

Thanhouser Company Film Preservation, Inc.

Presents

Thanhouser Collection Volumes 13, 14 & 15

Nineteen New Silent Era Films Produced by

The Thanhouser Studio

New Rochelle, NY

1911 to 1916

THE *Ibsen's "Pillars of Society" Here!*
THANHOUSER
WO-A-WEEK

RELEASED TUESDAY, MAY 2 **The Pillars of Society** **BY HENRIK IBSEN**

This is the original "Ibsen Film"—the initial Ibsen play to be put into moving pictures. And many think it the very masterpiece of the great playwright who has just departed. And we, on our part, feel that if he had been spared to see the "first print" of the film of his play as we saw it the other day in our inspection room, he would have enthused over it every jot as much as did we. WE raised! Undoubtedly, you and your patrons will, too.

Code Word, Soci.

Just Out! The Thanhouser Lobby Photos consisting of five splendid individual photographs (1x10) of Thanhouser principals; sent postage prepaid for \$1.00 with order. Address Exhibitor's Dept.

The Thanhouser News the "Exhibitor's Guide," containing the Thanhouser Lobby-Decorator, sent FREE OF CHARGE to all who can show connection with the Moving Picture business. Address Exhibitor's Dept.

Thanhouser Company
NEW ROCHELLE NEW YORK

Ibsen's "Pillars of Society" Here!

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Press Kit: *Thanouser Collection Volumes 13,14 & 15*

Credits

The films in this collection are from nineteen recently discovered Thanouser films produced by the pioneering studio that was based in New Rochelle, New York. During its short production run from early 1910 to late 1917, the studio produced over 1,000 silent films that were seen by audiences around the globe. This compilation presents these silent classics with new digital high-quality video transfers and new music for you to enjoy and brings to 101 the total number of surviving films available to the public.

A three-disc DVD collector's set is available for purchase for \$24.95 at www.thanouser.org and online video streaming for \$1.99 for each film at www.vimeo.com/ondemand/thanouser131415.

NOTE: Some films in this collection (e.g. *Toodles, Tom and Trouble*) may include racist representations of African Americans and other minorities, (e.g. Caucasian actors in black face). Ned Thanouser, president of Thanouser Company Film Preservation, acknowledges racism is portrayed in these films. Rather than hide this part of our cinematic history, I am choosing to keep the original film material intact as a historical document. I recognize viewers may experience discomfort viewing this material. Under no circumstances do I condone racist behavior. I am committed to inspiring everyone to protect our cinematic heritage as a record of our culture.

This collection continues my commitment to offer these long-forgotten, silent-era classics for viewing by scholars and cinephiles worldwide. Below are descriptions of all films included in this release.

VOLUME 13: 1911 to 1912

The Pillars of Society

Theme: One-reel classic released May 2, 1911.

Print Source: George Eastman Museum, TRT 10:39, optional commentary track by Eirik Frisvold Hanssen, National Library of Norway.

Cast: Julia M. Taylor (Bernick's wife), William Russell (Bernick's suitor), unknown (Johan Tonnesen), Marie Eline (young orphan girl), David H. Thompson (the rector).

Musical Accompaniment: Stephen Horne.

The marquee film for this two-disc collection, based on the 1877 play by Henrik Ibsen, is believed to be the first Ibsen play to be dramatized on the screen in America. This adaptation was a highlight in Edwin Thanouser's career and was among the accomplishments he fondly recalled.



Henrik Ibsen (ca. 1898)

In a small coastal town in Norway a respectable family is hiding scandals. Long lost relatives return from America to disturb the peace of “decent” people where progress is threatening to shatter the secluded society.

This print is from the George Eastman Museum and has many jumps at the beginning and end due to deterioration and abuse from frequent projection. The storyline is, however, complete and demonstrates Thanouser's ability to bring this complex drama to the screen.

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A Doll's House

Theme: One-reel classic released July 28, 1911.

Print Source: Hiroshi Komatsu, Waseda University, Japan, TRT 14:32, optional commentary track by Eirik Frisvold Hanssen, National Library of Norway.

Cast: Julia M. Taylor (Nora), Justus D. Barnes (Nora's father), Edward Genung (Torvel Helmer), David H. Thompson (doctor), William Russell (Niles Krostad, a money lender), Marie Eline and (child).

