A History of Latter-Day Saint Screen Portrayals in the Anti-Mormon Film Era, 1905-1936

Richard Alan Nelson
Brigham Young University - Provo
A HISTORY OF LATTER-DAY SAINT SCREEN PORTRAYALS IN
THE ANTI-MORMON FILM ERA 1905-1936

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Ralph D. Barney, Committee Chairman

Glen S. Rich, Committee Member

R. Irwin Goodman, Committee Member

8-5-74

Date

Edwin O. Haroldsen, Department Chairman
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

In recent years cinema scholars have shown a more sustained interest in what generally forms the silent motion picture era. Yet despite the fact that during the years 1905-1936 many photoplays depicting Mormon characters and alleged historical accounts of Latter-day Saint life were manufactured and exhibited, to date no comprehensive source chronicling this unique and largely undiscovered film genre exists. This neglect is what this thesis proposes to remedy.

There are two major previous studies that show some relationship to the topic, but they have either been limited to LDS Church produced films or have been hampered by incompleteness.¹ In addition to consulting these, the author has also made reference to a wide variety of pertinent materials. These include moving picture trade journal accounts, news and periodical reports, and a number of previously unpublished letters. Personal interviews with still-living motion picture personalities and

qualified historians were conducted whenever possible. The important southern California film research libraries were searched. Correspondence with foreign cinema archives helped document European productions. Finally, resort to printed memoirs and standard reference works was undertaken when it was felt this would prove useful.

A history filled with claims of divine inspiration, religious and secular conflict leading to bloodshed and murder, a difficult and epic transcontinental migration, and the creation of a singular people and culture is inherently dramatic. It is not to be wondered at then that the Mormon experience was to be of interest to filmmakers looking for exciting screen material. Indeed, the Latter-day Saint celluloid image transcends the United States which spawned the religion. As shall be established later in this thesis, the Mormons were the subject of a variety of foreign as well as American productions during the silent movie years. Unfortunately for the Saints, most of these were to prove less than favorable in their treatment of the Utah colonists.

Because it is anticipated that many readers will be unfamiliar with Mormonism, it will be necessary at this point to present a brief introductory overview of LDS Church origins and history. Without this framework, it is unlikely that the non-Mormon would be able to place in context the subsequent development of the anti-Mormon movement and the part it and the Church would
play in the creation of the Latter-day Saint literary and film image.

Mormonism traces its beginnings to the year 1805 when Joseph Smith, Jr. was born of humble parentage in Sharon, Vermont. As a young boy he moved with his family to the state of New York. While a teenager Smith became interested in God and was perplexed about which of the many religious denominations to join. According to his later account, he took literally the admonition of the biblical writer James who stated: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."\(^2\)

This passage inspired Smith to retire to a surrounding grove of trees to pray for heavenly guidance. Smith then claims to have beheld there both God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ. In this vision the Messiah told Joseph not to join any of the churches. The future prophet was also given other commandments he was told not to put into writing. This experience profoundly moved Joseph.

Smith further testifies that several years later he felt need to pray in his room for forgiveness of his sins and a confirmation of his relationship with God. As a result an angelic personage manifested himself to Joseph. He announced his name as Moroni and informed Smith that God had a special work for him to do.

\(^2\)James 1:5.
This was followed by other visitations. As a result, Smith was directed to some metal plates hidden in a local hillock that later came to be called Hill Cumorah. These plates purport to chronicle the sacred history of ancient Israelite travelers who came to the Americas and founded great civilizations. According to these records, the emigrants were visited by Jesus Christ following his resurrection. However this failed to prevent a disastrous series of wars that destroyed one branch of the colonists, and left the other to continue in spiritual darkness. According to Mormon doctrine, this latter people form the basis for many of the Indians now extant in the New World.

Smith published what he claimed was his divinely aided translation of the plates in 1830 and called it *The Book of Mormon* after one of the major prophets in the history. That year he also founded what was to become The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. For convenience this is often shortened to "the LDS Church" or just "the Church" when referring to it. The nickname of "Mormons" was first applied by opponents of the Church, but later came to be accepted by the members as well. As for the original plates, it is claimed that they were taken off the earth by the Angel Moroni once their use was ended.

As "the Prophet, Seer, and Revelator" of the "restored" religion, Smith organized around himself a group of twelve apostles in which the "keys" of authority
would collectively reside in the event of his death.
Joseph claimed that his commission from God was not to
reform religion, but rather to reintroduce the "true Church"
lost since the post-apostolic period. These "revelations"
led to conflict with a variety of entrenched authorities.
In what the Latter-day Saints have always regarded as an
unwarranted series of persecutions, they were forced to
relocate variously in Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois.

Through hard work and increasing conversions, the
Mormons became politically powerful. About this time
elements of the Church formed a protection agency known
commonly as "The Danites" or "Avenging Angels." This
group later gave rise to a number of lurid tales that were
to carry over into literature and film.

The Mormon leadership also began secretly
practicing polygamy, although it was publicly denied.
Not until the main body of the Church removed to Utah was
the doctrine of "celestial marriage" openly proclaimed.
Nevertheless, word of it began to get around and this led
to further dissension. The resulting unrest finally
culminated in late June 1844 with the murder of Joseph
Smith and his brother Hyrum by an anti-Mormon mob.

After several years of crisis and confusion, the
majority of the faithful membership followed the lead of
Brigham Young, the President of the Council of Twelve
Apostles. Most of the dissidents rallied around Joseph's
young son and the Prophet's first wife Emma who formed
The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They repudiated polygamy and refused to accept Young's authority.

Eventually in 1847 the "Brighamites" left their winter quarters across the river from the now abandoned Mormon capital of Nauvoo, Illinois and made their dramatic trek to what would become Utah. It was hoped by the Church leadership that they could escape what they felt to be the tyranny of the United States by migrating to the unwanted Salt Lake Valley. The Mexican-American War changed the politics of the area however, and soon the Mormons came into conflict with the new American overlords. The open enthusiasm for polygamy by the prominent Church officials led to an unrelenting series of national press and governmental attacks that would continue until well into this century.

In 1890, bowing to Federal demands and the call of God, the Mormons abandoned plural marriage as a practice while retaining it as a Church doctrine. As this new prohibition was only loosely enforced until the First World War period, the topic continued to excite anti-Mormon controversy outside the Utah heartland.3

3For the LDS Church viewpoint see Joseph Smith, History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, ed. B. H. Roberts, 7 vols. (2d ed. rev.; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1959-1960); Joseph Fielding Smith, Essentials in Church History (24th enlarged ed.; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1971); and Brigham Henry Roberts, A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: The Deseret
Despite their isolation, the Mormons were creating a distinguished Church-wide theatrical and musical tradition. Concurrently developing was an international interest in the Saints and a "gentile" literature generally characterized by an anti-Mormon attitude. Most often one finds fantastic tales in which sensual and unscrupulous missionaries lure unsuspecting women to Utah for a life of polygamous servitude.

That much of this literature was created out of whole cloth and is erroneous is now recognized, although the Saints have contributed their share towards helping popularize their alleged bizaarrity. Scandals in Mormon history such as the Mountain Meadows Massacre have always provided good copy, especially for opponents of the Church who wrote and lectured extensively in the period under discussion. The doctrine of polygamy certainly helped to precipitate opposition to the Church and was eagerly used by its enemies to popularize their anti-Mormonism. Elements of the press and public were also mobilized to spread fear of the Mormons.


In the following chapters, which document the history of Mormon inspired motion pictures, we shall see what relation these anti-LDS literary and religious forces played in the portrayal of Mormons on the screen.
Chapter 2

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW INDUSTRY

In 1847 two seemingly unrelated events occurred. One was the forced exodus of the Mormon people under the leadership of Brigham Young from Illinois to the apparent wasteland of the Great Salt Lake basin. The other was the birth of Thomas Alva Edison (1847-1931).

The Utah Mormons were actively creating an isolated culture, having made one of the greatest religious migrations in history. Their epic story was to be of active interest to the popular press for well over seventy years.

Unfortunately for the Saints, the isolation which physically protected them also left them easy targets in the more populous East where their opponents were vigorous in their attacks. Concentrating on the necessities of survival, the effects of an indigenous press and literature in Utah were negligible to non-Mormon audiences. This weakness was to prove of great damage to the Mormon position in later years.

Thomas A. Edison's importance to the motion picture is difficult to overestimate. Perhaps America's most practical inventive genius, he and his assistant W. K. L. Dickson perfected the modern moving picture camera and
laid the technological foundation for the art of the moving picture. Interestingly, Edison failed to foresee the great potential of his and Dickson's machinery. His neglect in obtaining world copyrights for his inventions was to have a great influence in shaping the motion picture wars of the first decade and a half of the new century.¹

Nearly fifty years after the Mormon withdrawal to the West, the film era began. Most authorities recognize 1896 (the year of Utah's statehood) as the date in which the first commercial exhibition of a moving picture on a screen occurred. It would be only a matter of time before cameras were to be turned on this "strange" people and give new life to the so-called "Mormon Problem."

In many ways, of course, the Mormons were unique. In their claims of living prophets and direct revelation and new scriptures they were (and to some extent, continue to be) seen as a heretical--and dangerous--sect threatening traditional Christendom. The vocal practice of polygamy, an ambivalent loyalty to the Federal Government, and the willingness to defend themselves against physical attack all contributed to the mythic aura surrounding them.

¹For more on Edison and Dickson's work see Terry Ramsaye, A Million and One Nights--A History of the Motion Picture (New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1926), pp. 50-78, passim. A more recent dissenting view on Edison's as compared to Dickson's contribution to the development of the practical motion picture is argued cogently in Gordon Hendricks, The Edison Motion Picture Myth (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961).
Although polygamy was officially abandoned by the Church as a whole in 1890, this issue has continued to haunt the Saints and dominate the public mind.

Some background to the first two decades of motion picture development and progress is prerequisite. Without an elementary understanding of this first nascent period, the story of the introduction of the Mormon-- and anti-Mormon-- film remains divorced from its historical context.

The modern moving picture industry had its origins with a patent issued Thomas Edison in 1889 for his motion picture camera. Two years later he patented his Kinetoscope cabinet viewer, more commonly called the "peep show." To supply the purchasers of these Kinetoscopes, Edison then began producing short fifty foot length films selling them at prices ranging from ten to twenty-five dollars.

These early films did not at first involve themselves in the Mormon controversy. Generally they were less than a minute long and recorded people or places from one camera position with little or no editing. Most often they showed events such as a ship coming into a

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harbor, or a building burning down etc.

Within a few years a rival American firm—The Biograph Company—also became a producer of motion pictures. Biograph was able to do this because it patented a camera designed to circumvent Edison's patents. They also deliberately used a larger size film stock, and manufactured a different type cabinet viewer known as the Mutoscope. This device utilized flip cards rather than continuous celluloid.

The problem with these viewers was that only one person could see the films at any one time. This spurred interest in screen exhibition, and by late 1895 several workable mass projection machines were developed. April 23, 1896 marked the American debut of the Edison-Armat Vitascope projector at Koster and Bial's Music Hall in New York City. The "movies" had begun.

In 1897 Edison sold a projector to J. Stuart Blackton. Blackton and his friend Albert E. Smith ingenuously converted this into a workable camera. Two years later they founded their own motion picture firm—The Vitagraph Company—and began making pictures rivaling Edison and Biograph. By 1900 these companies were the three largest producers of moving pictures in the world, although foreign concerns were soon to dominate the international market until the outbreak of the First World War.
For the first ten years of the industry, motion pictures generally remained less than one hundred feet in length. Mostly, they were sold outright to traveling exhibitors and to more stationary music hall operators. These early showmen in turn screened these films over and over again until the celluloid finally wore out.

Realizing the lucrative market they had established could be lost, these three pioneer film giants attempted to dominate the fledgling American industry by refusing to sell cameras to potential competitors. As the demand for movie product increased, bootleg filmmakers began manufacturing their own cameras and films in violation of the Edison, Biograph, and Vitagraph patents. Other enterprising individuals imported cameras made in Europe where Edison had neglected to register his patents. Suits against these smaller producers, while generally successful, were so time consuming and expensive that they failed to deter further entry into the new field.

Although the work of French cinéaste Georges Méliès is sometimes cited, most authorities state that it was not until 1903 that the first recognizable narrative film appeared. This was the now classic The Great Train Robbery directed by Edwin O. Porter for Edison. Porter's earlier The Life of an American Fireman (1902) had pointed the way to this new departure in cinema, but The Great Train Robbery was the first to fully portray the potential of the film to tell a story. Moving the camera to a
variety of positions, introducing subjective narrative, mixing long shots with closeups—all these were new. The grammar of the motion picture began, conventions of continuity and editing were established, and a film recognizably modern now existed. It was to have a profound influence in the future development of world cinema.

Ironically The Great Train Robbery was so successful that the number of independent film companies proliferated. According to Michael Conant:

It is estimated that by 1907-1909, there were six large, well organized motion picture firms and approximately 100 smaller producers or importers of films from Europe. Films by this time were 800 to 1,000 feet long, with screen time up to fourteen minutes. Costs of production ranged from $200 to $500 for the completed negative, and production time was usually one day.3

With this increased length and cost it became more difficult for individual theaters to purchase movie product outright. By 1907 over 150 film exchanges were in existence in America. These purchased the pictures from the manufacturers and then in turn rented them to the theater owners. Many films, however, continued to be sold directly to showmen for exclusive "states rights" exhibition.

The earliest movies were most often screened in conjunction with a vaudeville stage production. Later, as public interest in moving pictures increased, store lofts and penny arcades set aside rooms for them to be shown.

3Conant, p. 17.
The industry continued to develop. The first crude theater built specifically for the exhibition of motion pictures was prophetically opened in Los Angeles in 1902. In 1905 the first nickelodeon (so named because of the cost to view the films) was started in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Decorated like an opera house, it was really a converted store with 96 seats placed inside for the convenience of patrons. Space was left in the rear for standing customers. Piano music was provided to accompany the pictures, and the idea proved immediately popular with both customers and exhibitors:

Continuous films lasted twenty minutes to one hour and were shown from 8:00 p.m. to midnight. Earnings averaged $1,000 for a seven-day show week, based on five to ten cents admission. Such enormous profits encouraged entry. Within a year, a hundred nickelodeons were operating in Pittsburgh alone, and by 1908 there were 8,000 to 10,000 in the United States. 4

In 1909 the major producers and distributors made a momentous decision. Concerned over protecting their semi-monopoly from further inroads by the upstart "independents," they decided to pool their claims and acknowledge Edison's patent primacy. Calling themselves The Motion Picture Patents Company, these leading industry figures—among them the seven largest American producers, two French companies, and America's leading importer-distributor—attempted to dominate the market completely. They entered into agreements with film exchanges to only

4Conant, p. 18.
distribute films manufactured by the Patents Company members. Only exhibitors with equipment licensed by the Patents Company were allowed to screen its films. Failure to adhere to these stipulations could mean that exchanges and individual theaters would no longer receive Patents Company films. And that meant essentially all films.

Almost overnight the industry was stabilized into producing one-reel features, lasting about 15 minutes. It was widely believed that most audiences would not be able to endure a single story of longer length. The average exhibitor—and there were over 10,000—presented a one or two hour show which required four to eight new reels a week. This was satisfactory to the Patents Company as it meant that each of its member concerns was guaranteed a demand for its product. Profits were enormous.

These high profits encouraged exchanges to secretly market pictures made by non-licensed production companies. The exchangemen found they realized more profit off these independently produced movies than off the tightly controlled Patents Company productions.

The Patents Company did not take these threats to its dominance lightly. In 1910 it organized its own distribution subsidiary—The General Film Company. By various methods it bought out 57 of the 58 principal exchanges, and forced the smaller ones out of business. One major holdout was William Fox, who will play an important part later in the history of Mormon related photoplays.
General Film by 1910 was the only national distributor. The independents, although badly divided, organized The Motion Picture Distributing and Sales Company (commonly referred to as the Sales Company) to meet the Edison combine's attempt to smother competition. Meanwhile the Trust moved quickly. Contracts with the Patents Company's licensees were rewritten to require all their releases be distributed through General Film.

During this time William Fox expanded from supplying the theater showmen with other manufacturer's product to creating his own. This later was to develop into the Fox Film Corporation. Others followed Fox's example, and this acted to strengthen the independent movement. Another factor was the independents willingness to innovate and pioneer the creation of the two-reel picture. These were approximately thirty minutes in length. As these proved popular with the public, General Film also began producing two-reelers although they actively opposed the introduction of even longer photo-plays. Despite this opposition, the "feature length" four and five-reel film was to later become the industry standard.

The new entertainment grew in popularity. It has been estimated that during 1908 the moving picture shows had a daily total attendance of four million people. This figure more than tripled by 1913, and reached upwards of twenty million patrons by 1919. This enormous impact
on American culture and thought was later to prove of serious concern to Mormon authorities.5

Throughout this period the Patents Company was engaged in constant litigation, actively prosecuting violations of its patent rights. The Federal government in 1912 then sprung a bombshell. It charged The Motion Picture Patents Company and The General Film Company with an illegal restraint of trade. Courts held that the companies' patents did not allow them to erect a monopoly in motion picture equipment manufacture or film distribution. Controlling patents, the Courts further said, did not exempt the companies and their directors from prosecution.

Although the cases and appeals were not fully decided until 1918, effective control of the industry passed out of the hands of the Patents Trust by 1915. The independents had won and the first era of the motion picture had ended. With this historical outline in mind, we can now turn to a discussion of Mormon related films commercially released in the United States and Europe.

5For documentation on patronage see the editorials "Moving Picture Shows," The Deseret Evening News (Salt Lake City), January 8, 1909, p. 4, cols. 1-2; "Growth of 'the Movies'," The Salt Lake Tribune, December 1, 1913, p. 6, cols. 1-2; and the article "Twenty Million Persons Go to Movies Daily," The Salt Lake Telegram, December 1, 1919. This latter news account was located in the Journal History, December 1, 1919, p. 4. The Journal History is a bound and indexed periodical clip file located in the Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah. Hereafter this library will be referred to as LDS Church Archives.
Chapter 3

THE MORMON AND ANTI-MORMON FILM 1905-1915

By 1908 the motion picture had progressed from its first crude beginnings to become an effective story-telling medium. Entertainment became a prime concern and as a result American and European producers began looking to literature and contemporary life for exciting subject matter. Wholesale lifting of plots and themes from famous novels, established stage plays, and popular magazines was common. It became an era of social preachment. As cinema historian Lewis Jacobs has observed about the pre-war American film:

Whatever their source--current events, plays, novels, or short stories--all film stories took on a quality characteristic of the temper of pre-war America: a high moral tone and strong didactic purpose. Politics had swung toward progressivism; "causes" had become fads; social sentiment was saturated with humanitarianism; the muckraker had been superseded by the reformer and uplifter.

Strict late nineteenth-century attitudes were the values and homilies preached and defended in films. Though more than a decade had passed since the movie, with all its possibilities of realistic portrayal, had first amazed Americans, those attitudes still persisted on the screen.¹

What Jacobs writes about the American motion picture is also applicable to the European as well. Preachments and controversy were not effectively stanched by threats of

¹L. Jacobs, p. 137.
censorship. Religion was openly attacked and defended by moviemakers, and most of the important denominations and groups from Roman Catholic to Jewish had some form of "anti" photoplay made about them.\(^2\)

Mormonism was a particularly fertile theme for film propagandists, and at times it must have seemed to the Saints that they were singularly under cinematic assault. While this was not strictly factual, it is true that the majority of the motion pictures portraying Mormons did so negatively. The virulence of the film attacks is strongly interwoven with the fear polygamy had struck into the traditional social fabric of Western society.

\(^2\)Roman Catholics were kept busy in 1911 protesting such films as *The Nun, The Secret of the Confessional,* and *The Price of Ambition.* This latter production, for example, showed a Catholic priest hugging and kissing another man's wife. Jews were caricatured in such movies as *The Yiddisher Cowboy* (1909, 1911). Even organized charitable groups were abused in films like *Scientific Charities* (1911). Early puritans were portrayed in *The Quakeress* (1913). Other religious groups were expanding into motion pictures for their own purposes. The Watch Tower Tract Society (forerunner of today's Jehovah's Witnesses) produced the multi-media *Photo-Drama of Creation* for release in 1914. Unfortunately, one must really go to the original trade accounts to dig out the documentary material on this aspect of cinema history, for researchers have long left this area unanalyzed. For a general overview of the relationship of religion to the motion picture see Ivan Butler, *Religion in the Cinema* (New York: A. S. Barnes and Company, 1969). Although this gives very inadequate coverage to the early period of the controversial photoplay, it does indicate the tendency of the film to distort and exploit religion for its own purposes.
At least nineteen pictures of varying importance and emphasis touching on Mormonism were in production during the years 1905-1915. Most of these were completed and received some sort of public screening. The more popular of the films were exhibited in a variety of nations worldwide.

Following is a chronological listing of known photoplays from the period. In some cases the exact title is not determined. While this compilation is complete to date, it is not unlikely that further research will turn up other films grounded in a Mormon theme. The titles generally suggest the plot line.

Although several pictures were friendly to the Church, most tended to concentrate on the highly sensational aspects of Mormon history. This historicity was often filtered through an eye far removed from actual conditions in Utah. These anti-Mormon productions generally displayed a lack of sensitivity towards the LDS people, and in many cases offered viewers little more than a series of visual defamations:

1. *A Trip to Salt Lake City* (1905).


3. *Mormonbyens Blomst* (*The Flower of the Mormon City*) (1911--Denmark).

4. *The Mormon* (also known as *The Mormons*) (1912).


7. **Marriage or Death** (1912).
8. **The Danites** (1912).
9. **A Mormon Episode** (believed to be the same as *An Episode of Early Mormon Days*) (1912).
10. **Salt Lake City, Utah, and Its Surroundings** (1912).
11. A short pictorial of Salt Lake City and surrounding localities of unknown title (1912-1913).
12. **The Romance of the Utah Pioneers** (1913).
13. **One Hundred Years of Mormonism** (also referred to as *The Rise and Growth of Mormonism*) (1913).
15. **A Study in Scarlet** (1914--British version).
18. **A Study in Skarlit** (1915--British spoof).

The following pages will document, so far as is possible, the purposes and effectiveness of these photoplays. Certainly the topic is an interesting one, and much may be inferred about international attitudes in regards the Saints from an analysis of their content and productional/exhibitional motivations.
A Trip to Salt Lake City reflects the first burgeoning interest in the Saints by filmmakers. Although made in 1905 by The American Mutoscope and Biograph Company, copies still exist today and are distributed for sale to collectors in this country by Blackhawk Films Inc. As might well be expected, the subject is polygamy.

Kemp R. Niver, who has done extensive research in silent era film at the archives of The Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., gives a detailed description of this early comedy:

The film begins with a full photograph of a set of the interior of a Pullman sleeping car. The first action is a woman carrying a small child down the aisle toward the camera. She puts her child in an upper berth. A second woman, also carrying a small child, enters and proceeds down the aisle toward the camera and puts her child in the berth across the aisle. Following in close succession are several more women of various sizes and shapes, each carrying a child whom they deposit in a berth. The last person to arrive in the sleeping car is a man with a small child. The father promptly does the bidding of the child by giving him a horseback ride. At that moment, all the other children in the sleeping car wish to get a drink of water and everyone crawls all over him. In a fit of anger and annoyance, the man leaves the sleeping car, pulls the drinking container from its mounting, drags it into the sleeping car and puts it on the floor. He then climbs into his berth.3

3Kemp R. Niver, Motion Pictures From The Library of Congress Paper Print Collection 1894-1912, ed. Bebe Bergsten (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), pp. 100-101. See also Blackhawk Bulletin (Davenport, Iowa), 149 (September-Early October 1964), p. 4. Today the film is coupled with another early picture called On a Good Old Five-Cent Trolley Ride for commercial sales. Unfortunately not all motion pictures shown in this country were registered with The Copyright Office nor placed in the collections of The Library of Congress.
As a motion picture *A Trip to Salt Lake City* is relatively innocuous. The film's influence could not have been particularly great, and at its length (only 79 feet in 16mm) it likely had little effect on determining popular attitudes towards Mormonism. This first Mormon based picture can rather be viewed as a reflection of those attitudes, and it is interesting to note that a full fifteen years after the issuance of the Church Manifesto prohibiting polygamy the popular conception of Mormonism was still dominated by the plural marriage doctrine.

However, *A Trip to Salt Lake City* inspired no immediate imitators and the greater use of the Mormon theme had to wait for the photoplay to progress. Unfortunately for the Utah Saints, most of these later films were to be much more damning in their picture of LDS life.

Foreign film companies were the first to realize the potential of strongly anti-Mormon fare. Denmark—although a small country—was nevertheless a leading motion picture center in the first two decades of silent production. Nordisk Films, founded in 1906 by Ole Olsen, was by 1911 one of the most prestigious production studios in world cinema. Their *Mormonens Offer* (*A Victim of the Mormons*) after premiering in Copenhagen on October 2, 1911

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was to become the center of a controversy that would cover half the globe.

Olsen, when he approved the scenario, likely was unconcerned over possible LDS protests. For although he was severe in his demand for top quality film product (he won his first international gold medal in 1908), he catered to the popular taste. And that taste was most definitely concerned about "The Mormon Problem." European writers and governments, like their American counterparts, showed a special concern over the problems of polygamy and expressed fears that women converts were being taken to Utah under false pretenses by Mormon missionaries.

Sensing a good public issue, Olsen ordered production of A Victim of the Mormons. He had always had a good eye for story and promotion. As the official Danish Film Foundation booklet The Cinema in Denmark puts it:

Ole Olsen's taste for the melodramatic film coincided with that of cinema audiences all over Russia, Europe and the USA. With one or two exceptions, it would be hard to speak of the silent movies produced by Nordisk Films Kompagni as "art". The aim was to rouse people's emotions by any means that happened to be available. The titles of these films tell their own story: "White Slave Trade", "Death Leap on Horseback from the Big Top", "Daughter of the Railroad", etc. And judging by their tremendous popularity, the aim must have been achieved."7

5Neergaard, p. 12.

6For a study of actual emigration from Denmark to Utah see Jørgen W. Schmidt, Oh, du Zion i Vest: Den danske Mormon-emigration 1850-1900 (København: Rosenkilde og Bagger, 1965). From 1910-1915 the Swedish government investigated and appropriated money to combat Mormonism.
A Victim of the Mormons proved to be no exception to the pattern. The story itself is typical of most of the later anti-Mormon film dramas. George Grange (played by Henry Seemann) and the "Reverend" Larson (Vlademar Psilander) are former school chums. This leads to an introduction of Larson to George's sister Florence (Clara Wieth) and her fiance Leslie (Carlo Wieth) at a fashionable restaurant in Copenhagen. Larson is tall and quite good looking, although there is something vaguely fanatical about the look of his eyes. The fact that he is now a Mormon missionary doesn't seem to bother the family, and Florence finds herself immediately drawn to him.

Larson on his part is intoxicated by her beauty and determines to win her for himself. Gradually he gains in influence over her, and soon she is attending Mormon meetings with him. Using his near hypnotic powers Larson finally convinces her to emigrate to Utah with him.

The parents discover their departure and are desperate. George and Leslie resolve to stop their flight. They telegraph the police, but Larson cleverly avoids the authorities with the help of a couple of Mormon aides. He and Florence board an American bound steamship and set off for the States.

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7The Cinema in Demark (Copenhagen: The Danish Film Foundation, 1970), pp. 3-4. Punctuation follows the original.
Florence by now has second thoughts, and she is no longer willing to accompany the missionary. He has to resort to narcotics to keep her under his control. Florence's brother and suitor meanwhile have set out after the pair. Vowing to rescue her at any cost, they radio the ship to request that American police hold the couple in New York. Larson cunningly intercepts the message and overpowers the telegraph operator. The Mormon is thus able to make good their (on her part unwilling) escape to Utah.

George and Leslie arrive in New York not long after and immediately set out for the Mormon state in pursuit. Once in Salt Lake City they begin the search for Larson and Florence. To keep her from escaping, the evil Elder keeps her locked in his house. Larson's American wife takes pity on the girl and tries to help her escape. He learns of the plot and quickly puts a stop to it.

Larson then retires to the "temple" where he is shown performing a "baptism." George and Leslie discover him as he leaves the sanctuary. Noticing them, the Elder maneuvers the would-be rescuers around the city while he locks Florence in his basement cellar without food or water.

Enraged, George and the neglected fiancé force their way at gunpoint into the Mormon's home. They demand to know where Florence is hidden, but Larson feigns complete ignorance about the girl's whereabouts. Suddenly he disappears through a trap door! Florence had discovered a secret button controlling the roof to her cell. Above
she sees the faces of both her brother and her true love. They finally make their way down to free her and she throws herself into the arms of Leslie. Larson makes one last desperate attempt to restore his mastery, but in picking up a loose gun his aim is deflected and he kills himself. Thus ends *A Victim of the Mormons.*

The film billed itself as "A Drama about Love and Sectarian Fanaticism," and claimed its purpose was to expose "Mormon Propaganda." Most of the picture's Danish language program was given over to a generally accurate, though slanted, history of Mormonism. Only the last few pages dealt with the photoplay itself. The attitude of the filmmakers is clearly revealed to be rabidly anti-Mormon:

Even today this sinister sect shows an eager agitation and every year there are many poor people led astray--particularly from the Northern Kingdoms and Germany--who let themselves be lured by the wheedling Mormon preachers to go over to the sect's teachings and emigrate to the New Zion, which is the holy name of Salt Lake City.

He who sees this film and reads this text booklet is warned against the deception of Mormonism. May this warning bear fruit!

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8 See "Mormon Governor Threatens to Bar Films in Utah," *The Morning Telegraph* (New York City), January 28, 1912, Section 4, Part 2, pp. 1, 6; and *Mormonens Offer* (Aarhus: A/S Fotorama, (1911)). This latter publication is a sixteen page program prepared for the film. Copies are located in the Danish Film Museum and the LDS Church Archives. Viewing prints of the picture itself are also available through both libraries. Translation of the booklet was provided by Richard Jensen of the LDS Church Archives. Utilized here are English language titlings.
The movie was no fly-by-night production. Vlademar Psilander, who played the sinister Mormon priest, was the most popular male star of pre-1918 Danish film. Clara Wieth (Pontoppidan) was a respected ingénue. August Blom (1869-1947) is one of the best remembered directors from the Danish silent period. Most of the company was connected with the prestigious Royal Danish Theater in Copenhagen. One of the first extended length motion pictures ever released, it was Nordisk's longest photoplay of the year and ran a full three reels (3200 feet/1080 meters).

A Victim of the Mormons premiered in Great Britain not long after its opening in Denmark. There the Saints were just recovering from a series of press attacks that had led Home Secretary Winston Churchill to quietly investigate charges of kidnapping and the like.

With this in mind, it is not difficult to understand the British Mormons concern and protest over its exhibition in the United Kingdom. Apparently it appeared at the same time as a sensational play called "Through Death Valley, or The Mormon Peril." European Mission President (and Church Apostle) Rudger Clawson was quick to object to its screening.

9Mormonens Offer program booklet, p. 1.

10Mormonens Offer program booklet, pp. 12, 15. The utilization of the term "anti-Mormon" in this thesis does not necessarily imply that the films discussed herein were made by anti-LDS activists except where noted. A motion picture is categorized as anti-Mormon if one of its predominant themes is the negative portrayal of LDS Church activities.
Calling the film "vile and altogether deceptive," "mercenary," and a "disgrace" directed against "an innocent people," Clawson clearly articulated the official British Mormon position towards the production.\(^{11}\) Passions were certainly aroused and as the following account taken from the *Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury* shows, the picture was not shown in Britain without incident:

In view of the crusade going on throughout the country against Mormonism, the extraordinary cinematography film entitled, "A Victim of the Mormons," which is being shown at the Garston Picturedrome this week, is particularly interesting, and there was a crowded audience at that popular house last night.

The picture had just begun after the interval when something of a sensation occurred in the body of the hall. A man rose and exclaimed, "I protest against this picture being shown in this hall to-night." Immediately there was an uproar, the lights were promptly turned up, and the interrupter was speedily ejected through a door at the rear of the hall.

When this scene occurred it was thought that it was a hoax, but the manager, Mr. George Atkin, states that he received a letter from the Mormon Brotherhood in Liverpool last Saturday threatening a protest would be made at Garston if the picture was shown. He, however, did not regard the matter seriously, and destroyed the letter. However the threat was last night carried out. When the excitement had cooled down the picture was proceeded with without further interruption.\(^{12}\)

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\(^{11}\)Rudger Clawson, "The Anti-'Mormon' Moving Pictures and Play," *The Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star* (Liverpool), LXXIII, 51 (December 21, 1911), p. 808. A copy of Clawson's article is included in this thesis as Appendix A. This publication is hereafter referred to as the *Millennial Star*.

Clawson utterly rejected the assertion that the "Mormon Brotherhood" was involved in the demonstration. He felt the promoters themselves staged the whole incident as "a clumsy dodge" because the advertising and the show itself were "insufficient, apparently, to keep up the interest to fever heat." The Mission President then took the filmmakers to task for what he felt was a defamation of the Church. He publicly declared:

These and all similar productions are based on fiction of the rankest kind, and constitute a base and cruel libel on the character and lives of the Latter-day Saints. They are utterly devoid of truth and are unworthy the notice of intelligent people. The writers of these clumsy canards were careful in each instance, to use fictitious names for the characters represented in the moving picture, and this, I take it, was obviously done for two reasons. First, there is no foundation in truth for the stories, and secondly, the use of fictitious names is a protection to the managers against libel suits. It is fiction, and not facts, that is being dished up to the poor suffering public, many of whom apparently are easily hoodwinked.

The Church, according to Clawson's account, was having difficulty getting what it considered a fair hearing in the newspapers. In order to circumvent the news "blackout", he ordered the printing of the complete article in pamphlet form and made them available for public distribution at one shilling and three pence per thousand. Missionaries and other members of the Church then stationed themselves in front of theaters showing A Victim of the Mormons and passed them out to interested patrons.

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Clawson was not the only Mormon in Britain concerned enough to write against the picture. Edwin D. Hatch represented those critical of the photoplay from an "artistic" point of view. Somewhat sarcastically he noted "the absurdity" he felt was inherent in the production:

Perhaps the most absurd feature of the entire affair was the arrival of two English youths in Utah, who are shown as following the supposed "Mormon" villain from a structure representing the great "Mormon" temple—which no one who has seen the original or a real photograph of the temple would have recognized, but which with its pillared porch and broad stone steps extending across the entire front, resembled the entrance to a modern Wesleyan chapel or the front of the church of the Madeline in Paris—to his home, where, after being several times foiled by the "Mormon," they eventually succeed in the rescue of the fair maid "stolen" from her home and parents in England. It is a most curious thing also that, while in England the "Mormon" seemed to be endowed with almost superhuman cunning and his friends were numerous and assisted him at almost every turn, yet on his return to Utah, where one would naturally suppose his influence and the number of his friends to be vastly greater, his cunning craftiness fell from him as a mantle, and those of his household were his worst enemies and every man's hand was seemingly raised against him.16


16 Edwin D. Hatch, "Moving Picture Misrepresentations," Millenial Star, LXXIII, 45 (November 9, 1911), p. 710. A copy of Hatch's article is included in this thesis as Appendix B. Hatch, it must be noted, apparently was unaware the film was of Danish, and not British, manufacture. However he is not to be blamed, for the titles were naturally in English, and the architecture of the two nations is quite similar.
Within a few years English filmmakers would emulate their Danish counterparts and eagerly utilize the anti-Mormon film theme. And as we shall see in a subsequent chapter, national concern over "The Mormon Question" would again flare up in the United Kingdom during the early 1920's.

The British Saints weren't the only ones angered over *A Victim of the Mormons*. Utah Governor William Spry, himself a member of the Church, vigorously attempted to suppress its showing in the United States.

American interest was first publicly drawn to the photoplay when the trade journal *The Moving Picture World* carried a full-page still photograph from the film in a special four page photo-insert in its December 30, 1911 issue. This purported to show a baptismal ceremony in the Salt Lake Temple, and as can be imagined proved to be offensive to active Mormons who considered it a perversion of a God ordained ordinance.

Mormon ire was now aroused. As other films portraying the Saints unfavorably were also beginning to be exhibited, Spry apparently felt that a stand had to be made. Without setting a precedent, future productions of a similar nature would be unavoidable.

Although many of the pictures of the period now seem preposterous, at the time they represented the common image of Mormonism and Utah found in popular thought. To Church members it seemed incredible that The National Board of Censorship would sanction the exhibition of photoplays
attacking their faith. This is however what happened.

Learning of the approval, the Utah Governor in January 1912 addressed a lengthy protest telegram to the Board requesting they suppress *A Victim of the Mormons* and a similar film entitled *The Mormons*. Spry's petition read in part:

On behalf of the people of Utah, I earnestly urge that these motion pictures be suppressed. I respectfully submit that their exploitation will tend to revive and kindle prejudice against this state. For years the commercial interests of Utah have been hampered, the industrial development of the state has been retarded, and the standing of its citizens assailed by malicious misrepresentations regarding the religious beliefs and moral ethics of the people of Utah.

...I respectfully submit...there is so much of real uplifting romance in the building of the state, and there is so much in its educational institutions that raises the standard of civilization that resort need not be had to the imagination, especially when the imagination evolves false stories, such as those in question, whose rehearsal slanders a state and a people, fills the minds of children of the nation with an erroneous idea of Utah and its people that is nothing short of preposterous, creates prejudice and makes Americans the target for contempt.

Will you not suppress the pictures and permit us to suggest themes for picture dramas regarding Utah that will be truthful and elevating? 17

The Governor wrote the Board indirectly through the offices of the Rex Manufacturing Company in New York. Rex

was founded by William H. Swanson and Edwin S. Porter, the director best known for his epochal *The Great Train Robbery*. Swanson was a noted independent and opponent of the Patents Trust.

The National Board of Censorship on the other hand was a 1909 creation of the New York People's Institute and The Motion Picture Patents Company. Ramsaye reports in his standard work *A Million and One Nights* that the relationship to the Patents Company limited its effectiveness as "the 'independents' did not know how to approach the board."18 The Board itself had no legal standing, but was immensely powerful because of its connection to the Trust.

It was thus unusual that Spry chose to contact the censors through Swanson. Swanson however in 1912 maintained the only independent exchange in Salt Lake City in competition with the General Film Company,19 and is credited as among "Utah showmen" by at least one author.20 This would explain why the Governor wrote the Board through him, for Swanson would at least have a first hand knowledge of the area and could be expected to understand the concern Mormons and Utahns would have over the unfavorable pictures.

