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“Planned, Plotted, Played, Pictured by Students”: The Ambitious Amateurs of *Ed’s Coed* (1929)

ABSTRACT: This article provides a historical analysis of *Ed’s Coed* (1929), one of the earliest and most accomplished feature-length films made by college students in the United States. Student-made films of the silent era have received little critical attention, but they should be understood within the diverse overlapping categories that encompass amateur local filmmaking. Engaging the underexplored resource of student newspapers, the authors document how *Ed’s Coed*, a 35mm college-life romantic comedy, was produced by University of Oregon students working alongside a professional Hollywood second-unit cameraman. The resulting production history reveals the film crew’s sophisticated approach to publicity, fund-raising, and cinematography that beneficially extends our understanding of the range of amateur local practices in the 1920s.

KEYWORDS: student filmmaking, amateur film, college films, University of Oregon, production history

In the first week of February 1929, Cecil B. DeMille received a brief flurry of letters and telegrams sent southward from Eugene, Oregon. The telegrams came from Ron Hubbs and James Raley Jr., upperclassmen at the University of Oregon, while the letters were from James “Gabe” McBride, a twenty-eight-year-old originally from Spokane, Washington, who had served the previous eight years in the camera department on a variety of Hollywood movies, including four for DeMille. McBride was back in the Pacific Northwest recovering from a serious illness that had forced him to temporarily give up his career in Los Angeles, and he was broke.¹ McBride’s letter noted that while he was feeling much better, he hadn’t been able to find employment since he became ill, and he wondered if Mr. DeMille would be willing to write him a recommendation as “I have a little work here I can get making scenics.” DeMille happily assented, writing Hubbs and Raley that McBride was “a young man of excellent reputation ... a diligent and reliable worker and a splendid photographer.”² The two college students

subsequently hired McBride, the end result being not simply footage of Oregon's verdant landscape, but instead *Ed's Coed* (1929), a 35mm feature-length silent romantic comedy "planned, plotted, played and pictured" by McBride and a crew of sixty undergraduates.³

Ed's Coed is a film about late 1920s college life made, with the crucial exception of McBride, by a group of Oregon college students on their own campus. The film portrays the social life of University of Oregon college students in the pre-Depression 1920s, including fraternities and sororities, canoeing on the campus stream, dances and parties, and the arcane traditions of the university—if you're a freshman, don't wear cords and sit on the senior bench under an umbrella without your "green lid" or you'll suffer a public paddling (fig. 1)! As such, the film lends itself to historical examination within the aesthetic, cultural, and institutional framework(s) of local amateur filmmaking.

In the past two decades, scholars have become increasingly attentive to, and sophisticated about, the overlapping categories of amateur and local filmic practice. Out of this collective work has come a recognition of the sheer proliferation of local filmmaking across both time and space. While scholars



Fig. 1: Sitting on the senior bench wearing cords. (University Archives Photographs, UA Ref 3, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon Libraries, Eugene, OR)

initially often celebrated the resulting films as unique and individual instances of cinema, critically located in dialectic to the dominant texts of Hollywood, we now understand that the vast majority of these movies conformed to a relatively limited and distinct set of approaches that were often quite visible to both the filmmakers and their contemporary audiences. Martin Johnson has recently described these as the “modal properties” of local films: a set of well-established (if not always actually named) generic modes of production and resulting films. With one of these modes in particular, the “local Hollywood film,” Johnson has built a compelling case for how such films were widely produced across the country, most often by itinerant filmmakers who repetitively followed commercial patterns of Hollywood in terms of both institutional methods and narrative forms.⁴ In documenting broadly shared practices and modal tendencies, this recent work offers us the potential to better understand, as historiographer E. H. Carr succinctly put it, “what is general in the unique.”⁵

Ed's Coed is in many ways a unique film with exceptional qualities that make it a valuable object of historical study. However, it unquestionably also conventionally falls into Johnson's category of the local Hollywood film, sharing many of its modal traits, including its filmmakers' purposefully “recreat[ing] the social, cultural, and aesthetic forms of classical cinema.”⁶ Specifically, our nascent Oregon filmmakers drew upon the well-established Hollywood subgenre of the college-life film, which in the mid- to late 1920s was reaching its initial peak of cyclical popularity. Much like the story of Harold Lloyd's archetypal character Speedy in *The Freshman* (1925), *Ed's Coed* tells the tale of Ed Williams, a “frosh” who comes to the state university in Eugene, Oregon, in pursuit of an education and a beautiful girl, in this case named Joanne. Ed, from rural timber country, initially struggles to fit in and prove himself among the more sophisticated upperclassmen, who seek to humiliate him through a series of pranks. Thanks, however, to his strength of character and some mad violin skills, Ed (of course) prevails in the end. He wins the girl, the respect of his fellow students, and brotherhood in a choice fraternity.

