

## Multi-sited Cinema

Multi-purpose cinema hinged on the assumption that the practical functionality and open-ended utility of moving pictures made the medium eminently suitable for a host of uses, from promoting the cause of suffrage and educating waves of new immigrants to selling high-priced corsets, revealing the mysteries of microscopic life, and documenting expeditions to the polar south. Realizing these possibilities entailed showing films at locations including but never limited to the many theaters where moving pictures were the prime attraction. The transportability of reels and projectors opened up a myriad of places where cinema could happen. Tents, railroad cars, and open-air spaces were sites for film screenings, as were all manner of buildings—small storefronts and private offices, massive factories and metropolitan convention halls. Small wonder that grand visions of the ubiquitous dispersion of cinema flourished, such as when *Motion Picture News* optimistically predicted in December 1914 the emergence of a “much greater market” for the “ever-elastic picture” with the continuing exploitation of the “educational field,” comprising “several hundred thousand schools, churches and colleges.”<sup>1</sup>

In fact, from its inception, American cinema has been flexibly, ambitiously, and irregularly multi-sited. One significant and often overlooked through line in the history of this cinema is the emplacement of moving pictures in the localities, regions, geographies, socially constructed spaces, and value-laden places of America. Thus I would argue that the basic historical query, *What was cinema?*, necessarily involves asking, *Where was cinema?* This is a question as much about opportunity, ambition, and innovation as it is about uneven diffusion, limited access, and established networks. Exploring the locations of American cinema beyond the movie theater during the 1910s entails—as with the notion of multi-purpose cinema—examining how multi-sited cinema was practiced and how it was framed, promoted, challenged, and celebrated in period discourse. In this exploration, I am indebted to a wave of excellent scholarship focusing on the United States during the silent era that examines the role that film exhibition

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Programme</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">WEDNESDAY EVENING  <b>March 18</b>  <small>At 8:15</small></p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>JAVA</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">THE GARDEN AND ITS GARDENERS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SYNOPSIS</p> <p>A Strange Pilot Boat—Tanjong Priok—Old Dutch Gate—Batavia—Chinese Merchants—Sacred Cannon—A Traveling Kitchen—<b>JAVA LAUNDRY</b>—Business Quarter—Fine Streets—<b>A HUMAN WATER CART</b>—Old Dutch Fort—Buitenzorg—Mount Salak—<b>SLIDING DOWN THE SPILLWAY</b>—In the Botanical Gardens—Sausages on Trees—Java Coffee—Hundreds of Orchids—Cart Drive to Sindanglaya—<b>A PRIMITIVE FERRY</b>—Poentjak Pass—<b>CHINESE CARRIERS</b>—Wild Poinsettia Trees—Arrival Garoet—The Market—A Drive to the Rice Fields—<b>COMPLETE ILLUSTRATION OF THE RICE INDUSTRY</b>—Levelling and Plowing Fields—Replanting Rice—Reaping Rice—Binding and Pounding Rice.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">INTERMISSION</p> <p>A Carriet Girl Weaving—<b>LOOM AT WORK</b>—<b>DESIGNING A SARONG</b>—Beautiful Road to Bagedit—<b>NATIVE BOAT ON LAKE</b>—Strange Musical Instruments—<b>CHILDREN DANCING</b>—Sourabaya—Streets and Canals—Tropical Fruits—Expedition to Tosari—The Mountain Road—Bell Alarm—<b>TAPPING A RUBBER TREE</b>—Tosari Hotel—A Climb to the Top of Mount Penandjan—Sunrise at 10,000 feet elevation—Four Volcanoes—Street Djokjakarta—The Palace Grounds—Some Little Djocjas—A Tomboy—<b>HAVING SOME TODDY</b>—The Water Palace—Sugar Cane—The Great Temples Brambanam—<b>A NATIVE DANCE</b>—Moentilan—<b>MARKET SCENES</b>—A Quartette of Ponies—Native Cart—Rice and Sugar Cane—<b>THE DUCKLINGS' MEAL</b>—The Great Temple of Boro Boedor.</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><small>Motion Pictures are Indicated in Black Face Type</small></p> <p style="text-align: center;">PROJECTING BY MR. F. H. WHITE</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CARNEGIE MUSIC HALL</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">ANNUAL TOUR</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Dwight L. Elmendorf</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">ARTIST  TRAVELER LECTURER</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1913—SEASON—1914</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>"The Other Side of the World"</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">FIVE NEW TRAVEL TALKS</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Colored Views and Motion Pictures</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><small>MADE AND COLORED BY</small></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>MR. ELMENDORF</b></p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><small>BUSINESS DIRECTION of WM. W. WESTCOTT</small></p>
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FIGURE 3.1. Dwight L. Elmendorf Programme for 1913–1914 season.

played in various prominent sites, from public libraries, churches, social centers, YMCAs, and department stores to museums, prisons, and military installations.<sup>2</sup>

In utilizing *multi-sited* I am not suggesting that my historical study of American cinema has affinities with or borrows methodologically from *multi-sited ethnography*, most obviously because I offer no findings based on participant-observer fieldwork. Ethnographic research is multi-sited, according to Mark-Anthony Falzon, to the extent that it “proceeds by a series of juxtapositions in which the global is collapsed into and made an integral part of parallel, related local situations, rather than something external to them.” Thus, this methodology “involves a spatially dispersed field through which the ethnographer moves,” “follow[ing] people, connections, associations, and relationships across space.”<sup>3</sup> Well before the popularization of 16mm (and then 8mm) film equipment in the 1930s, the “field” of

American cinema was “spatially dispersed” widely and unevenly, though it was not necessarily interconnected. I call this cinema *multi-sited* to emphasize the promise and the practice of screening motion pictures at various different locations—in addition to moving picture theaters, which themselves were by no means uniform and interchangeable, especially during the silent era, and were at times open to screening “free shows” like the Gossard Corset Company’s advertising films.<sup>4</sup>

In one sense, this multi-sited potential was most visibly realized through the activities of government employees delivering information about agriculture and health to rural residents, professional lecturers, and entrepreneurial traveling showmen, who all made use of moving pictures as they journeyed from place to place. Particularly prominent were Burton Holmes, Dwight L. Elmendorf, and other established headliners who delivered feature-length travelogues illustrated with hand-colored slides and unique motion picture footage. These lecturers followed seasonal itineraries (similar to touring stage productions) and were booked for reserved-seat engagements of a week or more in opera houses, metropolitan auditoriums, and multi-use commercial theaters across the US.<sup>5</sup> Government-sponsored mobile exhibitors typically covered less territory but often handled more stops along the way. The North Carolina State Board of Health “moving picture health car” that I mentioned in the introduction, for example, screened its programs during one week in 1917 at twelve different towns and villages.<sup>6</sup> More difficult to identify and track were itinerant exhibitors, who were not likely to catch the attention of or to run ads in newspapers. These included, for example, the operators of the “Big Show” pictured on this postcard (fig. 3.2) and what *Motion Picture News* in 1914 described as the “half dozen tent shows” bringing old films to the “hill-billies” in “little, far-from-the-railroad towns” in the Ozarks.<sup>7</sup> But multi-sited cinema made use of possibilities well beyond the ambit of these disparate versions of traveling exhibition.

Whether screening events were novel or commonplace, intermittent or frequent, exhibiting motion pictures always entailed more than aiming a projector toward a flat, reflective surface. Where, when, and by whom was the potential expansion and dispersion of cinema articulated and put into practice? How did this practice situate film exhibition in certain social as well as physical spaces, reaffirming or expanding the presence of cinema in America and, in the process, modifying or redefining the significance and the role not only of the medium but also of the spaces that served as sites for cinema? In this chapter I will take up these questions from quite different perspectives, examining a church that with considerable fanfare installed a motion picture projector, various state and local ordinances that limited and enabled non-theatrical screenings, and advertising campaigns for the Nicholas Power Company’s industry-leading Cameragraph projector and for a range of portable projectors, notably, the Pathéscope—ambitious marketing efforts that articulated a grand vision for the future of multi-sited cinema in twentieth-century America.



FIGURE 3.2.  
Kimball  
Show postcard.

### INSTANTIATING MULTI-SITED CINEMA

*Reel and Slide Magazine*, the first trade journal devoted to making “the screen a greater power in education and business,” insisted in 1919 that given the motion picture’s calling “as a world enlightener,” “no narrow conception of film utility will do”—and, therefore, “outside of the theater” was an “open” field, potentially taking in the “school room, factory, church, club, lodge, home, [and] office.”<sup>8</sup> As countless passing references in newspapers and the motion picture trade press suggest, multi-purpose cinema was from the first understood as multi-sited cinema, but the spread of motion pictures beyond the theater was not in every case deemed a sign of progress, uplift, or public service. For example, *Moving Picture News* in 1912 railed against a “stag party” featuring the screening of “immoral films” and lantern slides that drew a thousand men to New York City’s Lennox Casino, where “on the stage, or platform had been hung a large white screen upon which the pictures were to be thrown. At the rear of the hall a small elevated platform was erected upon which was mounted an ordinary looking moving-picture machine.” The screening was evidence, according to the *New York Times*, of “a secret traffic in indecent films.”<sup>9</sup>

As this event suggests, the aim and the audience targeted could necessitate or encourage the use of a particular location, which might vary widely. Searches of digitized newspapers reveal that during February 1915, for instance, films were screened at a host of locations across different regions, including the University of Minnesota School of Agriculture in St. Paul, Minnesota; the Madison Square Garden Poultry Show in New York City; the House of Representatives Hall in Columbus, Ohio; the Green Spring Valley Hunt Club in Baltimore, Maryland; the high school auditorium in Neosha, Missouri; the Minnesota State Penitentiary at Stillwater; the Raleigh Hotel in Washington, DC; and the convention of the Southern Presbyterian Church’s Laymen’s Missionary Movement in Charlotte, North Carolina.<sup>10</sup> And the list could go on and on.

