

EARLY MOVIE-GOING IN NIAGARA

From Itinerant Shows to Local Institutions, 1897–1910

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INTRODUCTION

In August 1910, a moving picture named *Scenes in Ontario* was advertised playing at the Princess Theatre in Niagara Falls, Ontario. The film was part of a Canadian-themed bill, one of three different programs to appear at the Princess that week. At the time, just as movie-going was becoming an everyday routine and a local institution in Niagara Falls and across North America, each short film was presented almost interchangeably. Individual pictures were not yet advertised as having special interest, let alone presented as having local interest for particular audiences in Niagara or anywhere else. Not yet nicknamed “movies,” films came and went in constant variety. In just this week at the Princess, twelve pictures were shown, interspersed with a variety of illustrated songs, musical selections, and short plays on stage. The films included comedies, melodramas, westerns, and scenic or newsworthy pictures from around the world.¹ The picture of Ontario scenes was nothing special. Compared to more popular genres and more exotic locations, the movie-going public of Niagara Falls was probably disappointed to see the selection. After the first show, however, the *Niagara Falls Record* excitedly reported that this particular film had “created quite a little comment last night,” because it was “a local picture which shows scenes along the Niagara, St. Catharines and Toronto Railway from Port Dalhousie to Falls View.”² Indeed, the Princess changed its advertising to elaborate: “*Scenes in Ontario*, including N., St. C. & T. Ry, Falls View to Lake Ontario.” Even more remark-

ably, this film stayed for an extra two days “by special request,” even when the other films on the program changed.

While the definitive debut and origins of cinema are debatable, the novelty became publicly exhibited worldwide in 1896, and in every present-day Canadian province and most Canadian towns by the end of 1897. From the very first months of commercial cinema, people in towns and cities around the world marvelled at images of Niagara Falls from afar. Yet the earliest exhibitions of moving pictures in the Niagara Region itself in 1896 and 1897 notably failed to include those scenes of Niagara’s famous waterfalls. If cinema specialized in showing the world, beyond local experience, its global, mass culture was nonetheless built upon gatherings of local audiences. By 1910, moving picture theatres had become anchored local institutions, each connecting people to modernity through the world on screen. In that context, with a film of a tram ride through St. Catharines and Thorold to the city of Niagara Falls, and only then to the site of the Falls themselves, the people of Niagara clamoured to appreciate their own region on screen as part of the modern world, knowing audiences elsewhere were seeing the same film.

Moving pictures of Niagara’s waterfalls were the first images of Canada filmed and are central to any history of early Canadian cinema. The same cannot be said of movie-going in Niagara. Film distribution and exhibition in the Niagara Region (Welland and Lincoln counties) was organized commercially as a marginal part of a Toronto-based mass market, itself a marginal affiliate of a global industry soon dominated by the United States. Niagara’s theatres and audiences are absent from the record of Canada’s film history, but hardly more than any other region because local sites are altogether sidelined as a result of the global reach of film production, distribution, and exhibition. Niagara’s local relation with mass culture can thus be taken as paradigmatic for Canada as a whole—an international flow of popular culture easily crossed the Canada-United States border at Niagara; the region received magazines and newspapers, touring shows and circuses, and later radio and television broadcasts directly from south of the border. The people of Niagara could also casually cross the border in person, and in many ways their metropolis was Buffalo, not Toronto. My argument is that, if images of the natural wonder of the Falls themselves stand in for the entirety of early Canadian cinema, then the cultural experience of modernity that grew from the Falls can be understood as a condensed version of the Canadian experience of American popular culture. On the one hand, this historical case study of the beginnings of movie-going in Niagara is valuable as an example of the more general, even globalized, emergence of mass culture. On the other hand, this history recovers the origins of the region’s movie theatres as important local institutions,

as part of Niagara's regional culture and public practice. Movie theatres became gathering places, fondly remembered and significant in everyday life, alongside schools, libraries, or churches (and likely attended more often, with excitement, for fun). The exceptional moment when local culture appeared on screen, such as at the Niagara Falls Princess Theatre in 1910, sheds a light on the routine of constantly varied imported mass media, embedded in local experience, but always in view of wider cultural contexts.

The earliest film exhibitions—in Niagara as elsewhere—presented the modern world in motion, bringing glimpses of foreign lands and marvels from across the oceans: New York and Paris streets, royalty and presidents, colonial peoples, exotic animals and scenery, and always a careening express train headed straight toward the seated audience. Did any actual viewer of the first moving pictures really duck and run away from the oncoming locomotive? The “train effect” is known as one of the primal scenes of cinema's modern grammar, but Niagara Falls is another constant scene in early cinema shows around the world (Bottomore 1999). At the very first display of moving pictures in Ontario in July 1896, the Falls were ballyhooed as an attraction on the program.³ Although more distant scenes from Europe and America predominated in the promotional rhetoric across Canada in the first year of cinema, in smaller towns across Ontario the Falls were a constant draw (albeit always second-rate compared to trains and racing fire brigades or royal parades). First to capture the Falls on film was an unknown camera operator working for the Thomas Edison Vitascope Company early in 1896. With Edison's celebrity behind it, the Vitascope claimed the title of “invention” as the first projected, paying, public showing of moving pictures in North America, making its debut in New York City in April 1896, dismissing earlier efforts as experiments.⁴ In France, the Lumière brothers had even earlier introduced their Cinematographe to Paris in December 1895, arriving in North America in Montreal to become the first exhibition of moving pictures in Canada on June 27, 1896 (Lacasse 1984).⁵

Because the Lumière films of Niagara's Falls did not enter their catalogue until 1897, the first public showing of films of the Falls in Canada happened with the official debut of Edison's Vitascope at an Ottawa amusement park on July 21, 1896.⁶ The Vitascope opened next in Toronto on August 31, 1896, at a Yonge Street vaudeville theatre and dime museum called Robinson's Musée (later the first Toronto branch of Shea's Vaudeville). Those Vitascope views of Niagara appeared in Toronto, too, promoted for just one week in September 1896. Peter Morris, in writing a first academic history of Canadian cinema, notes how Niagara Falls was “the mecca of all early motion picture cameramen” and how two more picture operators stopped to capture

the Falls in September and October 1896: Felix Mesguich for Lumière, and W.K.L. Dickson for the American Mutoscope and Biograph Company.⁷ Scenes included the American and “Horseshoe” (Canadian) Falls, the Whirlpool rapids of the Niagara River, and the *Maid of the Mist* bringing boatloads of tourists into the spray at the foot of the Falls. One of these films—it is difficult to know which in these first months—was part of a program of the Motoscope in Toronto early in February 1897. Another was noted as an important part of a show of the Anamatograph in Aurora, north of Toronto, in January 1897, and again mentioned when that show toured in Ontario to Berlin (now Kitchener) and Hamilton in February. Yet another projector called the Canada-graph was made in Toronto and, in an opening exhibition in Richmond Hill in April 1897, featured moving pictures of the Falls—later touring through Muskoka and up to Sudbury, Sault Ste. Marie, and the twin cities of Port Arthur and Fort William (now Thunder Bay).⁸