Musical accompaniment: Stephen Horne.

Based on Ibsen's 1879 play that was translated into English in 1889, it became a popular stage feature. The play is significant for the way it deals with the fate of a married woman who lacked reasonable opportunities for self-fulfillment in a male-dominated world. It aroused a great sensation at the time and caused a "storm of outraged controversy" that went beyond the theatre to world newspapers and society.

This, Thanouser's second Ibsen film, was released in the wake of positive reviews two months earlier for *The Pillars of Society*. The intertitles of the original film were truncated during the transfer and have been digitally recreated and tinted to match Thanouser's font and style used during the 1910 to 1914 era.

The Austin Flood

Theme: Documentary released October 6, 1911.

Print Source: Library of Congress, TRT 9:52.

Cast: Citizens of Austin, Pennsylvania, including Lena Binkey and Katherine Lyons, and various military and police responders.

Musical Accompaniment: Ben Model

On Saturday, September 30, 1911, the Bayless Dam, less than a mile north of Austin, Pennsylvania failed, and a huge wall of water followed by a fire devastated the town and killed at least 78 of its citizens. This remarkable footage was shot by Thanouser cameramen who rushed to the scene on Sunday, October 1, 1911. The Thanouser crew was sufficiently fast so that a print of the film 750 feet in length, condensed from 2,000 feet photographed at the scene, was shown at Thanouser's New Rochelle headquarters on Monday, October 2, 1911. The film, titled *Austin Flood*, was advertised in the October 14, 1911 issue of *The Moving Picture World*, which was in the hands of its readers about a week earlier. News films were a rare endeavor for Thanouser and were clearly meant to capitalize on the disaster as it was nearby and reachable by train. Other studios (e.g. Pathé) also filmed the disaster, but the Thanouser footage, as reviewed in *The Moving Picture World*, was deemed a "scoop."



The Star of the Side Show

Theme: One-reel drama released April 2, 1912.

Print Source: UCLA Film and Television Archive, TRT 12: 27.

Cast: Marie Eline ("the star of the side show"), Bertha Blanchard (albino), David H. Thompson (strong man), Carl LeViness (side show barker), May Carr (fat lady), Fanny Gregory (bearded lady), Robert Milasch (the giant), Mignon Anderson (snake charmer).

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Cameraman: Carl Louis Gregory.

Musical Accompaniment: Nathan Avakian.

REVIEW: *The Moving Picture World*, April 13, 1912:

The star of the side show is 'the Thanouser Kid' - little Marie Eline - who takes the role of a midget. In the early scene she is a little Dutch woman in sabots, who refuses a proposal of marriage from a neighbor, also a midget. She joins the show and has a very amusing flirtation with the show's giant. He is sick with love for the serpent charmer, however, and she feels the pain of jealousy. Soon, the other midget also comes to the show, and we have a pretty wedding ceremony. It is something fresh, new, and delightfully amusing.



The Girl of the Grove

Theme: One-reel drama released April 5, 1912.

Print Source: Hiroshi Komatsu, Waseda University, Japan, TRT 15:45.

Cast: Florence LaBadie (boss), Joseph Graybill (married man), Marguerite Snow (his wife), James Cruze (worker), William Russell (doctor).

Director: George O. Nichols.

Cameraman: A.H. Moses, Jr.

Location: Florida.

Musical Accompaniment: Ben Model.

REVIEW: *The Moving Picture World*, April 13, 1912:

An orange grove picture story, taken in Florida. The girl was 'boss' of the grove. A stranger, coming in to see the grove, finds her at work, dressed in overalls. This meeting is followed, a few weeks later, by a love scene set up in a great tree with branches like immense arms. The 'boss' later finds that the man is married. The man's sick wife is neglected; the disillusioned girl, 'the boss,' is also despondent. Each is on the point of drowning herself; but the 'boss' rescues the wife. The girls comfort each other. It is pretty well photographed in interesting background; but it is slight. A good, romantic filler.

The Thunderbolt

Theme: One-reel drama released November. 26, 1912.

Print Source: British Film Institute, TRT 13:50.