Information about these non-theatrical screenings was provided by newspapers in the form of an advertisement, a heads-up to potential attendees, a report on local events, a brief syndicated news item, or a bit of novel filler. Rarer were those occasions when the use of moving pictures outside the movie theater merited more attention, such as when Kentucky's three Asylums for the Insane installed projectors and began regular screenings in 1911. The *Paducah Sun-Democrat* and other newspapers throughout the state (and across the border into Ohio) reported on the implementation of this plan, applauded the state's investment in this "innovation in the modern methods of caring for the insane," and described the initial screenings, which were said to evoke "uproarious laughter and vociferous applause" from the patients.<sup>11</sup>

FIRST METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
(BAKERSFIELD, CALIFORNIA)

As might be expected, the first installation of a projector at a church or school in a town or small city was often deemed significant enough to warrant coverage from the local press. Both newspapers in Bakersfield, California, for instance, reported in detail on the introduction of moving pictures in 1915 at First Methodist Episcopal Church, the largest of the seventeen Protestant congregations in the city, which then had a population of around fifteen thousand and was in the midst of a significant oil-driven economic boom.<sup>12</sup> (At this date, Bakersfield had four commercial venues: two specializing in moving pictures, one offering "high class vaudeville and master photoplays," and a multi-use opera house that largely booked touring shows.) After taking over this pulpit in late 1913, the Reverend Charles R. Wentworth quickly became a leader in the city's anti-saloon and anti-vice campaigns, making the most of publicity opportunities by, for example, preaching a sermon entitled "Blundering, Belligerent, Blasphemous Bakersfield" while standing surrounded by confiscated barrels of whiskey and cases of wine, brandy, gin, and beer.<sup>13</sup> As part of his efforts, Wentworth formed a Men's Brotherhood League at his church dedicated to promoting wholesome "recreation and social entertainment" for men and boys as a means of fostering what a laudatory newspaper editorial called "a public atmosphere favorable for the social, civic, industrial and moral betterment of the city."<sup>14</sup> Moving pictures figured not as a target of Wentworth's sermons but as a key element of his stalwart efforts at "betterment." After transforming the church's basement into a gymnasium, complete with showers and a reading room, the Men's Brotherhood, with Wentworth's blessing, decided in November 1914 to raise funds to purchase a moving picture machine. As plans progressed, this group invited church members and non-members alike to a public discussion of the "moving picture show" they had in mind for First Methodist Episcopal.<sup>15</sup>

Beyond funding and support from the congregation and the pastor, to make this site usable for film screenings meant deciding what particular space in the

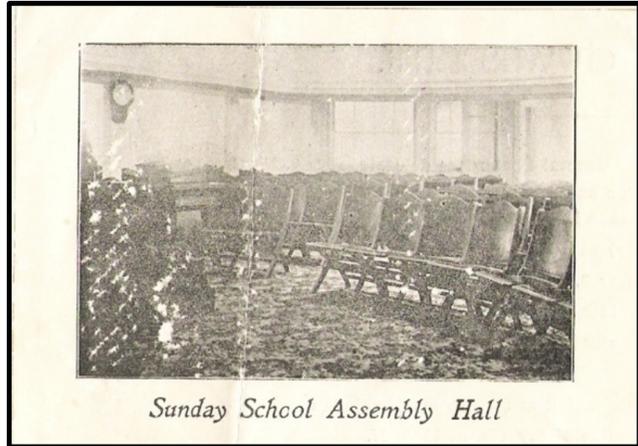


FIGURE 3.3. First Methodist Episcopal.

church was appropriate and where the projector was to be stationed. From a defunct theater, the Men's Brotherhood acquired a "steel cage" for a projection booth, which was attached to the outside of the church building, meaning that the Powers 6a Cameragraph projector they purchased would be positioned to project images through a window into the four-hundred-seat Sunday school assembly hall, sometimes referred to as an auditorium.<sup>16</sup> (Installing the projector in this unusual manner was likely intended to waylay any anxieties about fire hazards.) Viewing moving pictures in the auditorium made obvious sense, not only because of the dimensions and seating capacity of this room. Since at least 1904, this part of the church had been used for stereopticon lectures covering a range of topics, including presentations on *Ben Hur*, Salvation Army work in New Zealand, and the white slave trade in San Francisco's Barbary Coast.<sup>17</sup> And beginning with the 1909–10 season, First Methodist Episcopal hosted in its auditorium the Bakersfield Lecture and Entertainment Course, an annual lyceum series featuring touring orators and musical groups.

In effect, this assembly hall functioned in part as a social and cultural center. When the church booked an African American musical ensemble, the Eastern Jubilee Singers, in November 1915 for two free concerts, it billed these performances as "an offering of the church to furnish clean and wholesome entertainment in the city."<sup>18</sup> The auditorium served also as a civic center, home to speeches and illustrated lectures promoting the temperance campaign being led by Bakersfield's chapter of the Anti-Saloon League. Thus, for First Methodist Episcopal, the installation of a motion picture projector was in keeping with ongoing efforts to reach an audience beyond its congregation and play a prominent role in the city at large.

The film booked for the premiere screening at the church on February 1 was a hand-colored four-reel version of *The Passion Play* that formed the centerpiece of what the *Bakersfield Californian* called a "grand moving picture concert," with eight

choral, solo, and instrumental performances by church members interspersed with single reels of the film.<sup>19</sup> Tickets cost twenty-five cents and the event was open to the public. After three hymns and a dedicatory prayer and directly before the first moving images were projected, someone (presumably Wentworth) explained the “purpose, plan and future policy” concerning the “moving picture machine,” now installed at First Methodist Episcopal. Given the novelty of the situation and likely also the still problematic status of moving pictures for certain members of the audience, a public explanation for the church’s investment in the new machine and its de facto endorsement of moving pictures was no doubt warranted.

During the rest of 1915, First Methodist Episcopal screened films on weekdays, beginning with a Friday afternoon and an evening showing of *David Copperfield* (1913), “said to be one of the best educational moving pictures ever made.”<sup>20</sup> There is no indication in the local press that the Friday “entertainments” at First Methodist Episcopal—which typically paired a newsreel and short along with a feature film—included spoken commentaries or overtly religious components, like benedictions, hymns, or sermons.<sup>21</sup> In addition, once the Cameragraph was in place, the Sunday school sessions regularly began with one reel of moving pictures having a Biblical theme, utilizing well-traveled titles available from commercial producers, like Thanhouser’s *The Star of Bethlehem* (1912) and Pathé’s *Abraham’s Sacrifice* (1912).<sup>22</sup> Screenings at this site reflected market conditions in the mid-1910s, when churches largely relied on moving pictures that were produced by companies whose primary customer was the movie theater.<sup>23</sup>

#### REGULATING NON-THEATRICAL SITES

An available multi-use space and a commitment by the pastor and the Men’s Brotherhood were necessary if moving pictures were to be exhibited at First Methodist Episcopal, just as state funding and official authorization were obligatory before screenings could take place at Kentucky’s Asylums for the Insane. In other words, to turn a suitable space into a screening site required more than a projector, reel of film, power source, and screen.<sup>24</sup> Access to the site was a factor, as was—at a minimum—a tacit acknowledgement that it was appropriate to show moving pictures in the space. So was cost. A 1915 ad offered the Portoscope, “A Practical Portable Projector,” without any other equipment and accessories, for \$125 (more than \$3,400 in 2022 dollars); a full-size, professional-quality Power Cameragraph projector went for at least twice that amount.<sup>25</sup>

Local ordinances, regulatory agencies, and state laws also played a significant role in limiting—or encouraging—cinema’s multi-sited possibilities. The chapter on “Typical Ordinances and Specifications Governing Motion Picture Theaters” in John B. Rathbun’s *Motion Picture Making and Exhibiting* (1914) highlights censorship as a mechanism for government oversight. But Rathbun also notes that a proposed censorship ordinance in Milwaukee specifically excludes “pictures shown

for purely educational, charitable or religious purposes by fraternal, charitable, educational and religious associations, or by libraries, museums and schools.”<sup>26</sup> The *Rules and Standards of the Pennsylvania State Board of Censors of Motion Pictures* (passed on May 15, 1915) was equally explicit, stipulating that “this act does not apply to any exhibition of or use of films, reels, or views for purely educational, charitable, fraternal, or religious purposes by any religious association, fraternal society, library, museum, public school or private school, institution of learning, or by any corporation of the first class.”<sup>27</sup> As with these ordinances, local censorship initiatives clearly targeted screenings in movie theaters. For example, Nashville, Tennessee’s Board of Censorship, established by ordinance in 1914, covered “all public places of amusement to which admission is charged,” but was tasked in particular with preventing the exhibition of films that are “immoral, obscene or otherwise criminal, moving or stationary” in moving picture shows.<sup>28</sup>

It is not clear if itinerant exhibitors charging admission were also monitored by Nashville’s Board of Censorship, but this type of film exhibition could face the same costly license fees and physical restrictions that covered touring street carnivals and tent shows. *Moving Picture World’s* survey of “Motion Picture Laws” in 1914 noted that Florida state law, for example, mandated that “traveling Moving Picture Shows in buildings or tents” pay a twenty-five-dollar daily license fee in cities with a population of ten thousand or more and fifteen-dollar daily fee in smaller cities, while the annual license for a permanently installed moving picture theater in places with fewer than five thousand residents cost ten dollars, with fees scaling up to a maximum of two hundred dollars for cities with populations over twenty thousand.<sup>29</sup> State law in this case decidedly favored “permanently installed” as opposed to “traveling” shows, though the legal distinction could also be drawn between public and non-public exhibition, as in Detroit, where a special permit allowed the city’s Board of Commerce in 1914 to show films in its own building since the screening was limited to members of the group and therefore was deemed to be “not a public gathering.”<sup>30</sup>

Safety regulations mandated by states and localities figured as prominently as license fees and censorship boards. These regulations were hardly uniform when it came to non-theatrical exhibition. An ordinance in Miami, Florida, for example, insisted on a number of (likely costly) structural requirements as well as the ready availability of fire extinguishing equipment in any “theater, opera house, moving picture theater, public hall or other building used as a moving picture theater.”<sup>31</sup> Connecticut law likewise stipulated extensive measures to control the risk of fire in theaters, but noted that “a certificate of approval may be granted for single exhibitions of Moving Pictures in School Houses, Churches, Lodge Rooms, Club Rooms, Hotels, etc. with the use of an asbestos booth.”<sup>32</sup> Similarly, the Indiana State Fire Marshall’s elaborately detailed regulations covering the operation of moving picture machines included a section outlining the type of portable projection booth required “for temporary one-night exhibition of motion pictures in places

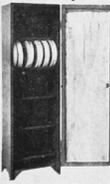
**PATENT ALL METAL FILM REEL**

**Patent All Metal Slide Carrier**



**Lamp Houses Magazine Boxes Switch Covers for the Machine Manufacturer**

We also manufacture high grade reels with wooden hubs, the hub being reinforced with a metal banding, and patented clip gives longer service and is far superior to any other.

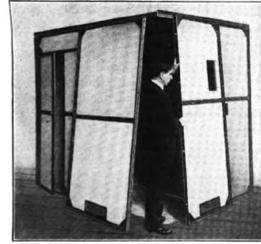




Made for safety in the Theatre, Church or Lecture Room, where the Motion Picture Machine is used and where it is necessary to take the booth apart or set it up quickly, and when it must be stored away compact in a small space. It is impossible for fire to escape from the Booth.

