

THE SILENT TREATMENT

ALL THE NEWS FIT TO HEAR • VOLUME 09 • NUMBER 02 • SUMMER 2015

Universal Pictures Makes Historic Commitment to Silent Films Honors Studio's Rich History and Cultural Legacy

UNIVERSAL CITY, CA. Building on its 2012 Centennial celebration, Universal Pictures announced its commitment to honor the Studio's rich film history and cultural legacy by restoring some of the world's most classic silent films. During the next four years, the Studio will restore approximately 15 silent film titles from Universal's early years.

The complete list of films is still in development in collaboration with outside film historians, institutions, and preservationists. Partners and collaborators in the initiative include the Library of Congress, The Film Foundation, Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, George Eastman House, UCLA Film & Television Archive, Association of Moving Image Archivists, and Hollywood Heritage. The announcement was made at the Opening Night of the 2015 San Francisco Silent Film Festival.



"The company understands its responsibility and need to preserve our silent film legacy," said Ron Meyer, Vice Chairman, NBCUniversal. "This early art of filmmaking is the foundation on which Universal Pictures was built more than 100 years ago, and it's important we honor our rich history."

Universal's restoration team will work with archives and collectors worldwide to secure copies of prints and additional elements needed to complete this restoration effort and augment the silent film titles currently in its library.

Universal Pictures' silent film restoration initiative builds on the company's ongoing restoration commitment. Since the program was first announced in 2012, nearly 30 titles have been restored and 25 more titles are expected to be restored by 2017.

A Universal Pictures Quarter 2 report released July 2015 has indicated the company started 4K res-

toration work on the silent feature pictures *The Last Warning* (1929) directed by Paul Leni, *Oh, Doctor!* (1925) directed by Harry A. Pollard, and *Outside the Law* (1920) directed by Tod Browning and starring Lon Chaney. All are scheduled for completion near the end of 2015. (May 28, 2015 /PRNewswire/Excerpted)

Lewis Milestone's **SEVEN SINNERS** Found in Queensland

By Sally Browne (excerpted)

AUSTRALIA. A silent film star who died young of alcoholism, a dashing leading man who starred with Marlene Dietrich, a millionaire backer and a director who went on to win two Academy Awards, these are the secrets of the film *Seven Sinners*, which was thought by Hollywood to be lost—until now.

The silent film was discovered in



Queensland by two film enthusiasts, and it has now been returned to Hollywood—which is thrilled with the rare find. Made in 1925, the crime caper is the much-sought-after first feature by acclaimed director Lewis Milestone, who was awarded an Oscar for *All Quiet on the Western Front*. It was produced by multimillionaire businessman, producer, director and aviator Howard Hughes.

Joel Archer, 27, from Brisbane, discovered the film in the collection of silent film lover Ron West, former owner of the Majestic Theatre in Pomona on the Sunshine Coast.

At first the pair thought they had a different film on their hands until Archer was able to send footage to Warner Brothers in the US, which confirmed it was the long-lost film by Milestone. The film reels originally came from a cinema that had closed down in Melbourne.

Warner Brothers and The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Film Archive will be doing a full restoration of the film, which will be released to DVD and premiered at the San Francisco Silent Film Festival in 2016. Archer and West, have been invited to attend the premiere.

A story about multiple crooks who try to rob the same upmarket

house in Long Island, New York, *Seven Sinners* stars suave British actor Clive Brook, a big name in his day, who went on to make *Shanghai Express* with Marlene Dietrich. Opposite him is leading lady Marie Prevost, known for her comic timing but who died of acute alcoholism alone in her apartment in Los Angeles at the age of 38.

Director Milestone went on to have an incredible career. The Russian-born US director also won an Oscar for *Two Arabian Knights* (1927) and directed *The Front Page* (1930), *Of Mice and Men* (1939), *Ocean's 11* (1960) and *Mutiny on the Bounty* (1962). (www.courier-mail.com.au)

THE BATTLE OF THE CENTURY

Lost Laurel & Hardy Reel Recovered

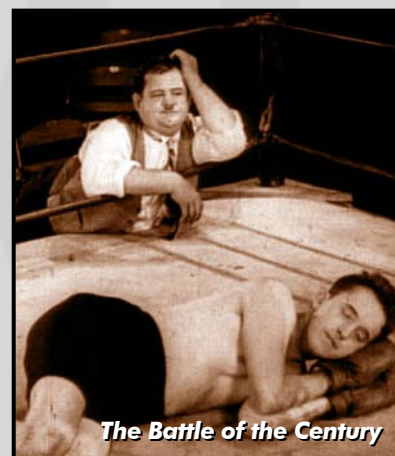
Reported by Silent London (excerpted article 06/15/2015).

