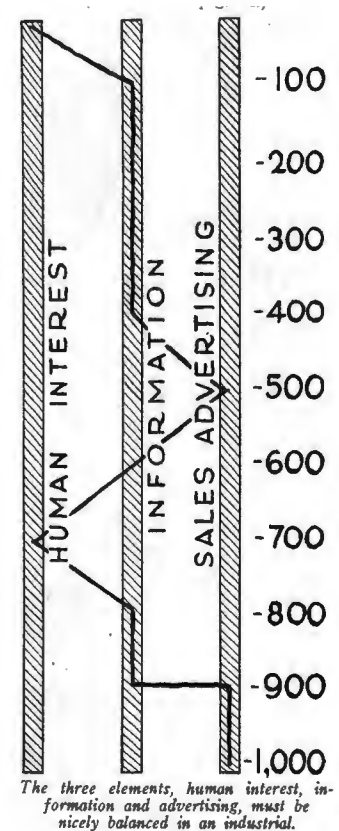
<sup>19</sup> “Bureau of Commercial Economics” booklet, (Washington) 1916, 10.

<sup>20</sup> quoted in Frederick James Smith, “The Evolution of the Motion Picture,” *New York Dramatic Mirror*, July 9, 1913, 24.

<sup>21</sup> E. P. Corbett. “Selling Goods by Illustrated Lectures,” *Reel and Slide*, February 1919, 9.

Bureau of Commercial Economics conducted their own experiments with educators to determine how well students received lessons through sight, sound and both senses together, with follow-up examinations at different intervals to see how long the information was retained.<sup>22</sup>

Not surprisingly, the films were constructed very carefully to maximize their persuasive power. As distributor, the Bureau requested reels in one thousand foot lengths for convenience in exhibition, suggesting that two reels were ideal: one documenting the manufacture of a product, and another demonstrating its use.<sup>23</sup> A diagram in the trade magazine *Reel and Slide* suggested an even more precise formula: a reel of film was illustrated as a thousand-foot ruler, showing how many feet of an industrial should be devoted to providing information, appealing to human interest, and direct advertising.<sup>24</sup> In another article, the Heinz Company revealed the strategy of their latest productions on vinegar and pickles:



The chief value of the screen in the exploitation of food products lies in its ability to reassure the consumer concerning the purity of the food he consumes... This represents indirect advertising, or perhaps, more properly, “educational” advertising, since the effect sought is seldom direct sales.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Bureau booklet, 1916; and letter from A. M. Boggs to Notre Dame president, John Cavanaugh, October 21, 1915.

<sup>23</sup> “Publicity with Motion Pictures” booklet, Bureau of Commercial Economics (Washington) 1920, no page number.

<sup>24</sup> Lyne S. Metcalfe, “How Can I Get My Product in the Movies?” *Reel and Slide*, September 1918, 29.

<sup>25</sup> E. J. Clary, “Visualizing Factory Expansion by Motion Pictures,” *Reel and Slide*, September 1919, 11.

And much like indirect advertising, industrial and educational films could be employed to subtly communicate other kinds of messages. The U.S. Steel production “An American in the Making” (1913), circulated by the Bureau of Commercial Economics, was a drama-industrial hybrid that addressed two public welfare issues of the period: Americanization and worker safety. By demonstrating all the precautions the company had taken to protect the worker, it portrayed U.S. Steel as having “a heart.” Less apparent was the fact that the film was also part of their lobbying campaign for less restrictive labor, that is, a cheap unskilled workforce.<sup>26</sup> The film was one of a series that was produced by the Bureau of Mines, of the U.S. Department of Interior, that positioned on-the-job accidents as the result of worker carelessness rather than the employer’s neglect of safety laws.<sup>27</sup> The Bureau of Commercial Economics was a “semi-official” distributor of government films, and their quasi-federal status will be examined further in the next section, but ideological content – usually perpetuating ideals of patriotism and free enterprise – can be evidenced in many films of the era. In her study of the Edison *Conquest* series, Jennifer Horne noted that “the managers at Edison had imagined the *Conquest Program* to be so close to the interests of the state, so similar to the sort of address a state would make to its citizens, that films made by the U.S. Department of Agriculture we reconsidered for inclusion in the program.”<sup>28</sup> Though the affiliations cannot always be directly traced, Walter Klein notes in his 1976 book, *The Sponsored Film*, that: “Whoever or whatever sponsors a film... has the intent to influence the ultimate work.”<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Scott Simmon. *Orphans 5 Film Symposium: Science Industry & Education*. Columbia, South Carolina. March 24, 2006.

<sup>27</sup> Ross, 76.

<sup>28</sup> Horne, 321.

<sup>29</sup> Klein, xii.

The lack of supporting documentation makes sponsorship difficult to determine, but the paucity of the films themselves, complete or otherwise, makes examining how these films operate and the aesthetic tactics they employed an even greater challenge to scholars. The first Amsterdam Workshop, presented by the Nederlands Filmmuseum in 1994, specialized in non-fiction films from the 1910s. The theme was inspired both by the unsung holdings of the museum, and the fact that this kind of material had only received scant attention by historians.<sup>30</sup> While most of the films in the program were European actualities rather than American industrials, a number of observations made by attending scholars are applicable. The aesthetic progression of narrative films from this period have been scrutinized to such an extent that an informed scholar can with some confidence place a particular work within a window of just a few years. Ben Brewster, of the Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, observed that silent non-fiction films, such as travelogues, are comparatively ahistorical, that is, it is difficult to determine if an actuality dates from 1907 or 1917. Non-fiction, such as the more functional factory industrial, doesn't "seem to exist in the regime of stylistic pressure that was clearly there for fiction filmmakers."<sup>31</sup> Tom Gunning added that recognizable change came to non-fiction in the late-1910s and early-20s, when aspects of the popular narrative form, such as character, began to be incorporated into the genre.<sup>32</sup> Two similarly-titled pictures, 1913's "An American in the Making" and 1920's "The Making of an American" show a considerable advance in dramatization as a tool to more effectively communicate an ideological agenda.

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<sup>30</sup> Daan Hertogs and Nico De Klerk, editors. *Nonfiction in the Teens* (Amsterdam: Stichting Nederlands Filmmuseum, 1994), 6.

<sup>31</sup> Brewster, in Hertogs, 32.

<sup>32</sup> Gunning, in Hertogs, 35.



Another compelling aspect of silent non-fiction, at least how it survives today, is the question of whether the absence of satisfying closure to the films can be attributed to a lack of “storytelling” sense, or the incompleteness of prints. Some early industrial films did have a linear progression, such as demonstrating the production process that yielded the specific product, and closing with the onscreen consumption of the item. Others might conclude with an attractive display of the product. Some were more open-ended, almost a call to action, with closure only coming with the viewer’s own consumption of the pictured product. Nicholas Hiley, of Kings College in London, observed at the 1994 Amsterdam Workshop:

By looking too closely at what’s on the screen you’ll miss the most important form of closure, which is closure by the audience. That’s why advertising films, why news films, why propaganda films are open-ended. “Bakery” (Great Britain, 1912) is closed by buying and eating a biscuit. The audience, in a context of closed narratives, feels it has to respond to an un-closed narrative by some form of action.<sup>33</sup>

From my own research, it is difficult to determine if the abrupt ending of a film like “The Miner’s Lesson” (1914, Bureau of Mines) is intentional or a consequence of missing footage. Stephen Bottomore speaks of the “dreaded brackets” around film titles that archives must attribute to unidentified fragments from the silent era.<sup>34</sup> **Appendix E** of this paper compiles the catalogs of the Bureau of Commercial Economics, and by documenting what industries and other subjects were being filmed, and their approximate release dates, it can be a useful tool for such identification. There were thousands more such films, as well as other non-theatrical distributors in this period – such as the Red Cross, University of Wisconsin’s Bureau of Visual Instruction, and the National

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<sup>33</sup> Hiley, in Hertogs, 17.

<sup>34</sup> Bottomore, 168.

Association of Manufacturers – but the case of the Bureau of Commercial Economics provides an ample, if somewhat arbitrary, sampling of the industrial film in its first important era.

Anthony Slide notes that World War I “illustrated the massive potential for film outside of theatrical presentation.”<sup>35</sup> By 1923, the Bureau of Commercial Economics alone claimed to have 60,000,000 feet of film in circulation.<sup>36</sup> This was also the year that 16mm safety film was introduced, breaking “the shackles that had been holding back the full utilization of films in education and industry... Prints could be produced for one-third the price of the theatrical size; the fire hazard was eliminated; and projectors could be easily carried from location to location.”<sup>37</sup> The non-theatrical field exploded, making the film a regular fixture in classrooms, churches, and other community centers. In the NFPF *Field Guide*, Rick Prelinger speculates that “daunting numbers” of sponsored films survive,<sup>38</sup> though he is likely referring more generally to the “golden age” of industrials that followed, those of the 1940s, 50s and 60s. To what extent can this optimism extend to the silents?

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<sup>35</sup> Slide, 14.

<sup>36</sup> “The Story of the Bureau of Commercial Economics” booklet, Bureau of Commercial Economics (Washington) 1923, no page number.

<sup>37</sup> Gipson, 8.

<sup>38</sup> Prelinger, 6.

## II. THE BUREAU OF COMMERCIAL ECONOMICS

“Serious minded adults gather regularly to study the patriotic, industrial, commercial, scenic and war films of the Bureau in the community centers all over the country.”<sup>39</sup>

The novel practice of exhibiting films for free, to “audiences eager to see but unwilling to pay,” Arthur Edwin Krows reported in *Educational Screen*, was initiated by The Bureau of Commercial Economics, launching “the first considerable distribution of this sort.”

The YMCA had started their service in the mid-1910s as well, but exhibition was limited to their own centers.<sup>40</sup> The Bureau’s slogan, “The Eye Beholds”, was apparently an allusion to the prolonged adult blindness of co-founder Francis Holley, and their logo, incorporating a globe within the center of an eye, would later appear on their office letterhead, publications and on the sides of their projector trucks.

Though biographical data is scant and conflicting, Holley appears to have been born in Cook County, Illinois in 1863. An engineer for the Northern Pacific and Canadian Pacific Railways, it seems that when he was about 30 years old<sup>41</sup> he “found himself totally blind,” and vowed to dedicate himself to the service of mankind if he were to ever regain his vision.<sup>42</sup> Sightless for either a decade or almost two,<sup>43</sup> after a miracle operation in Europe, one of the first and most profound things Holley witnessed was an exposition of industries in Duesseldorf, which also served as a vocational guide for young German men. In an address to the Senate endorsing the work of the Bureau, Senator

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<sup>39</sup> “Motion Pictures: Fighting for Victory” booklet, Bureau of Commercial Economics (Washington) 1918, 6.

<sup>40</sup> Krows, April 1936, 123.

<sup>41</sup> John Dickinson Sherman, “PICTURES—Without Money and Without Price: World-wide Altruistic Work of the Bureau of Commercial Economics,” Western Newspaper Union Service, [1923].

<sup>42</sup> “The Story of The Bureau...”, 3.

<sup>43</sup> “Screen Not for Ads.” Reprint from *The Boston Evening Transcript* (May 13, 1921), in “The Story of the Bureau...”, no page number.