**Portable, Asbestos and Sheet Metal Motion Picture Booths**

MANUFACTURERS OF  
**Film Reels, Film Cans, Film Cabinets  
 Metal Re-Winding Tables, Racks and Shelves for the exchange**

**SHARLOW BROTHERS COMPANY**  
 440-442 West Forty-second Street NEW YORK CITY 439-441 West Forty-first Street



Assembling a semi-portable form of asbestos wood motion picture booth.

**J-M Transite Asbestos Wood Booths**

**Absolutely Fireproof.** Prevent noise of machine from disturbing audience. Cannot become electrically charged or grounded. J-M Booths conform to all the requirements of state and municipal regulations, insurance, authorities and inspection departments wherever ordinances compel the use of a fire-proof booth.

Permitted in portable and permanent types. Write our nearest branch for "J-M Theatre Necessities" booklet.

**H. W. JOHNS-MANVILLE CO.**

Albany	Chicagot	Kansas City	New Orleans	San Francisco
Baltimore	Cleveland	Los Angeles	New York	Seattle
Boston	Dallas	Louisville	Omaha	St. Louis
Buffalo	Dayton	Memphis	Philadelphia	Syracuse
Chicago	Indianapolis	Minneapolis	Pittsburgh	

FIGURE 3.4. Ads for portable projection booths, *Moving Picture World*, January 3, 1914 (left); *Motion Picture News*, June 23, 1914 (bottom right); assembling a booth, *Insurance Engineering*, January 1913 (top right).

of assemblage, such as halls belonging to commercial organizations, churches, schools, etc.<sup>33</sup> Recourse to *etc.* in these public pronouncements acknowledges that there was no way to enumerate the many possible sites for screenings outside the movie theater.

Regulations in Connecticut and Indiana were in line with the recommendations that the National Board of Censors had first circulated in 1913. This influential organization’s “model ordinance for regulating motion picture theaters” was meant to serve as a prototype for state and local “framers of motion picture laws,” who “should be careful not to forbid, wittingly or unwittingly, the use of motion pictures in public institutions. The law regulating booths should explicitly permit the use of portable booths, which could be used in churches, schools, family restaurants, etc.”<sup>34</sup> Information about and advertisements for these specialized pieces of equipment appeared in film trade magazines from 1913 through the rest of the decade.<sup>35</sup> The Sharlow Brothers Company, for example, offered “portable, asbestos and sheet metal motion picture booths,” including a model “made for safety in the Theatre, Church or Lecture Rooms where the Motion Picture Machine is used where it is necessary to take the booth apart or set it up quickly.”<sup>36</sup> And the Johns-Manville Company, with branches coast to coast, began a concerted effort in 1913 to sell its “absolutely fireproof” “transite asbestos wood booths,” which were “available in portable and permanent types” (fig. 3.4).<sup>37</sup>

Utilizing fireproof portable booths was one way to render spaces suitable for screenings. The introduction by Pathé in 1911 of what came to be known as “safety

film” (inflammable cellulose acetate as opposed to flammable nitrate film) opened further possibilities.<sup>38</sup> In Michigan, for example, a bill was passed by the legislature in 1915 exempting from existing requirements “moving picture theaters for religious, educational or scientific purposes when non-inflammable films are used in special machines.”<sup>39</sup> (Note here the fluidity of “theater” as a classification.) Maine’s new law, passed that same year, maintained regulatory control over for-profit, traveling shows while allowing safety film screenings that had either no admission charge or were conducted by “social, fraternal, charitable, religious and educational organizations, where the machine so used is owned by said organization and used in the city or town where said organization is located, and the proceeds of such admission fees are to be devoted to the uses of said organization.”<sup>40</sup> In these cases, regulations concerning the sites of exhibition protected and encouraged certain ostensibly high-minded uses of moving pictures and certain local (and likely well-established) sponsors.

Concerns about safety were evident in some of the earliest examples of purpose-built non-theatrical screening facilities, when school boards and architects in the mid-1910s began to incorporate permanent projection booths into their plans for state-of-the-art public schools. Such schools were presented as model facilities in *School Board Journal*, a periodical devoted less to pedagogy than to the equipment, supplies, and building design that would best guarantee efficient, safe, cost-effective public education. Leading up to this endorsement, *School Board Journal*’s shift in attitude toward moving pictures took a fairly common route. This journal in 1906 had editorialized against the menace posed by moving picture shows, and by 1912 could only see limited benefits to using film for instructional purposes.<sup>41</sup> But over the next three years it published several articles that covered in some detail the technology and varied uses of motion pictures and encouraged schools to take advantage of this medium, which it deemed “the unique educational tool of the twentieth century.”<sup>42</sup> At the same time, ads from projector manufacturers, which first appeared in *School Board Journal* in 1912, had become commonplace by 1914.

Thus, it is not surprising that this trade journal singled out in 1915 a newly constructed high school in Logansport, Indiana, which had been designed to “embrace the educational, social, and physical life of the community.” This facility had a swimming pool open to the public and a one-thousand-seat auditorium that was available for the use of “church conventions, lecture courses, concerts, [and] political gatherings.” Aiming toward broader community outreach, the auditorium was equipped with a full stage and an enclosed booth housing a stereopticon and a film projector.<sup>43</sup> W. Blanchard Moore’s “Great Lecture on Siberia, Russia and Count Tolstoi”—complete with “200 colored stereopticon views smuggled out of ‘Darkest Russia’” and 2,500 feet of moving pictures—was one of the first public events in this space.<sup>44</sup> Atlantic City, New Jersey’s new four-floor grade school, reported *School Board Journal*, went a step further, installing “apparatus for motion-picture

exhibitions . . . on each floor and in the auditorium gallery for use in classrooms and for public lectures in the building.”<sup>45</sup>

*School Board Journal* was not on the lookout for examples of multi-sited cinema, but rather for exemplars of the modern school plant, which, in the case of Atlantic City and Logansport, happened to incorporate facilities for projecting motion pictures.<sup>46</sup> I have found scant evidence regarding how many school districts during the 1910s followed the advice of this trade journal and invested in a permanently installed projection booth or even purchased and maintained a projector. Newspapers, as we have seen, provide invaluable information about sponsored screenings, but there is little reason to assume that the daily press in a metropolitan area would note the availability of motion picture equipment in a high school—or a YMCA or Elks Lodge. And once the novelty had worn off, a small town or small city newspaper might not have paid attention to the acquisition of a projector by a local school, church, college, or state institution.

The motion picture trade press, as part of its coverage of the burgeoning industry and its boosting of the medium’s social and cultural legitimacy, offered scattered references to the installation of projectors in non-theatrical sites, though these brief items garnered only a fraction of the copy devoted to new theater construction. “A little while ago we recorded the occasional installation of moving picture equipments [*sic*] in this school or that church, or a certain institution,” explained *Moving Picture World* in 1914. “This can no longer be done, for their number now is almost legion. The day has come when wherever there is anything educational there also is the moving picture machine, no longer as a luxury, but as an imperative necessity.”<sup>47</sup> *Billboard* would announce the following year that “schools, colleges and sanitariums all over the country are installing projecting machines.”<sup>48</sup>

Hyperbolic claims aside, how many installations make up a *legion*? Or, put more literally, how many motion picture projectors were acquired for non-theatrical sites during the 1910s? Sometimes specific information is available. For example, the War Department’s *Annual Report for 1913* mentions, with no additional information, “the purchase of moving-picture machines, films, etc. for amusement purposes for enlisted men at various posts.”<sup>49</sup> It was likely this acquisition that the *Army & Navy Register* was referencing in January 1914 when it reported that the War Department had purchased sixty-six Simplex projectors, each comprising one part of a larger media package that included a phonograph, fifty records, “necessary slides and films,” a forty-by-eighty-foot tent, and 250 folding chairs—enabling Army chaplains to supervise delivery of “the proper sort of entertainment” to enlisted men at Army posts.<sup>50</sup>

Newspapers and the trade press typically offered information about specific screening locations like a YMCA in Detroit; the Kansas State Manual Training Normal School; an ice cream parlor in Lincoln, Illinois; or the West End Methodist Church in Nashville.<sup>51</sup> There are hundreds of examples like these in the print

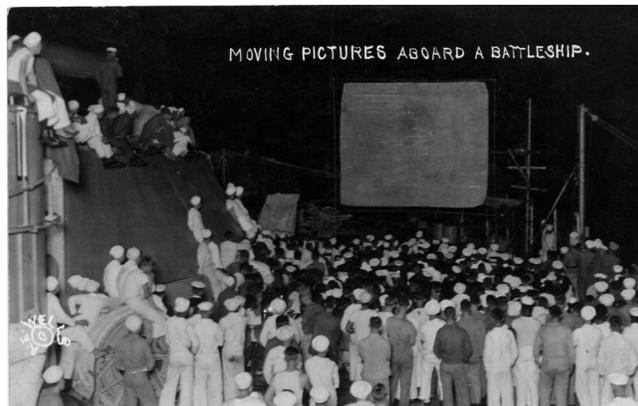


FIGURE 3.5.  
“Moving pictures  
aboard a battleship”  
postcard.

record, indicating the broadening dissemination of multi-sited cinema in the 1910s. But extrapolating more general trends based on these individual instances is difficult at best. For example, identifying certain YMCAs equipped to screen films can't tell us how widespread this practice was among the more than two thousand YMCAs then operating in North America.<sup>52</sup> The listing of these branches in the 1914–15 *Yearbook and Official Roster of the Young Men's Christian Associations of Canada and the United States of America* indicates the number of lectures, pool tables, and “professed conversions” at each YMCA but offers no statistics regarding moving picture projectors.<sup>53</sup> The sheer mass of churches across the US puts this gap into much greater relief, even if we only take into account a denomination like the Methodist Episcopal Church, sectors of which welcomed the use of moving pictures.<sup>54</sup> There is no telling, for example, whether Bakersfield's First Methodist Episcopal was at all representative of what the 1916 census of *Religious Bodies* identified as this denomination's twenty-eight thousand churches.<sup>55</sup>

For schools, there is more concrete data, thanks to the efforts of the United States Bureau of Education, a relatively small unit in the Department of the Interior, which gathered information about the “motion picture projection machines in use for purely educational purposes in the United States.” The self-reported results of the bureau's survey, issued in the form of a pamphlet in 1919, identified only 1,129 “educational institutions equipped with motion-picture projection machines,” a very small number given the more than thirty-eight thousand institutions queried for the survey.<sup>56</sup> Expand the potential screening sites beyond schools and colleges to include churches, YMCAs, conventions, trade shows, hotels, penitentiaries, asylums, public halls, lodges, and even battleships (as the postcard in fig. 3.5 indicates), and it readily becomes apparent that there is no way to estimate the number of projectors in operation during the 1910s—much less to know precisely when and where these machines were installed, how frequently they were deployed, how long they remained in operation, and whether they were eventually recycled as part of the market for used equipment.<sup>57</sup>