18Ramsaye, p. 481. Punctuation follows the original. See also Herbert A. Jump, "Religious Possibilities of the Motion Picture," *The Motion Picture Story Magazine* (Brooklyn, New York), II, 7 (August 1911), pp. 94-95.

For whatever reasons, Swanson did pass on the telegram to the Board and wired Governor Spry in reply on the 11th of January. He suggested that the state of Utah buy the objectionable reels at 15¢ per foot. In the case of A Victim of the Mormons this would have involved the fifteen prints imported and meant Utah would end up buying approximately 45,000 feet of film!  

Spry unilaterally rejected the suggestion. Parts of his telegram of January 13 to Swanson are most illuminating:

Please note that my telegram of January 9 was not a protest filed on behalf of the "Mormon" Church, but a protest on behalf of the state of Utah. While as a member of the "Mormon" Church I am glad to appeal to the manufacturers of the objectionable films to suppress them, I voiced in that telegram a protest that represents the objections of the people of a sovereign state knowing that the exploitation of the pictures in question will do irreparable injury to Utah by poisoning and prejudicing the minds of the younger generation especially against the state. I wish you to convey my reiteration of that protest, and now wish it to be most emphatically conveyed, that I will never consent to Utah or any institution or person of Utah paying money to suppress these slanderous films, a precedent that would be most dangerous. Once the state began buying these objectionable pictures there would be no end to the calls for money to suppress them. Individually, I want the people who are responsible for these films to understand that if they are not suppressed I will exert every effort and use every influence at my command to secure such legislation as shall at least prohibit the exploitation of motion pictures in the state of Utah.  

It is doubtful that Spry could have exerted such control over the exhibition of motion pictures in Utah. He never carried out his threat, but he apparently felt it wouldn't hurt to flex his gubernatorial muscles.

On February 3, 1912 the Governor received some recent issues of the New York City Morning Telegraph, a theatrical paper, which carried word of the Board's action. Although it had originally sanctioned the films, the Board now ordered each of the offending companies to change the titles and remove all references to Mormonism. Spry appears to have leaked the story of the supposed suppression and his role in the attempt to the Salt Lake dailies.

The local newspapers were quick to hail this apparent victory for the Church (and state of Utah). In an editorial appearing in the Mormon owned Deseret Evening News, the Church's position was made clear:

21 "Will Aid Effort to Suppress Films," The Salt Lake Tribune, February 11, 1912, p. 16, col. 5.

22 The Salt Lake Tribune, February 4, 1912, p. 28.

23 The Salt Lake Tribune, February 4, 1912, p. 28. See also The Morning Telegraph, January 28, 1912, Section 4, Part 2, pp. 1, 6; "Mormon" Film Has 'em Wobbly," The Morning Telegraph, January 30, 1912, p. 2, col. 3; "Mormon" Film to be Censored by National Board," The Morning Telegraph, January 31, 1912, pp. 1, 2, cols. 4+; and "Film 'Censors' Right on the Job," The Morning Telegraph, February 1, 1912, p. 12, col. 7. Copies of the pertinent issues of the New York trade paper are apparently available in the United States only from The Library of Congress holdings in Washington, D. C.
Governor Spry has done the State splendid service in securing the repression of certain moving picture films which must be regarded as a libel on Utah, and the business men who have so ably seconded his efforts on behalf of the good name of the State are to be congratulated on the success achieved. The stories told in the films referred to are untrue, and the exhibition cannot but have a demoralizing tendency.

Moving picture shows, as an innocent amusement or as a means of instruction are all right, but when the pictures are fakes though exhibited as authentic, the moving picture show is no better than any other attempt to obtain money under false pretenses. And if, in addition, the pictures teach crime, they should certainly be repressed everywhere.24

Not everyone connected with the film controversy was in agreement with the Deseret News' analysis, however. The New York Morning Telegraph was particularly bitter over the National Board of Censorship's action. Attacking Spry for his threat to use his influence to ban motion pictures in Utah, the paper asked: "Have the alternating religio-political tentacles of the Mormon Church of Utah drawn into their embrace the 'National Board of Censorship'?"25 Governor Spry's suggestion that Utah suggest some suitable themes about the state also drew their criticism: "By the beard of the Prophet Brigham that is going some! Reduced to an immigration advertising proposition Elder Spry's suggestion is audacious enough to make every tithe-gathering elder of the temple chortle with joy."26


The Morning Telegraph was especially upset over the pressure placed on the Board by "the most powerful influences within the councils of the church to rescind its sanction" of the melodramas. The paper sarcastically commented: "And the 'National Board of Censorship' hastened to obey the demand of the prophet." Also mentioned in account was the possible intervention in the controversy by United States Senator Reed Smoot, himself a Utahn and Latter-day Saint. Apparently this did not come about, although Smoot would later play an important role in the suppression of other anti-Mormon productions. No evidence has been found to indicate that the President of the Church personally approached the censors. It is not unreasonable to assume, however, that Joseph F. Smith was in agreement with the Governor's actions. Certainly the stories appearing in the Salt lake dailies give this impression.

In February William Swanson came to Utah on business, and while in the state conferred with Governor Spry and the First Presidency of the Church. The discussion centered


28 The Morning Telegraph, January 28, 1912, Section 4, Part 2, p. 1. See also The Salt Lake Tribune, February 4, 1912, p. 28.
on the unsympathetic films discussed above, as well as another entry entitled *The Mountain Meadows Massacre*.

Swanson, who had earlier expressed a desire to make his own film about Mormonism, admitted that suppression had not been as universal as had at first been thought. He told his ecclesiastical audience that the Sales Company, which handled the distribution of American made independent film productions, had nothing to do with either *A Victim of the Mormons* or *The Mountain Meadows Massacre*. Rather, he said they were distributed in this country by their foreign manufacturers. As late as mid-February, The National Board of Censorship had failed to publicly condemn the films, although in the case of *A Victim of the Mormons* it had withdrawn its approval.

Swanson did indicate more success with American made pictures which to some extent were suppressed.

Be this as it may, both *A Victim of the Mormons* and *The Mormons* suffered no serious title revisions or cuts. This is evidenced by the fact that they continued

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29 The First Presidency is made up of the Prophet/President of the Church and his two counselors. These are taken from the Council of Twelve Apostles. It may be said without exaggeration that the First Presidency is the executive-legislative arm of the Mormon Church, and while the Prophet lives forms the center of power in the religion.

to be advertised in the trade journals long after their supposed curtailment.\textsuperscript{32}

This also means that LDS versions of this controversy will have to be re-written. For example, Leonard J. Arrington, the Church Historian, in his work with William L. Roper on the life of Governor Spry, writes:

William Spry: Man of Firmness, Governor of Utah, writes:

Despite the cries of "censorship" by certain film writers and publications, Spry's protest had the desired effect. One photoplay was suppressed, the other's title was changed, and certain references to the Mormons were eliminated.\textsuperscript{33}

While \textit{The Mormons} apparently was more limited in its distribution as a result of Spry's actions, the Governor had little to boast about. The flood of later productions was not to be stopped, and \textit{A Victim of the Mormons} would even benefit from the threats. Arrington and Roper based this part of their history on Governor Apry's memorabilia and the first optimistic newspaper accounts as they appeared in Salt Lake. Without access to the trade journals, they had no way of knowing such stories were partially erroneous.

\textsuperscript{31}See "Helped Suppress Libelous Film," \textit{The Deseret Evening News}, February 10, 1912, p. 2, col. 4; and \textit{The Salt Lake Tribune}, February 11, 1912, p. 16.

\textsuperscript{32}See the advertisements appearing for \textit{A Victim of The Mormons} in \textit{The Moving Picture News}, V, 8 (February 24, 1912), 28 ("THE TALK OF THE TRADE...ONLY A FEW STATES LEFT...Now Playing to Crowded Houses"); \textit{The Moving Picture News}, V, 9 (March 2, 1912), 21 ("...A RECORD BREAKER"); \textit{The Moving Picture World}, XI, 9 (March 2, 1912), 791 ("A gripping story with strong human interest, depicting the practice of the Mormons"); and \textit{The Moving Picture World}, XI, 11 (March 16, 1912), 993 ("...one grand production").
The National Board of Censorship's power—especially with the independent filmmakers—was based upon voluntary compliance. When the Board withdrew its sanction of *A Victim of the Mormons*, for example, Nordisk's American subsidiary simply ignored their edict. In the midst of the crisis Ingvald C. Oes, the head of Nordisk's New York office, spoke for The Great Northern Special Feature Film Company when he told reporters:

We have worked hand in glove with the Board of Censorship for a long time and we like to have their approval of our films. But in this case the company will be justified in disregarding anything that the board (sic) may do. They gave us an approval without qualification and we made our contracts under that approval. Then this Mormon racket came up and they withdrew the approval. Personally I don't believe that the board (sic) will finally refuse their sanction, because there is no good reason why they should. But if they do we'll go right ahead.\(^3^4\)

Oes was true to his word. The Board—after all, essentially an arm of the Patents Trust—had no recourse to Great Northern's refusal to withdraw the picture. The film went into national exhibition.

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\(^3^3\) Roper and Arrington, p. 95. Also see L. Lambert, "Image of Mormons in Films," pp. 14-15. Apparently they are referring to *Morning Telegraph* articles cited earlier.

Essentially The Great Northern Special Feature Film Company was a separate arm of Nordisk's already established American operations. Its purpose was to handle the still experimental longer photoplays like *A Victim of the Mormons* on a states rights exhibition basis. Indeed *A Victim of the Mormons* was their first release.

Although the first published reports indicated that Great Northern would abide by The National Board of Censorship's decisions, this was soon repudiated.\(^{35}\) Apparently the "Mormon picture" was too lucrative a property to shelve. As the earliest company to give the new idea of features special attention in the States, Great Northern was not about to bow to the Utah churchmen.\(^{36}\) The impression the trade magazines give is that the film was indeed successfully exhibited.\(^{37}\)

These same journals were not lax in noticing the controversy. For example, *The Moving Picture World* of January 27, 1912 devoted nearly a full page to an editorial called "The Sectarian Film Once More." After quoting *The Salt Lake Tribune*’s account of the Salt Lake Commercial Club's attempt (in conjunction with Governor Spry) to

\(^{35}\)See *The Moving Picture News*, January 6, 1912, pp. 12-14. As has been documented above, Oes ignored the Board's reversal.

\(^{36}\)For more on Great Northern's leadership see Ingvald C. Oes, "Growth of the Feature Film," *The Moving Picture World*, XIV, 8 (November 23, 1912), 759-760.
suppress one of the "objectionable" pictures, *The Moving Picture World* then turned to a letter by Lester Park, a pioneer Mormon exhibitor and showman in the Intermountain West. Park had addressed "a lengthy and impassioned" letter to the periodical in which he expressed his conviction that the "proposed reels are in effect libels upon the conscientious beliefs" and traditions of the Latter-day Saint Church. Unfortunately Park's complete letter is not reproduced, although the fact that he wrote indicates that Mormons involved in the motion picture industry were also concerned about the film attacks. 38 Park and his brother

37 "Great Northern Special Feature Film Co.," *The Moving Picture News*, V, 9 (March 2, 1912), 21; and "Mormon Pictures in Demand," *The Moving Picture World*, XI, 6 (February 10, 1912), 470. For one type of Scandinavian reaction see "'Mormonens Offer' Forbades i America," Skandinaviens Stjerne (Copenhagen), LXI, 5 (March 1, 1912), 72-77; and "'Mormonens Offer' i Narvik," Skandinaviens Stjerne, LXI, 6 (March 15, 1912), 90-91. Skandinaviens Stjerne was the official Mormon missionary journal for the Northern Kingdoms. Additionally see Ebbe Neergaard, *Historien Om Dansk Film* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1960), p. 45. This is the original Danish version. The English translation cited above inexplicably ignores this part of Neergaard's work. Reviews of the film appeared in both the Danish newspapers *Politiken* and *Folkets Avis* on October 3, 1911. Those interested in reviewing the Danish motion picture literature covering the various personalities involved may wish to consult Marguerite Engberg, *Dansk Filmlitteratur* (Copenhagen: Det Danske Fimmuseum, 1964). Personal correspondence with Clara Wieth Pontoppidan who played the abducted Florence in *A Victim of the Mormons* was conducted with the assistance of The Danish Film Museum. Unfortunately her recollections of the picture and period were poor and of no real import to this thesis. 38 "The Sectarian Film Once More," *The Moving Picture World*, XI, 4 (January 27, 1912), 282.
Byron Park will reappear later in this narrative.

In this same article The Moving Picture World moved to condemn religious prejudice and bigotry in the photoplay.

Its editors wrote:

We have on more than one occasion condemned an attack in films on the religious tenets of any set of human beings. The Mormons are, it is true, unpopular in certain sections of the country. Their prophets and leaders have in the past on more than one tragic and deplorable occasion been made the victims of mob fury and have been done to death without the semblance of a trial. They are even to-day accused of disloyalty to the government and of practices contrary to the penal laws of the States in which they live. The controversy between Mormon and Gentile, though no longer disgraced by savagery of past practices (sic) is still going on. We believe, however, there is great mutual forbearance and toleration, much of the ancient prejudice is dying out, the warring factions are beginning to recognize the merits and good qualities of each other and peace and amity have given place to strife and hatred.

It seems to us a bad use of the moving picture to threaten such a desirable condition of affairs. The stirring up of religious prejudice, the opening of old wounds, the renewal of bitterness is to be condemned utterly and without reservation. With every desire to be fair and just to the makers of the proposed releases it is impossible to resist the conclusion that the Mormons are attacked as a religious sect and made the objects of hatred, ridicule and contempt. If any films were to portray living men or women in such a manner and in such a light, the law would give them the right to sue for libel and prosecute the detractors criminally.

We cannot fathom the reasons which impel the production of such reels after the many bitter experiences which former similar efforts have brought down upon their perpetrators. It is quite possible that ignorance and a desire to be cheaply sensational account for these objectionable reels, and that there is no such deep-seated malice as the objectors allege...In view of our repeated warnings against sectarian films, in view of the disastrous results of such sectarian films to their makers, we are constrained to pronounce this continued ignorance as decidedly inexcusable. 39

Despite these encouraging words by The Moving Picture World towards the Mormons, they rang hollow. For many weeks after the editorial, the magazine continued to devote news and advertising space not only to A Victim of the Mormons and The Mormons but to other unfavorable films about the Utah Saints.40 We shall be examining these later in this and succeeding chapters.

A Victim of the Mormons was not the only film made about the followers of Brigham Young by Danish moviemakers. Mormonbyens Blomst (The Flower of the Mormon City) released by A/S Fotorama in 1911 also presented a negative screen view of Mormon missionary efforts.41

The story, so familiar from the anti-LDS characterizations of the period's "penny press," is little more that a paraphrase of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's tale of vengeance A Study in Scarlet.

40 See for example The Moving Picture World, February 10, 1912, p. 470: "Mr. Charles Abrams, manager of the Great Northern Special Feature Film Company, is almost the busiest man on Fourteenth Street. Since the announcement that this company would release 'A Victim of the Mormons' on the State rights plan, he has been bombarded with requests for territory and inquiries regarding that picture...Rights have already been sold for several territories....One thing that has tended to rouse interest in this picture is the antagonistic attitude of the so-called Mormon church, which has given the subject the widest publicity and tended to rouse greater interest in the picture...."

41 Mormonbyens Blomst (Aarhus: A/S Fotorama, 1911). This is a sixteen page program prepared for the film similar to the one cited earlier for Mormonens Offer. A copy is located in the Danish Film Museum.
Mormon missionaries call on the wife (played by Laura Mogensen) of the simple village blacksmith Jens Olsen (Peter Nielsen). She unsuspectingly allows them in, and not long after dies. The bereaved husband turns to the Elders and is soon converted to the Mormon religion. He and his young daughter Kristine decide to leave behind their sad memories and emigrate to the "Mormon paradise."

A half dozen years pass, with Jens prospering among the Saints in Utah. Kristine (Jenny Roelsgaard) has grown into a beautiful young woman, so much so that she is now "The Flower of the Mormon City." Hopeful suiters abound for her hand.

Unfortunately for the blacksmith, he does not have the best of relations with the Mormon Elders who rule the theocratic "Kingdom." Jens finds polygamy an abomination, and finds it impossible to forget the memory of his dead wife whose picture remains imprinted upon his heart.

The Elders, for their part, view this stubborn refusal to remarry with great suspicion. Without children their Kingdom cannot prosper. The situation is complicated as one of the Elders (Philip Beck) has a son, John (Gunnar Helsengreen), who desires Kristine for his harem of wives.

Relations between the two factions go from bad to worse. Kristine emphatically does not want John despite his attentions. Instead she gives her heart to a non-Mormon cowboy named Tom Carter (Aage Schmidt) who one day saves her from drowning.
The slighted Mormon angrily swears he will have her for his own no matter what. He appeals to his father for help. A holy meeting of the elders is called and the decision is made that Kristine shall marry John in three days—or else! If she or her father oppose the decree, they are warned, they will be taken care of by the Avenging Angels.

Fearful for their lives, the two immigrants decide to flee with Tom. He adroitly knocks out a night watchman, and they make good their escape that evening. Early next morning when they are discovered missing, John and his father form a posse to pursue them. The chase lasts a full day through the waste lands of Utah. Jens falls off his horse and dies in the arms of the young couple. Things now become desperate as they also run out of food.

Tom rides off to shoot some wild meat while Kristine remains behind at the site of her father's newly dug grave. While thus left alone, the posse catches up to Kristine and takes her back a prisoner to the Mormon town. Tom returns to find her gone and notices the tracks left by the riders. Vowing vengeance but realizing he is a wanted man, Tom waits until dark to return to the Mormon headquarters.

Meanwhile Kristine's wedding is all prepared. Pale and more dead than alive, she faints before she can whisper the fateful "yes." The marriage—to John's dismay—must be postponed. Tom under the cover of darkness makes his way to where Kristine is quartered. The two lovers meet and arrange
their escape for the next night. She is to pretend she is deathly ill. While left alone by her captors, she and Tom ride off never to return.

In the morning John finds them gone. He sadly resigns himself to his fate and does not pursue. Several years pass. Kristine is now Tom's wife and has borne him a son. They live in New York City where Tom has managed to build up a large and thriving business. Kristine is still homesick for Denmark, however, and so Tom sells his interests and makes plans to take her back to her native land.

They find though that they have not left the Mormons completely behind them. One last strange run-in occurs before their departure. A few days before they are due to leave, a Mormon priest comes to their home tracting. It unexpectedly turns out to be John—the rejected suitor. When he realizes who he has called on, he quickly leaves. For Tom and Kristine it is their last reminder of the "horrors" they had in the Mormon city.

Tom on his arrival in Denmark makes arrangements to buy the old blacksmith shop in the village where Kristine was raised. The film ends with them at the little country graveyard where she sheds a tear over her mother's burying place, but smiles happily up at her Tom who has saved her for true love and happiness.42

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42Mormonbyens Blomst program booklet, pp. 8-16.
Divided into fifty "exciting and effective parts," *Mormonbyens Blomst* (*The Flower of the Mormon City*) is typical of its genre. The Mormons are all portrayed as degenerate polygamists in need of new women. Little relationship seems to exist between such a film and the reality it claimed to portray.\(^{43}\) Although relatively little has been written about the photoplay, it is known to have been screened in Britain. It also is documented that about a half dozen residents of Aarhus were utilized in photographing the chase sequence on horseback over the fields of Skejby, to the north of Aarhus. This area was chosen because its unsettled landscape resembled a real prairie.\(^{44}\) Unlike *A Victim of the Mormons*, this film is believed to be lost.

The other moving picture objected to by Governor Spry in his protest was *The Mormons* (also known as *The Mormon*). This was a Western drama of 1,000 feet released early in 1912 by The American Film Manufacturing Company. Headquartered in Chicago with studios in California, American like Great Northern was an independent producing firm, and thus less under the influence of The National Board of Censorship than the Trust filmmakers.

\(^{43}\) Even the most scholarly anti-Mormon writers admit that the number of Mormon males practicing plural marriage probably never amounted to more than 20% of the total male population of Utah. The figure may have been as low as 2%. See Jerald and Sandra Tanner, p. 225.

\(^{44}\) See "Anti-'Mormon' Pictures in Edinburgh,"
The firm began in 1910 by raiding the Essanay studio of most of its top talent, and soon specialized in making solidly produced Westerns. A number of early professionals worked on The Mormon. J. Warren Kerrigan, one of the screen's first big male stars, was the featured lead.\(^4^5\) Allan Dwan, later to become a respected Hollywood director, launched his long career with The Mormon and other similar melodramas for "Flying A."\(^4^6\)

As Ramsaye relates, it wasn't easy to make pictures in those days. There was always the everpresent threat of nearby Patents Company agents. Cameras and good cameramen to operate them were scarce then, and snipers with long range rifles were not uncommon. One well placed bullet could have delayed production for months.\(^4^7\)

The following synopsis was provided by the company for advertising purposes and appeared in both The Moving Picture News and The Moving Picture World.

It was this story, coupled with the still photograph of A Victim of the Mormons mentioned earlier, which first prompted Governor Spry's response. As is readily

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apparent, *The Mormon* is strongly part of the anti-Mormon film genre and can be seen as indicative of the gentile view of Mormon life in the West:

In the early days of the West it was customary for the Mormons to attack wagon trains, in order to secure new wives in the practice of their polygamous belief. This American release deals with such an attack. The young son of the Mormon elder was dearly beloved and faithful and was given the post of outlook, to locate wagon trains, ascertain the number of men and women in them and assist in the attack. One morning he spies through his powerful telescope a lone wagon crossing the prairie. He hastens to the council of the Elders and tells them of the approaching emigrants. He is sent to ascertain the number of men with the wagon and encounters the girl. It is a case of love at first sight. He gazes earnestly in the girl's eyes and sees an answering light in their depths. Then he realizes his mission and that the capture of those women will make them wives of the prophet. A fierce desire overcomes him to possess her for himself—a thing not possible in the church. He renounces his faith and warns the emigrants.

He assists in fighting off his own people and at last they hold up the flag of truce. The old father learns that his son has become an apostate. Sadly he returns to his home to grieve over his erring son lost to him forever. The emigrant having been killed, the young Mormon takes his place, and with the girl by his side turns to a new life with the woman he loves.48

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46 Dwan directed such classics as *Heidi* (1937) and *The Sands of Iwo Jima* (1949). *The Mormon* was photographed at La Mesa, California. See Peter Bogdanovitch, Allan Dwan—*The Last Pioneer* (New York: Praeger, 1971), p. 171.

47 Ramsaye, p. 575. For a detailed study of the Flying A studio see Timothy Lyons, "The Silent Partner: The History of The American Film Manufacturing Company" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of Iowa, 1972). This and other material on American can be consulted at the Santa Barbara Historical Society in California.

That the premise of the picture tended to the ridiculous was recognized even by contemporary reviewers. Only in movie reality can a party of three—the settler, his wife and their daughter—aided by one renegade Mormon hold off an attack of determined religious zealots. For example the critic for The Moving Picture World wrote that "the picture has no special strength, nor any noticeable weakness except the result of the battle. It will serve as a filler." Little else is known about the film, except that it was not fully suppressed as the Mormons were first led to believe. It is not determined if The Mormon still survives.

This picture, like many others of this early period, was loosely based upon the so-called Mountain Meadows Massacre. Occurring in 1857, the event has continued to haunt Mormons. Whipped up to fever pitch by fear of invasion on the part of a Federal army under the command of General Albert S. Johnston, the Saints of southern Utah were in no mood to assist Gentile wagon trains. Especially one made up of travelers some of whom claimed to have been active in the murder of the Prophet Joseph Smith over ten years earlier.

49 "Independent—'The Mormons'," The Moving Picture World, XI, 5 (February 3, 1912), 393.

50 For further information on this photoplay see the advertisement appearing in The Moving Picture World, XI, 4 (January 27, 1912), 323. It was described as "one of the
Food, normally available to California and Oregon bound emigrants, was hoarded in case war with the national government actually broke out. Bitterness was common to both sides, and elements of the "Dixie" leadership determined that it would be best for the eternal souls of these unrepentant sinners (to some Mormon eyes) if their blood was shed. This shedding of blood, according to what some Latter-day Saints were then teaching, was necessary to atone for the sin of murder (in this case, the murder of the Prophet Joseph). "Blood atonement" still finds echo today in the Utah prison system where the use of a firing squad is a voluntary alternative in executing sentences related to capital crimes.\(^5\)

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\(^5\)See Keith D. Wilcock, "Utah's Peculiar Death Penalty," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* (Los Angeles), VII, 2 (Summer 1972), p. 34. There is disagreement over what blood atonement encompassed and whether it was actually practiced. For two views see Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine* (2nd ed.; Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), pp. 92-93; and Jerald and Sandra Tanner, pp. 398-404. These provide references to most of the other major sources dealing with the doctrine.
Mormons and their Indian allies attacked the California bound settlers. Because of the stiff resistance by the emigrants, eventually it was decided to use a ruse. Under a flag of truce, the Mormon led attackers killed the majority of the party. Only some young children were spared.

The conception that Brigham Young personally ordered the murders is apparently erroneous, but has nevertheless continued to dominate the popular mind. It is possible, however, that he attempted to shield those involved after the incident became known. Eventually John D. Lee, who led the raid, was tried and convicted for his part in the massacre. Before his execution he dictated a book in which he claimed he was the scapegoat for others and that he was innocent of any wrong doing. Whatever the truth of the matter, the event remained singular in Mormon and Utah history.

This however has not prevented authors, dramatists, and filmmakers from using license in their recreations of the Mountain Meadows tragedy. In the film The Mormon, discussed above, the reader will recall the assertion that "in the early days of the West it was customary for the Mormons to attack wagon trains, in order to secure new wives in the practice of their polygamous belief." 53

53 John Doyle Lee, Mormonism Unveiled (St. Louis; Bryan, Brand and Co., 1877). The book has been reprinted many times.
These twin threads—unprovoked attacks on innocent wagon trains, and the use of unscrupulous means to secure unwilling wives in order to increase already sizeable harems—dominate the history of Mormon portrayals in silent era motion pictures.

These themes proved undeniably popular. Two other films, both similar in story line to The Mormon, appeared about the same time. These were The Mountain Meadows Massacre and An Episode of Early Mormon Days (this latter picture believed to be the same as A Mormon Episode).

They apparently were first screened in California during January 1912. The following synopsis for A Mormon Episode clearly demonstrates the relationship these melodramas had to the Mountain Meadows killings:

It is the year about 1865, in Utah. On the outskirts of the Mormon territory, a horseman is watching a long line of men and women, with horses and carts, sweeping down the slopes of a rising plateau. They are settlers, who, disregarding the warnings at the boundaries of the Mormon territory, are seeking for a spot to pitch their camp. The horseman gallops back into the rough collection of buildings dignified by the name of the town. Men are scattered about, and picking out one of them—a tall thin man, with white hair—the horseman shouts a warning to him. The man is James Smith, and he listens to the horseman's story, then goes to verify it. Soon, convinced that the settlers are making preparations to stop, he issues orders to the men to gather to commence an attack. A message is despatched to Brigham Young, and within minutes all is in readiness. The attack is opened. The settlers, barricading themselves behind the wagons, put up a stern fight in spite of the breaches.

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54 The Moving Picture World, December 30, 1911, p. 20.
made in their ranks as the shots of the Mormons find their marks one by one. Brigham Young gives orders for a flag of truce to be carried out, and then for his men to turn upon the settlers and massacre them wholesale. These instructions are carried out to the letter. Cries for mercy are unheeded, and when the sun dips in the West there is not a living creature left in the valley to bear witness to Mormon treachery.\footnote{Supplement to the British motion picture trade publication \textit{The Bioscope}, (September 12, 1912), p. V.}

It should be noted that it is possible that \textit{A Mormon Episode} and \textit{An Episode of Early Mormon Days} are two separate productions. Nevertheless it is true that these and similar films played up the most sensational aspects of Mormon history through a distorted celluloid image. Contemporary accounts indicate that \textit{An Episode of Early Mormon Days} not only had Brigham Young leading the massacre, but that he was assisted by Joseph Smith.\footnote{See "Massacre Picture Nearly Causes Riot," \textit{The Salt Lake Tribune}, January 25, 1912, p. 3, col. 4. Also of interest is "Moving Pictures Stir Up Feeling," \textit{The Deseret Evening News}, January 25, 1912, p. 5, col. 5.}

Confusion may have occurred between the character listed in the synopsis reprinted above known as James Smith, and Joseph Smith who was the founder and first Prophet of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It was of course impossible for Joseph Smith to aid Brigham Young in Utah for Smith was killed long before the exodus to the territory took place.
The Mountain Meadows Massacre was manufactured by
the French headquartered Pathé Frères Company. News
accounts differ as to whether the film was made in Europe
or at the American subsidiary's Los Angeles facilities. Letters addressed to the French motion picture archives
have produced no further information.

Pathé Frères was begun before the turn of the
century by Charles Pathé. Until 1901 its output of moving
pictures was only a sideline to the profitable manufacture
of phonographs and phonograph cylinders. Through shrewd
management, Pathé became one of the leading production
companies in the world. As French cinema historian
Georges Sadoul points out in his book French Film:

For the first ten years of the twentieth century,
the Pathé dramas and comedies and realistic films
dominated the world market...The sale of all these
Pathé films went into the hundreds and sometimes
thousands of copies, bringing in profits fifty or a
hundred times the cost of their production. With
agents established in every quarter of the globe, it
was not long before Pathé film production started in
countries such as Italy, Great Britain, America, Russia,
Germany and Japan. With such wide ramifications, it is
not surprising that the firm of Pathé Brothers in 1908
sold twice as many films in the United States as all
the American producing companies put together.58

With this vast financial power, Pathé identified
itself with the Edison Patents group and was one of its
member firms. First locating in a remodeled cash register
factory at Bound Brook, New Jersey, Pathé's American arm
also turned to the California sunshine for some of its
films. Today Pathé is best remembered for its red rooster
insignia and newsreels--the first to successfully develop.
Although a member of the Trust (and thus an Upholder of the Censorship Board), Pathé was not anxious to suppress *The Mountain Meadows Massacre*. Salt Lakers wintering in Los Angeles in early 1912 first brought the film to the attention of Utah civic leaders. "Greatly incensed," the vacationers wired the Salt Lake Commercial Club (a group of prominent local businessmen) so that steps could be taken to censor the picture. Club Secretary Joseph E. Caine immediately wired Pathé Frères' New Jersey office to complain of what he termed a "libel" on Utah which threatened the material development of the entire state.  

Other Utah organizations also protested the exhibition of the photoplay. Frank M. Driggs, President of the Utah Development League, sent a similar telegram to Frank Wiggins, Secretary of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce.


59 Ramsaye, p. 518.


61 *The Salt Lake Tribune*, January 11, 1912, p. 16.
As the film was a "gross misrepresentation of the affair," Caine was in high hopes the movie and others like it would be withdrawn as soon as the manufacturers learned of the damage they were doing to the state. Failing this, however, there was an optimistic reliance on the authority of The National Board of Censorship:

...If the demand is ignored, it is believed that an appeal to the national censorship board (sic) will be effective. That bureau's powers are dictatorial in the motion picture world, and if it can be shown that the film is false and libelous an order can be issued strictly prohibiting its display in any theatre in the country.62

As we have already seen, the LDS people had a somewhat distorted view of the powers of the National Board. Because of the Mormon and Utah civic protest, however, Pathé Frères did offer to withdraw the film--for a fee. They wanted assurances from the Commercial Club that their loses would be made good.63

The Salt Lake Commercial Club naturally enough had no desire to buy out the film. They preferred that the picture, and others like it, be voluntarily retired by the manufacturers concerned. Pathé Frères utterly rejected the Utahns reasoning. In the face of this refusal, the Club contacted the National Board and the Utah Congresssional delegation in Washington to see what legal recourse the State had in its attempt to ban the showing of such films throughout the nation. Apparently there was none.

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The protest--coming at the same time as that for A Victim of the Mormons--produced relatively little concrete action. As will be recalled, William H. Swanson attempted to help the Mormon leadership suppress these films. He was clear that nothing could be done to stop the showings of pictures like these on a states rights basis. Until further information can be brought forth, the status of this motion picture and its distribution must remain in doubt.

The Utah leadership did, however, receive some consolation from the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce. Agreeing with its Utah counterpart that any attempt to buy the films would only lead to a form of blackmail, the Chamber stated its strong opposition to the manufacture and distribution of The Mountain Meadows Massacre and all similar productions. The Chamber's board members affirmed their belief that it was "a serious business mistake to show any film which creates race or religious hatred." 65

The Church's newspaper--The Deseret Evening News--responded heartily to the Chamber's action in an editorial.

63 "Company Demands Payment to Quit," The Salt Lake Tribune, January 13, 1912, p. 9, col. 6.

64 The Salt Lake Tribune, February 11, 1912, p. 16.

appearing in the January 22, 1912 issue:

We here in Utah thoroughly appreciate the stand taken by the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce in the matter of exhibiting the so-called Mountain Meadow film. The businessmen of the wide-awake coast city are correct in stating that it would be a business mistake to show any film which creates race or religious hatred.

The Mountain Meadow tragedy belongs to the class of occurrences in early pioneer days of which every state in the Union has had its share: some more, some less. The attempt to fasten the responsibility for it upon the Church leaders was one of the brilliant afterthoughts of anti-"Mormon" fanatics. It was a crime for which no one was responsible but those who committed it. Why, then, should the memory of it be perpetuated?

But the film is, of course, pure fake. And that is another reason why its exhibition is objectionable. It does not give a true representation of the occurrence but the author's version of it, founded entirely upon his imagination. It has not, therefore, the merit of history but is simple fiction. As such it is objectionable on the same ground as novels and plays that have no other object in view than the exhibition of murder and bloodshed for the delectation of a deparved taste. It is objectionable on the same ground as the horrible wax figures that at one time used to attract crowds. It is not fit for the entertainment of children who flock to the moving picture shows.

It is bad business. No state, no section of the country is served by having it exhibited as the scene of sanguinary tragedies. Uncritical audiences do not always discriminate between the past and present and transfer the odium of long ago to the present. So from every point of view the film should be suppressed. It does not concern the Church. It concerns every citizen of the state.66

Only three days after this editorial, both major Salt Lake papers reported the incidence of a near riot in San Francisco over the showing of An Episode of Early Mormon Days.

Readers will recall this is the film that pictured Joseph Smith and Brigham Young leading a murder conspiracy in Utah. According to the Tribune account:

When the picture was produced at a suburban picture house last night several Mormons were among the audience, and took such exception to the production that, for a time, a fight seemed imminent. The manager of the house was requested to withdraw the scene, but stated that it was only on exhibition at that particular house for one night.67

Whether this disturbance was a planned publicity ploy such as occurred in the British screenings of A Victim of the Mormons is not known. It is documented, however, that local Mormon leaders were aware of the film and unhappy about its public exhibition. James E. Robinson, head of the Church's San Francisco mission, wired his colleague in New York to protest the showing of the photoplay. Apparently Robinson hoped that the eastern Church authorities would be able to make effective representations with the pertinent movie officials. It is unlikely that much was accomplished as the film was reported to be unlicensed and without Board of Censorship approval.68

The Mormon genre—although limited to massacres and kidnappings—continued to hold the public's interest. Pathé, for example, undaunted by its run-in with the Church earlier in the year, released the one-reel Marriage or Death

67 The Salt Lake Tribune, January 25, 1912, p. 3. See also The Deseret Evening News, January 25, 1912, p. 5.
on February 21, 1912. The pattern is similar to previous efforts. According to the description provided exhibitors by Pathé:

This is the story of early life in Utah. A young girl is seen by one of the Mormons and demanded in marriage. Her family, however, refuses and is driven from home by the combined force of the Mormons and Indians. The girl is captured and once in the hands of the Mormons is about to be forced into marriage with the man she loathes when she is rescued by a band of cowboys from a ranch nearby.69

It is not known if this film still survives. Certainly it displays little originality over earlier pictures.

The National Board of Censorship seems to have cared little about suppressing these Mormon related films. For example, that same year another member of the Patents Trust--The Selig Polyscope Company--undertook the filming of Joaquin Miller's well known anti-Mormon stage play "The Danites of the Sierras."

Miller's drama was loosely based upon his earlier book First Families of the Sierras. Following its stage debut in 1877 it was to become the most popular anti-Mormon production of the nineteenth century.70 Although the Mormons (two unnamed "Avenging Angels" or "Danites") make only a brief one-page appearance in the novel, they acquire names (Carter and Hickman) and dominate the play.

68 The Salt Lake Tribune, January 25, 1912, p. 3. Robinson branded An Episode of Early Mormon Days a "fake and foreign to the truth," and added that "if it were according to the facts it would be a most demoralizing picture to show young people."
This change has been attributed to "the leaden hand" of Miller's collaborator, Philadelphia playwright P. A. Fitzgerald. Fitzgerald, apparently influenced by the fantastic fiction appearing as fact in the dime novels of the day, seemed to feel the book needed spicing up if it was to do big box-office as a play.

He must have known what he was doing, for it proved overwhelmingly successful. This success, combined with the death of Brigham Young in 1877, prompted the publication in 1878 of an anthology of Miller's works, edited by A. V. D. Honeyman. Honeyman's introduction is indicative of the Eastern literati's inability to deal realistically with the Mormon experiment. For he describes the adaptation as a "nearly perfect likeness," even though the play bears very little resemblance to the book. 71 As Lawrence Klenk points out:

This gives us a glimpse of the weight of realistic Mormon influence on American letters. Real Mormons don't count; writers were too busy telling Mormon "ghost stories." 72

The anti-Mormon dramatist often displayed little interest in the real conditions in Utah. And unfortunately for the Saints this same literary (and popular newspaper) attitude carried over into the cinema.

69 "Marriage or Death," The Moving Picture World, XI, 7 (February 17, 1912), 614.

70 This section largely parallels Lawrence D. Klenk, "Saints Alive; or Deseret Detested--An Overview of the Mormon Image in American Drama, 1846-1914" (unpublished paper, Brigham Young University, 1972), pp. 9-12.
McKee. Rankin wrote the screenplay and directed the picture for Selig. Rankin, who was the leading actor of the original Broadway production, had made the play into his personal vehicle. In 1880 he took it abroad in what was apparently the first completely American company to tour the theaters of Britain. Even twenty years later he was still able to draw crowds with his portrayal as Sandy, the hero of the drama.

Selig appears to have felt that the controversy engulfing the earlier anti-Mormon pictures would ensure the success of the already well established play. The Danites routinely received its license and ran two reels. As the idea of longer feature films was not fully accepted, each reel was released separately.