Whether in northern small towns or metropolitan cities, the history of the beginnings of movie-going in Canada is archived primarily in local newspapers, for most communities the *only* record of early cinema. Every small town and village newspaper had a local gossip column, “Town Topics” or some such heading, an informal compilation of indiscriminate social and commercial happenings of the past week. These columns often recorded the first appearances of cinema in not-quite-rural places across North America. Altogether they paint a surprisingly detailed picture of the regional dispersion and institutionalization of the novelty in the years before it was a mass practice. The crux of my previous study of early movie-going in Toronto emphasized urban routines and city governance as the foundation for making a mass culture out of metropolitan movie-going.⁹ Now that I have also carefully studied early picture shows in regional small towns, such as in this discussion of the Niagara Region, I must modify my argument to emphasize how the emergence of mainstream cinema was metropolitan—not simply urban—insofar as it almost simultaneously included entire regions in a mass market for entertainment. Newspapers are an important empirical record of early cinema-going because they were a similarly modernizing means of connecting readers anywhere to the modern, mass market everywhere.

For the city of St. Catharines in the 1890s, the daily *Standard* consistently included advertising for entertainments and usually printed small articles about business developments—cinema events in the city are easily found. Unfortunately, both the Niagara Falls newspapers *The Daily Record* and the weekly *Review* were lost before December 1908. I have relied instead on local notes from Niagara Falls published in the Welland weekly papers. The paper in St. Catharines also included daily notes of town gossip and hap-

penings in Niagara Falls, Thorold, Welland, and Niagara-on-the-Lake. The everyday life of culture and consumption was rarely reported as news but instead shows up as passing comments in these “town topics” columns like needles-in-haystacks. The three Welland papers in this period, in particular, included columns of news from everywhere in Niagara *except* St. Catharines, and they luckily make up for the gaps in the early newspaper records of Niagara Falls and other towns—albeit with the need for patience and a magnifying glass because the news was written as notes without headlines.¹⁰

TOURING THE ATTRACTION OF CINEMATIC TECHNOLOGY

In these first months of cinema, the entertainment was usually named after the brand-name apparatus; the content of the show was at first secondary to the technology itself. Let me clarify something implicit in the preceding tracing of films of the Falls as they travel around Ontario: In this first year of commercial cinema, 1896, the projector, showman-operator, often a pianist, and a lecturer all travelled with the canisters of films as an itinerant, mobile evening of entertainment, criss-crossing the territory (Pryluck 2008). To provide further context before discussing film shows in Niagara itself, it is important to understand the very beginnings of cinema in relation to travelling dramas, vaudeville, circuses, and fairground attractions. In my tracking the routes of the first year of cinema across Canada, I found several types or classes of moving picture shows. First were the prominent, licensed exhibitions of particular picture programs, which did *not* cross the Canada-United States border but toured interprovincially to small cities, but not small towns. In the Niagara Region, these shows stopped only in St. Catharines. Second were the cinema machines, which were a supporting “act” on a large-scale vaudeville bill of a syndicated American touring show; these *did* cross the border but stopped only in major cities. In 1896–97, there were no theatres in Niagara on these routes, but these shows did stop in Buffalo, Hamilton, and Toronto. And third were the small-scale exhibitions extensively touring a territory, usually run by a regional showman; these did *not* cross the border. In Niagara, these shows toured through the smaller cities, and this last type was especially typical in small towns in southern Ontario, the only part of Canada that was densely populated with extensive rail networks.

Except for when cinema was attached to American vaudeville acts, the impermeability of the border arises from film being a licensed industrial product rather than a performance, making moving pictures distinct from prior commercial amusements. In the 1890s, even small-time touring dramas and minor circuses travelled throughout North America, treating the U.S. border

as all but irrelevant. Film was different because local entrepreneurs purchased its amusement as an industrial product, competing against others with identical content. Ironically, the technological reproducibility of cinema imposed territorial borders on exhibition circuits, even as costs lowered to make it more viable to include small towns as well as villages within those entertainment routes. The effect for the Niagara Region (a borderland) was to sever it from Buffalo and render it marginal to Toronto, part of a Toronto-centric network in a rail-based mass market. Another effect is to squarely privilege St. Catharines as the biggest city in the region.

Moving pictures debuted in Niagara on November 30, 1896, with an engagement of the Lumière Cinématographe, “Here for Three Days Only” at the Victoria Chambers in St. Catharines—“If you miss it now, you will be sorry when it’s gone! Greatest Wonder of the Age!”¹¹ The Ontario licensee for the Lumière machine was H.J. Hill, manager of the annual Toronto Industrial Exhibition, where the show opened on September 1, 1896, then stayed in Toronto for another month at a Yonge Street storefront site.¹² In October, the Cinématographe toured west through Hamilton, London, and six other Ontario cities, ending its tour in St. Catharines before returning to the Yonge Street location for another two months. Playing at the town hall auditorium instead of the Grand Opera House in St. Catharines was typical, as Hill’s booking agents needed specific dates (and surely lower costs) to plan their routes with the machine in tow. Only here in St. Catharines was the full program of films printed in the advertising, a total of twenty-two scenes, all from England, France, and Spain except for a “Negro Bathing Scene” noted as off the coast of South Africa. Typical of a Cinématographe program, the moving pictures were accompanied by a lecturer, William Ramsay, and turned into a formal, almost educational event as much as an entertainment (Steven 2003). Despite the variety of distinct scenes, there was a logical progression: the program started with the landing of a steamship, scenes from London, then Brighton Beach on the coast. Then came a segment of visual and comic scenes before arriving in Spain with scenes of its armies, and onto France with domestic scenes reflecting the French origins of the Lumière invention. Last, of course, an approaching train completed the show with dramatic effect. The cost was fully twenty-five cents, a dime for children, and the show ran from 2 to 6 p.m. and again from 7:30 to 10 p.m.—probably four shows a day in all. Representatives of the St. Catharines *Standard* attended the first show, reporting the next day that “everyone should see the Cinématographe. That’s the unbiased advice the *Standard* has to offer ... every movement is depicted very realistically, in fact, absolutely true to life,” singling out the military, seaside bathing, and railway scenes.¹³

Here for Three Days Only
If You Miss It Now You Will be
Sorry When It's Gone!

