

Récits de décorateurs : regards croisés de Ben Carré et Henri Ménéssier sur leurs trajectoires transatlantiques.

Annexes - Clara Auclair
16e colloque international de Domitor



Fig. 1 - Darwin Karr dans *The Sewer* (Solax, 1912), décor et mise en scène d'Henri Ménessier



Fig. 2 - Darwin Karr dans *The Sewer* (Solax, 1912), décor et mise en scène d'Henri Ménessier



Fig. 3 - Darwin Karr dans *The Sewer* (Solax, 1912), décor et mise en scène d'Henri Ménessier



Fig. 4 - Darwin Karr dans *The Sewer* (Solax, 1912), décor et mise en scène d'Henri Ménessier



Scenes from a Two-Reel Solax Feature, "The Sewer."

"THE SEWER" (Solax).

For four weeks the scenic artist and the Solax property men worked on the light and mechanical effects for this two-reel feature release of Wednesday, April 24th. As a result of this long and careful preparation, the Solax Company is able to say to the exchanges and exhibitors, that it now has one of the most vivid and most remarkable melodramas produced in pictures. Every foot of the film brings a new thrill. In the long weeks of preparation, real sewers, manholes, rats, traps, switches, poles, doors and detour, and other contraptions used in the underworld, were gotten together with utmost care and attention to detail.

The story of the sewer was written by Henri Messiaer, of Solax art department. He spent considerable time at the head of a gang of workmen and directed them in the building of a big ditch in the Solax grounds in Flushing. This ditch was eventually filled with water and foul sewerage waste. He contrived an impervious roof and wall for this sewer which shot out considerable light and yet was light enough for photographic purposes. The sewer rats which attack the hero were a week in tanning and treading. White rats were used, as it was found that the ordinary gray rats were not amenable to reason. They would scurrier as soon as they were let loose. In order that the white rats would look like gray sewer rats, it was necessary to paint them red, so that they would photograph black.

The studio door was closed up and a trap-door was built. A big hole was dug under the trap, so that the hero, who is lowered down by rope and pulley, would give the effect of being swallowed by the earth. In fact, all the effects aimed for, rendered with exactitude on the film.

SELIG LEADING WOMAN INJURED SECOND TIME.

Miss Eugenie Besmore, of the Selig Western stock company, who not so very long ago suffered for several weeks from a broken leg, the result of a strenuous attempt to secure a certain effect in a motion production, is on the hospital list again, this time with a wrenched ankle, and, strange to say, the wrenched ankle was caused by a second attempt at the "effect" which resulted in breaking her leg. Robert Bloor, the Selig producer, had warned her each time not to attempt the effect in question, but as Miss Besmore's French blood runs the determination and audacity of her race and in the paid little heed to the advice of the producer. After the Selig studio's physician had pronounced the second injury only a badly wrenched ankle, Miss Besmore made the statement that she would again attempt the desired effect as soon as her ankle would permit. Such is the temperament of the picture actress. In their quest for realism they often-times allow their ambition to overshadow the director's good judgment.

MR. A. L. COTTHILL, SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT.

Mr. A. L. Cotthill, of Potosi, Missouri, Mo. Va., writes requesting us to insert a mention of his name in the report of the election of officers of the West Virginia Exhibitors' League. Our report had it that Mr. Winkburn, of Salina, had been elected to the office of second vice-president, whereas Mr. Cotthill claims this distinction. We stand corrected.

"TEMPTED BUT TRUE" (Imp).

There are some spots, which though they may appear only to the blasé student of scenes and settings, may nevertheless, have a moral, which always pays on reputation. There is not anything, particularly new about the story of "Tempted But True," still when we reflect on the words of a recent preacher, that a girl's life on Broadway is no longer of even frequently "full stockings and champagne," a film which drives home the point is found to have a certain preventive value wherever shown.

Any reduction of morality brings its own punishment. This is the thing that is done, not one scene from the subject and demonstrated so as in good books, good pictures, etc., every day of our lives.

The young girl in this picture tried to her husband's college life and so she went to a big city and landed a job



Scene from "Tempted But True" (Imp).

was. The freedom of boarding house life at first attracted her. It was a change and it was a relief from the gloomy monotony of her home town life. Of course, she had adventures and she became the more victim in a bogus marriage.

But in her knee down she had left behind a faithful heart. He was a rugged fellow and a blacksmith, and when the girl's shoes had almost done her garters in disarrangement, he made for the great city in search of his sweetheart. He found her only to be scorned, but he persevered in his quest. He found a gang of conspirators who were investigating the girl into a false sewerage, and was successful in penetrating her to his home.

They meet at the depot and return together. The girl had nearly been surely lured, but she remained true, and thus a happy marriage, based on the true future for the honest blacksmith and his sweetheart.