Existing scholarship of the college-life film has primarily focused on Hollywood's long-standing fascination with the collegiate experience, but the genre was also, not surprisingly, popular with actual college students who, in this era, were beginning to actively engage in making their own movies.⁷ Raley, Nelson, and their classmates were part of a wider and growing community of would-be college filmmakers in the 1920s. The Kinema Club of Cambridge University was one of the earliest known groups, producing their first half-reel drama, *The Witches' Fiddle* in 1924, but by the end of the decade they were joined by college film clubs in the US at Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Colgate, Stanford, the University of Virginia, Amherst, Dartmouth, the University of

Minnesota, and the University of Southern California.⁸ Harvard's club began life shooting 35mm film, but the wider growth in amateur film activity was due in large part to the introduction of Kodak's cheaper 16mm safety film in 1923, along with the associated rapid development of a relatively affordable class of small-gauge cameras and projectors. Compared to the expense and complexity (and flammable dangers) of 35mm film, 16mm, often designated in the period trade press simply as "amateur" film,⁹ significantly lowered the economic and technical barriers for a range of potential new filmmakers. These structural developments were soon followed by institutional and discursive support in the form of the Amateur Cinema League association (ACL) and its network of local amateur cinema clubs around the United States and overseas.¹⁰ The ACL's monthly magazine, *Movie Makers*, which began publishing in 1926, quickly became essential reading for the nonprofessional filmmaker, with news and advice appropriate for all levels of amateur filmmakers. The ACL defined *amateur* broadly to accommodate the myriad of noncommercial film activities taking place at that time. Although amateur film has most often been associated with home movies, amateur filmmaking in the 1920s was far from monolithic.¹¹ The wide range of subject matter included travel, domestic scenes, nature, technical and medical films, and experimental, instructional, and narrative films. Films varied in length from a few minutes to what *Movie Makers* describes as "amateur super-features," films that could run for more than two hours.¹²

While, when finished, *Ed's Coed* would be celebrated by the magazine as one of these rare super features, initially the students planned to shoot what they generically titled "the Campus Movie" on 16mm film to keep costs down, with the primary goal of exhibiting their film in Oregon high schools as a recruitment tool for the university. They originally intended to produce a forty-five-minute film—"an ideal length for an amateur performance"—with two 16mm cameras on a budget of \$500.¹³ In the end, however, *Ed's Coed*, made by "the largest amateur production staff yet recorded," would run seventy-six minutes (the same length as *The Freshman*), cost the equivalent of \$48,000 (in 2019 dollars), and receive positive coverage in Hollywood industry trade journals and fan magazines as well as in newspapers from across the country.¹⁴ The resulting production history of this ambitious cinematic transformation, including the financing, shooting, and marketing of the film, exemplifies what many scholars have observed as the complex interplay between notions of amateur, professional, and commercial that existed in the amateur film community. Melinda Stone and Dan Streible argue that "the utopian and independent impulses of amateurism have been complicated by professional, commercial and official interests from the beginning."¹⁵

Heather Nicholson Norris describes a close and often overlapping relationship between amateurs and professionals in her study of the amateur film movement in the United Kingdom.¹⁶ Likewise, Dwight Swanson notes how the films produced by the local film club in Rochester, New York, “mimicked mainstream cinematic styles” and demonstrated how the filmmakers “were well versed in contemporary film grammar.”¹⁷ While Patricia R. Zimmermann criticizes the ways that amateur film magazines encouraged filmmakers to conform to Hollywood’s mainstream aesthetics,¹⁸ Charles Tepperman argues that a basic proficiency with Hollywood’s narrative and aesthetic techniques enabled amateur filmmakers to adapt them to their own storytelling goals.¹⁹ Crucially, however, *Ed’s Coed* offers up a markedly accomplished film, well beyond “basic proficiency” in its restrained performances, artful plotting, and fluid cinematography, and while historians have typically analyzed the qualities of local amateur film, for various reasons they rarely express much about the quality of a particular film—how good it is. In part this is because critical scholarship does not seek the same types of answers as film criticism, but it’s also because, if truth be told, most local amateur films are, at best, proficiently made. But with *Ed’s Coed*, it is imperative to recognize exactly how and why it ended up so “super,” an aesthetically sophisticated and narratively cohesive “local Hollywood film” made by college students that remained deeply pleasurable to watch by audiences far beyond Oregon’s state boundaries.²⁰ Even though it initially failed to reach those wider audiences and, like many amateur films, fell into obscurity, *Ed’s Coed* is a valuable film to add to the growing body of scholarship on the vital amateur film movement that operated alongside and in conversation with the Hollywood industry and, in particular, films produced by college students, on which relatively little work has been previously focused. In both its qualities and quality, *Ed’s Coed* is productively (un)common, and, ultimately, its differences help denote the boundaries of amateur filmmaking, defining the outer limits of this local cinematic mode, at the end of the silent era.

As the silent era came to a close, F.W. Murnau was widely perceived in Hollywood as “that peer among directors,” and in the late 1920s his movies were often identified as the apotheosis of commercial film’s possibilities as a visually expressive art.²¹ In the summer of 1928, Murnau was creating his newest art in Pendleton, Oregon, in the agricultural expanses of the eastern corner of the state.²² Employed on the crew, helping to build and strike the sets for exteriors of *City Girl* (1929, known prior to release as *Our Daily Bread*), was Carvel Nelson, James Raley’s best friend at the University of Oregon.²³ Raley and Nelson were at Raley’s home in Pendleton for vacation, and the production of *City Girl*, a conscious inversion of *Sunrise* (1927)’s rural/urban melodrama, gave the boys a summer’s worth of access to preeminent performances, sets,

cinematography, and special effects. To less enthusiastic amateurs, experiencing the scale and the scope, and accompanying labor and cost, of a Murnau production might dissuade them from attempting to (re)produce their own feature-length film. However, youth has its advantages, and undeterred by their complete lack of experience or access to equipment, proximity that summer to Hollywood in Oregon led the two young men to think they could produce their own movie.²⁴ As an additional boost, the star of *City Girl*, Charles Farrell, encouraged them and offered advice about how to proceed.²⁵ By the time Raley and Nelson returned to school in Eugene in the fall, they had agreed to give it a try: “We felt that making a picture was feasible, would be an exciting adventure, a lot of fun, and, we hoped, a big money maker,” said Nelson.²⁶ During the fall term Raley and Nelson recruited a core group of other willing students to share in the producing tasks. English literature major Beatrice Milligan joined Raley and Nelson to create a trio of “producing directors” to oversee the project as a whole.²⁷ Ronald Hubbs managed the finances, and Myron Griffin supervised a pool of five student scriptwriters (with assistance from a faculty member). Even company stationery was produced (fig. 2).

