



March 2023 Volume 1, Issue 3

Renewed Remembering: The Newsletter of the Conneaut Area Historical Society

A Message from President Jim Jones

The Conneaut Area Historical Society wants to thank all members who have been prompt with their dues. However, due to Covid and the loss of our Secretary Joan Barnett, we no longer have a newsletter being sent to members. We are asking you for your support because utilities, taxes, and upkeep on the building must be maintained. Thank you again for your continued support. As always, new members are welcome.

You can call: 440-593-3019 with further questions or write to Conneaut Area Historical Society, P.O. Box 563, Conneaut Ohio, 44030.

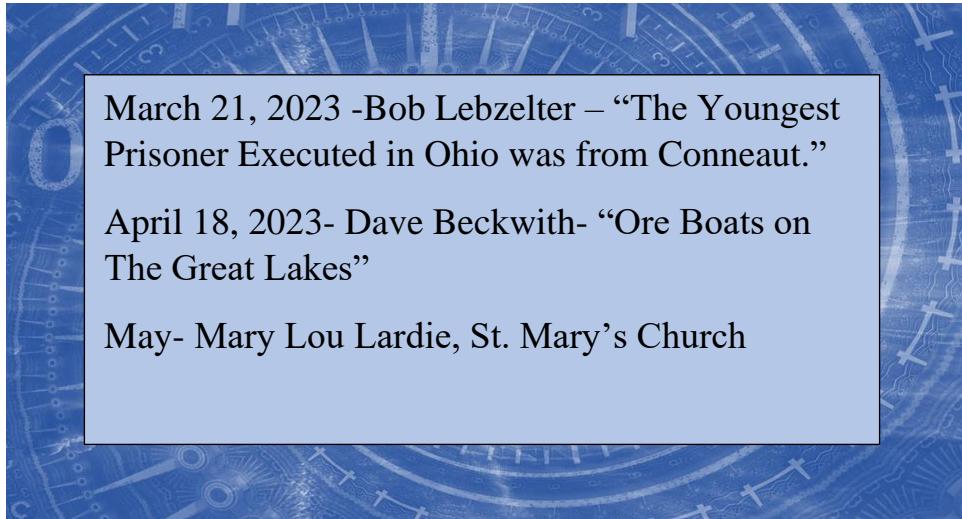
Thanking you in advance, Jim Jones, President, Conneaut Area Historical Society.

Please pick up a copy of this newsletter and share it with your friends. Or read your copy on our

Conneaut Area Historical Society Website. <https://capturingconneauthistory.com>

Inside: Motion Pictures in Motion, Jeff Morrell;
Time Travel Tuesday; Membership Application

Time Travel Tuesdays



Day and Date

3rd Tuesday of the month

Time

6 to 7 p.m.

Place

Conneaut Public Library

Society Notes

“Remembering” was the name of the original Conneaut Area Historical Society newsletter. Joan Barnett was the last editor, and with her death and the Covid pandemic the newsletter has not been published for a time. It seemed fitting to name this new version of the old newsletter “Renewed Remembering,” in honor of the former editors including Louise Legeza and Joan Barnett who edited and published the newsletter for so many years.

This last year featured a renovated Conneaut Historical Society, both inside and out. Volunteers cleaned, rearranged, and renovated inside exhibits and the frame based picture feature is being reimagined as well as the collections and shelving being reorganized. The Museum now has a website which we hope all of you will visit, read the historical articles, and watch the historical videos. The website address is: <https://capturingconneauthistory.com/>

We are also presenting a monthly program of speakers on historical topics at the Conneaut Public Library. Please get involved and help us in our goal of preserving and presenting Conneaut History

Time Travel Tuesday:

Jeff Morrell Took Us to the Movies!



The audience went to the movies at the Tuesday, February 25 “Time Travel Tuesday” Conneaut Area Historical Society program. Jeff Morrell, President of the Conneaut Historical Railroad Society presented a program about Conneaut Movie Theaters, complete with illustrations and insider knowledge.

With the help of material from the Conneaut News Herald which he made available to everyone as handouts, Jeff Morrell took the group on a tour of several Conneaut theaters of the past. The theater tour included the La Grande, and the State Theaters with a side trip featuring an impressive theater organ.

On October 11, 1916. The Conneaut News Herald announced that preparations were completed for the opening of Conneaut’s new moving picture playhouse, the La Grand, that evening at six thirty. The new theater had Kaiser Gray cushion seats trimmed in green leather and mahogany finished woodwork.

Fred L. Horton built the theater, located at the corner of State and Broad Streets, at a cost of approximately \$10,000, and J.C. Flack leased the theater and planned to manage it.

Mr. Flack saw E.H. Sothern’s first photoplay, “The Chattel, “recently at the opening of the new Stillman Theater in Cleveland, and he secured the performance for opening night at the La Grand.