Cast: James Cruze (dishonest broker), David H. Thompson (poor man), Jean Darnell (poor man's wife), William Garwood (poor couple's son grown up), Mignon Anderson (broker's grown daughter).

Musical Accompaniment: Ben Model.

SYNOPSIS: Excerpt from a Thanouser advertisement in *The Moving Picture World*, Nov. 23, 1912:

It struck the house, wrecked the old stone chimney, and sent the fragments crashing into the room. After the fragments came gold, lots of it. The chimney had been the hiding place of a stolen fortune. The ultimate disposal of the fortune is the story the picture tells, tells well, and tells in an unexpected twist.

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NOTE: For the curious at **heart**, there is an “Easter Egg” on Volume 13! Selecting an unexpected small image on the main screen will take you to the short film *Cupid the Conqueror* (1911) with two alternative original musical tracks by Andras Benz and William TN Hall. This nice romantic comedy will delight you in many ways.

VOLUME 14: 1912 to 1914

Cross Your Heart

Theme: One-reel drama released November 22, 1912.

Print Source: British Film Institute, TRT 14:35.

Cast: Marie Eline (farmer's young daughter), Helen Badgley (farmer's son's younger brother), Riley Chamberlin (their father), Leland Benham (orphan boy), James Cruze (orphan boy grown up), Justus D. Barnes (J.B. Snaith, orphan boy's adoptive father), Marguerite Snow (daughter grown up), Francis Newburgh (daughter's grown up brother).

Musical Accompaniment: Ben Model.

REVIEW: Excerpt from *The Morning Telegraph*, November 24, 1912:

Dramatic in its every scene, this play carries a heart interest not found in the average picture story. The play is splendidly acted in both of its periods, is finely staged and exceedingly well directed.

The Idol of the Hour

Theme: One-reel drama released March 14, 1913.

Print Source: Lobster Films at the Library of Congress, TRT 13:53.

Cast: James Cruze (Raoul, a young artist), Marguerite Snow (Felice, a shepherdess), Riley Chamberlin (a party goer).

Director: Lucius J. Henderson.

Cameraman: Arthur A. Cadwell.

Location: California.

Musical Accompaniment: Ben Model.

ADVERTISEMENT: *The Moving Picture World*, March 15, 1913:

She was the idol of the hour, the toast of the town, with admirers galore - this pretty model. Her suitors were all of them men of wealth and standing, and yet she rejected all of them for the poor-enough artist, for whom she posed. He, again, rejected her for another. But the story is not of the conventional 'scorned by the one man she loved' sort. The Thanouser Twist puts in its appearance and you will be surprised at the odd ending of the tale.

The Girl of the Cabaret

Theme: One-reel drama released August 8, 1913.

Print Source: British Film Institute, TRT 15:54.

Cast: Marguerite Snow (May, girl of the cabaret), Harry Benham (her husband), Helen Badgley (their daughter), Dorothy Benham, Riley Chamberlin, David H. Thompson (booking agent).

Location: May Day celebration in Central Park, NY.

Musical Accompaniment: Ben Model.

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REVIEW: *The Moving Picture World*, August 16, 1913:

There is seemingly a perennial interest in this type of story, wherein a young man weds a girl from the music hall. She afterwards leaves him, only to find that the place has lost its charm and is glad when he discovers her and takes her home. Harry Benham and Marguerite Snow, assisted by the Thanouser Kidlet, work this story out in a very attractive and appealing manner.

Jack and the Beanstalk

Theme: One-and-a-half-reels fairy tale released on December 19, 1913.

Print Source: British Film Institute, TRT 13:17.

Cast: Leland Benham (Jack), Helen Badgley (Golightly, a fairy).

Scenario: Lloyd F. Lonergan from the fairy tale.

Musical Accompaniment: Ben Model.

REVIEW, *The Moving Picture World*,
December 27, 1913:

A reel and a half number depicting the good old tale of the youthful prodigy who mounts the beanstalk and invades the realm of the giant. In this Leland Benham appears as Jack and makes a very creditable appearance in all of the various scenes. The production is not particularly spectacular, but it adheres to the fairy story very closely and will delight childish observers as well as older people.



***Coals of Fire* (British release title: *Reinstated*)**

Theme: One-reel drama released January 16, 1914.

Print Source: British Film Institute, TRT 13:05.

