

The Thanhouser Collection

Treasures from the Library of Congress



Thanhouser Company Film
Preservation, Inc.



LIBRARY OF
CONGRESS

Produced in cooperation with the Library of Congress
National Audio-Visual Conservation Center
Culpeper, Virginia USA
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Located at the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Culpeper, Virginia, the Library's Packard Campus of the National Audio-Visual Conservation Center provides underground storage to more than 1.3 million film, television, and video items on 100 miles of shelving with extensive modern facilities for the acquisition, cataloging and preservation of all audio-visual formats. With a collection ranging from motion pictures made in the 1890s to today's TV programs, the library's holdings are an unparalleled record of American and international creativity in moving images.

The Library of Congress is home to over 70 surviving Thanhouser titles that were produced by the pioneering studio from 1910 to 1917 in New Rochelle, New York. This DVD contains 11 films recently preserved and transferred to HD video by the Motion Picture Division exclusively for this collection.

Two Thanhouser films, *The Evidence of the Film* (1913) and *The Cry of the Children* (1912), are listed on the National Film Registry (<https://goo.gl/gYDpZH>) for their cultural, historical and aesthetic significance and are available for viewing online at no charge or for purchase on DVD at www.thanouser.org.

All music composed and performed exclusively for this DVD anthology by Ben Model unless noted otherwise.

Not Guilty (TRT 14:10)

(One reel of approximately 1,000 feet, September 20, 1910)

Print Source: Professor Erkki Huhtamo (2005)

Character: Drama

Cast: Frank H Crane (Harry Martin, unfortunate young man), Violet Hemming (his sweetheart), Marie Eline (a newspaper boy)

This print of *Not Guilty* was discovered by Professor Huhtamo in the reel box of an Edison Kinetoscope he purchased in 2005 for his collection; he generously donated this film to the Library of Congress for preservation.

SYNOPSIS: *Not Guilty* was the fledgling Thanhouser Company's 42nd release and is about Harry Martin who is wrongfully convicted and imprisoned for a crime he did not commit. He escapes from prison, evades capture by the police, and reads in the newspaper that the real thief has confessed; he is exonerated.

The scenario was most likely written by chief scenarist Lloyd F. Lonergan, brother-in-law of co-founders Edwin and Gertrude Thanhouser, whose themes often included mistaken identity as a plot device.



Advertisement in the *Motion Picture World* September 24, 1910

Oh, What a Knight! (TRT 10:52)

(One reel of approximately 1,000 feet, October 22, 1910)

Print Source: EYE Filmmuseum, Amsterdam (2012)

Character: Comedy/Drama

This film was first brought to our attention in 2008 by Elif Rongen-Kaynakçi, silent film curator at the EYE Filmmuseum in The Netherlands. It was thought to be *The Ring of a Spanish Grandee*, but subsequent viewing of the print preserved by the Library of Congress and the translation of the Dutch intertitles to English by Dr. Kristin Hole resulted in this film being correctly identified as *Oh, What a Knight!*

SYNOPSIS: In another scenario likely written by Lonergan, a romantic girl dreams of having a genuine knight rescue her from a prison. She attempts to carry out the same marriage scheme when she awakes from her slumber, but her plans go awry and she discover knights of old are foreign to the modern age.

The Only Girl in Camp (TRT 6:15)

(Approximately 480 feet, split reel with *Everybody Saves Father*, January 10, 1911)

Print Source: Bob Wadsworth (2010)

Character: Comedy/Drama

This film was acquired by Thanouser Company Film Preservation in a 2009 eBay auction by Bob Wadsworth. This nitrate reel of film was donated to the Library of Congress and delivered personally by Bob in 2010 to the Culpeper site for preservation.



Advertisement in the *Motion Picture World* October 22, 1910

SYNOPSIS: This comedy film was one of two short subjects released on one 1,000-foot reel, what was known as a "split reel." It is a lively story set in a western town during what appears to be in the gold rush era. Thieves use trickery to part citizens of the town from their money, but the "Only Girl in Camp" figures out the ruse and saves the day with her father's bear traps.