Robert Owen explained Holley's inspiration: "The boys were allowed to inspect and study all the different crafts exhibited, and after this were expected to decide which vocation in life appealed to them most."<sup>44</sup> Intrigued, Holley approached the German Minister of Education and the Kaiser himself to suggest that films would be the ideal means of industrial education. With their cooperation, Holley initiated this plan in Germany, and Owen reported that only the technical limitations of early cinema prevented it from being more of a success.<sup>45</sup> Again, the chronology of these beginnings are vague, since there seems little reason why the cinema technology of this period (1902-1912) would not have the capability to support Holley's modest endeavor. Undeterred, Holley revisited the idea in the establishment of the Bureau back in the United States.

Anita Maris Boggs was born in Philadelphia in 1888, and did not venture far to earn degrees from Bryn Mawr and University of Pennsylvania before co-founding the Bureau in her hometown. A "cosmopolitan" and "prominent figure in literary circles,"<sup>46</sup> she led a more public life than the humble Holley, and served as an "honorary member" of countless clubs and societies. It is not known how she came to partner with the much elder Holley, but their first step in establishing the Bureau was approaching the Bureau of Education of the U.S. Department of Interior, for whom Boggs would become a "special collaborator," and request copies of their films. Even more enterprising was Holley's solicitation of films from private industry to demonstrate to the general public various

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<sup>44</sup> Speech by Senator Robert Owen (OK), February 6, 1923. Reprint from the Congressional Record in "The Story of the Bureau...", 5.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>46</sup> "Dr. Boggs Dies In Jerusalem; D.C. Educator," *Washington Post*, July 14, 1937, 22.

industrial methods. Earliest evidence of this effort was a notice appearing the *Los Angeles Times* in July 1914:

Southern California industries are to be filmed for the ‘movies,’ pursuant to a request made by the industrial bureau of the Chamber of Commerce, yesterday, by the Bureau of Commercial Economics of Philadelphia for pictures descriptive of industrial progress in Los Angeles and the Southland. Any industries having films of their plants are invited to aid the bureau by sending them to the office in the Chamber of Commerce building.<sup>47</sup>

Founded in late 1913, and incorporated in August of 1914, the forward of their charter (**Appendix B**) announced the intent of the not-for-profit organization: “The Bureau is an association of the leading institutions, manufacturers, producers and transportation lines in this country and abroad to engage in disseminating industrial and vocational information by the graphic method of motion pictures, showing how things in common use are made or produced, upon the recommendation of the leading educators of the country.”<sup>48</sup>

The Bureau was able to solicit the support of esteemed men of arts and letters, though for some a subtle distinction was important. Arthur Hadley, president of Yale University, observed: “Your project is interesting... I believe, however, that if you use the word ‘information’ rather than ‘education’ to describe what you are doing, it would indicate the real character and usefulness of the work better.”<sup>49</sup> But neither word did justice to the lofty ambitions of the Bureau. In the first publication to explain their philosophy in any detail, Boggs announced the grand scheme: “The whole idea is to give

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<sup>47</sup> “The City and Environs,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 16, 1914, 110.

<sup>48</sup> “Fore Ward and Charter,” Bureau of Commercial Economics pamphlet, (Philadelphia) 1914.

<sup>49</sup> “Commendation of Industrial Information by Motographs,” Bureau of Commercial Economics pamphlet, (Philadelphia) 1914.

a more complete concept of life, a more fundamental philosophy in the art of living.”<sup>50</sup>

In his commendation of their work, Cardinal James Gibbons used Holley’s own heroic perseverance as the model for what the Bureau was capable of: “The blind man by the wayside begged the Savior that he might see, and the gentle master gave him sight. By the wayside and along the highways of the world thousands are pleading for the instruction which can come to them through the light of motion pictures – visualizing what is done in and for the world, and what they can do also. May God bless your work.”<sup>51</sup>

Through the vocational films displayed by the Bureau, such as “Fitting the Boy to the Job” (ca. 1914), a young man could “find his place in the world.” The Bureau was not merely providing information to young men, but a future. As Boggs wrote in the pamphlet “Visualized Opportunity,” “educational films abound but the films of opportunity are scarce.”<sup>52</sup> But audiences weren’t limited to those anxious to learn a trade, but anyone who stumbled upon one of the Bureau’s free open-air screenings in the public square. The Bureau presumed a general curiosity on the part of the citizen to know how the items they consumed were produced. In an appeal to manufacturers to submit films, the Bureau boasted: “So great is the interest in outdoor pictures that the crowds stand for hours watching the screen.”<sup>53</sup> On Memorial Day 1916, even on a rainy night, “several thousands” gathered to watch reels of U.S. National Parks projected onto the side of the

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<sup>50</sup> A. M. Boggs, “Visualized Opportunity,” Reprint from the Pedagogical Seminary, Vol. XXI, September 1914, 446.

<sup>51</sup> “Publicity with Motion Pictures” booklet, Bureau of Commercial Economics (Washington) 1918, no page number.

<sup>52</sup> Boggs, 448.

<sup>53</sup> “Motion Pictures: Fighting for Victory” booklet, Bureau of Commercial Economics (Washington) 1918, 2.

Washington Monument.<sup>54</sup> This juxtaposition of domestic scenic wonders onto such a positioned screen (another showing took place on the steps of the Treasury building) was one of many reasons the Bureau was often perceived as a government agency. In fact, less than a year after their incorporation, the Bureau had closed their Philadelphia office and moved their headquarters to Washington, D.C. A Bureau booklet explained the reasons for its “private” status:

This is not a Government Bureau. If it were it could not display its films in foreign countries, or foreign films in this country, or foreign films in foreign countries, all of which it is now doing.

It has been decided that a government cannot display any films containing a trademark or a trade name, otherwise it would be possible for one institution to secure publicity at the expense of its competitor.<sup>55</sup>

A book from the period about the educational use of motion pictures rather confusingly stated that the Bureau “is not either directly or indirectly connected with the Government but is entirely a private commercial enterprise.”<sup>56</sup> Despite all proclamations, the Bureau did have strong ties to the government. Their Board of Directors included Senators Robert Owen (OK) and Albert Cummins (IA), and U.S. Assistant Secretary of Labor, E. J. Henning. A 1920 Bureau pamphlet stated that they operated as “the semi-official distributor of many Government films,”<sup>57</sup> and their international exchange of films were often transported via “diplomatic pouches.”<sup>58</sup> At the peak of the war the Bureau installed film projectors in the Senate Office Building, and made the projection facilities in their own offices available “for use by officers of the War Department and other officials of

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<sup>54</sup> “Monument a Movie Screen,” *Washington Post*, April 14, 1916, 4; and “Movies on Monument,” *Washington Post*, May 31, 1916, 12.

<sup>55</sup> “Publicity...”, 1920. No page number.

<sup>56</sup> Don Carlos Ellis & Laura Thornborough. *Motion Pictures in Education* (New York: Thomas Y. Cromwell Company, 1923). 131.

<sup>57</sup> “Publicity,” 1920. No page number.

<sup>58</sup> “The Story of the Bureau...”, 6.

the government for reviewing films of current interest dealing with the war, for the purpose of comparison and study.”<sup>59</sup>

President Harding himself praised the work of the Bureau, on the occasion of a rare instance of the non-theatrical field returning to moviehouses. In June 1921, the Bureau collaborated with the Motion Picture Theater Owners of America to form the latter’s new Public Welfare Division, of which Holley was named Director General. In cooperation with school districts, theaters committed to a five-year agreement to make their halls available during the day for students to view “pictures covering the subjects of [classroom] study, especially subjects having to do with vocational training.”<sup>60</sup> Holley approached the President, inviting the various departments of the government to supply films, “for such public purposes along propaganda and other lines as might be found practicable.” Harding responded with “heartfelt thanks,” saying: “I therefore accept your offer most gratefully and I do and will require your services in the upbuilding of a spirit of proper Americanism, so vital to the existence of the Republic.”<sup>61</sup>

The Bureau’s blurred identity persists to this day, as some Bureau correspondence encountered during research of this paper were often found amongst federal documents. The similarity of the text and layout of their respective letterheads are conspicuously similar:

BUREAU OF COMMERCIAL ECONOMICS  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION  
WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF EDUCATION  
WASHINGTON

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<sup>59</sup> “Publicity...”, 1918. No page number.

<sup>60</sup> “Youth Soon to Study Lessons Via the Screen,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 19, 1921, III4.

<sup>61</sup> *South Jersey Republican*, “A Highly Interesting Statement,” October 1, 1921.



The confusion is perpetuated by the fact that both documents might carry the signature of A. Maris Boggs, who in addition to her duties as Dean of the Bureau, was also a “special collaborator” to the Department of Interior. This possible misrepresentation was irksome to many.

Its stationary as printed is of a character to justify the belief in the minds of the uninformed person that the ‘department of public instruction’ is a governmental department. Their representatives talk in interchangeable language of ‘our department and the Interior Department and the Treasury Department.’<sup>62</sup>

Another publication of the period made reference to the “Federal Bureau of Economics”<sup>63</sup> and all of this may perhaps reflect a deliberately misleading effort by the Bureau to play it both ways, that is, to take advantage of having an implied federal affiliation yet also engage in activities that were only possible for private institutions.

In her book *Spreading the American Dream*, Emily Rosenberg points out that organizations like the Red Cross and YMCA were effectively unofficial government agencies, “fulfilling a foreign policy function that the Congress did not permit the government to undertake directly.”<sup>64</sup> The formation of the American Relief Administration, for example, was necessary for providing aid in response to the Russian famine because to do so in any official capacity would be construed as an endorsement of the czarist regime.<sup>65</sup> Years later, the War Department was forbidden from releasing the

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<sup>62</sup> “To Amend Section 27 of the Merchant Marine Act of 1920: Hearings on H.R. 6645. October 28 and November 3, 1921” By United States Congress. House. Merchant Marine and Fisheries. Published 1922. p. 140-1.

<sup>63</sup> “The Man Who First Made Pictures Move and Revolutionized Photography,” *Current Opinion*, No. 1, July 1917, 31.

<sup>64</sup> Emily Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1982), 75-76.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

film “The Negro Soldier” (1944) to civilian audiences because it would effectively be perceived as campaigning for the NAACP.<sup>66</sup>

And while it seems that the activities of the Bureau were rarely at odds with the federal position, exhibiting films that were consistently in accord with values of patriotism and free enterprise, Holley regarded his work with great integrity, sometimes at the expense of maintaining smooth relations with the government. We will return to this later, but the Bureau was also financially independent, and took pride in not being reliant on taxpayer money. One of their booklets stated that “The Bureau is financed by wealthy men and women in the United States, although initially the work was carried on by Holley and Dean Boggs from their personal resources.”<sup>67</sup> But again, recalling Walter Klein’s observation of the sponsored film, it seems unlikely that such a costly operation could be entirely selfless, and the unspecified individuals who backed the Bureau probably did so under the expectation that it would in part carry out its interests. Krows had noted of the Bureau’s novel approach to circulating films without cost: “The truth of the matter is that every ‘free’ film obliges its user to become party to the dissemination of some propaganda.”<sup>68</sup>

Still, Holley considered the advertising element of the industrial film to be a necessary evil. “The primary object of the Bureau of Commercial Economics is not the circulation of publicity pictures, that is only a means to an end... if no better medium can be found.”<sup>69</sup> In an early letter of support, Geo. W. P. Hunt, Governor of Arizona, was conditional in his praise: “With reference, solely, to the educational aspect of this plan

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<sup>66</sup> Thomas Cripps, *Making Movies Black: The Hollywood Message Movie from World War II to the Civil Rights Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 114.