## ADVERTISING THE CAMERAGRAPH

A different, but no less revealing, attempt to gauge—and to envision—the extent of multi-sited cinema during the 1910s was offered by projector manufacturers, who had much to gain from the spread of screening possibilities beyond the movie theater. The promotion of portable projectors is especially significant in this regard, most notably the marketing of Pathé's Pathéscope projector in the United States from 1914 through the rest of the decade. A more unexpected source are the ambitious advertising campaigns mounted for the Nicholas Power Company, whose Cameragraph projector was designed, wrote *Nickelodeon* in 1910, with “the needs of the theater owner, the operator and the patron of the moving picture theater . . . constantly held in view.”<sup>58</sup> Yet even by this early date, company founder Nicholas Power had already begun to look toward other opportunities, and he would insist in a 1914 *Moving Picture World* article that “in the beginning, you know, pictures were shown much outside of theaters. . . . We are getting back that point. Today the United States Government is equipping its warships and army posts with projection machines. So, too, installations are being made in churches, schools, colleges and clubs, and also in insane asylums and prisons. They are being placed everywhere.”<sup>59</sup>

With an investment in advertising that far exceeded anything attempted by its competitors, Power through the first half of the 1910s increasingly looked “everywhere” beyond the theater to what its ads pictured as a diverse array of screening sites across an America that was primed to take full advantage of motion pictures as the nation faced the challenges and opportunities of the twentieth century.<sup>60</sup> A photograph of Nicholas Power (1854–1921) graced the title page of *Motion Picture News* for October 11, 1913, accompanying a celebratory profile by editor Thomas Bedding that praised the Nicholas Power Company's Cameragraph 6A projector as “wonderfully ingenious . . . well made, efficient, and good to handle,” all-in-all, a machine whose performance “helps to popularize motion pictures.”<sup>61</sup> The special attention afforded Power in *Motion Picture News* was perhaps to be expected since ads for the Cameragraph 6A ran in virtually every issue of this weekly trade magazine for the rest of 1913 and through the following year. These ads often included copy claiming that Power's “perfect moving picture machine” satisfies exhibitors, operators, and the public and accounts for “over 65% of the American business.”<sup>62</sup> This “business” stretched well beyond America's “picture houses,” declared a December 1913 piece that appeared under Power's byline in *Motion Picture News* and was subsequently reprinted as a syndicated newspaper article. “The one feature that assures a future for the motion picture,” Power confidently affirms,

is their versatility, as there is hardly a line of endeavor in which they have not become a dominant factor. One may very well wonder what comes of the vast number of motion picture machines which constitute our daily output, and yet if you consider the many fields in which this industry has become a part, it ceases to be a mystery. Our machine is used by nearly all the prominent lecturers, churches, schools, Y.M.C.A.'s

and other religious institutions; in commercial houses and factories where they are used to exploit their wares, in medical colleges to illustrate surgical operations, and in all branches of the arts. Their value as an exponent of education is already recognized, and I thoroughly believe that time is bound to render the motion picture more and more indispensable.<sup>63</sup>

What Power's advertising manager called the "versatility of the motion picture" became a centerpiece of the marketing campaign for the Cameragraph, as evidenced not only by advertisements but also by a host of "news" items—likely press releases—that appeared in *Motion Picture News* during 1914 attesting to Power's burgeoning business.<sup>64</sup> Other projector manufacturers, like Motiograph, Edison, and Pathé, at times relied on a similar promotional strategy.<sup>65</sup> While a few of the updates concerning the Nicholas Power Company in *Motion Picture News* noted the sale of Cameragraphs to theaters, like the Fox Airdome in Atlantic City and a number of notable Broadway houses, the rest of these items tracked the installation and use of the company's projectors in other sites. These regular reports pointed to the existence of a potentially huge market for projectors, once prospective buyers embraced the versatility and "indispensability"—to use Power's word—of motion pictures. Significantly, some of the same information about Cameragraph installations subsequently appeared in *Photoplays and Photoplayes* (sometimes titled *News of Photoplays and Photoplayes*), a newspaper page devoted to moving pictures that frequently included an ad for the Cameragraph. Thanks to the broad circulation of this syndicated feature, information about the expanding scope of multi-sited cinema reached readers across the country via newspapers like the *Jaspar [IN] Weekly Courier* and the *Ogden [UT] Standard*.<sup>66</sup>

A particularly eclectic example of this promotional material appeared in *Motion Picture News* in October 1914 under the title, "The Powers that Be." This brief item matter-of-factly noted "only a few of recent installations of Power's machines"—at a West Virginia coal company; a YMCA in New Haven, Connecticut; a school in Flushing, New York; the New York Eastern Reformatory; and on the *USS Utah*.<sup>67</sup> Each week during 1914, updates from Power published in *Motion Picture News* (and syndicated nationwide in newspapers) offered further evidence that cinema's potential was being realized across a varied array of sites, including the homes of the wealthy (like Mrs. William Randolph Hearst), railroads (like the New York Central and Hudson River Railroad), industrial concerns (like the Adirondack Electric Power Company), and social clubs (like the United Odd Fellows in Illion, New York).<sup>68</sup> Most frequently, Cameragraphs were touted as being put into service at churches of various denominations, public and private schools, YMCAs, Army camps, Navy battleships, and state-run prisons, reformatories, orphanages, and asylums.<sup>69</sup>

More prominent than this steady stream of publicity about the non-theatrical installation of new Cameragraphs were Power's advertisements, which began to

appear in the trade press even before the Nicholas Power Company was officially formed on August 1, 1907, taking over from the business that Power had created in 1898.<sup>70</sup> Initially, these ads focused on theatrical exhibition, for example, by pitching the Cameragraph to readers of the *New York Clipper* and *Billboard* in 1906 as fireproof, flickerless, durable, and reliable.<sup>71</sup> These claims were underscored in a two-page spread in the *Handbook for Motion Picture and Stereopticon Operators* (1908), which enumerated the various features that made the Cameragraph “the modern motion picture machine” par excellence.<sup>72</sup> The same selling points were emphasized in Power’s marketing efforts over the next several years, including advertisements in *Nickelodeon*, *Film Index*, *Moving Picture World*, and *Billboard* in 1910, which advised theater owners that purchasing a Cameragraph was the surest way “to please your patrons.” These ads attested to Power’s status by citing the company’s “conquest” of the European and the Australian markets, providing testimonials from exhibitors and projectionists across the United States, and avowing that the Cameragraph was “used by the best and largest moving picture theatres everywhere.”<sup>73</sup>

With these ads Power sought to capitalize on a thriving, competitive theatrical market, in which upgrading to new, improved projectors could provide what one ad called “real, hard, practical advantages for the exhibitor.”<sup>74</sup> At the same time, when Power’s new factory opened in 1912 and its total sales had passed seven thousand projectors, the company’s advertising was already looking beyond the movie theater, seeking to enhance the prestige of and to find new customers for the Cameragraph.<sup>75</sup> For example, an ad that year in *School Board Journal* tried to boost sales to public school systems by noting that the non-theatrical field was already well established, with Power machines being used by “Industrial Corporations” like National Cash Register, International Harvester, and American Laundry Machine, as well as “many branches of the Y.M.C.A., the Catholic Church, Protestant Churches, Salvation Army, schools and colleges.”<sup>76</sup>

Power ads that ran in the motion picture trade press in 1912 focused less on schools, corporations, and religious organizations, than on the use of Cameragraphs by high-end touring attractions, particularly “prominent lecturers” like “Burton Holmes, Dwight Elmendorf, Fred Niblo, [and] Lyman H. Howe,” whose performances relied on the superior quality of their unique still and moving images.<sup>77</sup> One such ad featured a testimonial from the projectionist for Elmendorf’s lecture tours, paired with a photograph of the transportable (if not portable) Power equipment he used.<sup>78</sup> Other Power ads in 1912 pointed out that Cameragraphs were the projectors of choice for “the two newest and biggest moving picture shows in New York City,” *Paul Rainey’s African Hunt* and *The Carnegie Alaska-Siberia Expedition*, “shows” not initially slotted into the regular programming at moving picture houses but instead booked for extended runs at multi-use theaters.<sup>79</sup> Sharing little, if anything, with what was then standard nickelodeon

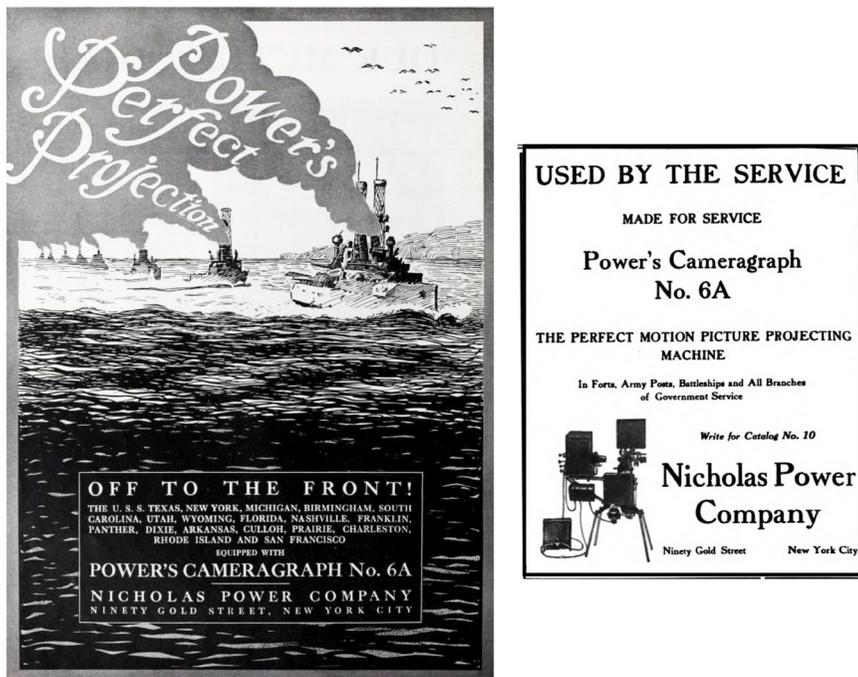


FIGURE 3.6. Power ads, *Moving Picture World*, May 23, 1914; *The Navy*, November 1915.