A Circus Stowaway (TRT 10:50)

(One reel of approximately 1,000 feet, June 2, 1911)

Print Source: British Film Institute (2012)

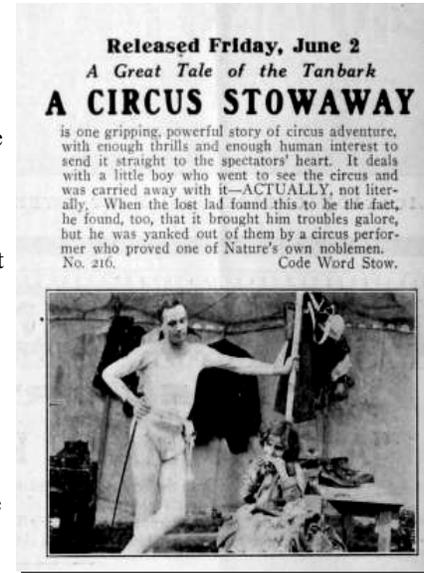
Character: Drama

Cast: Marie Eline (Bobby, an orphan boy stowaway), Frank Crane (Jack, the circus acrobat), Justus Barnes (ringmaster), William Garwood (ringmaster's accomplice)

The poem "Jogging Along the Highway" at the front of this film was not part of the original release and was most likely added by the distributor. Ben Model's accompaniment for this poem is based on a turn of the century cylinder recording and is played when the main DVD menu is on screen.

The opening scenes of this film document a Barnum & Bailey Circus Street parade in New York sometime in 1911. The little orphan Bobby (played by Marie Eline) is enthralled by the spectacle, sneaks into the circus grounds, and falls asleep. He is discovered and protected from expulsion by one of the performers (Frank Crane). The boy overhears a plot by the ringmaster and his accomplice to steal money that the acrobat is to inherit and exposes it for a happy ending.

This scenario, like *Not Guilty*, was probably written by Lonergan who often used inheritance as a plot mechanism in his films.



Advertisement in the *Moving Picture World* May 27, 1911

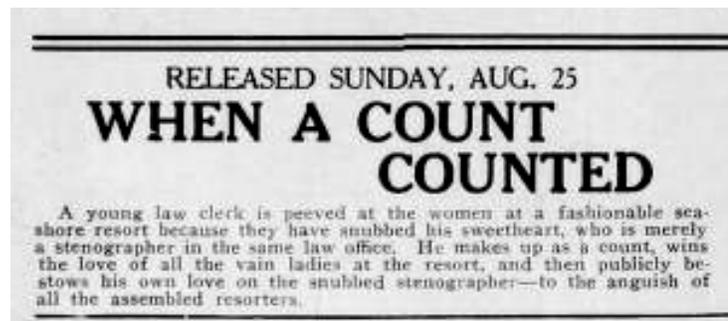
When a Count Counted (TRT 11:43)

(One reel of approximately 1,000 feet, August 25, 1912)

Print Source: Museum of the Great Plains Collection (1976)

Character: Comedy/Drama

Cast: Mignon Anderson (May, the stenographer on vacation), Harry Benham (Jack, the "count"), Justus Barnes (W.T. Wilson, attorney-at-law, Jack and May's employer)



Advertisement in the *Moving Picture World* August 24, 1912

SYNOPSIS: A pretty young stenographer in a New York law office with two weeks' vacation splurges on fancy clothes and arrives at a fashionable seaside resort. She is thought to be a society debutante, but a client from her office exposes her as a "working girl" and she is snubbed by her new "friends." She writes to her co-worker Jack of her plight and that she plans to cut her vacation short because she has been rejected. Jack wires: "Don't leave. Watch Results." He arrives at the hotel as "Count de Piedmont" reserving a suite of rooms, elegantly dressed, and with much luggage making a sensational impression on the resort guests. He shows public affection to May and is interviewed by a local reporter who publishes a "scoop" the next day that they are to be married, leaving the vain ladies at the resort astonished. Jack and May have a good laugh as they breakfast at a local café. Stars Mignon Anderson and Harry Benham were two of Thanhouser's most popular and important stars working for the studio from 1910 to 1916 and appeared in over 120 films. They were often paired opposite each other and can be seen together in surviving Thanhouser films on www.thanhouser.org: the two-reel Dicken's classic *Nicholas Nickleby* (1912), the one-reel drama *Just a Shabby Doll*, the two-reel classic *King René's Daughter* (1913), and the one-reel comedy *Madam Blanch, Beauty Doctor*.

This print, like many surviving films from the early era of motion pictures, suffers from some severe nitrate deterioration in the latter sections of the film. Thankfully, enough of the film survives providing us with a complete representation of the story.

The New Zealand Film Archive, The National Film Preservation Foundation, and the Library of Congress

Completed in 2013, the New Zealand Project was a multi-year collaboration of the New Zealand Film Archive / Ngā Kaitiaki O Ngā Taonga Whitiāhua, the American archival community, and the National Film Preservation Foundation, resulting in scores of “lost” American silent-era films being returned to the USA for new audiences to enjoy. Thanhouser productions of *Little Brother* (1913) and *The Tell-Tale Scar* (1914) were among these repatriated films in 2010; preservation work for these two films was accomplished by the Library of Congress.