<sup>67</sup> “Publicity...”, 1920. No page number.

<sup>68</sup> Krows, December 1942, 387.

<sup>69</sup> “The Story of the Bureau...”. no page number.

and disregarding its exercise as a possible medium of industrial advertising, I regard the undertaking as very commendable.”<sup>70</sup> On the other hand, there would be no incentive for private industry to take on the expense of producing films of their operations if not for some promotional benefit. The films, often augmented with a live lecture, would illustrate the production and use of a particular item – “The Making of a Shoe” (ca. 1916, United Shoe Manufacturing Company) for example – but the publicity value to the producer was expected to be inherent and understated. A 1916 Bureau pamphlet suggested the ideal approach:

When one contemplates that with each thousand feet of film every audience sees upon the screen for a period of twenty minutes all the activities of a company, with nothing to divert attention, and listens to a description of a plant by an accredited professor of their own university, one cannot help realizing the value of this means of publicity... Wide experience with industrial films proves indirect publicity is the most efficient and holds the audience sympathetically, whereas flagrant advertising renders it combative.<sup>71</sup>

Despite the implied objectivity of a university professor providing the accompanying lecture, more often a representative of the manufacturing company would appear with the film. No texts of these talks have been located, but they presumably included allusions to the company’s productivity, invention, and efficiency. As for onscreen acknowledgement of the sponsor, the Bureau requested a very specific notice be included at the start of the film: “Contributed for the purpose of public instruction by – Borden’s Condensed Milk” (or whoever it was). But again, the company’s product and trademark likely appeared throughout the film, reinforcing brand identity with their audiences. To their credit, the uneasy balance of instruction and advertising was minimized by the fact that the Bureau

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<sup>70</sup> quoted in: “Commendation...”

<sup>71</sup> Bureau of Commercial Economics pamphlet, (Washington) 1914, 8.

would no longer accept films of a particular industry if they felt that a topic had already been sufficiently covered.

The films were frequently shown in the open air, courtesy of the Bureau's "theaters-on-wheels", that is, projected from the back of motor trucks onto portable screens pitched in city parks, public squares, and community centers. "So great is the interest in outdoor pictures," an early Bureau pamphlet claimed, "that the crowds stand for hours watching the screen."<sup>72</sup> In regards to the initial intent of providing vocational information, the Ambassador to Germany said the service was valuable because the available opportunities could reach young men "without the necessity of losing valuable time in forming their opinions."<sup>73</sup> Industrialists hoped the films would reach uncritical consumers in much the same fashion. But the programs were not limited to demonstrations of industry or indirect advertising.



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<sup>72</sup> "Motion Pictures: Fighting for Victory," 2.

<sup>73</sup> James W. Girard, quoted in: "Commendation..."

In the fall of 1919, a collaboration between the Bureau, Universal Film Manufacturing Company and the New York State Reconstruction Commission was announced. Starting in Albany, Bureau trucks would set out to tour every “important” city in the state, to show a whole range of filmed representations of civil life. “Food problems, the housing question in industrial communities, control of the milk supply, public health, distribution of hydro-electric power, highway development, rural and intercity motor express, and Americanization are some of the topics upon which the pictures will be built.”<sup>74</sup>

Through the extension work of universities and international circulation of films (see **Appendix C**), all people could be better informed about issues around the world and within their own communities, and through these the Bureau had the power to provoke real change. At home, the films of modern agricultural techniques could correct the inefficient practices of rural farmers, and demonstration of America’s sophisticated scientific methods could save lives abroad. A 1919 industrial trade magazine said of the Bureau: “Its films are now teaching mothers of India how to stop their babies from dying. The Bureau’s films go by dog sled to the tuberculosis stricken Eskimo, by camels to the dwellers of African deserts and by llamas over the Andes to the Inca Indians.”<sup>75</sup> In a newspaper interview, Boggs described the altruistic and positive affect the pictures could have in undeveloped societies. “Take for instance the natives of Syria. After they’ve seen a film depicting life and industry in this country, in Britain, or in Germany, they are able to compare their own methods of living and working with ours. From this comparison they may derive new ideas for themselves and their community.”<sup>76</sup> European countries

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<sup>74</sup> “State to Give Free Movies,” *New York Times*, September 5, 1919, 10.

<sup>75</sup> “Free Factory Movie Exhibitions,” *Furniture Manufacture and Artisan*, November 1919, 243.

<sup>76</sup> Frances Mangum, “Dr. A Maris Boggs Heads Enterprise of World Amity,” *Washington Post*, December 20, 1933, 13.

had something to offer the rest of the world, but it seems improbable that anyone believed the inverse could be true. Through such declarations of industrial prowess and America's rising trade leadership in world, the Bureau's work was in accord with a general wave of cultural imperialism that was prevalent in the post-war years. America's expansion in this period has long been regarded as benign, precisely because it was based "not on military force or government design but on the wonders of its private industry, the skill of its experts, the goodness of its philanthropists."<sup>77</sup>

Back home, the Bureau's films exposed and successfully remedied loathsome sweatshop conditions in the lower east side of New York,<sup>78</sup> while offsetting labor unrest in other factories by importing specific films depicting working environments in socialized countries, "with the idea of instilling in the mind of the man in the United States by comparison with these conditions, the realization of how much better off the mass of humanity is here than anywhere else in the world."<sup>79</sup> The Bureau had a relationship to labor that is difficult to reconcile. As noted in the previous section, they circulated Bureau of Mines films that were unambiguously pro-capitalist, and apparently tried to foster a fantasy scenario where working conditions were harmonious without the need of unions. A 1915 pamphlet strongly maintained that "the Bureau will under no circumstances show any film of an industry where due consideration is not clearly shown to employees, or where children are employed under oppressive and unwholesome conditions." A Chicago chapter of the Bureau worked with industries to help draft agreements between management and workers. Little is known about this aspect of the

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<sup>77</sup> Rosenberg, 229.

<sup>78</sup> Francis Holley, "Industrial Education and the Uses of the Cinematograph in Public Instruction." Address to the Second Pan American Scientific Congress, January 4, 1916.

<sup>79</sup> "Publicity...", 1920. No page number.

Bureau, apart from two surviving publications that seek to ensure fair wages and benefits for workers and guarantee they will “suffer no discrimination on account of race, sex, political or religious affiliation, or membership in any labor union or other organization.”<sup>80</sup> Holley was specifically wary of industrial films that disingenuously misrepresented factory operations. “Motography has produced all sorts of industrial films, some truthful reproductions of conditions actually existent; other manufactured for the coming of the motographer.”<sup>81</sup>

This kind of integrity distinguished the Bureau in its first decade until Holley’s death from its final years under Boggs. Being a distributor of federal films might suggest that the Bureau was simply an obliging mouthpiece for the government, but Holley was outspoken about questionable practices of his collaborators. A 1921 newspaper article reported a statement made by Holley, in which he said “some of the oil companies had had their advertising films circulated at public expense through the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Mines, and at least one automobile maker had enjoyed this same privilege through the U.S. Bureau of Education. Dr. Holley regards displays through these channels as unlawful and discriminatory.”<sup>82</sup> The Bureau reprinted and distributed 100,000 copies of the article, eliciting an objection from Albert B. Fall, Secretary of the Interior. In a heated exchange of letters, Fall asked Holley to retract his “libelous statement,” but the Bureau director stood his ground and condemned what called the “uses of public money for the advertising of a favored few.” He added that: “We have

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<sup>80</sup> “Employees [sic] Representation Plan of the Peoples Gas Light & Coke Company” (1921) and “Research Report on Manuals” (1922). Bureau of Commercial Economics booklets, (Chicago).

<sup>81</sup> Francis Holley, “The Army of the Vigilantes, Recruiting for National Defense,” pamphlet, (Washington: National Capitol Press, 1916), 8.

<sup>82</sup> “Screen Not for Ads,” no page number.

been serving the various Departments of the Government for the last 10 years... without expense to the extent of a dollar from the Government and hope to continue to do so.”<sup>83</sup>

Like many private organizations, the Bureau made their own voluntary contribution to the war effort, mobilizing support by exhibiting propaganda films. In a speech at American University on March 25, 1916, Holley emphasized that a careful restraint was essential in preparing and exhibiting recruitment films:

The Bureau has offered its services to the Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy to display films of the War and Navy Departments to a million people a month in an effort to encourage recruiting in defense of the nation; *but it insists that such films shall be in all things truthful and show every phase of army and navy life, the drudgery as well as the pleasure*, so that all may see and know all conditions, thus qualifying them to enlist; thus enabling them to decide whether or not they want to enlist... It is necessary to be frank and honest, and take them into the confidence and council of the nation and tell them the truth of what they are to expect when they enlist for a life of service, *for truth is like a living tree whose roots must ever be watered with reality*.

As if such a statement wasn't sobering enough, Holley went on to imagine a scenario in which an "overzealous recruiting officer" deceived a young recruit, leaving the latter to suffer a penalty equivalent to a stay in Leavenworth prison.<sup>84</sup> Two years later, Boggs authored a Bureau publication entitled "Patriotism that Registers," which was a handbook to "all who plan to utilize the irresistible power of motion picture screen for patriotic purposes." Either demonstrative of a fundamental ideological divide between the two founders, or simply an example of an advanced urgency in garnering support for the war, Boggs strongly discouraged the showing of films that "dwell over-much on the horrors of

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<sup>83</sup> Correspondence between Albert Fall (6/20/1921) and Francis Holley (6/22/1921) from the National Archives.

<sup>84</sup> Holley, "The Army of the Vigilantes," 5.



war and are too liable to result in war weariness.”<sup>85</sup> This more calculated argument was to be expected from one with diplomatic ambitions, and after Holley passed away in December 1923 and Boggs became Director, the Bureau’s mission would change considerably.

There were a number of reasons why 1923 was a pivotal year for the non-theatrical field. The introduction of 16mm film not only made projection more simple and less dangerous, it lent for a portability with less fanfare than the Bureau’s projector trucks. In June, the National Association of Manufacturers announced establishment of “a national non-commercial motion picture distribution service” that sounded precisely like what the Bureau had been doing for ten years: “The pictures will cover a varied range of subjects, such as general industrial education, individual manufacturing processes, pointing lessons in carelessness and prevention of fires, and along the lines of teaching the newcomers to these shores the fundamental principles underlying American citizenship.”<sup>86</sup> Such an arrangement was probably more desirable for industrialists, who may have grown weary of the rigid production guidelines set by the Bureau. It appears that the Bureau never adopted 16mm or other safety stocks, nor made the transition to sound. In *Educational Screen*’s annual “Blue Book” of non-theatrical films, in the years 1927 to 1935 the Bureau is still named as a distributor, but none of the films listed are attributed to them. It seems they had literally dropped out of circulation.

An obituary for the humble Holley has not been located, but Boggs was a much more public figure who managed to get the Bureau into the society pages. The final

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<sup>85</sup> A. Maris Boggs and J.C. Flynn, “Patriotism that Registers.” National Committee of Patriotic Societies, in collaboration with the Bureau of Commercial Economics and National Board of Review of Motion Pictures, 1918, 2.