GREATEST WONDER OF THE AGE!
 The Great French Electrician and Photo
 grapher, M. Lumiere's Marvellous
 Invention, the

CINEMATOGRAPHE
IN VICTORIA CHAMBERS
MONDAY, TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY
NOV. 30 and DEC. 1 and 2.

PROGRAMME :

1. Landing from the Steamer.
2. Regent St., London.
3. Rotten Row, Hyde Park, London.
4. Visiting Friends in London.
5. Sea Shore on the South Coast of England, Brighton Beach.
6. Garden Hose Scene.
7. Pulling down an Old Building.
8. The Village Blacksmith.
9. Many Faces under One Hat, by M. Dreyer.
10. Bark Leaving Port.
11. Sardine Fishing on Coast of France.
12. Spanish Artillery at Gun Practice.
13. Review of Imperial Troops in Spain.
14. Spanish Soldiers Dancing.
15. Children and their Toys.
16. Negro Bathing Scene.
17. Burning Weeds in Garden of M. Lumiere.
18. A Game of Cards.
19. The Gull of Lyons.
20. Coming out of Cologne Cathedral.
21. M. Lumiere, Wife and Child at-Breakfast.
22. Arrival of Train.

Open from 2:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. and
 from 7:30 to 10:00 p.m.
 Admission, 25c; Children, 10c.

FIGURE 4.1 Ad for Cinematographe, St. Catharines Standard, Nov. 1896

Newspapers across Canada reported the arrival of cinema as a novelty entertainment rather than a newsworthy invention. In London, Ontario, a review in the *Advertiser* is perhaps the most evocative: “The performance is so marvelous that one is appalled by the genius of the human mind that could produce such wonders.... To a person of imaginative mind, the exhibition is peculiarly attractive. He is transported in quick succession to France, Spain, England and Africa—to scenes and places that no writing, however graphic, can make so real to him as this little miracle, the Cinematographe. It has almost the power of the magic cap in the Arabian Nights.”¹⁴ This ecstatic impression certainly contrasts with the reception on the next tour of the Cinematographe around Ontario in February and March 1897, when newspapers merely reprint Hill’s own press releases; we can assume the reading public was now familiar with the conventions of cinematic entertainment.

Within months, the marvel and novelty of the technology itself had worn off, and moving pictures of prominent special events were featured on a variety bill of assorted other unnamed scenes. The Magniscope pictures of Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee Procession arrived in St. Catharines in September 1897 for two days. This time, the shows were booked into the Grand Opera House.¹⁵ All across Canada, even in Quebec, local events in June 1897 had celebrated the British Monarch’s Jubilee, mirroring the Queen’s own procession and celebrations in London, England. Newspapers and magazines rushed to print special issues with photographs of the event, but moving pictures nonetheless drew audiences months later. The filming of such newsworthy events was proving the commercial viability of cinema, which was still strongly connected to its verisimilitude and ability to photograph events in movement. Strictly speaking, moving pictures were operating as newsreels, as a “cinema of attractions” (Gunning 1990) rather than merely providing “harmless entertainment” (Grievson 2004). This was all the more evident with another moving picture show of

an equally newsworthy event. Veriscope pictures of the Jim Corbett–Bob Fitzsimmons heavyweight boxing prizefight arrived in St. Catharines for one night in October 1897 at the Grand Opera House.¹⁶ The fight had taken place in March in Carson City, Nevada, where it was legal—but prize fights were illegal in Ontario and most other parts of North America, and this film led to the first debates over film censorship in the Canadian Parliament, in the Toronto city council chambers, and in dozens of meeting rooms around the continent. In fact, such controversy had erupted on a smaller scale when a “fake” fight film toured Ontario earlier, in summer 1897. Calling itself the Feriscope and claiming to depict the Corbett–Fitzsimmons fight, it was actually a poor-quality film from 1894 of Corbett staging a boxing match with Peter Courtney for the Edison cameras making a Kinetoscope picture (a peepshow predecessor of projected cinema). This film, too, came to the St. Catharines Grand Opera House for a night in June 1897.¹⁷ In other Ontario cities, for example in Chatham, the show was stopped and the showman arrested and fined, but the tour moved on without incident in Niagara.

TOURING NIAGARA’S SMALLER TOWNS

By the time moving pictures came to the smaller communities of the Niagara Region in February and March 1897, over a dozen different machines had shown exhibitions in six provinces already and had visited at least forty different towns and cities elsewhere in southern Ontario. The first show to tour Niagara was for a machine called the Ametomagnoscope, owned by T.H. Duncombe, manager of the Duncombe Opera House in St. Thomas, Ontario. The apparatus was advertised as “an invention which produces colored animated bodies upon a screen, as in life.” There was a staff of five working on this cinema side-business from November 1896 until April 1897, when Duncombe sold the outfit.¹⁸ Travelling with the machine was a lecturer, electrician, and operator, plus a secretary to collect receipts and a publicity agent to book shows and handle advance advertising. Duncombe purchased the Ametomagnoscope from Thomas Amet’s Illinois factory and originally planned to debut it on Thanksgiving Thursday, November 26, 1896, in his own St. Thomas theatre, but the machine arrived late and, instead, had its first show in nearby Aylmer the next week.

The device had to be set up in each new hall, and technical problems with electric current and projection were typical; in Aylmer for its first performance, the newspaper reported, “the results were not good.... [S]ome improvement in the motion and in the clearness of the pictures is still possible.”¹⁹ Indeed, local reception of the showmanship behind the new mov-

ing picture machine was essential at first, and in Aylmer, Duncombe offered free admission to all who had paid for the first failed performance, “thus doing all in his power to go square with the public, as he always does.” Subsequent exhibitions in St. Thomas, Petrolia, and Chatham were well received, at least according to the local press. The show’s films were evidently American and derived from early titles from Edison’s Vitascope: *Ocean Storm*, *Children’s Parade*, *Camels*, and *The Kiss*, the last an already famous close-up of a moment between May Irwin and John C. Rice from a Broadway play called *The Widow Jones*.²⁰ Two films on the program, *Eating Watermelons* and *Pickeninies*, attest to how early cinema inherited racial themes and stereotypical preoccupations from minstrelsy and the popular culture that preceded it.²¹