Little Brother (TRT 6:47)

(One reel of approximately 1,000 feet, November 7, 1913)

Print Source: New Zealand Film Archive (2010)

Character: Comedy

Cast: William Russell (the lover, Jack), Florence LaBadie (his girl, May), Leland Benham (May’s “Little Brother”)

Scenario: Lloyd F. Lonergan

This was the sixth and final film of the Thanhouser “Cape May Series” shot on location in Cape May, New Jersey, one of the country's oldest vacation resort destinations. Although missing the comedic setup in the first 400 feet of this film, the key elements of the story line of this hilarious comedy remain intact.

SYNOPSIS: May and Jack are engaged but while crabbing, Jack fouls the net and inadvertently releases May’s award-winning catch. Furious, May breaks up with Jack, returns his engagement ring, and begins to entertain a new suitor. The surviving print begins here with May’s “Little Brother” telling Jack he can square things up for him with his sister for \$5...the amount he needs to buy a much-desired bicycle. “Little Brother” puts his crab catch to good use hiding them in Jack’s bed resulting in Jack running into the surf to rid himself of the pinching crustaceans. Thinking Jack is drowning himself out of his despondency due to their breakup, May forgives Jack and they are reunited...and Jack makes good on paying “Little Brother” the \$5 to buy the bicycle.

The Tell-Tale Scar (TRT 12:09)

(One reel of approximately 1,000 feet, August 9, 1914)

Print Source: New Zealand Film Archive (2010)

Character: Drama

Cast: Morris Foster (Pietro Laporì), Mayre Hall (Maria Deguida, his sweetheart), J.S. Murray (her father), Mrs. Doris Farrington (her mother), Mitchell Lewis, William Noel, Alfred Hollingsworth, Jack Sullivan, John Lehnberg, Dave Keleher

Scenario: Philip Lonergan (brother of Lloyd Lonergan)

SYNOPSIS: *Reel Life*, August 1, 1914: "Pietro Laporì, a young barber, loves Maria Deguida, the daughter of a prosperous merchant. He is in despair, however, as his sweetheart's father refuses his consent to their marriage until Pietro shall have five hundred dollars in cash. One day a detective shows him a circular offering a big reward for the capture of a noted crook. In the picture on the circular a scar disfigures the criminal's face. A few days later the barber shaves a man who bears the counterpart of the scar, until now concealed by the beard. He shadows his customer but is discovered. With great difficulty, he succeeds in overpowering the crook, and is rescued just in time by the police. Pietro receives the reward and marries the girl." Note: This print also shows signs of damage in the later half, most likely from water.

The Picture of Dorian Gray (TRT 22:26)

(Two reels of approximately 2,000 feet, July 20, 1915)

Print Source: State Historical Society of North Dakota (1985)

Character: Drama

Cast: Harris Gordon (Dorian Gray), Helen Fulton (Evelyn, his actress friend), Ernest Howard (Basil Hayward), W. Ray Johnston (Lord Henry Wotton), Morgan Jones, Claude Cooper, Arthur Bauer, N.S. Woods

Scenario: From Oscar Wilde's novel of the same name

Director: W. Eugene Moore

Optional Commentary: Judith Buchanan and James Williams, University of York



Advertisement from the *Moving Picture World* July 24, 1915

The Picture of Dorian Gray is a philosophical novel by Oscar Wilde first published complete in the July 1890 issue of *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine*. The magazine's editor feared the story was indecent, and without Wilde's knowledge, deleted roughly five hundred words before publication. Despite that censorship, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* offended the moral sensibilities of British book reviewers, some of whom said that Oscar Wilde merited prosecution for violating the laws guarding the public morality. In response, Wilde aggressively defended his novel and art in correspondence with the British press, although he personally made excisions of some of the most controversial material when revising and lengthening the story for book publication the following year.

SYNOPSIS: Dorian Gray is the subject of a full-length portrait in oil by Basil Hayward, an artist who is impressed and infatuated by Dorian's; he believes that Dorian's beauty is responsible for the new mode in his art as a painter. Through Basil, Dorian meets Lord Henry Wotton, and he soon is enthralled by the aristocrat's: that beauty and sensual fulfillment are the only things worth pursuing in life. Understanding that his beauty will fade, Dorian expresses the desire to sell his soul, to ensure that the picture, rather than he, will age and fade. The wish is granted, and Dorian pursues a of varied and amoral experiences, while staying young and beautiful; all the while his portrait ages and records his every sin.