<sup>86</sup> “Free Industrial Films. Manufacturers Also to Distribute Americanization Pictures,” *New York Times*, June 25, 1923, 16.

decade of the Bureau was characterized by a move away from the free screenings for the general public to more exclusive invitation-only events held at ritzy Washington hotels (the West ballroom of one of these, the Shoreham Park Hotel, was a replica of the east room of the White House). These events, known as “Diplomatic Evening Salons,” were held on Sunday nights, and typically a domestic tourism film would be shown, or a specific nation would be showcased, with an ambassador or other distinguished guest, augmented by films from that country. Even while honoring various international neighbors, the salons invariably concluded with an anachronistic rendition of the Star Spangled Banner. “Friendship between nations is the natural order of things,” Boggs told a reporter. “It is far from being an impossibility. It is in fact, only necessary that the peoples of the world should be better acquainted with one another... [The Bureau’s] very purpose is to introduce one nation to another, not on political grounds – that is up to the governments – but on the plane of the people.”<sup>87</sup>

But this plane had changed as well, since the Bureau had apparently abandoned the arguably more democratic events in public spaces. For the periods between the salon seasons, Boggs started a separate organization called The Embassy Film Guild, which seems to have been merely a private club for the diplomatic set. In a letter of invitation to the President of Georgetown University, she described it as an opportunity to see first run films in a closed environment. “So many of us do not go the theaters on Sunday night due to the crowds and the difficulty in getting seats. If we could see carefully selected films in an audience where everyone knows each other and be sure of seats without elbowing the public to get them, it would certainly be pleasant.”<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Mangum, 13.

<sup>88</sup> Letter from A. Maris Boggs to Coleman Nevils, February 3, 1932.

By this stage, the aim of the Bureau was confused to the point of being self-contradictory. In a letter to Governor Floyd Olson of Minnesota in 1932, Boggs encouraged him to make films of his state as Colorado had recently done, which were to be seen in an upcoming salon. “It is to be regretted that the various states of the United States are so backward in utilizing the use of scenic motion pictures to attract Americans from other States and thus keep within the boundaries of the United States the 7 to 9 million dollars of tourist money spent abroad each summer... money that should be spent in this country.”<sup>89</sup> Without irony, included with the letter was the standard Bureau enclosure, a flyer declaring: “The purpose of the Bureau is the introduction of Nations to each other to promote international good-will and friendship.”

By 1920, the Bureau claimed to be reaching two million people around the world each month. “From Cape Town to Tokio – from Java to Lahore – the world is eagerly awaiting the time when it can buy American goods... Far-away and inaccessible places know America only through the ‘cinema’... No matter what language is spoken by the strange people that gather to see the pictures, there is one language that they all understand – the universal language of pictures.”<sup>90</sup> Boggs herself had retreated to Europe and Asia in 1934, falling ill shortly thereafter, and died in Jerusalem in July 1937.<sup>91</sup> The next section will explain the approach in seeking evidence of the Bureau which, given its two decades of work and broad dissemination of tens of thousands of film reels, has strangely been all but lost to history.

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<sup>89</sup> Letter from A. Maris Boggs to Floyd Olson, March 23, 1932.

<sup>90</sup> “Publicity,” 1920. No page number.

<sup>91</sup> “Dr. Boggs Dies In Jerusalem; D.C. Educator,” 22.

### III. METHODOLOGY: RETRACING THE BUREAU

After encountering the 1920 booklet “Publicity with Motion Pictures” archived at Northeast Historic Film, I began to search for other Bureau of Commercial Economics publications. From 1914 to 1923, the Bureau self-published a number of pamphlets, booklets and catalogs, some with identical titles within the same year. Photocopies of some of these were obtained from the Library of Congress and The New York Public Library. Online searches via WorldCat and RLIN aided in locating others in special collections of university libraries. I found only a few duplicates, and there may be other publications as well. Most disappointingly, I encountered several allusions (spanning 1917-23) pointing to the existence of a Bureau quarterly entitled “Vision,” but the only search hit was the University of Georgia, who could not locate the item(s) on their shelves.

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures records at The New York Public Library and various special collections of university archives held some correspondence from Bureau Director Francis Holley and Dean A. Maris Boggs. As universities were the circulation hubs for the Bureau’s distribution service, there were a number of letters about movement of film prints, scheduling screenings and lectures, and invitations to events. With the lists of cooperating partners and contributors, a one-by-one inquiry of these institutions could be conducted, though tremendously time-consuming.

Given the wide dissemination of Bureau materials, my research had been dependent on online finding aids, and there is surely much more of this kind of material that has yet to be identified or cataloged. Surviving evidence of the Bureau suggests a wealth of paper material generated, such as questionnaires with various industries, rental

agreements, exhibition reports, and so on. Very few of these have been located, and there does not seem to be a centralized repository for the Bureau's internal records, which must have been considerable. There is a similar problem with the lectures that accompanied the films. These were probably always kept physically separate from the prints, and may have never been in the care of the Bureau at all, but more likely in the personal papers of the company representatives who read them during the screenings.

Searches of historic newspapers via ProQuest generated many Bureau-related articles and announcements of events. The more public figure of A. Maris Boggs yielded two obituaries, but one for Francis Holley has not been found. There is also no firm date for the cessation of the Bureau, it appears to be somewhere in the period between Boggs' failing health and death, 1934-37. Evidence of Bureau events in smaller communities might be found in regional newspapers. For example, a Bureau booklet includes a detailed itinerary of a 1919 Bureau truck tour of the Northeast, and local coverage may give more details about the content of these programs and audience reception. A further step would be to examine the Department of Interior papers in the National Archives. A colleague researching Government-produced films recalls encountering some internal memos regarding the Bureau, much of it skeptical of the Bureau's intent, including some specific criticism of the Bureau's chosen name. General information about industrial films, and specific Bureau activities, can be found in various trade magazines. I examined *Reel and Slide* most exhaustively, though a number of others are bound to yield useful information.

More daunting still is the search for the many film titles circulated by the Bureau.

**Appendix E** compiles the catalog titles from Bureau publications between 1914 and

1923. In these, the Bureau's lists of films (called "Visatures") do not have producers attributed to them. Early pamphlets would include a separate list of companies contributing films (**Appendix D**), and with guesswork, and confirmation from other sources, I've been able to match some of these up. While it wasn't feasible for me to do exhaustive searches on all the Bureau titles, during this phase of research I discovered several challenges to locating and identifying such films.

One of the benefits of keeping your negative safe, the Bureau argued, was that films could be altered as industries, or tourism, or whatever the subject of the film, changed. In the process, the title might be changed as well. The Bureau film catalogs were numbered lists, with most films holding the same position over the years. Films were withdrawn for whatever reason, and replaced by something else. For example, in the 1915 and 1916 catalogs a film about the rubber industry entitled "Cushion of Creation" appeared as number 51. In 1920, a different title "Milk of the Tree", about the same subject, appeared in that position. Is this the same film? A revised version?

As information films, exclusive distribution arrangements were probably rare, and I wonder if there may have been alternate versions for different circuits. Again, the Bureau frowned upon overt advertising – they were even known to reject films outright – and a product name never appeared within the title of a Bureau film. Another example of an alternate title/version is "Manufacturing and Circulating a Magazine," a 4-reeler by the Curtis Publishing Company. It is listed in the 1915-16 catalogs, but was dropped as another Curtis production appeared. The second film, identified as "Producing the *Ladies Home Journal* and *Saturday Evening Post*" in the December 1918 *Reel and Slide*, is six reels and most likely incorporates at least some of the material of the prior film. The first

one is true to the merely informational spirit of the Bureau – even the detailed shot-by-shot description printed in a Bureau booklet doesn’t name the magazine that is being produced – while the second film, probably a revised version, plays up the end product in the title itself. To add to the confusion, a notice in the December 16, 1915 *Washington Post* identifies the first title as five reels, rather than four. In my searches, I encountered many examples that made me suspect alternate titles and/or revised versions, complicating things considerably.

Knowing what to look for is difficult enough, but actually finding it is something else. Resources I checked for surviving prints were the online databases **ArchivesUSA** and FIAF’s **Treasures from the Film Archives**, which is a catalog of silent films held in international archives. Again, from the few hits I had, I was faced with many slight title variations. Due to time limitations, and the fact I had yet to make a hit, I stopped checking ArchivesUSA after the first 160 Bureau titles. Picking this up at another time may indeed yield some results. A date search for the entire silent period showed a few surviving government films at the **National Archives**, and I viewed some of these during a visit.

Consulting the printed volumes of the **Library of Congress** paper print collection and the **Museum of Modern Art** film catalog (1984), I found no Bureau title matches in either. The Bureau encouraged those who submitted films to copyright them, though the paper print era may have ended slightly too early (around 1912) to include Bureau films (founded 1913). As for MoMA, they’ve really only collected early documentaries of prestige, though Steven J. Ross (see **Bibliography**) noted that he viewed a print of the 1912 film “The Crime of Carelessness” at the MoMA study center. Very discreet about

their specific holdings, they may have acquired this and other titles since 1984's printed volume. The **American Film Institute** online catalog was occasionally helpful in filling in production information, though I stopped checking consistently (again in the interest of time) at #270. Finally, historic newspapers and trade journals enabled me to confirm some titles, and even attributed some new ones to the Bureau that don't appear in their own publications.

Though mine wasn't an exhaustive search, a quick perusal of the results documented in the spreadsheet does not show a very encouraging situation. Had the Bureau been a government agency, it would have improved their archival legacy. The films that have been located are those co-produced by the government – Bureau of Mines, Department of Agriculture, etc. Of course there are many other listed films that were probable government productions – titles such as “How Uncle Sam Gets His Coin” and “U.S. Government Inspection of Beef” – that do not appear to have survived, or at least have not yet been identified and inventoried for access. Another industrial and educational series from the period is the *Ford Educational Weeklies*. Sponsored by the Ford Motor Company, it was a collection of enough prestige to be donated to and protected by the National Archives.

Apart from traditional archives, I wondered what other caretakers there might be for these works. While many of the companies that produced silent industrials no longer exist, some still do, and I took a small sampling of those and contacted their corporate archives to see if the films were in their care. I attempted contact with about a dozen, and of those who were willing to talk, NONE of them knew about these productions, confessing that this was the first they'd heard of it. What follows is a list of these,



including comments from the company archivists, sometimes with suggestions for further research.

**American Telephone and Telegraph Co. (AT&T)**

AT&T Corporate Archives / Warren, NJ / (908) 226-2386

“The Nerves of Commerce” (1914, originally exhibited with a lecture by president Theodore Newton Vail and/or vice-pres Nathan Kingsbury)

I spoke with archivist Christine Ryan, who told me company records from this period “are really really bad.” She searched their database, and found no hit with this title. This is an example of a presumptive connection I made between a Bureau catalog title, its subject (“Telephone and Telegraph”), and the separate list of sponsors that appeared in the same Bureau pamphlet. Ms. Ryan also tried a film search from 1900-1920 and came up with 4 hits, all from 1900: “Dailies” (35mm), “outtakes”, “unknown reels 5-6, 1-2” and “E.S.S.- A- Day”. The last one was a 30-minute item on 16mm, and was flagged as restricted/proprietary (at one time anyway), indicating perhaps an in-house experiment. She said she could send these out to see what’s on them, but “the last time I did it cost about \$500.”

