

**Northeast Historic Film Wunderkino 5:
Moving Images of War and Peace
July 23-25, 2015**

[All events take place at the Alamo Theatre, 85 Main Street, Bucksport, ME, unless otherwise noted]

Thursday, July 23d

1-5 p.m. Archival Service Project, Alamo Theater & Northeast Historic Film Archive

6 p.m. Opening Reception, Alamo Theater

7 p.m. *Nursing the Home Front: The Henry Street Settlement Visiting Nurse Service's Keep 'Em Fighting (1942) Fundraising Snipe*

Tanya Goldman, New York University



Founded in 1893, the Henry Street Settlement was among the wave of Progressive Era social reform organizations developed in response to industrialization, poverty, and urban overcrowding. Situated in the heart of Manhattan's Lower East Side, the Henry Street Settlement developed a wide range of social service initiatives, including its pioneering Visiting Nurse Service (VNS), committed to providing public health education and quality care for all. When war began in Europe in 1939, a handful of Henry Street nurses went overseas to work with the Red Cross in England. One such nurse, Elizabeth Phillips, is the star of the VNS' 1942 short *Keep 'Em Fighting* (1942). This two-minute

snipe was created to aid in the organization's 1942 fundraising efforts, playing in New York City-area movie theaters prior to the main coming attractions. *Keep 'Em Fighting* represents an underexamined type of film within WWII nonfiction historiography and a valuable entry point into discussions of gender, domestic wartime labor, and home front "normalcy."

7.30: O'Farrell Fellow Presentation: *The Sound of Amateur Film*
Liz Czach, University of Alberta

In this presentation, I will chart amateur filmmaking's long struggle with the use of sound through a case study of Archie Stewart's work. Stewart was an avid filmmaker and early adopter of filmmaking technology. He purchased an RCA-Victor sound camera in the mid-1930s and it is this experimentation in early amateur sound for which Stewart is best known. These forays into early amateur sound production are interesting rarities but are exactly that—odd outliers in Stewart's vast filmmaking oeuvre. After a brief period of sound experimentation, Stewart started experiencing problems with his sound camera and abandoned sound production. Drawing upon NHF's extensive collection of Stewart's film and video work (over 150 reels) I will chart one amateur's struggle with sound, placing his work within the larger debates about which sound technology would best serve the amateur—debates that notably replicate the battle of the coming of sound to industrial 35mm filmmaking.



Friday, July 24th

8.30 a.m. Registration, Coffee, and Conversation, Alamo Theater Lobby

9 a.m. *British Instructional Films and the Great War at Sea*
Kenneth Pearl, Queensborough Community College

Beginning with *The Battle of Jutland* (1921), British Instructional Films (BFI) produced a series of films dealing with major battles from the Great War. The films were a commercial success with British viewers that appreciated the skillful reenactments that gave the films the look of



documentaries and also highlighted the close connection that BFI enjoyed with the British government, which permitted the Admiralty to cooperate in these ventures by making ships and men available for filming. Their maritime films presented to the public a government friendly message that the great expenditure and sacrifice that the nation underwent prior to 1914 to build the fleet was worth it, while also addressing the troublesome issue that British naval supremacy, unquestioned since the time of Nelson's victory at Trafalgar, could no longer be taken for granted. This is particularly the case in making a film out of the Battles

of Coronel and Falkland Islands, where BFI had to deal with the first, a shocking British defeat in November 1914 off the coast of Chile and the second, a much more palatable decisive victory a month later that brought an end to German commerce raiding in the Atlantic.

10 a.m. *Preserved Food, Identity and Experience in Post-WWI:*
American Home Canning in France (1919)
Christine Gorby, University of Pennsylvania

This paper analyzes how material culture and space were used in film to reproduce and transform cultural food practices during the post-WWI reconstruction period in France. A fourteen-minute, black & white, educational film, it was made in 1919 by the American Committee for Devastated France or Comité Américain pour les Régions Dévastées de France (CARD), a private American-based women's charitable service organization. The moving picture was created for use by French domestic science workers to teach American methods of home canning and drying foods to disabled war veterans and the 'peasant class' that included both French-born and colonial immigrants. This picture was also used to alter time by simultaneously drawing upon the 'ancient technique' of canning while ushering in the aspirational use of modern canning equipment such as the steam pressure cooker and commercially made glass jar. By reinforcing past, modern, and future values and ideals through objects and environments, identity and experience through preserved food in rural France was re-structured.