REVIEW: *The Moving Picture World*, July 31, 1915: "The strong two-reel presentation of Oscar Wilde's famous story. The plot is unusual, and even though none of the familiar epigrams of the author find their way into the subtitles there is an artistic flavor to the production. Dorian's picture shows evidence in the passing years of his selfish, dissipated life, though his own countenance remains unchanged. Harris Gordon handles the leading role effectively, and Helen Fulton was pleasing as the ill-fated young actress who won Dorian's heart. The story is unusual and well worthwhile."

***When Hungry Hamlet Fleed* (TRT 12:27)**

(Two reels of approximately 1,150 feet, August 17, 1915)

Print Source: British Film Institute (2012)

Character: Comedy

Cast: Claude Cooper ("Hungry Hamlet"), Frances Keyes (his mother), Lorraine Huling (Margy, the leading lady), Harry Benham (Johnnie Jenkins), Winifred Lane (Ruby, the villainess), Eleanor Spaulding

When Hungry Hamlet Fleed was Edwin Thanhouser's attempt at a two-reel-comedy. The result of a wager for \$5,000 made by Edwin Thanhouser and Seton C. ('Cyclone') Pierce that he could not produce a two-reel film that would rival the one-reel comedies on the market at the time. Thanhouser won the bet and released this hilarious burlesque comedy under the Falstaff brand.

SYNOPSIS: *Reel Life*, August 14, 1915: "Hungry Hamlet, a romantic vagrant, comes to Cedarville and usurps the place of Johnnie Jenkins, leading man in the 'Booth and Barrett Dramatic Club' productions. Moreover, he seems in

a fair way to steal the affections of Margy, the leading lady, in real life Jenkins' sweetheart. Jenkins plots revenge. A thrilling love drama is announced, with Hamlet and Margy in the leads. On the opening night, all sorts of unforeseen accidents to actors and props turn the performance into a howling burlesque. Hamlet is egged off the boards, and Jenkins comes in for comforting the leading lady. Margy receives Johnnie back into her favor.”

Down on the Phony Farm (TRT 2:46)

(Approximately 355 feet, split reel with *The Scoop at Bellville*, October 12, 1915)

Print Source: Tommy José Stathes (2016)

Music: Robert Israel

Character: Cartoon comedy

Writer/Director: Paul Terry

This film is one of two animated cartoons distributed by Thanhouser (the other was *Little Herman* released on June 18, 1915). Produced by Paul Terry in New Rochelle, he went on to establish the Terrytoons studio in 1929. The studio created many popular cartoon characters including: Jeckle, Mouse, Goose, Sourpuss, Dinky Duck, and the White Stallion.

SYNOPSIS: On Al Falfa's not so real farm, he can grow such delicacies as a pitcher of beer and an alcoholic cocktail. He feeds the cocktail to his willing cow, Clara. But that drink makes her go a little wild, she starts to chase Al Falfa through his vast and geographically diverse property. But since his farm isn't really real, Al Falfa can use some interesting techniques to get away from Clara.

REVIEW: *The Moving Picture World*, October 16, 1915: "An excellent animated cartoon on the last reel of the above, showing what happened when a farmer took undue advantage of the thirst of his cow."

The Mistake of Mammy Lou (TRT 14:30)

(One reel of approximately 1,000 feet, November 7, 1915)

Print Source: Horton Collection (1971)

Character: Drama

Cast: Nellie Gilmore (Mammy Lou, a black "mammy"), Morgan Jones (father), Grace DeCarlton (daughter), Wayne Arey (lover)

SYNOPSIS, *Reel Life*, November 6, 1915: "In *The Mistake of Mammy Lou*, the 'old colored mammy' misconstrues her lovelorn mistress' actions and mistakenly fears the young woman is planning to commit suicide with a handgun. Mammy Lou finds and informs her mistress' estranged fiancé, who rushes ahead to the young woman's home. He arrives to find a 'tramp' robbing the fiancé. As the would-be robber holds them at bay with the young woman's handgun, Mammy Lou arrives and immediately exclaims through an intertitle that 'I Done Took Out the Cartridges So Young Missy Couldn't Hurt Herself.' The young man subdues the robber, and the police are called."

Thanhouser adopted the use of blackface for this film in an era when racial and ethnic minorities were often disparaged. Film scholar John Baker Brown, Jr. writes: "Mammy Lou saves the day for her white mistress – but only through her arguably childlike misunderstanding of adult white folks' business. Clearly – by today's standards – the mammy stereotype is in play here, although, again, in a milder version than in many films of that day."

Bibliography

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The Library of Congress: www.loc.gov.

Thanhouser Company Film Preservation, Inc.: www.thanhouser.org.

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THANHOUSER®



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