**Curtis Publishing Company**

Philadelphia, PA / (317) 633-2070

“Manufacturing and Circulating a Magazine” (1915, originally exhibited with a lecture by Charles Crosman)

“Producing the ‘Ladies Home Journal’ and ‘Saturday Evening Post’” (ca. 1918)

Redirected to *The Post* in a different building: (317) 636-8881. Archives voicemail said email was best: satevepst@aol.com. Left a couple messages and emails over a several week period, no response.

**NO CONTACT.**

**Eagle Family Foods**

Columbus, OH / (614) 501-4200

“Borden’s Condensed Milk” (1915)

Archivist Robyn Beultel told me that when Borden sold their brands to other companies (like Eagle), some items may have been lost in transition. “To be honest, if we don’t have

it, it probably doesn't exist." She suggested trying Rich Danec, Trademark License Coordinator at Borden, and the following is his verbatim email response: "Thank you for your email. Unfortunately, I'm unaware of any films in Borden/Hexion's archives. As such, neither I nor anyone else in the Company is able to further assist you." [sic] As a contribution to their archive, I sent Ms. Beutel a copy of the shot-by-shot synopsis of the film, as it appeared in a 1915 Bureau pamphlet.

**Eastman Kodak Co.**

George Eastman House / Rochester, NY / filmstudycenter@geh.org  
"I Saw Him First" (1914)

GEH could find no record of this title.

**Hershey Chocolate Co.**

Harrisburg, PA / (717) 533-1777  
"Sweets that Nourish" (1914)  
"Cocoa and Chocolate, From Bean to Cup" (ca. 1918, title from *Reel and Slide*, 12/1918)

Archivist Andrew Newman told me they had no record of them, telling me he "wouldn't be surprised if something like that went by way of the trash can." Newman noted that the company once tried to throw out 1903 blueprints and maps of the town of Hershey, and someone had to save them from the dumpster.

**Pneumatic Scale Corp.**

Cuyahoga Falls, OH / (330) 923-0491  
"Weighed in the Balance" (1914)

"Probably long since gone... no central storage... company has changed, grown and moved over the years."

**Reed and Barton**

Taunton, MA / (508) 824-6611 / (508) 967-1255  
"Basis of Housekeeping" (a.k.a. "Making Silverware") (1915)

I was told I was being directed to an archivist, and got customer service instead. I explained what I was looking for, and she put me on hold. The remainder of the exchange went like this:

*“Nobody’s heard of it.”*

“Do you have a company archivist?”

*“He’s out.”*

“Can I call back?”

*“He’s out out. I have no idea when he’s coming back.”*

“OK. Thank you.”

**Sherwin-Williams Co.**

Cleveland, OH / (216) 566-2284

“Renewing of Youth” (1914, originally exhibited with a lecture by C. R. Brohman)

I spoke with Stacey Guinn, archivist at the company’s “Center of Excellence.” She was not familiar with the production, though they do have some film reels in their holdings. Ms. Guinn didn’t know how to distinguish 16mm from 35mm by sight, and speculates that some of the donated reels “might just be someone’s home movies of the company picnic.” She’s looking into getting some of these transferred, and promised to keep me informed on what she finds out.

**Victor Talking Machine Co. (RCA)**

David Sarnoff Library / Princeton NJ / (609) 734-2636

“Talking Back” (phonographs) (1914)

Alex Magoun’s voicemail suggested email contact, and the following is his kind response:

Hi Sean, Thanks for writing and nice bit of research. This is the first I've heard of the film, and I can only imagine that the LoC might have a non-nitrate copy: [www.loc.gov/rr/record/](http://www.loc.gov/rr/record/). You could also contact the 78-L List: [www.78online.com](http://www.78online.com); the Eldridge Johnson Victrola Museum: [www.destatemuseums.org/information/Museums/Victrola/victrola.shtml](http://www.destatemuseums.org/information/Museums/Victrola/victrola.shtml); the Camden Country Historical Society: <http://www.cchsnj.com/library.shtml>; and the Association for Recorded Sound Collectors: [www.arsc-audio.org/](http://www.arsc-audio.org/). That should cast a wide if overlapping net. If you track it down, I'd like to hear about it. Best, Alex.

A quick stab at these brought no success. There were a number of enthusiastic responses from the 78-L listserv, but no leads, just people anxious to see the film if I found it.

I was surprised that even enduring and presumably well-organized companies did not have any knowledge of these early advertising endeavors. These films are just the kind of historical material that a company could exploit for their own marketing purposes today, if their value had not been dismissed as old news, or discarded because they were not considered worth the fire hazard. On the other hand, adherence to the Bureau's strict guidelines may have yielded films that were not product-specific enough, limiting their value for reuse.

As for other filmic evidence of the Bureau, their 1920 booklet reported a newsreel crew documenting one of their projector trucks being loaded onto a steamship setting sail for Sumatra – though which company photographed the event was not specified. It is also not known if this story ever made it onscreen. For such remote audiences, the Bureau also shot their own promotional reel showing the wonders of their “theaters-on-wheels,” which were sent ahead to screen on extant projection machines to herald the coming trucks. And while not generally known to be film producers themselves, a notice in a 1916 Bureau pamphlet promised: “The surplus funds of the Bureau will be used in the production of welfare films, first aid to the injured, including the resuscitation of the drowning and the emergency methods of rescue of imprisoned miners, and the awakening and development of civic pride and patriotic American citizenship.” It is difficult to know if these were ever produced, but if they were, locating them, or even determining what titles they may have been issued under, is a daunting task.

It's appropriate that the Bureau should be the subject of a preservation research project (though admittedly a sprawling and imprecise one), since they had once engaged in a very early “preservation” effort themselves. In 1917, the Bureau collaborated with

the University of Pennsylvania to make prints of Eadweard Muybridge's motion studies, to "preserve [them] for posterity." I could find only one notice of this project, in the same year's July issue of the journal *Current Opinion*:

All the surviving Muybridge pictures are being transferred to modern films by the Bureau of Commercial Economics at a cost of some \$15,000... The whole story of the Muybridge discoveries and experiments will probably make three or four full-length films... The films will have explanatory 'leaders' or 'cut in' reading matter which will be published in French, German, Italian, Spanish and English. These reels will be ready for distribution early in the fall and will be circulated by the university and Bureau of Commercial Economics throughout the world.

I speculate this, or at least part of this grand project, to be entry #5 in the Bureau film catalogs, entitled "The First Motion Pictures." George E. Nitzsche at the University of Pennsylvania had lead the endeavor, but his papers housed there yielded nothing more than another copy of the above article. The university's archivist suggested I try the George Eastman House, believing that Nitzsche had sent some Muybridge negatives to them. The day after I put this thesis to bed, I will be in Rochester, still digging. And so continues my search for evidence of the Bureau.

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**Ernest O. Holland Papers**

## APPENDIX A

### UNRAVELING THE “MADISON NEWS REEL”

[ Note: This section has been replaced with an article as submitted to the Association of Moving Image Archivists journal, *The Moving Image*, in May 2007. Intended as a stand-alone article, there may be some redundant contextual information. ]

Though doubtfully little more than a lark in its inception, the “Madison News Reel” nonetheless illuminates our understanding of two different cinematic traditions – the found footage and industrial film. This primitive 3-minute work appears to be one of the earliest surviving collage films, whose discovery simultaneously rescued from history a once-ubiquitous and now forgotten enterprise of sponsored and non-theatrical films. This article attempts to unravel the many mysteries of an artifact that enjoyed an extremely limited moment 75 years ago, yet incredibly just avoided slipping into oblivion.

Discovered in Bristol, Maine, about 80 miles from the small town that provides its title, the 250-foot nitrate reel was donated to Northeast Historic Film in February 2001. Phil Yates, NHF Projection & Facilities Manager, had found it in the third floor eaves of a barn inhabited by his cousin. There had been many tenants over the years, all of who left junk behind. The film almost went unnoticed and was nearly discarded at this point, as it was the only bit of film on a 2000’ reel amongst a large rusty box of otherwise empty cans.

Once accessioned into the NHF collections, the piece became known as “The Eye Beholds,” from the animated logo that provides the film’s most striking moment. Given its apparent regional significance and early signs of decay, it was promptly preserved. Still, the origins and purpose of the film remained a complete mystery. The film’s

esoteric references and elusive humor make for an utterly baffling experience to contemporary viewers, who nonetheless respond to its playful spirit.

In fact, the “Madison News Reel” (*MNR*) is a curiosity in almost every respect, and while this article is primarily concerned with the origins of the artifact itself, the *MNR* is not without interest as an early entry in the tradition of collage filmmaking. Assembled just a few years before Joseph Cornell’s masterpiece *Rose Hobart* (1936), this obscure found footage film was likely shown exclusively to the local audience that was the subject of its limited address. In part due to this narrow spectatorship, I do not make a claim of lineage for the more sophisticated works that followed, particularly since the film’s sense of montage is limited at best.

In *Film Form*, Sergei Eisenstein defines montage not as “an idea composed of successive shots stuck together but an idea that DERIVES from the collision between two shots that are independent of one another.”<sup>92</sup> The “Madison News Reel” in only one instance juxtaposes two images together to form a new meaning, and this comparatively extravagant gesture is in fact the film’s grand finale. More often, an explanatory intertitle is followed by a single appropriated image that supports its claims. Eisenstein and his colleagues considered the intertitle to be the “first blind alley” of the cinema’s cultural avant-garde, particularly “the vain attempts to integrate it into montage composition as a unit of montage.”<sup>93</sup> As we will see, the *MNR* is completely reliant on the intertitle for its uses of found footage to have any meaning.

On one hand not as formally ambitious as *Rose Hobart* or Bruce Conner’s *A Movie*, the “Madison News Reel” also does not appear to have any dialectical aims. In his

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<sup>92</sup> Sergei Eisenstein. “The Dramaturgy of Film Form,” in *Film Theory and Criticism* (Sixth Edition), edited by Leo Braudy and Marshal Cohen. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004). 26.

<sup>93</sup> Eisenstein, Vsevolod, Pudovkin and Alexandrov. “Statement on Sound,” in Braudy and Cohen, 371.

book *Recycled Images*, William Wees recognizes montage, or collage, as the “most effective means for exposing the social/political implications of found footage.”<sup>94</sup> The “Madison News Reel,” however, has little use for montage, neither as an aesthetic practice nor as a means for subversion. As Michael Zryd wrote in this journal about Craig Baldwin’s paranoid collage masterpiece *Tribulation 99*, the “Madison News Reel” too “culls its images from ostensibly legitimate institutional sources of knowledge production,” such as government films.<sup>95</sup> In other hands, the *MNR* would be a ripe opportunity for undermining the official discourse of its source material, but the film instead takes an entirely ahistorical approach. Obliterating any reference to the shots’ original context, the film ultimately employs found footage to utterly innocuous ends.

The subsequent postmodern uses of found footage are evident in the earlier moment of the “Madison News Reel,” albeit in a much more embryonic stage. As I will revisit later, it is tempting to regard the *MNR* (circa 1932) as an antecedent for *Rose Hobart*, but this is perhaps another “blind alley” of a project heavily populated with red herrings. If the *MNR* shares anything with the genre as it would develop it is an inherent sense of play that distinguishes the most enduring collage films. Since the purpose of the film seems to be fundamentally banal, a textual analysis will be set aside for an account of the perhaps more compelling circumstances of its creation.

In pursuing the origins of the “Madison News Reel,” the aforementioned “Eye Beholds” logo provided the first avenue of investigation, for also featured in the image was the phrase “The Bureau of Commercial Economics,” naming an all-but-forgotten silent-era

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<sup>94</sup> William Wees. *Recycled Images: The Art and Politics of Found Footage Films*. (New York: Anthology Film Archives, 1993). 4.