After extensive exploitation of the densely populous area between Sarnia and Woodstock, the Ametomagnoscope toured Niagara, opening in Welland on Monday, February 22, 1897, for four days. By then, the lecturer accompanying the moving pictures had been supplemented with an Edison Graphophone playing recorded music and famous speeches. The *Welland Tribune* reprinted a review from Brantford that placed as much emphasis on the music as the moving pictures: “It sings, talks and laughs and gives selections from Sousa’s, Gilmour’s and other bands.”²² The publicity in the *Welland Telegraph* was more extensive, striking a defensive tone to differentiate this entertainment from others: “The Ametomagnoscope Co. do not cater to the class that always go anyway, but to those that class all shows the same. Now stop a minute and think. You see a picture on the wall and then each individual person, streetcar, bicycle, whatever it may be begins to move, as in life. You hold your breath in surprise.”²³ Admission was 20 cents for adults and 10 cents for children; seats could be reserved without extra charge at Garner’s bookstore. In Welland, the show was far from a success, as the *Tribune* remarked afterwards, almost mocking the townsfolk for being stuck in conventional expectations about amusements: “Perhaps few comprehend what these moving pictures are—and then there was no brass band, you know.”²⁴

Judging from notes in the Welland papers, audiences in Niagara Falls were more appreciative when the moving pictures were exhibited there for two days in the Clifton Town Hall: “The Ametomagnoscope exhibitions in the town on Saturday and Monday evening last was a great success, considering the bad weather.... The reproductions from life are so perfect that one is disposed to believe life is actually in the pictures, while no less interesting were the productions by the Graphophone.” Separate notes from Niagara Falls South report, “[A] large number from here went to Clifton ... to see the wonderful Ametomagnoscope in the town hall there and were highly

delighted.”²⁵ A return date was set for March although it is not clear whether it actually happened. It is certain, however, that Duncombe’s moving pictures continued on for three days at the Bridgeburg Oddfellows Hall, two days in Matthews Hall in Port Colborne, and finally two days in St. Catharines at the Victoria Chambers where the Cinematographe had played three months earlier.²⁶

As the Ametomagnoscope finished its Niagara tour, another small-scale picture show toured the region, with a gimmick marketed especially to women. Purchased by a Hamilton firm—apparently the manufacturers or retailers of a local baking powder—a machine called the Cinagraphoscope exhibited pictures for two weeks in St. Andrew’s Hall in Hamilton: “A program of wonderful animated pictures. Admission 15c. children 10c. Note—to every lady will be given a free sample half-lb. tin of the famous Jersey Cream Baking Powder. Cosy Hall—good music. Come!”²⁷ In the newspaper ads for its second week, when it had to compete against another picture show, the baking powder almost received top billing: “While giving this strictly first-class entertainment to advertise our celebrated Jersey Cream Baking Powder, we are trying to give as good value for money as we give in our powder. We trust every lady in Hamilton will attend. Two hours’ solid enjoyment. Lumsden Bros. Wholesale Grocers.”²⁸

This special show, perhaps the first use of moving pictures for product placement targeting women as shoppers, came to the Welland Opera House for three days beginning March 10, 1897. The Welland *Telegraph* reported that the Cinagraphoscope’s strange use for advertising baking powder led to its leaving town with a deficit of \$35 rather than a profit.²⁹ The show had better luck in the town of Niagara Falls (known before as Clifton). The local notes column in the *Telegraph* reported that the show “met with great success. The wonderful moving pictures shown by this machine excels all others ever shown here. In addition to the pictures, Mr. Allan Douglass, the popular Scotch baritone, who is possessed of exceptionally rich talent, delighted the large audiences with some beautiful selections in the dialect in which he is particularly gifted.” Again, there was special clamour among those who had travelled from Niagara Falls South: “The wonderful Cinagraphoscope, which has given such great amusement in the town hall, Clifton, has by special request of a number of prominent citizens been induced to give an entertainment in the town hall here.”³⁰ Early cinema shows were apparently not uniformly well received, and a show might hold over or return to an enthusiastic community. This particular machine played five days in Niagara Falls (Clifton), reportedly to packed houses, but was a failure in its three days in Welland and stopped in St. Catharines for only a single day.³¹

PICTURE SHOWS BECOME THEATRES: A PLACE TO SPEND YOUR NICKELS

Cinema continued to depend on touring showmen for another decade, stopping for a few days in the local opera house or town hall just like any itinerant show or travelling vaudeville program. The situation changed entirely in 1907 when some showmen and local entrepreneurs turned downtown storefront spaces into small-time picture shows. Although at the time it seemed these might be a passing fad, they are considered in hindsight to be the first movie theatres. Converting storefronts to small theatres seating around 200 people had happened as early as 1896, but the Vitascope Hall in Buffalo or the Cinematographe set up on Yonge Street in Toronto were temporary sites. Where there was Keith's Vaudeville—as at the major Shea's Theatres in Buffalo and Toronto—moving pictures were first available on an everyday basis as the last act “chaser” on their variety bills from 1899 onward. The storefront theatre as a permanent, small-scale picture show took hold as a fad throughout the mid-west United States in 1905 where it became known as a “nickelodeon” (Bowser 1990). The first “scope” opened in Montreal early in 1906, and the first “theatorium” in Toronto in spring 1906. The first Ontario nickel show to open outside those metropolitan cities was the Theatorium in Brantford, in November 1906.³² By the end of 1907 more than thirty Ontario towns and cities had picture shows running daily, including St. Catharines and Welland, with plans to open shortly in Niagara Falls.

Many years later in a special issue of the *St. Catharines Standard*, Henry P. Nicholson wrote a nostalgic article, “Remember Those Early Movies?”³³ He recalled the first picture theatre in St. Catharines was called the Bijou and located on Queen Street across from the *Standard* offices, where, as a boy, he would pick up papers daily for delivery. He recalls vividly his first trip to the pictures came with a fellow newsboy when the newspaper was delayed one afternoon: “When we got inside, the place was dark and the show had started.... When the picture was over, an announcement came on the screen saying, ‘Those who came in late can remain for the start of the next show.’ The exit doors opened and about 75 percent of the people went out, including two dumb little boys who did not understand the meaning of the announcement. I still remember and still laugh.” Nicholson also recalls how early picture shows included two acts of small-time vaudeville, performing popular songs on stage. In its first several years, the program presented at most nickel shows was indeed a combination of short films, usually shown silent, interspersed with illustrated songs—popular music sung by a paid performer accompanied by projected slide images, with a chorus slide for everyone to join in singing together (Altman 2004). It took several years for picture shows to set up two projectors and a piano accompanist to allow for

a continuous multiple-reel feature lasting one hour or more.

