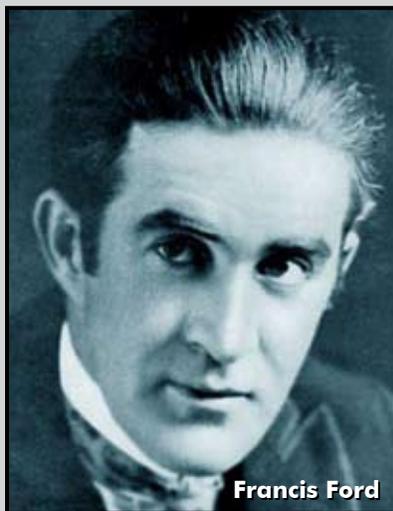


# THE SILENT TREATMENT

ALL THE NEWS FIT TO HEAR • VOLUME 04 • NUMBER 03 • MAY/JUNE 2010

## LOST SILENT FRANCIS FORD FILM FOUND IN BARN

CONCORD, N.H. A contractor cleaning out an old New Hampshire barn destined for demolition found seven reels of nitrate film, including the only known print of a 1913 silent film about Abraham Lincoln.



Francis Ford

When *Lincoln Paid*, a 30-minute film about the mother of a dead Union soldier asking Lincoln to pardon a Confederate soldier, stars Francis Ford, the brother of director John Ford. "I was up in the attic space, and shoved away over in a corner was the film and a silent movie projector, as well," said Peter Massie, a movie buff, of his discovery in the western New Hampshire town of Nelson. "I thought it was really cool."

It was the summer of 2006, and the film canisters sat in his basement for a while before Massie thought of contacting nearby Keene State College, where film professor Larry Benaquist thought it was a rare find.

After working with the George Eastman House film preservation museum in Rochester, NY, the college determined that the film, directed by and starring Francis Ford, did not exist in film archives. In fact, it was one of eight silent films starring Ford as Lincoln; there are no known surviving copies of the others.

The college received a grant from the National Film Preservation Foundation to restore it and it took a Colorado lab a year to complete the task. Benaquist said the images themselves were well preserved, likely because they endured decades of New England winters in the barn which was well sheltered by trees. The 35mm film itself had shrunk and the sprocket holes used on projectors were shredded. "What the laboratory had to do was remanufacture the sprocket holes to a new dimension, make it in strips, adhere it to the image, and then run it through a printing process where they would print it, frame by frame," Benaquist said.



When Lincoln Paid

Helping with the restoration was Mark Reinhart, author of *Abraham Lincoln on Screen*, who had a crude video copy of the film made from an

unknown 8mm print which included a few scenes that were missing from the film found in the barn.

In 1913, the film was praised by weekly trade publication *Moving Picture World*, as "a great war drama" with vivid battle scenes. Francis Ford, who died in 1953 at age 72, is best known for small, mostly comic roles in at least 30 of his younger brother's films. (Full article at <http://www.chicagobreakingnews.com>)



## CINEVENT 42

May 28th – 31st

OHIO. The 42nd Annual CINEVENT festival will be held on Memorial Day Weekend, **May 28th through May 31st** at the Ramada Plaza Hotel and Conference Center in Columbus. Cinevent is an annual gathering of classic film buffs and collectors from all over the United States and beyond. Great programs of silent & mostly pre-1950 films are shown on the large screen in the Cinevent Screening Room at the hotel.

This year's silent centerpiece pictures are models of diversity within one category: Melodrama. Friday, **May 28th**, spotlights *Chicago* (1927), a contemporary tale with a satirical bent, offering the story

of Roxie Hart (Phyllis Haver), who shoots her lover, is forgiven by her husband (Victor Varconi), and enjoys the celebrity brought by being tried for murder.



The drama continues on Saturday, **May 29th**, with *The Sorrows of Satan* (1926), directed by D. W. Griffith; a mystical piece with eternity in Heaven or Hell as the stakes as Prince Lucio (Adolphe Menjou) tempts writer Ricardo Cortez with promises of success and fame if he will only place his fate entirely in the Prince's hands.

The 2010 program also features silent era icons Clara Bow in *Kid Boots* (1926), Louise Brooks in *Love 'Em and Leave 'Em* (1926) and Rin-Tin-Tin in *Lighthouse By The Sea* (1924); plus comedy with Marie Prevost in *Blonde For A Night* (1928), Raymond Griffith in *Open All Night* (1924), and adventure with Rod La Rocque in *The Coming of Amos* (1925) and Patsy Ruth Miller as *Lorraine Of The Lions* (1925). All silent films are programmed with live piano accompaniment provided by Dr. Philip C. Carli and David Drazin. (Info available at [www.cinevent.com](http://www.cinevent.com))

## DIGGING UP A PIECE OF HOLLY- WOOD HISTORY

By Mike Anton (excerpted article)

GUADALUPE, CA. Strong winds scour the dunes that hide a curious history. Nails and fragments of concrete are scattered everywhere; steel cables, carved pieces of wood, and slabs of painted plaster poke out of the ground—like ghosts rising from the grave.