Once again the motif of unprovoked pioneer murder predominates. Danites disguised as Indians overtake a lone family of westward bound emigrants. All are killed except for Nancy Williams (played by Betty Harte) and her younger brother, Georgie. Although left for dead, they are eventually rescued by another group of settlers.


When Carter and Hickman discover that there are survivors, they determine to finish them off. That night they come upon the unsuspecting travelers and coldbloodedly kill Georgie. Nancy gets her guns and follows vainly in pursuit. Unable to find the murderers, she returns to camp only to find it deserted. She makes her way to an abandoned hunter's cabin. There she cuts her hair, borrows some clothing, and adopts a new identity as Billy Piper.

The second reel opens with Nancy disguised as the male Billy Piper riding into town. She makes friends quickly with the new school teacher, fondly referred to as "the widow" by the townspeople. The two Danites suspect Billy is really Nancy, but are not sure. Nancy/Billy sees them peering through her friend's window and faints in fear. The widow (Eugene Besserer) then discovers Billy's secret.

A year passes. The teacher is now married to the popular miner Sandy (Hobart Bosworth). In order to help determine if their suspicions are correct, Hickman and Carter spread rumors of the "strange relationship" between Billy and Sandy's wife. Sandy coming home finds the two together and suspects the worst. He orders Billy to leave the house.

Meanwhile the Danites head for Billy's place only to find it empty. Arriving at Sandy and the teacher's, they demand Billy's life. Billy begs Sandy's help, swearing that no wrong has been done. As the Danites crowd
in, Sandy orders them to stand aside.

Billy makes her way out, but seeing the Danites causes her to be seized by a heart attack. Falling dead in Sandy's arms, she at last is released from her burdensome secret. The Danites with a triumphant look at each other quietly leave, their mission of death completed. 74

Trade interest in the film was marked. The Moving Picture World, for example, devoted an entire page to an illustrated article praising the picture. The Danites' emphasis on authenticity was seen as especially remarkable:

Never on any stage has been shown such magnificent vistas of rugged scenery, with ridge behind ridge fading into dim perspective...Those prairie schooners, with their canvas-walled sides, drawn by oxen with heavy wooden yokes, are examples of the painstaking bestowed on details. They are accurate duplications of old-time wagons, and were especially made for the occasion. 75

Other reviewers felt that the movie was unfortunately weakened by its artificial division into two parts, although the cinematography and acting were recognized as competent. It is clear that the overtly Mormon motivation for the tale was glossed over, perhaps in order to mute possible adverse criticism by Utah and LDS authorities. 76

74 "The Danites," The Moving Picture World, XI, 7 (February 17, 1912), 614.

75 Jas. S. McQuade, "'The Danites'--A Revival," The Moving Picture World, XI, 8 (February 24, 1912), 660.

Although the word "Mormon" was never used, the term "Danite" still has Mormon connotations. The relationship to the Mountain Meadows Massacre is plain, and the film—as was the play before it—must have been objectionable to the LDS Church leadership. It must be admitted, however, that no reference to the film version has been found in Mormon sources. 77 Although parallels to literature and anti-Mormon newspaper accounts are pronounced in nearly all the films to be discussed, The Danites provides the first definite linkage to a literary source work. We will find others as we progress in this thesis.

It must not be thought, however, that all motion pictures from this era are anti-Mormon in character. On the contrary, several major photoplays favorable to Mormonism were completed while others were known to have been planned. For example as early as January 1912, W. H. Harbeck, a motion picture photographer with the Canadian Pacific Railway, was in Salt Lake City directing The Romance of Mormonism.

77Selig Polyscope at least certainly felt the film version was remarkable. Their advertising for the picture is typical of the modesty of the period: "Beyond a question of a doubt, this wonderful picture contains more real value than any previous Western story. 300 PEOPLE. 10 PRAIRIE SCHOONERS. BEAUTIFUL SCENERY. WONDERFUL ACTION. A SELIG MASTERPIECE PAR EXCELLENCE." See The Moving Picture World, XI, 8 (February 24, 1912), 653.
Harbeck commissioned Harry Revier and Walter Park as his assistants. Revier and Park proceeded to take pictures of the Tabernacle and Hotel Utah. According to the story appearing in The Salt Lake Tribune, these were to be part of a series of films that were to "take up between 15,000 and 18,000 feet of film."

The Romance of Mormonism as it was envisioned was to give a complete pictorial history of the Church up to the then present day.\(^78\)

The Tribune indicated that Harbeck, who had temporarily gone back East, was expected to return to Salt Lake to supervise work and complete the filming. The picture was to have been released within a year. Unfortunately, neither local sources nor correspondence with Canadian film archives have been able to supply further information about Harbeck or his project. It is not known if the photoplay was in fact completed or remained another unrealized dream.

One movie that did materialize was the Edison Company's scenic Salt Lake City, Utah, and its Surroundings released in November 1912.

\(^{78}\)"Films to Picture Mormonism's Story," The Salt Lake Tribune, January 27, 1912, p. 14, col. 1. Revier later worked with Lester Park and others at Ogden Pictures Corporation (Ogden, Utah, circa 1917-1919) and went on to a successful career in Hollywood.
One may speculate that the interest generated by the fictional representations of Mormon life prompted the company to include this 500 foot travelogue in a series Edison was preparing. Whatever the reasons, this film represents the first known moving picture documentary of the Latter-day Saint spiritual capital. According to the description appearing in *The Moving Picture World*:

This city by the inland salt sea makes a novel subject for the motion picture devotee who wishes to combine knowledge with pleasure. Salt Lake City is beautifully located at the base of the high mountains that almost encircle it and one is given a complete and thorough view of the surrounding country from Immigration to Cottonwood Canyon, from the bathers in the Salt Lake to that masterpiece of Western architecture, the Mormon Temple, which lies in the very heart of the city.

About this time Utah was in the process of developing an indigenous film industry. A number of companies were springing into existence (and often just as quickly disappearing). At least one of these—the Salt Lake City headquartered Utah Motion Picture Company—made a similar pictorial. This consisted of between 700 and 800 feet of views of the Utah capital and surrounding localities.

79 The Edison Company sent out a location unit beginning in July 1912 which took films across the American continent. Among the cities visited was Salt Lake. See P. M. Powell, "Doings at Los Angeles—Edison Players Join Los Angeles Colony," *The Moving Picture World, XV, 1* (January 4, 1913), 36.
While these pictures may have done much to balance the view of Mormonism filmgoers were receiving, the most important photoplay from the Mormon standpoint would have to be *One Hundred Years of Mormonism* (also sometimes referred to as *The Rise and Growth of Mormonism*).

Although strangely neglected by most cinema historians, *One Hundred Years of Mormonism* is important for a number of reasons. The film was truly mammoth for its era--five reels and 90 minutes running time. Indeed its promoters (with only slight overstatement) claimed it was the longest picture ever completed devoting itself to a single story. In addition to its then innovative feature length, it had the advantage of active cooperation by LDS Church authorities.

30 "Salt Lake City, Utah, and its Surroundings," *The Moving Picture World*, XIV, 6 (November 9, 1912), 586. See also *The Edison Kinetogram*, VII (July 16, 1912–January 31, 1913). Future researchers may find this useful as it was not available to the author. The film was approved for LDS Church use. See "List of Educational Films Recommended For the Use of L. D. S. Schools by the Committee on Films" (Adam S. Bennion Speech Collection File on Films, Brigham Young University Library Special Collections Room). This undated evaluation of theological films also recommended that "a travelogue film be made, showing the principal points of interest in the history of the church, such as the birth place of the prophet, Cumorah, Kirtland, Nauvoo, Carthage, Jackson County etc. Also points of interest of the journey west. One reel could very well be spent on Jackson County alone." It is not as yet ascertained whether this recommendation specifically was acted upon, although the Church has subsequently produced similar films.

31 "Roll of the States--Utah," *Motography* (Chicago), VIII, 12 (December 7, 1912), 452. This was due to go into release sometime around January 1, 1913.
The sweep of production was impressive. A broad outline of Mormonism from Joseph Smith's purported first angelic vision through the long migration and building up of Utah was included in one hundred scenes. Church leaders including President Joseph F. Smith declared the film "commendable" after a special preview showing was arranged for them in Salt Lake City. Parts of the movie were actually shot in Immigration Canyon near Salt Lake for the sake of authenticity, and the part of Brigham Young was taken by one of his grandsons, Frank Young.

Work was begun in June 1912. At that time Frank A. Kelly, the President and General Manager of The Ellaye Motion Picture Company, was able to interest LDS Church officials in the project. Kelly was also able to raise $50,000 in cash backing (it is not clear whether the Church provided part of this) and in his company's contract with the Mormons agreed to relinquish control over the final release version to the Church in return for LDS sanction.

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82 For representative articles see Levi Edgar Young, "Mormonism' in Picture," The Young Woman's Journal (Salt Lake City), XXIV, 2 (February 1913), 74-80; "Mormon Pictures," Motography, VIII, 3 (August 3, 1912), 110; P. M. Powell, "Doings at Los Angeles--The Mormon Picture," The Moving Picture World, XV, 3 (January 18, 1913), 251; and "History of 'Mormonism' in Picture," The Deseret Evening News, January 25, 1913, Section 3, p. VIII, cols. 1-7. Young's article is reproduced in this thesis as Appendix C.

83 "Century of 'Mormonism'," The Deseret Evening News, February 3, 1913, p. 2, col. 5.
However, when Ellaye found it could not complete the film "under the rigid terms of the contract," it sold its interests to the by then three-fifths completed picture to The Utah Moving Picture Company which had greater capital reserves. Care must be taken to differentiate this California enterprise from the Salt Lake based Utah Motion Picture Company.\(^8\)\(^5\)

The publicity phrase "a cast of thousands" was applicable in this case. At least two reports state that over a thousand people took part in the film's production.\(^8\)\(^6\)

A half-mile recreation of Nauvoo, Independence, and other sites prominent in Mormon history was especially constructed for the movie in Los Angeles. The residences, stores, and other buildings were all faithfully reproduced from old photographs obtained from Church sources. In filming the Haun's Mill Massacre, during which a large number of houses were burned down, four cameras were utilized to capture the action.\(^8\)\(^7\)

\(^8\)\(^4\) The Moving Picture World, January 18, 1913, p. 251. It is not clear whether Ellaye itself was a Salt Lake or California company. Powell calls it "the Ellay (sic) Company of Salt Lake City" while it is described as "the Ellaye Motion Picture Company of Los Angeles" in Motography, August 3, 1912, p. 110. Likely it was a California group ("Ellaye=L. A."?) but with Salt Lake connections. No incorporation or business record could be found for Ellaye in the Utah State Archives which incorporates Salt Lake City and County records from this period.

\(^8\)\(^5\) P. M. Powell, "Doings at Los Angeles--Two 'Utah M. P. Companies'," The Moving Picture World, XV, 7 (February 15, 1913), 667. It is especially confusing as Kelly left Ellaye to join the Utah Motion Picture Company.
Editing was completed by January 1913. Orders were placed for copies of the film by exhibitors in New York, London, Berlin, Paris, Buenos Aires, Peking, Sydney, St. Petersburg and elsewhere worldwide. In February of that year the picture premiered in Salt Lake.

As was indicated earlier, Church President Joseph F. Smith approvingly declared the screening "commendable." Others of the brethren were also pleased. The Deseret Evening News in an editorial of February 5, 1913 also had words of praise for the film, although they were tinged with some constructive criticism:

36 Young, "'Mormonism' in Picture," p. 78; and The Deseret Evening News, January 25, 1913, Section 3, p. VIII.

37 "Amusements--Colonial," The Deseret Evening News, July 2, 1913, p. 3, col. 1; Young, "'Mormonism' in Picture," pp. 78-79; and The Deseret Evening News, January 25, 1913, Section 3, p. VIII.

38 The Moving Picture World, January 18, 1913, p. 251; Young, "'Mormonism' in Picture," p. 78; and The Deseret Evening News, January 25, 1913, Section 3, p. VIII.

39 The Deseret Evening News, January 25, 1913, Section 3, p. VIII; the advertisement for One Hundred Years of Mormonism's première at the Salt Lake Theatre appearing in The Deseret Evening News, February 1, 1913, Section 2, p. V, cols. 6-7; and "The Round of the Theaters--One Hundred Years of "Mormonism"", The Deseret Evening News, February 4, 1913, p. 3, col. 1. It is likely that the choice of title was taken from a popular history of the Church. See John Henry Evans, One Hundred Years of Mormonism, A History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints From 1805 to 1905 (Salt Lake City: The Deseret News Press, 1905).
The motion pictures representing scenes in the history of the Church, which were shown at the Salt Lake Theater this week, were very interesting, and they were well received by the large audiences which attended every performance.

For the very critical mind it might occur that the first part was, perhaps, not as full of dramatic action as it might have been, if the possibilities of the wonderful history of the Prophet Joseph had been utilized more extensively. But the second part was very impressive, especially to those who know by experience, or have heard from their parents, of the thrilling stories of the trials and hardships of the early days of Utah. The critic might also suggest that some scenes ought to be added, and some eliminated, or revised to conform to history, in order to make the film still more interesting.

The enterprise in producing these pictures is very commendable. It is evident that the cost has been enormous and that a great deal of study has preceded the staging of the scenes. The history of almost a century being compressed within the limits of a performance of an hour and a half, many important incidents and episodes are necessarily passed by, but the story as told is full of interest especially to the younger generation.\footnote{90}

One Hundred Years of Mormonism\footnote{90} did big box-office, at least in its initial Salt Lake City run. Nearly $1800 was pocketed in its first two days alone. Over half of this represented the second day's earnings, then a motion picture record for the state. In order to accomplish this it was necessary to accommodate an extra 400 spectators on the stage behind the screen. Because this reversed the titles, they were read aloud to the additional patrons by William T. Nuttall, the LDS advance manager for the film.\footnote{91} Although it was locally welcomed, there was some question as to whether the photoplay would be able to maintain its interest outside the Mormon heartland.\footnote{92}

\footnote{90}"Mormonism' in Picture," The Deseret Evening News, February 5, 1913, p. 4, col. 1.
Following its first Salt Lake screenings, the picture's director Norval MacGregor took one of the prints on a five month tour of Utah and Idaho where it was claimed that the film "met with the unqualified approval of all the people who have seen it, both members of the 'Mormon' faith, and others." Other copies apparently were exhibited on the West Coast about this time."

One Hundred Years of Mormonism however didn't enter general release until June 1913. The Moving Picture World index for April-June 1913 mentions it under "Feature Releases." Unfortunately, the manufacturer did not provide a synopsis at that time for the magazine to publish.

91P. M. Powell, "Doings at Los Angeles," The Moving Picture World, XV, 9 (March 1, 1913), 875. See also "'One Hundred Years of Mormonism' a Success," The Moving Picture World, XV, 7 (February 15, 1913), 686.

92See The Deseret Evening News, February 4, 1913, p. 3 where it is noted that "there was also some diversity of opinion as to what the future of the enterprise will be as a money maker. In Utah and other parts of the west, the opinion was expressed that it would be highly successful and more than the original outlay made by the promoters would be returned to them. But whether it would make equally as strong an appeal when exhibited at remoter points, where the subject is less understood and of less interest, was considered a matter of doubt. It is understood the pictures will be shown in all parts of the country."

93"One Hundred Years of 'Mormonism'," The Deseret Evening News, July 5, 1913, Section 2, p. IV, col. 2.

94The Moving Picture World, March 1, 1913, p. 875.

95"Index April to June 1913," The Moving Picture World, XVI (1913), p. viii, col. 3.
Meanwhile another special showing of the picture was arranged in Salt Lake City. It marked the end of an era, for over a thousand of the pioneer Saints met to enjoy the recreation of their epic journey. As *The Salt Lake Tribune* observed:

One by one the early pioneers are passing into the valley of silence, and it is not considered likely that so many of the first builders of the city will ever gather together again on a similar occasion.96

Following the screening a commemorative photograph was taken of "the old folks" on the steps of the Salt Lake Theater.

Apparently the promoters of *One Hundred Years of Mormonism* took earlier criticisms to heart. The *Journal History* for April 17, 1913 reports that "a Mr. Thompson" representing the filmmakers requested permission "to enliven the picture by making a record of one of our tabernacle services."97 President Smith told him that he believed their would be no objection, and after a brief discussion at the regular meeting of the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve Apostles, consent was granted.

A second seven-day run in Salt Lake was arranged at the Colonial Theater beginning the 4th of July. It was shown at this time because a large National Education Association convention was in town, and they were considered

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96 "See Their History in Motion Pictures," *The Salt Lake Tribune*, March 19, 1913, p. 9, cols. 4-6.

97 *The Journal History*, April 17, 1913, p. 5.
likely patrons for this painless way to learn about Mormonism. A matinee was presented at 2:30 in the afternoon and was followed by two evening showings offered at 7:30 and 9:00 p.m. Prices ranged from 10¢ for children to 25¢ for adults. It is not known how successful this run was.

While most of the principals connected with the film are now obscure, several became prominent within the silent industry. Nell Shipman, who authored the final screenplay, was known as a competent photoplay writer and later became a popular screen actress. Norval MacGregor, the director, helped found the Motion Picture Director's Association and worked for a number of the leading film manufacturers during the teens and twenties.

98See the "Amusements--Colonial" columns appearing in *The Deseret Evening News*, July 2, 1913, p. 3, col. 1; The Deseret Evening News, July 3, 1913, p. 12, col. 3; The Deseret Evening News, July 4, 1913, p. 3, col. 3; The Deseret Evening News, July 5, 1913, Section 2, p. IV, col. 2; and The Deseret Evening News, July 8, 1913, p. 6, col. 2. A typical advertisement appears in *The Deseret Evening News*, July 8, 1913, p. 4, col. 6. See also the photograph captioned "Scene From 'One Hundred Years of Mormonism'." *The Deseret Evening News*, July 3, 1913, p. 12, cols. 3-4. Inexplicably Levi Edgar Young in his article "Mormonism in Picture," cited earlier neglects to call the film One Hundred Years of Mormonism. This photograph and those appearing in *The Deseret Evening News*, January 25, 1913, Section 3, p. VIII correlate to those in Young's article and definitely prove that One Hundred Years of Mormonism is the film described by Young. Although no title was used in Young's story, the impression is given that it was to be called The Rise and Growth of Mormonism. David Kent Jacobs in his thesis on LDS Church films erroneously adopted this title when describing the picture. See David Kent Jacobs, p. 7.

99According to the account appearing in *The Moving Picture World*, January 18, 1913, p. 251: "A tremendous
According to David Kent Jacobs, author of the companion thesis to this, One Hundred Years of Mormonism remains the single most important commercial film release of the silent cinema for Mormon study. Not only is it the only photoplay known to have enjoyed Church approval, but the only one also to have benefited from the active assistance of then still-living pioneers. As Jacobs says:

We cannot overestimate the importance of this picture. For when you have the actual pioneers—those whose life the film is about—assisting in a production, then you have a priceless historical record. Comparing it to other "Mormon" motion pictures of the period is in a sense futile. For it is unique—it stands alone as the only silent movie sanctioned by the Church as essentially authentic, the only film utilizing genuine relics from the pioneer trek, and the only picture drawing on the experience of still-living pioneers. Its rediscovery would add immeasurably to our understanding of the crucial pioneer period now long past. 101

Amount of data had to be worked over before the story was in shape for motion picture purpose. Nell Shipman, a Los Angeles photoplay writer, was engaged to arrange the data and prepare the working scenario. It is reported that her fee for the work was $2,500 which, if it is true, probably establishes a new scale for work of this kind, and a scale which will delight photoplay writers everywhere." Harry A. Kelly disputed her contribution. See The Moving Picture World, February 15, 1913, p. 667. Nevertheless this is only another indication of the importance of this neglected production. Earlier she had toured in stock theatricals through Utah. See Tom Pulbright, "Nell Shipman—Queen of the Dog Sleds," Classic Film Collector (Indiana, Pennsylvania), 25 (Fall 1969), 30-31+; and the advertisement "Nell Shipman—Photoplaywright," The Moving Picture World, XV, 7 (February 15, 1913), 707.

As a result of the preliminary research undertaken for this thesis, the Church Historian's Office is now making a serious effort to acquire copies of all existent moving pictures dealing with Mormonism. A special attempt is being made to find One Hundred Years of Mormonism, and it is to be hoped that an undecomposed release print of this singularly important story film will yet be found.

Another movie released in 1913 was favorable to the Mormons. This was Bison Life Motion Pictures' two reel The Romance of the Utah Pioneers. Bison--another independent--made its mark manufacturing Westerns. 102 This photoplay is the only known silent picture utilizing the history of the dramatic march by the Hand Cart Immigrants to Utah for a backdrop. 103 Little is known today about the film itself other than the synopsis appearing in the January 4, 1913 The Moving Picture World:


102 See Ramsaye, pp. 491-492.

103 Converts to the Church were often too poor to afford the cost of traveling by wagon train. In the early 1850's Brigham Young issued a call to all faithful members to hasten to "Zion." Several thousand persons made the arduous walk from Iowa to Utah in that decade carrying all their worldly goods in handcarts. It was a difficult journey and a number died on the way, although their faith enabled the majority to successfully make the trek. See Joseph Fielding Smith, Essentials in Church History, pp. 397-402; and Nels Anderson, Desert Saints: The Mormon Frontier in Utah (2nd impression; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966), pp. 155-158.
Edward Martin and Alice, married, start out for Salt Lake with the "Hand Cart Immigrants," so-called because a number of the adventurers pushed and pulled their belongings ahead of them on small, rough carts. Edward Martin is made Captain of the train.

The Indian tribes are at peace and little Watana and Mountain Pine make love as Watana weaves her pretty baskets. Unfortunately the Mexican raiders are in the vicinity, capturing Indians and selling them into slavery. Watana is seized and taken away and is made love to by the guide. Mountain Pine traces her and rides back and arouses the Indians, who steal up to the marauders and annihilate them. Watana and other Indians are rescued. The Indians are flushed with victory and consumed with hatred for all pale faces. They see the Hand Cart Immigrants and determine to attack them.

Edward Martin and his followers have a hard time. The guide is killed by falling over a cliff and the party is lost. Starvation and thirst stare them in the face and the whole party is suffering intensely. Little Watana has had her need of suffering and determines to try and save the immigrants. She pleads with Mountain Pine and the old chief and they listen to her, and instead of attacking the party decide to help them. The immigrants find water, which revives them and sustains them long enough to allow Watana to bring them provisions. Little Watana is puzzled when Alice kisses her, but she decides that the practice is a good one and imparts the experience to the astonished Mountain Pine, who also thinks it nice. 104

Certainly it combined all the elements of adventure, romance, and a happy ending. Another attempt at producing a picture advantageous to the Church apparently was less successful. In late December 1913, The Salt Lake Tribune reported that Chester Y. Clawson had made arrangements to produce a filmed version of The Book of Mormon. 105

104 "The Romance of the Utah Pioneers," The Moving Picture World, XV, 1 (January 4, 1913), 84.

105 He and his brother Shirley were the "motivating force" behind continued LDS Church interest in motion pictures during the silent years. Much of their work is
Clawson declined to name his eastern backers, but told reporters that he had every expectation that the scenario by William A. Morton would be produced. The film was to embrace "the entire history contained in the Book of Mormon." Work on the picture was to begin in the spring. While the money was to come from the East, production was to be accomplished in an unnamed western locale. Unfortunately, no further record was located to indicate that the photoplay was actually completed.

As was indicated earlier, British filmmakers were to take an active interest in "the Mormon Problem." Their viewpoint would prove universally negative towards the Church and its missionary representatives. The last major pre-war production at least had the advantage of a popular book behind it. That book was A Study in Scarlet by Arthur Conan Doyle, and it marked the introduction of Sherlock Holmes to detective fiction. In the years since its first appearance in 1887, the saga of the London detective has been eagerly followed. The character transcends fiction, and to many people has taken on the aura of an historical personage.

now of great historical interest and forms an invaluable documentary (as compared to fictional) film record of early 20th Century Mormon activities and leadership. For more on their careers see David Kent Jacobs, pp. 11-31. In 1929 Shirl was killed in an explosion of their film laboratory. Chester was badly burned and never returned to movie work. See "Motion Picture Producer Dies as Blasts Wreck Laboratory," The Salt Lake Tribune, October 24, 1929, pp. 1-2, cols. 5-7; and "S. L. Film Blast Kills 1, Traps 3, Gas Hurts Many," The Deseret News, October 23, 1929, p. 1.
It is not to be wondered at that moviemakers looking for dramatic story material turned to the Doyle novels. In cases like *Mormonbyens Blomst*, discussed above, they virtually stole the plot.

The man who officially brought *A Study in Scarlet* to the screen was British producer and director George B. Samuelson (1888-1947). Samuelson began as a film distributor in 1910 when he chanced to acquire a newsreel made of the funeral of King Edward VII. He managed to double his original investment of fifteen shillings by renting this to a local cinema in his home town of Southport. Once established in business, he never looked back.

By July 1, 1914 Samuelson had opened his own studios at Worton Hall, Iseworth, England where he began by shooting *A Study in Scarlet*. He returned to Southport where he utilized the town's sandy beaches to approximate the desert traversed by the Mormons in their march to Utah. He hired his friend George Pearson (1875-1973) to direct the film, which ran a full six reels (5800 feet). Authorities differ as to whether it received its release on December 28 or December 29, 1914.

106 "Book of Mormon to be Seen in Films," *The Salt Lake Tribune*, December 21, 1913, p. 15, col. 3.

107 Much of the material in this section is based upon an undated program entitled "G. B. Samuelson," prepared by Harold Dunham and Anthony Slide for an exhibition on Samuelson's career assembled by *The Silent Picture* magazine in Great Britain. Also see Ernest Betts, *The Film Business: A History of the British Cinema 1896-1972* (London:
Starred were popular British performers of the day Fred Paul, Agnes Glynne, Harry Paulo, and Winifred Pearson. James Braginton, an accountant from Samuelson's Birmingham office, took the key role of Holmes. Walter Buckstone operated the camera.

The movie, like the book it was based upon, is a murder mystery which the detective is called in to solve. The unravelling leads back to Utah, where the trail of events began. John Ferrier and a little girl are all that survive from an ill-fated wagon train. Near death, they are rescued by a band of Mormon immigrants led by Brigham Young who are making their way to the "promised land." Ferrier adopts Lucy and they prosper among the Saints.

She grows into a fair woman--"The Flower of Utah"--and is commanded by the Prophet to marry one of the eligible young men offered her. As all are polygamists (and she and her adopted father have never paid more than lip service to Mormon teachings), she rebels against the order.


108 Low, British Film 1914-1918, p. 302 says December 28. Dunham and Slide say December 29. This later date agrees with the review appearing in The Moving Picture World, XXII, 13 (December 26, 1914), 1893-1894.
In her quandary Lucy meets a non-Mormon adventurer named Jefferson Hope. He and Lucy fall deeply in love. Eventually they, along with her adopted father, attempt to flee from the Mormon dominated territory. Ferrier is killed by "Avenging Angels" sent out to recapture the girl for her polygamous suitors. She is forced into an unwanted marriage, and in her grief dies of a broken heart. Hope manages to escape and vows vengeance. His consuming desire for revenge eventually leads him to London. There he kills the men who compelled Lucy to marry, but is in turn trapped by the famous detective.\(^{109}\)

Doyle's (and in turn, Samuelson's) portrait of Mormon life is essentially unsympathetic, although the characters do display some variation and are not universally evil. It differs from later Holmes' stories in that a large proportion of the book and film is told in a flashback to Utah in which Holmes and Watson do not appear. Doyle also wrote an anti-Mormon play based upon the novel. The play, entitled "Angels of Darkness," although finished in 1890, was never produced, possibly owing to the fact that Sherlock Holmes did not appear at all in the stage version.\(^{110}\)


Not all film reviewers felt *A Study in Scarlet* an ideal book from which to make a moving picture, although critics were generally pleased with the Samuelson production. Rachael Low in her *History of the British Film, 1914-1918* states that contemporary writers sensed that not even a single scene could be cut out as inessential. Some American reviews, however, stuck to only a bare overview of the plot, and even neglected to mention the Mormon motivation for the murders.

The picture inspired imitators. A comedy spoof entitled *A Study in Scarlet* was released in Britain in 1915. There was also a French version of *A Study in Scarlet* produced in 1914-1915.

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111 Low, *British Film 1914-1918*, p. 233. See also "'A Study in Scarlet.'--Samuelson Film Company's Pictur-esque Adaptation," *The Bioscope*, (October 15, 1914), 203. This article states, for example: "There may be those who, quite reasonably, maintain that as a novel, 'A Study in Scarlet' is not one of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's greatest works. Certainly the author departs very considerably from the traditional detective methods of Sherlock Holmes, and presents us with a vivid, if somewhat overdrawn, picture of Mormon life in the early fifties. The picturesque version of the great Mormon trek to the valley of Utah undoubtedly adds to the interest of the novel as such, while perhaps detracting slightly from its dramatic intensity. However that may be, there can be no doubt regarding the fascination of the film version as supplied by the Samuelson Film Company, which, for realism, interest, and photographic quality, will go far indeed toward placing this youthful producing house in the front rank of English manufacturers."


113 Gifford, citation number 06008.
Although World War I dramatically altered film habits and interests in both Europe and the United States, Samuelson did release one more motion picture utilizing the Mormon theme. This was the 1915 six-part serial adaptation of *The Adventures of Deadwood Dick* based upon the well known character of "penny dreadful" literature fame. Frederic Paul, who played Jefferson Hope in the earlier *A Study in Scarlet*, who took the title role of Deadwood Dick.

Each weekly episode dealt with some aspect of the English adventurer's travels through the Wild West. Parts three (*Deadwood Dick and the Mormons*), and four (*Deadwood Dick Spoils Brigham Young*) both told of Dick's run-in with the Utah Saints.

The general drift of characterization can be gleaned from the titles and Samuelson's previous film efforts.

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114 William K. Everson, *The Detective in Film* (Secaucus, New Jersey: The Citadel Press, 1972). Despite inquiries, no French motion picture archive was able to provide further information or assistance.

115 See Low, *British Film 1914-1918*, p. 176 where she writes: "It is in keeping with the premature sophistication of the early cinema that there was never a true film equivalent of either the penny dreadful or the later Gem and Magnet form of schoolboy serial literature, despite its very large circulation from the 1850s onwards. The only clear case of the adaptation of this type of story in Britain seems to have been Samuelson's series of separate *Adventures of Deadwood Dick* (1915), made by arrangement with that famous source of boys' stories, the Aldine Publishing Company."

116 Gifford, citation numbers 05903-05909.
European demand for anti-Mormon photoplays declined following the release of The Adventures of Deadwood Dick in 1915. Except for the spectacular, but short-lived, renewal of British anti-Mormon film activity in 1922 discussed in a subsequent chapter of this thesis, the genre died out completely among European moviemakers. Perhaps public appetite was satiated. Certainly the outbreak of "The Great War" directed attention to new problems and concerns. The war also led to the withdrawal of Mormon missionaries from the involved nations. This undoubtedly removed "The Mormon Question" from active public scrutiny. Whatever the causes, interest in the production of anti-LDS moving pictures became concentrated in the United States.

In American anti-Mormons eagerly adopted the new mass medium to their own purposes. This led to additional controversy. At the same time, Utahns were banding together to produce motion pictures about local conditions.

117 Unfortunately, the pertinent issues of the British trade periodicals the Kinematograph Weekly and The Bioscope are not found in the holdings of the British Film Institute (BFI). Based upon personal correspondence between Miss Brenda Davies, Head of the Information Department of the BFI, and the writer. Researchers may also wish to consult C. A. Oakley, Where We Came In--Seventy Years of the British Film Industry (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1964), p. 69.

118 See "Salt Lake City Woman Brands Lecturer on Mormons as 'Liar'," The Salt Lake Telegram, January 16, 1914. This was located in the Journal History, January 15, 1914, p. 3.

119 See "Salt Lake Breaks Into the 'Movies'," The Salt Lake Tribune, October 27, 1914, p. 14, col. 3; and David Kent Jacobs, pp. 14-19.
Salt Lake and Ogden entrepreneurs were also busily organizing a host of commercial film enterprises in a series of attempts aimed at establishing the Beehive State as a leading movie center.\(^\text{120}\)

In reviewing the period, one must ask why the predominant view of Mormon life remained so stereotyped? The popular view was undeniably one in which the strange and remote Mormons gleefully murdered innocent travelers under the cover of secret rites. It was further believed that the polygamous leaders constantly sought new women converts in order to satisfy their orgiastic lusts. As we have seen, these twin threads of murder and polygamy dominate the film image of pre-war Mormonism.

The answer lies, as was earlier suggested, in an analysis of the influence of contemporary literature and drama on the commercial motion picture industry. The parallels of film to its sister arts are striking. The literary picture of Mormonism proved to be of resilient interest to the general public. Unfortunately for the Saints, their image outside of Utah was universally poor. As the Mormon writers Lambert and Cracroft observe:

Humorous or horrifying, but generally false, the image of the Latter-day Saint nevertheless played a significant role in the popular literature of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. We will look in vain for an accurate image of a Latter-day Saint in the fiction of this period in America (or Europe), and like the characters on television shoot-up shows, any relationship between fictional and historical Mormons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.\(^\text{121}\)
Later in this same article, they clarify what this popular mental picture of the Saints encompassed:

For the first hundred years or so of our history, most of the magazines and novels that appeared portrayed us either as sly, dark, and seductive missionaries who slinked around the cities of America and Europe, stealing wives and daughters, or as fat, boorish old bishops, plodding around Salt Lake City arranging for a new wife or a raid on a gentile wagon train, or both!122

A number of other studies tend to confirm Lambert and Cracroft's conclusions.123

Although the previous quotes refer to literature alone, it is nevertheless easy to see their relevance to the motion picture. Clearly a relationship between the two exists. We have already seen that scriptwriters and producers willingly reached back into the theater and the novel for story material. Films like The Danites, A Study in Scarlet, and The Adventures of Deadwood Dick evidence this. Most of the other anti-Mormon photoplays were little more than rehashes of the popular anti-Mormon writings of the day. Actually, this was to be expected.

120 See the author's "Utah Filmmakers of the Silent Screen Era" (unpublished paper, Brigham Young University, 1974); and "The History of Utah Film: An Introductory Essay" (unpublished paper, Brigham Young University, 1973). Copies of these have been placed in the Utah State Historical Society Library in Salt Lake City. The former article is tentatively scheduled to be published in The Utah Historical Quarterly early in 1975.

For although the Latter-day Saint community included a number of writers of imagination and talent, it was not until 1898--nearly fifty years after the earliest anti-Mormon fictional writings began to appear--that the first novel of Mormon life by an LDS author was published. This was Nephi Anderson's *Added Upon*. Whatever the reasons for this neglect of letters by the Utah Saints--the sources cited in the footnotes above suggest several--its effect carried over into the stage and later the cinema.


Moving picture production—despite a few notable exceptions—was not a prime concern of the Mormons at this time. And filmmakers, concentrated in New York, Los Angeles, and Europe, had little social intercourse with the still isolated Utahns. Any research into Mormonism by these moviemen would, of course, be dominated by anti-LDS accounts. The Saints can in a sense consider themselves lucky that more anti-Mormon pictures weren't made in these first two decades of the new medium.

It is interesting to note that although the Church readily used journalistic and civic pressure in attempts to prevent the exhibition of those movies it considered slanderous and libelous, no effort was apparently made to get a court judgement against the offending films. This may have been due to the fact that the manufacturers of the controversial photoplays avoided reference to living personalities. Another factor undoubtedly was that libel did not become an established principle of motion picture law until after the bulk of the most strongly anti-LDS films were released. For whatever reasons, the Church avoided the use of this possible remedy.


124 Arrington and Haupt, "Intollerable Zion," p. 256.

The Saints were to face yet another ten years of unfavorable screen portrayals. Although following the high-water mark of 1912 moving picture representations of Mormons became more balanced, this was only a temporary respite. Church protests had done little to materially affect the production of anti-LDS films. Soon the most effective anti-Mormon movie of all time was to receive its theatrical debut. This was the 1917 *A Mormon Maid*.


128. A check of the *Table of Cases-Second Decennial Digest* (1906-1916) (St. Paul: West Publishing Co., 1923); *Table of Cases-Third Decennial Digest* (1916-1926) (St. Paul: West Publishing Co., 1929); and *Table of Cases-Fourth Decennial Digest* (1926-1936) (St. Paul: West Publishing Co., 1938) revealed no record of litigation by the Church involving motion pictures. In fact, only one case brought by the Church was listed (and that in an unrelated area). These digests provide a table of case names for the reported opinions of all courts of record. Included are the highest court of each state plus all Federal courts both high and low. The Church had previously failed in legal attempts to defend polygamy and this may have influenced official thinking. For background see *The Most Holy Principle*, 3 vols. (Murray, Utah: Gems Publishing Company, 1970).
Chapter 4

A MORMON MAID

The first inkling the Saints had of the new picture was a short article appearing in the New York Times on December 17, 1916. The unnamed journalist told his readers that the Lasky studio was producing a Paul West scenario about the days when the Mormons "were becoming the terror of the Western pioneers."\(^1\)

The eastern LDS leadership immediately fired off a strong protest to the Times. Mission President Walter P. Monson spoke for the Saints when he wrote:

It is a little hard, of course, on a newspaper to ask that its movie reporters even strike towards historical accuracy or historical perspective; but I wonder how long the open season is to be on for this stale and much overplayed viewpoint towards the "Mormons"? I mean the viewpoint that makes them serve as a ready first-aid to any lurid writer, novelist, or scenario king who wants to use gore freely.\(^2\)

And in this same letter, which apparently went unpublished by the Times, Monson plaintively asked: "Why must this wholesale slandering of a people go so merrily on?"\(^3\)

Monson's questions were never really answered. Like previous protests, his appeal only served to show how powerless outside Utah the Mormon people were. For A Mormon Maid not only completed its filming, but went on to become an effective and artistic weapon in the anti-Mormon arsenal.

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By March 1917 the picture was ready for general release. During that month, numerous illustrated reviews and articles began appearing in the industry journals. These generally were highly favorable.  

The story itself is not much different from the earlier anti-Mormon melodramas. Its five-reel feature length however did give it time to explore the plot, and the quality of the cinematography was a noted advance over previous efforts.  


3The Deseret Evening News, December 27, 1916, p. 4. Monson denied emphatically that the Mormons were murderers. He stated clearly his belief that "far from being 'terror to the pioneers,' no people in America have been pioneers so completely as the 'Mormons'...What the 'Mormons' were really guilty of was being so far away that the yellow press in New York had free and untrammeled play with them for many years. In winters while the Utah colonists lay snow-bound in the mountains the dispatches 'from Utah' to the New York papers stirred the people in the East mightily and started those tales that have become historically the 'meat' of the lurid writers."