<sup>95</sup> Michael Zryd. “Found Footage as Discursive Metahistory,” *The Moving Image* 3, No. 3 [Fall 2003]: 42.

distributor and exhibitor of industrial films. This connection was first made in the summer of 2005, representing a convergence of interests from a period of high activity at Northeast Historic Film. One of three interns at the time, Guy Edmonds of the University of Amsterdam, was organizing a box of paper ephemera and encountered a Bureau of Commercial Economics booklet entitled “Publicity with Motion Pictures.” NHF consultant William O’Farrell recognized the same peering eye on the title page, summoning a collective “a-ha” from the half dozen of us present for this thrilling moment.

Just a couple days later, Audrey Amidon of Bowdoin College was researching early teaching methods with cinema, and in her perusal of trade periodicals found a brief citation of the Bureau of Commercial Economics in *Educational Screen*. Arthur Edwin Krows’ mammoth series of articles on non-theatrical film remains one of the most exhaustive histories of the genre.<sup>96</sup> As the third intern that summer, I had already been intrigued by the *MNR* as a viewing experience, but was increasingly curious how the film could be historically situated, especially with the aid of the disparate clues that were materializing right under our noses. This would gradually grow in scale and eventually become my senior thesis project in the Moving Image Archiving and Preservation program at New York University.

The Bureau of Commercial Economics (BCE) booklet seemed like a logical place to start, and as indicated by its title, “Publicity with Motion Pictures,” it was directed at manufacturing firms, encouraging them to shoot films of their processes and submit them to the BCE for wide dissemination. The most visible of the Bureau’s efforts, as depicted

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<sup>96</sup> Credit is due to University of Chicago PhD candidate Charles Tepperman’s efforts to copy and generously share the otherwise uncompiled Krows articles – “Motion Pictures: Not For Theaters” – with NHF.

in many photographs in the booklet, were its fleet of black projector trucks, featuring the “Eye Beholds” logo painted on the sides, which would pull into city parks and town squares and show these silent industrials to the public for free. So the first question was: would the “Madison News Reel” have had any place in such an exhibition program?

Despite the implication of the name, and the fact that it was based in Washington, D.C., the Bureau of Commercial Economics was not a federal agency, but rather a self-proclaimed altruistic endeavor that nonetheless circulated government films. The fanciful tale of the Bureau’s founding concerned the dream of a blinded young engineer for the Northern Pacific and Canadian Pacific Railways, who vowed to dedicate himself to the service of mankind if he were to ever regain his sight.<sup>97</sup> Decades later, a miracle operation in Europe restored Francis Holley’s vision, which was figuratively fulfilled with the implementation of his plan to use motion pictures for vocational training. Founded in late 1913, and incorporated in August of 1914, the forward of their charter announced the intent of the not-for-profit organization:

The Bureau is an association of the leading institutions, manufacturers, producers and transportation lines in this country and abroad to engage in disseminating industrial and vocational information by the graphic method of motion pictures, showing how things in common use are made or produced, upon the recommendation of the leading educators of the country.<sup>98</sup>

For the next two decades, the Bureau circulated non-theatrical films on a wide range of subjects throughout the world. By 1920, the BCE claimed to be reaching two million people each month.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> “The Story of the Bureau of Commercial Economics” (Washington: Bureau of Commercial Economics, 1923): 3.

<sup>98</sup> “Fore Ward and Charter,” Bureau of Commercial Economics pamphlet, (Philadelphia) 1914.

<sup>99</sup> “Publicity with Motion Pictures.” (Washington: Bureau of Commercial Economics, 1920): no page number.

Amongst the industrial and educational titles, the Bureau also distributed and exhibited “scenics” such as films of National Parks, as well as those documenting civil life in various communities, with entries like “A Trip to the City of Indianapolis,” “Scenic Idaho” and “Elk's Parade at Sheboygan, Wisconsin.” But it seemed clear that the “Madison News Reel” did not have any ambitions for promoting tourism. The film is all but incomprehensible to an outsider – its overall intent appears to have been the good-natured lampooning of folks in the town. The title “Madison News Reel” does not appear amongst the 750 films – most long lost – listed in various BCE catalogs published between 1914 and 1923, so what possible affiliation could the film have had with the Bureau of Commercial Economics?

It is not known if the Bureau attached its logo to the heads of the films it exhibited, but in this instance it is the *second* shot of the film, after a quaint hand-stenciled or stamped title reading “MADISON NEWS REEL.” This suggested that the logo might have been inserted because it lent a certain aura of credibility to a decidedly non-professional production – an authoritative banner of sorts not unlike those of the many newsreel programs that were proliferating in the late 1920s. Interestingly, the BCE logo appears again at the end of the film, in a creative use that will be discussed later. The very homemade quality of the work, and the fact that every shot was joined with a cement splice, suggested that the *MNR* was a one-of-a-kind item, comprised at least in part of appropriated material.

The intertitles on clear stock named a number of individuals presumably from Madison, Maine, and these separated various short, tinted images, some of which were revealed from the date codes to be from 1917 and 1918. As part of my initial research



efforts, I sent a VHS copy to Leslie Drew, president of the Madison Historical Society, to see if he could identify any of the places or people pictured in the film. Surprisingly, Drew declared that none of the scenes depicted Madison, and while those named in the intertitles were citizens of the town, those pictured onscreen weren't them. A case was developing for the *MNR* as collage.

Ward builds  
new block  
on Main St.



At this point it may be useful to break down the film into discrete fragments, and consider them individually in the interest of identification. There are a total of 10 titles in the film, almost invariably separated by a single shot. These units will be referenced with a letter or number in the remaining pages:

- (I) "MADISON NEWS REEL"
  - (a) Bureau of Commercial Economics "Eye Beholds" logo.
- (II) "Rev. Charles Sinden grades lawn"
  - (b) One-armed man operates a General Motors Samson tractor.
- (III) "Ladies Aid meet next Wednesday"
  - (c) Long procession of women in city alley approaching camera.

- (IV) “Ward builds new block on Main St.”
  - (d) Large four-story stone building.
- (V) “Carrol Danforth up a tree, in Solon, Me.”
  - (e) Tilt down trunk of tall, wide tree.
- (VI) “Marriage license clerks are very busy.”
  - (f) Pan right across busy clerical office.
- (VII) “Rev. E.C. Evans takes a vacation.”
  - (g) Likely the conclusion of tilt shot (e). Two happy couples parked at base of tree begin to exit automobile.
- (VIII) “Tom hunts big game in Starks” [Maine]
  - (h) Howling wolf. Jump cut reveals chain-link cage at edge of frame.
- (IX) “Ladies make huge profit to-night.”
  - (i) Three still illustrations depicting the magnitude of the figure “Forty Billion Dollars.”
- (X) “Mark Spear views the eclipse.”
  - (j) Medium shot of man smoking cigarette, looking at camera.
  - (k) Conclusion of “Eye Beholds” logo.

While the appropriated logo did not appear to indicate the film’s producer or distributor, there were other things about the film that hinted at a connection to the BCE. One shot of a city alley (c) shows a long line of well-dressed ladies approaching the camera. A sign juts out perpendicularly from the brick wall, and even when projected the image lacks the detail for the words to be read. With a loupe, I struggled to make out the

text, and noticed that words were also painted on the opposite wall at the right side of the frame. Deciphering characters from each, I discovered that it was the same text, and pieced it together: “Disbursing Office – Bureau of War Risk Insurance.” This clue fit nicely with another bit of pivotal evidence from the “Publicity with Motion Pictures” booklet. It included a notice that the BCE was assisting the U.S. Treasury Department by circulating a film about War Risk Insurance, though the title of the film was not specified.<sup>100</sup> But here was second confirmation that whoever assembled the *MNR* did so in part by drawing from material that would have screened in a BCE program.

There was only one other example of a lead as literal as the aforementioned sign text, though a far less direct one. After an intertitle (IX) reading “Ladies Make Huge Profit To-night” (an earlier title, III, refers to the “Ladies Aid Society”), there is a sequence of three still illustrations, all graphic representations of the magnitude of the figure “forty billion dollars” – paper bills reaching to the moon and back several times, stacks piled high beside the Washington monument, and dollar bills stretched end-to-end around the equator. This fragment, the only shots in the *MNR* printed, not spliced together, does not have a date code on the edge, but given the other present dates a reference to the first World War seemed likely.

A search of the phrase “forty billion” in online historical newspaper databases delivered several hits, and three different instances of how this particular figure was pertinent to WWI. The most promising was a *New York Times* article from October 4, 1920 entitled: “WAR INSURANCE TOTALS FORTY BILLION TO DATE.” The brief notice reported: “A summary of the activities of the Bureau of War Risk Insurance as of August 31, 1920... shows that during the war and to date forty billion dollars worth of

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., no page number.

insurance was issued on behalf of the American forces.”<sup>101</sup> So it seemed quite likely that at least two sections of the *MNR* (c & i) came from the aforementioned Treasury Department film. As I began to acquire copies of other BCE publications from the Library of Congress and various university archives I encountered an entry in one of their film catalogs entitled “Uncle Sam: Insurance Agent.” Happily, the film survives at the National Archives, and the brief online description confirmed it was an informational piece about the Bureau of War Risk Insurance, with the estimated date of 1919. It seemed odd that the forty billion dollar figure would be cited first in a 1919 film shown to general audiences, only to be announced in the press well into 1920, but the date was precise enough for identification purposes.

It would be many months before I would be able to travel to the National Archives’ Motion Picture Sound and Video branch in College Park, Maryland. In fact, my visit came just days after presenting the “Madison News Reel” at the 5<sup>th</sup> Orphan Film Symposium in Columbia, South Carolina, where I could only speculate to my audience that some of the appropriated material originated with the Treasury Department film. I was anticipating a handful of shots to be attributable to “Uncle Sam: Insurance Agent,” and was quite surprised to learn that almost every shot – 8 out of 10 – of the *MNR* was lifted from the former film. It is worth noting that the copy at the National Archives did not feature “The Eye Beholds” logo. While a 1920 Bureau of Commercial Economics pamphlet stated that they operated as “the semi-official distributor of many Government films,”<sup>102</sup> during my research I encountered evidence indicating that the BCE’s film circulation was on a non-exclusive basis – that is, there were other services that

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<sup>101</sup> “War Insurance Totals Forty Billion to Date.” *The New York Times* [October 4, 1920]: 6.

<sup>102</sup> “Publicity,” 1920. No page number.

distributed some of the same titles. The “Uncle Sam” prints retained by the government or transferred back to the National Archives likely never featured the BCE logo.

While it was gratifying to solve a great part of the mystery, there was much left to reconcile. The other unidentified fragments in the *MNR* (e & g) – likely just a single moving shot cut into two pieces – were magenta-tinted, distinguishing it from the yellow “Uncle Sam” material, and were in a much more advanced state of nitrate decomposition. The image depicts a long tilt down the trunk of an enormous tree (e), and later in the *MNR* two happy couples in an automobile are shown apparently parked at the base (g). A tiny plaque can be noted on the tree, but the image lacks the detail for the text to be read. But more challenging than identifying the film’s individual shots was deciphering the intended new meaning of the images when intercut with the titles.