fare, these free-standing, feature-length expedition films—like the illustrated lectures of Holmes and Elmendorf—typically required projection equipment that was moveable from one venue to the next. According to its 1910 catalogue, Power sold trunks and carrying cases specially designed to hold a Cameragraph, films, and accessories, including a removable stereopticon for projecting slides.<sup>80</sup> The company's 1913 catalogue announced that these cases had been improved to help serve the needs of what it called “a great many traveling exhibitors.”<sup>81</sup>

Highlighting its connection to the likes of Burton Holmes and a Carnegie Museum-sponsored expedition was another way for Power to reaffirm what a later ad stated directly: “Uplift Is always a part of Our Business Creed.”<sup>82</sup> Along with “Prominent Lecturers” and “Big Feature Shows”—now including the road companies of *Paul Rainey's African Hunt*—Power's advertising in 1913 also emphasized that the “U.S. Government” was a committed buyer of its projectors, with “over 30 installations at various posts and aboard battleships,” as well as the Naval Academy and West Point.<sup>83</sup> After the war in Europe had begun, Power would even more explicitly spotlight its connection to the US military. Ads pictured battleships speeding “off to the front!” and lists of the many ships in the US fleet equipped with Power's projectors—testaments to the company's patriotism as well as the quality and utility of its machines (fig. 3.6).<sup>84</sup>

Lecturers and battleships continued to figure in the increasingly extensive marketing efforts Power mounted in 1914–15, which relied on but also reached well beyond the motion picture and commercial entertainment trade press to periodicals aimed at other specialized markets, like *American Exporter: A Monthly Journal of Foreign Trade*; *The Navy: An Illustrated Monthly Devoted to the Interests of the United States Navy*; *School Board Journal*; *Christian Work*; and *The Churchman* (the organ for the Protestant Episcopal Church).<sup>85</sup> In a variety of large format ads, Power's campaign for the Cameragraph 6A utilized different graphic designs and selling points, in addition to the claim that "thousands of motion picture theaters use" the company's "perfect motion picture projection machine."<sup>86</sup> One particularly striking design, first appearing in March 1914, directly addressed the realized promise of a versatile, widely deployed cinema by featuring a circular layout with a projector at the center, connected to sixteen radiating lines, each leading to a different type of user and/or screening site (fig. 3.7). "Exhibitors"—representing all motion picture theaters—are but one spoke in this wheel, for here Power depicts the motion picture "trade" as encompassing a surprisingly wide range of possibilities.<sup>87</sup> A variation of this graphic design pictured the projector as the sun spreading its rays "everywhere," including, but well beyond, the theater (fig. 3.8).<sup>88</sup>

Advertisements like these are not evidence of actual installations and screenings in the mid-1910s. Their significance lies, rather, in how they articulate, predict, and imagine an expanded, well-established field of multi-sited cinema. With enough Cameragraphs in service, these ads claim, motion pictures could be put to use by the US Government as well as by lecturers and "commercial houses," screened everywhere from private homes and clubs to prisons, Army posts, and hospitals, on steamships and battleships, in colleges, public schools, YMCAs, film studios, and churches. Identifying and thereby encouraging the use of these many sites is the point. These ads do not acknowledge that a diverse array of spaces might require a range of sometimes radically different approaches to producing, programming, and sponsoring moving pictures. Not surprisingly, Power never considers, in other words, the political, social, and cultural import of multi-sited cinema as a means of redefining cinema and space alike.

Viewed from the perspective of an industry-leading projector manufacturer as it surveyed the territory beyond the theater, the potential of moving pictures seemed almost boundless. Realizing the promise of multi-sited cinema required only the ever-increasing availability of safe, reliable, durable, and professionally engineered projectors, "designed," Power claimed, "to give entire satisfaction under any and all conditions."<sup>89</sup> This versatility and mechanical sophistication made the Cameragraph, according to another memorable advertisement from 1915, not simply useful but "prominent among the most important factors of progress," on a par with the automobile, locomotive, steam shovel, and giant printing press—the machines powering twentieth-century America (fig. 3.9).<sup>90</sup> By 1921, addressing readers of *Visual*

EXHIBITORS

PUBLIC SCHOOLS U.S. GOVERNMENT COLLEGES FILM STUDIOS

LECTURERS Y.M.C.A. ARMY POSTS

CLUBS PRISONS

HOSPITALS

COMMERCIAL HOUSES PRIVATE HOMES STEAMSHIPS BATTLESHIPS

CHURCHES

**POWERS CAMERAGRAPH No. 6 A**

USED BY OVER 70% OF THE ENTIRE TRADE

**NICHOLAS POWER COMPANY**  
88-90 GOLD STREET :: NEW YORK CITY

FIGURE 3.7. Power ad, *Motion Picture News*, March 21, 1914.

*Education: A Magazine Devoted to the Cause of American Education*, it sufficed for Power to rely on its track record over the 1910s by enumerating in a full-page ad “a few of the hundreds of leading schools, colleges, churches, industrial organizations and public institutions” that had installed its projectors—implying that the promise of multi-sited cinema was well on its way to being realized.<sup>91</sup>

CHURCHES

THEATRES

FILM STUDIOS

NAVY

ARMY

SCHOOLS

Y.M.C.A.

PRISONS

**EVERYWHERE**  
 LIKE THE RAYS OF THE SUN  
**Power's Cameragraph, No. 6A**  
 WILL BE FOUND  
**NICHOLAS POWER COMPANY**  
 NINETY GOLD STREET Leading Makers of Motion Picture Machines NEW YORK CITY

FIGURE 3.8. Power ad, *Motion Picture Magazine*, June 1915.

**PROMINENT**  
Among the Most Important Factors of Progress is  
**Power's Cameragraph No. 6A**  
*Write For Catalog No. 12*  
**THE PERFECT MOTION PICTURE PROJECTING MACHINE**  
**NICHOLAS POWER COMPANY**  
NINETY GOLD STREET NEW YORK CITY

FIGURE 3.9. Power ad, Factors of progress, *Our Navy*, June 1915.

PORTABILITY AND THE “RAPID SPREAD  
OF MOTION PICTURES”

If packed in the right trunks and carrying cases, Power’s Cameragraph was transportable, yet it hardly qualified as a portable projector. This company’s advertising campaign conjures up a vast world of uses and sites that are not dependent on access to a reasonably priced projector, easy to set up and take down, simple to operate, and capable of being carried by hand. “Nimble, adaptable, mobile machines”—to use Haidee Wasson’s phrase—would in the United States become a hallmark of 8mm and 16mm cinema from the 1930s on.<sup>92</sup> Well before this small-gauge equipment had made significant inroads into the American market, the 1910s saw the promotion of a number of portable—sometimes called “amateur”—projectors. A two-line filler that appeared in newspapers across the US noted in 1914 that “a portable motion picture projector which weighs but 25 pounds and can be carried in a case twice the size of an ordinary suitcase has been invented.”<sup>93</sup> That same year *Motography* would announce that “the rapid spread of motion pictures, outside the theater, for religious, commercial and educational purposes, has been doubled and trebled since various styles of small portable projectors came into being.”<sup>94</sup>

This field included machines designed for home use that relied on non-standard gauge film, like Edison’s Home Projecting Kinetoscope (the Home P. K.), which was introduced in 1912.<sup>95</sup> Edison’s marketing for the Home P. K. hinged on turning the “parlor” into a screening site for the family and guests, with department stores serving as prime retail outlets for the machine and entertainment films (that the company also released theatrically) distributed by mail to individual users.<sup>96</sup> However, as Ben Singer points out, “the managers for the Edison firm conceived the Home P. K. as a projector to meet the needs of a variety of users—family, church, school, club, business.”<sup>97</sup> Despite the widespread publicity generated by Edison for the broader “educational” uses of his portable projector and the company’s ads in periodicals like *School Journal*, it failed to make headway with the American public school market before the Home P. K. enterprise ceased in 1914.

The early 1910s also witnessed the first iterations of what would later be called the “suitcase” projector, that is, a machine (with handled carrying case) specially designed for sales presentations and capable of turning “any room” into a screening site (fig. 3.10). So claimed the Knickerbocker Film Company, when it introduced its new machine, which was supposed to be capable of pausing “indefinitely” on any single frame, thereby rendering a stereopticon superfluous.<sup>98</sup> A similar “salesman’s portable projecting machine,” complete with “neat, compact, leatherette traveling case,” was highlighted in *Machinery* (January 1914) and advertised as a way to “take your plant—your machine—to your prospects.”<sup>99</sup> Suitcase projectors promised to provide a quite different capacity for mobility than other moveable screening options like the railway car refashioned as a mini-theater or the automobile or truck modified to serve as a self-contained traveling motion

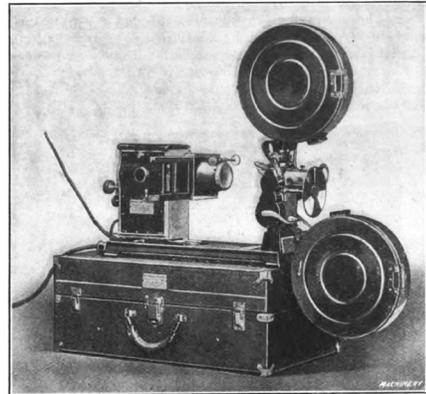
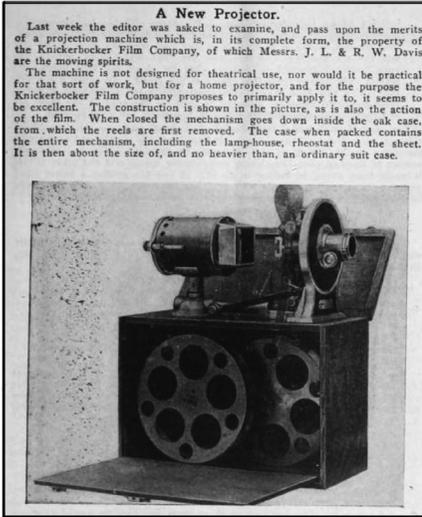


Fig. 5. Salesman's Portable Projecting Machine

FIGURE 3.10. Suitcase projectors, *Moving Picture World*, November 29, 1913 (left); *Machinery*, January 1914 (right).