There is no trace of the Bijou except Nicholson's memories, but there are large ads leading up to the opening of the Hippodrome on downtown St. Paul Street in June 1907. Owned and managed by a Mrs. Hastings, who operated a show of the same name in Buffalo, the Hippodrome offered "the latest and most up-to-date moving pictures," gave away souvenir fans to the first 150 ladies for its opening, and featured Charles O'Donnell with illustrated songs—all for five cents from 2 to 6 p.m. and 7 to 10:30 p.m.³⁴ O'Donnell was described as "St. Catharines Favorite Singer," and he had frequently sung in travelling Vitagraph shows in the previous year at the Grand Opera House. Within the first week, song and film titles were advertised daily, and the first Friday afternoon was free to children. Summer heat was immediately a problem; although it was years before air conditioning was standard, the Hippodrome promised ventilation with special electric fans. In November, a third nickel show called the Gaiety, owned by two men (James and Watson), opened in St. Catharines on Ontario Street at St. Paul Street.³⁵ Against its new competition, the Hippodrome arranged to exhibit a blockbuster feature film, *The Passion Play of the Life of Christ*, "two miles of beautiful, interesting, hand-colored film that touches every heart-string." This picture was the five-cent show's first blockbuster, playing for fourteen weeks in Detroit starting in August 1907 and prompting Toronto theatroriums to advertise in newspapers for the first time in October.³⁶ At the Hippodrome in St. Catharines, admission was a dime instead of a nickel.

Religious films like *The Passion Play* were important to the entrepreneurs of picture shows because these new, permanent daily places to see moving pictures were already drawing the criticism of religious ministers, parents, and police. Their primary audience was children and young women, and the immaturity and feminine character of the pastime cast aspersions on exactly the cheap freedom of entertainment it offered (Uricchio and Pearson 1993). They offered a space of fun and amusement without supervision, at a cheap price almost anyone could afford. In Chicago in April 1907, protests came from moral reformers supported by investigations of danger and vice, reported by the *Chicago Tribune* (Grieverson 1999). At exactly the same time in Toronto, calls came for film censorship but the Staff Inspector of the Police morality squad announced he had already been confiscating objectionable moving pictures and inspecting the theatroriums. An undercover reporter for the *Mail and Empire* visited several downtown Toronto picture shows and had to report, "Five Cent Theatre Harmless Here."³⁷ The controversy happened on a smaller scale in Welland.

The first picture show in Welland, the Grand Theatrorium, was owned by

William Dawdy and opened in November 1907 on East Main Street. A small news article reported in the *People's Press* that the theatre was “fresh evidence of Welland’s new order of things ... modeled after the style of the five-cent shows on the main streets of the metropolis, which have been all the craze, and the price will be the same.”³⁸ Dawdy’s advertising the following week made a case for the merit of amusement: “The one great craving in human nature is to be entertained. We hope to satisfy that longing,” no doubt to the consternation of churches trying to satisfy what they thought to be people’s one great need. The ad continued, “Moving pictures make recreation more delightful, as a result work is made easier and sleep more restful.... Come and enjoy yourself.”³⁹ The new, secular order of things was all the more clear when a second picture show opened in Welland in January 1908 on West Main Street in an old church. The Star Nicklette was owned by Charles DeGraff of Buffalo and run by a man named Mr. Sider from nearby Ridgeway. The *Welland Tribune* noted wryly, “Just think of it girls! Another place to spend your nickels and your dimes.”⁴⁰ As before in St. Catharines, the Grand booked *The Passion Play* to ward off the new competition. By March, the *People's Press* commented on the state of affairs of commercial versus sacred amusement on Saturday night in town: “Both five cent theatres were crowded—standing room only—whilst a contingent of Free Methodists conducted service at the end of the canal bridge and the Salvation Army held the fort in front of the bunch of hotels on East Main Street.”⁴¹ If the moral consequences of nickel shows were debatable, one harmful side effect would soon lead to regulation: The material base of film itself was highly flammable.

SOCIALLY COMBUSTIBLE: REBUILDING FOR SAFETY AFTER TRAGEDY

In January 1908, a fourteen-year-old projectionist died of burns after the film he was showing caught fire at the Hippodrome in St. Catharines. The news was reported widely across Ontario even before his injuries turned fatal: “A spark from the electric light fell upon the combustible film and an explosion followed.... Panic followed and several were trampled under foot.... The machine was being operated by Lorne McDermott, a boy under 15 years of age. The lad was severely and seriously burned about the hands and all over the face.”⁴² The *Standard* interviewed eyewitnesses: Annie Markle, the ticket seller who was working immediately below the projection room, said, “The people came crowding out in a bunch, some of them completely losing all control of themselves.... I grabbed the money and pushed my way out.”⁴³ Another woman was working in her store across the street: “My first impres-



FIGURE 4.2 Tragic celluloid film fires make the news. St. Catharines Daily Standard.

sions were that the crowd coming out had enjoyed a good show and were laughing over it. On second thought, however, I could see that something unusual had happened. The pen where the operator sits was a mass of fire." A young lady who had been in the audience said, "All seemed to rise at once, and jumping over chairs and anything which might be in their way, made a dash for the door." John Sawyer was managing the theatre: "I had just concluded singing an illustrated song which was given after the pictures.... I endeavored to keep the crowd quiet and tell them to take their time, but it was useless." Finally came the thoughts of the proprietress, Mrs. Hastings of Buffalo. The Hippodrome was in the same building as the McDermott family store, and her loss of \$2,000 seemed nothing compared to their tragedy, although she said he was hired "against her desires and out of deference to the wishes of himself and his family."

McDermott's death followed on the heels of a theatre disaster in Boyertown, Pennsylvania, where 170 people died in a panicked rush to flee a fire reportedly resulting from the explosion of a moving picture projector. Although moving pictures were ultimately cleared of culpability in Boyertown, the tragedy remains associated with the dangers of early movie-going (Smither 2002, 433).⁴⁴ Horrific details from Pennsylvania shared the front page of the *Standard* with news of the fire, panic, and injury at the local theatorium. The death in St. Catharines showed how the still-novel technology seemed to escape the bounds of even the most stringent requirements in the construction of theatres, although the city introduced a much stricter building code for public buildings as a result. Within months of the fire and death came the

first provincial law from Queen's Park specifically addressing the cinematograph and its flammable film material. Film was identified as a hazardous substance needing careful bureaucratic inspection and licensing. These fire safety laws were soon extended into elaborate film bureaucracies encompassing inspection, censorship, taxation, and restricted admissions (barring unaccompanied children from attending films, for example). The first Ontario law addressing the cinematograph in 1908 amended the existing regulation of safety exits in public buildings, which had previously meant churches and theatres, but now applied to "all places of amusement" as well. The amendment went further than its nominal interest in exits, however, and there were provisions for a provincial licence of all moving picture machines and their projectionists, both instituted a year later in 1909.⁴⁵ But the law *immediately* required the inspection and approval by municipal police of every "cinematograph or similar apparatus" and all locations handling or storing "combustible film more than ten inches in length." From this time forward all over Ontario, moving picture machines would be strictly regulated as part of community policing.