It is not known how a print of “Uncle Sam: Insurance Agent” film might have made its way to Madison, but given the broad reach of the BCE there are a number of possibilities. A February 1920 letter written by Bureau of Commercial Economics founder Francis Holley to the National Board of Review stated that they were distributing a hundred prints of the War Risk Insurance film, and may have been doing so for some time.<sup>103</sup> It is possible that the title was included as part of the BCE’s truck tour of “certain New England industrial cities” in the fall of 1919 (an event documented in the 1920 “Publicity with Motion Pictures” booklet), though the caravan does not appear to have ventured further north than Connecticut on this trip. The Bureau also used the extension system for circulation, and as early as 1914 the University of Maine is noted as one of the many “Co-operators and Distributing Points.” At some point, a print of “Uncle

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<sup>103</sup> February 13, 1920. New York Public Library, National Board of Review of Motion Pictures Records, box 18. Humanities and Social Sciences Library, Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York, NY.

Sam” was left behind in the region, and someone – perhaps the projectionist at a Madison moviehouse – got the idea to make use of it, reediting the material and inserting his/her own intertitles.

There were a number of clues within these, but the last one (before I had confirmed the film’s relationship to “Uncle Sam”) made the strongest case for appropriation. After the final intertitle, “Mark Spear views the eclipse,” there is a quick shot of a man standing in what appears to be a park, smoking a cigarette, looking into the camera. This is followed by the second half of the Bureau logo: a rotating globe in the center of an eye. This juxtaposition, a visual pun making the logo’s spinning sphere the “eclipse” Spear is observing, suggests a creative use of the logo beyond the mere tacking on by a film distributor.

After previewing the “Madison News Reel” in consideration for the 2006 Orphan Film Symposium, Dan Streible joked that it looked like an early Joseph Cornell film. Given its apparent vintage in the found footage tradition, the suggestion did not seem so absurd. In the journal *Senses of Cinema*, Brian Frye notes that “one of the most arresting images in *Rose Hobart* comes when a solar or lunar eclipse is paired with the image of an object falling into a circular pool of water. Hobart simply gazes bemusedly at this spectacle, as if it were little more than a parlour trick.”<sup>104</sup> Spear too appears disinterested in his part of the montage, and in another fascinating coincidence the ripples on the water surrounding Cornell’s fallen moon suggest a human eye.

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<sup>104</sup> Brian Frye. “Rose Hobart.” *Senses of Cinema* November 2001. Accessed June 14, 2006 at: <http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/cteq/01/17/hobart.html>



That each film concludes with the evocation of an eclipse invites a case for either attribution or inspiration, though placing the New Yorker Cornell in this small Maine town at the time is highly unlikely. And to tread further down this possible blind alley, Jodi Hauptman in the book *Joseph Cornell: Stargazing in the Cinema* goes as far as suggesting that Cornell may have observed the summer 1932 solar eclipse over the Northeast.<sup>105</sup> It is this same eclipse that is most likely the one alluded to in the “Madison News Reel.”

But well before Dan made the first mention of Cornell and the *MNR* in the same breath, I had sensed that the celestial happenings in the film might provide another avenue of research. While the vintage of most of the source material could be determined from date codes, the *MNR* itself could have been assembled any time in the ensuing decades. Consulting an online resource for eclipses<sup>106</sup>, I was able to determine that there were two solar eclipses in this period that were highly visible in the northeastern United

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<sup>105</sup> Jodi Hauptman. *Joseph Cornell: Stargazing in the Cinema*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999): 105

<sup>106</sup> *Eclipses Online*. Council for the Central Laboratory of the Research Councils (United Kingdom). Accessed June 16, 2006 at: <http://www.eclipse.org.uk/eclipse/>

States: January 24, 1925 and August 31, 1932, the latter a total eclipse for many communities in Maine. So when I decided to visit the Madison Historical Society to peruse the town's weekly newspaper for traces of the film, I could focus my research around these dates rather than thumb aimlessly through 20 or more years of newspapers.

With a town this small (pop. 5,000 in 1930) and a newspaper that reported whose relatives were visiting and what folks had had for dinner, I imagined that if a film had been made about and shown in Madison, there would surely be some mention of it in the news. I thoroughly checked bound volumes of *The Madison Bulletin* (1885-1951) for several months on either side of the eclipse dates – with some broader perusal throughout the 1930s. There were two Madison moviehouses in this period, The Strand and the Pastime Theater, and for a time ads for both appeared on the front page of the *Bulletin*. The “Madison News Reel” being a 35mm print, I thought one of these would be a likely venue for locals to see themselves, and I examined the ads for any mention of the *MNR*. In early 1929 the Pastime burned down, and by the early 30s it had become “The New Pastime Theater” and the Strand had been converted into a ballroom. While disappointed not to encounter any reference to the film anywhere in the paper, I did gather some anecdotal and biographical information about those named in the film that informed my estimate of when the reel was assembled.

Both eclipses were events that made the local news, and everybody was out “with smoked glass and exposed camera films.”<sup>107</sup> In general, the *Madison Bulletin* showed the individuals in the *MNR* to be engaging in activities consistent with those suggested by the film. The Ladies Aid Society (title III) did indeed meet on Wednesday nights, often in the home of Rev. and Mrs. Sinden (II). A specific individual's appearance in a neighboring

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<sup>107</sup> *The Madison Bulletin* XL, No. 49 [January 29, 1925]: 1.



town (V) is corroborated in a 1925 notice: “Mrs. Hazel Danforth and son Carrol passed the weekend with relatives in Solon.”<sup>108</sup> The “Ward” of title IV seems to be developer Ernest H. Ward, who in 1932 was struggling to repair one of his buildings in accord with a town ordinance.<sup>109</sup>

The 1925 eclipse was eliminated as a possibility when a few articles in mid-1941 reported the resignation of Rev. E.C. Evans from the Congregational church after serving in Madison for 14 years. But Evans’ movements also make a case for 1932: the solar eclipse was at the end of August, and that same year there was notice in the paper that Evans – who is on holiday in the *MNR* – had returned from a month-long vacation to Prince Edward Island in mid-September.<sup>110</sup> In addition to the newspapers, the 2003 book *History of Madison, Maine* provided some useful information. Long time Madison historian Emma Folsom Clark noted that Ward had acquired a building in 1932 with the intention of rebuilding it as the First National Store,<sup>111</sup> which may be the source of the “new block” reference in the *MNR* (IV), and in August 1930 there had been a fire in a clothing store on the “E.H. Ward Block.”<sup>112</sup>

It turns out that Carrol Danforth (V) was still a teenager in 1932, and did not graduate from Madison High School until the following year, the commencement ceremony of which included reading of scripture by E.C. Evans (VII) and a benediction from Rev. Sinden (II).<sup>113</sup> Even if the total eclipse hypothesis were to be disproved as a complete red herring, the best case for 1932 as the year the “Madison News Reel” was

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<sup>108</sup> *The Madison Bulletin* XLI, No. 2 [March 5, 1925]: 5.

<sup>109</sup> *The Madison Bulletin* XLVII, No. 26 [August 11, 1932]: 1.

<sup>110</sup> *The Madison Bulletin* XLVII, No. 31 [September 15, 1932]: 5.

<sup>111</sup> Emma Folsom Clark. *History of Madison, Maine*. (Rockport, Maine: Picton Press, 2003), 314.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 310.

<sup>113</sup> *The Madison Bulletin* XLIX, No. 18 [June 15, 1933]: 1.

created is Sinden's very limited term as pastor of the Methodist church, which the *History of Madison* specifies as 1932-33.

The story of Mark Spear (X) is dizzying in both in the many variations of his name ("M.M.. Spear", "Marc Spear", "Mark M. Spear", "Mark N. Spear") as well as the variety of trades he engaged in. He was reportedly a woolen mill worker, sealer of weights and measures, town constable, milk inspector, food administrator, Sunday school treasurer, member of the Canibas Camera Club, news editor of the *Bulletin* until 1911, owner of the Acme Print Shop on Main Street, and possibly – by association – a Klansman. Historical society volunteer Keith Blackwell assured me that these various identities were embodied in the same man. Blackwell grew up living next door to Spear's best friend, Blaine Dickinson, a bootlegger and weather prophet whose KKK hood and robe are now at the historical society.

As I became intrigued with the film's "characters," I sketched out biographies based on the bits of history they left behind. A 1934 breach of promise suit against Spear is ironic for a man who served as Justice of the Peace and printed wedding invitations in his shop, but the scandal is corroborated in part by his obituary which said of the 86-year-old: "He was a bachelor."<sup>114</sup> It is difficult to resist speculating about the specific references in the film. As for Carrol Danforth being "up a tree," I imagined an infamous event of the young boy climbing a tree and not being able to get back down, and the film teasing him about this. Without a last name, nothing could be learned about "Tom" (VIII) and his hunting expedition to Starks (another Maine town about 9 miles southwest of Madison), but *The Bulletin* did note that Mark's uncle Thomas H. Spear, the local

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<sup>114</sup> *The Madison Bulletin* L, No. 23 [July 19, 1934]: 1. A photocopy of Spear's obituary dated 8/16/1963 likely appeared in the *Lewiston Journal-Sentinel*, as the *Madison Bulletin* ceased publication in 1951.

telegraph entrepreneur, was such a “familiar figure” to area citizens that he was simply known as “Tom.”<sup>115</sup>

Unlike the most of the *MNR* cast, who kept up appearances in the press for several decades and whose town pride are confirmed by cemetery records, Charles Sinden seems an unlikely inclusion in the film given his fleeting tenure on the Madison scene. The shot following the mention of Sinden (II) shows a one-armed man – did the reverend himself have only one arm? While I found no evidence of this, that distinction would certainly make him an irresistible subject to whoever was behind the “Madison News Reel,” especially when faced with the shot of a one-armed veteran in “Uncle Sam: Insurance Agent.” The nature of the small town humor may forever elude our comprehension. Why should there be a spike in marriages in summer of 1932, as suggested by title VI? And what to make of the film’s most “cinematic” joke? Keith Blackwell told me that Mark Spear was nearly blind, remembered for his thick eyeglasses, and Spear’s obituary reported that he had to close his print shop in 1948 due to his cataracts. Is the *MNR* eclipse blinding Spear? The similarly afflicted Francis Holley might say: “The Eye Beholds.”

Perhaps its best to let some mysteries remain, and keep intact the intrigue of the “Madison News Reel,” which was obviously crafted for a very specific audience and never intended to transcend its original time and place. But the film is still with us today, and its significance is three-fold: a fascinating regional document; an early example of found footage filmmaking; and finally, vital filmic evidence of the Bureau of

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<sup>115</sup> Emma Folsom Clark. “Biographical Sketches of Well Known Madison-Anson People, No. 7: Thomas H. Spear,” *The Madison Bulletin* L, No. 37 [October 10, 1934]: 8.

Commercial Economics. In fact, to date the “Eye Beholds” fragment in the “Madison News Reel” remains the only known copy of the animated Bureau logo.