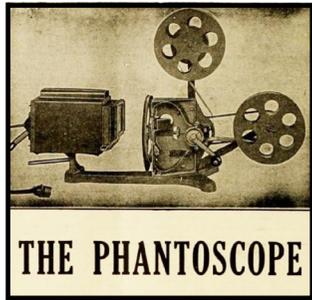
picture projection system, complete with screen as well as projector, lantern slides, and reels of film.<sup>100</sup>

Even without taking auto-mobility into account, *Motion Picture News* by June 1914 could flatly declare that “motion picture exhibitors are no longer confined to the theatre. With the improvement of projection apparatus there has come the portable machine specially designed for use in the home, schools, small halls, churches, and other places where elaborate outfits are out of the question.”<sup>101</sup> Variations on this theme were echoed elsewhere in the trade press. *Billboard* touted the Cameoscope portable projector as a “highly efficient apparatus that has a wide field of endeavor for the showman, the traveling lecturer, or for use in schools, churches and homes” and “is particularly practical for the traveling showman who either covers a fixed circuit of towns or follows carnivals, circuses or other show routes.”<sup>102</sup> Éclair billed its portable Kineclair as “the perfect projection machine” not only for use in homes, churches, and schools, but also in factories, kindergartens, lodges, and clubs, with particular value for “scientific lecturers” and traveling salesmen.<sup>103</sup> “Small portable projecting machines” were likewise a key element of a plan to create an “educational film exchange” based in Kansas City that would serve “schools, colleges, medical societies, mercantile houses, homes, Chautauquas, Sunday schools, churches and special gatherings” across Kansas.<sup>104</sup> Even as they point out—and regularize or even delimit—possibilities, such inventories of potential screening spaces celebrate the imminent realization of an expanded, pervasive, dispersed, multi-sited cinema powered by the transformative utility of the portable projector.

There is little evidence that portable projectors actually fulfilled this grand destiny during the 1910s, but it was not for lack of initiative by manufacturers. A typical issue of *Moving Picture World* in July 1914 contained advertisements for no less than four different portable machines that used standard 35mm film: the Phantoscope, the Optigraph Home Projector, Bing's Home Entertainer, and the Animatograph. All were supposedly designed to suit the needs of a wide range of users, occasions, and sites, including but never limited to the private exhibition space of the middle- and upper-class home.<sup>105</sup> Most prominent, and likely most successful in the marketplace, were the Phantoscope and the Animatograph.

Developed by industry pioneer, C. Francis Jenkins, the Phantoscope was introduced in September 1913. Weighing twenty pounds and initially priced at one hundred dollars (complete with stereopticon, allowing for the uninterrupted shift from film to slides), with a motor-driven model selling for \$125, Jenkins's machine was heralded as perfectly safe, "simple as it is practicable," able to project an eight-foot picture, and easily operated by an "intelligent boy" and "even a lady."<sup>106</sup> An optional "gas generator" (for an extra twenty-five dollars) allowed the Phantoscope to be used in "rural districts or elsewhere where current is not available."<sup>107</sup> *Moving Picture News* saw the Phantoscope as fulfilling a "clear need for a portable motion picture projector, something you can readily pack up in a small box, set up easily in the parlor, a small schoolroom, or a room in a hotel" to serve the needs of "the home circle; the small schools, traveling men and others."<sup>108</sup> An extensive advertising campaign in the trade press during 1914 underscored the even more expansive multi-sited opportunities for this projector, emphasizing its suitability for churches, colleges, YWCAs, lodges, clubs, and Army and Navy posts.<sup>109</sup> An ad from July 1914, for instance, listed more than eighty firms and institutions that had purchased Phantoscoptes, ranging from the American Tobacco Company and the Battle Creek Sanitarium to the University of Wyoming and the Virginia Experimental Agricultural Station.<sup>110</sup> This apparent success was short-lived, however. The Phantoscope Company looks to have stopped production of its portable projector in October 1915 after increasing its capitalization and resurfacing as the Graphoscope Company, offering a projector designed for theaters.<sup>111</sup>

Advertised by the Victor Animatograph Company as "the First Professional Portable Motion Picture Machine," the Animatograph was described as being "easily carried about from place to place, set and put to work, it is said, in less than three minutes' time, and producing an image of professional brilliancy and size." The first model of the Animatograph in 1914 weighed forty pounds and came complete with a stereopticon.<sup>112</sup> Victor introduced the Animatograph Model 2 in 1917, aiming toward the "entirely separate field" of what it called "light-exhibition." Model 2 was "intended and guaranteed for traveling exhibitions, and all educational and religious work in both large and small rooms" by the "non-theatrical user of motion pictures."<sup>113</sup> Through the late-1910s, Victor continued to promote the Animatograph in the trade press as well as other periodicals like *School Board*



**The Optigraph Six**  
A Perfect, Portable Projector for Educational, Industrial, Home, Etc.

PRICE \$100.00 COMPLETE

WEIGHS 20 POUNDS, COMPLETE

USING Standard Films

- Lenses
- Reels
- Condensers
- Carbons
- Neuropticon Slides

The Optigraph is not an experiment and there have been actually more Optigraphs sold than any other machine made.

Dealers apply to  
First National Bank Building Chicago, Illinois

*Optigraph*  
Mfg. Co.

**The Standard Light-Exhibition Projector VICTOR ANIMATOGRAPH**  
Exclusively Equipped With Mazda Lamps

Intended and Guaranteed for—  
Traveling Exhibitions  
Small Theatres  
School Auditoriums  
Church Auditoriums  
Lodge Halls  
Road Shows  
Private Exhibitions, or

For any showing of standard film for any purpose not requiring an image of more than twelve feet in width, and a throw of more than 100 feet.

**THE PIONEER MAZDA LAMP PROJECTOR**

In the Animatograph, incandescent lamps give more light on the screen, than in any other existing projector. The patented optical system, improved intermittent, and shutter, designed for use with Mazda lamps, save a large percentage of the light wasted in all other machines.

**Motion Pictures Whenever and Wherever You Want Them**  
The Model 2 Victor Animatograph is a standard film projector, with standard slide attachment. Lamps and lenses are interchangeable, to conform to requirements of size of picture and distance of throw. For quality of image—steadiness, lack of flicker, illumination—no machine of any size or type, is superior to the Animatograph. This is guaranteed.

**TO OPERATORS**—Private exhibitions are becoming popular everywhere. There's good money to be made there. It is a big field for the projector. Write for the Animatograph. Easy socket attachment saves time and saving trouble. Write for more information.

**NOTE**—Lighting should also be considered in the trade that incandescent lamps were used to be practical for motion picture projection. Study flexible size lamp used, how we tell you that a 40-watt machine gives the same quality of the best lamp machine. We will prove this, too, if you are interested.

A new illustrated descriptive catalog is ready. Write today to

**VICTOR ANIMATOGRAPH COMPANY**  
160 VICTOR BUILDING - - - - - DAVENPORT, IOWA, U. S. A.

FIGURE 3.11. Ads for Phantoscope, *Moving Picture World*, July 25, 1914 (top left); Optigraph, *Moving Picture World*, July 18, 1914 (bottom left); Victor Animatograph, *Motion Picture News*, December 1, 1917 (right).

*Journal* and *Catholic Educational Review*.<sup>114</sup> In 1922, the year before Victor introduced its “Sixteen Millimeter Camera and Projector,” the company announced the Model 3 Victor Animatograph, designed specifically for the home.<sup>115</sup>

The most ambitious and likely the most successful attempt to market a portable projector in the 1910s was mounted by Pathé, then the major company in the French film industry, which introduced its Pathéscope to the US market in 1913, promising to bring “motion pictures to [the] home” as a “companion to the Talking Machine.”<sup>116</sup> The company’s larger aim, as archivist Anke Mebold explains, was to create a “comprehensive service strategy for non-theatrical clientele.”<sup>117</sup> Not just portability but safe operation was a prime selling point of this novel projector, since the Pathéscope did not use the 35mm film stock that was the industry standard and relied, instead, on the 28mm non-inflammable alternative that had been introduced by Pathé. The use of 28mm film also meant that purchasers of the Pathéscope had to screen either moving pictures they themselves had shot (using a Pathé camera) or titles acquired from a Pathé-licensed rental library.

**The Pathéscope**  
**Brings the Motion Pictures to Your Home**

Now you can sit in your *Home*, or at your *Club*, and provide entertainment for your family and friends superior to the average picture theatre — in absolute *safety* and *comfort*.

FIGURE 3.12. Pathéscope ad, *Saturday Evening Post*, April 3, 1915.

The holdings of these rental libraries give some indication of Pathé's proprietary strategy for circulating moving pictures beyond the theater. The 1918 edition of the *Descriptive Catalogue of Pathéscope Films*, compiled by the Pathéscope Company of America, lists 935 available titles, "an abundant supply to suit every taste, every mood, any ages and all occasions."<sup>118</sup> The majority of these films were reduction prints from 35mm theatrical releases produced by Pathé, including serial episodes, travelogues, industrials, and films covering "popular science" and current events. More than 350 of the titles available were identified as comedies and dramas, again largely produced by Pathé, with certain films from other major studios like Thanhouser, Vitagraph, and Biograph. While Pathé's 28mm camera no doubt encouraged amateur filmmaking, the success of its Pathéscope and licensed rental libraries was clearly predicated on treating the home as an ancillary market for the theatrical film industry (fig. 3.12).<sup>119</sup>

As prominently as the home figured in the marketing of the Pathéscope in national mass-circulation magazines like *Saturday Evening Post*, *Literary Digest*,

*Scribner's Magazine*, and *Collier's*, the authorized dealers for the Pathéscope in the US did not ignore the potentially much wider utility of this projector.<sup>120</sup> For example, at Philadelphia's Industrial Exposition in March 1914, the city's Pathéscope Exchange promoted the projector as being readily "adapted to industrial, domestic, and educational uses."<sup>121</sup> The Pathéscope Company of New England informed readers of *Congregationalist and Christian World* that "the Pathéscope is bringing new life to hundreds of churches, Sunday Schools, Y.M.C.A.'s and institutions which before were losing their hold, owing to motion picture shows."<sup>122</sup> Encouragement also came from *Moving Picture World's* resident expert on projection, who concluded that in addition to "the homes of wealthy people," Pathé's "remarkable" machine is "unquestionably destined to have a large sale . . . in business offices and factories," not least of all because "the amateur, be it the child, or the mother or father in the home, or the traveling salesman, or office man, can get just as good illustration of the picture as can the most experienced operator. All there is to do is turn on the switch . . . and watch the picture."<sup>123</sup> In effect, the Pathéscope promised to do away not just with the projection booth and the dangers of 35mm nitrate film but also with the trained, professional projectionist.