Victor Priceau plays the part of the tempted girl and King Duggan is the honest blacksmith who unraveled the wicked plots of the city chaps. Much of it is the release date.

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Fig. 5 - "The Sewer" *The Moving Picture World*, Vol. 11 No. 1, March 30, 1912 - accessed via The Media History Digital Library.



Fig. 6 - La fenêtre ouverte sur la rue permet immédiatement de diviser le champ et d'installer un sentiment d'insécurité dans cette scène autrement mondaine d'un dîner entre un fils et sa mère. L'insurrection fait rage dans les rues de Paris - les soldats courent dans les rues - mais le jeune homme doit sortir faire une course pour sa mère.
Sur la barricade,
(Gaumont, 1907)



Fig. 7 - Guy Blaché et Ménessier utilisent tout l'espace de cette scène pour construire le drame de *Falling Leaves* : la fenêtre ouverte montrant les feuilles qui tombent en arrière plan est un rappel constant de la maladie de la fille aînée. Trixie, toujours en arrière plan des scènes de conversations entre adultes, tend l'oreille tout en passant inaperçue. Trois actions simultanées se déroulent ainsi dans le champ. *Falling Leaves* (Solax, 1912).



Fig. 8 - L'espace est très ingénieusement divisé en deux ici, permettant à Little Oliver (à nouveau interprété par l'enfant star Solax Magda Foy) d'être témoin caché de la scène lui donnant toutes les informations nécessaires pour sauver le protagoniste du film.



Fig. 9 - Les français d'Éclair devant la villa Richard (restaurant à Fort Lee). De gauche à droite: Lucien Bessanay, chauffeur non identifié, George Doublier (enfant) - au fond George Benoit, femme non identifiée, Lucien Andriot. Wanamaker / Bison Archives reproduite dans Koszarski, Fort Lee, The Film Town, p. 102. Photo datée du 20 août 1912.

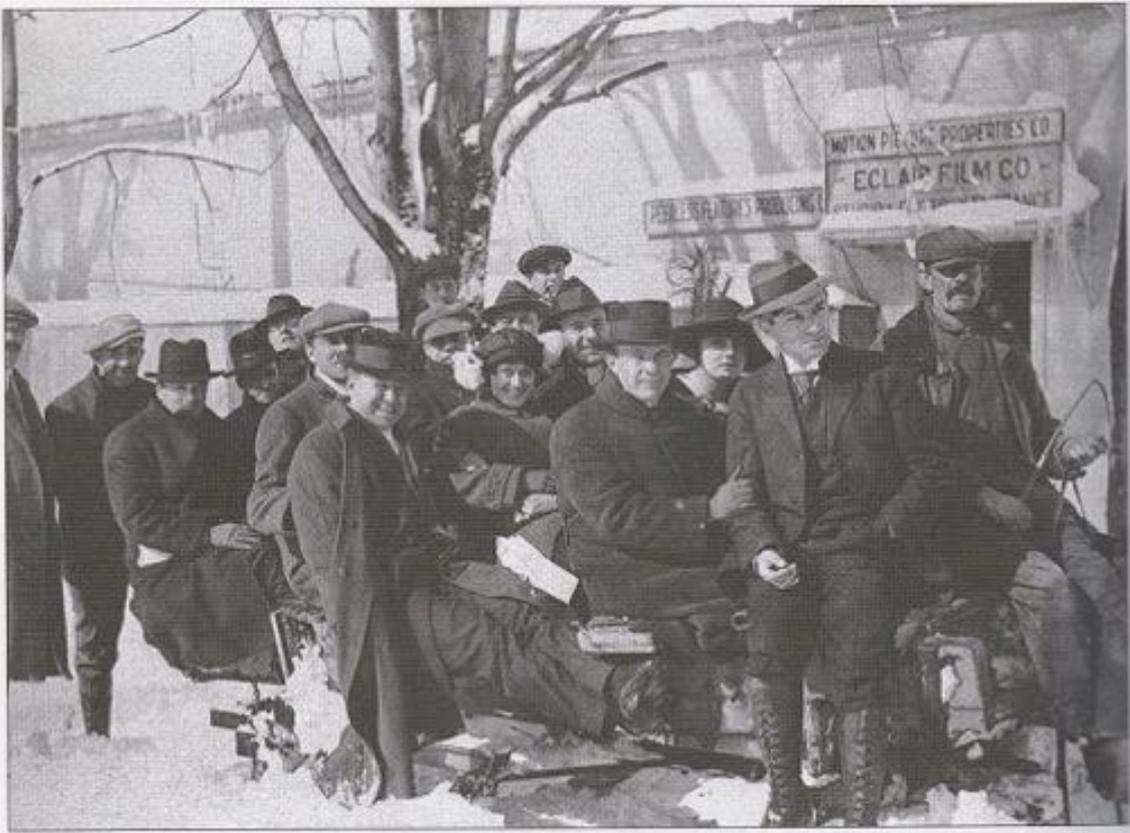


Fig. 10 - Arrivée au travail en traîneau chez Eclair, ca. 1914. Silent Film Collection of the Fort Lee Public Library, reproduite dans Richard Koszarski, *Fort Lee, The Film Town*, p.106