A cream-filled pie landing in the face of an adversary is a popular trope of silent slapstick comedy, along with bumbling Keystone Kops and strategically placed banana peels—and now comes word that one

of the classic piefights of all time has been rediscovered—the epic splatterfest that crowns Laurel and Hardy's silent film *The Battle of the Century* (1927).

That street brawl, involving a van full of pies and a cast of dozens, is gleeful, gore-free carnage – a classic movie moment in its own right. But until now, the fight, and the film it belongs to, have been truncated. *The Battle of the Century* was originally two reels long, and much of it has been missing since the silent era. The fight itself, or at least most of it, had been preserved, but the rest was not to be found. The first reel was discovered in the late 1970s, but the second reel, which contains the piefight, has been unseen for decades longer.

The discovery was announced to a group of silent film experts at the **Mostly Lost** film workshop in Culpeper, Virginia. The footage was discovered by composer and historian Jon Mirsalis among the Gordon Berkow collection—and Serge Bromberg of Lobster Films will be taking custody of it for preservation work.



The Battle of the Century has its fair share of great slapstick moments, and the new reel promises plenty more. The plot concerns Stan Laurel as a hapless boxer and Oliver Hardy as his unscrupulous pal trying

to make some cash from his misfortune via an insurance scam. When a banana peel drops on the pavement, Laurel trips up a passing baker and the flan-flinging begins!

Attendees at the **Mostly Lost** event were extremely excited by the news, and quick to share it on social media. *The Battle of the Century* is something of a cult film and its missing scenes are holy grail for slapstick fans. The rediscovered print is of surprisingly high-quality—a 16mm print that was struck from the original film negative.

The rediscovered footage should include the climax of the piefight, including a policeman getting a pie full in the face—courtesy of Stan and Ollie. There will also be considerable interest in scenes showing Eugene Pallette, who plays an insurance agent in the comedy short, and went on to a long career in sound films. Other notable names in the cast list include a young Lou Costello as an extra, and Anita Garvin, who falls foul of a pie on the pavement. *Full Article:* <http://silentlondon.co.uk/2015/06/15/second-reel-laurel-hardy-battle-of-the-century-pie-fight/>

LOST FILMS

*Internet Portal Collects,
Documents Lost Silent Pictures*

LOST FILMS is an initiative of the Deutsche Kinemathek in Berlin originally launched in 2008, and is an internet portal aimed at collecting and documenting film titles which are believed or have been declared “lost.” The website currently contains over 3500 entries; a number of which are extensively illustrated with surviving documents contributed by archives and individuals worldwide. The “Identify” hyperlink contains images and short video clips of around 50 unknown or unidentified



films which face the danger of also becoming lost if not identified by members. The aim of **LOST FILMS** is not to produce a definitive list of lost motion pictures, but to provide a platform where members can frequently—and freely—exchange, add and update information.

A growing network of collaborators has been responsible for building up this archive. Initial collaborators submitted almost 500 of these titles to a specially set up Wiki during the earliest stages of the websites’ development. Others, meanwhile, have been kind enough to allow **LOST FILMS** to reproduce information already published elsewhere. The portal was specially developed using a new Open Source Software called CollectiveAccess. Using this software, it is possible to supplement individual titles with detailed textual, photographic, audio and video information—all in a single, virtual space.

Over 40 different document categories were assigned so that users would have the option to view different document types separately. Document types uploaded include surviving production records, such as scripts and set designs, as well as posters and other distribution materials, press items, censorship docu-

ments and music manuscripts. Also uploaded are numerous photographic stills and even in some cases digitized film clips.

All visitors to **LOST FILMS** are free to view its contents. Members have the added benefit of being able to amend existing information, as well as to contribute additional information and documents. Member contributions will assure the frequent and essential supply of the most up-to-date and accurate information.

More information, including membership registration can be found at the official website: www.lost-films.eu/index.

TST BOOKCORNER

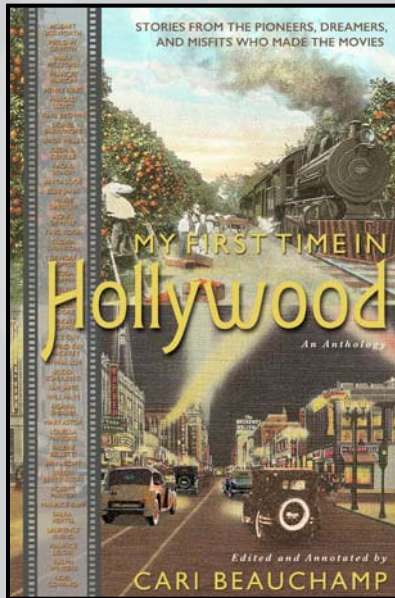
My First Time in Hollywood: AN ANTHOLOGY

Edited and annotated by Cari Beauchamp.