Cast: Harry Benham (Blodgett, a rich young businessman), Helen Badgley (his motherless child), Riley Chamberlin (Emmet Moore, Blodgett's clerk), Leland Benham (Larrie, Moore's grandson), Lila Chester (Helen's nurse), George Barnes (Gary, a storekeeper), Mrs. Badgley (Jane), N.S. Woods (butler), Marie Eline.

Musical Accompaniment: Ben Model.

REVIEW, *The Morning Telegraph*, January 18, 1914:

As the name implies the return of good for evil is the subject of this drama. It is well acted and attractive. The playing of the children's parts is particularly effective. A heartless businessman discharges an old clerk for no reason but his age. Later the wealthy man's little baby girl wanders away and is found by the grandson of the old clerk. At first the old man, in his bitterness, was tempted to revenge himself through the little child. Then his better nature triumphed, and he sent his grandson for the little girl's father. The rich man was so shamed by the situation that he restored the old man to his position.

Their Best Friend

Theme: One-reel drama released February 27, 1914.

Print Source: British Film Institute, TRT 16:03.

Cast: Marguerite Snow (May [or Amy], an heiress), Morris Foster (Jack, a young broker in love with May), Joseph Sparks (Gray, May's guardian), Justus D. Barnes (Jack's father).

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Scenario: C.E. and H.B. Maltby.

Musical Accompaniment: Ben Model.

REVIEW: *The Moving Picture World*, March 7, 1914:

A good picture. An unusual love story with a villainous uncle in the background - he has speculated with the fortune of his ward and fears exposure. He does not intend to let her marry and it is the real brass of this new kind of villainy that, in the excellent character drawing of this part, is a big interest in the offering. All the characters, but especially this uncle, are drawn with vigor and seem to us like real human beings full of interest. The picture ought to make a very good offering. It will be liked.

A NOTE ABOUT THANOUSER LOGOS

The familiar Thanouser "TCo" logos appeared on title, intertitle cards, and in many films in the frame from 1910 to 1914. Thanouser Company was acquired by Chicago-based Mutual Film Corporation from Chicago in April 1912 and renamed Thanouser Film Corporation. New branding elements reflecting this change became evident in films beginning in 1915. In *The Mother of Her Dreams*, the new intertitle format is used. Also, with the introduction of the Falstaff Films comedy brand in April 1915, these films also had new branding elements as seen in *Toodles, Tom and Trouble* and subsequent Falstaff Films.

VOLUME 15: 1915 to 1916

The Mother of Her Dreams

Theme: One-reel drama released Sept. 10, 1915.

Print Source: British Film Institute, TRT 11:42.

Cast: Ethyle Cooke (mother), Madeline Fairbanks (orphan, one of the few films she appeared without her twin sister Marion).

Musical Accompaniment: Ben Model.

SYNOPSIS: *Reel Life*, September 18, 1915:

To the lonely little girl in the orphan asylum comes every night the vision of a beautiful woman in white, who smiles at the little foundling and tells her to be brave and good and great happiness will come to her. The little girl names her "the mother of my dreams." Every day, as the other little girls at the asylum are chosen by kind-faced women to be taken to their homes, the heart of the little orphan grows more sad as she realizes that no one wants her. At last she is chosen, but, alas, when she reaches the home of the woman who has taken her, she finds that she is to be merely a drudge in the household, and not a daughter. One night, after a hard day's toil, "the mother of her dreams" comes to her and beckons her to follow.

The Twins of the GL Ranch

Theme: One-reel drama released September 19, 1915.

Print Source: Academy Film Archive, TRT 11:35.

Cast: Madeline and Marion Fairbanks (twins of G.L. Ranch), Ernest Howard (father), Leo Post, David H. Thompson.

Musical Accompaniment: Nathan Avakian.

REVIEW: *The Moving Picture World*, September 25, 1915:

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Their father sells some horses, and when thieves come, one of the twins places the bills inside her doll. The other goes for help. The plot is not very new but is well acted and the story gets up considerable suspense.

John T. Rocks and the Flivver

Theme: One-reel comedy released October 17, 1915.

Print Source: British Film Institute, TRT 13:36

Cast: Mignon Anderson (girl), George Marlo (John L. Watson, a young man), John Holden (John T. Rocks, the world's richest man), Arthur Bauer (John D. Gray, the young man's boss).