The La Grande Theatre was on the southwest corner of State Street and Broad Street across from the Post Office. It possessed a Teller-Kent 3m-10r pipe organ. The building has housed a beauty salon for many years.

Heath's Seven Piece Orchestra furnished the music for opening night and patrons paid five and ten cents to enjoy the show.



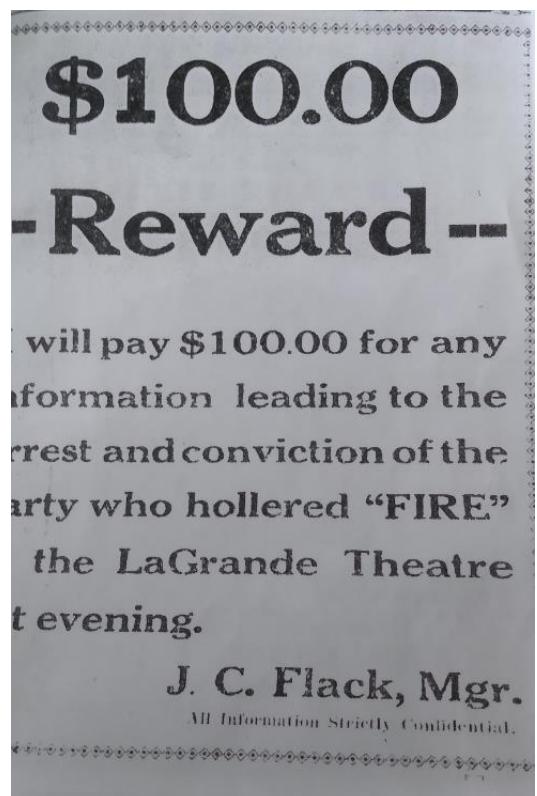
After the grand opening, La Grand Theatre, now adding an “e” to its name to become LaGrande Theatre, continued to show current movies that audiences were willing to pay good money not to miss movies like “Womanhood” with Alice Joyce and Harry Morey.

Part of Jeff's presentation handouts included a fascinating story appearing in the Conneaut News Herald of December 13, 1919 that revealed a real life drama taking place during the evening show at LaGrande. At about 9:30 in the evening when LaGrande had reached an almost capacity crowd of men, women, and children, "the air was pierced with the cry of FIRE!" In split seconds, the crowd was transformed from usual taking of seats and subdued conversation to a panicked rush for the exits. "The law of self-preservation reigned." A Miss Cox from Ashtabula fainted, but luckily someone helped her, and she regained consciousness and got safely out of the Theatre.

J.C. Flack, proprietor of LaGrande Theatre, raced after the person or persons who had cried fire. He saw them as they left State Street exit and gave chase. He followed them across State Street and down Broad, but then stopped short, realizing that his first priority had to be returning to the Theatre and quieting the audience. J.C. Flack, with the help of an actor from the stage, successfully calmed the audience before the panic spiraled out of control. They convinced the people there was no fire. Many returned to their seats, ready to continue their evening of entertainment, but many other decided to abandon their evening of pleasure and

return to the safety of their homes. In his interview with the Conneaut News Herald, J.C. Flack emphasized that LaGrande was so built that even if there had been a fire, everyone would have safely escaped. He said that the Theatre had four exits which would enable everyone to escape. He added that the booth was the only place for a fire to make headway, "and it is so constructed that we could close it and burn up two or three weeks of pictures without the audience knowing about it."

J/C. Flack said he could identify at least some of the culprits, and worked with Conneaut police officers to apprehend them, intending to prosecute them to the fullest extent of the law. Jeff included a reward poster to show how seriously J.C. Flack considered the offense.



Only history knows whether or not J.C. Flack and the Conneaut police officers ever captured the culprits for J.C. to prosecute to the fullest extent of the law.

Theater owners, including J.C. Flack of the LaGrande, addressed the problem of accompanying the Silent Films and stage performances with appropriate music in various ways. The need for musical accompaniment provided glittering opportunities for musicians of all talents and localities and for musical instrument manufacturers. The organ industry and motion picture theaters were meant to be united in a profitable partnership for both. The LaGrande Theatre realized the perks of partnership and J.C. Flack clearly understood this basic business fact.

Another pertinent handout that Jeff provided illustrated the importance of a theater organ to the LaGrande. The Conneaut News Herald of February 12, 1926, stated that a new organ was to be dedicated Sunday. Proprietor J.C. Flack announced that the initial concert program would be presented on the Theatre's new Teller-Kent pipe organ on Sunday afternoon in a program starting at 2 p.m.