Dora (Mae Murray) is the rambunctious teenage daughter of John and Nancy Hogue (Hobart Bosworth and Edythe Chapman). The family occupies an isolated cabin in the far West "beyond the furthest outpost of civilization." The Mormons, too, have fled westward in order to escape their persecutors. Establishing towns as they went, a title announces, the Saints "perished by hundreds from wounds, hunger and disease but their faith never faltered...Their leader was inspired. His promises were revelations--'inspired revelations.'"

Brigham Young (Richard Cummings) sends out a party led by the Apostle Darius Burr (Noah Beery) to meet a band of foreign converts. The arranged meeting place is not far from the Hogue cabin. While waiting for the new arrivals, the Mormon group notices a band of Indians--"the menace of the plains"--approach the unsuspecting settlers. Young Tom Rigdon (Frank Borzage) is dispatched to warn the family of their impending danger.

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5 The five-reel picture was still an exception in 1917. According to figures compiled by The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures (the old National Board of Censorship renamed) early in 1918, the average film in December 1917 was still only 3.28 reels in length. However, by the end of the First War the five-reel feature photoplay became standard. See Low, British Film 1914-1918, pp. 25-26 where these figures are cited as representative "of a world-wide movement." Also see The Bioscope, (March 7, 1918), p. 6; and L. Jacobs, pp. 159-170.
Rigdon, who is "ignorant of the ugly side of early Mormonism," does as he is instructed. He notices Dora perched in a treetop and immediately they are attracted to one another. He tells the father that because of the Indian threat, the family would do well to return to Salt Lake City with the Mormons. Although Hogue is open to the suggestion, his wife adamantly declares "I'll take my chances with the Indians, not with Mormons." Rigdon then leaves.

Not long after his departure, the Indians make their attack. Tom reads their smoke signals however, and is able to alert the Saints. In a rousing battle the Indians are beaten off. Despite the victory, the cabin and crops are totally destroyed. Destitute, the family has no choice but to accept Mormon aid.

"Two years within the city of the 'Saints' brings prosperity to Hogue and his family," reads a title. Burr becomes envious of Hogue and desires Dora for his own. He tells Brigham Young that "Hogue has become a man of influence. The people look up to him. If he can scoff at our belief in celestial marriage, so will they." As the power behind the throne, Burr's "whispers were translated into revelations" by the definitely subservient filmic Prophet. Young quickly orders that "the revelation must be obeyed! Hogue shall be summoned before the Council!"

Tom and Dora meanwhile have grown very close. Tom attaches a note to a chipmunk and lets it loose at Dora's
window. She is delighted with this love note. But Burr has other plans for her. He makes further inquiries to Brigham Young who breaks into a broad smile as if to say "and you shall have her."

At the Council meeting that night Hogue is told that he must marry within twenty four hours or else! This is no idle threat for the movie Saints are guarded by "four hundred oath bound fanatics" who "held the settlements in an iron ring." These "Avenging Angels" wore terrifying ghostly "hoods and gowns emblazoned with the all seeing eye." The audience is told that "this costume, but with the cross substitute for the eye, was later adopted by the Ku Klux Klan."

Hogue's pleading to be released from this commandment is to no avail. He is warned that "Blood Atonement" is his only alternative. Later, his twenty four hours up, he is forced by the "Angels" to return to the Council. Once there he is dressed in ceremonial clothing and told that the Mormon leadership is willing to be lenient. "Give your daughter in celestial marriage publicly and heaven will be satisfied. You or your daughter. Choose!"  

6For representative studies of the celestial marriage teachings see Francis M. Darter, The Four Rejected Revelations; Celestial Marriage (3rd ed.; Salt Lake City: (n.p.), 1948); Orson Pratt, "Celestial Marriage," included in Mormonism (New York: Derby and Jackson, 1859); Joseph Fielding Smith, Blood Atonement and the Origin of Plural Marriage (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1905); and Jerald and Sandra Tanner, pp. 202-230, 455-457.
Faced with this undesirable alternative, he consents to his own second marriage in order to protect his daughter. Dora, who has been brought to watch on orders from Burr, exclaims that she will marry to save her father. But this is to no avail, and Hogue reluctantly enters into the celestial covenant.

Dora is taken to the Apostle's home where she is cared for by his five wives. Burr's unrestrained glee is evident for he plans to marry her as quickly as possible. Dora is told to calm herself by one of the wives who tells her, "You see I'm your Aunt now. Your father's new wife is my sister." This only further agitates the young girl.

Hogue returns home to his unsuspecting wife. She suspects something is amiss when the new wife is brought in by a hooded escort. The truth dawns on her and in horror she locks herself in an inner room. Nancy looks upward to pray for deliverance and spies a loaded revolver. Her hand grasps the gun.

Dora runs screaming from the house of Burr and enters her family home just as the pistol goes off. Breaking down the door, Hogue and the others find the prostrate body of his wife. Dora breaks down and sobs in grief.

The camera makes a fade-in iris on Tom, Dora, and her father at her mother's newly dug gravesite. Also there is the everpresent Burr in "Danite" garb who orders the "Avenging Angels" to surround the trio. In a furious ride
and fight sequence they are subdued, but not before several
of the hooded Mormons lie dead. Hogue manages to struggle
free from his captors and shoot two of them before he in
turn is shot. Dora flailing in grief makes her way to her
fallen father who lies apparently dead on the ground.
Her hands are covered by his blood, and her suffering now
is made all the greater.

Tom is taken to a guarded room, while Burr returns
with Dora to his home. After ordering his other wives out,
he tells her: "I'll hold you to your promise to be my
wife." Her pleading is to no avail. He leaves to arrange
the wedding, and she with nothing else to do picks up a
book entitled Celestial Marriage and Revelation. She
reads "and again as pertains of all the priesthood, if any
man expouses a second wife and she is a virgin then he is
justified. If he hath ten virgins given unto him..."?7
A plan begins to formulate in her mind.

The ceremony begins. Tom has been brought to
watch, but is powerless to intervene. Dora--lying to
protect herself from Burr's defilement--tells the assembled
group that she cannot marry the Apostle because she is not
a virgin and he is thus not "justified." Tom does not know
she is not telling the truth and is crestfallen by the news.

7A reference to the revelation now printed as
Section 132 of the Utah Church's version of The Doctrine
and Covenants. See The Doctrine and Covenants (Salt Lake
City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,
1968), pp. 239-245. The film title quotation is a loose
Brigham Young is forced by these unexpected developments to stop the wedding. As Dora is led out, the Prophet turns to Burr and tells him that "she has tricked you." Burr then orders a nearby hooded man to bring the girl to him privately at Jordan Rock.

Tom has left the Council chambers and makes his way to Dora's house. Dora is still there, and she asks him if he heard her tell why she could not marry Burr. He silently nods assent, and in shame she breaks down and cries. True to his love for her, he comforts Dora. She tells him how she had been forced to lie. Now united, they determine to prevent the marriage no matter what. Tom leaves to make preparations for their escape. Meanwhile the guard sent by Burr nears the house with some other men. Seeing their chance, the riders enter and take her forcefully to the waiting Apostle.

Rigdon finds out what has happened. Aiding him is a masked avenger who disapproves of Burr's plans. They ride furiously to the Jordan Rock rendezvous. Burr tells Dora that she will now pay for scoffing at his faith. At this moment he is surprised by Tom and the renegade Mormon. In the struggle Burr drops his gun. Dora picks it up and fires directly into Burr's head. Their leader dead, the other "Angels" are quickly subdued. Tom hugs Dora for joy, but she is afraid of the man assisting him. The hood is removed to reveal her father!

A flashback sequence shows that his wound in the
earlier gunfight, though bloody, was only superficially inflicted. Left for dead, he took the clothing of one of the lifeless "Angels." By hiding, he was able to recover his strength in time to help rescue his daughter. Now free from the clutches of the evil Elder and the Mormons, they ride off on horseback in the dead of night "into a land of golden promise."\(^8\)

The story is reminiscent of previous anti-LDS photoplays. It is at once apparent that the plot of an innocent non-Mormon family with an attractive daughter caught up in the machinations of the polygamous Elders is again repeated here. Indeed the repetition of this basic allegation and theme is common to all the anti-Mormon productions. The relationship to the earlier Mormonbyens Blomst (1911), The Mormon (1912), and A Study in Scarlet (1914), as well as the later Trapped by the Mormons (1922) and Married to a Mormon (1922) is striking.

What makes A Mormon Maid so unusual and important is its clear (though now largely forgotten) derivation from D. W. Griffith's epochal The Birth of a Nation, the extreme high quality of its production, and the extent of its use for anti-Mormon propaganda.

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\(^8\)The quotes in the above synopsis are taken from the titles appearing in the film, based upon tape recorded notes made by the author at a viewing of the film on April 13, 1973. Copies exist at The Library of Congress as well as in private collections. Several firms distribute prints commercially to collectors for home use.
The association of A Mormon Maid and The Birth of a Nation is particularly important in reconstructing early motion picture history. As David S. Bradley, an instructor in cinema history at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), relates:

I happen to think that A Mormon Maid is of great historical importance despite the neglect shown it by writers on film. Because of its obvious relationship to Griffith's work and also because of its strong anti-Mormon position, the picture deserves renewed attention. We are now beginning to look back at these older films to see how they represented and influenced our attitudes and sense of values, and how these now perhaps have changed. A Mormon Maid is typical of these sociologically important pictures that have not been lost physically, but have remained too long neglected and unstudied in some archive or private collection.

The Birth of a Nation changed the face of Hollywood. It's not surprising that somebody picked up the idea after the commercial success of this groundbreaking picture and said, "Let's do another Birth of a Nation with a little different twist." This is part and parcel of the movie business. Once something makes a lot of money, others think that they'll repeat if they follow the same formula. Often it doesn't work out that way, but filmmakers keep trying. A Mormon Maid fits in this general pattern.

The film's use of Klan-like Mormon characters is particularly interesting. The two are definitely linked in the plot of the picture with the clannish insulation and isolation of the group emphasizing the bizaarity of the Mormons life style. Because it seemed such a near copy of Birth of a Nation, I arranged a showing not long after we presented Griffith's film here at UCLA in order to emphasize the parallels. Most everyone was indignant at Griffith's portrayal of the Negro and his glorification of the Klan. However, when we presented A Mormon Maid nobody protested at all. No one seemed to know much about the Mormons, and although the similarities in actions by the Klan and the Avenging Angels were obvious, no one appeared to mind. It might be described as a kind of selective outrage.9

Bradley's observations are particularly pertinent for they emphasize the difficulty the Latter-day Saint people have traditionally had in convincing public opinion that there was more to Mormonism than polygamy. *A Mormon Maid* continued the anti-Mormon film trend popularized by other secular movie interests.

As was indicated earlier, what made *A Mormon Maid* singularly dangerous to the Utah Saints was its technical brilliance and the scope and intensity of its exhibition. The entire production is handsomely mounted. The photography is superior to most film dramas of its day with sharp, striking imagery evidenced throughout. Superbly artistic lighting and composition clearly show the hand of the cameraman, Charles Rosher. Rosher was one of the small group of top-flight cinematographers who in the silent era "changed the look of American films." He is individually credited with transforming "motion-picture photography from a skilled craft into a fine art," and his work is easily recognizable here.\(^1\)

Robert Z. Leonard, the director, was of only moderate talent. But he was intelligent enough to use men of value and experience like Rosher under him in order to maximize his effort on *A Mormon Maid*. Another factor was

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that Leonard at this time was deeply in love with the picture's star, Mae Murray, and for this reason lavished more attention on its production values than he might otherwise have done.\footnote{They later married. See Jane Ardmore, The Self-Enchanted, Mae Murray: Image of an Era (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1959), pp. 79, 93.}

Unfortunately, Murray was no actress\footnote{See Joe Franklin, Classics of the Silent Screen--A Pictorial Treasury (New York: Citadel Press, 1959), p. 206 where Franklin writes that Mae "never was a great actress and never pretended to be. But she was a vibrant personality; she had a face that millions of moviegoers knew and loved." Murray published an autobiography which appeared under the title "My Memories," in the Hearst press' American Weekly from May 24, 1942 through July 12, 1942. In these she does not specifically mention A Mormon Maid, although she does discuss her romance with Leonard.} and her ludicrous performance as the tragedy torn Dora mars the film, at least for modern audiences. The emphasis on a pixvish fluttering heroine had been made popular by the ingenues Lillian Gish and Mary Pickford, then "America's Sweetheart." Although Murray was a competent dancer, she was unable to copy their style and bring off her part realistically.

It must be admitted, however, that despite the overly exuberant nature of her performance in an otherwise unrelentingly grim and somber picture, contemporary reviewers enjoyed the entire photoplay including Murray's rendition of Dora.
Peter Milne writing in the *Motion Picture News* is typical in his review when he states that the film:

...contains a wonderfully strong plot that possesses several moments of the greatest dramatic power. In its production Robert Leonard has utilized the artistic prerogatives of the director to good effect chiefly in his panoramic scenes. The groupings of the Destroying Angels, the fight between the Mormons and the Indians and the attempted escape of Hogue and his daughter are events that are handled superbly and create a strong measure of suspense.

The cast of the play does capable work. Mae Murray in the title role, though her tendency to become Pickfordian was never more prominent, creates an appealing character in the shape of Dora. Hobart Bosworth has a strong role as her father, who, by his fierce fight against the unjust principles of Mormonism is constantly the center of admiration...The players have been directed after the customary Lasky fashion in that they continually approach the foreground, where the full significance of their every expression and sometimes the falsities of their makeup are magnified.13

George Blaisdell in his critique appearing in *The Moving Picture World* also found *A Mormon Maid* powerful entertainment. He admitted that "the subject is being exploited as anti-Mormon propaganda," but declared interest in that phase of the film. Rather, he felt it could stand on its own cinematic appeal.14

13 *Motion Picture News*, March 3, 1917, p. 1419. Milne was no authority on Mormonism for he also writes that the film dealt with "Mormonism at the period of its height, in the year 1848." At that date the Utah settlers had only been in the Great Salt Lake area for about a year and were then barely surviving. Milne also felt the "picture seems perfectly suited to the requirements of the states rights man. Well produced and setting forth a theme that will undoubtedly evoke considerable comment due to the innumerable revelations of the laws of the Mormon faith, it carries advertising possibilities manifold within its footage. Commercially worthy its artistic merit is no less prominent." The movie was shot on orthochromatic film stock which tended to emphasize contrast and makeup.
Artistically, the film stands out as an excellent example (again excepting Mae Murray's performance) of the best in early Hollywood filmmaking. In addition to Rosher's superb camerawork and choice of lighting and composition, some credit must also go to the art director Wilfred Buckland, the unnamed editor, and the Lasky Company's Director General Cecil B. DeMille. David Bradley attributes a definite DeMille influence in the stylized use of close-ups in Noah Beery's portrayal of the evil Apostle Darius Burr.15

14 The Moving Picture World, March 3, 1917, p. 1372. Blaisdell wrote in the same article: "Accepting as accurate the conditions alleged to exist in the fifties in the large territory dominated by the Mormons, or accepting them as an exaggeration, 'A Mormon Maid' is an absorbing story, well acted and well produced. There is no suggestion that the situations outlined have anything to do with the present day. It is strong drama, with its full measure of suspense, with its accompaniment of the tragedies that ensue in a primitive region when men of strong will meet at the crossing of the paths." Although Blaisdell indicates that the story was divorced from the present day, it shall be demonstrated later in this chapter how others attempted to link the two in order to destroy Mormonism.

15 DeMille received screen credit in his role of Director General, although no standard works on DeMille mention any personal work on the picture. Despite this, it is clear that he must have approved its release. In later years he had a very warm relationship with LDS President David O. McKay. See Cecil B. DeMille, The Autobiography of Cecil B. DeMille, ed. Donald Hayne (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1959), pp. 433-434; and Cecil B. DeMille, Commencement Address (Provo: Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year--Extension Division, 1957), p. 3. Noah Beery won a three and a half year contract with Lasky as a result of his work in this film. See Hal C. Herman (ed.), How I Broke Into the Movies--Signed Autobiographies by Sixty Famous Screen Stars (Hollywood: published by the author, 1930), p. 123.
The editing throughout is modern and cleanly executed. The story itself moves quickly and competently towards the inevitable battle for freedom by the young lovers. Compositions of powerful imagery and lyrical quality are evidenced throughout. An unrelenting documentary feeling is inherent in the film, and this is further emphasized by the prologue attached to some versions.

The prologue consists of extracts from the June 11, 1906 United States Senate majority report on the Mormon Church prepared as part of the investigation surrounding the controversial selection of Reed Smoot as Utah's senatorial representative. Although Smoot was eventually seated, the national attention focused on the hearings aided anti-LDS partisans. Popular fear of Mormonism and polygamy found natural expression in films and campaigns typified by the exploitation of *A Mormon Maid*.

Eastern exhibitors openly stressed the alleged historicity of the photoplay with extravagant copy. Representative of the thinking of these moviemen are the following unqualified assertions:

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This picture gives an insight into the practices of Mormonism by depicting the covetous pursuit by one of the Elders of a daughter of a pioneer who has come under Mormon influence...Forced marriages, under pressure of the Mormon Council and the well known system of Mormon spies, are also pictured realistically. "The Mormon Maid" (sic) is an accurate and truthful narrative of Mormonism in early Utah and the scenes have been taken in the country in which the incidents occurred. The faithful reproduction of the early Mormon as he was, cold and stolid, with his religion, is given throughout.17

The veracity of the unknown press agent is, however, called into question on such a simple thing as where the film was made. For the scenes were not "taken in the country in which the incidents occurred" as we are told, but rather on the Lasky Ranch in California.18 While it is true that individual Mormons entered into polygamy in this period, it is unlikely that the portrayal of Mormon life found in A Mormon Maid even vaguely corresponded with common pioneer reality.19

17"A Mormon Maid," The Christian Statesman (published by The National Reform Association of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania), LI, 6 (June 1917), p. 276. All articles cited in this thesis from The Christian Statesman can be consulted in originals at the BYU Library or on Microfilm Number M 209 ALD in the LDS Church Archives. See also the double-page advertisement appearing in The Moving Picture World, XXXI, 9 (March 3, 1917), 1308-1309 where it declared this to be "a realistic film with a real tragedy about real people." While full and double-page ads were not uncommon in the movie trade journals, the extent of the publicity surrounding the release of A Mormon Maid proved to be unusually sustained.

18"Ranch" in the Hollywood lexicon meant an outdoor location site. See "Treeing Mae Murray Just to Shoot Her," Photoplay, (February 1917), p. 35; and Ardmore, p. 79 which both state it was filmed at the Lasky Ranch. Leonard had to have the bush beaten every night for snakes before shooting.
The author was unable to find documentation to support the assertion that somehow the Ku Klux Klan took its distinctive costuming from the Utah Mormons. Whatever the truth of the matter, it was likely seen as a neat way to tie-in to the earlier success of *The Birth of a Nation*. David Bradley feels this is certainly true. *Variety* also noted the relationship when its reviewer call *A Mormon Maid*:

...straight way drama of the strongest kind with not a single wasted foot, occupying the same relation to Mormonism that "A Birth of a Nation" (sic) does to the colored question.20

One can to some degree empathize with LDS Eastern Mission President Walter Monson in his earlier futile protest over the alleged historical inaccuracies in the production.21

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19 See pp. 5-7 of this thesis above.

20 Quoted in the ad for *A Mormon Maid* appearing in *The Moving Picture World*, XXXI, 10 (March 10, 1917), 1448-1449.

21 *The Deseret Evening News*, December 27, 1916, p. 4. The News further editorialized in that article that "President Monson is right, and *The Times* is entirely mistaken, in the statement that the 'Mormons' are not 'untouched by the movies.' They have been vilified on screen after screen from the day the moving picture first came in, though it must be said that in some scenarios an effort has been made to do justice to them. It is a satisfaction to be able to say further that the film story to which *The Times* so gayly refers was promptly rejected by local managers and producers when offered to them, with the intimation that while anything quite as 'yellow' might be acceptable in certain localities, it would find no favor in the West where the 'Mormons' and their history were better known. Purveyors of such slander as this particular play is said to carry, deserve to be pilloried; and the producers whose sole motive is to pander to the sensation-loving and baser instincts of their clientele, are paving...
Any protests on the part of the Mormon and Utah authorities did little to dampen the excitement surrounding the release and exhibition of *A Mormon Maid*. Full and double-page advertisements appeared in industry journals throughout March 1917. On March 3 it was declared "The Trade Sensation of The Year! A Stupendous Thrilling Expose Of A Hidden Chapter of American Life."\(^{22}\) By March 10 it was "The Best Advertised Screen Feature in America."\(^{23}\) On March 17 exhibitors were told that the film would "Electrify Not Only Utah But The Whole United States."\(^{24}\) On March 24 it was reported that the picture recorded "896 Inquiries In One Week From Buyers, Bookers and Exhibitors Throughout the Country on States Rights."\(^{25}\) And by the end of the month "Buy 'A Mormon Maid'" was "The Message That Is Making The Wires Of A Nation Hum."\(^{26}\)

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the way by such conduct for a stricter censorship than they have any present idea of." An attempt was made to implement a statewide censorship law in Utah during 1917. See D. W. Cummings, "Utah Censorship Discussion," and other related material in *The Moving Picture World*, XXXI, 8 (February 24, 1917), 1237. This was averted when local exhibitors and showmen voluntarily agreed to eliminate "objectionable" photoplays from the state. See the author's "The History of Utah Film: An Introductory Essay," pp. 19-22 for details.

\(^{22}\) See *The Moving Picture World*, March 3, 1917, pp. 1308-1309. This ad also perpetuated the falsehood that the picture had somehow captured something totally new to moviemaking when it declared *A Mormon Maid* "The Most Difficult Thing to Find in the Film-Field Today...A Sensational Picture With A New Theme. No Such Shower of Praise In The Records Of States Rights Pictures."

\(^{23}\) *The Moving Picture World*, March 10, 1917, pp. 1448-1449. This illustrated advertisement contains numerous quotes from the trade press.
In its early release the film was controlled by the then newly incorporated Friedman Enterprises. The firm of Hiller & Wilk, Incorporated acted as sales agents.\(^{27}\) They bombarded the country with various promotional inducements. One million post cards, one thousand twenty-four sheet posters, a nation-wide newspaper campaign "agitating afresh the unusual character of the production." and other similar activities aimed at both the trade and lay publics swamped the United States.\(^{28}\)

The first trade showing as the Strand Theatre in New York on February 14, 1917 reportedly attracted the largest trade audience in the show house's experience.\(^{29}\)

\(^{24}\)See *The Moving Picture World*, XXXI, 11 (March 17, 1917), 1714. This ad reprinted the review appearing in *Wid's*, III, 8 (February 22, 1917). The *Wid's* critic was enthusiastic about this "Gripping Drama, Artistically Done, Attacking Mormon Polygamy." He told exhibitors that it was "a production which should get money anywhere. It has exceptional advertising possibilities because of the attack against the Mormon religion, in which most every one is interested. Since their knowledge of this great force is limited and the fact that the production shows the Mormon guards in the white-robbed costume of the clans in 'The Birth of A Nation' gives this an added interest. You can safely promise that this is one of the greatest five-reel melodramas ever produced....By intelligent use of the Mormon guards costume and properly playing up the curiosity of most folks as to the Mormon faith you should be able to do a lot of business with this."

\(^{25}\) *The Moving Picture World*, XXXI, 12 (March 24, 1917), 1887. This advertisement states the film is "a six-part drama of early Mormon days." Most other accounts indicate this occurred in five reels.

\(^{26}\)See *The Moving Picture World*, XXXI, 13 (March 31, 1917), 2058.
This trade interest was not short lived. Fully three years after its initial release *A Mormon Maid* was still playing regularly throughout the country to paying customers. It is also known to have been shown in Great Britain.\(^\text{30}\)

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\(^{27}\) Little written information is readily available on the firm of Hiller & Wilk. The "Wilk" of the duo was Jacob Wilk, an important motion picture literary agent who died in 1956. For biographical information on him see the book by his son Max Wilk, *The Wit and Wisdom of Hollywood* (New York: Atheneum, 1971), pp. xvi-xix. Hiller & Wilk obviously had little understanding of Utah conditions. In April 1917 they told reporters that they were considering taking the picture to the Beehive State "and giving a grand showing in the Mormon tabernacle in Salt Lake City." See "'The Mormon Maid' May Come to Utah," *The Salt Lake Tribune*, April 22, 1917, Magazine Section, p. 5, col. 6.


\(^{29}\) That is if the advertisement in *The Moving Picture World*, March 5, 1917, pp. 1308-1309 is to be believed. It is an historical curiosity that the film was released through Friedman on an independent states rights basis. Lasky productions were generally offered through Paramount. For some reason—perhaps because of its controversial nature—this was not. However, the original script for *A Mormon Maid* is now to be found in Carton 62 of the Paramount Pictures Collection at The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS) Library in Los Angeles. This unfortunately is not available for public study until 1975 when the entire collection—now in closed storage—is moved to the anticipated new home for the Academy.

\(^{30}\) See "A Mormon Maid," *The Bioscope*, (September 5, 1918). *The Bioscope* reviewer felt that "ever since Joe Smith went into the wilds and came back with his new ideas for the structure of society a romantic interest has always
The reason for this unprecedented publicity lies in its dramatically visual facility for anti-LDS propaganda. That it was seen as such has already been indicated, although the film's primary purpose must have originally commercial. At this time, however, there were organized groups actively and vehemently opposing the "Mormon Menace," some of whom latched onto the picture for their own purposes. Foremost among these anti-Mormon activists was the National Reform Association (NRA), headquartered in Pittsburgh. Reference has already been made to their periodical The Christian Statesman which regularly published anti-LDS articles on the "evil of Mormonism" in the name of "Christian duty." Undoubtedly many within the movement were sincere in their hatred of polygamy. They probably were honest in their belief that it was their responsibility to lead the effort to eradicate what they construed as a conspiracy on the part of LDS officials to perpetuate plural marriage.

Whatever lie behind their motives, it is certain that groups like the NRA approved of A Mormon Maid. The Christian Statesman ran favorable reports of its success well into 1918.31

centered upon Salt Lake, the home of the Mormons, and, as they style it, the 'kingdom of God on earth.' Drama in this instance has clutched hold of a strong theme connected with this sect, and although in reality they are not quite so bad as they are often painted, in this instance the Mormon elders are tyrants who force their customs upon unwilling visitors to their community." Exhibitors were nevertheless recommended to use it.
Despite continued publicity and moral support, the NRA declined to financially back the picture because it wished to disassociate itself from any charges of purely commercial interest. This did not stop others who moved to form "The National Anti-Mormon League." The impetus behind this new group was Samuel D. Matthews, "a New York City Jewish lawyer," who headed a combine controlling the screen rights to *A Mormon Maid* in twenty-one states.  

According to *The Christian Statesman*’s report, invitations dated September 3, 1918 were sent by the League to prominent civic figures in Rochester, New York, worded as follows:

The National Anti-Mormon League invites you to attend a private complimentary exhibition of the propaganda picture, "A Mormon Maid," to be presented for the clergymen and their wives, philanthropists, settlement workers among club women, and others in Rochester, at the Strand Theatre, Thursday morning, September 5th, at 10 o’clock. Before the picture Miss Myrtle Edwards will give a brief lecture. After the picture, Mrs. Nellie B. Van Slingerland will explain the purpose of the League and organize a local branch.

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Following the film, Mrs. Van Slingerland (who was apparently employed by Matthews) guided the audience in forming a committee which included eight of the leading clerics in the city, among them Reverend James A. Dobbs, the local representative of The National Reform Association. The League evinced "no definite program, other than an amendment of our marriage and divorce laws." Here the League's organizers made a tactical error. 34 What raised the ire of the NRA was the new group's assertion that no other anti-Mormon organizations were actively combatting the Utah Church. With the recent lecture activities of NRA speakers still fresh in their memories, at the urging of Reverend Dobbs the members of the local committee decided not to endorse the League. 35

32 See "'A Mormon Maid' and 'The National Anti-Mormon League'," The Christian Statesman, LII, 10 (October 1918), 476-478. This indicates that press reports on the new group also appeared in the Rochester (New York) Democrat and Chronicle and the Brooklyn (New York) Eagle on September 17, 1918. In the case of the Eagle, items on the League can be found scattered throughout various September editions. See also the letter of Reed Smoot to Heber J. Grant, September 21, 1918. This is located in the Reed Smoot Collection, MS 1187, Container 48, Folder 8 in the Brigham Young University Library Archives. Hereafter this is referred to as BYU Archives.

33 The Christian Statesman, October 1918, p. 476. New York was one of the states where rights were controlled to the film by Matthews.

34 The Christian Statesman, October 1918, p. 477. What this amendment was to encompass is not clear.

Thwarted in their attempt in Rochester, the League's organizers moved on to other New York cities. Its success in these was to some degree muted. The Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, for example, ran a letter in its September 17, 1918 issue which purported to be from Nathan S. Stronge, formerly the manager of The National Anti-Mormon League. He is quoted as stating that he severed all connections with the organization when he learned that its motives were "purely mercenary, the ultimate purpose being to bring financial return to one, Samuel D. Matthews, lawyer, who poses as secretary" of the League.\footnote{36 Quoted in The Christian Statesman, October 1918, p. 477.} Attempts in Brooklyn also met opposition from NRA members.\footnote{37 See The Christian Statesman, October 1918, pp. 477-478.}

Such infighting between the two most organized anti-LDS groups in America gave small consolation to the Mormon leaders in Salt Lake and the young missionaries in the field. Despite the setbacks outlined above, the League continued its activities into the 1920's. Elder John F. West laboring for the Church in Albemarle, North Carolina wrote a letter to The Box Elder News in Utah describing the difficulties the League's crusade was causing the missionary program. He and his companion arrived in the town to find it blanketed with handbills publicizing the
Mae Murray vehicle.

The words "A Mormon Maid" were written in thorns to emphasize the alleged LDS threat. According to West, the handbills boldly proclaimed "that all scenes were taken from the Mormon public temples" and that "it was a tale of Mormonism...today."38

West felt that these anti-Mormon activities were hampering the mission work of the Elders. A short time earlier, he reports, Mrs. Lulu Loveland Shepard toured North Carolina and her "misrepresentations of the true condition in Utah and also the doctrines of our church" led to "an increase in opposition to us in our labors." As a result, he promised that "in the future we intend putting forth a greater effort in spreading the Truth."39

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38 Letter of Elder John F. West entitled "Anti-Mormon Crusade On," The Box Elder News (Brigham City, Utah), June 4, 1920, p. 4, col. 3. The letter is marred by numerous typographical and grammatical errors. See also Linda Lambert, "Image of Mormons in Films," p. 15; and a clipping of the letter located in The Manuscript History of The Southern States Mission, 1920-1922 at the LDS Church Archives. The costumes pictured in the wedding ceremony (which were played up in the advertising in Albemarle as elsewhere) bear an admittedly strong resemblance to those used within the temple. See Jerald and Sandra Tanner, pp. 455-464. The local paper in Albemarle is called The Stanley News and Press. A written request by the author that the editor check his back files for information on the crusade's activities during 1920 in connection with the showing of A Mormon Maid elicited no reply.

39 The Box Elder News, June 4, 1920, p. 4.
Unfortunately, there has been little agreement on just what that "Truth" is. The screen, like the lecture and the book, has acted as a handy forum from which opposing ideological forces have attacked one another.

_A Mormon Maid_ is only one of many films which were eagerly utilized for propaganda purposes by enemies of the Mormon faith. Although more extensively and effectively employed than the others, it was certainly not to be the last such photoplay. Soon the popular novels of Zane Grey were to attract the interest of filmmakers looking for a solid story. Regrettably for the LDS Church, his most successful book, _Riders of the Purple Sage_, paints an envelopingly vivid tale of polygamy and revenge in the harsh southern Utah desert.
Chapter 5

THE ZANE GREY WESTERNS

The studio that first realized the movie potential of the Zane Grey novels was the Fox Film Corporation controlled by William Fox.¹ He astutely recognized that the runaway success of The Birth of a Nation following its release in 1915 would dramatically change the face of the motion picture industry. Unlike the backers of A Mormon Maid who merely imitated the Griffith film, Fox "decided that if a successful book could be made into a successful motion picture, then the thing to do was to buy a successful book."² But if one best-selling novel could be obtained, then so could two. According to Zane Grey's biographer, Fox:

...saw Zane Grey in New York and offered him twenty-five hundred dollars for the picture rights to Riders of the Purple Sage. When Grey hesitated, Fox offered him an additional twenty-five hundred for a second book...Grey accepted the offer.³

¹Fox's own story parallels that of many of the early motion picture moguls. Born in 1879 in Hungary of German-Jewish parents, he came as an infant to the States with his family. After a variety of jobs in New York, he entered the nickelodeon business. By 1910 he owned a string of theaters. With Carl Laemmle he led the challenges against the Patents Company strangulation, and eventually helped to bring it down. Soon he organized his own film purchasing and distributing firm, and not long after began to make his own pictures under the Fox Film banner.
Grey's Riders of the Purple Sage has entered into many printings since it was first released in 1912. Over the years it has become "probably the most popular Western ever written." Grey was helped by first hand experience gained in travels through Utah and Arizona. This combined with his mastery of descriptive language to elevate his work far above the average writing on the Mormon West. But while he retains a continuing popularity, it is also true that Riders of the Purple Sage differs little in basic plot from many of the formula anti-Mormon novels.

The action takes place in 1871 at Cottonwoods, a remote border settlement in southern Utah. A rich and beautiful Mormon girl named Jane Withersteen (Mary Merch) is out of favor with her Church because she has been doing charitable work for impoverished non-Mormons. More importantly, she scorns the ardent Elder Tull (Murdock McQuarrie) who wants to marry her.

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3Gruber, p. 131.

4From a full-page advertisement by The Zane Grey Library of Roslyn, New York appearing in the newspaper supplement magazine Parade, (February 18, 1973), 28.
Former Texas Ranger Jim Lassiter (William Farnum) rides into Cottonwoods in search of his sister Millie (Katherine Adams), who has been abducted by a Mormon "raiding party." He arrives in time to save one of Jane's innocent Gentile riders (Venters—played by William Scott) from the wrath of Elder Tull. Eventually Lassiter and Jane fall in love.

Venters leaves to ride down the rustlers who have been stealing Withersteen cattle. He discovers them beyond Deception Pass, led by a masked rider. Venters shoots at the leader and discovers that he has wounded a woman. He nurses her back to health—and love.

Lassiter eventually learns that his sister is dead. His hatred for the Mormons boils over when he discovers that a young orphaned girl has also been kidnapped by Church members. He enters the Mormon meetinghouse, kills Dyer (M. B. Robbins), their leader, and escapes with the girl. With her and Jane he flees to Deception Pass, where they find Venters and the masked rider (also played by Katherine Adams). Lassiter recognizes her as his sister's daughter, Bess. With the encouragement of Lassiter and Jane, Venters and Bess make their escape from the pursuing religionists and leave Utah to make a new life together.

Jane and Lassiter with young Fay (Nancy Caswell) climb to the high cliffs above the pass. He finds a narrow passageway leading into an isolated pocket canyon. Guarding the entrance is a precariously balanced rock. Lassiter
hurls the rock down on the Mormons below. Tull is crushed in the avalanche and the trio are safely sealed within their valley paradise.  

This first Fox version of Riders of the Purple Sage was released on September 1, 1918 and faithfully recreated the essential outline of Grey's book. William Farnum as Lassiter was well received, and the success of this first Zane Grey Western feature ensured the continuance of the author's work on the screen.  

The reviewers and general public found the film solidly produced entertainment. For example, P. S. Harrison writing in the Motion Picture News called it "Good Western Stuff." Walter K. Hill was even more enthusiastic in his trade critique:

With a corking good novel to begin with, manly William Farnum to play its star part, and an evenly balanced and talented supporting company to manipulate, Director Frank Lloyd could do no less than turn out the entirely satisfactory entertainment "Riders of the Purple Sage" affords. There is the dash and fire of the open plains and strength of the rugged mountains to inspire the imagination; horsemen ride with skill and daring that quicken the pulse of the spectator, and William Farnum acts the hero's part with wholesome naturalness that merits unstinted praise. Zane Grey's story of life among the Mormons many years ago lends itself admirably to screen representation. Mr. Farnum and his associates went to ideal locations to reflect the "atmosphere" of the piece and then and there collaborated to a delightful moving picture conclusion. Best of all there is promise of more of these Zane Grey stories, although this number is complete in itself.  

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The Fox studio management, in a statement given to the trade papers, was ecstatic over the popular and critical success of this initial Zane Grey production. It was reported that first-run houses were doing "tremendous business" and that, as a result, Fox's policy of using only novels and plays that had achieved definite literary or financial acceptance would continue.⁹

⁶Farnum was part of a famous acting family that included his brothers Dustin and Franklyn. For a popular overview of his career see Mario A. DeMarco, "Real West Movie Hall of Fame--William Farnum," Real West (Derby, Connecticut), XVII, 124 (February 1974), 32-33.

⁷P. S. Harrison, "'Riders of the Purple Sage'--Fox," Motion Picture News, XVIII, 12 (September 21, 1913). This provides an excellent summary of the film version's action.

⁸Walter K. Hill, "Riders of the Purple Sage," The Moving Picture World, XXXVII, 12 (September 21, 1918), 1771. Hill also enthused: "If the screen ever served an entertaining purpose it will be acclaimed as useful and engaging while this Zane Grey passes in satisfying review."

⁹"William Farnum Scores in 'Riders of the Purple Sage'," The Moving Picture World, XXXVII, 13 (September 28, 1913), 1899. This article notes that "the run of 'Riders of the Purple Sage' in Los Angeles may be taken as an example. The engagement in that city was at the Kinema Theatre, and because of the experience of this theatre with male stars since its opening nine months ago the success of 'Riders of the Purple Sage' is especially gratifying. The manager of the Kinema says that he has played numerous male stars since he opened his theatre, but all of them had proved failures. William Farnum in 'Riders of the Purple Sage,' however, opened on Sunday to a record crowd. Moreover, the crowds continued throughout the whole week, capacity houses being the rule at every performance. The manager reports that he did the biggest business he has ever done..."
The box-office for this first Zane Grey vehicle insured that others would follow. Fox wisely had taken the opportunity to film the sequel to *Riders* while he had his principals together. Like its predecessor, *The Rainbow Trail* faithfully followed the spirit of the author's novel. The picture opens with Lassiter (again played by William Farnum) rolling down the huge rock which blocks the valley entrance. Years pass as Fay (Ann Forrest) grows into a beautiful woman.