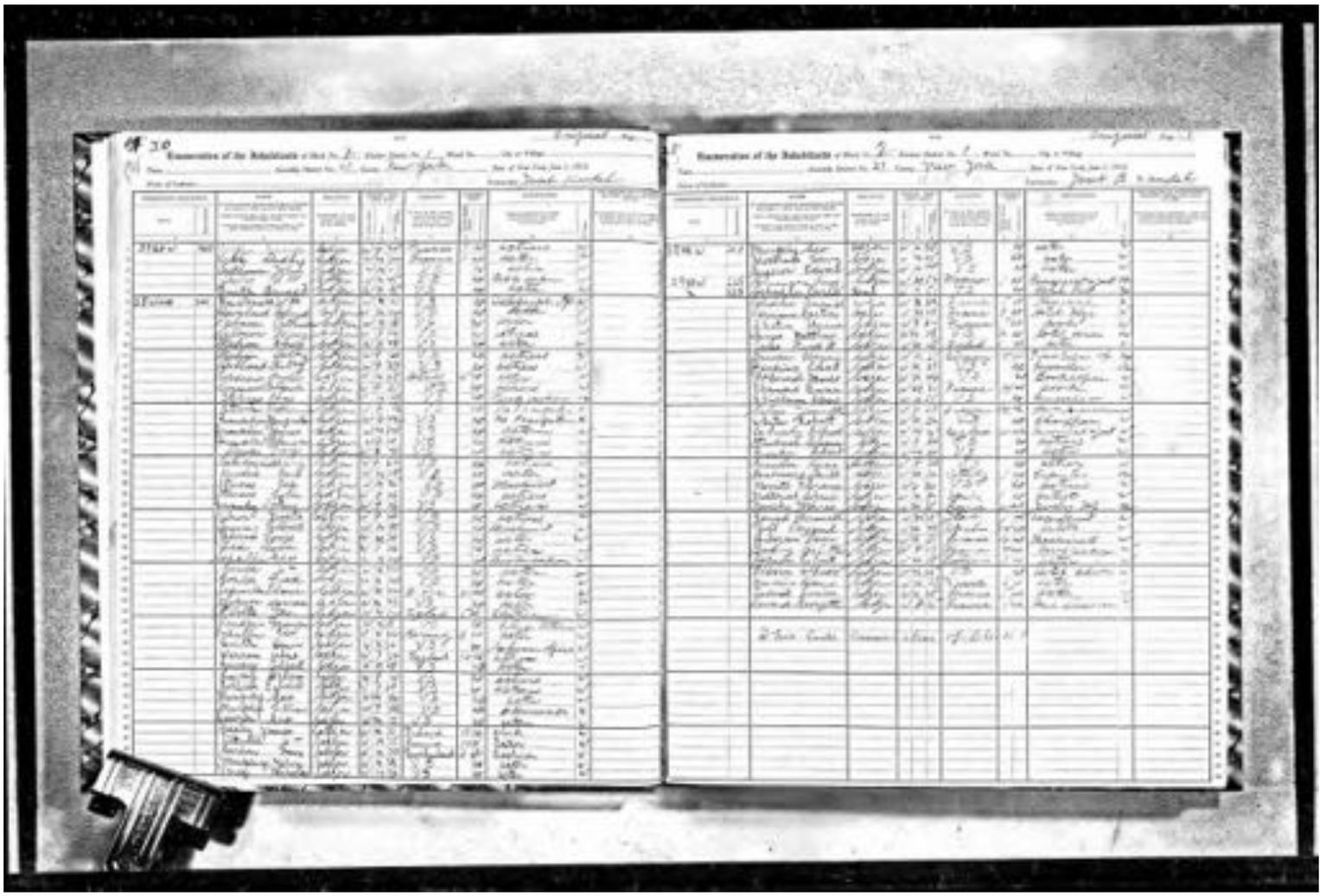


Fig. 11 - Recensement 1915, alentours de Broadway. Lucien Andriot et Henri Ménessier partagent une chambre avec Georgette Seward, coiffeuse française de 25 ans. Coiffeuse pour le cinéma? Menessier et Andriot sont marqués comme 'acteurs' - terme qui semble englober toutes les professions liées aux métiers du cinéma. Sont présents ici aussi des restaurateurs, cuisinier et autres acteurs français et étrangers.