Workmen quickly completed installing the organ, which according to J.C., is the largest between Cleveland and Buffalo. Officials of the Teller-Kent Company of Erie, Pennsylvania, agree with J.C. Flack's assessment of the new organ.

Wellman P. Glazier, organist, drew up specifications for the new organ and the Teller-Kent Company custom build the instrument. The organ is divided into three units: the great organ, the swell organ, and the echo organ. The echo organ is located in the rear of the auditorium near the projection room. The great organ and the swell organ are located to the right of the stage.

The smallest pipe in the collection is one-fourth on an inch in diameter and eight inches in length. The largest pipe is eight inches in diameter and thirteen feet long. The organ has 41 speaking stops, 16 couplers, four piston combinations, chimes, harp, xylophone, bass drum, traps, and cymbal. Nearly every instrument known can be reproduced. Mr. Glazier states that five of the stops on the organ are placed on very few organs. It is a three manual instrument.

The interior of the theater has been entirely remodeled. An addition to the stage makes it much larger than before. It has been extended over the former orchestra pit and now measures 15 feet by 22 feet in size.

A new lighting system has been installed, this being indirect instead of direct. Lamp shades for the four large floor lamps are now being made by Mrs. Wade Cole at the Magic Door Gift Shop. These floor lamps will be installed in the corners, and one will sit near the organ console.

Mr. Glazier has worked out a delightful concert program for Sunday which should prove well worth hearing.

La Grande Theatre

GRAND OPENING

—OF—
The Mighty Teller-Kent Concert Organ

—AT THE—
LA GRANDE THEATRE

Sunday, February 14, 1926

THE MANAGEMENT OF THE LA GRANDE AND THE TELLER-KENT ORGAN CO. ARE PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT CONNEAUT HAS THE LARGEST THREE MANUAL CONCERT ORGAN BETWEEN CLEVELAND AND BUFFALO. THIS ANNOUNCEMENT IS A FACT AND TELLER-KENT ARE READY AT ALL TIMES TO STAND BACK OF THE STATEMENT.

MR. J. C. FLACK HAS SPARED NO EXPENSE IN INSTALLING THIS INSTRUMENT AND FEELS THAT CONNEAUT HAS AN ORGAN TO BE PROUD OF.

THE ORGANIST, MR. GLAZIER, FORMED THE SPECIFICATION FOR THE ORGAN, AND INCLUDED STOPS THAT ARE SELDOM FOUND IN ORGANS, EXCEPT WHERE THEY ARE SPECIALLY ORDERED. MR. KENT, OF TELLER-KENT CO., WISHES TO STATE THAT MR. GLAZIER, ORGANIST, HAS PLAYED SEVERAL OF THEIR ORGANS AND AS A CONCERT ORGANIST, OF THE BETTER CLASS OF MUSIC, FOR WHICH THE PIPE ORGAN WAS BUILT, MR. GLAZIER WILL GIVE CONNEAUT MUSIC LOVERS SOME WONDERFUL MUSICAL TREATS.

THE ORGAN CONSISTS OF THREE SEPARATE ORGANS, SWELL — GREAT — ECHO — WITH SEPARATE PEDAL ORGAN FOR EACH. SIXTEEN STOPS IN SWELL ORGAN — TWENTY-THREE STOPS IN GREAT ORGAN — THIRTEEN STOPS IN ECHO ORGAN — THIRTEEN IN PEDAL ORGAN — SIXTEEN COUPLERS — FOURTEEN PISTON COMBINATIONS — CHIMES — HARP — XYLOPHONE AND A COMPLETE SET OF DRUMS.

DON'T FORGET NEXT SUNDAY — COME AND HEAR THE LA GRANDE CONCERT ORGAN, CONNEAUT'S MASTER ORGAN AND ORGANIST.

TELLER-KENT CO. WISHES TO STATE THAT THIS INSTRUMENT IS ENTIRELY TELLER-KENT MATERIAL AND WORKMANSHIP THROUGHOUT, AS ARE ALL THE ORGANS THEY BUILD.

MR. GLAZIER, ORGANIST, WILL GIVE ONE ORGAN RECITAL DURING THE MATINEE AND ONE DURING THE EVENING.