By early February, the production personnel had swelled to over fifty students—although they still lacked anyone with actual experience in shooting a film—making *Ed’s Coed* a truly collaborative amateur venture. While this sizeable team was largely structured to mimic the specialized labor divisions of the Hollywood studio system—with crew assigned to specific roles in costuming, props, publicity, and so on—the unusual triumvirate of the film’s producing directors also indicates a more amateur and democratic process. In generating the script, students purposefully set the film in their own geographic location and incorporated a wealth of locally specific details.²⁸ However, the University of Oregon students didn’t want to make an insular local movie; on the contrary, they aspired to make a popular feature-length narrative fiction film that would

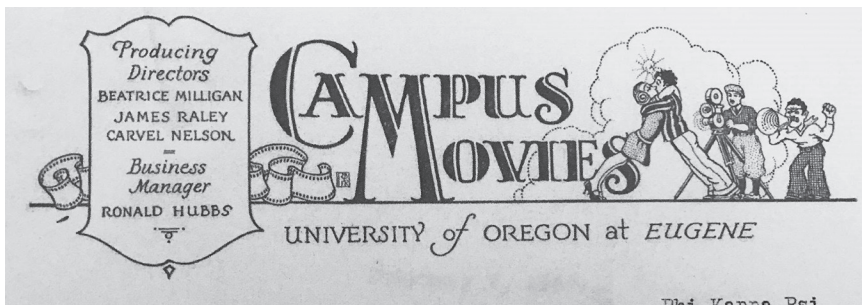


Fig. 2: Campus Movie letterhead from stationery used to write to Cecil B. DeMille.

attract exhibitors (and audiences) beyond their campus and hopefully make a profit in commercial theaters.

While campus mythology about the film suggests that at this point, in the early spring of 1929, the students wrote to DeMille for advice, and he subsequently offered them both a 35mm camera and his cinematographer, documentation from the DeMille archive shows that the Hollywood director was merely approached for a job reference after McBride and the students had already met. It makes sense that, of all the work involved in producing a film, it would be the cinematography that would give the students most pause to proceed on their own, and while it's unknown whether McBride approached the students, or if the students sought out professional help and hired McBride, regardless, the result of their meeting was mutually satisfying and critical to the film's final results (fig. 3).

The first result of bringing McBride on board was the decision to shoot in 35mm film, which the campus newspaper announced proudly, "means ... that the movie can be shown in any standard theater and that when it carries its Oregon-directed, Oregon-filmed, Oregon-acted motion picture over the state it can 'hold its head up' along with any other production."²⁹ The language used in



Fig. 3: Some of the cast and crew, including James McBride (no. 4), wearing cap and glasses. (University Archives Photographs, UA Ref 3, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon Libraries, Eugene, OR)

the article to describe the “upgrade” from “amateur” to 35mm film highlights the students’ pride in being a regionally specific, nonprofessional production that, at the same time, could create something indistinguishable from a Hollywood film. Beyond the size of the negative, it was the knowledge and concerted efforts of McBride, the only compensated member of the crew, that resulted in the film’s professional aesthetic that belies its otherwise amateur circumstances. McBride, however, was not actually DeMille’s cinematographer. Union records show that he was qualified as a “Second” or “Second Unit” cameraman.³⁰ By 1929, McBride had served in these positions on Hollywood movies for eight years, working on DeMille’s *Feet of Clay* (1924), *The Volga Boatman* (1926), *King of Kings* (1927), *The Godless Girl* (1929), as well as a college-themed romance, *West Point* (1928), directed by Edward Sedgwick.³¹ The second unit, which works away from, and often semi-independently of, the first-team production crew, is perhaps one of the least historicized standard operational elements of the classical studio system. However, the Oregon students could not have done better for their otherwise nonprofessional production than in hiring a young cameraman trained in second-unit photography. While D. W. Griffith was likely one of the earliest of American directors to delegate responsibilities to a second unit, it came into regular use in Hollywood beginning in the 1920s with the rise in popularity of both action-oriented serials and the western. The art of the second unit, which is charged with efficiently producing a wide range of supplementary footage, including establishing shots, stunt-oriented action sequences, inserts, and cutaways, is a subtle one, but crucial to a film’s consistent atmosphere and tone. Notably, many of the more celebrated moments of silent-era cinematography, such as the iconic chariot race in *Ben Hur* (1925), were produced by second-unit directors and their cameramen. McBride would have worked primarily for and with Arthur Rosson (who later would direct the cattle stampede in Howard Hawks’s *Red River* in 1948), DeMille’s second-unit chief throughout the twenties, and widely considered one of the best in Hollywood.³²

The lessons McBride would have learned shooting with Rosson—how to economically create aesthetically pleasing and consistently evocative images that seamlessly serve the larger narrative—were made quickly apparent to the Oregon students, who noted that McBride really knew his “cinema onions.”³³ As a result, the student-producers treated his ideas and contributions as a major asset rather than something that compromised the amateur spirit of the production. Conversely, McBride appears to have been energized by the students’ untrained enthusiasm and was more than willing to engage in wide-scale on-the-job training for much of the inexperienced crew, something a better-established professional might have found considerably trying. The film’s title credits indicate that *Ed’s Coed* was “Planned, plotted, played, pictured by