Lassiter's kinsman Shefford (also acted by Farnum) sets out in search of the lost trio. His Mormon enemies, however, learn of the plan and precede him to the closed canyon. Their leader, Wagoner (William Burress), orders his men to make an opening. Once this is effected, Wagoner takes Fay from the old couple and forces her to accompany him to the "City of Sealed Wives" where the Mormons imprison their plural wives. Not long after this, U. S. marshals raid the settlement and arrest the Mormons for illegally practicing polygamy. The case against them is shattered when the women, out of fear, deny they are married.

Shefford notices Fay at the trial and falls in love with her. He helps her to escape and together they ride away to rescue Lassiter and Jane. Wagoner is killed by an Indian when he attempts to follow. Other Mormons pursue the couple in the belief that Shefford is responsible for Wagoner's death. As the lovers near the valley, they are set upon by their enemies "and a hot battle ensues."
Shefford, Fay, and the others are only saved by the arrival of the Federal marshals, who were warned by the faithful Indian.\(^{10}\)

Theater owners, while cautioned as to their methods of exploitation, were told that playing up "the Mormon element" in their advertising could prove profitable. For example, the *Motion Picture News* advised the exhibitors of *Riders of the Purple Sage* that:

...for the bulk of your patronage you must dress up to the Western atmosphere. At the same time let them know that it is a "different" Western, being actually of historical interest as portraying a certain period of history in Utah.

And—if your theatre is in a section that will stand it—don't forget the Mormon element in your publicity. If your patrons need stirring up by sensational means forget the other elements in the picture and just go to it on such words as "An Expose of Early Mormon Days," "Farnum Clashed with Mormon Kidnappers," "How Mormon Polygamy Was Spread."

But if your patronage is high class, steady, family trade keep away from this. William Farnum and a Western subject will be enough for them.\(^{11}\)

Only one of the six suggested advertising catch lines dealt with Mormonism, although this was sensational enough—"Farnum as 'A Two-Gun Man' Battling Desperately with Unscrupulous Mormon Leaders."\(^{12}\)

*The Rainbow Trail* was released in six reels on October 27, 1918. Perhaps as a result of protests over its predecessor, theater managers were warned to downplay any Mormon emphasis in their promotion of the picture. *Motion Picture News* made the following suggestions:

\(^{10}\)P. S. Harrison, "'The Rainbow Trail'—Fox." *Motion Picture News*, XVIII, 14 (October 5, 1918), 2244+.
It has a number of good advertising angles, but be sure not to play up the Mormon side too strong. There are slight chances that such a practice would revert again(st?) you. If you work the Mormon angle refer to those in the picture as outlaws from their own religious cult and then you won't be damning people that are today perfectly law-abiding.\textsuperscript{13}

Despite this evidence of a mellowing attitude, LDS churchmen were understandably exercised over this two-fold negative portrayal of Mormonism. Disclaimers that movie patrons were seeing something that bore little relationship to current practices, naturally enough, were of little consolation to the beleagured Mormon leadership.

Their attention was first directed to the pictures by a non-LDS resident of New Orleans named Edward Pearson Moses, a sometimes newspaper columnist on the subject of motion picture reform. On September 8, 1918 he wrote to United States Senator Reed Smoot, then the most effective Mormon voice in Washington. Smoot took an active interest in moving pictures, and was also an Apostle of the Church. Pearson stated that although he was a Baptist and had "no acquaintance with a single living member of the Mormon Church," his "soul burned with indignation" at the movie version of Utah life pictured in Fox Film's \textit{Riders of the Purple Sage}.\textsuperscript{14}

\begin{enumerate}
\item Motion Picture News, September 21, 1918, p. 1913.
\item Motion Picture News, September 21, 1918, p. 1913.
\item Motion Picture News, October 5, 1918, p. 2260.
\end{enumerate}
Smoot in his reply to Moses on September 20th, thanked him for his efforts. The Senator told him:

It is almost more than human nature can bear to see one's beliefs, his friends and people constantly misrepresented by a lot of unscrupulous and dishonest men, but the Mormon people have been treated that way so long that it is now possible to stand most anything. 15

Two days later, Smoot also wrote Heber J. Grant--head of the Quorum of the Twelve and soon to be named President of the Church upon the death of Joseph F. Smith. In his letter Smoot included copies of his correspondence with Moses, as well as newspaper clippings from the Brooklyn Daily Eagle of September 18, 1918 which gave an account of The National Anti-Mormon League's drive against the LDS people. This is the group which, as was documented in the previous chapter, commercially exploited A Mormon Maid. At any rate, these letters indicate that the highest levels within the Church as early as 1918 exhibited a continuing concern over the ongoing negative screen image of the Saints. 16

14 Carbon copy of the letter of Edward Pearson Moses to Reed Smoot, September 8, 1918, Reed Smoot Collection, MS 1187, Container 48, Folder 8, BYU Archives. Note: Due to handling, papers and letters are sometimes misfiled. This is evident in the microfilm copy of the collection found in the LDS Church Archives under MS f 240 "Reed Smoot Correspondence to First Presidency 1908-1935."

15 Carbon copy of the letter of Reed Smoot to Edward Pearson Moses, September 20, 1918, Reed Smoot Collection, MS 1187, Container 48, Folder 8, BYU Archives.

16 Carbon copy of the letter of Reed Smoot to Heber J. Grant, September 22, 1918, Reed Smoot Collection, MS 1187, Container 48, Folder 8, BYU Archives.
This concern produced no tangible results when the two pictures were first released in 1918. The protests were renewed, however, when *Riders of the Purple Sage* went into re-release in 1921. A telegram from Elliott C. Taylor, a Salt Lake "automobile man," to F. C. Schramm of the city's Commercial Club alerted the Utahns to the new screenings. Taylor reportedly saw the film while on a business trip to Detroit.

Schramm moved into action and wired a complaint to The National Board of Review, the Fox Film Corporation, and F. H. Elliott, a New York moving picture man. The telegram typifies the strong fears still held by the Utah business community concerning the state's public image. In part it read:

> We protest against further showing of this picture and request your approval be withdrawn so that the people of Utah will suffer no injustice through misleading picturization of story.17

Similar telegrams were sent by Salt Lake Mayor C. Clarence Neslen to the mayor of Detroit, and by Utah Governor Charles R. Mabey to his state's congressional delegation.18

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17See "Club President Wires Protest Against Film Said to Defame Utah," *The Deseret News*, July 2, 1921, Section 2, p. 8, col. 1. This differed very little in tone from the exertions made nine years earlier by Governor Spry and the Commercial Club to suppress the first anti-Mormon films.

18"Censorship of Film Against Utah Sought," *The Deseret News*, July 5, 1921, Section 2, p.1, col. 7.
These actions did result in the apparent withdrawal of Riders from the Michigan market.19 LDS Church President Heber J. Grant addressed a letter to Senator Smoot on August 24, 1921 thanking him for his efforts on behalf of the Church:

...I am also very glad to note that you have taken up the matter of preventing the motion picture houses from showing Zane Grey's novel "Riders of the Purple Sage." Thru the efforts of the Commercial Club here and also others who have endeavored to have this stopped, I am informed that the picture is no longer passing censorship in the State of Michigan. I sincerely hope that it will not be necessary to bring suit in this matter.

Don't you think that if it could get to the National Board of Motion Picture Review that litigation is likely to follow if exhibition of this scandalous picture is not prohibited that good results might obtain? It would seem to me that large damages could be collected and I don't know but that the advertising we would get might be beneficial. Sometimes I think we are too passive and do not defend ourselves as we should against such onslaught.

I shall be glad to hear from you further on this matter at your convenience.20

19 "Zane Grey Picture is Barred in Michigan," The Deseret News, July 16, 1921, Section 2, p. 8, col. 3.

20 Letter of Heber J. Grant to Reed Smoot, August 24, 1921, Reed Smoot Collection, MS 1187, Container 48, Folder 9, BYU Archives. This is the first clear evidence that the First Presidency was considering legal action in order to suppress an anti-Mormon film. This was not necessary as the removal of the objectionable photoplays was effected through less involved methods. See below for documentation of Senator Smoot's efforts on behalf of the Church. Grant and the Church definitely supported censorship not only of anti-LDS productions, but also other "improper films." See for example the telegram of Heber J. Grant to Reed Smoot, April 21, (1922?) which states that "the first presidency appreciates highly what Mr Hays has done in suppressing the arbuckle and other improper films." This is in reference to the "Fatty" Arbuckle scandal of 1921-1922. This
Smoot lost no time in arranging the suppression of the objectionable picture. Just six days after Grant's letter, he was able to wire the Church leader that assurances had been given that *Riders of the Purple Sage* would never be shown again. In a return telegram the following day President Grant indicated the Church's "sincere thanks" and requested the particulars of Smoot's success with the Fox Film Corporation. By September 7, the Senator was able to write the LDS Prophet. Because this has never been explained in detail before, the pertinent parts of Smoot's letter detailing his meeting with the Fox representatives will be reproduced below:

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telegram should be found in the Reed Smoot Collection, MS 1187, Container 48, Folder 10, BYU Archives. It was misfiled in the microfilming however (probably due to the fact that the year is not included in the telegram), and is found in the 1908 portion of the 1903-1908 Reed Smoot Correspondence microfilm, MS f 240, LDS Church Archives. For more on the Arbuckle scandal see Kenneth Anger, *Hollywood Babylon* (Phoenix, Arizona: Associated Professional Services, Inc., 1965), pp. 41-50.

21 Telegram of Reed Smoot to Heber J. Grant, August 30, 1921, Reed Smoot Collection, MS 1187, Container 48, Folder 9, BYU Archives.

22 Telegram of Heber J. Grant to Reed Smoot, August 31, 1921, Reed Smoot Collection, MS 1187, Container 48, Folder 9, BYU Archives. The complete telegram read: "PLEASE WIRE MESSRS BRADY AND ROGERS OUR SINCERE THANKS FOR THEIR GENEROUS ACTIONS AND ACCEPT CONGRATULATIONS YOURSELF SHALL BE GLAD TO RECEIVE LETTER CONTAINING PARTICULARS H J GRANT."
On August 30, 1921, I sent you the following telegram: "William J. Brady and Saul E. Rogers of Fox Film Corporation promised me today that the moving picture "Riders of the Purple Sage" would never be shown again. They will stop further showing of the picture by telegram. Will write details of conference."

What led up to this telegram is as follows: For years I have been acquainted with William J. Brady. He is deeply interested (sic) in moving picture productions. William J. Brady played in the old Salt Lake theatre forty years ago or more. He has been a particular friend of mine, and I have held conferences with him many times since I have been here in Washington. Saul E. Rogers is the attorney for the Fox Film Company. These two gentlemen called on me on August 30th, asking my assistance in the elimination of a tax of 30% on moving picture films provided for in the House Bill revising the Revenue Laws. Remembering that the Fox Film Corporation was the producer of the picture entitled "Riders of the Purple Sage", I took occasion to call their attention to the lying, dastardly, libelous film, after telling them that I was in sympathy with the elimination of the 30% tax and what I had to say regarding the Fox Film Company would not in any way influence my vote on legislation that would affect them materially. I did say to Mr. Rogers however that I thought that any film company that would produce a moving picture and exhibit it to the American people, such as was done by the Fox Film Company in the production of the picture entitled "Riders of the Purple Sage" came with unclean hands to me asking for relief in any way. Perhaps I was a little rough on Mr. Rogers but there is no question but what the position taken by me resulted in an immediate decision. William J. Brady spoke up before Rogers, the attorney, did, and promised me as a friend that the picture should never be shown again. Mr. Rogers assured me that as soon as he returned to New York he would see that his company withdrew the picture from future exhibition. Brady spoke up and said: "We need not wait until we return to New York, we will stop the showing of the picture by telegram."

Upon receipt of your telegram of August 31st, asking me to wire messrs. Brady and Rogers your sincere thanks, I concluded to write a letter, which I did, and they no doubt have received the same ere this. Yesterday I received a letter from Mr. Saul E. Rogers dated September 2, 1921, reading as follows:

"My dear Senator Smoot: "Permit me to express to you on behalf of Mr. William A. Brady and myself, our sincere appreciation for the cordiality with which you received us on Wednesday last. If there is any manner in which we can serve you, do not hesitate to command us."

In this letter you will notice that he has not even
referred to the moving picture but I have no doubt but that immediate action was taken.\textsuperscript{23}

There is no reason to question the veracity of Senator Smoot's account. As can be imagined, the Church leadership was jubilant over the favorable turn of events. On September 14, 1921 Grant wrote Smoot to thank him for his efforts. He indicated that the LDS officials in Salt Lake City were "very grateful for your efforts in this direction and much gratified in the result."\textsuperscript{24}

Later that month, William Fox personally wrote the Senator detailing his company's program for withdrawal of the film from distribution. Fox also expressed interest in producing a picture on the "true history" of the Church.\textsuperscript{25} Smoot later sent a copy of this letter to President Grant asking that the LDS Prophet reply with a personal message of appreciation to the movie mogul.\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{23}Carbon copy of the letter of Reed Smoot to Heber J. Grant, September 7, 1921, pp. 2-3, Reed Smoot Collection, MS 1187, Container 48, Folder 9, BYU Archives. The original of the letter of Saul E. Rogers to Reed Smoot on September 2, 1921; and the carbon copy of Smoot's reply to Rogers on September 7, 1921 are both found in the same folder.

\textsuperscript{24}Letter of Heber J. Grant to Reed Smoot, September 14, 1921, Reed Smoot Collection, MS 1187, Container 48, Folder 9, BYU Archives.

\textsuperscript{25}Unfortunately, this letter or a copy of it was not located in the Smoot Collection. We know of the letter through the correspondence of Smoot and Grant on October 2, 1921 and October 14, 1921. A copy or even the original may possibly be found in the Heber J. Grant Papers, MS d 1223, LDS Church Archives. However, the 116 boxes of material
The Mormon leader was more than pleased to comply with this request. On October 13, 1921 he expressed his personal thanks on behalf of the LDS people and indicated a strong interest in Fox's proposal to make a pro-Mormon film.27 On that same day Grant also wrote J. H. Rayburn, the General Secretary of the Salt Lake Commercial Club and Chamber of Commerce, thanking him for his organization's cooperation in suppressing the film.28 A copy of this letter was enclosed in President Grant's communication to Senator Smoot of the following morning. From this we can gain a clear indication of the LDS leader's mind at the time. He wrote:

The outcome of your efforts in this matter have been very gratifying indeed. There have been many applications made from different people to picturize certain historical events that have occurred in the history of the Church but the proposition made in the next to last paragraph of Mr. Fox's letter to you is the only one that has had any appeal to me in it. Other propositions that have come to us have always been made with a view to having the Church finance them, but you will observe that Mr. Fox makes the unqualified statement that his company will undertake to finance the production of such a motion picture and distribute the film play under proper and dignified auspices.

I believe this matter is of sufficient importance for us to give it very careful consideration and should like to have the benefit of your views on it at your early convenience.29

that comprises the collection are not arranged, nor are they open to research at this time.

26 Carbon copy of the letter of Reed Smoot to Heber J. Grant, October 2, 1921, Reed Smoot Collection, MS 1187, Container 48, Folder 9, BYU Archives.

27 Carbon copy of the letter of Heber J. Grant to
Immediate announcement of Fox's proposal to underwrite the production of a pro-LDS motion picture was delayed, and did not receive press notice until June of the following year. However, Fox did move to withdraw from circulation the Grey films in dispute. He wrote Senator Smoot on October 20th to tell the Apostle that the photoplays would be "junked":

I have telegraphed directions to all branch offices throughout America to terminate the exhibition of the two films "Riders of the Purple Sage" and "The Rainbow Trail" as of November 15th, 1921. All advertising and publicity matter will be destroyed and the film copies will be collected at New York and be junked. This is in keeping with my letter stating that it would require one month's time to carry out the matter to a conclusion, and I will see that all details are properly complied with.30

William Fox, October 13, 1921, Reed Smoot Collection, MS 1187, Container 48, Folder 9, BYU Archives.

28 Carbon copy of the letter of Heber J. Grant to J. H. Rayburn, October 13, 1921, Reed Smoot Collection, MS 1187, Container 48, Folder 9, BYU Archives.

29 Letter of Heber J. Grant to Reed Smoot, October 14, 1921, Reed Smoot Collection, MS 1187, Container 48, Folder 9, BYU Archives.

30 The entire telegram is quoted in the carbon copy of Reed Smoot's letter to Heber J. Grant, October 22, 1921, Reed Smoot Collection, MS 1187, Container 48, Folder 9, BYU Archives. For other letters touching on this matter see the correspondence of Reed Smoot to Heber J. Grant on October 15, 1921, and Grant's reply to Smoot on October 20, 1921. Both these are found together with the above letter in Folder 9. The story of the withdrawal of the two films was confirmed in outline in a personal interview with Romer Grey, son of the novelist, at his home on April 4, 1973. In this interview Grey had this to say in response to the question of what really happened to cause the suppression
Although the films were suppressed in the United States, Fox continued to exhibit them overseas. It was not until March of the following year, however, that the Mormon heads were alerted to this unanticipated development. It was in that month that Reed Smoot received some clippings from English newspapers advertising the showing in Britain of Riders of the Purple Sage. Smoot forwarded these on to Saul Rogers, the General Counsel for the Fox Corporation, with a letter reminding the attorney of their earlier agreement. According to Smoot's correspondence of March 15, 1922 with Heber J. Grant:

Of these films: "To oversimplify it, William Fox purchased the motion picture rights to Riders of the Purple Sage and The Rainbow Trail. The books were popular because they told a tremendously dramatic story set against a vivid background portraying two romances. Although the first movie versions were limited, they did try and follow my father's novels. I don't remember all the things the Mormons objected to, but certainly one was where Lassiter, the gunman, in his search for the man who ruined his sister shoots the Mormon Bishop in his own meetinghouse. Now I don't blame them for objecting, but at any rate Fox did the pictures. Pressure was brought to bear on Mr. Fox by the church and others to withdraw them from circulation. This worked after the second release. I was told that they had a sort of burning in effigy of all the prints. But what has never appeared is that at that time, according to the distribution set-up of motion pictures, Mr. Fox had already got 80-90% of all the money that he'd ever get out of them. He wasn't doing the Mormons a big favor by withdrawing the pictures from circulation. It was mostly a shrewd public relations gesture on his part. After all, there were a lot of Fox pictures running in the state of Utah." It will be demonstrated, however, that Fox did take into consideration Church objections and concerns when he later remade the Zane Grey stories with Tom Mix."
Immediately upon receipt of that letter Mr. Rogers called me over the phone and stated that he had received my letter and presented the same to Mr. Fox. Mr. Fox instructed him to telephone me immediately and state that cablegrams would be sent immediately not only to England but to every part of the world where the picture was being shown, withdrawing the same from exhibition and instructing them to return the film to New York. Mr. Rogers told me that Mr. Fox instructed him to advise me that the picture would never be shown again in any part of the world.31

Soon after this exchange of correspondence, news accounts of the suppression and the Fox offer to film the Mormon and Utah story began appearing in Church publications. However, the author has not been able to find any record to indicate that a photoplay of this type was actually produced or released by Fox Film Corporation.32

31 Carbon copy of the letter of Reed Smoot to Heber J. Grant, March 15, 1922, Reed Smoot Collection, MS 1187, Container 48, Folder 10, BYU Archives. See also the letter of Heber J. Grant to Reed Smoot on March 27, 1922, and Smoot's reply to Grant on April 13, 1922. Both these are found together with the above letter in Folder 10. In his letter of April 13, Smoot writes that he is enclosing a copy of some suggestions he sent to Will H. Hays, newly named head of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors Association (M. P. P. D. A.). Hays appointment to the post came as a result of the various scandals inflicting Hollywood at that time. Hays earlier had been prominent in Republican Party circles, and was known personally by fellow Republican Smoot. The Senator indicated to Hays his belief that "in formulating his policy as to the future course to be followed by the moving picture industry, he will serve the industry well by advising it not to produce any pictures which hold up in ridicule any religious sect or section of people, or place them in obviously false positions." Whatever the reasons, it is true that the anti-Mormon screenplay largely dies out in the United States after this date. For more on Hays and his appointment see Ramsays, pp. 810-821.

32 See "Fox to Film True Story of Utah After Recalling Picture Which Libelled Activities of Church,"
Fox did personally intervene to make sure that the remakes of the films in 1924 (released in 1925) met with LDS Church approval. He accomplished this by ordering that scenarist Edfrid Bingham and director Lynn Reynolds delete all references to Mormonism in their new adaptation of Grey's work. In communications dated October 7 and October 30, 1924, Fox assured Smoot that the pictures would not be screened or exhibited until the Senator had opportunity to see them in a private screening room in Washington. This was accomplished in early 1925 and must have met with the Utahn's full approval for the pictures went into general release not long after without Church complaint. 33

In these and subsequent sound versions in 1931-1932 and 1941, the Mormons became unidentified outlaws with the evil Bishop Dyer replaced by a corrupt Judge Dyer. 34 This translation of character motivation away from Utah towards a more generalized Wester locale certainly pleased the Mormon officials. Audiences, as they moved further from the era the photoplays purported to depict, seemed not to mind too much either.

The Deseret News, June 17, 1922, Section 3, p. VI, cols. 6-7; and "Fox to Film True Story of Utah," Millenial Star, LXXXIV, 28 (July 13, 1922), 445-446.

33 The letter of October 7, 1924 is missing from the Smoot Collection. However, see William Fox's letter to Smoot of October 30, 1924; Smoot's letter to Heber J. Grant of November 10, 1924; Smoot's letter to William Fox of November 10, 1924; Heber J. Grant's letter to Reed Smoot of November 14, 1924; and George Garvin's letter (representing the Fox Film Corporation) to Reed Smoot of
A historically based critical appraisal of these remakes, however, would have to conclude that artistically the plot and character development suffered from the changes made in Grey's original stories. Certainly Romer Grey believes this to be true, and indicated in interview that he felt the later versions were little more than "a bunch of junk." As he analyzes it:

At least the first versions were authentic in so far as they reproduced the story found in the novels. I don't say they were good. If we could see them now, they probably would seem funny like many of the early silent era pictures. But at least they were very dramatic—perhaps overly dramatic by our standards—and seemed to go over well with the audiences of those days.

The later ones as far as I am concerned were a bunch of junk. When they took the Mormon motivation out of the stories, they cut the heart out of the films. They had excitement, and scenery, and a chase, but their overall effect was like a skeleton without the flesh. They followed the bare outlines of the plot, but they eliminated the characterization and the motivation that made the books the great stories they are.35

February 13, 1925. These are all found in the Reed Smoot Collection, MS 1187, Container 48, Folder 11, BYU Archives.


Romer Grey indignantly denies that his father was an anti-Mormon author, or that his work was designed as anti-Church propaganda:

Anyone who makes such a charge just doesn't know my father. Complaints that his work has somehow been unfair to Utah or to the Mormons are totally unfounded. If anything, my father was fond of the state and many of the Mormon people. Even a quick look at his aggregate works will show there was equally as many "good" as "bad" Mormons in his writings.

Utah critics often forget that my father's first Western novel The Heritage of the Desert (1910) had as its hero a Mormon patriarch named August Naab. Naab was based on two men Zane Grey traveled with in 1908 through Arizona. One of these--the Mormon, Tim Emmett--was one of the finest individuals one could ever hope to meet.36

Like the other Zane Grey books discussed above, The Heritage of the Desert was made into a motion picture. Unlike them however, it was not produced by Fox but by Famous Players-Lasky. Paramount acted as the distributor. Readers will recall that Lasky before it merged with Famous Players was the same company that made A Mormon Maid.

36 Statement by Romer Grey, personal interview, April 4, 1973. Grey also had this to say: "None of the so-called villains or badmen were ever taken from real-life persons. But most of the good people in his books were based on actual men and women he met. Statements that my father's novels or the early Fox pictures maligned the state of Utah are just not true at all. After all, how can one malign a state--a piece of ground--unless you call it a sinkhole? And Utah is anything but that, for it has some of the finest resources and the most beautiful scenery available anywhere in the world. Protests of that nature were just grist for the mill--published for the people to read. I don't know whether they swallowed it or not. It's true that his writings were works of fiction. I remember one time I traveled to Monument Valley with him and we were up on the top of a slope overlooking the valley
The Heritage of the Desert opened theatrically in January 1924 with a good cast including Ernest Torrence as Naab, Bebe Daniels as Mescal, and the villainous Noah Beery playing the ruthless desert pirate Holderness. Although essentially a black and white production, parts of the picture were enhanced by the use of Technicolor.\textsuperscript{37}

All references to Mormonism were dropped however. This was likely due to a combination of factors. Famous Players-Lasky may have wanted to avoid protests such as met A Mormon Maid. The more recent suppression of the Fox produced Westerns probably was also on the studio executives' minds. The earlier cries for censorship raised by the Church partisans rebounded in this instance, for the screen was deprived of a Mormon hero. According to Romer Grey:

Unfortunately--well maybe fortunately, I don't know--when the picture was first made this upset about the Mormon business had taken place. The filmmakers just thought it best to avoid problems by dropping the Mormon identification entirely. So film versions of The Heritage of the Desert have never been made to show the great character of this great man, August Naab. Although it is a great story of a great Mormon, this side of it has been totally left out of any of the motion pictures based upon my father's work.\textsuperscript{38}

below and he said, 'This is where Cottonwoods was.' Cottonwoods, of course, was the Mormon town in Riders of the Purple Sage. There was nothing there but sagebrush--it was entirely a creation of his imagination. Perfectly permissible 'authors license'."

\textsuperscript{37}See Munden, p. 345 for full credits and a synopsis of the 1924 release. The script for the 1923 production/1924 release version of the film is included
Although other Zane Grey stories have either been filmed in Utah for scenic reasons,\(^39\) or like Western Union (1941) have dealt with incidents touching on Utah life,\(^40\) the era of the Zane Grey Mormon Western ends with the first Fox Film versions of *Riders of the Purple Sage* and *The Rainbow Trail.\(^41\)* As was documented above, subsequent Grey based motion pictures ommitted essential Mormon motivation in compliance with Church requests.

Unfortunately, the earliest films are not readily available for research viewing purposes. Indications are that all the prints were destroyed by the Fox Film Corporation in order to emphasize its commitment to the agreement reached with the LDS Church. Historically this is a great loss, although expediencies of the time may have necessitated such a drastic course of action.\(^42\)

with the scripts for the 1932 and 1939 sound versions in Carton 41 of the Paramount Pictures Collection at the AMPAS Library in Los Angeles. Loose stills and still books can be found in Boxes 65, 85, and 136 of the same collection. See also Zane Grey, *The Heritage of the Desert* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1910).


\(^39^4\)One of the first all-talking Western films to be shot in southern Utah was Grey's *The Dude Ranger* (1934). See *Tour the Different World of Utah's Color Country* (Salt Lake City: Utah Travel Council, [c. 1972]), p. 16. This is a sixteen page booklet published in conjunction with the five counties of southern Utah—Beaver, Garfield, Iron, Kane, and Washington. See also *The Film Daily Year Book of Motion Pictures*, 1935, p. 141 for credits; and *The Film Daily* of September 29, 1934 for a review.
The decision involving the Grey films can be described as the first substantive Church victory in suppressing "offensive" motion pictures, although this also involved a loss of favorable screen time in picturizations of The Heritage of the Desert. Mormon problems with alleged anti-LDS photoplays, however, did not end with the capitulation of Fox. Over in Britain, the anti-Mormon cineasts were as busy as ever.

40 This chronicled the building of the transcontinental railroads which met at Promontory Point, Utah in 1869.

41 For additional background on Grey see Virginia Palmer, "The Man Who Practically Invented the Western," Zane Grey Western Magazine, V, 1 (August 1972), 33-35+.

42 Other copies, of course, may not have been destroyed and hopefully will be located at a future date in an archive or personal collection.
Chapter 6

MORE BRITISH ANTI-MORMONISM

It was shown earlier that the British displayed an affinity for unfavorable LDS screen portrayals second only to that of the United States during the First World War period. National interest in the "Mormon Question" never really died out and would revive again as the end of hostilities neared.

Foremost among English professional anti-Mormons was novelist and journalist Winifred Graham (Mrs. Theodore Cory). She had produced a spate of anti-LDS books and essays and as early as 1917 was publicly proclaiming that the Salt Lake Church authorities were unscrupulously taking advantage of the European War situation to increase their proselyting activities. Her exertions in conjunction with those of the Anti-Mormon Society of Liverpool were eventually to lead to a full-scale campaign against "the scourge and menace of Mormonism" throughout the whole of the United Kingdom.1 In a situation like this, it was only a matter of time before filmmakers would leap in to capitalize on the renewed topical controversy.

1See the interview with Winifred Graham entitled "The Mormon Propaganda in Great Britain," The Christian
Ms. Graham made a number of serious charges in her interview in 1917, charges that were to be re-echoed following the conclusion of the war. She told The New York World reporter that Latter-day Saint activity at that time posed a dangerous threat to the citizens of Great Britain. Her remarks typified British anti-Mormon thought and fears:

During the present crisis I am frequently asked whether Mormon missionaries have seized the opportunity to proselytize impressionable women whose husbands and brothers are absent in the trenches. There is little doubt that the wily elder--always afraid of the man of the house--can now more safely whisper the teachings of the Utah church. While our soldiers fight abroad, their women at home are being visited daily by these valuable gentlemen in black coats.2

The novelist also alleged that women were being taken to Utah, only to utterly disappear:

When girls are sent to Utah...their friends and relatives never hear of them again. Immediately on landing, their names are changed. Seceders from the faith are placed under the ban, escape being made practically impossible by the network of Mormon spies surrounding the country.

I have in my keeping a number of specific instances that plural marriage has been rife among officials of the Mormon Church since the United States forbade the practice. I also have affidavits and signed statements of people whose daughters have been enticed away by agents of Mormonism.

These sorrowful instances come from Liverpool, Dudley, Pudsey, Birmingham, Edinburgh and other places. It is a fact that the majority of Mormon emigrants are women, always easier victims for unscrupulous men, who approach them under the cloak of religion.3

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**Statesman**, LI, 2 (February 1917), 84–86. This is a reprint of an article which appeared early in 1917 in *The New York World*. No specific date was given.

The grave accusations that the missionaries were making against the polygamous system in Utah in order to make them more appealing were to be repeated more strenuously after the signing of the armistice. And they would provide the basic plot for the anti-Mormon movies that were to follow.

As in the earlier attacks, the leader of the post-war onslaught was Winifred Graham. She launched the new press assault with an article that appeared in the London Daily Express on April 20, 1919. Graham warned:

Let the Mormon's fiancée picture herself, after the public cleansing, when she will be disrobed and washed in the presence of her companions, having to take the oath of obedience to the priesthood, with its pledges that bind her forever in the toils of a blasphemous creed. Then, when her Mormon "boy" casts a covetous glance at a younger charmer, it will be the fate of the wife to join her husband's hand to that of her rival, in the secret ceremony of his second marriage. Unable to protest, she will find herself enslaved by a system of unspeakable degradation. 4

The Daily Express editorialized in its comment on the Graham article:

The Mormon missionary is a pest that is always with us, but from time to time his activities become more dangerous. These evils flourish in darkness. Once the light of publicity is turned on them two-thirds of the danger is destroyed. The Mormon elders are trying to begin a great revival or recruiting campaign here in England, and every English family, of whatever class or creed, should be on their guard against them. There is no return from Utah; after a while not even letters come. Utah is the threshold of the grave for body and soul--but it is an unpleasant death to die. 5

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3The Christian Statesman, February 1917, p. 35. Graham says in this same article that the Church was using motion pictures of Salt Lake as part of the missionary work.
Graham and others continued their crusade against the Church well into the early 1920s. By 1922 the English Mission leadership was forced to apprise the First Presidency of the seriousness of the situation. Calling Graham "the oracle of the ignorant," British Mission head Orson F. Whitney warned the Salt Lakers that the forces opposed to the Church were using every means in their quest to "down the Mormons." Whitney observed that Graham's writings were being:

...followed up by others even more vicious, from her and several scribblers of her sort, (and) have been reprinted by other journals, copied and recopied, day after day, until no less than thirty papers of this stamp--the London "Daily Mail" the most influential one among them--are now revamping the vile slanders all over the United Kingdom, and howling like wolves for the blood of the lamb.6

The charges regularly appearing in the British press that the Mormon Elders were spiriting young women to "Zion" prompted Marc T. Green, the American Consul in Birmingham, to write Reed Smoot in Washington. His experience, he told the Senator, belied the reports:

4Winifred Graham, "Mormons in Khaki--Latter-day Saints New Devices in England," The Christian Statesman, LIII, 6(June 1919), pp. 236-238. This is an "exact reproduction" of the article as it appeared in the London Daily Express.

5Emphasis added. This editorial comment is quoted in The Christian Statesman, June 1919, p. 238.

6Letter of Orson F. Whitney to Heber J. Grant, January 27, 1922, Reed Smoot Collection, MS 1187, Container 48, Folder 10, BYU Archives. Unfortunately, only pages 1 and 4 of this four page letter are on file. Whitney also
The particular phase of this newspaper attach (sic) which appeals to me as being nothing less than scurri- lous is the emphasis laid on what is characterized the "luring" of young women to the United States and to Utah. While this office is not, of course, in a position to take sides in any controversy; yet it irks me, personally, to observe the injustice of the methods these newspapers are resorting to. And I sincerely believe that this talk of "luring" is the veriest rot. What I thought might interest you, however, is the fact that during the two years I have had charge of passport work here, out of many people, presumably converts, who have gone to Utah from this large district, there has not been, so far as I can remember, a single woman of marriageable age. It seems to me that such a fact is in itself a considerable refutation of at least one of the accusations leveled at your people. Moreover I have made it a point to question the people, mostly young men, who have left England to go to Utah, having joined the Latter Day Saints Church, and I have been unable to discover that any inducement of a material nature of any sort whatever has been offered any of them, other than, perhaps, the opportunity of doing better for themselves in a less crowded land.7

With a continuing controversy of this nature, fanned and exploited by the popular press out of a combined sense of "public service" and mercenary commercial considerations (for, after all, "The Mormon Menace" sold papers), it was natural for topically oriented moviemakers to take up the cudgel.

makes mention of the "notorius Pittsburg (sic) Convention," which likely is a reference to the activities of The National Reform Association headquartered in that city. In 1919 Winifred Graham chaired the "World Commission on Mormonism" and was scheduled to speak before the "Third World Christian Citizenship Conference" sponsored by the NRA later that same year. See The Christian Statesman, June 1919, p. 236.

7Quoted in the letter of Reed Smoot to Heber J. Grant, March 2, 1922, Reed Smoot Collection, MS 1187, Container 43, Folder 10, BYU Archives. Official LDS figures for the number of American missionaries in Britain
Typical of the exploitative nature of British moving picture companies was Master Films, who operated studios at Weir House in Teddington. Formed during the First World War, after 1920 it produced a fairly large output of features and short subjects under the direction of General Manager Harry B. Parkinson. Master aimed at "useable popular pictures," but largely failed in this because "they underestimated their audience with silly sentimental or melodramatic scripts crowded with incidents and characters in the old fashioned manner."3

Master is particularly important for this study because its studio was responsible for the production in 1922 of the virulently propagandistic Trapped by the Mormons and Married to a Mormon.

for the period are far from overwhelming. According to Orson F. Whitney's letter to Heber J. Grant cited above, before the war there were 250 missionaries in Britain; during the war only twelve in all Europe; and as of 1922, not including the Liverpool office force, only 137 in the U. K. These figures, however, do not correlate with those published in Richard L. Evans, A Century of "Mormonism" in Great Britain (Salt Lake City: The Deseret News Press, 1937), p. 243. Even Evans' compilation shows relatively small numbers of Elders working in Britain. Whatever the true figures, it must be accepted that a post-war upsurge in missionary work did help trigger a renewal of anti-LDS activities. These did not necessarily harm the Church. Whitney concludes his letter by noting that he was "happy to be able to report that this anti-'Mormon' stir-up is doing us a whole lot of good. Every mail brings inquiries about the 'Mormon Church and Religion,' with requests for our literature, and not infrequently inclosures of money for subscriptions to the 'Star.' There is also an awakening among the Saints; the lukewarm and indifferent are becoming zealous once more, and our meetings...are better attended and more spirited than they have been for years..."
The screenplay for *Trapped by the Mormons* was actually based upon one of Winifred Graham's novels of "Mormon terror" entitled *The Love Story of a Mormon*. Frank Miller's adaptation was faithful to the spirit of the book.9

Nora Prescott, a winsome Manchester lass (Evelyn Brent), is induced by the Mormon missionary Isoldi Keene (Lewis Willoughby) to abandon her seafaring sweetheart Jim Foster (George Wynn) and travel with the Elder to his home in Salt Lake City. She tells her parents that she is going with a lady authoress to Holland. This is only a ruse, for Isoldi has told Nora that his "sister" will help them in their plans. Meanwhile, Nora's old boyfriend returns. Upon learning that she has been in conversation with the Mormons, he hires a detective who traces her to LDS headquarters in London.

Nora wonders if she has done the right thing, and begins to discover sides to Isoldi she had not known. These fears turn to terror when she finds out that his "sister" is really his first wife! The wife takes pity on Nora and tries to help her escape. This is prevented by the wily Mormons, and both are condemned on the spot to death. However the detective has not been lax, and he

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previously told Nora that if she ever needed help she was to hang a colored handkerchief out one of the building's windows. Nora manages to accomplish this after many difficulties, and thus alerted Foster and the detective arrive with the police to overpower the Mormons and free the trapped women. 10

Contemporary reviewers recognized that the film was little more than propaganda, and noted that it suffered artistically on this account. Wrote one:

There is no room for propaganda on the screen whatever that propaganda may attack or defend. Quite apart from the fact that a case is always put in a one-sided way, and is liable to do more harm than good, it is inartistic and usually dull if not boring; this picture is no exception to that rule.

There is a sense of amateurishness about the film, both in the acting and in the entire working out of the story, when compared with foreign and recent English productions, although one must admit that there are good dramatic scenes here and there and some good lighting effects.

The story is quite unconvincing and at times is apt to make one laugh rather than be thrilled; it is melodramatic throughout.