In 1923, Cecil B. DeMille came to the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes on California's Central Coast and built a movie set that still captures the imagination—a colossal Egyptian dreamscape for the silent movie version of *The Ten Commandments*. Under the direction of French artist Paul Iribe, 1,600 craftsmen built a temple 800 feet wide and 120 feet tall flanked by four 40-ton statues of the Pharaoh Ramses II. Twenty-one giant plaster sphinxes lined a path to the temple's gates. A tent city sprung up to house some of the 2,500 actors and 3,000 animals used to tell the story of Moses leading the Israelites to the Promised Land.



When filming completed, the set proved too expensive to haul away, but too valuable to leave intact for rival filmmakers to poach. DeMille had it bulldozed into a 300-foot-long trench and covered with sand.

Peter Brosnan was a 30-year-old NYU film school graduate when he first heard the story in 1982. Captivated, Brosnan embarked on a journey that has yet to end—a quest to find DeMille's set, exhume it and produce a documentary about this unusual piece of Hollywood history. Brosnan and archaeologist John Parker developed a plan for the excavation, but after years of effort, could raise only a portion of the \$175,000 needed for a full-blown archaeological dig. Now, 27 years later, Brosnan believes he's close to obtaining a grant that will allow him to use inexpensive editing software to fulfill part of his project—a film showcasing his oral histories on Guadalupe's days as a stand-in for exotic locales.



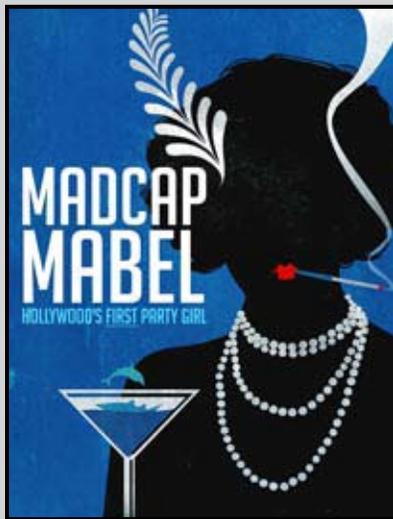
A steady trickle of film buffs find their way to the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Center every year where chunks of DeMille's set are on display, including a bas-relief of a pharaoh's head reassembled by Brosnan's team. (Full article: <http://articles.latimes.com/2010/mar/18/local/la-melostcity19-2010mar19>)

## "MADCAP MABEL" HITS FESTIVAL CIRCUIT

*Madcap Mabel: Hollywood's First Party Girl* is a newly produced 35 minute film capsule on the life of silent screen comedienne Mabel Nor-

mand (portrayed by actress Penelope Lagos) as seen through the repentant eyes of fictional reporter Charlie Craig, whose scandalous stories of Mabel's private life helped contribute to her career's downfall.

As a result of Craigs' outrageous articles, Mabel—once considered the "Queen of Comedy" and who made history as Hollywood's first female Producer, Director, and Stunt Woman—is now disreputably labeled as Hollywood's "First Party Girl."

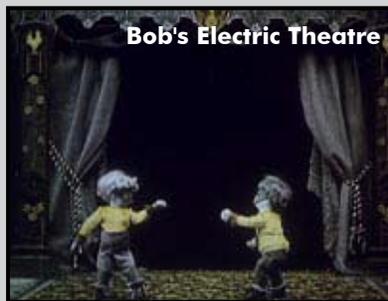


As her popularity declines, so does her health, and as she lies near death Charlie finally gets a conscious and embarks on a quest to report all the positive aspects of her life. Through the stories of her friends and associates, Charlie's journey not only enlightens him as to Mabel's accomplishments but gives him hope that he'll vindicate her to the public and earn her forgiveness before it's too late. A trailer for this short subject is accessible at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=d-yjoPpxTtI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d-yjoPpxTtI) and will play at the **Yperia Film Festival** in Greece as well as the **2010 New Jersey International Film Festival**. (<http://rudy-cecera.webs.com/madcapmabel.htm>)

## UCLA LAUNCHES SILENT ANIMATION WEBSITE

LOS ANGELES. Thanks to an access grant from the National Film Preservation Foundation, the UCLA Film & Television Archive announces the launch of an interactive website showcasing select animated films preserved at UCLA. Although best-known for the restoration of feature films, the UCLA Film & Television Archive has preserved over 100 animated films during the last three decades. The animated short subjects are presented in the Archive's new online portal at <http://animation.library.ucla.edu/> which provides a representative sampling of work from the silent era, preserved from best-surviving and sole-surviving 35mm nitrate and 16mm prints.