Students of the University of Oregon,” with McBride listed simply as a technical supervisor. However, McBride’s influence penetrated nearly every aspect of the production and indicates the extent his professional expertise helped shaped the film’s success. After coordinating the rental of a professional-quality film camera from Hollywood, a Bell & Howell reported to be worth \$3,500, “he shot all of our pictures, often acted as a script writer and director, found a firm that would develop our film, and a dozen other things that go with making a movie picture,” wrote Ronald Hubbs.³⁴ Carvel Nelson, reminiscing much later in life, went even further in his praise of McBride: “It was actually Jim McBride who made the Campus Movie ... He did the camera work, directed the action, managed reflector lighting, soothed hurt feelings, improvised and built reflection, filters and other needed equipment, ‘rewrote’ script on set to accommodate weather conditions, tantrums, and no-show actors. His consideration and patience were beyond belief and he enjoyed the full respect of every person involved in the production.”³⁵

One consistent characteristic of silent-era second-unit cinematography is that, overwhelmingly, it is made up of exteriors, shot on location with little or no use of artificial light. For McBride’s work on *Ed’s Coed*, an amateur production with no budget or access to the kinds of lighting required to properly expose 35mm film, this extensive experience shooting outdoors proved to be of significant benefit. It is likely not accidental that almost forty years later Nelson would still remember McBride’s use of reflector lighting, because according to an interview in the student newspaper, McBride believed that “tin foil and aluminum are as necessary to the campus movie as grease paint and glycerin tears.”³⁶ With the exception of one scene, the entire film was shot outdoors, and McBride had the students build twenty-five different reflectors “of various shapes and sizes,” as well as a range of other “scrimms and screens” including a large “butterfly” of white muslin, which when stretched above the actors softened daylight and reduced exposure (fig. 4).³⁷

Both how-to cinematography manuals of the period and *Movie Makers* magazine regularly suggest the use of inexpensive reflectors to better create and balance light in amateur productions, but, in the end, how they’re employed constitutes the difference between exposure and art. Image consistency, in both composition and exposure, is a hallmark of professional photography, and *Ed’s Coed* provides this aesthetic dependability to such a degree that it would be difficult to differentiate it from many Hollywood films of the period. However, the filmmakers, largely through the efforts of McBride, also consistently reach moments throughout the film that go beyond basic shot functionality to produce evocative story-driven imagery, a Hollywood ideal rarely within the grasp of most amateur productions.

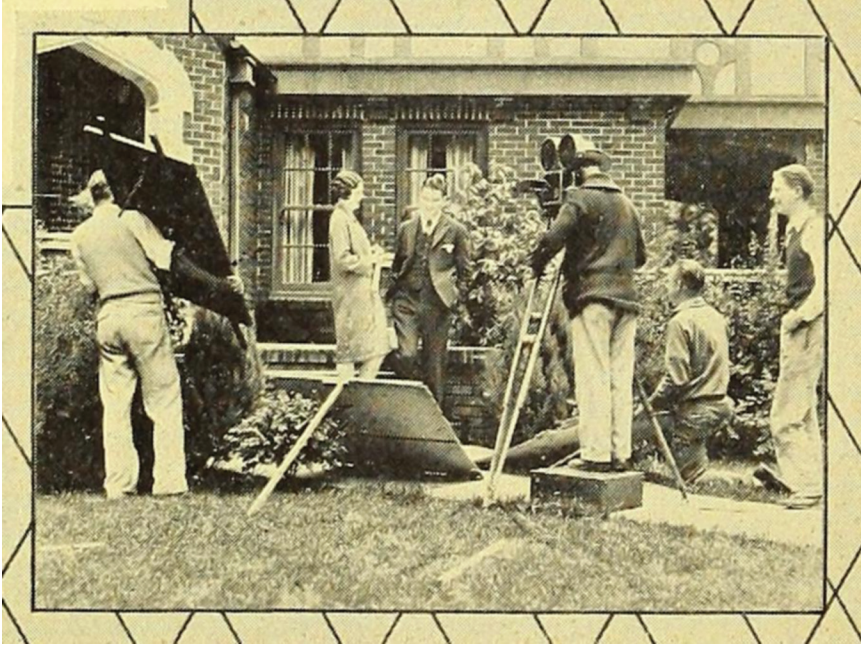


Fig. 4: Use of multiple reflector boards in *Ed's Coed* (*Movie Makers* 5, no. 6 [June 1930]: 352)

Second-unit cameramen often have the authority to search for shots—to wait for the light—and throughout the film McBride appears to have strategically utilized the campus environment to create images that further the narrative, while simultaneously enhancing pictorial beauty and establishing a mood. The millrace stream at the edge of the campus is the site of several of these types of moments in the film. The millrace was built at the turn of the twentieth century as an industrial transport system in Eugene to bring lumber and other goods to the mills and trains downtown. By 1929, however, the millrace had shifted in purpose to become a place for canoe parties, tug-of-war competitions, and amorous encounters.

In one scene from the film, in which Joanne is being wooed in a canoe by one of her potential paramours, McBride and the crew utilize a jury-rigged camera platform (fig. 5) to produce an extended medium moving shot that stays framed on Joanne as the shadows from the leafy trees on the banks of the millrace slowly cross her face, creating a dappled-light mood of languid romance that heightens the narrative (fig. 6). In both the ability to create, out of materials at hand, a steady moving camera apparatus, and the awareness to utilize natural light for expressive means, McBride literally balanced Hollywood sensibilities with his available amateur resources.