Sunday and Monday

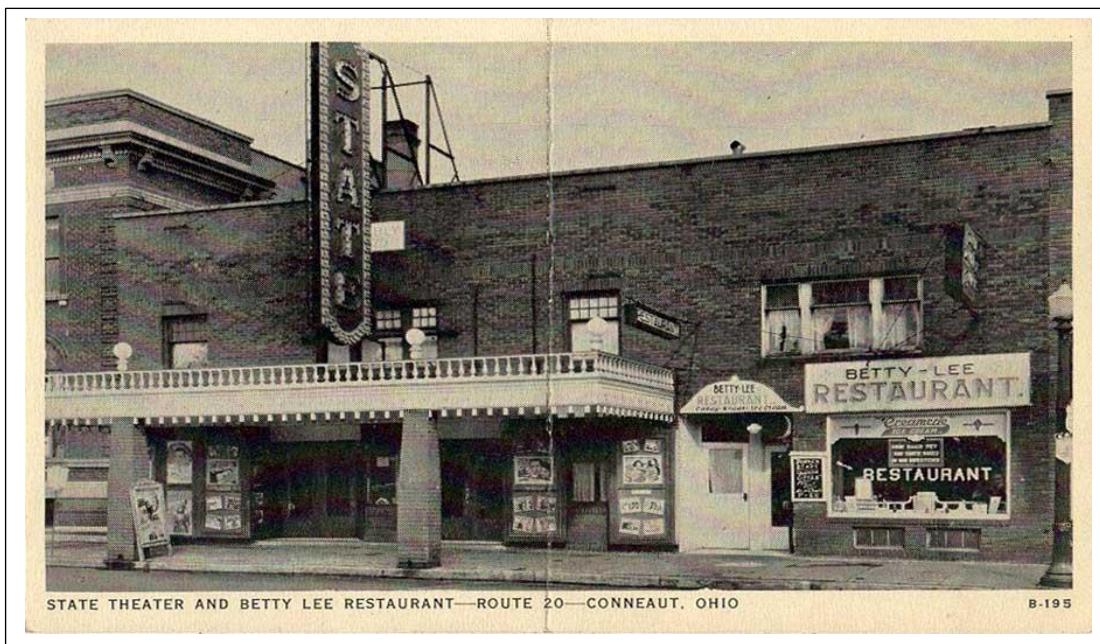
HOUSE PETERS



Here is a picture about robust men and lovable women—of exciting rescues at sea, and of thrilling adventure on land. House Peters

Other Choices, Other Conneaut Cinemas...

The State Theatre was located on the north side of State Street on the right side of the telephone company building which still stands. The State Theatre was a few doors west of the Ohio Theatre, and it opened in late-1925. It was closed in April 1967 with Kenneth Williams in "Carry on Screaming!". It was demolished in early-1972.



LADIES' WAITING ROOM

STATE THEATRE

First National Picture, Inc. presents

TOMORROW AND MONDAY

NORMA TALMADGE

in

One of Her Greatest Pictures

"THE ONLY WOMAN"

Don't Miss This One

Also

Two Sets of Bib-Tuckers

and

Father World News

DORIS KENYON

Story by Margareta Tuttle. Directed by Lambert Hillier. Produced under the personal supervision of Carl Laemmle.

CHARLESTON DANCE CONTEST

Every One Can Enter This Contest For Cash Prizes

Leave your name and address at the box office.

16 CASH PRIZES

COME AND BOOST YOUR FAVORITE DANCER

Added Attraction and No Advance in Prices

Be On Guard for a Big Thrill

LAST TIME TODAY

Matinee 10 and 30c
Night 15 and 35c

Enjoy The \$10,000 Organ—Mrs Olga Soboda At The Console ✓

ADMISSION PRICES

Matinee—10 and 30c
Night—15 and 35c

TIME
CONTINUOUS
2:15, 4:15, 6:15,
8:15

STARTING
MONDAY

ADDED ATTRACTION
FOR SIX DAYS
HARRY ROCKWELL'S
DANCE ENTERTAINERS

Eight Pieces
Will Play Every Night
For

CHARLESTON
DANCE
CONTEST

Every One Can
Enter This Contest
For Cash Prizes
Leave your name and address at the box office.

16 CASH PRIZES

COME AND
BOOST YOUR

FAVORITE DANCER
Added Attraction and
No Advance in Prices

Performances
Continuous
2:15 to 11:00

STATE THEATRE

PRICES
Matinee 10c and 30c
Night 15c and 35c

WEDNESDAY AND THURSDAY



The greatest epic of gold and glory your eyes have yet beheld.

LAST SHOWING TODAY

Frank Lloyd presents
WINDS of CHANCE

REX BEACH'S ROMANCE OF
THE KLONDIKE GOLD RUSH

with
Anna Q. Nilsson, Ben Lyon, Viola Dana,
Victor McLaglen

and a great supporting cast including Dorothy Sebastian,
Hobart Bosworth, Claude Gillingwater, Philo McCullough
and John T. Murray.

Directed by Frank Lloyd maker of "The Sea Hawk"

A First National Picture

COMING ATTRACTIONS

FOR THURSDAY, FRIDAY AND SATURDAY
3 BIG ACTS VAUDEVILLE

Which now is playing big time in Cleveland

COMING NEXT SUNDAY—"THAT ROYLE GIRL"

Also our regular good comedy and news reel

"Wind of Chance" is one of First National's newest releases.
You have my personal guarantee that this is one of the greatest pictures ever shown in this theatre. Manager

Mrs. Olga Soboda, our organist, has a very pleasing program
which you will enjoy.