In his serialized history of the non-theatrical film, Arthur Edwin Krows reported in *Educational Screen* that the novel practice of exhibiting films for free, to “audiences eager to see but unwilling to pay,” was initiated by The Bureau of Commercial Economics, launching “the first considerable distribution of this sort.”<sup>116</sup> The chance surfacing of the *MNR* is remarkable in its own right, but it is all the more amazing for conjuring with it the scattered evidence of the BCE. From its early uses of motion pictures to provide vocational training to young men, to the traveling exhibitions in civic spaces via projector trucks, to bolstering support for the first World War, and finally to its more exclusive private functions for Washington’s diplomatic set, the Bureau’s contributions to the silent period were nearly lost to contemporary film studies and archives. The story of the Bureau of Commercial Economics is most instructive as a case study in the frightfully dire survival rate of early industrials – ironically only remembered now thanks to the random reappearance of the “Madison News Reel.”

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<sup>116</sup> Arthur Edwin Krows, “Motion Pictures: Not For Theaters. Part I,” *Educational Screen*, April 1936, 123.

This project was inspired in part by “The Strange Case of *The Fall of Jerusalem*” (*The Moving Image*, Fall 2005) and the film identification efforts of Jan-Christopher Horak, which is why I was pleased to encounter the following ad in the 6/9/1928 *Washington Post*, in which *Jerusalem* and the Bureau shared the same venue for a week:

CONGREGATIONAL

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL**  
10th & G Sts. N.W.

JASON NOBLE PIERCE, D. D., Minister  
*Dr. Pierce Preaches*

11—"What Jesus Did That We  
Can Do."

8—"What Happens When We  
Do Wrong."

Followed by  
**MOTION PICTURE**  
"THE FALL OF JERUSALEM"

An historical spectacle of great scope,  
action, and awe, great value to all  
students of the Bible and ancient his-  
tory.

*Motion Picture Services*  
S. S. M. Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday  
Science, Educational and Historical  
Films of the Bureau of Cine-  
matograph Education

7-Reel Photoplay, "EVANGELINE"  
Based on Longfellow's immortal poem.  
This is a real beauty and very tender.  
7:20 P. M. Saturday, matinee for  
children.

## APPENDIX B

### FORE WARD

#### *Bureau of Commercial Economics, Inc.*

There has been established a new department in industrial education under the Bureau of Commercial Economics, Inc.

The Bureau is an association of the leading institutions, manufacturers, producers and transportation lines in this country and abroad to engage in disseminating industrial and vocational information by the graphic method of motion pictures, showing how things in common use are made or produced, upon the recommendation of the leading educators of the country.

The work of the Bureau will be maintained through endowment funds and annuities, and is purely philanthropic. No expense is involved for any institution to whom these lectures or reels are sent; they are available, however, only when admittance to the public is free.

The Bureau does not accept any remuneration for the exhibition of any reel or slide. The reels and slides are only exhibited for educational purposes.

**The corporation is one not for profit and it has no capital stock.**

The Bureau will display its reel and slides not only in universities, colleges, technical and agricultural schools, high schools, public institutions, settlement houses, missions, commercial clubs and at trade conventions, but also with powerful projectors, operated from auto trucks, in parks, playgrounds, and other centers for the general public.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.  
1914

## APPENDIX C

### UNIVERSITY CIRCULATION

Twenty Circuits for Films [one print for each]

[ From 1916 *Bureau of Commercial Economics* pamphlet. By 1920 they were requesting 20 prints from manufacturers of each of their films, more if international outreach was desired. ]

**University of Pittsburgh**

**University of Cincinnati**

**University of Tennessee** (+ the Central Southern States)

**University of Kansas**

**St. Louis Business Men's League** (state of Missouri)

**University of California**

**University of Arizona** (+ the Southwest)

**University of Texas / Texas State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts**

**District of Columbia, Maryland and the Virginias**

**University of Indiana** ("one of the most active of the universities engaged in extension work")

**University of Illinois** (and its extension centers)

**Universities of Alberta and Manitoba** ("for their many centers")

**University of Idaho** (the "intra-mountain empire")

**University of South Dakota**

**Universities of North and South Carolina and Georgia**

**Universities of Louisiana and Mississippi**

**New England** service

**New York** circuit

**for conventions**

### INTERNATIONAL

[ From 1923 booklet, *The Story of The Bureau of Commercial Economics*. ]

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT  
THE BRITISH EMPIRE  
REPUBLIC OF FRANCE  
DOMINION OF CANADA  
COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA  
UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA  
REPUBLIC OF ARGENTINA  
REPUBLIC OF CHILE  
REPUBLIC OF BOLIVIA  
THE NETHERLANDS  
DUTCH EAST INDIES  
REPUBLIC OF GUATEMALA  
REPUBLIC OF COSTA RICA  
REPUBLIC OF URUGUAY  
REPUBLIC OF PERU  
INDIAN EMPIRE

REPUBLIC OF BRAZIL  
REPUBLIC OF SALVADOR  
REPUBLIC OF CUBA  
FEDERATION OF SWITZERLAND  
REPUBLIC OF CHINA  
KINGDOM OF SPAIN  
EMPIRE OF JAPAN  
REPUBLIC OF MEXICO  
REPUBLIC OF NICARAGUA  
PROTECTORATE OF MOROCCO  
PAN AMERICAN UNION  
KINGDOM OF ITALY  
KINGDOM OF DENMARK  
KINGDOM OF SWEDEN  
DOMINION OF NEWFOUNDLAND  
PAN-PACIFIC UNION

## APPENDIX D

### BCE FILM MANUFACTURERS/SPONSORS

“More than 400 of the largest manufacturers and producers of America have furnished films to the Bureau.” –Francis Holley, 1916.

[ Compiled list of film sponsors from Bureau publications dating 1914-16. Some may have contributed slide lectures rather than films. ]

Aeolian Co.  
Alabastine Co.  
American Agricultural Chemical Co.  
American Clay Machinery Co.  
American Coal Products Co.  
American Cyanamid Co.  
American Exporters' Association  
American Laundry Machinery Co.  
American Manufacturers Association of Products from Corn  
American Museum of Safety  
American Sugar Refining Co.  
American Tel. and Tel. Co.  
Angus Watson & Co., Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, Eng.  
Armour and Company  
Association of American Portland Cement Manufacturers  
Automatic Electric Co.  
B. F. Goodrich Co.  
Barber Asphalt Co.  
Barkey & Gay Furniture Company  
Barrett Manufacturing Co.  
Beechnut Packing Co.  
Bessemer Limestone Co.  
Bigelow-Hartford Carpet Co. [New York City]  
Boston Woven Hose & Rubber Co.  
Bureau of Explosives  
Burroughs Adding Machine Co.  
C. F. Sauer Co.  
California Cannery Association  
California Fruit Distributors  
Canadian Pacific Railway  
Carborundum Company  
Central Coal and Coke Co.  
Central Foundry Co.  
Cheney Brothers  
Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway



City of Baltimore  
City of Beaumont, Texas  
City of Calgary  
City of Cleveland, Ohio  
City of Edmonton, Alberta  
City of Helena, Montana  
City of New Orleans  
City of St. Joseph, Mo.  
Cluett Peabody & Co.  
Coburn Trolley Track Co.  
Combe Printing Co.  
Corn Products Refining Co.  
Corticelli Silk Mills  
Cudahy Packing Company  
Curtis Publishing Co.  
Dalton Adding Machine Co.  
De Vilbiss Manufacturing Co.  
Deere and Co.  
Denver and Rio Grande Railroad  
Detroit Stove Works  
Diamond Match Co. [from *Reel & Slide*, 12/1918]  
Dow Wire and Iron Works  
DuPont de Nemours Powder Co.  
East Ohio Gas Co.  
Eastman Kodak Co.  
Elgin National Watch Co.  
Elliott-Fisher Co.  
Evinrude Motor Company  
Fairbanks Morse Co.  
Federal Terra Cotta Co.  
Firestone Tire & Rubber Co.  
Ford Motor Co.  
Fore River Shipbuilding Corporation  
Fownes Brothers & Co.  
Fritzsche Brothers  
Fruit Dispatch Co.  
General Electric Co.  
General Fireproofing Co.  
General Roofing Company  
German Kali Works  
Glidden Varnish Co.  
Grand Truck Pacific Railway [Montreal]  
Gray & Davis  
Great Northern Railway  
H.K. Mulford & Co.  
Hartford Carpet Corporation

Hershey Chocolate Co.  
Holt Manufacturing Co.  
Hoosier Cabinet Company  
Hudson Motor Co.  
Icy-Hot Bottle Co.  
Imperial Motor Co.  
Industrial Works, Michigan  
International Harvester Co.  
Iver Johnson Arms and Cycle Co.  
Jackson & Church Co.  
James S. Kirk & Company  
Jesse French & Sons  
John B. Stetson Co.  
Joseph Campbell Co.  
L. E. Waterman Co.  
L. S. Starrett Co.  
Larkin Company  
Lauders, Frary & Clark  
Lee Tire & Rubber Co.  
Lehigh Portland Cement Co.  
Libby, McNeill & Co.  
London & Northwestern Railway of England  
Long Bell Lumber Company  
Lowe Brothers & Co.  
Macey Company  
Marshall Field & Co.  
Mayer Brothers  
Mayer China Co.  
Minn., St. Paul & Sault Ste. Marie Railway  
Missouri Pacific Railway  
Mount Rainier Nat'l Park  
National Association of Manufacturers  
National Canner's Association  
National Cash Register Co.  
National Fire Proofing Co.  
National Lead Co.  
National Tube Co.  
New Jersey Zinc Co.  
New York Central Lines  
Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Co.  
Northern Pacific Railroad  
Northwestern National Bank  
Oshkosh Grass Matting Co.  
Packard Motor Co.  
Pan-American Union  
Parfumerie Ed. Pinaud

Parke, Davis & Co.  
Parker Pen Company  
Peace Dale Manufacturing Co.  
Pneumatic Scale Cor., Ltd.  
Postum Cereal Co. (C.W. Post)  
Prinz-Biederman Co.  
Procter & Gamble Company  
Reed & Barton  
Regal Motor Co.  
Regal Shoe Co.  
Remington Typewriter Co.  
Rice & Adams  
Rock Island Lines  
Rogers-Brown Co. [from *Reel & Slide*, 12/1918]  
Royal Chair Co.  
Scott Paper Co.  
Sellers Sons Co.  
Sheldon Slate Co.  
Sherwin Williams Co.  
Shimmel & Co., Leipzig  
Singer Sewing Machine Company  
Sir Thomas Lipton, London  
Sohmer Piano Co.  
Standard Oil Co. [New Jersey]  
State of Idaho  
State of Michigan  
State of Montana  
State of Oregon  
State of Washington  
State of West Virginia  
State of Wisconsin  
Studebaker Corporation of America  
Sultzberger Sons Co.  
Swift & Co.  
Thomson Printing Co.  
Trussed Concrete Steel Co.  
Union Pacific System  
United Engine Co.  
United Gas Improvement Company  
United Shoe Machinery Co.  
United States Beet Sugar Industry  
United States Gypsum Co.  
Usines Carels Freres, Gand, Belgium  
Victor Talking Machine Co.  
W. R. Grace & Co.  
Welch Grape Juice Co.

Wells Fargo & Co.  
Western Electric Co.  
Westinghouse Electric Co.  
White Motor Co.  
Wilcox & White Co.  
Winchester Repeating Arms Co.  
Winsted Silk Company  
Workmen's Compensation Bureau  
Yale & Towne Mfg. Co.

## **APPENDIX E**

### **COMPILED BCE CATALOGS WITH ADDITIONAL FILM DATA**

[ Unpublished at this time. Contact [seansavagel@gmail.com](mailto:seansavagel@gmail.com) for more information. ]