After the Hippodrome fire, safety was paramount in the promotional rhetoric of new picture shows. Another nickel show opened in St. Catharines soon after the fire, Mr. Harris' Lyric, next to the trolley station, "The Prettiest Theatre in Canada." When the Lyric opened in April, it featured Charles O'Donnell in illustrated songs, just as the Hippodrome had nearly a year earlier. But this time, a fire drill was performed in addition to the entertainment: "The theatre was emptied of its largest audience in exactly 55 seconds."⁴⁶ When the Hippodrome itself was rebuilt and reopened in May, fire safety was promoted as much as its decoration or entertainment. "No expense or labor has been spared in making the theatre thoroughly fire proof, so that even the most critical patron, who besides desiring to see a good show, thinks more of his or her safety, will feel perfectly at ease."⁴⁷ Again, the opening of Griffin's Family Theatre in November presented its fire exits as its "most consoling feature.... [I]t can, almost in an instant, be cleared of an overcrowded house, the exits being so arranged that it is next to impossible to be dangerous." This new theatre had even hung a framed painting in its lobby of the city fire chief alongside pictures of St. Catharines' first mayor, and Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Sir John A. Macdonald. The Family theatre was a class higher than the earlier nickel shows. Purpose-built, part of a theatre chain, with a stage curtain, box seats, and a balcony, "It is just like Shea's," the *Standard* reported as the "general exclamation" of those who attended opening night.⁴⁸ John Griffin was the pioneer theatorium owner in Toronto, opening the city's first four nickel shows between March and August 1906,

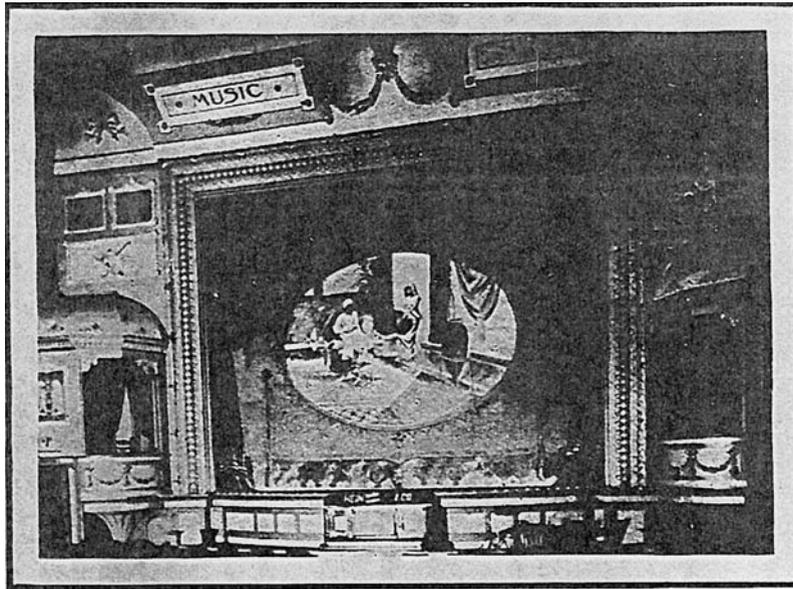


FIGURE 4.3 Proscenium of Griffin's Family theatre. *Billboard* 1908

adding several more in the next two years, and expanding to other cities—first here in St. Catharines, as reported in the American amusement trade paper, *Billboard*: “There is no finer structure devoted to refined vaudeville and motion pictures on the continent and Mr. Griffin is to be congratulated for his laudable ambition.”⁴⁹

With the opening of the Family theatre at the end of November 1908, the city of St. Catharines now had four picture shows operating (perhaps five if the Bijou was still open). But the business had been booming all over Niagara, from the shore of Lake Ontario to the shore of Lake Erie: a picture show called the Idle Hour had opened in Port Dalhousie back in May, as did a “nickelodium” at an expanded Crystal Beach Amusement Park. In November, a Prof. Scott had opened the Nicklette in the Osbourne House block in Thorold.⁵⁰ Niagara Falls now had two nickel shows. At the end of January, the *People's Press* noted that the Reeb Brothers, Port Colborne merchants, were converting part of the Gay Brothers block on Queen Street in Niagara Falls to a moving picture theatre. Just after the Hippodrome fire, the newspaper also noted that the site had “good means of exit” and that the picture apparatus would be “entirely fire-proof.” The Amuseyou opened in March to a packed house, offering a change of program three times a week.⁵¹ News of plans for another show in Niagara Falls first appeared in September. Located in the Woodruff block on Bridge Street, Mr. Taylor's Princess Theatre



FIGURE 4.4 Vanetograph Company in Thorold's Odd Fellows Hall. Thorold Post, Nov. 1908

was the city's mainstay for entertainment until 1914, after a larger theatre had opened. The Niagara Falls notes in the *Standard* reported of its opening in November 1908, "No expense has been spared in fitting up the building, both inside and out. The entrance is wonderfully pretty, numerous electric lights being artistically arranged."⁵² A few days later came another newsworthy event: "On Saturday night his establishment was packed and there were so many people waiting outside that the services of the police were requisitioned to keep the sidewalk clear for passersby. The high-class entertainment provided was thoroughly enjoyed, especially the singing and dancing of little Miss Olga Durham."⁵³ The Princess was off to a good start.

Another development bridged the early years of the itinerant travelling showman and the nickel show as a local institution. In November 1908, Fred VanDyke started a weekly moving picture circuit across Niagara, routinely scheduling shows for the first time in Grimsby, Beamsville, and Port Colborne, and also competing against the daily nickel shows in Welland and Thorold. VanDyke and other members of his family had been operating the Twentieth Century Roller Rink in Welland, as well as rinks elsewhere in Ontario. His Vanetograph Company offered a two-hour show in established venues like the Oddfellows Hall in Thorold, travelling along the street railway line from Grimsby to Port Colborne and ending on Saturdays in his own roller rink in Welland. He charged five cents for children, ten cents for ladies, and a hefty fifteen cents for gents.⁵⁴ It is difficult to judge his success; like many of the early nickel shows, VanDyke's Vanetograph circuit is noted only when it first opened. How long did these small shows last? It is easier to answer how bigger theatres soon replaced them, long-lasting "picture palaces" still remembered in contrast to these forgotten first picture shows.