NO ADVANCE IN PRICES

"MEET YOUR FRIENDS AT THE STATE"

FER 16. 1926



The Ohio Theatre in Conneaut was located on State Street at Harbor Street, the Ohio Theater is listed in editions of Film Daily Yearbook from at least 1941 through to beyond 1950. Photo on Cinema Treasures website, taken by Lost Memory. Jeff Morrell also contributes to Cinema Treasures. Admiral Richard Byrd's Snow Cruiser which rumbled through Conneaut on its way to Antarctica in October 1939 sits in front of Western Union.



The Ohio Theater had its grand opening on April 8, 1931 showcasing the movie *Sit Tight* starring Joe E. Brown. The Ohio was constructed from the start for the showing of talking pictures. Both the State and Ohio were owned by Mr. D. R. Bly.



The Academy Theatre was opened April 4, 1912 and in late 1927 it was renamed Main Theatre. It was still open in 1929. Photo on Cinema Treasures contributed by Billy Holcomb, Don Lewis, and Billy Smith.

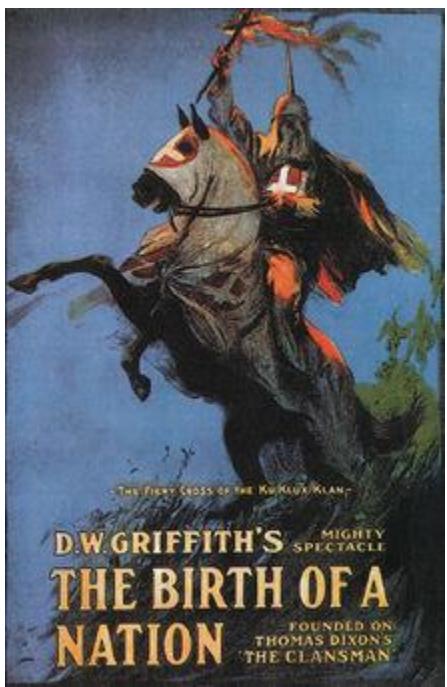


Movies Through the Years at Conneaut Movie Theaters

Conneaut Movie theaters owe their purpose and contents to a long historical film progression that has its roots in ancient Chinese, Greek, and Arab cultures and spread to Europe and then America. Greek, Chinese, and Arab scientists and inventors experimented with light rays and projecting images on solid surfaces.

Fast forward to New York City, 1888. Thomas Edison and his British assistant William Dickson have invented a camera that could recover moving pictures. In 1889, Thomas ordered some of the new film cut into long strips and by 1890, William presented the Kinetograph, a primitive motion picture camera. In 1892, he introduced the Kinestoscope, a machine that projected the movie images onto a screen. These inventions made it possible for Thomas Edison to sponsor public film screenings in his recently opened Kinetograph Parlors.

Creating films was the next step in the new technology and Thomas Edison provided a pioneer clip in the new film technology by recording himself sneezing. The oldest surviving film in existence is believed to have been recorded in 1888. It is titled the Roundhay Garden Scene, filmed at the Whitely Family house in Roundhay, a suburb of Leeds in Great Britain.



In 1915, American filmmaker, D.W. Griffith introduced *The Birth of a Nation*, attracting instant attention and controversy and earning many film firsts. Critics past and present praise the film for its technical excellence and celebrate its pioneering statistics of being the first American 12-reel film ever made. It is the first American made film to feature a musical score for an orchestra and to use closeups and fadeouts. It features choreographed battle sequences using hundreds of extras – another first in film history.

The Birth of a Nation is controversial because of its storyline- it is part historical fact and part fiction- focusing on a Union and a Southern family surviving after the Civil War. The movie garnered ongoing criticism for its racist characterizations of

African-Americans and its favorable portrayal of the Klu Klux Klan.



Conneaut and Country-Wide Cinema

Top Movies of 1910

- Frankenstein 1910
- A Trip to Mars 1910, 5 min.
- The Automatic Moving Company 1910, 4 min.
- The House with Closed Shutters 1910, 16 min.
- The Wonderful Wizard of Oz 1910, 13 min.
- The Unchanging Sea 1910, 14 min. ...
- Le vitrail diabolique 1910, 7 min. ...
- Slippery Jim 1910, 9 min.