11 a.m. *Inside the General Hospital: Physician Films from WWII Medical Units*
Timothy Wisniewski, Alan Mason Chesney Medical Archives, Johns Hopkins University

This paper will investigate personal filmmaking by physicians serving in the United States Army's general hospitals during World War II. Originating in the Base hospitals of the First World War, these numbered general hospitals were established and staffed by major American hospitals and charged with treating more serious injuries that could not be treated in the field or required longer periods of convalescence. In contrast to the Army's field and evacuation hospitals, general hospitals were situated further from combat in the communication zones of the Eurasian theaters of operation and had more elaborate equipment and specialized staff. Thus, despite the general precariousness of wartime healthcare delivery and the constant necessity of mobility, these hospitals enjoyed a greater degree of stability in which documentary functions such as photography and filmmaking could and did flourish.



LUNCH 12.00-1.00 Alamo Lobby

12.30: Archive tour with Brook Minner: meet at the stairs adjacent to the Alamo lobby

1 p.m. *P is for Patriot: The Manufacturing of Americans from WWII-Vietnam*
Devin Orgeron, North Carolina State University

Focused on a wide swath of American educational media produced from the 1940s-1970s, this presentation examines rhetorical appeals to and changing notions regarding American patriotism. In contrast to



educational materials designed to give students a broad sense of their nation's history, the materials examined here, masquerading as history and/or social studies, are primarily concerned with a brand of social engineering rarely discussed (where "patriotism" and "Americanism" are substituted for concepts like "good manners" and/or "cleanliness"). Close textual analysis of several of these films combine with attention to both the broad historical context and specific examination of the educational debates of the time to create a compelling argument about the fine line educators walked in selecting classroom materials during these tumultuous decades.

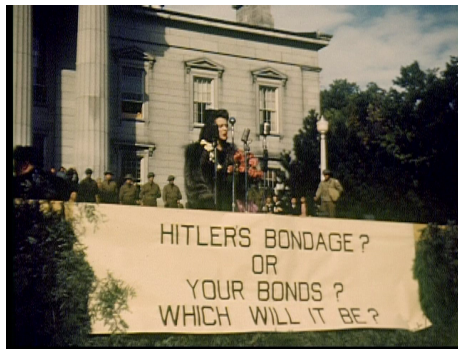
2 p.m. *Lost WWII Women Directors, Screenwriters & Editors*
Sharon Thompson, Lesbian Home Movie Project

While World War II opened many non-traditional jobs to women, male names dominate the history of U.S. film during the period. Yet at least half dozen women wrote, edited, and directed newsreels, shorts, and features for the Domestic Branch of the Bureau of Motion Pictures, Office of War Information (OWI) and other government agencies. This presentation focuses on two: Marion Dix (1904-1992) and Elizabeth Wheeler (1920-1956). Dix began as a Hollywood screenwriter, primarily of romantic comedies, including the military comedy *Sea Legs* (1930). After OWI, she served as UN film production and distribution officer in India and later directed and produced films on Buddhism. Although Wheeler met an early and tragic end, she too garnered screen credit on several films. An interesting example is *It's Up to You* (1943), which involved a roster of well-known progressives: photographer Paul Strand; lyricist Lewis Allan of "Strange Fruit;" and Earl Robinson who composed "Joe Hill." She also directed "Light for the Traveller" (1944), shot by her cousin, the photographer George Daniell, best known for his portraits of Audrey Hepburn and Sophia Loren and edited *Last Night We Attacked* (1947), which NHF saved this year in collaboration with the National Center for Jewish Film.