Fig. 5: Shooting on the millrace. (University Archives Photographs, UA Ref 3, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon Libraries, Eugene, OR)



Fig. 6: Millrace

Throughout the film, Dorothy Burke, who plays Joanne, is typically photographed by McBride, particularly in close-ups, with the “gentler contrasts and lighter tonalities” associated with feminine photography portraiture of this period.³⁸ In terms of cinematography, this soft style was exemplified in the late 1920s by the work of professional cameramen Charles Rosher and Karl Struss, who coincidentally had worked in tandem to shoot Murnau’s *Sunrise*. According to lighting historian Patrick Keating, Rosher and Struss had the ability to produce a soft close-up through a combination of lighting diffusion, double keying of lights to smooth out the actor’s features, and soft focus of the camera’s lens, typically produced through diffusion placed directly in front of the lens elements.³⁹ McBride had no lights at all but instead employed “reflectors covered in aluminum paint as it has a softening effect” for his close-ups of Burke.⁴⁰ Although professional glass diffusion filters were available and could have potentially been rented by the student filmmakers to place in front of their camera, it’s more likely that McBride exploited a well-known, less expensive and more readily available alternative: a silk stocking stretched tight over lens.⁴¹ McBride’s lighting and lens softening, techniques that (re)produced Hollywood ideals of femininity and glamour, led to an image of Burke that perfectly aligns with the film’s narrative of Joanne as an ingénue worthy of Ed’s pursuit (fig. 7).



Fig. 7: Joanne in love

Like male leads in all good romantic comedies, to achieve his goals and win Joanne's affections, Ed must first overcome a number of obstacles, including his scheming cousin, Les Williams (played by James Lyons). If the film's photography stylishly matches classical Hollywood conventions of the era, one notable scene, with Les at its center, can perhaps be better understood as more expressionistic than expressive in its camerawork. One of the film's major subplots involves Les stealing a crystal gazing ball from the dean in an attempt to set up the university's beloved track star as a dastardly thief. However, Ed catches Les and nobly takes the blame so that Les, already on double probation, won't be kicked out of school. Ed is, of course, widely ostracized by the student body and Joanne. A two-shot sequence at this point begins normally enough with Les staring into the glass orb, but the second shot, or more accurately effects shot(s), expressionistically represents Les's tortured soul, or at least his anxiety over being caught. McBride chooses to create a triple exposure, marrying a close-up of the globe in Les's hand with a ghostly Les in a wide shot being persecuted for his crimes on the steps of his fraternity, first by Ed, and then by an increasing mob of wrathful coeds, until finally, grasping his head in agony, Les moves directly toward the lens, dissolving away just as he fills the frame, and the shot cuts back to the more earth-bound version of Les ready to plot his next move (fig. 8). In many ways, the short sequence is excessive, in both expressionistic performance style and cinematography more fitting of a Murnau film than the rest of *Ed's Coed*. In this sense, it disrupts the larger established conventions of the college-life romantic comedy, and its placement in the film could be considered amateur—McBride showing off his technical capabilities with no larger studio structure or powers to object. At the same time, the results are visually sophisticated and effectively set up the penultimate scene of the film, when Les confesses, and Ed is recognized for his gallantry.

McBride had worked on at least one other college-life film, *West Point* (1928), and his experience on that Hollywood film and his narrative sensibilities may also have had a role in the effective shaping of the *Ed's Coed* story with its classic interweaving of the film's central story and subplots. McBride's strong opinions about the qualities of good storytelling went against what he saw as the clichéd commercialism of Hollywood, but he acknowledged the need to satisfy audiences. There are too many happy endings, he argued in an interview with the student newspaper, but producers had to deliver them or audiences wouldn't go see the pictures. "The producer gets blamed for making pictures with no depth and no art, when in reality it is the public which forces him to do this. In Europe it's different," he continued. "Motion pictures have as much art as literature or the stage has, but in America, where the average mental age of the movie fan is fifteen, pictures have to be the same old thing."⁴² *Ed's Coed*



Fig. 8: Driven mad by guilt

follows a standard boy-meets-girl narrative and delivers a happy ending, but the story also reflects McBride and the student-producers' awareness of the generic limitations of the well-established Hollywood college-life film.

The majority of Hollywood movies about college in the 1920s focused primarily on football or other intercollegiate sport as a way to structure the plot around an exciting "big game" climax.⁴³ Although *Ed's Coed* does not center on athletic achievement, as in *The Freshman* (1925), *The Quarterback* (1926), *College Days* (1926), and *The College Hero* (1927), the story otherwise follows a similar narrative trajectory that echoes these Hollywood movies. A naïve young man comes to college and enters a social minefield for which he is ill prepared. Thus, when the hero of *Ed's Coed* initially arrives on campus, other students immediately mock his appearance. "My breath comes in short pants," laughs one girl at the sight of Ed's high-water trousers as he steps off the bus. Two sophomores purposely misdirect him to a sorority house instead of the administration building to register for classes, and a housemother chases him out with a broom while a crowd of students laugh. While Harold Lloyd in *The Freshman* (1925) and Buster Keaton in *College* (1927) struggle to make the team, help win the big game, and impress the girl, Ed has to navigate hazing and humiliations to learn how to play the game of college social life. Instead of the football field, Ed



Fig. 9: Ed woos Joanne with his violin, not on the football field. (University Archives Photographs, UA Ref 3, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon Libraries, Eugene, OR)

proves himself on the dance floor, and he woos Joanne by playing his violin in the shadows outside her sorority house window (fig. 9). With or without sports, all of these protagonists traverse a similar path to success: through a combination of pluck and luck (and many wacky hijinks along the way), they manage to prove their worth and earn a place of respect at school.