Top Movies of the 1930s

- Modern Times
- Gone with the Wind (1939) ...
- The Wizard of Oz (1939) ...
- It Happened One Night (1934) ...
- The Grand Illusion (1937) ...
- Pépé le Moko (1937) ...
- Mr. Smith Goes to Washington
- The Public Enemy (1931)
 - Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (1937)
- Horse Feathers (1932)

Top Movies of the 1920s

- Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (1920)
- Häxan: Witchcraft Through the Ages (1922)
- Dr. Mabuse the Gambler (1922)
- The Hunchback of Notre Dame (1923)
- The Thief of Bagdad (1924)

Eight Top Movies of the 1940s

- The Great Dictator. Charlie Chaplin 1940.
- Rebecca. Alfred Hitchcock 1940.
- His Girl Friday. Howard Hawks 1940.
- Pinocchio.
- The Grapes of Wrath
- Fantasia
- The Philadelphia Story
- The Shop Around the Corner

Popular Movies of the 1950s

- Cat on a Hot Tin Roof (1958)
- Orphee (1950) ...
- Voyage to Italy (1954) ...
- Julius Caesar (1953) ...
- Houseboat (1958) ...
- Harvey (1950) ...
- The Thing from Another World (1951) ...

Some Popular 1960s Movies

- Psycho (1960)
- Spartacus (1960)
- The Magnificent Seven (1960)
- Breakfast at Tiffany's (1961)
- One Hundred and One Dalmatians (1961)
- The Hustler (1961)
- To Kill a Mockingbird (1962)
- Lawrence of Arabia (1962)

Some Popular 1970s Movies

- The Godfather Part II
- Alien
- Star Wars Episode IV, A New Hope
- Apocalypse Now
- Dirty Harry
- A Clockwork Orange
- Jaws
- The Invasion of the Body Snatchers

Top Movies of the 1980s

- Top Gun (1986) PG | 109 min | Action, Drama. ...
- Killer Klowns from Outer Space (1988) ...
- Scarface (1983) ...
- Batman (1989) ...
- The Princess Bride (1987) ...
- Back to the Future (1985) ...
- Raiders of the Lost Ark (1981) ...
- Dirty Dancing (I) (1987)

In an often-humorous discussion, Jeff encouraged and shared opinions about some of the movies that Conneaut movie goers remembered seeing in Conneaut theaters.

A woman revealed that she had worked at the concession stand in one of the theaters. One of the most irritating things she remembered about the movie, “Bridge on the River Kwai,” which is set in a Japanese POW camp in Burma, is its theme song, the Colonel Bogey March. The British prisoners of war whistled the song as they marched into camp. “After several times, it grates on the ears,” she said. “I still don’t want to hear it.”

A gentleman in the audience remembered the movie “Invasion of the Body Snatchers.” This 1956 film is about an alien invasion in the form of plant spires that grow into large seeds pods. Each pod produced an identical copy of a human, and as each pod fully developed it assimilated the physical traits, memories, and personalities of each sleeping person near it until only the copy is left. The copies have no human emotion and eventually as the pods replace the human population, the earth becomes a barren, emotionless, meaningless planet. Gradually, a local doctor discovers the pod invasion and tries to stop it. The film’s ending implies that he is successful. “Talking about that movie still scares me,” he admitted.

Jeff Morrell’s easy conversational style encouraged audience members to talk back and forth with him about movies, even about movie censorship which has proven to be an ongoing issue for theater owners, theater goers, and the United States government.

Since The Birth of a Nation in 1915, attempts to control the content and distribution of a film has been on the agendas of private citizens, churches, schools, local and state governments, and the United States government.

An ironic early example of movie censorship occurred in 1897 when straight laced Victorians thought The kiss in Thomas Edison’s “The Kiss”, a little too graphic.



In 1897, a Maine statute prohibiting showing prizefight films fining anyone showing boxing films \$500.00. to prevent the exhibition of the 1897 heavyweight championship between James J. Corbett and Bob Fitzsimmons. Illinois, Minnesota, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania quickly followed suit.

Despite the Maine law, generally speaking, the movie years between 1897 and 1907 were uncensored movie years, but as the number of movies produced increased, so did the number of groups in the United States questioning the practices of the fledgling cinema industry. Dismayed at what they considered some of the violence, explicit sexuality, and moral laxity of the movies, these groups wanted to regulate the new industry before it could continue to build its immoral foundation.

Cities like Chicago outright banned films from being shown in their municipalities and others established and enforced strict censorship guidelines. Politician, U.S. Postmaster General, and Republican National Committee Chairman William Hays formally introduced the Motion Picture Production Code, which became known as “the Hays Code.” The Hayes Code or more popularly known as the Hayes Office, was a set of guidelines that Hayes, working in tandem with the Production Code Administration and the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America , used to censor American films.

The Hays Office regulated the content of motion pictures in the United States from 1930 to 1968 and the Production Code Administration enforced the code. The United States government, despite the First Amendment right to freedom of expression, no longer allowed films to depict gratuitous sexuality, drug use, substance abuse, murder, and other acts it considered immoral.