Visitors to the Archive's website may view or download eleven films originating from 1900 to 1928, including titles such as J. Stuart Blackton's *The Enchanted Drawing* (1900) and a promotional film for Harry O. Hoyt's *The Lost World* (1925).



Audio track options to accompany the silent films include traditional piano and experimental scores by composer Michael Mortilla, as well as voice-over commentary by the

Archive's Senior Film Preservationist, Jere Guldin. Additional context is provided with film notes by Guldin and animation historian, Jerry Beck (*The Animated Movie Guide*), and an original essay, *Animation's Early Years*, by Carleton University's Mark Langer.

The site also features a study guide that serves as an introduction to the Archive's broader collection of animation, much of it accessible for research via the Archive's Research & Study Center (ARSC) located on the UCLA campus.

### SILENT SPOTLIGHT

## WALLACE REID

By Kally Mavromatis (excerpted article)

Wallace Reid might have made the perfect F. Scott Fitzgerald character, a Dick Diver or even a Gatsby, an eighteen-karat-gold Princeton man—gentle, beautiful, and doomed.

Wallace Reid was born into a theatrical family in St. Louis, Missouri, on April 15, 1891, son of actor and playwright Hal Reid. In 1909, Hal was hired by the Selig Company in Chicago as a scenarist. Originally intending to be a cinematographer, Wally's All-American, handsome looks got him signed as an actor instead. In 1911, father and son joined Vitagraph until Wally left the following year after filming *Jean Intervenes*, *The Seventh Son* and *The Illumination* (all from 1912).

In 1915 he appeared in Griffith's Fine Arts production of *Old Heidelberg*, and later that same year landed at Universal, where he attracted the eye of Jesse Lasky who quickly signed him to a contract. For the next two years he costarred with opera star Geraldine Farrar in all but one of

her Lasky films, including *Carmen* (1915) and *Joan the Woman* (1917), both directed by Cecil B. DeMille.



Wallace Reid

After the war, Reid's clean-cut, straight-arrow persona caught on with audiences, and the studio worked and exploited him constantly. On average, over a seven-year period, he was appearing in as many as one feature film every seven weeks. Such a schedule would have been grueling for any actor, and Reid was no exception.

Conflicting accounts abound as to the origins of his morphine addiction, but of general accord is that, after suffering an injury during location filming on *The Valley of the Giants* (1919), he was given morphine to dull the pain and continue shooting. The morphine also killed the exhaustion from such a rigorous schedule, and it was later intimated that the studio continued to keep Reid supplied in order to keep him productive. Sadly, his weakened body was unable to fight off the influenza that finally killed him on January 18, 1923, aged 31. Reid's widow, Dorothy Davenport, later produced and starred in *Human Wreckage* (1923), a propaganda film exposing the evils of drug addiction.

Despite his once immense popularity, Wallace Reid is little remembered today. Any discussion of his status of "screen idol" is overshadowed by the circumstances of his death. Likable, modest, and hard-working, Reid has become little more than a footnote in film history. (Full article: [www.csse.monash.edu.au/~pringle/silent/ssotm/Dec97/](http://www.csse.monash.edu.au/~pringle/silent/ssotm/Dec97/))

## BOOK CORNER

### OLIVE BORDEN THE LIFE & FILMS OF HOLLYWOOD'S "JOY GIRL"

By Michelle Vogel

The all too brief career of film star Olive Borden (1906-1947) is chronicled in this definitive biography. Apprenticing in short slapstick silent comedies, the vivacious Virginia-born actress rose to stardom after signing with Fox in 1925, enlivening such films as John Ford's *3 Bad Men* (1926).



Olive Borden

Borden's career declined after she severed her ties with Fox, and by the early 1930s she was finished in Hollywood. Alcoholism and a devastating series of personal setbacks hastened her death at age forty-one. Dozens of heretofore unattributed

screen appearances by the actress are included in the filmography. ([www.mcfarlandpub.com](http://www.mcfarlandpub.com))

## ON DVD

### VON MORGENS BIS MITTERNACHTS

In his Expressionist theater play, Georg Kaiser portrays a bank cashier's attempt to escape his middle class daily life. Director Karlheinz Martin's screen adaptation of *Von Morgens Bis Mitternachts* (*From Morning to Midnight*, 1921) transfers Kaiser's play into an Expressionist film of radical stylization. The German film industry was so irritated by the result that the film never found distribution and was never shown in German cinemas.



The Munich Filmmuseum has restored the film and added two scores: an improvised performance by the SchlagEnsemble H/F/M, and a modern score composed and conducted by Yati Durant. ([www.edition-filmmuseum.com](http://www.edition-filmmuseum.com))

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