3 p.m. *Vermont's Home Front Response to War*
Fred Pond, University of Vermont

Vermont's response to war is presented through films centering on World War II. Several reels from amateur filmmakers depict efforts of hometown military training and war bond promotion [*Vermont State Guard*, 1943], scrap steel gathering [*Rail Raising Bee*, 1942], and hometown scenes for screening to far-away home-sick soldiers [*Our Rutland*, 1942]. These are the efforts of Vermonters



seeking to record the events of the day, under the influence of war. Perhaps farther reaching are films produced with outside motives: Dorothy Thompson's scripted film [*Farm Work is War Work*, 1941] sought to connect agriculture to war efforts, echoing earlier local farm-oriented CCC efforts while promoting US involvement in the European theatre; and a post WW II Department of Army production [*A Town Solves A Problem*, 1947] promoting democracy via a small-town meeting process, which evidence points to plans to distribute the film overseas to aid in post-war education activities.

Friday Night Screening: *WWII Night at the Movies* [off-site]
Programmed by Liz Coffey and Sharon Thompson
Introduction by Paul Spehr

Saturday, July 25th

9.30 a.m. Alamo Theater Lobby

Registration, Coffee, and Conversation

10 a.m. *Seeing was Believing: Recording Nazi Camps on Amateur Film*

Lindsay Zarwell, US Holocaust Memorial Museum

Content Notice: Some of the films may be graphic for young or sensitive viewers.

In April 1945, Omar Bradley called for "both still and moving pictures be utilized to the fullest extent practicable ... for the purpose of recording for civilization the history of horror written by over five years of German atrocities." Thousands of feet of film taken by the U.S. Army Signal Corps and Air Force provide visual evidence of the inhumane treatment of prisoners and the atrocities of

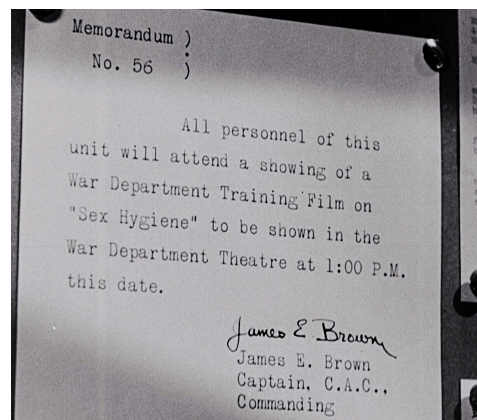


war. A small number of others, both men and women, recorded the story with handheld movie cameras. These amateur films show the liberation and its immediate aftermath through the eyes of individual, ordinary Americans. These personal and intimate images of war complement the official military film coverage. The frames capture a more complete picture of the soldiers' experience with book-ending shots of daily military life, leisure activities, and surrounding geography. Both in black and white and color, such rare small-gauge films expand the documentation of this remarkable time in history.

11 a.m. *Unseen Casualties: VD Films in War and Peace*

Heidi Holmstrom and Audrey Amidon, National Archives and Records Administration

According to John Ford's venereal disease classic *Sex Hygiene* (1941), the number of victims of venereal disease in our country exceeded the total number of battle casualties from all nations during the First World War. If correct, these numbers made sexually transmitted disease as lethal an enemy as the Germans or Japanese military. It was therefore of utmost importance that soldiers understand their bodies and the dangers of "illicit" sex with "contaminated women" in order to avoid an infection that might put them out of commission. To do otherwise was equivalent to shirking duty. This presentation seeks to provide and overview of how films educated the military and the public about the dangers of venereal disease and how these films reflect the connection between international conflict and increased infection. Starting with *Sex Hygiene* as a classic example of the genre's form and message, we will look back to civilian films such as the post-World War I film *End of the Road* (1919), as well as films that were made for soldiers serving in later conflicts like the animated *Return of Count Spirochete* (1973). Using textual records of military film production, we will explore the objectives of the originating agencies and consider potential repercussions of the ideological framework underlying the films' message.



12-1.30 LUNCH on your own

12.30: Archive tour with Brook Minner: meet at the bottom of the stairs adjacent to the Alamo lobby

1.30 p.m. *Shoot the Kids: Violence and Postwar Home Media*

Stephen Monteiro, American University of Paris

Home moviemaking is as old as cinema itself, but it became common practice for middle-class America families only after World War II. This presentation considers the terms of that popularity by examining the relationship between postwar home-movie practices and contemporaneous depictions of violence. Home-movie making in the 1950s paralleled the renewed popularity of the western in Hollywood and on television. Commercial media's depictions of the Indian Wars and



western conquest were repeated in the conquest of suburbia as acted out in children's games of cowboys and Indians captured on 8 mm and 16 mm celluloid.