Musical Accompaniment: Ben Model

REVIEW: *The Moving Picture World*, October 23, 1915:

A pleasing comedy, in which a young man induces the richest man in the world to ride in a 'Flivver' car. He is aided by the girl, whose hand he claims as a reward. This is light but pleasing throughout.

Toodles, Tom and Trouble

Theme: One-reel comedy released December 23, 1915.

Print Source: Library of Congress, TRT 12:56.

Scenario: Lloyd F. Lonergan; released under the Falstaff brand.

Cast: Baby Geregthy (Toodles), Colin Campbell (Tom), Lady (Trouble, a dog).

Musical Accompaniment: Nathan Avakian.

MODERN SYNOPSIS:

Toodles, a baby, is entrusted with Tom for the afternoon so the mother can go shopping with friends. Tom carefully tucks the baby into a corner of the park as he is distracted by a friend for a smoke. Tom fails to notice that a stranger sees Toodles, apparently abandoned. The stranger takes the baby and begins a search for the child's parents. Meanwhile, a "baby" rag doll is left in the same location where Toodles was deposited by Tom. The rag doll is taken by the dog Trouble. Tom sees the dog with the

"baby" running from the park and gives chase to rescue his charge. Thus begins a frantic series of comedic situations where Tom valiantly attempts to rescue Toodles, the "baby." The film ends with a happy reunion of Toodles, Tom, and the mother. Not so much for Trouble!



Guiders

Theme: One-reel comedy released August 15, 1916.

Print Source: Getty Images, TRT 14:07.

Scenario: Lloyd F. Lonergan; released under the Falstaff brand.

Cast: Claude Cooper (Oscar) and Frank E. McNish (Conrad), Riley Chamberlin (an Elk), and Louise Emerald Bates (lady client).

Location: Jacksonville, Florida.

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Musical Accompaniment: Ben Model

MODERN SYNOPSIS

The was the last of six “Oscar and Conrad Company” one-reel comedies written by Lloyd F. Lonergan released under the Falstaff Films comedy brand. Oscar and Conrad become “gentlemen guides” working for Fluster’s Tourist Agency. A series of comedic situations ensue when the duo attempt to bluff their way into an Elks Lodge, encounter unruly animals at ostrich and alligator farms, and Conrad starts a flirtation with a lady client resulting in a madcap police chase on the beach.

This 1916 film highlights significant changes in Thanouser’s filmmaking technique. Many of the intertitles are written as dialog (in quotes) vs. a description of the action to come. This technique was adopted by studios as a precursor to synchronized sound in the late 1920s. Also, note the use of closeup shots to highlight a character’s reaction to a situation, e.g. at 3:51 the closeup of actor Riley Chamberlin’s response to his fellow Elks’ whisper, “LET’S TURN THIS FAKE ELK INTO A GOAT!” The use of these techniques demonstrate how Thanouser was adopting and developing the new language of cinema.

BONUS FILM: *An American in the Making*

Theme: One-reel Educational-documentary, April 22, 1913.

Print Source: Academy Film Archive

Cast: Harry Benham, Ethyle Cooke, Leland Benham.

Locations: Ellis Island, New York Harbor; United State Steel Corporation, Gary, Indiana; the National Tube Works, Lorain, Ohio.

Musical Accompaniment: Marvin Marks

NOTE: This film appears on the National Film Preservation Foundation’s DVD *Treasures III: Social Issues in American Film, 1900-1934*. Music used with permission.

ADVERTISEMENT, *The Moving Picture World*, April 26, 1913:

From the 'greenhorn,' fresh from the 'old country,' you stay with him while he seeks and lands an American job, an American wife and American happiness; also is shown the ingenious American safety devices that protected him while he was in the making.