The list of movies that the Hays Office marked as immoral at least in part is long and often controversial. The 1934 Tarzan movie, Tarzan and His Mate, starring Maureen O’Sullivan as Jane, displayed her midriff. By 1939, the Government Hays Office had forced her to cover up when she again appeared as Jane in “Tarzan Finds a Son.”

“Gone With the Wind” finally came out in 1939, and its debut offered ample material for Hays censorship. The movie contained what the censors considered explicit sexual content, graphic depictions of childbirth, and profanity, most notably when at the end of the film Rhett tells Scarlett “My dear, I don’t give a damn.”

Director David O. Selznick appealed some of the Hays Office decisions and managed to remove some of the censored items.

Films that successfully challenged the Hays Office

- Notorious (1946)
- Top Hat (1935)
- The Girl Can't Help It (1956)
- Make Way for Tomorrow (1937)
- Strangers on a Train (1951)
- Wings (1927)
- Gone with the Wind (1939)
- Bluebeard's Eighth Wife (1938)
- Tarzan Films
- Every Day's a Holiday

Activists in our contemporary society continue the fight on both sides of censorship of motion pictures and freedom of expression under the First Amendment.

The final laugh of the evening occurred when several audience members reminisced about the local of the balconies in Conneaut theaters and why people sat in the balcony. One woman pinpointed their reasons when she said, "We used to go up to the balcony so we could neck." She led the laughter.

At the end of the program, Jeff asked for questions and comments. There were questions and discussions and jokes about movies being before "my time." But the most telling comment came from a woman who said, "Thank you for the good program, Jeff. You are a real asset to our community."



Conneaut Area Historical Society Museum Membership Application



Single \$10.00 Couple \$15.00 Family \$20.00 Patron
\$50.00

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____

Would you be willing to volunteer at the Museum during the summer months? We are open Friday, Saturday, and Sunday from noon until 5 p.m., starting on Memorial Day and ending on Labor Day. What day or time is best for you?

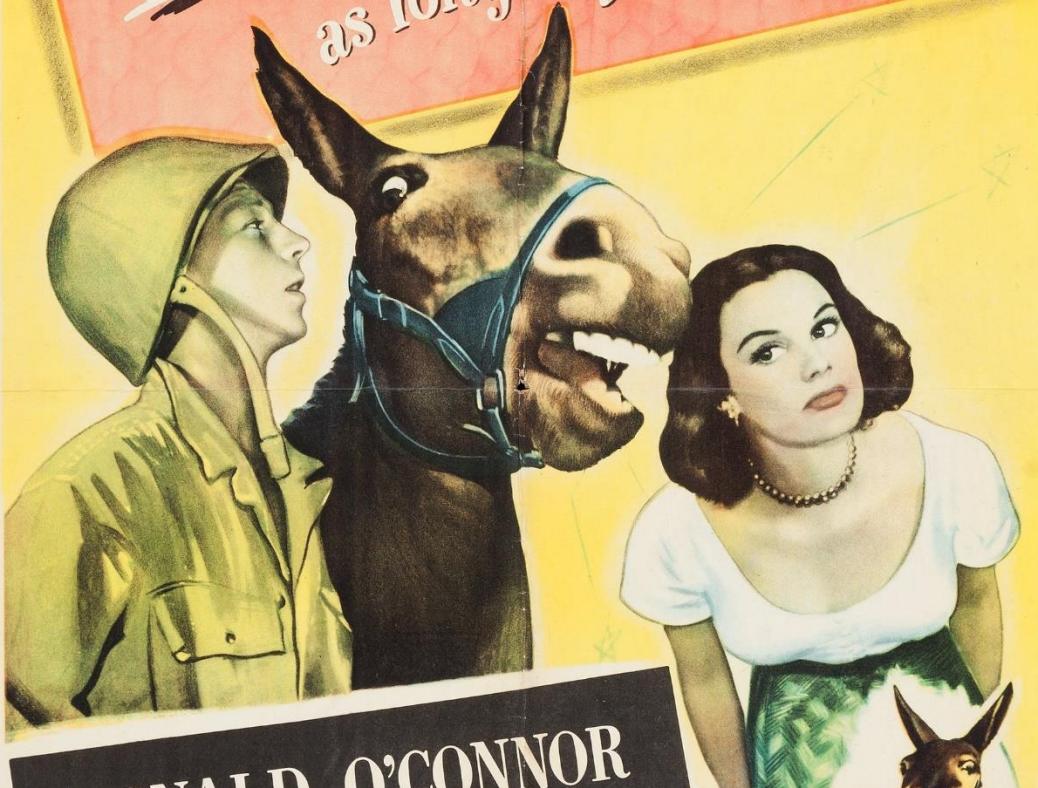
If you would be willing to help with some winter projects, please let us know.