It is probable that the title and the interest the subject is creating at the moment will be sufficient to attract good audiences, but it is quite as probable that they will be disappointed. 11

This did not prevent the Kinematograph Weekly from advising exhibitors to "BOOM FROM THE MORMON PERIL ASPECT" and "stress the fact that some of the Mormon ceremonial is shown." 12

9 Winifred Graham, The Love Story of a Mormon (London: Mills and Boon, Ltd., 1911). Also see Gifford, citation number 07397.
The female lead, Evelyn Brent, was actually rather good in her role of the trapped Nora, and her simple and direct acting holds up quite well. So does that of Lewis Willoughby as the "mesmeric" Mormon Elder.

Popular interest in the first of these anti-Mormon features must have been strong, for soon a second Brent "programmer" reached the market. On May 29, 1922 Married to a Mormon made its theatrical debut. The story is similar to its predecessor.

Beryl Fane (Evelyn Brent) is a wealthy orphan who marries Lionel Daventry (Clive Brook), much to the disappointment of Philip Lorimer (George Wynn). Daventry, now firmly in control of her money, reveals he is a Mormon and is taking her back to Utah with him. He gives Beryl solemn assurances that polygamy is abolished, but true to Mormon movie tradition, prepares to marry a second wife once he's safely returned to Salt Lake. Beryl takes her protests to Bigelow (Booth Conway), "the Arch-Mormon," but to no avail. She is only saved from her dishonor by the surprise appearance of Lorimer who has followed her from Britain. In the ensuing struggle Daventry is killed by the dispossessed lover of the prospective second wife. Beryl and Lorimer are thus free to return to England.

10 See "Trapped by Mormons," Kinematograph Weekly, (March 23, 1922); Low, British Film 1919-1929, p. 468; and the National Film Archive Catalogue: Part III, Silent Fiction Films 1895-1930 (London: The British Film Institute, 1966), p. 120. This is hereafter referred to as National Film Archive Catalogue.
The propagandistic nature of this latter production was also clearly recognized by reviewers. Typifying trade response was the review appearing in the Kinematograph Weekly. While the acting and technical aspects of Married to a Mormon drew commendation, its social implications attracted condemnation from the unnamed critic. He noted:

Had this film been anything else except the rankest anti-Mormon propaganda, it would have deserved more than a little praise on many accounts. Up to a point its technical excellence has rarely been equalled in a British studio.

Unfortunately, it is not only propaganda but very rubbishy melodrama, made worse by the continual hinting at dreadful immorality which are never shown. The result is that the technical values go for nothing, and in the end the film falls to pieces in a manner almost ludicrous.

It ought not to be popular, but there is little doubt that it will be very much so.16

12Kinematograph Weekly, March 23, 1922.
13From the author's viewing of the film at the LDS Church Archives. Prints still exist in the British National Film Archive, and copies are also commercially available to collectors in both the United States and Britain. The author interviewed Evelyn Brent personally in her Hollywood apartment on April 3, 1973, but she unfortunately remembers very little about her work in the period and has no recollection of making these pictures. Myron Braum, also of Hollywood and an avid collector of Brent memorabilia, has an excellent collection of material on her life and work although it too suffers from a neglect of her British films. See Marquis Busby, "She Doesn't Want to Star," The Los Angeles Times, June 3, 1928, pp. 11, 16; "Betty Riggs Now Evelyn Brent," The Moving Picture World, (February 5, 1916), p. 782; "Evelyn Brent--The Girl Who Had the Courage to Choose Her Own Career," Picture Show (Britain?), (July 22, 1922), p. 21; and Jess Hoaglin, "Down Memory Lane--Evelyn Brent," Hollywood Studio Magazine, (September 1972), p. 19.
LDS forces were quick to react to the movies. Robert H. Summers, a Church member, decided to go see *Trapped by the Mormons* for himself in Hull. Summers criticism of the photoplay appeared as a letter in the *Hull Daily News* and was later reprinted in the Church organ *The Millenial Star*. Calling it a "disappointment" and "a third-rate show," he also took strong exception to a baptismal sequence:

The scene showing the method of baptism was entirely out of order, and nothing short of a religious mockery. In the picture it was shown that the candidates knelt on cushions, then went into the water up to the waist while the Elder stood on the edge of the large bath in a sanctimonious attitude. Now, in a real baptism service conducted by the Mormon Elders the converts do not kneel on cushions. The officiating Elder goes down into the water with them, and they are immersed. I note in the circular advertising the picture—a copy of a baptismal form; this is called a "re-christening certificate." Now, seeing that we have no christenings in the Church, I fail to see where the re-christenings come in.14

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14See the unidentified British periodical photo article on Lewis Willoughby in the Myron Braum Collection. This is illustrated with a still from *Trapped by the Mormons* which shows him as the "Mormon Elder," glass in hand, literally wining and dining Evelyn Brent.

15"Married to a Mormon," *Kinematograph Weekly*, (April 27, 1922). See also Gifford, citation number 07425; and Low, *British Film 1919-1929*, p. 409.

16*Kinematograph Weekly*, April 27, 1922. It was noted in the same review: "Leaving the subject matter out of consideration, the producer deserves high praise. For the most part the technique of the film is of a very high standard. The settings are lavish without being unduly ornate, and the lighting leaves nothing to be desired. The continuity is good. With the exception of the rescue scene, which has been badly handled, the direction has been excellent...{The acting} is very good...{The photography} first-class."
Other Church leaders saw mixed blessings in the anti-Mormon film crusade. For example G. Osmond Hyde, President of the Hull Conference, saw a "silver lining" in the "dark cloud" of the anti-Church campaign. In a lengthy report Brother Hyde explained that while the photoplays were part of the wave of persecution then sweeping Britain, the moviemakers unwittingly were helping to advertise the Church:

From the point of view of advertising the enemy acted wisely when they chose the screen as the place upon which to let the people of these islands know that the "Mormons" are here. This fact is realized when one knows that in England everyone goes to the "pictures." In this conference there have only been two films on the "Mormon" question projected thus far. We were first shown "Trapped by the Mormons" and later "Married to a Mormon" was brought into our midst. It seems that in this part of England these pictures were the straw that broke the camel's back. This fact was clearly evident when the London Daily Mail Film Critic published the statement that "Trapped by the Mormons," a British film which has been showing this week at two West End theatres, is such absolute rubbish that to exhibit it is nothing short of an insult to public intelligence." I have talked with several people who parted with sufficient cash to permit them to see this picture. Many of these believed much of what they had read before but now, after seeing the show, they realize that such rubbish could not be true of a people who are living in a civilised country and who claim to be equally as intelligent as any other body of people on earth.

"Trapped by the Mormons" was followed by "Married to a Mormon." I thought the first one was bad--rank. But this second attempt to poison the minds of these people can not even be considered from the point of view of intelligence. We secured permission from the police and the manager of the hall to tract the people as they left the show. In Grimsby, the only city in this district in which it has been shown thus far, Elders Melvin T. King, Donald E. Rose and myself did a great amount of good by this method of contradicting the falsehood that had been witnessed on the screen. We distributed a large number of pamphlets and tracts. Of course some of the people would not accept them, others tore them up in our faces, but others were anxious to get them and would not leave until they had secured one. That was the best stroke of advertising that we have put forth since coming over here. In three evenings we let more people know that we are here than we could have done in three months at ordinary tracting from door to dor. It was a rare experience but one in which, I am sure, we did a great amount of good.18

Despite Church feelings that the two movies were part of an anti-Mormon conspiracy, it is unlikely that they represented any deep felt conviction on the part of the filmmakers. The screenplays, both by Frank Miller, rather were indicative of Master Films' attempt to capitalize and exploit topical public issues for commercial advantage. For example the studio's next two releases in May 1922 were sensationalized accounts--again by Miller--of the perils of drug addiction.19

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18 G. Osmond Hyde, "Movie Campaign Against 'Mormons' Leads Many to Investigate Message," The Deseret News, June 3, 1922, Section 4, p. VI, cols. 1-3. Hyde also noted that "during the last six months we have made more headway and better progress in this conference than has been made in any other similar length of time since the war. Our meetings have been well attended. Many strangers, as a result of reading the papers and seeing the films, have come out

Although British Latter-day Saints were apparently seeing the brighter side of the two pictures, the American brethren were determined that the films would not receive release in the United States. This determination was reinforced when Canadian showings surfaced in the summer of 1924. At that time Canadian Mission representatives extracted a promise from the Canadian censors that modifications would be made. However when Trapped by the Mormons re-emerged in November of that year its content was little changed. Joseph Quinney, Jr., the President of the Canadian Mission, wrote Senator Reed Smoot apprising him of the developments within the Dominion. Enclosed were advertisements promoting the film which appeared in the London Free Press (Ontario, Canada). Quinney told the Senator:

_to see for themselves just what sort of people these much talked of 'Mormons' are. Where are gatherings were small six months ago they are now large...This is all evidence of the fact that the Lord's work is progressing rapidly and that the means the enemy intended to use in their attempt to have us deported have actually turned out to be one of the best helps that could have come into our hands." This tracting technique is reminiscent of Church activities during the earlier British showings of A Victim of the Mormons in 1911-1912. The editor of The Millennial Star noted for example: "In conversation with a 'Mormon' missionary, the manager of a moving picture theatre in which the film 'Trapped by the Mormons' was being exhibited, said: 'The film is a great disappointment; it is a poor play; the attendance is far short of our expectation.' He gave the missionary and his companion permission to stand in front of the theatre and distribute 'Mormon' literature to those who came to see the film. Nearly three thousand leaflets were distributed. The manager and his secretary each purchased a copy of the Book of Mormon." Millennial Star, April 6, 1922, p. 223.
This picture, no doubt, influences a great many people and establishes a deeper prejudice against us as a people and makes it quite difficult for us to get our message before the people.
I trust that the whole affair will be taken out of circulation and I know that if any one can do this you are that one.  

Smoot, readers will recall, was instrumental in securing the suppression of *Riders of the Purple Sage* and *The Rainbow Trail* and in ensuring that future versions omitted all references to Mormonism. The Senator quickly wrote Church President Heber J. Grant regarding these new developments. In this letter he noted:

I suppose the question of its suppression will have to be taken up with the producers in England. I have been trying to think of a young man's name, a member of the Church, who is interested in the picture business and has considerable influence with the distributors and producers of moving pictures. He was closely connected with David Howells. I met him while in London. I am sure Brother Talmadge could get in touch with him and it may be worthwhile to undertake the matter of having the picture suppressed.

In a letter to Quinney of the same day, Smoot told him of his correspondence with the LDS leader and indicated that "if this [plan] is not successful I shall arrange to handle the situation in some other way."  

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19 The films were *Cocaine* and *Crushing the Drug Traffic*. See Gifford, citation numbers 07426 and 07427. Although Master Films Company was the producer of the "Mormon" pictures, Astra Films was the distributer.

20 From the letter of Joseph Quinney, Jr. to Reed Smoot, November 6, 1924, Reed Smoot Collection, MS 1187, Container 48, Folder 11, BYU Archives. According to the letter, at that time world rights were controlled by Frederick White Co., 54 Victoria Street, Manchester, England. The distribution rights for *Trapped by the*
Smoot's actions appear to have been successful, for apparently neither of the films were released commercially in this country. Unconfirmed statements that the Church paid $2000 (then a considerable sum of money) to the producers not to exhibit them in the United States were told the author in his researches. Others felt the pictures were so poor that they went unreleased because they did not warrant commercial exploitation.

The most authoritative account must be that of Ken A. Collinson, Director of the British based Stahl Pyramid Films Ltd. His father acquired the rights to Trapped by the Mormons outright along with the original negative in the mid-twenties. According to Collinson's previously unpublished statement:

Mormons for the Dominion of Canada were held by Dominion Films Company, who obtained them from a S. W. Smith "supposed to be in London England."

21 Letter of Reed Smoot to Heber J. Grant, November 18, 1924, Reed Smoot Collection, MS 1187, Container 48, Folder 11, BYU Archives.

22 Letter of Reed Smoot to Joseph Quinney, Jr., November 18, 1924, Reed Smoot Collection, MS 1187, Container 48, Folder 11, BYU Archives. There is no further correspondence in the Smoot Collection bearing on the matter of the suppression of these British anti-Mormon photoplays.

23 One evidence is that there is no record of them in the Catalog of Copyright Entries; Cumulative Series: Motion Pictures, 1912-1939 (Washington: Copyright Office, The Library of Congress, 1951). This is hereafter referred to as Copyright Catalog 1912-1939.
The Mormon Church never approached the original owners of this film, as far as I know, but once the film had been exploited and started to make its mark here under Stahl Pyramid's aegis, my father was approached by Ralph Pugh (or Pew) at that time managing director of the United Kingdom branch or division of the American film company, First National Films or First National-Warner Bros. Films. Mr. Pugh was himself a Mormon. He asked my father whether there were any backers, political or religious, who were behind him. My father answered in effect, "No, merely that the film provided a good vehicle from which to make money" and that this was the sole purpose for which he had exploited the film.

After rather justifiably mentioning that he was sure that my father could hardly approve of a film made about the "Protestant, Catholic or Jewish Peril" (depending upon whichever religious persuasion my father belonged to), Mr. Pugh mentioned that this film had "got the State wires of Washington ringing," and then offered, I believe on behalf of the Mormon Church, to buy the film outright and take it off the market. My father said he was doing so well with the picture here that he did not really want to sell but if he could obtain a certain sum from Mr. Pugh's backers, which would not be subject to negotiation, he would sell to Mr. Pugh. This fizzled out because talkies were then beginning to come into Britain and the writing was on the wall for silent films.25

Pugh is likely the man Smoot had in mind in his letters to Grant and Quinney. However, there is a question of dates. Smoot first became interested in the film in late 1924, well before the advent of talkies on a commercial scale. Collinson may have telescoped dates, for it is known that his father reissued the melodrama in 1928 under the new title The Mormon Peril.26

Here is what happened, according to Collinson's own statement:

Although the film was and is a rather good "thriller" in itself (forgetting for the moment the probably arbitrary choice of villains), the original owners do not appear to have made much of it. My father, through Stahl Pyramid, re-issued it with a great deal of showmanship and, I am afraid, rather lurid publicity (the photos of our posters at the U. S. H. S. will show you this),27 engaged a famous raconteur and actor, W. J. Mackay, to give a rather sensational lecture (a copy of which I still have) to accompany this silent film, which resulted in good business wherever the film was shown. My father had not contemplated then showing it in the States for the specific reason that he did not want to offend the Mormon Church, particularly on their own home ground.28

Following World War II, Stahl Pyramid leased the picture for five years to a 16mm distribution company, confining release to the United Kingdom. More recently it has found public distribution and sales in 8mm through Keith Perry of Perry's Movies in London. The lecture that accompanied the film in its 1928 re-release was published in his firm's magazine Home Movies.

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26 Gifford, citation number 07397.

27 Collinson is making reference to some photos located in the Utah State Historical Society Archives. Part of the John A. Widtsoe Collection, these were taken in Britain in 1928 by LDS missionaries. Widtsoe was President of the Church's European Mission at the time.

Trapped by the Mormons is no longer available through Perry's as Collinson is attempting to halt what he considers pirate sales in the United States and elsewhere. Prints, however, are being sold in the U. S. by Glenn Photo Supply of Encino, California. Other distributors may also handle the film. Claims to legal ownership in America are complicated because the picture itself has never been registered for copyright here. It is felt by those selling the film that it is in the public domain in this country and it may therefore be copied and sold openly.

Looking back, these two anti-Mormon melodramas must be considered the high point of the commercialized anti-LDS screen movement in the United Kingdom. Although sporadic crusades would continue, the heart of the cause was dying. The Utah of 1925 was neither as harsh nor as isolated as the Deseret of 1855. Fears of women never returning from the Mormon Zion just could no longer be substantiated, if they ever could.

Time was finally catching up with the anti-polygamy campaigners, for by the mid-twenties the Church was actively suppressing any attempts by its members to practice the plural marriage doctrine. Although polygamy has not died out completely, it has been effectively confined to offshoot and dissident groups repeatedly condemned by the LDS leadership. More than anything else,
the ending of polygamy as an active issue has acted to drastically revise the Mormon film image.\textsuperscript{32} Certainly this is true of British cinema where the anti-Mormon film disappears after the nova of interest in 1922.

In the following chapter, which documents miscellaneous productions during the later silent period, we shall see just what changes occurred in the American film.

\textsuperscript{29}For example, a stage play called "At the Mercy of the Mormons" was produced in Britain in 1925. This was typical of traditional LDS dramatic portrayals with the Elders shown as unscrupulous villains and murderers whose wives were nothing more than slaves. See "Elder Addresses Theatre Audience," \textit{Millenial Star}, LXXXVII, 16 (April 16, 1925), 246.

\textsuperscript{30}See James B. Allen and Richard O. Cowan, \textit{Mormonism in the Twentieth Century} (2nd ed.; Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1969), p. 36. They note that the "First Presidency of the Church responded to the new criticism by emphasizing that the continuing practice was due to an altogether overzealous and mistaken clique within the Church. On March 21, 1924, an official statement was issued in which those entering into new polygamous marriages were again denounced as disloyal to the Church."

\textsuperscript{31}See Jerald and Sandra Tanner, pp. 234-244.

\textsuperscript{32}Polygamy was the heart of the British anti-Mormon cause. Typical was the statement that "Mormonism spells polygamy, and polygamy means the enslavement of women." C. Sheridan Jones, \textit{The Truth About the Mormons--Secrets of Salt Lake City} (London: William Rider and Sons Ltd., 1920), p. ix. This can be studied on BYU Microfilm 299 #9.
Chapter 7

MISCELLANEOUS FILMS 1917-1930

Not all attempts at making anti-Mormon motion picture propaganda made it into the theaters. One production failure was the "Superlative Historical Picture Drama" The Power of the Mormons to have been made by The Fidelity Picture Plays Syndicate of Cleveland, Ohio. Although the date of the proposed film cannot as yet be definitely established, from internal evidences in a six page promotional brochure issued by the company it is clear that Fidelity operated in the general period 1919-1921.¹

As might be expected, the Syndicate's big selling pitch was that "POLYGAMY MUST BE BANISHED FROM THE NATION."² And selling the new group was. Under a heading modestly stating that theirs was a "Great Masterpiece Motion Picture to be Made Part of International Propaganda to Remedy a Great Social Evil," the brochure told prospective investors that The Power of the Mormons was both morally and fiscally a "good" investment.³ In addition to reaping great monetary profits, backers would help "arouse the public to the ever increasing menace of Mormonism, with its constantly growing power."⁴
Despite the hard sell evident throughout the brochure, Fidelity did have claim to some notable backing. Although not known for previous work in moving pictures, Dr. George L. Knapp was established in journalistic circles. For many years a member of the editorial staff of The Chicago Journal, Knapp had already completed the scenario for the planned movie at the time the Fidelity announcement appeared.5

Also associated with the Syndicate was Frank J. Cannon, a former United States Senator for Utah. Cannon, whose father was an LDS Apostle and polygamist, was a bitter apostate from Mormonism who had made a national name for himself as an anti-LDS author and publicist. He was to "authenticize" the filming of The Power of the Mormons.6

1 The Power of the Mormons (Cleveland: The Fidelity Picture Plays Syndicate, [c.1919]). This publication is a six page brochure promoting the film to prospective investors. A copy is found in the LDS Church Archives and a xerox duplicate of this is included in this thesis as Appendix D.


3 The Power of the Mormons brochure, p. 2.

4 The Power of the Mormons brochure, p. 2.

5 Knapp (1872-1950) had long been an active anti-Mormon. See The Power of the Mormons brochure, p. 4; Frank J. Cannon and George L. Knapp, Brigham Young and His Mormon Empire (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1913); and George L. Knapp, "Treason by Divine Right," The
In most details the Fidelity Syndicate promised a film that would appear to parallel through anti-Mormon eyes the earlier pro-LDS *One Hundred Years of Mormonism*. It was to cover the history of the Saints "from the advent of the dreamer, Joseph Smith, founder of the Mormon Church and voucher for the spurious Mormon bible" to the "hiding out of the Mormon chiefs from the threatened punishment of the Federal government." 7

Also to play an important part in the picture were the "workings of polygamy" and "the apportionment of immigrant girls." 8 Fidelity assured its potential investors that the "strong, forceful and romantic love story throughout" would "in no way" sacrifice the picture's "historical value." 9 Harking back to previous efforts, scenes were to portray:

The Mormon ceremony of marriage and the romances of the children whose parents at Mountain Meadows were the victims of Mormon (sic) hate and blood lust, in the most fiendish massacre in the red annals of pioneer days in the West. The escape of the girls from becoming the plural wives of Mormon elders and their flight back to a Christian community. The power of life and death over Mormon wives and the terrifying blood atonement in the secret chambers of the Mormon Temple. 10

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6 For more on Cannon (1859-1933), see Kenneth W. Godfrey, "Frank J. Cannon, a Political Profile" (unpublished paper, Brigham Young University, 1965); and *The Power of the Mormons* brochure, p. 4.
Calling the practice of polygamy "a cancer upon civilization" and "a dark blot upon the fair fame and name of our nation," the Fidelity promoter's claimed their film would "prove to be a tremendous force in Anti-Polygamy propaganda." They also declared that their company was motivated by moral as well as monetary considerations, and emphasized that The Power of the Mormons was to be a quality film production:

The production of this great picture is entered upon not solely to gain the large pecuniary returns (which are inevitable), but with the belief that the exhibition of this great moral and historical picture will prove a powerful aid to the great organizations now centering their best efforts to eradicate polygamy from the civilized nations.

The best possible historical and romantic scenario has been prepared -- the best picture talent will interpret it upon the screen -- the best direction, photography, art and mechanical work, settings of natural scenery, and artistic treatment of this great subject, insures a motion picture production which will rank only among the very best and most notable of screen masterpieces.12

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7 The Power of the Mormons brochure, p. 4.
8 The Power of the Mormons brochure, p. 4.
9 The Power of the Mormons brochure, p. 3.
10 The Power of the Mormons brochure, p. 4.
11 The Power of the Mormons brochure, p. 4
12 The Power of the Mormons brochure, p. 3. The emphasis is in the original. On the same page of the brochure it was proclaimed that "never has a proposed photoplay created so much interest, or brought so many offers of co-operation and support."
Despite the rousing turn of phrase and the excess hyperbole of their promotional material, Frank W. Packer, a motion picture producer and Fidelity's President and General Manager, faced serious problems. Money was the prime factor--either not enough of it coming in, or not enough of what was being subscribed ended up going towards actual filming.

Although claims were made that only "the best picture talent" would be utilized, Fidelity's advertisement was vague about who actually would be involved. Outside of Knapp, Cannon, and Packer, the only name even vaguely connected with the movie industry was H. E. Mills listed as their Art Director. And except for the script being completed, no details were provided about the Syndicate's control of equipment, studio space, or film raw stock etc. These serious deficiencies resulted in a failure to effect the translation of the company's high sounding promises into concrete action. No picture appears to have ever been made, nor was any further reference to it found in researches for this thesis.13

Indeed Fidelity may have been more than a failure--it may have been a fraud. If so, it wasn't alone. In late December 1920 "the vigilance committee" of the National Association of the Motion Picture Industry, a trade organization, announced a warning to the American people about the dangers of "wildcat" film company promotions. They told potential investors that during the past year
(1919) between $25,000,000 and $50,000,000 had been squandered in worthless moving picture stock. This bogus stock was being offered to unsophisticates lured on by promises of high profits for short term investments.  

The Salt Lake papers carried reports of the National Association's findings. The Deseret News editorialized:

> It may be true, it doubtless is true, that a few of these companies were honorable in their intentions at the start, but because of inexperience, strong competition, or some other handicap it soon became evident that success was a forlorn hope and the promoters saved what they could for themselves, letting the rest go hang. But many of the companies were swindles throughout, organized and conducted just well enough to keep within the law, but having no other thought than to make some dishonest money for a few men promoting the venture. From the activities of such as these not only do the investors lose but the legitimate motion picture industry is greatly injured through the lack of confidence and trust that is created.

Another factor in Fidelity's lack of success were the changes wrought in the American film industry by "The Great War." No longer were the movies exclusively a cheap entertainment aimed at the visually oriented poor working masses and Non-American-speaking immigrants. Rather, as David Robinson points out, new interests dominated the screen:

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13 The author was unable to check the Ohio newspapers from the period for articles on the company, although it is likely some reports were filed. Fidelity operated under Ohio License Number 1261; The Power of the Mormons brochure, p. 1.
Film content...had altered since pre-war days, with changing tastes and the changing social context. Before 1914 the appeal of the cinema to the lower classes was clearly reflected. Settings were characteristically working class; sentiments were characteristically Victorian, with suffering heroines providing for orphan brothers and sisters; sick or dying grandparents, handsome heroes, miraculous benefactors, villains, perils and plot situations inherited from nineteenth-century popular melodrama.

The new middle class audience, the new prosperous working classes, and the will of the conservative business element of America which the film industry so faithfully represented, together conspired to change the characteristic social setting for contemporary film subjects. The films now showed predominantly a wholly imaginary leisured class, with lovely homes and lovely clothes and lovely cars and lovely lives. This was the desired, distorted mirror image of American "normalcy".  

The new national tastes were also reflected in the disappearance of a continuing anti-Mormon film movement. The strict self-enforcement of the plural marriage ban by the LDS leadership was bearing fruit.

For as the anti-polygamy crusades began to diminish with the new post-Manifesto, post-Great War conditions, so did the Mormon screen image of the unrelentingly brutal and heartless Elder. Indeed it is axiomatic that the end of the polygamy issue heralded the end of the anti-LDS photoplay.  

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14 The National Association of the Motion Picture Industry was headed by William A. Brady, a showman. For more information on it see Ramsaye, p. 815.

15 From the editorial "Swindling Up To Date," The Deseret News, December 29, 1920, p. 4, col. 2.

This does not mean to say that Mormons disappeared from the screen in the twenties. On the contrary, a number of films containing LDS portrayals were either planned or actually managed to make their way into the theaters, although the Mormon role was diminished.

By way of example, the American produced The Mormon Trail (1921) offered a refreshing change from the largely negative Church image. This because the Mormons were little more than mentioned except in the title of this episode of The Exploits of Battling Dick Hatton series. In fairly standard Western style:

Jack Wells is in love with Kate, the fiancee of his brother Jim. He accompanies her on a journey to meet Jim but on the way they are held up by a masked bandit who is shot as he rides away. Jack pursues the bandit, only to find that it is his brother, Jim. For Kate's sake Jack decides to take the blame for the hold up. Jim, however, mortally wounded, admits his guilt to the sheriff and Kate decides to marry Jack.18

The film still survives and is found in the British National Film Archive collection.

17The hackneyed and repetitive sensationalized anti-Mormon tales were ironically being replaced by sexually oriented films in which the threat was not it becoming some "horrible" Mormon's sexual slave, but rather in missing out on the "fun" of what was then called "Flaming Youth." Sex didn't become a fearful and degrading act until the last reel of the twenties motion picture. This "new morality" seemed to work despite restrictions brought on by the scandals. By 1925 some 50,000,000 people were going to the movies every week in America alone. See the promotional advertisement by the editors of The Deseret News entitled "Wanted--One Billion People," The Deseret News, August 29, 1925, Section 4, p. 8. Some Church leaders continued to condemn the industry. See "Moving Pictures Are Denounced," The Salt Lake Tribune, February 14, 1922,
The Church made a move to involve itself in the film production business in 1923. The year is meaningful for even at this date anti-Mormon screen propaganda (at least in Europe and Canada) continued to significantly attract movie-goer patronage. Whether wearied by the anti-LDS onslaught or not, it was announced in *The Deseret News* that a large committee had been established with the intention of producing a moving picture. This was to capture for all time the coming of the Utah pioneers into the state, concentrating on their arrival in the Salt Lake Valley. Altogether more than one hundred and forty Church and civic leaders were connected with the project, which was to take place in conjunction with the July 24th holiday celebrations. Unfortunately no mention was made as to who would actually film the proposed picture, nor has any reference been located to indicate that the project was ever completed.¹⁹

Although the Church was experiencing the difficulties inherent in producing and completing a motion picture, other interests were finding Utah's scenery and history attractive film incentives.

¹⁸ This synopsis appears in the *British National Film Archive Catalogue*, p. 248. The leading roles were taken by James Gibbs, Audrey Chapman, C. Edward Hatton, and Albert Van Antwerp. No other references in American sources were found for this picture.
Lester Park, a Mormon showman who earlier had protested the exhibition of *A Victim of the Mormons*, by 1917 was involved in forming the first major non-Salt Lake movie operation in Utah. Known as The Ogden Pictures Corporation and located—as the name implies—in Ogden, it enjoyed passing success in 1917 and 1918, producing at least two nationally distributed pictures. Now only an obscure footnote in cinema history, Ogden Pictures nevertheless represents an early (though brief) attempt to create a nationally recognized studio in Utah. So far as is known however, no Mormon characters appeared in their films. 20

Ogden Pictures' ultimate failure did not deter others from coming to Utah. Parts of native son James Cruze's classic of the old West *The Covered Wagon* (1923) were shot in the state, 21 and in a portent of things to come, director John Ford brought his crew to Utah to film segments of his saga of the transcontinental railway builders *The Iron Horse* (1924). This included an early dramatization of the linking of the Central Pacific and Union Pacific Railroads at Promontory Point, Utah in 1869 much like that of the later *Western Union* (1941). 22

Although the author was unable to document whether or not parts of Cruze's follow-up Western *The Pony Express* (1925) were filmed in Utah, reports exist to indicate that in the original movie version Brigham Young was portrayed. Its ten reels were cut from 9,949 feet to the general release length of 9,801 feet and this may have had some effect.\(^{23}\)

Various versions of each of these major silent era classics are commercially available. In each of the photoplay editions of the novels Mormons are mentioned, if only in passing. The sympathetic LDS character Major Howard Egan in the book *The Pony Express--A Romance* is not listed in the credits for the movie, although he may have been included in the screenplay. Until that is available for study, a definitive statement cannot be made.\(^{24}\)

\(^{20}\) The other major forces in Ogden Pictures were Albert Scowcroft, another Utah film pioneer, and Harry Revier. The two films were *The Lust of the Ages* with Lillian Walker, and *The Grain of Dust*. For full particulars on the company and its work see the author's essays "The History of Utah Film: An Introductory Essay," pp. 15-19; and "Utah Filmmakers of the Silent Screen Era," pp. 15-19.


\(^{22}\) See Edwin C. Hill, *The Iron Horse* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1924), pp. ix-xiii. Also Fox Folks magazine (Fox Film Corporation, New York), IV, 9 (September 1925), 48. This is found uncatalogued in the BYU Archives.
Indeed it was during these mid-twenty years that southern Utah was to first develop as a motion picture center. Kanab especially enjoyed the prosperity the new industry was to bring. Although this was to have a profound impact upon Utah's economy this activity is not strictly pertinent to a discussion of Mormon film portrayals and is well covered elsewhere.25

Typifying the new attitude towards Mormon subjects was the 1926 comedy Hands Up! starring Raymond Griffith. Griffith started his career with Mack Sennett and later rose to stardom in a variety of comedy and dramatic roles. He is best known today for his suave, sophisticated depictions as the "Silk Hat Comedian." It was in this latter vein that Hands Up! was made. True to form, Griffith plays a man of polish and assurance thrown completely off balance by women—in this case two sisters.26

23 See Munden, p. 609 where it states that "the novel by Forman and Woods was written for the film and published simultaneously with its release. Brigham Young is also said to be among the historical personages depicted." The novel referred to is Henry James Forman and Walter Woods, The Pony Express—A Romance (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1925). Like the other photoplay editions cited above it includes numerous photographs taken from the film.

24 The script is found in Carton 73 of the Paramount Pictures Collection at the AMPAS Library in Los Angeles. Loose stills and the still book can be found in Boxes 56 and 155 of the same collection.

25 In addition to the author's previously cited essays see Elayne Wareing Fitzpatrick, "Where Have All the Movies Gone?" The Salt Lake Tribune, December 23, 1973,
**Hands Up!** begins as if it were a serious melodrama. Abraham Lincoln (George Billings) discusses with his cabinet the need to find new sources of revenue if the Union is to survive the Civil War. Word arrives that a western mineowner (Mack Swain) is willing to supply the North with all the gold it needs. Lincoln immediately dispatches a messenger for it.

General Robert E. Lee learns of the Northern plan and sends his own spy (Griffith) to forestall the Yankees. After a series of comic adventures among firing squads and Indians, Griffith is finally caught. However the two daughters of the mineowner (Marion Nixon and Virginia Lee Corbin) have fallen in love with Griffith and act to save his life. Peace is declared. Griffith ends up with the gold and the girls, although the North wins the war. The appearance of Brigham Young (Charles K. French) with a score of his wives gives Griffith his cue and he sets off for Salt Lake City with the two girls to settle down into blissful polygamy.27

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26 This should not be confused with the earlier *Hands Up!* (1917) starring Colleen Moore which had a totally different plot.

27 For background on the making of the picture see Brownlow, pp. 441-445. The script for *Hands Up!* (1926) is found in Carton 37 of the Paramount Pictures Collection at the AMPAS Library. Loose stills and the still books can be found in Boxes 53 and 136 of the same collection.
Contemporary reviewers were generally enthusiastic about the picture, sensing that Griffith was breaking new ground in screen humor. Calling him the leading comedian of the silent drama for "ingenuity, imaginativeness and originality," R. E. Sherwood happily declared that Griffith was "flying in the face of movie tradition and getting away with it beautifully." 28

C. S. Sewell was even more ardent in his review and told his readers that Hands Up! was one of the best burlesque comedies he had ever seen. 29 Although still locked into the polygamy era, one can nevertheless discern that the emphasis has begun to shift from propaganda to comedy. This represented a genuine victory for the Church and harbingered the nostalgic respectability that the Church was to cultivate in subsequent years. This new acceptance of the Mormons by both filmmakers and society as a whole would result in the making of Brigham Young--Frontiersman (1940) and other commercial pro-Mormon productions of later years.

28 R. E. Sherwood, "Hands Up," excerpt from "The Silent Drama," Life, LXXXVII, 2258 (February 11, 1926), p. 26, cited by George C. Pratt, Spellbound in Darkness--A History of the Silent Film (Greenwich, Connecticut: New York Graphic Society Ltd., 1973), p. 413. Sherwood found the dual love story "notable" and "daring." He wrote: "The most notable and most daring feature of the entertainment is the presence of two heroines, who share every love scene with the hero, and in the end--but it would be a low trick to spoil this refreshing laugh by attempting to explain it in cold, uninteresting type."
Actually *Hands Up!* had two endings according to Edward Finney, a personal friend of Griffith and himself director of the 1950 documentary *The Mormon Battalion.* Finney recalls:

Ray Griffith was one of my closest friends. He told me there were two endings to *Hands Up!* The ending that he liked best and the first one they made is one in which he marries both sisters. After all, part of the film had Brigham Young and his wives in it and this was the natural ending. But apparently there was some resentment about this original version from either the theater owners or the public, so they changed the ending so that he just rides off with the two girls to Utah. The conventional ending shows the three of them getting into a stage coach with something like "Off to Salt Lake City" on the back. I know they made the other ending with him marrying the girls because Griffith told me they did and he should know.30

Whatever the effects of *Hands Up!,* the LDS leadership still feared a possible renewal of anti-Mormon screen persecution. They sought to hedge this concern by encouraging film development within the state. As early as May 25, 1927 *The Deseret News* welcomed the temporary stopover in Salt Lake City of a large contingent of motion picture executives following a Hollywood trade convention. After noting that they were "keen observers and rare judges of beauty," *The Deseret News* urged the filmmakers to "come again gentlemen."31

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Certainly this extremely solicitous attitude on the part of the Mormon owned paper must have reflected serious interest among the Church authorities in having a motion picture situated in Salt Lake. Whatever the causes and inducements, within ten months of The Deseret News' editorial The Pioneer Film Corporation was operating in the Utah capital.32

Although Norman L. Sims was named to the Presidency of the new studio it would appear that the creative force behind it would be George Edward Lewis, a rather obscure Hollywood producer best known for his work on the Alaskan made The Cheechakos.33

Announcements of the new group's plans for filming appeared in the March 24, 1928 Salt Lake papers. First up was a feature entitled The Exodus (also referred to as The Exodus of the New World), "a dramatization of the perilous journey of the Mormon pioneers across the plains in 1847, from the Missouri River to Salt Lake Valley."34

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30 Statement by Edward Finney, personal interview, December 18, 1973. Mr. Finney now distributes films to collectors. Hands Up! is one of those movies. It is also commercially available from other distributors in both 8mm and 16mm versions.


32 This Salt Lake City concern is not to be confused with the film company operating out of New York in the early 1920s.
Two grandsons of Brigham Young were enlisted to aid the new company. Levi Edgar Young was to "watch the making of the picture, so as to make sure of the historical accuracy of the scenes depicted." Richard W. Young, then President of the Utah Bar Association was named as their attorney and placed on the board of directors. Others named included Frank P. Stewart, Secretary and Treasurer; J. G. Sargent, General Manager and Financial Director; George J. Martin; and Frank A. Nance.

Plans were made to build an elaborate twenty acre studio "in some picturesque region on the outskirts of Salt Lake, which would be as complete in every way as any in Hollywood." By November 1928 it was announced that a twelve acre site in Sugar House had been acquired.

33"Film Producers Decide on S. L. as Permanent Home," The Deseret News, March 24, 1928, p. 7, cols. 5-6. The Kenneth Munden edited American Film Institute Catalog credits him only for the 1925 Arrow production North of Nome where he suggested the theme but did not produce or direct.

34"Pioneer Trek to be Filmed in Salt Lake," The Salt Lake Tribune, March 24, 1928, p. 6, cols. 1-2.