THE MUSIC

New and original music was composed and performed exclusively for the films in this collection by the following musicians:

- Nathan Avakian (www.avakiancreativeworks.com)
- Stephen Horne (www.stephenhorne.co.uk)
- Ben Model (www.silentfilmmusic.com)

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THE FILMS

This DVD collector's set was made possible with the cooperation of film archives around the world. All the videos in this set are new transfers presented at "silent speed" (18 frames per second) and were made from prints supplied by the archives. In several films, intertitles have been recreated and tinted to match the Thanhouser studio style of the era (e.g. *A Doll's House*). Sincere appreciation and thanks are extended to the following archives which supplied films used in this collection:

- Academy Film Archive, Los Angeles, California
- British Film Institute, London, England
- George Eastman Museum, Rochester, New York
- Getty Images, New York, New York
- Library of Congress, Washington, DC
- Lobster Films Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC
- UCLA Film and Television Archive, Los Angeles, California

SPECIAL THANKS

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- Serge Bromberg (Lobster Films) for access to *The Idol of the Hour*.
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- Bryony Dixon (British Film Institute) for making available Thanhouser films from the BFI collection.
- Eirik Frisvold Hanssen (National Library of Norway) for his insightful commentary on *The Pillars of Society* and *A Doll's House*.
- Chris Horak (UCLA Film and Television Archive) for the preservation and access to *The Star of the Side Show*.
- Hiroshi Komatsu (Waseda University) for access to *A Doll's House* and *The Girl of the Grove*.
- Jeff Lambert, National Film Preservation Foundation for use of *An American in the Making* music by Marvin Marks.
- Lee Shoulders (Getty Images) for access to *Guiders*.
- Rob Stone (Library of Congress) for all the magnificent HD transfers of numerous films in this collection.

The Thanhouser Collection Volumes 1 thru 12 –plus other Thanhouser films on DVD are available for purchase on the Thanhouser website on the internet at www.thanhouser.org.

Eirik Frisvold Hanssen (Commentary)

Head of Film and Broadcasting Section

Oslo, Norway

Eirik Frisvold Hanssen has written extensively on film history, colour and cinema, intermediality, and visual culture. Among his publications are *Early Discourses on Colour and Cinema: Origins, Functions, Meanings* (PhD diss., Stockholm University 2006), "Eisenstein in Colour" (*Journal of Art History* 2004), "Symptoms of Desire: Colour, Costume, and Commodities in Fashion Newsreels of the 1910s and 1920s" (*Film History* 2009), "'His Eyes Are Like the Rays of Dawn': Color Vision and Embodiment in *Leviathan*" (*Visual Anthropology Review* 2015), and "Die Herkunft der Farbe. Film und die Technik der Spur" (*Montage AV* 2015). He has co-edited *Adaptation Studies: New Challenges, New Directions* (with Jørgen Bruhn and Anne Gjelsvik, 2013) and *Small Country, Long Journeys: Norwegian Expedition Films* (with Maria Fosheim Lund, 2017).



Thanhouser Company

Film Preservation, Inc.



Trademark

Thanhouser Company Film Preservation, Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization based in Portland, Oregon involved in the research, acquisition, preservation and publication of educational materials related to the early silent motion picture era, with a specific focus on the Thanhouser film enterprise. From its founding in 1909 through 1917, Thanhouser Company, and its successor company, Mutual's Thanhouser Film Corporation, produced and released over 1,000 silent films to worldwide distribution.

To date, over 230 surviving Thanhouser films have been identified, located, and catalogued at archives and private collections around the world with new discoveries every year. Once relegated to the backwaters of academic study due to the lack of access to titles, this has changed dramatically in the past decade with the availability of over 100 Thanhouser titles on DVD and online for viewing at www.thanhouser.org. The company also publishes online the most extensive research effort on any American silent motion picture studio: *Thanhouser Films: An Encyclopedia and History* by Q. David Bowers.

Edwin W. ("Ned") Thanhouser is the grandson of silent film pioneers Gertrude and Edwin Thanhouser and is president of Thanhouser Company Film Preservation, Inc. He has been active in film preservation since 1986 and established in 1988 the Thanhouser Film Preservation Trust at the Library of Congress for the acquisition and preservation of nitrate based Thanhouser films. He is a member Association of Moving Images Archivist (AMIA), Domitor (The International Association for Early Cinema), the Society for Cinema and Media Studies (SCMS), Women Film Pioneers Project, and has served on the National Film Preservation Board. He has presented papers on the history of the Thanhouser film enterprise at academic conferences and makes guest lecture appearances at Thanhouser film screenings across the nation and internationally.