As Todd Gitlin claims, "The prairie became the lawn; the ranch, the ranch house... And the six-shooter became the point-and-shoot home movie camera."

Along with scenes of simulated violence and conquest in family films from the 1940s and 1950s, the visual component of this presentation will include advertisements for popular cinema and home movies in that period, as well as illustrations from home

2.30 p.m. "Winning or Losing is Temporary, Friendship is Eternal":

The Conflation of Cultural Diplomacy and Warfare in Chinese Ping-Pong in U.S.A.

Travis Wagner, University of South Carolina

The reality that Chinese-American "ping pong diplomacy" functioned as something in between diplomacy and warfare is nothing new to the discourse of American social history, however, popular culture and historical documentation favor the narrative from the viewpoint of The United States. Filmed by The Central Newsreel and Documentary Films Studio of The People's Republic of China, *Chinese Ping-Pong in U.S.A.* challenges that discourse. The film follows the Chinese table tennis team on their trip around the United States from April 12th through April 30th 1972, beginning their trip in the "industrial city" Detroit, Michigan and ending in Los Angeles, California. Through a nuanced discussion of the cultural politics of Chinese-American relations in the late 1960s and early 1970s, as well as juxtaposing this film with other acts of documented cultural diplomacy, this presentation will argue that *Chinese Ping-Pong in U.S.A.* functions as cultural diplomacy and warfare simultaneously, with a specific emphasis on China as a place of both athletic and social superiority. Furthermore, this presentation will consider the implications of this film existing within USC's Chinese Film Collection, itself donated as an act of 'cultural diplomacy' between the two nations.



3.30 p.m. *A Time To Play: Frivolous Cinema as Cold War Weaponry*
Brian Real, University of Maryland, College Park

The American presence at the 1967 International and Universal Exposition in Montreal – better known as Expo 67 – can be understood as a lighthearted effort to promote



American goodwill and, simultaneously, an organized attack on competing Soviet interests. Since the American presence was overseen by Jack Masey of the United States Information Agency (USIA) – which was responsible for crafting pro-American soft propaganda for foreign publics –virtually all elements of American exhibits were designed to convey political points, even when such messaging was not direct. American public diplomacy was effectively in a maintenance phase at this time, as progress in civil rights causes had largely taken away one of the Soviet Union’s most effective anti-American talking points, while the Vietnam war had not yet escalated to its high point of domestic and international controversy. In general, the United States was liked in much of the world at this time. Thus, to fight the Cold War, the United States needed to take its image as a fun and likeable nation seriously.

4.30 p.m. Closing remarks and Wrap-up

6 p.m. Cocktails

7 p.m. Dinner

Image Credits

Goldman: *Keep ‘Em Fighting* [snipe in public domain], Courtesy of the Visiting Nurse Service of NY.

Czach: *Movie Makers*, January 1935.

Pearl: BFI National Archive.

Gorby:

Wisniewski: U.S. Army physician reading a chest x-ray. R. Carmichael Tilghman, *Films of the 18th General Hospital* (1942-1945), 16mm.

Orgeron: *Despotism*, An Erpi Classroom Film. Produced by Encyclopaedia Britannica Films, INC. In Collaboration with Harold D. Lasswell, Ph.D, Yale University, 1945. From A/V Geeks

Thompson: George Daniell, “Gina & Lizzie,” Courtesy of DeJoy Design, Blue Hill, Maine.

Pond: Harold Bailey, Russell Going, George Eaton, "Vermont State Guard in World War II," 1941-1944. 16mm. Vermont Historical Society.

Zarwell: US Holocaust Memorial Museum, gift of Jamie B. Russell.

Holmstrom and Amidon: Still from *Sex Hygiene* (1942). National Archives and Records Administration.

Monteiro: Kodak Brownie Ad, *Life Magazine*, 1954.

Wagner: *Chinese Table Tennis Delegation in USA* (The Central Newsreel and Documentary Films Studio of The People's Republic of China, 1972) Courtesy of the Chinese Film Collection at Moving Image Resource Center, University of South Carolina.

Real: Library and Archives of Canada.