36 The Salt Lake Tribune, March 24, 1928, p. 6.

37 "Film Studio Soon Promised," The Salt Lake Tribune, November 23, 1928, p. 7, cols. 4-5.
There was every expectation that the Pioneer venture would prove successful. Lewis managed to acquire some unusual footage showing the stampede of a large herd of buffalo, and this would later be intercut into the film to give it dramatic punch. Lewis even submitted his proposal to a number of prominent Salt Lake citizens, including LDS Church authorities who gave him their blessing. Capitalization for Pioneer was reported at $200,000 which the directors expected to increase to $1,000,000 following the release of The Exodus. Plans were drawn up for a second film entitled The Malemute Kid which was to have been "a story of Alaskan love and adventure."\(^{38}\)

Lewis cited more than twenty reasons for his move to Utah including the observation that the state "actually has more days of sunshine than southern California, making it possible to go forward with production throughout the year."\(^{39}\)

Speaking for the company, J. G. Sargeant told reporters that Pioneer would specialize in Westerns and films "dealing with the romantic side of western life."\(^{40}\) To bolster anticipated box-office, popular Hollywood stars Ben Lyon and Marie Prevost were imported for The Exodus and backed by a supporting cast that included Andrus (Anders) Randolph, Jimmie Mason, Russell Simpson, and Jean the Shepherd Dog.
Actual filming was completed by November 1928, and the editing was subsequently accomplished in Hollywood.\textsuperscript{41} The picture excited some comment about this time, including columns by Louella Parsons and others.\textsuperscript{42}

Lewis proudly addressed the Salt Lake City Chamber of Commerce that month and promised the new studio would soon be a reality. He told his audience that The Exodus itself was nearly ready and noted that "no less than $55,000 of outside capital" was spent within the state on the production.\textsuperscript{43}

Despite the fact that the film was almost complete, the timing was poor. "Talkies" were beginning to sweep the country, and so plans were made to add a sound track. Tyrell A. Richardson, a Chicago attorney representing the corporation, told interested Salt Lake reporters that with "sound and talkie features" the picture would:

...have an appeal all its own...To hear the clatter of hoofs and roaring of the wild animals as they thunder over desert or plains will give the picture a touch of realism otherwise impossible. The same will apply to the long trains of covered wagons as they go rattling over rocky surfaces.\textsuperscript{44}

\textsuperscript{38} The Salt Lake Tribune, November 23, 1928, p. 7.

\textsuperscript{39} The Salt Lake Tribune, March 24, 1928, p. 6.

\textsuperscript{40} The Salt Lake Tribune, March 24, 1928, p. 6.

\textsuperscript{41} The Salt Lake Tribune, November 23, 1928, p. 7.

\textsuperscript{42} Louella O. Parsons, "Mormon History Now to be Shown on Movie Screen," The New York City American.
Despite this interest in a recorded sound track, one apparently was never added. The likely reason was a shortage of funds. In the interim Pioneer representatives previewed a single-reel documentary travelogue of Salt Lake City before interested civic officials, and announced that plans for a national distribution system were complete.\textsuperscript{45} Money problems however continued to plague the company and caused Pioneer's directors to look for alternate modes of financing.

An attractive illustrated advertisement appeared in the Christmas edition of The Deseret News which urged the Utah public to take advantage of the "New Christmas Gift Plan" by purchasing Pioneer Film stock. The certificates themselves were offered in units of $60 each. These included one share of preferred stock at $50 and five shares of common stock at $2 per share.\textsuperscript{46}

\textsuperscript{43}"Movie Studio Will Be Built in S. L. C. of C. is Assured," The Deseret News, November 22, 1928, Section 2, p. 1, col. 2.

\textsuperscript{44}"Film Made in S. L. Expected to be on Screen by Dec. 15," The Deseret News, November 20, 1928, p. 2, col. 3.

\textsuperscript{45}"Salt Lake, Utah, Scenic Film Shows Officials," The Deseret News, November 13, 1928, p. 6, col. 4.

\textsuperscript{46}"Buy Pioneer Film Stock," The Deseret News, December 22, 1928, Church and Community Section, p. VII, cols. 4-5.
Prospective investors were urged to consider the "real value" such a holiday gift could be for a loved one. According to the ad there were also additional benefits:

Owners of Pioneer Film stock will be partners with us in our plan for boosting and advertising Utah to the world. THE EXODUS tells a gripping, thrilling, heart appealing story of Utah's early days. It portrays the heroic, historic journey of Brigham Young and his group of sturdy pioneers over plains, mountains and deserts to Salt Lake in 1847.

Buffalo stampedes, Indian attacks, crossing rivers and other streams when there were no bridges, marauding gangs of horse thieves, thrills that none but our forefathers have ever experienced, all interwoven with a wonderful love story—these and scores of others are gripping features of THE EXODUS.

The story will be flashed on screens throughout the world. No single agency will do as much to advertise our matchless state in 1929.

The Exodus will be ready for universal release early in January. Why not join our happy family of Utah boosters and participants in the profits of the Exodus?47

Despite these expectations, the picture was not to receive its public world premier until March 2, 1929. This was under the new title of All Faces West as it opened at the Victory theater in Salt Lake City.48 Enhanced by an impressive 26-piece orchestral and vocal prologue and the organ of Jewell Cox, All Faces West must have nevertheless proved a great financial disappointment to the new studio despite public statements to the contrary. Although it obtained good local reviews, the film only maintained a single week run which was about average for the period.49

47 The Deseret News, December 22, 1928, Church and Community Section, p. VIII.
Another advertisement appeared in The Deseret News on March 6, 1929 which re-urged investment in The Pioneer Film Corporation. Response to this apparently was disappointing as well. By September Pioneer faced an equity suit for $150,000 on its failure to pay interest on money owed a Chicago businessman named Max E. Miller. A receiver was named later that month, and the company went into suspension. Within a month "The Crash" came, ending whatever chance there was for All Faces West to receive proper national or international distribution. So completely has this photoplay been lost that even the generally authoritative American Film Institute Catalog failed to include it in its listings.

At least The Pioneer Film Corporation managed to release one feature and a short documentary. The other contemporary attempt by Mormon interests to enter the picture business was not even able to manage this. This less successful firm was The Corianton Corporation, incorporated in Delaware, but whose interests were intimately connected with Utah.

48 See the advertisement appearing in The Salt Lake Tribune, March 2, 1929, p. 18, cols. 4-6.

49 For typical critical response see "Utah-Made Film Has Premier at Victory Theater," The Salt Lake Tribune, February 24, 1929, Society Section, p. 10, col. 3; and "Utah Picture Holds Interest at Victory," The Deseret News, March 4, 1929, p. 11, col. 4. All Faces West was also the title of a subsequent musical play by Roland Parry made popular in Utah in the early 1950's. As Parry
Public attention was first directed towards the Corianton Corporation when The Deseret News carried a story in its November 2, 1929 issues announcing that a major motion picture version of Corianton, a story based upon ancient American characters found in The Book of Mormon, was to be filmed. Earlier Corianton had been a popular Utah stage play and had made its author, Orestes Bean, a well known figure among the state's dramaticists.

wrote the theme song to the original film production there is a clear relationship between the two.


51 "Seek Possession of Pioneer Film," The Deseret News, September 19, 1929, Section 2, p. 1, col. 4; "Pioneer Film Defends Suit," The Salt Lake Tribune, September 20, 1929, p. 34, col. 3; "Receiver Named For Pioneer Film Firm," The Deseret News, September 21, 1929, Section 2, p. 1, col. 4; and "Film Company Gets Receiver," The Salt Lake Tribune, September 22, 1929, p. 9-10, col. 1. Also see the Utah Secretary of State's Corporation Archive File Number 18282.

52 "Film to be Made From Corianton," The Deseret News, November 2, 1929, Section 3, p. III, cols. 3-7. In the story "Corianton falls in love with a notorious vampire called 'Isabel.' He was a Zoramite, descendant of Nephi and beloved of his father. Following a night of wild revelry in the Palace of Seantum, in company with Zoon Ze Isobel, as she is called, this handsome young son of the Nigh (sic) Priest Alma, meets his waterloo. But it all ends happily." See "'Corianton' as Screen Feature Recalls Past," The Deseret News, November 9, 1929, Section 3, p. II, cols. 2-3.

53 Orestes U. Bean, Corianton, An Aztec Romance (Salt Lake City: n.d.), For more on Bean (1873-1937) see Merrill Dee Beal (ed.), Biographical Sketches of the Children of George Washington Bean, Elizabeth Baum.
The venture was to be jointly produced by Lester Park (formerly associated with Ogden Pictures Corporation), his brothers Byron and Allen Park, and Orestes Bean. Also connected with the film entrepreneurs was the lecturer-author Napoleon Hill. The Corianton group managed to sign an exclusive contract with the Tabernacle Choir to provide music to accompany the proposed photoplay. Negotiations on this alone took over a year and a half to compete, and only through the enthusiasm of Bishop David David A. Smith--President of the Choir--were LDS Church officials convinced that the magnitude of the undertaking warranted use of the Choir. Dr. Edgar Stillman Kelley actually completed an entire musical score which occupied "twelve wonderful records." It appears that some filming of the Choir was embarked upon.

Emily Haws and Mary Lane Wald ([n.p.]: The George Washington Bean Family Association, 1967), pp. 56-57. A copy of this can be consulted by requesting MSS 965 at the BYU Archives.

54 See the advertisements "Napoleon Hill Coming," The Deseret News, November 2, 1929, Section 3, p. IV; and "Dear Folks," The Deseret News, December 14, 1929, Section 1, p. 7, cols. 6-8.

55 From the advertisement "A Frank Statement by Byron Park," The Deseret News, December 21, 1929, Amusements Section, p. VI.

56 According to Byron Park's obituary he "was the first to make a motion picture recording of the Tabernacle Choir." See "Funeral Rites Held Tuesday For Byron Park," The Deseret News, August 22, 1950, p. B-5, col. 1; and "Ex-Salt Laker Dies After Coast Crash," The Salt Lake Tribune, August 23, 1950, p. 25, col. 3. Because these do not definitely state that the film in question was Corianton
Primarily it was the musical nature of the picture (which was to incorporate the new "all talking, all singing..." format) that attracted Church support. For example, The Deseret News felt that:

Though it will take over a year in the making "Corianton" when produced will be made one of the outstanding masterpieces of its kind in America, principally because of its musical features. The entire production is already financed and advance preparations are already underway.57

Unfortunately, despite these claims of fiscal solidarity, the market decline had its effect. Byron Park, General Sales and Fiscal Manager for the promotion, took a full-page advertisement in the December 21, 1929 Deseret News to explain the situation and respond to "rumors...circulated--some innocently--some maliciously" about Corianton's financial health.58

Perhaps influenced by the failure only months earlier of The Pioneer Film Corporation, Park felt constrained to deny that Corianton was engaged in a public stock sales program. He also denied that Corianton was:

...a "MORMON" enterprise or is being financed or sponsored by the Church as one of its activities. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The Church is not in the Motion Picture business. And it has never been asked to finance or sponsor "CORIANTON."59

there is still doubt as to when this occurred. For more on this see Jack Sears, "Anthony C. Lund and Tracy Y. Cannon Sponsor New Movie Star," The Deseret News, December 21, 1929, Amusements Section, p. VII.

57 The Deseret News, November 2, 1929, Section 3, p. III.
In the face of these denials, Park deftly announced that "owing to changed financial conditions during the past few months brought about by causes well known to the public, a limited number of capital stock of the Corianton Corporation, for which finances were pledged, cannot be taken up by the original subscribers." He then went into a pitch in which he urged those who desired to participate financially in "this great production in its All-Talking Motion Picture form" to send for detailed information as to how they could invest $100 or more.

The entire advertisement is most interesting, but apparently did not generate sufficient funds to realize the project. In May 1930 trading in the company's stock was suspended in New York, and the whole production died a casualty of the new economic conditions.  

58. The Deseret News, December 21, 1929, Amusements Section, p. VI.

59. The Deseret News, December 21, 1929, Amusements Section, p. VI.

60. The Deseret News, December 21, 1929, Amusements Section, p. VI. For further background on the film see "Theatre Sidelights from 'Corianton,' Forthcoming Talking Picture," The Deseret News, November 9, 1929, Section 3, p. III, cols. 4-8; and "'Corianton' Producers Go West on Business," The Deseret News, December 14, 1929, Section 3, p. II, col. 2.

Thus ended the decade of the 1920s—a period marked with both success and failure for the Church and its enemies. The thirties would prove to be much quieter, although these years, too, would exhibit both pro and anti-Mormon tendencies.

According to the Utah Secretary of State's Corporation Archive File Number 19209, The Corianton Corporation remained alive in Utah until April 4, 1932 when it was suspended for failure to pay taxes. Corianton may not have proved the masterpiece the Church expected it to be had it actually been completed. Samuel W. Taylor, an LDS author and screenwriter, relates: "Regarding Corianton, the screenplay does exist; but with my memory for names I couldn't tell you who has it for the life of me. I met him when appearing as speaker at the Utah Writers Round-Up; a tall, lean fellow, who'd worked around Hollywood on production crews. (I remember he was at Disney's awhile). He called at my home in Redwood City [California] subsequently with the Corianton script, and a sad story of how the producer put in dancing girls and spoiled everything. After looking at the script, I felt there should have been more dancing girls; it was terrible." Personal correspondence between Samuel W. Taylor and the writer, December 11, 1973.
Chapter 8

THE THIRTIES DECADE

The thirties continued the transitional process begun during the later silent years. The rabid anti-LDS cinematic image was quickly fading, although not yet entirely abandoned. New problems were to face the Saints.

The Church, although chastened by the commercial failures of the Pioneer and Corianton enterprises, did attempt to have a motion picture made of the Church's one hundredth anniversary pageant in 1930. This two hour production of The Message of the Ages was presented in the Tabernacle and dramatized the LDS conception of God's historical dealings with mankind.¹

Especially emphasized was God's influence on Luther and the reformers, the later founding of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and the directing of the Mormon pioneers to the safety of the Salt Lake Valley.

According to A. Hamer Reiser:

This pageant originally played 30 nights to the Tabernacle filled every night. President Grant wanted to have it photographed in motion pictures in color so that it might be available in that fashion to be presented in many places all over the Church. An effort was made to get it in color and finally the people who were working with technicolor photography motion pictures persuaded President Grant that it couldn't be done—that there was not enough light on the sets and the scenes to expose the film. And

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closeups would be very disillusioning because they would reveal young men with whiskers and the rest of the paraphernalia of an ancient prophet just stuck on his face....In other words they talked President Grant out of the project.2

As David Kent Jacobs notes in his analysis of this aborted film version, "perhaps the project would not have been very effective then, but the historical value of this production today would be significant."3 However Pathé Sound News did produce a 400 foot 35mm black and white documentary of the event entitled Mormons Celebrate Centenary. A copy of this is in the Church Archives, but because of the shrunken condition of the 35mm original the sound cannot be reproduced on 16mm dupes.4

Certainly this type of film--favorable as it was to Church aims and reaching millions of movie viewers--was looked upon benignly by the LDS General Authorities.

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1George D. Pyper, "'The Message of the Ages'--A Sacred Pageant," One Hundred Years 1830-1930 Centennial Celebration of the Organization of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Beginning April 6, 1930 (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1930), 45-56. Hereafter this is cited as Centennial Celebration.

2Quoted in David Kent Jacobs, p. 59. Jacobs inadvertently misspelled Reiser's name when he cited him.

3David Kent Jacobs, p. 59.

4David Kent Jacobs includes a description of the six scenes found in this documentary on pages 67-68 of his thesis. For further background on this production see Centennial Celebration, pp. 54, 112. The first page cited includes a photograph of the Pathé crew filming one of the scenes.
Around 1931 representatives of Electrical Research Products Incorporated, an affiliate of Western Electric, approached Mormon leaders with a comprehensive plan for renting motion pictures, buying equipment, and producing under Church direction specific films for LDS usage. A documentary on Church history and four educational movies were to be made a year.

Because of the restricted monetary situation during the Depression and the large initial cash outlay, the proposal was rejected. However, a modified equipment and film rental program was adopted by individual Church wards and proved successful.\(^5\)

The Church finally abandoned interest to film strip production. These years have been accurately described as "A Fruitless Decade."\(^5\) While Jacobs was making reference to LDS sponsored filming, the appellation is also apt commercially. It is true that theatrical exhibitors were screening the diluted remakes of many of the silent era melodramas now that sound and the talkies had come in, but as has already been noted these generally removed all references to Mormonism and Utah. Like Riders of the Purple Sage (1931 and 1941) most were virtually unrecognizable when compared to the original works.

\(^5\)David Kent Jacobs, pp. 62-63.
Other pictures with Utah titles but little else about the state also made their appearance—among these were The Utah Kid (1930), The Man From Utah (1934—an early John Wayne oater from Monogram), and The Utah Trail (1938). This latter film starred Tex Ritter and received some favorable critical comment.

Another development was the making of short semi-documentary travel featurettes utilizing the still new sound technology. Typical of these was The Mormon Trail (1935) and The Miracle of Salt Lake (1938). The Mormon Trail was part of the E. M. Newman "See America First" series distributed by Warner Brothers. Included were scenes significant in Mormon and Western history during the years 1865-1876 and a number of views of Salt Lake City.

Several other short movies were made. Among these were a March of Time documentary on the LDS Church welfare program released in the late 1930's, and a short black and white film showing LDS General Authority J. Reuben Clark presenting his credentials as American Ambassador to Mexico to the President of that republic in 1930.

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6 David Kent Jacobs, pp. 58, 68.

7 Mark Ricci, Boris Zmijewsky and Steve Zmijewsky, The Films of John Wayne (New York: The Citadel Press, 1970), p. 57. See also The Film Daily Year Book 1935, p. 169. Wayne is a deputy sheriff who infiltrates a gang of rodeo thieves and acts to expose them. Also featured was Polly Ann Young, Loretta Young's sister. Wayne
Although anti-Mormon screen activity generally ended by the mid-twenties, this does not mean to say that earlier Church practices had summarily received film industry sanction. For while polygamy had ceased to be a burning social issue, favorable movie use of the plural marriage theme was strictly prohibited for the vast majority of picturemakers. Behind this ban was the stringent language of the industry-wide Production Code administered by The Association of Motion Picture Producers, Incorporated (AMPP).  

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10 David Kent Jacobs believes this was filmed in either 1938 or 1939. See David Kent Jacobs, p. 66. However, and unidentified English newspaper clipping in the author's collection dated May 28, 1937 indicates that a March of Time newreel about the "Supreme Mormon Pontiff" Heber J. Grant and Church sponsored publics works projects was shown in Britain that month.


12 The Code was adopted in March 1930. For additional background see Kenneth Macgowan, Behind the
The Production Code was a voluntary system of self-regulation drawn up by the major studios in response to the periodic censorship outcries raised against them. Although independent filmmakers could choose to ignore the Code by opting not to seek the Administration's seal, they were in the small minority and lacked adequate distribution. All the leading producers were AMPP members, and because of fear of the more vocal censorship forces the Code strictures dominated the film output of the thirties and forties.\(^{13}\)

Despite a liberalizing of attitudes following the close of World War I, most Americans continued to believe that polygamy and Christianity were mutually contradictory. This was certainly true of official Hollywood. According to Olga J. Martin in her authoritative *Hollywood's Movie Commandments--A Handbook for Motion Picture Writers and Reviewers*:

Polygamy is considered as multiple adultery under the Code, and, therefore any story dealing with this theme must have sufficient compensating moral values to permit its dramatization on the screen. It may not be treated in a favorable or glamorous light, and no details of the intimate life of a colony devoted to polygamy may be portrayed on the screen. It must be shown as illegal, wrong, and subversive to the standards of Christian society.\(^{14}\)

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\(^{13}\)By the mid-thirties the production and exhibition of motion pictures had become a major industry. According to figures appearing in *The Salt Lake Telegram* on August 7, 1934 there were 19,311 motion picture theaters in the

There was one independently produced commercial screen attempt to capitalize on news items appearing in the mid-thirties about an offshoot Mormon sect in Short Creek, Arizona which had embraced plural marriage with renewed enthusiasm. Predictably enough, *Polygamy* (1936) took a dim view of the practice.

The Short Creek community developed largely because of a quirk in geography. The small town (now called Colorado City) lies north of the Grand Canyon in an isolated area known as the Arizona Strip. While this harsh, dry country is linked to Utah culturally, it is officially part of Arizona for law enforcement purposes. Because of its remoteness, state and Federal authorities seldom visited the area.

As laws against polygamy began to be more strictly enforced in Utah, some disgruntled Mormons looked to the Strip as the ideal location from which to continue the clandestine marital doctrine.

United States and 72,000,000 tickets were sold weekly. Over 30,000 persons were employed on production in Hollywood alone, while more than 260,000 others worked throughout the country in theaters and associated businesses. The Hollywood studios were making about 550 features a year, and spent approximately $100,000,000 advertising the industry. Taxes paid out equalled the advertising budget. The source article for these statistics was located in the *Journal History*, August 7, 1934, p. 5.

The LDS Church began excommunicating members of the "Fundamentalist" sect in 1933. By 1934 a number of the leaders of the movement visited Short Creek and made plans to move there in order to escape threatened legal action. After the Utah legislature amended existing state law in 1935 to make unlawful cohabitation a felony instead of a misdemeanor, the move was effected. Soon a thriving polygamist colony was evident.  

Missionaries were sent out to recruit other plural wives. Many of these proved to be teenage brides thoroughly convinced of the purity of their vows and the righteousness of their actions. Decisions in Short Creek were made by a council of "high priest apostles" who "quoted Brigham Young's sermons on polygamy over and over, including frequent use of the observation: 'A plural wife must overcome weakness.'"  

Although these and other modern day polygamist offshoots from the LDS Church are commonly called Mormons because of their belief in The Book of Mormon and the divine missions of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, it should be noted that the Utah Church even today disowns them as apostates and fully disfellowships (excommunicates) them when their unauthorized plural marriages are discovered.  

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of the Production Code Administration at the time her book was written.
After the polygamists settled in Short Creek, they began to attract public and ecclesiastical notice. Ironically, the Mormon leadership vehemently denounced them in terms reminiscent of those used by opponents of the Church in the late 1880s. At that time the then Apostle Heber J. Grant spoke of the membership's "virtue for sacrifice" because of their refusal to "forego their honest convictions" by deferring to the militant Federal majority. As Nels Anderson observes:

What he called a "virtue for sacrifice" in 1885 was less than a virtue in 1935, when, as president of the church, Grant raised his voice with the Gentiles in condemning the clandestine polygamy of a few isolated Saints in the Dixie region...Church authorities said they were moved by lustful urges. They were condemned by bishops, stake presidents, and apostles in the same language that Gentiles used against bishops, stake presidents, and apostles in 1885, when Bishop (John) Sharp was removed from ecclesiastical office because he had decided to obey the antipolygamy law.\footnote{See John Marshall Day, "A Study in Protest to Adaptation" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Utah, 1963), pp. 49-51; Arthur F. Bruhn, \textit{Southern Utah's Land of Color}! (Salt Lake City: Bryce Canyon Natural History Association and Zion Natural History Association, 1962), pp. 51-52; James Cary, "The Untold Story of Short Creek," \textit{American Mercury}, LXXVIII (May 1954), 119-123; and "Multiple Wives: Arizona Prisoner Defends His Conduct on Religious Grounds," \textit{The Literary Digest}, CXXII, 5 (August 1, 1936), 9-10. The colony never numbered more than 400 even at its height. See Day, p. 51.}


\footnote{There, however, is a reluctance to publicize the "Fundamentalists" as they are called. See Turner, pp. 214-215.}
Not surprisingly, it was the most bizarre aspects of the Short Creek polygamists that drew the interest of moviemakers. Advertising for Polygamy in its re-release used catch lines like "OLD WIVES TRADED FOR NEW. UNBELIEVABLE, FANTASTIC, BUT TRUE"; "A revelation for America!--a strange social problem rears its head again"; "EXPOSED!..THE DARING TRUTH! IN THIS STRANGE CULT A FATHER IS FORCED TO SACRIFICE HIS DAUGHTER"; "A DRAMATIC THUNDERBOLT. SENSATIONAL! * BOLD! * STARTLING!"; and "A Story That Will Grip The Whole Nation! Husbands of 50, Brides of 15. Startling Facts That Outstrip Fiction!"¹⁹

Perhaps because of its strong denunciation of plural marriage, the film received a Code seal of approval (number 2732).²⁰ According to David F. Friedman, Polygamy was made in 1936 by J. D. Kendis.²¹ This roughly corresponds with Library of Congress copyright registration data.²²

¹⁸Anderson, p. 417. Although several raids have been conducted on the polygamists, the community still exists and they continue an active though covert missionary campaign.

¹⁹These are taken from the four page press book issued at the time of the film's re-release under the title Illegal Wives in 1945. This and other promotional material for the movie (including still photographs) were provided the author by David Friedman. Friedman is also President of the Adult Film Association of America—a trade group comprised of producers, distributors, and exhibitors of adult and sex-related motion pictures. See Jerry Beigel, "Adult Film-makers Plan Counterattack," The Los Angeles Times, July 18, 1973, Part IV, p. 10, cols. 2-5.
Material on the picture is rare. No record of it exists at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Library nor in the various trade annuals for 1936-1937 or 1945-1946. Although The American Film Institute has been interested in the film, they have no material documenting the production.23 Trade reviews are notably lacking.

The general outline of the story can however be gathered from the promotional material provided by David Friedman. One photograph provides a definite tie-in to the Short Creek community. This shows the crowd at the RKO Downtown Theater in Detroit waiting to view Polygamy. The advertising is clearly visible and states that the film is a "REVELATION OF A STRANGE SOCIAL PROBLEM THAT NOW EXIST(S) IN SHORT CREEK ARIZONA."24 Another publicity still is an actual news photo of two Short Creek polygamists on their way to prison. According to Friedman, "This happened sometime in the 1930s, and Mr. Louis Sonney used this in the exploitation of Illegal Wives."25

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21 Personal correspondence between David F. Friedman and the writer, May 8, 1973. Friedman's company controls the present rights to Polygamy/Illegal Wives, but in this letter he indicated that they "no longer have prints of this picture, and I am not certain as to the condition of the negative." Friedman also stated that Kendis has been dead for many years.

22 Copyright Catalog 1912-1939, p. 672. According to this source, Polygamy was a nine-reel sound feature registered by Unusual Pictures on November 15, 1936. Basis for the film was the novel I Am a Polygamist by Peter Salia.
From the available stills and publicity brochures now available it is clear that the picture was an early sound "sex-ploitation" potboiler. Friedman relates that as far as he can recall, "Polygamy/Illegal Wives is the only American made 'Adult' film dealing with the question of Mormon polygamy."26

The polygamists are pictured as hillbilly types lazily resting about while their plural wives do all the back breaking work. Director Patrick Carlyle apparently concentrated on the plight of one young beautiful "child" bride torn between her religious duty and her desire for a non-polygamist lover.27 Readers will note that this theme is not too far removed from the earlier anti-Mormon films of the silent period. The cast itself was mostly non-stellar. Featured were Charles Maurice, Ruth (also listed as Ann) Marien, Bruce Wyndham, Robert Stevenson, Ted Edwards, Emilie Straube, Frank Pharr Simms, and Helen Pennington.28

23Personal correspondence between Pamela Wintle, Archives Assistant/Librarian at The American Film Institute, and the writer, May 2, 1973.

24Other advertising visible in the photograph parallels that used in the film's re-release as Illegal Wives.


Patrons were dared to read the "actual code" of the polygamists. According to the promotional material, they advocated:

1. Many Wives For Every Husband.
2. Many Children.
3. Brides Must Be Virgins.
4. All Males Must Wear Underwear.
5. Brides Are Prepared By Concubines.
6. No Divorces.
7. No Birth Control.
8. Marriages At Midnight Only.\(^{29}\)

Although copyrighted in 1936, the film appears to have received only limited bookings. It is known to have been screened under its original title Polygamy in Detroit because of the photograph provided by Friedman. Nearly ten years later it was reissued under the Illegal Wives name by Continental Pictures, Incorporated of Hollywood. This was in conjunction with another "sex-ploitation pic" Jungle Virgin whose advertising was a lurid as the title would suggest. The promotional material for this double-bill indicates they were receiving their "First Pacific Coast Showing."\(^{30}\) It is not clear whether this means

\(^{27}\)Although the actress playing the "child" bride (presumably Ruth or Ann Marien) looks old enough in her photos to know what she was doing.

Illegal Wives or Jungle Virgin singly or as a combined program were going into a first West Coast release.

Today largely forgotten, Polygamy/Illegal Wives remains a neglected cinematic curiosity. It principals, as well as the film itself, are obscure in Hollywood annals. The lack of trade reference during its initial exhibition and subsequent re-release would tend to indicate that despite its Production Code approval Polygamy did not make a major screen impact.\(^{31}\) Later research hopefully may turn up more on its origins, production, and influence.

\(^{29}\) This is taken from one of the photographs donated by Friedman. It probably is a relatively accurate reflection of the Fundementalist polygamist beliefs. For a detailed study see John Marshall Day's thesis cited earlier. The reference to male underwear presumably is an allusion to the use of special temple garments. See Jerald and Sandra Tanner, pp. 459-461.

\(^{30}\) This consists of a two page advertising brochure for Illegal Wives and Jungle Virgin which contained copies of ads appearing in California newspapers in 1945. Included were excerpts from the movie sections of The Glendale News-Press, September 21, 1945; The Long Beach Press-Telegram and Sun, August 3, 1945; and The San Pedro News-Pilot, August 20, 1945. Undated advertisements were also reproduced for the Colony Theater at 6523 Hollywood Blvd. in Los Angeles, which stated that the bill was in its "5th Smash Week" there. Exhibitors were told to "write or wire" Continental Roadshows in care of Continental Pictures Incorporated, 6362 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, California, for information on their "Complete Exploitation Campaign And Special Lobby Gratis With Every Continental Road Show Unit."

\(^{31}\) Although the later Illegal Wives-Jungle Virgin brochure alleged that "this Double Bill is NOW Smashing all Box Office Records and Will Smash Yours," this claim
This essentially marks the end of the anti-Mormon screen era's brief sound phase. While during the thirties several other commercial motion picture proposals were put forward in attempts to cash in on the pioneer sacrifices of more orthodox Mormonism, these attempts came to nothing. Nevertheless general interest in filming the LDS saga seems to have retained a continuing fascination for the Hollywood studio chieftains.  

Eventually this would culminate in the making of the best known picture of Mormon life—*Brigham Young-Frontiersman*. Its premiere in 1940 brought a whole new image of Latter-day Saint society to the sound film and laid to rest the cinematic horrors of the silent years.

remains somewhat suspect. Hollywood is not noted for the restraint of its advertising claims.

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32 See May Mann, "Events in Mormon Pioneering of Salt Lake Will Be Chronicled in Hollywood Production," *The Deseret News*, December 26, 1936, Weekly Magazine Section, p. 3. This was to be a pro-LDS romantic melodrama about the days of the Utah War starring Tom Keene. Mann also notes that in the three year period 1933-1936 a number of studios including Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Paramount, and Universal toyed with the idea of a major motion picture about the Mormon pioneers. None of these ever reached completion, including the Keene vehicle.

33 See for example Weston N. Nordgren, "Brigham Young," *The Improvement Era* (Salt Lake City), XLIII, 9 (September 1940), 532-533+; and the special *Brigham Young World Premiere* section in *The Salt Lake Tribune*, August 23, 1940, pp. 27-38 for typical Utah response. For further background on the film and Dean Jagger's later conversion to Mormonism see James D'Arc, "Dean Jagger—'Prophet' to Convert," *The Daily Universe* (Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah), November 19, 1973, pp. 7-8, cols. 3-5+. 
Chapter 9

CONCLUSIONS

Approximately forty motion pictures bearing on Mormonism were made in the thirty year period 1905-1936.\(^1\) In reviewing the genre one detects certain trends. First, the strong relationship (especially in the pre-1923 anti-LDS film) to the sister arts of literature and the stage. The carry over of traditional Victorian melodrama to the nascent cinema is well established, and, as this thesis documents, found expression in the anti-Mormon screen thriller. Second, despite a vast array of top-flight and second-rank talent evident in many of the pictures discussed, most of these cinéastes admittedly were not in their best or most memorable form. The movies themselves were largely imitative and to a degree this fact helps explain their relative obscurity in the history of the cinema. Non-innovative and often heavy-handed in their propaganda, they have lacked the more enduring interest of the more purely entertainment "pics."

It appears that the Mormons were slower to develop a positive screen image than most other churches and religious groups. Despite LDS claims of being "the only true Church," in the period under discussion it was still
too small numerically to bring about the social and political acceptance that the Catholics, Protestants, and even Jews were to effect.²

A number of other factors further acted to inhibit the growth of LDS influence. Among these were the Saints' relative isolation from the major literary and movie centers, the "strangely" prophetic nature of the religion, and a continued doctrinal emphasis on the principles of plural marriage long after its abandonment as a practice.

Polygamy crystalized opposition to the Church and seems to have held a strong fascination for silent moviegoers.³ Certainly the majority of films made about the Saints during this period focused in on this one aspect of pioneer Mormon society. As we have seen these often gave viewers little more than a repetitiously one-sided and distorted "exposé" of the Church's missionary efforts.

¹See Appendix E for a table of known motion pictures extending through 1938 containing proposed and realized Mormon screen characterizations.

²In 1900 the Church had an estimated 264,000 members worldwide; by 1910--381,000; 1920--508,000; 1930--631,000; 1940--759,000; and today embraces approximately 3,500,000 people on its rolls. As the Church grew so did its influence. Figures based on those appearing in Allen and Cowan, p. 51.

³The reason for this cannot be stated with certainty. However as one scholar puts it: "There is in every literature an undercurrent of 'wicked"
The cumulative effects of the anti-Mormon photoplays were mixed. While in some people they apparently spurred the adoption of an anti-LDS viewpoint or strengthened an already existing prejudice, in others they worked the opposite and caused many to investigate and eventually join the Church. Although the films today are little more than historical and sociological curiosities, in their day they were representative of the linking of commercial interests and a well organized international anti-Mormon movement’s attempt to influence public opinion against the Utah Church.

To some extent these exertions were successful. With its secular power outside Utah weaker than its rivals, the Church was not able to build and maintain the political and cultural leverage necessary to deeply impress American and European society until the 1930s. Latter-day Saint scholars generally recognize these years as the transitional period for popular acceptance of the Mormons. According to Church

writings—those whose appeal is to the anti-moral and a-social of the public taste. Nineteenth century Americans, Victorian descendants of Puritan forebears as they were, found in anti-Mormon literature what the present generation finds in pornography: a way of experiencing sex and sin without participating in the wickedness. They could enjoy the evil while still feeling quite smug and superior. With frequent descriptions of flagellations and indecencies, anti-Mormon novels were an interesting combination of self-righteous piety and titillating suggestiveness. Arrington, "Mormonism: Views From Without and Within," pp. 147-148. Interestingly enough a recently produced and self-styled pornographic film from Denmark called Bordsellet
Historian Leonard J. Arrington:

By not producing their own imaginative literature the Latter-day Saints lost the image-battle during the period of their western pioneering. In fact, it was not until the 1930s that the literary image began to change substantially. The Mormon scholars in eastern schools, the Tabernacle Choir broadcasts, and increased tourism helped people know us better. Publicity surrounding the Church Welfare Plan during the Great Depression helped change the image of present-day Saints, and the uncovering and publishing of pioneer diaries and histories by Andrew Jenson, Juanita Brooks, Preston Nibley, Dale Morgan, and Nels Anderson told the impressive stories of the once-maligned early-day Saints.

Above all, it seems to me our image changed as a result of our production of a significant body of high-quality imaginative literature by a number of people reared in our own culture.5

Among the attitude changing books mentioned by Arrington in his essay is *Children of God* by Vardis Fisher. It was the critical reception of this novel following its publication in 1939 which prompted the filming of Twentieth Century-Fox’s *Brigham Young—Frontiersman* the following year.6 The new Mormon screen image had arrived.

(As the Bordello) (1972) utilized a "Mormon priest" in some of the sex scenes.

5Allen and Cowen state on p. 66 of their book on *Mormonism in the Twentieth Century* that "it was not until these years that it (the Mormon image) crossed the line from a predominantly negative to a more positive character."

6James V. D'Arc, "'Brigham Young'...Epic Film," *The Daily Universe* (Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah),
It is unlikely we will ever experience a repetition of the anti-LDS screen "crusade" such as existed in the first quarter of this century. But while the emphasis has changed since *Trapped by the Mormons* was released in 1922, interest in Mormon pioneer life has never dimmed. Television like the cinema has found the Mormon experience (including polygamy) one of continuing fascination, and it's likely that as long as there are filmgoers there will be Mormons on the screen.

October 9, 1972, Monday Magazine Section, p. 6. Originally the title was just *Brigham Young*, but apparently --Frontiersman was added later to indicate that the film was less about the religious office of the Mormon leader (although that was an integral part of the story) than his pioneer role.
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F. LEGAL CITATIONS


APPENDIX A
APPENDIX A: THE ANTI-"MORMON" MOVING PICTURES AND PLAY

THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS' MILLENNIAL STAR.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1894.

THE ANTI-"MORMON" MOVING PICTURES AND PLAY.

The incitement of man is being taxed at the present time in Great Britain to find something that will move a spirit of antagonism against the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

The agitation of last spring and summer which at times was stormy and violent in character, failed in its unhappy purpose, because the charge preferred against the "Mormons" was insufficient to sustain its own argument.

The present movement is an attempt to renew the agitation against the Church, but in a more subtle and sly manner. In the investigation which it is understood, is made quarterly by the Home Secretary, through the police department, every assistance is rendered by the President of the European Mission and the conference presidents, so far as it is sought.

All information demanded relative to the movements of the anti-Mormon and the "Mormon" literature published by the Church and distributed among the people is readily and willingly furnished.

As a result of the agitation it was finally discovered that the charges made against the "Mormons" were without foundation in truth, and, further, that there was nothing in the situation requiring adverse legislation against this unpopular and greatly misrepresented Church and sect.

Our opponents have taken another "tack" and are now exploiting a vile and altogether despicable moving picture, entitled "A Victim of the Mormons," a show, known as "Through Death Valley, or Two Mormon Peculi." The movietime spirit that is promoting this latest attempt against an innocent people will at once be detected by a close observer.

The show is advertised by misleading but most sensational illustrated handbills that are a disgrace to the producers, but this is the shows themselves being insufficient, apparently, to keep up the interest to fever heat, a clumsy dodge is resorted to. It is made to appear that the "Mormons" are sending in written protests, which, if not heeded, are to be followed by an antagistic demonstration at the show, almost simultaneously, both at Sunderland and Harlaxton, it is announced through the press that the managers of this picture show had received a letter from the "Mormon" Brotherhood protesting against the picture and threatening violence if they were not withdrawn. And not having been withdrawn, a rush and an attack was made "last night" to stop the performance. The writer has before him a written denial from our representatives at Sunderland that anything of the kind happened, so far as the "Mormons" were concerned, and that no letter had been sent by the "Mormon" Brotherhood to the manager of the show.

As to the disturbance at Harlaxton, an account of which is given below, the writer addressed a letter to the Editor of the Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, showing up the intimations of the whole business for the information and enlightenment of the reader, making it clear that the letter, which is signed, was not written by the "Mormon" Brotherhood to the manager of the show.

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through a door at the rear of the hall. The "Mormons" were connected with this incident in the following manner: Mr. George Atkins, the manager, stated, in the report, "that he received a letter from the "Mormon" Brotherhood in Liverpool last Saturday threatening that a protest would be made at the door if the picture was shown. He, however, did not report the matter seriously and destroyed the letter. However, the threat was last night carried out."