While the Nicholas Power Company's marketing highlighted installations of the Cameragraph as a permanent fixture in a host of non-theatrical sites and as the projector of choice for prominent touring lecturers, the portability of the Pathéscope allowed for more diverse screening opportunities. Thus newspapers in Springfield, Massachusetts, reported that the Pathéscope Company of New England during 1915–16 put on "demonstrations" or "entertainments" at private homes, churches, a country club, the YWCA, the city's largest retail store, the Armory, the Boy's Club, and a session of the Western Massachusetts Christian Endeavor Societies convention.<sup>124</sup> Other sponsored Pathéscope screenings took place, for example, at the Woman's Club House in Butte, Montana (as part of a "practical demonstration regarding child's welfare"); the Presbyterian church in Cherryvale, Kansas (which hosted a traveling evangelist who brought six reels to screen); the Worth Hotel in Fort Worth, Texas (where the featured program was "The Pathéscope as an Advertising Medium"); the outdoor Fourth of July celebration in the village of Grantham, Maryland (attended by two hundred townspeople and "little ones from the Messiah Orphanage"); and the Dairy Show held at the Armory in Kalamazoo, Michigan (with "educational" films on the production of condensed milk and the operation of milking machines).<sup>125</sup>

The public visibility of Pathé's portable machine (and of non-theatrical cinema more generally) was also heightened by the many Pathéscope screenings in prominent department stores in cities across the US, including Butte, Montana, and Grand Rapids, Michigan, as well as Cleveland, Detroit, St. Louis, and Pittsburgh.<sup>126</sup> For example, beginning in December 1915 and continuing well into the following year, the regular full-page newspaper ads for Meier and Frank in Portland, Oregon, noted that free Saturday matinee Pathéscope screenings would be held in

this store's sixth-floor auditorium, a space also used for concerts and lectures.<sup>127</sup> Aimed specifically at children (who had to be accompanied by an adult), Meier and Frank's hour-long Pathéscope programs featured at least one educational reel (like *On Board the Flagship*, *Wyoming*, or *Tuberculosis, the Scourge*), along with comedies, dramas, animated cartoons, and trick films.<sup>128</sup> The Wanamaker stores in New York City, Philadelphia, and Brooklyn, in addition to arranging free Pathéscope screenings, set up demonstrations of the projector in an in-house Toy Store, Camera Shop, or special "Pathéscope salon" furnished like a cozy parlor.<sup>129</sup>

In Washington, D.C., Pathéscope programs were screened in the six-hundred-seat auditorium located on the eighth floor of Woodward and Lothrop, one of the city's preeminent department stores, as part of an ambitious marketing campaign aimed at getting Pathéscopes into public and private Washington-area schools.<sup>130</sup> In January 1915, the *Washington Post* began a two-month-long contest with the ten winning schools to receive a Pathéscope. To generate interest and waylay any doubts about the pedagogical utility of motion pictures, the *Post* set up demonstrations at schools to display the projector and to screen travel pictures, microscopic views, and other "educational motion pictures" from the Pathéscope library that were suitable for classroom use. From the first ads announcing the contest, the *Post's* campaign trumpeted this projector as a safe, small, portable, economical, readily powered, and easy-to-operate machine benefitting the student, the community, and the nation, since the Pathéscope will "help our youth to become better and more successful citizens" while "making our schools as efficient and up-to-date as possible."<sup>131</sup> Reports in the *Post* of enthused students and testimonials from educators, city officials, and representatives of civic groups like the Parents Association and the Federation of Women's Clubs attested to the value of the Pathéscope and educational film more broadly.<sup>132</sup> In addition, the community at large also stood to benefit from this progressive pedagogical initiative, since, as one advertisement claimed, "a Pathéscope in your school means that the building will become more of a social center"—that is, become another multi-use site like the church assembly room and the YMCA.<sup>133</sup>

The *Post* offered almost daily coverage of its Pathéscope giveaway. The same was true in the many other cities where newspapers sponsored comparable competitions, including New York City, Buffalo, Louisville, and St. Louis, but also much smaller places like Chillicothe, Missouri. Variations of this contest, with projectors given to community groups or churches, took place in Los Angeles, Tacoma, Washington, and Salt Lake City.<sup>134</sup> In other areas of the country, the promotion of the Pathéscope was aimed at the vast rural market that was not a primary target for manufacturers of 35mm projectors like Power's Cameragraph. *Farm, Stock and Home* magazine, for example, promised to give a Pathéscope to "any Farmers Club, Woman's Club, Consolidated or District School, Church, Sunday School or Lodge" that delivered a certain number of new subscriptions.<sup>135</sup> In Kansas, sales agents set up demonstrations in small towns across the state, while in New Mexico,

—you  
can make  
school happier!

—not only happier,  
—but more interesting and more beneficial,  
—for students, teachers, and every one.  
Yes, you can do this.  
—And—if you are a teacher of school,  
—or the parent of boys and girls who go to school,  
—or one of the boys and girls who are in school,  
—read this story of the great, new idea which makes school happier, more interesting, more beneficial, and how it concerns YOU.

## The Washington Post

has been showing to the schools how educational motion pictures can be used in school work. It has been giving practical demonstrations right in the schools themselves.

Principals, teachers, and pupils—in colleges, academies, high schools, and grade schools have been enthusiastically delighted with the splendid new possibilities in educational motion pictures.

Now, they all want to have their own motion picture equipment so that they can have motion pictures of their own.

So The Post has decided to give free, in a congenial competition, ten Pathoscope motion picture machines to the schools.

This offer was announced last Sunday, and immediately the interested friends and teachers and pupils of 30 schools busied themselves on behalf of their schools.

Pathe Freres!

—their  
new  
motion-  
picture  
machine!  
—the  
Pathoscope!



## A Moving Picture Machine for Your Church

Farm, Stock & Home will absolutely give a Pathoscope, the latest and newest development in moving picture machines to any Farmer's Club, Woman's Club, Consolidated or District School, Church, Sunday School or Lodge that will furnish a certain number of subscribers to Farm, Stock & Home.

### THIS IS NOT A CONTEST—IT'S A CONTRACT

Your organization meets our requirements, it gets the Pathoscope.

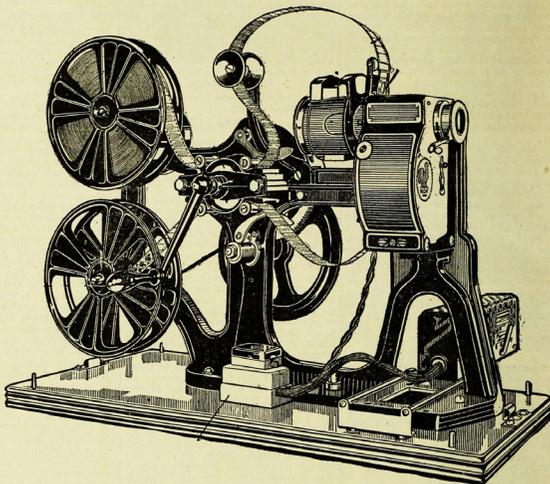
#### The Moving Picture

is here to stay. It is not a passing fad. As an educational method it is superior to a large library.

The ownership of a Pathoscope carries with it a membership in a film exchange, so that for a small fee a film service can be had that supplies a continual service of new and up-to-date films.

Remember the Pathoscope is not a toy but a genuine moving picture machine using safe non-flammable films so it can be used without the fire proof enclosure demanded before the ordinary machine is allowed to operate. This is a distinct Pathoscope feature and is found in no other machine.

This is not a contest; you cannot be disappointed. Your church, Sunday school or club send us a certain number of subscriptions to Farm, Stock and Home, and the Pathoscope is yours without any quibble or strings. Show this advertisement to your Minister, Supt. of your Sunday school, the Secretary of your club or lodge, the Teacher in your district school, the Principal of your consolidated school, President of the women's clubs in your neighborhood. Write today for full particulars of an plan showing how your church, Sunday school, club or lodge can get a genuine Moving Picture Machine given to it without paying any money for the machine. This machine can be used to make money for your organization in addition to its use for the benefit of your members.



THE PATHOSCOPE CAN BE RUN ANYWHERE

FIGURE 3.13. Pathoscope ads, *Washington Post*, February 7, 1915 (top); *Farm, Stock & Home*, February 1, 1916 (bottom).

the Department of Public Instruction issued a license to the Pathéscope company, “which will try to place an outfit in each district in the state if the consent of the county superintendent can be secured for a demonstration to the rural school directors.”<sup>136</sup> Under this plan, the Santa Fe Board of Education, for example, purchased a Pathéscope.<sup>137</sup>

As the marketing of the Pathéscope indicates, the limited success of Edison’s Home Projecting Kinetoscope, the Phantoscope, and other attempts to make the moving picture projector a regular household appliance and to open up screening sites outside the movie theater did not put an end to the dream of profiting from portability. Like the Victor Company—which would gain its greatest success in the development and commercial roll-out of 16mm equipment—Pathé continued to see the future of non-theatrical cinema in projectors that used “slow-burning,” aka safety film. By the end of the 1910s, the Pathéscope Company of America had introduced a new model of its 28mm projector, the Premier Pathéscope, redesigned to offer greater illumination and steadier images, with the added capability of being able to be “slowed down on speed without injury to the quality of projection”—a feature clearly designed to enhance classroom instruction and sales demonstrations.<sup>138</sup> Not surprisingly, the pamphlet introducing this product claimed it to be the “crowning triumph” in the development of the motion picture as “the universal educator and the universal amusement.”<sup>139</sup>

For home use, the twenty-three-pound Premier Pathéscope could be housed in an oak or mahogany cabinet that was designed to be a “companion entertainer to the better grades of talking machines or player pianos.” Yet this projector could also be easily transported either in a specially designed suit case or a metal carrying case.<sup>140</sup> Its adaptability and mobility were enhanced because the Premier Pathéscope was able to run off standard automobile batteries as well as 110 or 220 volts, alternating or direct current. It could even be powered, Pathé insisted, by hand-cranked or foot-driven electric generators, enabling the Premier Pathéscope to be put into service in sites far from American parlors and classrooms. Here was a machine usable “in the interior of China, South America, the Arctic and the South Sea Islands,” presumably making the Pathéscope a valuable resource for missionaries and manufacturers alike.<sup>141</sup>

The extensive advertising campaign for the Premier Pathéscope cast a wide net. As might be expected, ads running in magazines like *House and Garden*, *Vanity Fair*, *Art and Decoration*, and *Country Life* pitched this projector to well-to-do consumers looking for “a Christmas Gift for the whole family for a life-time.”<sup>142</sup> Even in these periodicals, however, advertisements referenced not only the upper-class “discriminating purchasers” of the projector like Mrs. Alfred G. Vanderbilt, Vincent Astor, and “four of the Du Ponts,” but also eminently respectable users of the Pathéscope outside of the home, including “the Y.M.C.A., Boy Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, Christian Endeavor Society, Epworth League, Social Settlement Workers, Parents Associations, Industrial Welfare Societies, Orphan Asylums,

**CELLULOID FILMS ARE DANGEROUS**

The operation of any portable projector USING CELLULOID FILMS is prohibited by State, Municipal and Insurance laws. It is therefore possible to become a criminal by using unsafe and flammable material in flammable surroundings.