It could easily be assumed that the big football game storyline—requiring outfitted athletes, lots of extras in the stands, and access to the stadium—was left out of *Ed's Coed* because of the logistical and financial limitations, but evidence shows this is not the case. Rather, the student filmmakers were aligned with a broader collegiate rejection in the late 1920s of “football as played in the [Hollywood] movies,” increasingly visible in both the trades and college newspaper editorials.⁴⁴ Complaints about the movies focused on representational inaccuracies, such as “pretty heroines running around the locker-room” and the “hero being carried off the field with flowers strung around his neck,” but the broader issue at stake was the genre’s “remarkable and embarrassing picture of college life presented ... to the public.”⁴⁵

Oregon’s filmmakers, working in this critical environment, therefore made a conscious decision to depart from some of the disparaged tropes

associated with college-themed films in the 1920s, further reinforcing the intertextual dialogue between amateur film projects and the Hollywood industry. “It is *not* the average college hero football story; Dorothy Burke, who is the leading lady, isn’t a blond, and ... Verne Elliot, who is the much abused freshman ... plays the violin.”⁴⁶ Crewmember and head of publicity, Myron M. Griffin, described it this way: “In preparing the story an effort was made to get away from the usual type of motion picture of college life. The student producers tried to represent university life as sincerely as possible, feeling that the collegiate actually experiences enough thrills and romance to make an interesting picture, without the addition of hokum. The last-minute-to-play climax was not included, for the hero of the story is not an athlete! Nor does the picture feature wild and wicked parties which temporarily ensnare the heroine. *Ed’s Co-ed* is simply a picturization of the joys and problems of the average undergraduate, made interesting by attention to detail rather than by inclusion of elaborate spectacles.”⁴⁷

Nonetheless, revisions to the screenplay show how in preproduction the story evolved to become less focused on Oregon-specific details and more universal in its appeal to audiences. The production history of *Ed’s Coed*, as an amateur local film with designs for commercial exhibition beyond its immediate locale, tells of constant attempts to balance its local specificity with broader generic necessities. For instance, the original opening scene of the film was to have been a re-creation of the university’s Shine Day, when junior men shine the shoes of seniors. The scene featured junior class president George Moorad shining the military boots of senior class president Francis McKenna in front of the Commerce Building in the center of campus.⁴⁸ At this point in the production time line, the film was still referred to as “the Campus Movie.” This name and the proposed opening scene indicate the Oregonian narrowness of the original structure of the film. Starting the film with a focus on campus activities unique to the university limited its appeal beyond the Eugene campus. Soon the film’s official title became *Green*, which it carried for several months. The new title highlighted the film’s theme of an inexperienced freshman navigating college for the first time, and it had the benefit of playing on the school’s colors of green and yellow, but it was still too general. Once the student-producers settled on *Ed’s Coed* as the title, the story sharpened its emphasis to focus on a single, relatable character, closely aligning it with established Hollywood narrative conventions. Rather than opening with a scene of arcane campus traditions, the finished film begins with Ed at his sawmill in rural Oregon, as he contemplates whether or not to go to college. This storytelling strategy encourages the audience to sympathize with Ed from the start and to root for him throughout the story. The audience, wherever it is located, can identify with an individual and his struggles to fit in and, ultimately, succeed. Without a hero to cheer for, the

obscure campus traditions are just an amusing spectacle without any special significance.

At the same time, as a proudly “Oregon-directed, Oregon-filmed, Oregon-acted motion picture,” *Ed’s Coed* is coupled with a specific regional landscape and adheres to the focus on local settings and topics characteristic of many amateur films.⁴⁹ The University of Oregon campus in Eugene is located in the fertile Willamette Valley, midway between Portland in the north and Medford in the south. In 1929 with a population of 18,000 people, Eugene was the third-largest city in the state after Portland and Salem.⁵⁰ The city’s economy relied on rich and extensive agricultural and timber industries. Approximately a hundred sawmills were located in the region, and Oregon was second only to Washington in nationwide lumber production in the 1920s.⁵¹ The timber industry is an implicit and explicit component of the *Ed’s Coed* story, with young Ed actually the owner of a small sawmill. The film’s opening scene takes place at his mill, which, according to the intertitles, is “gnawing in its small way into the vast forests of Oregon” (fig. 10).



Fig. 10: Ed, “tall and straight as a Douglas fir,” at his sawmill. (University Archives Photographs, UA Ref 3, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon Libraries, Eugene, OR)

The student scriptwriters designed Ed's character to embody the direct and noble connection to the land; the introductory intertitles tell us Ed is "tall and straight as a Douglas fir." The acres of old-growth forest in Oregon must have seemed endlessly abundant in the early twentieth century, and no doubt many of the students at the university were able to attend college either directly or indirectly because of the robust timber economy in the state. *Ed's Coed* reflects the economic changes already in motion in the late 1920s, particularly as they relate to the rising college attendance of the middle class. The film presents Ed as a hard-working young man, but he leaves the mill to attend the university in order to learn the business skills to improve and expand the sawmill so that he can spend more time playing his violin. Education for Ed is a means of economic and class mobility. He could progress from being a working man, who, in Hollywood fashion, happens to actually own the mill, to become someone with the leisure time to enjoy high-culture activities. Nonetheless, throughout the film Ed's connection to the land signifies his stalwart nature. Unlike his wealthy (if always seemingly broke) and effete cousin Lester, Ed stands apart from the social games, deceit, and disloyalty he encounters at college. The message seems to be that Oregonians should remember the values of their pioneer heritage, even while striving for a more comfortable, middle-class life.