Now, Mr. Editor, Mr. George Atkins may or may not have received a letter of some kind on Saturday last, but he certainly did not receive a letter from the "Mormon" Brotherhood in Liverpool upon that day at any other time. Being in charge of the said Brotherhood, I speak authoritatively. We are not in communication with Mr. Atkins, hence never met him and know nothing about him; but it is a matter of regret that he should lend himself to such transparent schemes if he is correctly reported to swindle this information donors. People who continue written protests against a procedure of public interest are not in the habit of destroying them. Such evidence would be highly useful in case of a judicial or an investigation. Mr. Atkins may be a successful moving picture showman, but he is dreadfully lacking in shrewdness. The purpose of it all was and is, evidently, to work up a general sensation on the "Mormon" question and, incidentally, secure a renewal license in the view of representation of a much maligned people, which would put pounds and pence into somebody's pocket.

While we disclaim the authorship of any such communication as the one referred to, I take this occasion to make a public and verifiable protest for myself and for the "Mormon" people against the exploitation of the moving picture known as "A Victim of the Mormons," and the drama entitled, "Through Death Valley, or The Mormon Peril." These and all similar productions are based upon fiction of the nastiest kind, and constitute a base and cruel lie on the character and lives of the Latter-day Saints. They are utterly devoid of truth and are unworthy of the notice of intelligent people. The writers of these diabolic records were careful in each instance, to use fictitious names for the characters represented in the moving picture, and thus, I take it, was obviously done for two reasons. First, there is no foundation in truth for the stories, and secondly, the use of fictitious names is a protection to the managers against libel suits. It is fiction and not fact, that is being dished up to the poor suffering public, many of whom apparently are easily hoodwinked.

A Mormon stunt was made for our appearance during the spring and summer to find some victims of the "Mormons." It is understood that Mr. Winston Churchill, the ex-House Secretary, took a hand in the investigation. At least, it is known to the writer that many inquiries were made through the police depart-

LATTER-DAY SAINTS' MILLENIAL STAR.
APPENDIX B
APPENDIX B: MOVING PICTURE MISREPRESENTATIONS

MOVING PICTURE MISREPRESENTATIONS.

There are appearing throughout the various provincial cities several moving picture shows, playing before the public the much-talked-of, though fabulous, "evils of Mormonism." Not many evenings since, it was my good fortune to witness one of these exhibitions. The scene of action was not specified, though any part of England might fit. There was no lack of worth mentioning, and the sole object of the pictures is to make money out of the common prejudice against the "Mormon," without any regard to truth in any detail. The pictures witnessed by me were of a nature to appeal to men by the unliking, the uncouth, or the extremely ridiculous. To those possessed of any knowledge of the subject, the thing was ridiculous. On the part of the originators, great ignorance is displayed in almost every scene— for instance, English railway carriages were seen on supposed American railways, and the transatlantic line was made after the order of an extension less than the real thing. There was neither credit given nor correct name at the New York end of the voyage. In a supposed scene in Salt Lake City the streets were narrow and the houses were of typical English design. Perhaps the most absurd feature of the American ship was the arrival of two English youths in Utah, who are shown as following the supposed "Mormon" villan from a structure representing the great "Mormon" temple—which no one who has seen the original or a real photograph of the temple would have recognized, but which, with its talled stock and broad stone steps extending across the entire front, resembled the entrance to a modern Wesleyan church or the church of the Hells in Paris— to his home, where, after being several times Taken by the "Mormon," they eventually escaped in the course of the fair maid "stolen" from her home and parents in England. It is a most curious thing also that, while in England the "Mormon" seemed to be endowed with almost supernatural cunning and his friends were numerous and assisted him at every turn, yet on his return to Utah, where one would naturally suppose his influence and the number of his friends to be vastly greater, his enemies continue to stand without a month, and those of his own household were his worst enemies and every man's hand was secretly raised against him.

It is not my purpose, however, to describe any length the pictures shown. The point to which I desire to call attention is the absurdity of such fabricated representations. While in some other country, as before noted, the "Mormon" is represented as possessed of great capacity, means, etc., so successfully cute all efforts made to capture him by the police, though they are possessed of a full description of him and the young lady whom he killed "sister," for some time previous to his leaving the country.

LATTER-DAY SAINTS' MILLENNIAL STAR

This is, to say the least, not a very flattering or complimentary reflection upon the efficiency of the police of these countries. More absurd still, though accomplished on honest the scenes by means of wireless telegraphy, the illusive "Mormon" evades all of his pursuers and succeeds in not only leaving New York city unscathed, but travels weekly to and from her majesty's Russian empire, and finds himself at the "Mormon" temple of Salt Lake City. Here he is met by a band of English boys of the same age as himself, and the police of two great nations were held at bay. When will these people wake up and refuse to be gulled by such representations?

These pictures and stories, like the others, are only exerted by their perversion of the truth by their absurdity. By thus the police system of these countries, the good sense of this people and the moral states of womanhood are placed upon an exceedingly low place, while the honesty, the will power and nervous executive ability of a "Mormon" calmer is called above the hills.

Editor D. Hatch.

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APPENDIX C: "MORMONISM" IN PICTURE

YOUNG WOMAN'S JOURNAL

Vol. XXIV. FEBRUARY, 1915 No. 2

"Mormonism" in Picture.

By Levi Edgar Young.

Contemporaneous with the advent of "Mormonism" in the nineteenth century came modern methods of national communication and new ideas pertaining to agriculture, social uplift, and political development. When it was declared that the gospel of Christ should be preached in all the world as a witness, and for the salvation of the human race, many wondered and many wondered still how such a thing could be done. "Mormonism" came just after the application of steam to navigation and the introduction of the steamship and railroad trains. About 1840, Samuel F. B. Morse invented the telegraph, and not long after that Cyrus W. Field laid the Atlantic cable. It seems then that every thing added to the means of proclaiming the gospel. Since those days, some eighty thousand missionaries have been in the world as representatives of the Latter-day Saints, as those we are the chosen Church of God. Every country of the civilized world has been visited, as well as many of those lands that are still in a semi-civilized condition. The gospel has been taken to no people on the earth. At times it has been hard to get the meaning of Christ's mission before the different peoples as Joseph Smith gave it to the world. Language

THE PONDS FORMING A RIVER ON THE PLAINS.
Today the moving picture shows history events in all the cities of the world. The story of Napoleon and Waterloo is seen both in New York and Shanghai, China, at the same time. The film showing the building of the Union Pacific Railroad over the Rockies is not only of interest to the people of Salt Lake City and Denver, but its dramatic history appeals to the people of all classes in Europe or in St. Petersburg. So the moving picture is one of the modern means.

The film showing some of the important events in the history of the rise and growth of "Mormonism" has just been completed by the Utah Moving Picture Company at Los Angeles, California. Within a few weeks, sixty companies will be showing this subject in all parts of the civilized world, and the total amount of film in use will be some five thousand miles. The undertaking has resulted in the largest reel depicting one story in the history of the moving picture business.

Joseph Smith Translating the Book of Mormon, and Martin Harris Acting as Scribe.

We have of bringing the past down to the very doors of the poorest and most lonely people. It becomes the means of doing a work, wherein books would fail.

The "Mormon" Church has had a history, full of tragedy and pathos, and while it is an individual history, pure and simple, the events that introduce us to this institutional history have to be related both in book and in picture. We have some good books on the subject. Now we are to have a moving picture.

The work was begun in April, 1912. At that time, a prominent official of one of the largest in-ship picture companies of the United States came to Salt Lake City and entered into a contract with the Church authorities to produce the scenes of "Mormonism." The agreement stipulated that the Church was merely to supply the production of the historical scenes, which the company had chosen to enact. Since that time the work has gone steadily on, and as a result, over nine thousand feet of
“MORMONISM” IN PICTURE.

Joseph Smith was rejected by Mr. Frank Young, a jurist of the great colossus, and Edson St. George, a young man, in order to portray the various scenes of the Prophet Smith's life. The young man, who portrayed the life of Joseph Smith, spent much time in a study of the prophet's general characteristics. The part of Brigham Young was played by a young man, who portrayed the great leader of the Saints, and by a young woman, who portrayed the life of Joseph Smith. The scenes were painted by the famous artists of the day, and the pictures were taken from the life of the Prophet Smith.

The picture will help the world at large in understanding the history of the People of the Book. It will appeal to the children of the Latter-day Saints, and to the world at large. It will be more than interesting to the people of the world, for Mormonism long ago has reached them to talk and to wonder. One thing is sure. The moving picture together with all other modern inventions is to help us carry the Gospel of Christ to all the world, and to bring humanity home to the true principles of salvation.
APPENDIX D: THE POWER OF THE MORMONS

The Fidelity Picture Plays Syndicate

PRODUCERS OF

MASTERPIECE MOTION PICTURES

Capitalization, $500,000. All Common Stock, No Par Value, No Preferred Stock. Fully Paid and Non-Assessable.

THE MOTION PICTURE BUSINESS IS MAKING BIG MONEY

INVEST IN A QUICK MONEY MAKING BUSINESS

Great Masterpiece Motion Picture to be made part of an International Propaganda Against Polygamy

STUPENDOUS
DE LUXE

"THE POWER OF THE MORMONS"

Joseph F. Smith was president of the Mormon Church. He had five wives and was the father of 43 children, 35 of whom are shown in this picture. Twelve of his children were born since the Mormons issued their manifesto "abolishing polygamy."

This Great Picture Will be Shown in All Civilized Countries of the World—IN EVERY CITY, TOWN AND VILLAGE IN THE UNITED STATES, ENGLAND, CANADA, FRANCE, ITALY, GREECE, BULGARIA, SERBIA, TURKEY, RUSSIA, JAPAN, SOUTH AMERICA, CENTRAL AMERICA, AUSTRIA-HUNGARY, CHINA, SCANDINAVIA, AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND.

SUPPORTED BY CHURCHES OF THE WORLD
ENDORSED BY ALL CHRISTIAN PEOPLE

POLYGAMY EXISTS IN AMERICA TODAY

The Hon. Frank J. Cannon, in his latest book on Mormonism, says:

"Joseph F. Smith, the late head of the kingdom, had begotten twelve children by five wives since he pledged his word and oath to abjure from polygamous living. . . . There are more plural wives in the kingdom now than ever before."

POLYGAMY MUST BE BANISHED FROM THE NATION

Fidelity Picture Plays Syndicate

Home Offices: Suites 300-301 Erie Building
CLEVELAND, OHIO

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Great Masterpiece Motion Picture to be Made Part of International Propaganda to Remedy a Great Social Evil

A company composed of bankers, business and professional men, and people in all walks of life, are preparing for the making of a big masterpiece photo-drama, which will be exhibited throughout the United States and the entire world, upon a subject which concerns the social and moral welfare of modern civilization, the preservation of the sanctity of the marriage bond, and the safety of the American fireside.

Polygamy must be banished from the United States. Contrary to the general public impression, polygamy is not dead, nor even sleeping. Two thousand proselyting priests of polygamy are working constantly in America and Europe. 500 Mormon women agents are now proselyting in Europe. It is reported by a prominent English authority that 1200 new converts to Mormonism, English women and young girls, are even now awaiting passports to the United States.

The most powerful Anti-Mormon forces in the United States and Europe are associated with this company, and are giving the project their hearty support. The exhibition of this great moral and historical picture will prove a powerful aid to the great organizations now centering their best efforts to eradicate polygamy from the civilized nations, and to oppose the impending drive for WORLD POLYGAMY now in prospect! Mormon history in all its polygamous iniquity will be shown from its inception down to its present day political power, necessitating a picture not less than three hours long.

The purpose of this great picture is to arouse the public to the ever increasing menace of Mormonism, with its constantly growing power; that all the great Christian organizations of the United States will unite in a demand to Congress, at Washington, for the passage of an amendment to the Constitution, prohibiting polygamy anywhere in the United States and territories.

Our great picture will receive the strong support and patronage of the millions of church people, as well as the patronage of the usual run of theatre patrons. This tremendous attendance should result in big profits to our stockholders, as well as the accomplishment of the great moral purpose involved.

The thrilling events in Mormon history will provide unusually interesting material for one of the greatest picture dramas ever flashed upon the screen. It will be a picture the public wants. The subject carries a universal appeal. Experts have predicted that this picture will be enormously profitable. A well known big special picture to date has earned for its lucky stockholders at the rate of $1,500 for every $750 invested, with more profits to follow. Our project should produce even better results than this, all things considered. YOU can share in this rare chance for big profits if you act quickly.

The motion picture industry had made many fortunes in the last 10 years, and is making big money today. Get in a fast money making business.

The Fidelity Picture Plays Syndicate is capitalized at $500,000, all Common Stock, fully paid and non-assessable. Shares $1.00 each. Each share participates equally with every other share in the profits of the picture.

GET THE FACTS. We have good reason to believe that this great picture will earn big profits. You can share in it.

This is an investment chance OUT OF THE ORDINARY. HERE is your opportunity.

On account of the nature of this picture, we want as many stockholders as possible to become financially interested in this great, and to-be, very profitable picture. The number of shares we will sell to any one person is limited.

Dividends of 1000% have been made in the
BIG FEATURE PICTURE BUSINESS

Each $100 invested in the "Birth of a Nation" made $1000.
Each $700 invested in "The Traffic in Souls" made $3300.
Each $800 invested in "The Spoilers" made $3000.
Each $100 invested in "The Million Dollar Mystery" made $700.
Many other pictures have made great fortunes for their lucky owners.
THE SUBJECT.

The subject is exceptional and cut of the beaten path of picture production. The theme is of vital interest. It has the virtues of novelty and great appeal to millions of people, as well as true and important historical value. Large posters are sure to the motion picture producer who gives the public an interesting production with a vital and soul-

 Tbating theme. We will give to the public a great master-

piece picture with a great moral theme as its foundation.

Polygamy must forever be eliminated from the United States of America. It is a cancer upon civilization and is a powerfully organized and flaming insult to the mother-

hood of America and the world. It is a dark blip upon the fair fame and name of our nation, and a reproach and a mockery in civilization.

The Mormon religion was founded by Joseph Smith about the year 1830, at which time he claimed to have found some hidden plates from which the Mormon Bible was written. This was done by Joseph Smith, a learned advocate of that period, who claimed that the book was nearly identical with one written by his uncle, Solomon Spaulding, several years before that time.

The followers of Joseph Smith were the first to openly practice polygamy in the United States. As the years have passed they have grown immensely powerful. Their grow-

ing power and increasing activity has aroused the press, pulpit and public to the necessity of strongly combating this growing menace to society.

This great picture will embody the complete history of Mormonism from its inception down to the present day. It will carry a strong, forceful and romantic love story throughout, but its historical value will in no way be sacri-

fied. History records no more thrilling and adventurous stories than those of early Illinois, Missouri and the frontier states of the year 1830. The romantic figures of the pioneer leaders of those stirring times, stand out clear, colossal and rugged, in the era of pioneer progress, as conquerors of the wilderness and the plain.

There is one man whose name is known to almost every American citizen, whose life and character are known scarcely at all. That man is Brigham Young.*

* Brigham Young was the prophet of the Church. Everyone knows that Brigham had a great many wives, and that he was head of the Church. * His life was an adventurous and romantic as anything that the history of the western continent can show. He was preacher, pioneer, prophet, pope and polygalist, all rolled into one. He was head of a harem, head of a church, head of a little kingdom hidden away in the mountains. He made war against the United States, and was never punished for it. He founded a state, built an empire, and prepared for this nation the most diffi-

cult problem which it has to face today, the problem of a political church."—From "Brigham Young and His Mormon Empire," by Hon. Frank J. Cannon and Dr. George L. Knapp.

DOES POLYGAMY EXIST IN AMERICA TODAY?

The Hon. Frank J. Cannon, in his latest book on Mor-

monism, says:—

"Joseph F. Smith, the late head of the kingdom, had between twelve children by five wives when he pledged his word and oath to abstain from polygamous living. * * *

There are more plural wives in the kingdom now than ever before.

The power of the Mormon Church is felt in many of the great corporations and leading industries of this country. Its sinister influence in politics is manifested at Washington, D. C., as well as in a number of our states.

The emirates of the Mormon Church are now prosperr-

ing in war-torn Europe as well as in our own country.

Their recent activities have caused many new reform organizations to be created for the express purpose of oppos-

ing their pernicious teachings. From these great organiza-

tions a number of lecturers have gone forth throughout the length and breadth of the land, in a concerted endeavor

to arouse the public to this growing danger. That their efforts are meeting with a tremendous response from the public is evidenced by crowded churches and enthusiastic audiences.

TREMENDOUS PUBLICITY POWER OF THE MOTION PICTURE SCREEN TO BE USED.

To the spoken and printed word, it has been decided to add the tremendous scope and power of the motion picture screen, which can carry its message to millions of people. The press, pulpit and screen will each do its part in effect-

ing the desired end, and together they will cause the tremendous protest of an outraged public. This is a time for nothing but sledge-hammer blows against this gigantic social evil.

THIS IS A MOTION PICTURE WITH A MISSION.

The screen tells to every million people daily, reaching large and small communities, and can sway the public that the great pressure of public opinion will be felt in quarters where remedial laws will be passed effectively.

To aid in this great propaganda now being launched by a Christian civilization against polygamy, a great master-

piece motion picture is being prepared for exhibition through-

out the United States and the entire world.

"Once to see is better than a thousand tellings."—Oriental proverb.

No written or spoken word can reach the mind so swiftly and surely as the thing seen. Motion pictures are a new medium which most attractively addresses itself to the minds of the people without the intervention of words. All the world sees motion pictures. Twenty million people a day attend 25,000 picture theatres.

The production of this great picture is entered upon not only to gain the large pecuniary returns (which are inevitable), but with the belief that the exhibition of this great moral and historical picture will prove a powerful aid to the great organizations now working their best efforts to eradicate polygamy from the civilized nations.

The best possible historical and romantic scenario has been prepared—the best picture talent will be brought upon the screen—the best direction, photography, art and me-

chanical work, settings of natural scenery, and artistic treat-

ment of this great subject, assures a motion picture produc-

tion which will rank only among the very best and most

notable of screen masterpieces.

Details and General Plan of the Greatest Photodrama Enterprise of the Times

History combined with romance has never before been pictured in such a stirring and realistic manner. Interest—curiosity—fascination—response—desire, and history in heart and brain, all have been created for each succeeding chapter, to a great climax. Months of preparation and much care and effort have been involved in the creation of this great master picture. A perfect future of interest will be aroused by it, and it is predicted that large box office receipts will follow wherever it will be shown. It will score an artistic as well as a financial triumph.

The first announcement of the plans for this great pic-

ture has been greeted with much enthusiasm. Never has a proposed photoplay created so much interest, or brought so many offers of co-operation and support.

SCENARIO BY DR. GEORGE L. KNAPP

Acknowledged Famous Authority upon Mormon History.

Dr. George L. Knapp, Editor of the Chicago Journal, author and historical writer, who is acknowledged to be a
famous authority upon Mormon history, and who collabor-
ated with the Hon. Frank J. Cannon in the book, "Brigham 
Young and His Mormon Empire," has given freely of his 
knowledge of this subject, for the benefit, exclusively, 
of this picture making project, and is closely associated 
with our organization.

His excellent scenario for this great picture is already 
written, dealing with the thrilling events of Mormon history 
from the advent of the dreamer, Joseph Smith, founder of 
the Mormon Church, and through the various Mormon 
bibles; Joseph Smith's dream of power as President of the 
United States.

The dramatic history of the Mormons in the early days 
of Illinois—the work as, and flight from burning Nauvoo—
the dramatic death of the prophet, Joseph Smith, at the 
hands of the mob at Carthage jail—the hard-to-migration, 
westward over the great plains in Utah—the building of 
the temple at Salt Lake City—the Mountain Meadows 
massacre, where 130 Arkansas immigrants were murdered, 
by the Mormons and Indians—the ending of Johnson's 
army, and the creation of a Mormon nation, in the early days 
of the Civil War—the execution of the arch murderer, John 
Dodge Lee, for the slaying of the immigrants at Mountain 
Meadows—the workings of polygamy—the hiding out of 
the Mormon chiefs from the threatened punishment of the 
Federal government, the immigration measures from Eng-
land—the appointment of immigrant girls among the 
Mormon elders.

The Mormon marriage of ceremony and the romance 
of the children whose parents at Mountain Meadows were 
the victims of Mormon hate and blood lust, in the most sud-
den massacre in the red annals of pioneer days in the West. 
The escape of the girls from becoming the plural wives of 
Mormon leaders and their flight back to a Christian commu-
nity. The power of life and death over Mormon wives and 
the terrifying blood atonement in the secret chambers of the 
Mormon Temple.

These thrilling events in Mormon history will provide 
unusually interesting material for one of the greatest picture 
themes ever flashed upon the screen. It will be shown 
throughout the length and breadth of the land and will be 
exhibited over the entire world.

This will be truly a masterpiece picture, its great scope in 
each unit of the civilization world will reach out not only church 
goers, but thousands who never attend any church.

STRONG ENDORSEMENT OF OUR PURPOSE.

The Hon. Frank J. Cannon, former U. S. Senator from 
Utah, needs no introduction to the public nor to religious 
o rganizations throughout the United States and the world. 
His twenty-five years of constant fighting against the 
technical and the practices of Mormonism have made his 
mame a household word throughout the length and breadth 
of the land. In his lifetime, during a long period upon the 
lecture platform, he has denounced Mormonism and poly-
gamy before upwards of forty-five million people. He will 
give the great power of his endorsement to this picture, both 
in press and upon the lecture platform. He is the author of 
the widely-rec'd books, "Brigham Young and His Mor-
non Empire," and "Under the Prophet in Utah." He is the 
best known authority upon Mormon history in the world, 
and his great knowledge of the Mormon subject has been 
planted at the disposal of the producers of this picture.

PROBABLE GOVERNMENTAL ACTION.

This picture will bring home the horrors and menace 
of polygamy to everyone in the civilized world for years to 
come, and it should prove to be of the utmost moral bene-
fit to the white people. It is predicted that the nationwide 
exhibition of this great and timely picture will so arouse 
the public to the necessity of speedily crushing this hydra-
headed viper upon the heart of our fair land, that tremen-
dous pressure will be brought to bear upon the govern-
ment at Washington for an amendment to the Constitution of 
the United States, to the effect that polygamy be prohibited 
in all our states and territories.

The moral and financial support that you give to this 
truly great project at this time will affirm in our uncon-
ting tones that the great bodies of Christian organizations through-
out the land are now and always will be against the practice 
of polygamy, with its degradation of the female sex—and its 
standing menace to the sanctity of the marriage bond. 
Its apostles are bold and defiant. Formerly they were con-
tent with enlisting recruits from England, Wales, Sweden 
and other parts of Scandinavia, but now, emboldened by 
toleration, they send their emissaries throughout this coun-
try and obtain disciples from all the states in the Union. 
Will you stand resolutely by and show by your non-resistance 
that you are tired and also that this flagrant social delinquen-
ty of one of the great states of our Union, or will you do all 
within your power to rid America of this plague spot upon 
our civilization?

The motion picture screen is the greatest publicity med-
ium in the world today. Crime and lawless living hate pub-
licity. Publicity can right many social and economic wrongs. 
Will you join in this great movement for social betterment 
and the common good? Every share in this project that you 
purchase is a blow against Mormonism. Aside from that 
despicable fact, the investment will be highly profitable.

A big American drive against polygamy is a crying need of 
today. Our picture will prove to be a mighty, effective 
weapon in Anti-Polygamy propaganda. It will turn the bright 
spotlight of national and world-wide publicity upon the 
workings of the polygamous priests and preachers of the 
Mormon Church.

We are forming a tremendous battery of financially in-
terested people, against whom the political and 
financial gates of polygamist Mormonism may thunder in vain. 
Will you join the great army mobilized against polygamy?

Because of its truthfulness, and of its promotion of social 
betterment, this great picture production will not be pro-
hibited by any state or city. When one realizes that this 
master motion picture will attract all the usual patronage 
ever attracted by any other big feature picture, and in 
addition will have the support of interested millions through-
out the entire country and the world, together with the co-
operation of pulpit, press, church and other influential in-
sstitutions and patriotic and social organizations, is it not 
reasonable to estimate that this great picture production will 
prove a tremendous and notable success?

The motion picture business has proven itself a mar-
velous wealth producer. The plain truth is as to the probabil-
ity of results thus far obtained seem incredible, but they are true, 
and the remarkable and extraordinary profits constantly being 
realized from the business are becoming better and better 
known, especially when substantiated by the most reputable 
publications in the land.

EVERYONE CAN PARTICIPATE.

Our organization is planned so that everyone who be-
lieves in the abolition of polygamy can support a finan-
cial interest in this enterprise. If they act promptly to sec-
ture their shares before the allotment is all sold.

The Fidelity Picture Plays Syndicate is capitalized at 
$150,000. All Common Stock, Fully-paid and Non-Assess-
able. Shares $14.00 each. The Syndicate is owned and operated 
by its shareholders on a co-operative basis. Every share
participants equally with every other share in the profits of the picture.

We reserve the right to refuse any application, or to make allotments of shares pro rata, if the issue is over subscribed.

All the directors of a company can do to protect their shareholders has been done in this case. Every phase of the question has been carefully considered and analyzed by the best experts and the most careful legal talent. Your investment will be as safe as careful management and conservative policies can make it.

If you are interested, it is advisable not to lose any time, but send in your subscription at once. If you are seeking an investment out of the ordinary, here is your opportunity.

THE FIDELITY PICTURE PLAYS SYNDICATE not only possesses every factor for success that was ever thrilled by any of the GREAT Motion Picture productions, but what

Many Motion Pictures Have Made Big Money

A good Feature Film may earn $100,000 a year or more for its producers. These films rent for as much as $1,000 a day to the largest theaters in the large cities. In smaller cities the rental may be $100 a day or more.

Often a picture will run six to eight years before it has visited every section of this country as well as foreign countries. A single big picture of this character has proved a fortune maker for its producers.

"The Eternal City," "Damon and Pythias," "The Last Days of Pompeii," "The Juggernaut," "Judith of Bethulia," are among those which are said to have made profits of over $100,000 a year. "Traffic in Souls" is said to have cost about $5,000 and to have earned more than $1,000,000 to date. "The Birth of a Nation," which cost $200,000 to produce and which people clamored to see at $2.00 apiece, has made upwards of $1,000,000 to date, with many small cities still to be shown. This great picture showed for a solid year at the Liberty Theatre, New York City, and for eight months in Chicago. Lately, in Cleveland, Ohio, it was witnessed by 8,794 people in three weeks at Euclid Opera House. Over ten million people in the United States have seen this great picture production and its success in London, England, and Paris, as well as other foreign countries has been phenomenal.

"Calista" and "Neptune's Daughter" are each reported to have earned over $100,000 to date, while "Quo Vadis" has made $609,000 for George Kirke, owner of the American rights.

"The Spookery," filmed from the book by Rex Beach, has had a great success and has made its owners $1,250,000 to date.

"The Sea Wolf," by Jack London, is said to have earned $150,000 the first year. "The Million Dollar Mystery," which cost about $35,000 to produce, has earned something like $1,000,000. It is said. In less than a year 925 in dividends were paid to the stockholders in the organization back of this picture. The serials, "Exploits of Elaine," "Romance of Elaine" and "Perils of Pauline" are reported to have made $5,000,000. "590,000 is said to have been paid for the rights to "The Garden of Allah" for the entire United States.

The cash receipts for one week for the great Fox spectacle "A Daughter of the Gods" were $104,782 in only six cities, New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Detroit, San Francisco and London.

Charlie Chaplin's picture, "A Dog's Life," attracted 15,041 people who paid $5,610.00 into the box-office in the first day the picture was run at the Strand Theatre, New York City, on April 14, 1916. This smashed all attendance records at the Strand for a single day. The week's business for week of April 14 was estimated at $27,000.

Ambassador James W. Gerard's "My Four Years in Germany" at the Regent Theatre at Patterson, N. J., during six days of the week of April 15, 1916, totaled receipts of $5,100.00. The business records of Fox's "Cleopatra" with Theda Bara are as follows:

Receipes—New York, Lyric Theatre (11 weeks), $77,000; Los Angeles, Cline's Auditorium (5 weeks), $55,817; Detroit, Washington Theatre (3 weeks), $72,000; Seattle, Metropolitan Theatre (1 week), $21,000; Omaha, Boyd's Theatre (1 week), $9,010; Buffalo, Terry Theatre (1 week), $6,100; Schenectady, Van Curler Opera House (2 days), $2,955.

 Exhibited in 7 cities for 20 weeks, total receipts $176,873.80.

 All above theaters are booked for return engagement.

"Tarzan of the Apes" at the Broadway Theatre, New York, attracted receipts of $2,045,50 for one day and night on Feb. 2, 1918, $9,000 people in two days at Convention Hall in Kansas City saw "The Kaiser—The Beast of Berlin," and 4,000 were turned away the night of the second day.

"The Unpardonable Sin," shown at the Broadday Strand, Detroit during week of March 2nd, took in the sum of $25,391.90 in admission alone, besides selling over $25,000.00 of state rights.

There are only a few of the successes. There are many others who have made all the way from 50 to 600 per cent on the original cost of the pictures. It is estimated that 7,000.000 each day attend 25,000 picture theaters; spending $7,000,000 a day. 100,000 people are said to be engaged in the motion picture business.
The Motion Picture has become an ever-increasing factor of importance in our national life. It is daily being brought into the fullest contact with the nation's needs. The film has come to rank as a very high medium for the dissemination of public intelligence, and since it speaks a universal language it lends itself importantly to the presentation of public plans and purposes.

The Mormon Revival of Polygamy
Mormonism is Still a Burning Issue

The Hon. Frank J. Cannon, in Everybody's Magazine:
"I propose to show that the leaders of the Mormon Church have broken their covenant with the nation. I undertake to expose and to demonstrate what I believe to be one of the most direful conspiracies of treachery in the history of the United States."

Burton J. Kendrick, in McClure's Magazine:
"Brands the Mormon Church as 'a great secret society existing largely for criminal purposes.'"

Rev. S. E. Wishard, in Missionary Review of the World:
"The Mormon System is utterly antagonistic to the institutions of our country. A constitutional amendment must be secured forever prohibiting polygamy in all the states and territories of our Union."

Richard Barry, in Pearson's Magazine:
"The law of polygamy now basks in the sun of statehood, not at all ashamed and very little afraid. There is but one way, now, to stamp out his new polygamy. That is for the federal government to act vigorously."

Alfred Henry Lewis, in Cosmopolitan Magazine:
Began a series of articles entitled: "The Viper on the Hearth," with the words: "The name of the viper is "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints." It lies coiled on the country's heartstone, and asks only time to grow and collect a poison and strength to strike."

Attorney Hans P. Frecce, of New York, and son of a Mormon Elder, says:
"Despite the general belief, Mormonism and polygamy are not dead. Polygamy, as practiced now, is much worse than it ever was. From 700 to 800 converts, mostly women, pass through Utah every year from abroad, to Salt Lake City. Mormons are urging girls in London factories to go to Salt Lake City City, telling them of excellent positions here and of their greater opportunities to obtain husbands. This talk of polygamy to repopulate the world emanates from Utah."

London Cable, April 19, 1919.

London, April 19—Mormon emissaries are displaying great activity throughout the country, but particularly in the north. No fewer than 500 women missionaries have been appointed to labor in what is called "the British Mission." Of these, ninety-seven are working in Lancashire and 161 in Yorkshire.

The Fidelity Picture Plays Syndicate
Producer of
THE MASTERPIECE MOTION PICTURE
"THE POWER OF THE MORMONS"

Home Offices: Suites 300-301 Eric Building, Prospect at 9th
Cleveland, Ohio
| Title of film | Year released | Country of origin | Length (in mins) | Sound | Cameo | Silent (all or sound) | Paramount | RKO | Scenario/Producers | Est. of production
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. A Visit to Salt Lake City</td>
<td>1905</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>split</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>4 all</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>American Movietone</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Naramata Story (Stolen by the Mormons)</td>
<td>1911</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>32000</td>
<td>all</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Nordisk</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Denmark/Britain</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Mormons in Alaska (The Power of the Name)</td>
<td>1910</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6.9000</td>
<td>all</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>F. A. P.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. The Mormon (also known as The Mormon)</td>
<td>1912</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1300</td>
<td>all</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>American</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. The Mountain Menace</td>
<td>1912</td>
<td>USA/Canada</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6.9000</td>
<td>all</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Pathé</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>USA/Canada</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. The Romance of Mormonism</td>
<td>1912</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>(15-18)</td>
<td>(15700-18000)</td>
<td>all</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>V. H. Harbeck</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>never completed</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Return of Safety</td>
<td>1912</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
<td>all</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Pathé</td>
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<td>USA</td>
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<td>8. The Battle</td>
<td>1912</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.0000</td>
<td>all</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Pathé</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>USA/Canada</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. A Mormon Tragedy</td>
<td>1912</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8.565</td>
<td>all</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Universal</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>USA/Canada</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Rite of Passage (also known as The Power of the Name)</td>
<td>1913</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>2-6</td>
<td>5.5000</td>
<td>all</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Universal</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>USA</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. The Romance of the Utah Pioneers</td>
<td>1913</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.0000</td>
<td>all</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Universal</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>USA</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. The Romance of the Utah Pioneers</td>
<td>1913</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>2-6</td>
<td>5.5000</td>
<td>all</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Universal</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13. The Adventures of Brigham Young</td>
<td>1914</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>all</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>S. L. Commercial Co.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>USA</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. The Story of the Mormon Battalion</td>
<td>1914-15</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>all</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Comdy Combina-Soupy</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>France</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. The Adventures of Brigham Young</td>
<td>1915</td>
<td>Britain</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>all</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Samuelson</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Britain</td>
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<td>16. The Story of the Mormon Battalion</td>
<td>1915</td>
<td>Britain</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>all</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Samuelson</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Britain</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. The Story of the Mormon Battalion</td>
<td>1915</td>
<td>Britain</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>all</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Samuelson</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. A Story of the Mormon Battalion</td>
<td>1916</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>all</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Desmar</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>USA</td>
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<tr>
<td>19. A Mormon Tale</td>
<td>1917</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.5000</td>
<td>all</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Fritts</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>USA/Canada</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. A Story of the Mormon Battalion</td>
<td>1917</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.0000</td>
<td>all</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Fox</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>USA/Canada/Worldwide</td>
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<tr>
<td>21. A Mormon Tale</td>
<td>1918</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.0000</td>
<td>all</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>April</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Fox</td>
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<tr>
<td>22. The Romance of the Mormon Battalion</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>(87)</td>
<td>(6.0000)</td>
<td>all</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Fidelity Syndicate</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>never completed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title of film</td>
<td>Year of release (or first release)</td>
<td>Country of origin</td>
<td>Length in feet (silent, unless otherwise stated)</td>
<td>Silent (all) or sound (sd)</td>
<td>Final exhibition</td>
<td>Area of release, theatrical exhibition</td>
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<td>25. The Exploits of Pauline (Dick Maitze: The Roman Trail)</td>
<td>1921 USA</td>
<td></td>
<td>T</td>
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<td>U.S.A/Britain</td>
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<tr>
<td>27. Trapeze to the Cantonese (Later re-released as The Cantonese Trail)</td>
<td>1922 Brittain</td>
<td></td>
<td>6200</td>
<td></td>
<td>Astra (Master)</td>
<td>Britain/Canada</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>28. Happiness is a Bitch</td>
<td>1922 Brittain</td>
<td></td>
<td>6 900-6 900</td>
<td></td>
<td>Astra (Master)</td>
<td>Britain/Canada</td>
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<td>29. An untitled proposed commemorative of the pioneer entry into space</td>
<td>(1923) USA</td>
<td></td>
<td>(T) (T)</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>never completed?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>30. The Poor Express</td>
<td>1923 USA</td>
<td></td>
<td>9 600-9 961</td>
<td></td>
<td>Paramount (F. P. Leaky)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>31. Habit Usi</td>
<td>1926 USA</td>
<td></td>
<td>6 900</td>
<td></td>
<td>Paramount (F. P. Leaky)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>32. A comfordy two-act play of Salt Lake City of unknown title</td>
<td>1928 USA</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 000</td>
<td></td>
<td>Flower</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td></td>
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<td>33. All For a Kiss (Also called The Exodus and the Return of the M.M. hitch)</td>
<td>1929 USA</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.66007</td>
<td></td>
<td>Flower</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>34. Carthage</td>
<td>(1929-32) USA</td>
<td></td>
<td>(T) (c. 4 000 ft)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Carthage</td>
<td>never completed?</td>
<td></td>
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<td>35. The Miracle of the Arts</td>
<td>(1930) USA</td>
<td></td>
<td>(T) (c. 8 000 ft)</td>
<td></td>
<td>LDS Church</td>
<td>never completed?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>36. Mormon Eschatology Conference</td>
<td>1930 USA</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 600</td>
<td></td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>37. The Mormon Trail</td>
<td>1935 USA</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 9 (11 min.)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Warner Brothers</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>38. Polyglot (Later re-released as Tribal Song)</td>
<td>1936/45 USA</td>
<td></td>
<td>9 000</td>
<td></td>
<td>Continental (Ben Eskin)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>39. First of four documentaries on the 5th Church Mission system</td>
<td>1937 USA</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 000</td>
<td></td>
<td>March of Time</td>
<td>USA/Britain</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>40. The Miracle of Salt Lake</td>
<td>1938 USA</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 000</td>
<td></td>
<td>Radio-Me</td>
<td>USA</td>
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A HISTORY OF LATTER-DAY SAINT SCREEN PORTRAYALS IN
THE ANTI-MORMON FILM ERA 1905-1936

Richard Alan Nelson
Department of Communications
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ABSTRACT

Polygamy was the key issue which acted to popularize opposition to the Latter-day Saint Church during the years 1905-1936. As a result of the continuing controversy over the so-called "Mormon Question," secular moviemakers in this period planned or actually produced nearly forty motion pictures containing Mormon characterizations. Although several important pro-LDS movies were made (some with Church assistance), the anti-Mormon photoplay dominated the silent film era portrait of the Saints. Murder and polygamy as basic themes provide clear reference to traditional literary and theatrical images.

Early attempts by Utah and Church officials to censor the offending pictures were unsuccessful. Following World War I, U. S. Senator Reed Smoot was able to effect the suppression of a number of anti-Mormon productions. After the Church reaffirmed its plural marriage ban in the mid-1920s, the anti-polygamy movement died out. As the polemical film aimed at the Church was abandoned, the Saints gradually took on a more favorable screen image.

COMMITTEE APPROVAL:

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