CONCLUSION

By 1910, moving pictures were a constant, daily part of life in Niagara. By then, moving pictures were playing regularly in the Town Hall in Niagara-on-the-Lake; Port Colborne had its own show, the Dreamland; Moore's Picture Palace had opened in Grimsby Park; the Grand in Welland and the Princess in Niagara Falls had expanded from around 200 seats to 600 or more, as newer, purpose-built theatres were planned to compete against them.⁵⁵ When the nickel shows first opened, most of the films were made in France by the Pathé Company, although they were imported to Toronto via New York. By 1910, as film historian Richard Abel has detailed, almost all of the pictures themselves were produced in the United States, although the film industry there was not yet centred in Los Angeles and not yet called "Hollywood" (Abel 1999, 2006; Olsson 2008). A major step in becoming a big business was the creation in 1910 of the General Film Company, a chain of distributors across North America, including Canada, directly owned by film production companies.⁵⁶ In the next decade, movie studios also purchased control of local theatre chains. In Canada, for example, Paramount helped create Famous Players Theatres in 1920, and the chain dominated the country's first-run theatres for the rest of the twentieth century. In light of this emerging corporate consolidation, let me return in conclusion to the film of the local tram ride that played in 1910 in Niagara Falls.

In August 1910, the Princess Family Theatre advertised daily in the *Record*. Musical director Joseph Hopkins changed the vaudeville program twice weekly, on Mondays and Thursdays, but the motion pictures changed every two days, on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. The local management would have had almost no choice in the films that came to town; the General Film Company in Toronto, a branch of the American company controlled by film producers, would have simply sent around a constant change of almost interchangeable titles. On Wednesday, August 10, the pictures changed like any other, with a two-day show consisting of five pictures from American film companies, but with a Canadian theme: 1. *Trappers and Redskins*; 2. *That's What They All Say*; 3. *Scenes in Ontario*; 4. *Canadian Northern Railway Construction*; 5. *General Farming in Canadian North-West*. As I noted in my introduction, Thursday's *Record* excitedly reported that the scenes in Ontario had actually included a film of local interest, "a local picture which shows scenes along the Niagara, St. Catharines, and Toronto Railway from Port Dalhousie to Falls View."⁵⁷ Exploiting the unusual interest in this otherwise routine program, the Princess changed its advertising to make the local content explicit: "*Scenes in Ontario*, including N., St. C. & T. Ry, Falls View to Lake Ontario." Unlike other films at the time, this picture stayed for an addi-

tional two days, even when the rest of the program changed on Friday. For over a decade already, moving pictures of scenes from around the world had entertained audiences in the Niagara Region. For several years already, picture theatres had provided a daily variety of constantly changing amusement and distraction. All forms of sensation and spectacle had become routine. Yet, here this once, the local theatre provided a special experience never seen before as the screen flickered with images of home.

NOTES

- 1 Advertising for the Princess Theatre, *Niagara Falls Record*, Aug. 8–13, 1910.
- 2 “Princess Theatre,” *Niagara Falls Record*, Aug. 11, 1910.
- 3 The Falls of Niagara is promised as a feature of “Edison’s Vitascope at West End Park,” *Ottawa Journal*, July 20, 1896. On the Vitascope, see “Edison Manufacturing,” in Richard Abel, ed., *Encyclopedia of Early Cinema* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 200–203.
- 4 For the filming of Niagara Falls, see Peter Morris, *Embattled Shadows: A History of Canadian Cinema, 1895–1939* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1978 [2nd ed. 1992]), 29, 276 n16, 280 n2.
- 5 “Le Cinématographe,” Montreal *La Presse*, June 29, 1896. On the Cinématographe, see “Lumière, Auguste and Louis,” in Abel, *Encyclopedia of Early Cinema*, 398–99.
- 6 An apparently unlicensed Edison Vitascope actually opened in Winnipeg on Portage Avenue before the official Ottawa debut. See “The Vitascope,” *Winnipeg Tribune*, July 20, 1896.
- 7 Morris, *Embattled Shadows*, 29.
- 8 The Whirlpool Rapids are noted as part of the New Motograph show in the ad for the Bijou Theatre, *Toronto World*, Feb. 6, 1897. Niagara Falls showing the *Maid of the Mist* is noted for the Anamatograph show in “Town Topics,” *Aurora Banner*, Jan. 15, 1897. A scene of Niagara Falls is noted as part of the Canadagraph show in “Vaudeville Entertainment,” *Richmond Hill Liberal*, Apr. 8, 1897.
- 9 Focusing on Toronto, Paul S. Moore, *Now Playing: Early Moviegoing and the Regulation of Fun* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008), traces the emergence of theatricums and their transformation to a mass culture of movies.
- 10 This methodology is developed further in a forthcoming publication by Paul Moore, “The Social Biograph: Newspapers as Archives of the Regional Mass Market for Movies.”
- 11 Ad for the Cinématographe, *St. Catharines Standard*, Nov. 30, 1896.
- 12 Morris, *Embattled Shadows*, 7–9. Also see Walden.
- 13 “City and Vicinity News,” *St. Catharines Standard*, Dec. 1, 1896.
- 14 “A Delightful Exhibition,” *London Advertiser*, Oct. 27, 1896.
- 15 Ad for the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Magniscope at the Grand Opera House, *St. Catharines Standard*, Sept. 16, 1897.
- 16 Ad for the Corbett-Fitzsimmons Veriscope at the Grand Opera House, *St. Catharines Standard*, Oct. 7, 1897.
- 17 Ad for the Corbett-Fitzsimmons Feriscope at the Grand Opera House, *St. Catharines Standard*, Jun. 7, 1897. The arrest in Chatham was the last show; coincidently word

