Rediscovering Thanhouser: Digital Resources for Cinema Studies Research

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Thanhouser Beginnings

• Edwin and Gertrude Thanhouser
• Stage and Theatrical Management Careers
• Studio Founded 1909 in New Rochelle, NY
• First to head an American studio with theatrical background
Thanhouser Films (1909-1917)

- 1,000+ films released to Worldwide distribution
  - Extant films: 186 at 24 sites
- 2/3 Drama
  - Classics
  - Original Scenarios
  - Shakespeare
- 1/3 Comedy
  - Falstaff brand
- Princess Films
  - Muriel Ostriche
Notable Stars

• James Cruze
• Frederick Warde
• Jeanne Eagels
• Florence LaBadie
• Marie Eline (Kid) and Helen Badgley (Kidlet)
Thanhouser Research

• Robert Hamilton Ball (1968)
  – Shakespeare on Silent Film
  – Interview with Edwin Thanhouser

• Anthony Slide (1978)
  – Aspects of American Cinema Prior to 1920 – Chapter 8

• Q. David Bowers (1995)
  – Encyclopedic Research Effort
  – Narrative History, Filmography, Biographies
  – Over 3,000 articles on every aspect of Thanhouser Studio
  – Over 100 Bibliographic entries

• Charles Foster (2000)
  – Florence LaBadie (pps 123-149)
New Digital Resources for Cinema Studies Research

• Thanhouser Web Site
  – www.thanhouser.org

• Thanhouser Films: An Encyclopedia and History by Q. David Bowers
  – Interactive CD-ROM

• The Thanhouser Collection
  – Six DVDs with 26 films
Thanhouser Site

- www.thanhouser.org
  - Research Center
    - History & research links
  - Image Gallery
    - Ads, post cards, glass slides, heralds, studio shots and more
  - Preservation Activities
    - Recent discoveries
  - Films on Video - DVD and VHS
    - Synopsis on all available films
  - Press Room
    - News and reviews on films
  - Thanhouser Films Encyclopedia
    - Details & reviews on CD-ROM
  - Over 500 pages online
Thanhouser Films CD-ROM: An Encyclopedia and History by Q. David Bowers

- Full text search of over 3,000 articles
- Over 440 images with caption text search
- Over 20 minutes of 32 unique film clips
- Index to all productions, studio employees and surviving films

“...a resource for primary documents, it is marvelous, and it provides fodder for several dissertations and a host of journal articles.” – Kathryn Seeley
Thanhouser DVD – Vol. 1, 2 & 3

DVD #1 The Early Years (1910 – 1912) Five films made when Edwin Thanhouser was directly managing the day-to-day activities of the company:
- Only in the Way (1911) TRT 12:14
- Get Rich Quick (1911) TRT 12:46
- The Coffin Ship (1911) TRT 14:37
- Cinderella (1911) TRT 14:23
- Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (1912) TRT 11:31

DVD #2 Under the Mutual Banner (1912 – 1915) Five films released under the Mutual banner, including a Princess Release featuring Muriel Ostriche:
- The Cry of the Children (1912) TRT 28:47
- Petticoat Camp (1912) TRT 14:50
- The Star of Bethlehem (1912) TRT 15:13
- The Decoy (Princess, 1914) TRT 16:02
- A Dog’s Love (1914) TRT 11:12

DVD #3 Edwin Thanhouser Returns (1915 – 1917) Three films released under the Falstaff and Pathé banners, including the feature film The World and the Woman with legendary actress Jeanne Eagels:
- Crossed Wires (1915) TRT 30:58
- The Soap Suds Star (1915, Falstaff) TRT 14:38
- The World and the Woman (1916, Pathé) TRT 1:06:00

Total Running Time: 4 hours, 22 minutes
Thanhouser DVD – Vol. 4, 5 & 6

DVD #4 *The Vicar of Wakefield* Two versions of Oliver Goldsmith’s 1764 story (a 1910 one-reeler and a 1917 six-reel feature film starring Frederick Warde) provides a unique view into the evolution of the early film industry:
- *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1910) TRT 13:20
- *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1917) TRT 1:29:30

DVD #5 *Thanhouser Kids and Dogs* Seven films, including *The Evidence of the Film*, selected by the National Film Preservation Board for the National Film Registry because of its cultural, historical and aesthetic significance:
- *The Little Girl Next Door* (1912) TRT 14:20
- *The Evidence of the Film* (1913) TRT 14:30
- *The Tiniest of Stars* (1913) TRT 15:45
- *Just a Shabby Doll* (1913) TRT 14:40
- *Uncle’s Namesakes* (1913) TRT 15:00
- *Shep’s Race with Death* (1914) TRT 12:15
- *Their One Love* (1915) TRT 15:20

DVD #6 *The Thanhouser Stars Emerge* Four films featuring popular Thanhouser “stars,” including Florence Labadie, James Cruze, Marquette Snow, William Russell, the Thanhouser Dog “Shep,” Broadway star Jeanne Eagels, and Shakespearian actor Frederick Warde:
- *She* (1912) TRT 24:40
- *Marble Heart* (1913) TRT 26:50
- *Madam Blanche, Beauty Doctor* (1915, Falstaff) TRT 13:35
- *Fires of Youth* (1917) TRT 31:12

Total Running Time: 4 hours, 58 minutes
Recent Thanhouser Research
Available online http://www.thanhouser.org/research.htm

• Notes on Thanhouser’s *The Evidence of the Film*

• **Lloyd Lonergan and the Development of Film Scripts at the Thanhouser Studio**
  – by Lindsay Harris (2004)

• **The Construction of Educational Value in Thanhouser Silent Film**

• **The Cinema of Special Effects Attractions and Its Representation of Reality: The Comparison between the Early Tricks and Digital Effects**

• **Acting for the Camera: Dramatic Styles in Thanhouser Studio Films**
  – by Frances Pici (2003)

• **The Influence of D.W. Griffith on Thanhouser’s 1913 Release: The Evidence of the Film**

• **The Evidence of the Film Shot-by-shot Analysis**

• **The Social Impact of Thanhouser's 1912 The Cry of the Children**
Thanhouser Company Legacy