—But—  
The New Premier  
**Pathscope**  
Flameless "SAFETY STANDARD"  
Motion Picture Projector

**Can be used by anyone, anytime, anywhere**

Labeled by fire underwriters "Enclosing Booth Not Required." Avoid expense and trouble at the start—Don't violate fire and insurance restrictions. Use an approved projector and "safety standard" film.

We number among our clients the most prominent manufacturers using motion pictures as an aid to salesmanship, such as:

American Bank Note Co.,	5 Pathscopes	Balding Bros. Silk Co.,	12 Pathscopes
Baldwin Locomotive Works,	14 Pathscopes	Hershey Chocolate Co.,	15 Pathscopes
Barber Asphalt Co.,	11 Pathscopes	National Cash Register Co.,	20 Pathscopes

Many of them adopted the Pathscope after unsatisfactory and expensive efforts to use unapproved projectors with dangerous celluloid films.

The Baldwin Locomotive Works, with fourteen Pathscopes and a hundred thousand feet of Pathscope "Safety Standard" film, with titles in seven languages, shows to its customers in every field, the activities of its immense plants and the skill and care used in the building of its product.

Mr. A. H. Ehle, General Sales Manager, writes: "We feel that this method of publicity and assistance to our salesman is going to produce beneficial results, and congratulate you upon the highly satisfactory results supplied us."

**Your hesitating prospect must be SHOWN  
The MOTION PICTURE CONVINCES**

The salesman equipped to show his product by motion pictures not only gets a showing, but gets the order. A Pathscope weighs only twenty-three pounds. Fits in a small case. Operates on any light socket. Pictures up to 12 feet wide at any distance up to 75 feet. Motor drive and rewind at variable speed. If you already have a film let us make you a Pathscope print from it that you can show *anywhere* without danger or restriction.

*Explanatory Printed Matter Sent on Request*

**The Pathscope Co. of America, Inc.**  
Willard B. Cook, President  
Dept. S, Aeolian Hall, New York City  
Agencies in Principal Cities



August, 1920 INDUSTRIAL MANAGEMENT 103

**Taking the Plant to the Prospect  
ON PATHSCOPE FILM**

SAFETY  
KOK  
STANDARD

**Celluloid Films Are Dangerous.** The operation of any portable projector USING CELLULOID FILMS without a fireproof enclosing booth is prohibited by State, Municipal and Insurance regulations, and the owner is frequently convicted in severe criminal courts. Pathscope film is "Safety Standard"—labeled by the Pathscope Laboratories—"Enclosing Booth Not Required." Pictures can be shown anywhere, at any time, without violation of any regulations.

ON the instance of their salesmen, Jim Brown, the A-Company sought a motion picture of manufacturing operations, they were interested.

The superintendent quickly saw that the A-Company had a real plant, much finer than he had ever possessed. He knew what was involved in turning out their product. He approved the methods used in its design and handling between operations. He saw that the methods were efficient in the use of labor and materials. He noted that the A-plant regularly paid the operator and mill maintenance, and that they left no stone unturned to make the A-plant right. Finally he got a new idea of what the A-product could do for his company.

And Jim said his Pathscope "sold" him.

The Pathscope Pictures within only 25 months. Can be installed in a small-scale case. Operates on any light socket. Does not require an expert to install or control. Descriptive literature was requested.

**The Pathscope Co. of America, Inc.**  
Willard B. Cook, President  
Suite 1329, Aeolian Hall, New York City  
Agencies in Principal Cities

**THE NEW PREMIER  
Pathscope**  
Flameless SAFETY STANDARD Motion Picture Projector



FIGURE 3.14. Pathscope ads, *System*, April 1920 (left); *Industrial Management*, August 1920 (right).

Convalescents' Homes, Sanitariums." With this track record, the advertising affirmed, the Premier Pathscope was in the vanguard of multi-sited cinema, ready to be deployed "everywhere that life can be made better worth living by the safe use of wholesome motion pictures."<sup>143</sup>

Everywhere likewise included the territory covered by traveling sales agents who could arrange a private exhibition for one prospective customer, a tableau pictured in an advertisement in *Industrial Management*.<sup>144</sup> Ads aimed at this market listed the precise number of Pathscopes sold to specific firms, including five to American Bank Note, eleven to Barber Asphalt, ten to Hershey Chocolate, and twenty to National Cash Register.<sup>145</sup> Ads in *Associated Advertising* and *Printers' Ink* explained that the Pathscope Company of America could produce new advertising and sales films and create 28mm prints of "any industrial film," further enhancing the utility of its portable projector.<sup>146</sup>

Coinciding with the introduction of the Premier Pathscope came the fifth edition of Pathé's pamphlet, *Education by Visualization: The Royal Road to Learning Lies along the Film Highway* (first published in 1914), which identified the "prominent users" of Pathé projectors as "Institutions, Schools, Churches, Clubs and Camps, Hotels, and Industrial Firms." As had been the case since the introduction of this projector, schools remained a highly prized market. *Education by Visualization* was careful to point out the dual utility afforded by Pathscope's

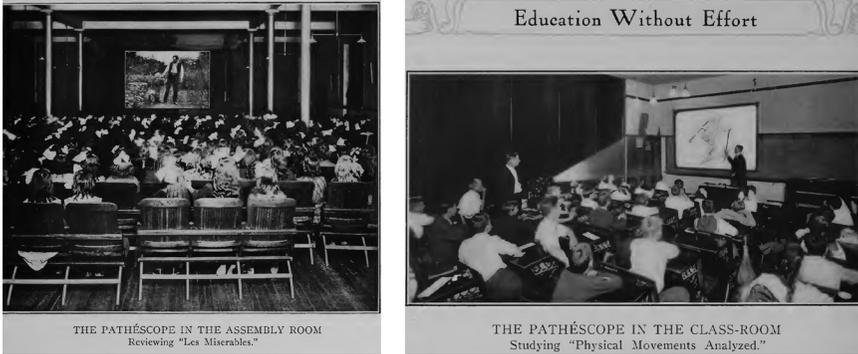


FIGURE 3.15. Photographs, *Education by Visualization: The Royal Road to Learning Lies along the Film Highway* (5th ed., ca. 1920).

portability, as demonstrated in photographs of both a classroom with students attentively watching a teacher pointing to a Pathéscope projected image and also an "Assembly Room" with students seated in rows "reviewing" *Les Misérables* (1917; see fig. 3.15).<sup>147</sup> Readers of *Visual Education*, a new journal affiliated with the Society for Visual Education, were informed that when it came to selecting a motion picture machine for school use, portability was essential, and since the Premier Pathéscope was easy to "carry from class room to class room," "the machine goes to the pupils—not the pupils to the machine."<sup>148</sup> That 115 New York public schools had chosen Pathéscopes was offered as dramatic proof that this projector was indeed "the most efficient aid to visual education."<sup>149</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The marketing of the Premier Pathéscope as a machine that "can be used without danger by anyone, anytime, anywhere" capped a host of attempts during the 1910s to profit from portability.<sup>150</sup> The aim was to make inroads into what was envisioned as a vast domain apart from the nation's fifteen to twenty thousand movie theaters, a potentially lucrative territory filled with schools and single-family homes, along with churches, public institutions, and offices. As a writer in *Reel & Slide* put it in 1918, "the increased value and possibilities for usefulness of the motion picture through the invention of the portable projector cannot be overestimated."<sup>151</sup> These dreams or schemes to market the handy, easy-to-operate portable projector as a useful household device and to foster the proliferation of screening sites were a corollary to the Nicholas Power Company's grand vision of its theater-quality Cameragraphs anchoring a modern, projector-illuminated America in peace and war.

Needless to say, possibilities did not directly or necessarily translate into practice. One estimate of conditions on the ground offered an appreciably less

sanguine assessment than did projector advertisements: the 1919 US Bureau of Education survey I mentioned earlier indicated that of the 1,129 schools with moving picture projectors only about 20 percent had portable machines, half of which were Pathéscopes.<sup>152</sup> As much as the (limited) findings of this report, the fact that this agency saw the need for such a survey in the first place is significant, underscoring the extent to which the school was a privileged site. If the idea of cinema as multi-sited evoked in the 1910s a myriad—even unlimited—array of potential options, the fragmentary historical record clearly suggests that for proselytizers and marketers alike certain kinds of places (apart from the home) predominated, most notably, schools, churches, YMCAs, and state-run institutions. The installation of projectors and screenings at these already well-established, easily identifiable sites were also likely to be referenced on the pages of newspapers and periodicals, which might take note of screenings by traveling representatives of agricultural extension services and state health agencies, but paid scant attention to the mobile itineraries of roadshowmen or to sales agents armed with suitcase projectors.

As the discussion of St. Louis in the previous chapter made evident, however, projectors in the 1910s were actually deployed in scores of sites besides schools and churches. Nevertheless, the promise of cinema “anywhere” did not materialize into the presence of cinema everywhere; expansion beyond the movie theater was partial, uneven, irregular, unsystematic. In a general sense, putting multi-sited cinema into practice during the first decades of the twentieth century was no doubt influenced by commercial film industry practices, progressive educational theories, modern advertising strategies, and attitudes toward the cultural, social, and religious status of motion pictures.<sup>153</sup> A host of other more concrete factors were also in play. The costs involved and even the access to requisite films could determine where moving pictures were screened. The regulatory actions of municipal and state authorities could directly limit, shape, or facilitate the implementation of multi-sited cinema from locality to locality.

Realizing the much-vaunted pedagogical, ameliorative, utilitarian, and/or commercially lucrative potential of cinema “anywhere” was dependent on more than the vagaries of local ordinances and the availability of prints. Conducting a screening outside the movie theater required owning, renting, or having authorized access to a suitable projector and to a usable physical space. This was as true for the showing of “indecent films” to an all-male audience at Lennox Casino as it was for an exhibition in Kentucky’s Asylums for the Insane, Bakersfield’s First Methodist Episcopal Church, and Meier and Frank’s department store in Portland—and likely even for itinerant showmen traveling the Ozarks. Ownership, authorization, access—these important variables all underscore that exhibiting moving pictures “anywhere” beyond the movie theater was a sanctioned, contingent, sponsored practice, which unquestionably privileged certain kinds of screenings, restricted

the sites where moving pictures might be shown, and limited the uses to which moving pictures might be put. But however formidable and consequential, this control was never close to being airtight, concerted, and uniform. Every projector sold for use outside a movie theater potentially raised anew the prospect of moving pictures, in Nicholas Power's words, "being placed everywhere."<sup>154</sup>