Thank you for your membership.

Send to P.O. Box 563 Conneaut, Ohio 44030

Website: <https://capturingconneauthistory.com>

You'll remember...
"Francis"
as long as you can LAUGH!

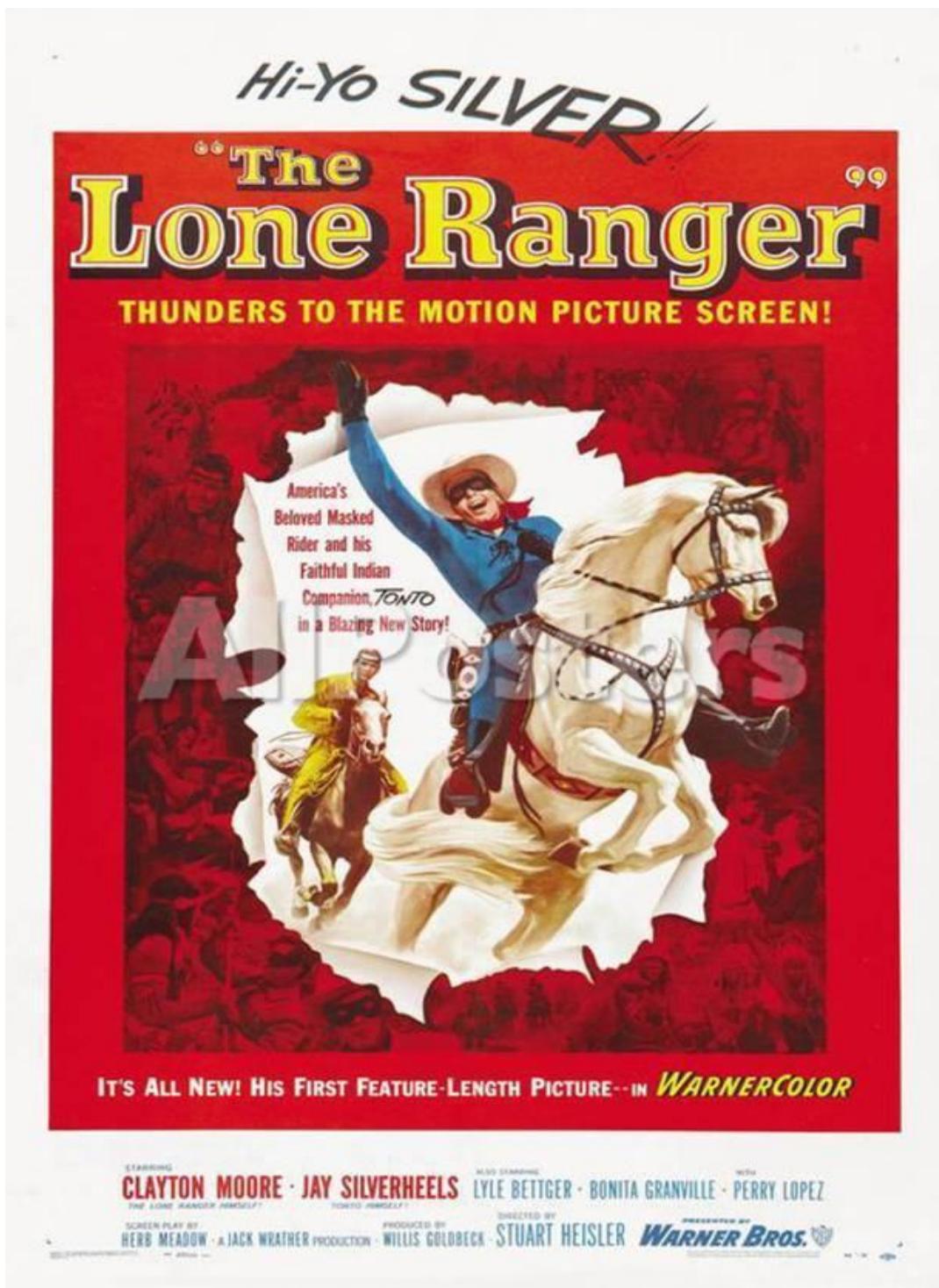


DONALD O'CONNOR
PATRICIA MEDINA · ZASU PITTS
RAY COLLINS · JOHN MCINTIRE

and "FRANCIS"
the TALKING Army MULE!



Screenplay by DAVID STERN · Adapted from the Novel by DAVID STERN · Produced by ROBERT ARTHUR
Directed by ARTHUR LUBIN · A UNIVERSAL-INTERNATIONAL PICTURE



Conneaut Area
Historical Society
P.O. Box 563
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