One of the positive impacts of the timber industry in Oregon was a middle- and upper-middle-class population with the means to send their children to the university. As a public institution, tuition and fees were rather modest at the University of Oregon in 1929, about \$60 per year.⁵² Nonetheless, amateur filmmaking in the 1920s was a hobby primarily for the well-to-do, and so not surprisingly, most of the earliest college film clubs originated in the Ivy League. Even though 16mm film stock and equipment were relatively cheaper than 35mm film production, filmmaking was still an expensive pursuit limited to individuals and groups with plenty of financial resources.⁵³ The cost of a feature-length film produced on 35mm film was an expense that none of the student filmmakers or their families could finance on their own. No original documents have survived from the production, but most contemporaneous news reports set the production budget at about \$3,500, the equivalent of about \$48,000 in 2019 dollars.⁵⁴ With a crew comprised almost entirely of volunteers, the film stock and developing represented a majority of the production costs. The students shot approximately 20,000 feet of standard panchromatic film and edited it down to about 8,000 feet in the final released version.⁵⁵ The cost would have been between \$2,000 and \$2,800, using *American Cinematographer's* estimate of a cost of ten to twelve cents for every foot of a finished print.⁵⁶ The remaining funds were likely spent on renting the professional-quality camera for the three months of shooting and paying James McBride. "The money

business was, of course, difficult,” remembered Ron Hubbs. “We were always running with our tongue hanging out because we hadn’t appreciated the unanticipated costs.”⁵⁷ Initially, the production fund grew to \$2,000 thanks to a loan from the university and subscriptions from students who believed in the worth of the endeavor.⁵⁸ “Those who subscribed to the enterprise were members of the [film production] organization, other students or family members,” wrote Hubbs.⁵⁹ Several faculty and staff also contributed to the production. Thus, the production team was driven by a financial motive that many amateurs could ignore; the student-producers of *Ed’s Coed* needed to earn back enough money to repay their investors, many of whom were fellow students and members of the film crew, as well as faculty from whom they received their grades.

With the money business always a concern, the student-producers took the initiative to employ a number of creative approaches to finance the film. The most effective of their strategies also served the dual purpose of promoting the film and building an enthusiastic local audience. When successful, such practices, as Martin Johnson has noted, allowed local filmmakers to turn “the very process of making a motion picture into a spectacle” itself.⁶⁰ The largest scale and most productive of these events for the Oregonians was a series of screen tests shot in February 1929, which both raised money and awareness about the film, and ensured enthusiastic ticket sales months later when the film premiered (fig. 11). While the tests also had the benefit of allowing the student-producers to see hundreds of potential actors, all the major roles were already cast, so the tests were, in reality, more about promotion and fund-raising than talent acquisition. The production team held screen tests for all comers in the large athletic arena on campus. For two days, McArthur Court (a.k.a. the Igloo) was thronged with hundreds of students who lined up to get their chance to be in the movie. Over 530 students and three house mothers paid fifty cents apiece for their test, consisting of five feet of 16mm film which the would-be actors got to keep after it was screened for casting.⁶¹ Fifty students assisted with the process, including camera operators, stenographers, call boys, makeup artists, and timers. The makeup crew alone had a staff of twenty-five people.⁶²

The production team had made an aggressive push to encourage students to participate in the screen tests. They placed signs around the campus that read “Have you had your screen test today?” and “Ask the man who’s had one.” The day before the screen tests, the production staff visited every sorority, fraternity, and dormitory on campus to announce the screen tests and to urge “100 percent turnout.” Arlen McCarty, the student director of screen tests, assured students that anyone who had a screen test would appear in the finished film, but that the screen tests themselves would remain private for the production team’s eyes only.⁶³ Despite the pledge of privacy, there was enough of a crowd at the showing

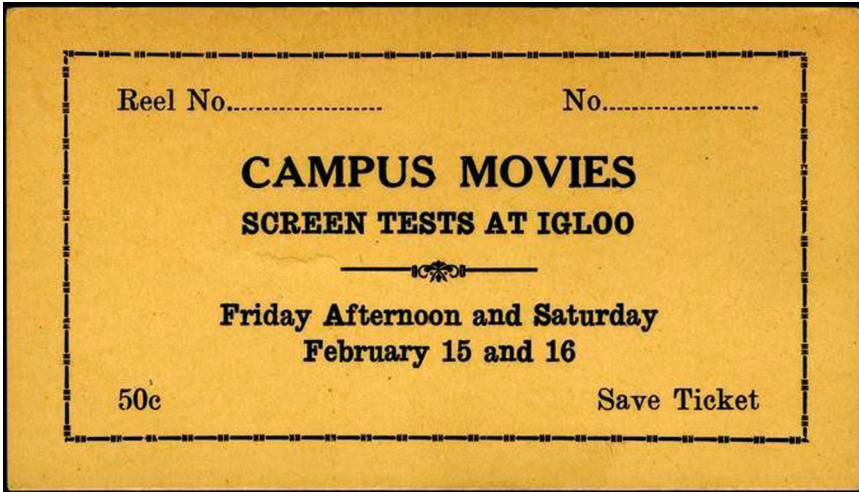


Fig. 11: Ticket for student screen test. (University Archives Photographs, UA Ref 3, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon Libraries, Eugene, OR)

to generate a snarky review, that is, publicity piece, in the college newspaper, the *Oregon Daily Emerald*. The audience “hissed and boomed and clapped and hollered [*sic*].” One aspiring actress was described as “the most pathetic looking face that ever a child who had been beaten and starved could have.” According to the anonymous reviewer, the men looked better on film than the women “possibly because [the men] were large and most of the girls looked too thin.”⁶⁴