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- had got round that the films were falsely advertised. "Verescope Showmen Arrested," Chatham *Daily Planet*, June 14, 1897. On fight films and fake fight films, see Dan Streible, *Fight Pictures: A History of Boxing and Early Cinema* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008); entry on "Boxing Films," in Abel, *Encyclopedia of Early Cinema*, 80–81.
- 18 "It Did Not Come," St. Thomas *Times*, Nov. 27, 1896. "Town and Vicinity," Aylmer *Sun*, Dec. 3, 1896.
 - 19 "Town Topics," Aylmer *Express*, Dec. 3, 1896.
 - 20 "The Ametomagnoscope," Strathroy *Dispatch*, Dec. 9, 1896.
 - 21 For more on blackface and minstrel shows in the Niagara Region, see Joan Nicks and Jeanette Sloniowski in this volume: Chapter 13, "Entertaining Niagara Falls: Minstrel Shows, Theatres and Popular Pleasures." For an analysis of the experience of early black audiences in the United States, see Jacqueline Stewart, *Migrating to the Movies: Cinema and Black Urban Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).
 - 22 "Town and Vicinity," Welland *Tribune*, Feb. 19, 1897.
 - 23 "News Around Town," Welland *Telegraph*, Feb. 19, 1897.
 - 24 "Town and Vicinity," Welland *Tribune*, Feb. 26, 1897.
 - 25 "Niagara Falls" and "Niagara Falls South," Welland *Telegraph*, Mar. 5, 1897. Upon amalgamation in 1856, the town name became Clifton and remained as such until 1904, when, with further amalgamation, it became the city of Niagara Falls. See Sherman Zavitz, et al., *Images of a Century: The City of Niagara Falls, Canada, 1904–2004* (Niagara Falls: Centennial Committee/Maracle Press, 2004).
 - 26 "Port Colborne" and "Bridgeburg," Welland *Tribune*, Mar. 5, 1897; "News of City and Vicinity," St. Catharines *Standard*, Mar. 8, 1897.
 - 27 Ad for the Cinagraphoscope, Hamilton *Spectator*, week of Feb. 15, 1897. See Jeannette Sloniowski and Joan Nicks in this volume (Chapter 5, "Hollywoodization") for details about the marketing of movies to women in Niagara Falls in later decades. See also Jane Gaines, "From Elephants to Lux Soap: The Programming and Flow of Early Movie Exploitation," *Velvet Light Trap* 25 (1990), 29–43.
 - 28 Ad for the Cinagraphoscope, Hamilton *Spectator*, week of Feb. 22, 1897.
 - 29 "News Around Town," Welland *Telegraph*, Mar. 19, 1897.
 - 30 "Niagara Falls" and "Niagara Falls South," Welland *Telegraph*, Mar. 19, 1897.
 - 31 "News of City and Vicinity," St. Catharines *Standard*, Mar. 16, 1897.
 - 32 Ad for Theatorium, Brantford *Courier*, Nov. 10, 1906.
 - 33 Henry P. Nicholson, "Remember Those Early Movies?" St. Catharines *Standard*, Feb. 14, 1976.
 - 34 The Hippodrome opened June 22, 1907. See ads in the St. Catharines *Standard* leading up to the opening. Also see note on owner Mrs. Hastings of Buffalo in "Fire in Moving Picture Theatre," Welland *Telegraph*, Jan. 21, 1908.
 - 35 The Gaiety opened Nov. 21, 1907. See "The Gaiety," St. Catharines *Standard*, Nov. 22, 1907.
 - 36 Ad for *Passion Play* at Hippodrome, St. Catharines *Standard*, Nov. 18, 1907. For the Toronto exhibition of the film, see Moore, *Now Playing*, 69.
 - 37 "Five Cent Theatre Harmless Here," Toronto *Mail and Empire*, Apr. 13, 1907. See also Moore, *Now Playing*, 24–25.
 - 38 The Grand opened Nov. 16, 1907. See "Moving Picture Theatre," Welland *People's*

- Press, Nov. 12, 1907.
- 39 Ad for The Grand, Welland *People's Press*, Nov. 19, 1907.
 - 40 The Star Nicklette opened Jan. 29, 1908. See "All for a Nickel," Welland *Tribune*, Jan. 17, 1908, and "Star Theatre Opening," Welland *Tribune*, Jan. 31, 1908.
 - 41 "Town and Country," Welland *People's Press*, Mar. 24, 1908.
 - 42 "Hippodrome Was Guttled by Fire," St. Catharines *Standard*, Jan. 15, 1908; "Was Nearly Disaster," Brockville *Times*, Jan. 16, 1908; "Was Nearly a Disaster," Belleville *Intelligencer*, Jan. 16, 1908.
 - 43 "Some Late Particulars of the Hippodrome Fire," St. Catharines *Standard*, Jan. 16, 1908. "Lorne McDermott Dies After Brave Struggle," St. Catharines *Standard*, Jan. 17, 1908.
 - 44 See also Moore, *Now Playing*, 53–61.
 - 45 See the chart of moving picture legislation in Toronto in Moore, *Now Playing*, 138–39.
 - 46 The Lyric opened Apr. 11, 1908. See "Successful Opening of the Lyric Theatre," St. Catharines *Standard*, Apr. 13, 1908.
 - 47 A rebuilt Hippodrome opened May 29, 1908. See "The Opening of the Hippodrome," St. Catharines *Standard*, May 28, 1908.
 - 48 Griffin's Family opened on Nov. 30, 1908. See "Pretty New Theatre Opened," St. Catharines *Standard*, Dec. 1, 1908.
 - 49 *Billboard*, Dec. 12, 1908, 8. For more on Griffin's chain of theatres, see Moore, *Now Playing*, 84–92.
 - 50 The Idle Hour in Port Dalhousie advertised its opening in the St. Catharines *Standard*, May 29, 1908. A new nickelodium is noted as one of the "Crystal Beach Wonderful Improvements," Welland *People's Press*, May 19, 1908. The Nicklette opening on Nov. 19, 1908, is reported in Thorold notes, St. Catharines *Standard*, Nov. 20, 1908.
 - 51 The Amuseyou opened Mar. 12, 1908. See "Niagara Falls," Welland *People's Press*, Jan. 28, 1908; "Niagara Falls," St. Catharines *Standard*, Mar. 13, 1908.
 - 52 The Princess opened Nov. 19, 1908. See "Niagara Falls," St. Catharines *Standard*, Nov. 20, 1908; "Niagara Falls," Welland *People's Press*, Sept. 15, 1908.
 - 53 "Niagara Falls," St. Catharines *Standard*, Nov. 23, 1908.
 - 54 Vanetograph ad, Thorold *Post*, Nov. 3, 1908, and following weeks. "Local News," Beamsville *Express*, Nov. 12, 1908. "Moving Pictures at Rink," Welland *People's Press*, Nov. 17, 1908.
 - 55 Moving Pictures begin daily in Niagara-on-the-Lake on June 14, 1909. See "Camp Entertainment," *Niagara Times*, June 11, 1909. The Dreamland opened in Port Colborne on July 30, 1910. See "Amusement House," Port Colborne *Times*, Aug. 4, 1910. Moore's moving pictures begin on May 24, 1910, in a rebuilt commercial Grimsby Beach. See ad, Beamsville *Express*, May 5, 1910. "The Grand Theatre," Welland *Tribune*, Apr. 28, 1910. "Princess Theatre," *Niagara Falls Record*, Feb. 1, 1910, and July 18, 1910.
 - 56 On the General Film Company in Canada, see Moore, *Now Playing*, 98–99.
 - 57 "Princess Theatre," *Niagara Falls Record*, Aug. 11, 1910, and advertising, Aug. 10–13, 1910.

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