Over forty legends of the film business recount their first trip to Hollywood. Actors, directors, screenwriters, cinematographers, and editors-half of them women-recall the long journey, their initial impressions, their struggle to find work, and the love for making movies that kept them going.

Drawn from letters, speeches, oral histories, memoirs, and autobiographies-and illustrated with over sixty vintage photographs and illustrations-each story is intimate and unique, but all speak to our universal need to follow our passions and be part of a community that feeds the soul.

This anthology is edited and annotated by distinguished author and film historian Cari Beauchamp. **My First Time In Hollywood** is described by award-winning film pres-



ervationist, historian, and author Kevin Brownlow as: “What every film fan yearns for—first-hand, eye-witness accounts of a Hollywood none of us can remember and all of us wish we’d known. Completely fascinating.” Film critic and historian Leonard Maltin writes: “What a priceless parade of evocative and highly entertaining memories. Once you start reading you won’t want to stop.” (www.amazon.com)

The Forgotten Flapper: A NOVEL OF OLIVE THOMAS

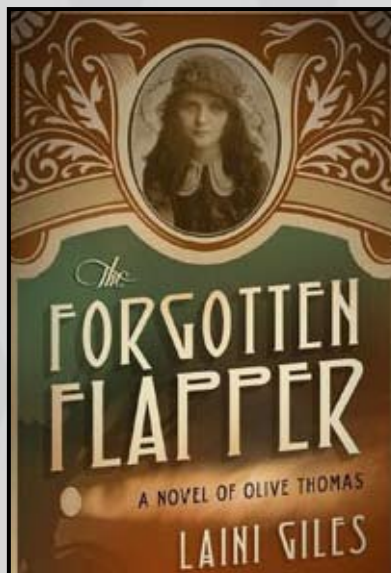
By Laini Giles

A presence lurks in New York City’s New Amsterdam Theatre when the lights go down and the audience goes home. They say she’s the ghost of Olive Thomas, one of the loveliest girls who ever lit up the Ziegfeld Follies and the silent screen. From her longtime home at the theater, Ollie’s ghost tells her story from her early life in Pittsburgh to her tragic death at twenty-five.

After winning a contest for “The Most Beautiful Girl in New York,”

shopgirl Ollie modeled for the most famous artists in New York, and then went on to become the toast of Broadway. When Hollywood beckoned, Ollie signed first with Triangle Pictures, and then with Myron Selznick’s new production company, becoming most well known for her work as a “baby vamp,” the precursor to the flappers of the 1920s.

After a stormy courtship, she married playboy Jack Pickford, Mary Pickford’s wastrel brother. Together they developed a reputation for drinking, club-going, wrecking cars, and fighting, along with giving each other expensive make-up gifts. Ollie’s mysterious death in Paris’ Ritz Hotel in 1920 was one of Hollywood’s first scandals, ensuring that her legend would live on. (www.goo-dreads.com)

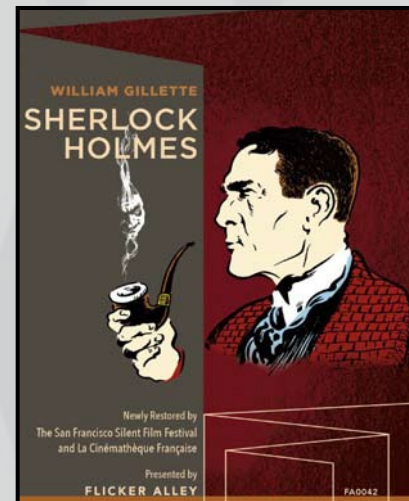


HOME ENTERTAINMENT

Sherlock Holmes REDISCOVERED FILM ON BLU-RAY

In commemoration of the 99th anniversary of the film’s original release, Flicker Alley along with the San Francisco Silent Film Festival

and la Cinémathèque Française is proud to present the Blu-ray/DVD premiere of one of the holy grails of lost films: William Gillette’s **Sherlock Holmes**.



Long considered lost until a complete dupe negative was identified in the vaults of la Cinémathèque Française last year, this William Gillette film is a vital missing link in the history of Sherlock Holmes on screen. By the time it was produced at Essanay Studios in 1916, Gillette had been established as the world’s foremost interpreter of Holmes on stage, having played him approximately 1300 times since his 1899 debut. This newly-restored edition, thanks to the monumental efforts of both the San Francisco Silent Film Festival and la Cinémathèque Française, represents the sole surviving appearance of Gillette’s Holmes on film (flickeralley.com)

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