The *Oregon Daily Emerald* newspaper had a story, news item, or photograph about the film virtually every day between January and June 1929, largely because four of the film production crew members also had prominent positions on the newspaper staff.⁶⁵ With the access and ability to produce content about the film’s production, the student filmmaker/journalists were able to consistently foreground *Ed’s Coed* as a dynamic part of daily campus life. Even a break in the typically rainy spring weather that had hampered filming was worthy of a front-page story in the *Emerald*: “Mac’ [James McBride] doesn’t mind a bit if the bright sun freckles his nose. He won’t even object to a sunburned neck. All he asks of the sun is—shine” so he could keep “making cinematic hay.”⁶⁶ One promotional/production tactic the filmmakers used frequently was to solicit students as extras for the crowd scenes, who would in turn buy tickets to see themselves onscreen when the movie finally came out. Throughout April and May, the production staff placed daily notices in the campus newspaper notifying the movie cast and other interested extras of scenes being shot each day. On May 17, for example, the “Campus Movie Call List” instructed several of the main cast members to show up as well as “5 freshmen with lids” and “9 Order

of the ‘O’ men” to shoot the “library steps sequence” in which Ed is paddled for not wearing a green hat and other freshman offenses.⁶⁷ McBride was quoted as “want[ing] a large crowd around the steps,” which the finished sequence, replete with willing undergrads, shows the crew clearly got.⁶⁸ Amateur films, and low-budget films more generally, often suffer from a lack of “background,” extras to realistically fill in onscreen public spaces, but *Ed’s Coed’s* promotional team’s ability to sustain student interest in the production meant there would be well-filled frames throughout the film (fig. 12).

Student filmmakers’ access to publicity in their university’s newspaper was not unusual for college filmmakers of the era, and these student-run papers offer a potential wealth of information about student film production in this era. But the Oregonians proved unusually adept at drawing attention to their film from far beyond Eugene and Oregon. The film was mentioned multiple times in *Movie Makers*, whose regular monthly column on the activities of amateur clubs often featured *Ed’s Coed* during the spring and fall of 1929.⁶⁹ Again, other college film clubs also received occasional write-ups in the amateur-oriented magazine; however, few, if any, others were able to break into national trades like *Variety* and fan magazines, including *Photoplay*, one of the period’s most



Fig. 12: Dozens of student extras fill the background of tug-of-war scene. (University Archives Photographs, UA Ref 3, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon Libraries, Eugene, OR)

popular weeklies about movies and their stars.⁷⁰ Nestled in between a photo spread and article about the fabulous homes of Hollywood celebrities and gossip from the studios, a column featured a description of the Oregon film production, along with photographs of collegiate stars Dorothy Burke (“Joanne”), Phyllis Van Kimmel (“Midge”), and Bill Overstreet (“Bill”).⁷¹

A significant aspect of the publicity generated around the film was the way the filmmakers were able to discursively elevate their amateur *Ed's Coed* actors into celebrities in the same way fan magazines treated Hollywood actors. Throughout filming in the spring of 1929, the campus newspaper promoted these previously regular students as singular creatures who deserved special attention and privileges. In May, for example, a local airplane company, Hobi Airways, invited the core cast for free scenic rides over Eugene in one of their airplanes. The *Oregon Daily Emerald* and the town's newspaper ran large photographs of the event in multiple issues, with text referring to the students as “movie stars.” The students rode out to the airfield in a new Chevrolet convertible coupe and posed for publicity photos. “Being accustomed to posing before the camera, they paused a moment to be ‘shot’ before taking to the air.”⁷²

A breezy profile of Dorothy Burke in the *Emerald* later that month elevated her as a remote and distinctive celebrity while disclosing personal details that made her seem as normal and knowable as any other student at the university. The story disclosed her preference for dancing, tennis, and dark-haired men with a good sense of humor. Her favorite actress was Dolores Del Rio, Portland was her hometown, and she could make “marvelous toasted cheese sandwiches.” The reporter assured readers not to worry about Dorothy getting spoiled like other movie actresses, however. When the reporter interviewed her, Dorothy was “all curled up in a chair, hugging her knees,” with a hot-water bottle on the bed and pink slippers on her feet. Unlike the pretentious movie stars, “she hasn't a poodle, an accent, or a line of bunk about dieting.”⁷³ The tone and language mirrors the “stars—they're just like us” rhetoric of studio publicity departments, but turns it on its head as if to say, “this one of us is just like a star.”

Logically, the discursive surround for most local amateur films is geographically limited to the locale from which the film is derived, at least in their original moment of reception. The *Ed's Coed* crew, because of their extensive experience on the *Emerald* and their desire for a larger commercial arena for the film's exhibition, understood the vital role of the newspaper, as what Richard Abel has described as “a cultural partner for the movies.” As a result, they were able to successfully navigate and insert themselves into an already well-established syndicated content system that delivered prewritten content about the movies and participants to newspapers nationwide.⁷⁴ Unusually for their amateur and local status, on more than one occasion, syndicated articles about

Ed's Coed appeared in papers across the country, in both big cities and small towns. The "small town girl discovered" was already a well-worn if still potent Hollywood trope in 1929 when the Oregonians sophisticatedly parlayed it into a syndicated piece on the "discovery" of Helen Allen, one of the film's supporting ingénues. Newspapers from Helena, Montana, to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, reported the tale of how McBride "caught sight of her" while walking on campus and, after a screen test, cast Allen as a "leading character in the film."⁷⁵ Another short piece that began life in the *Emerald* but which was also syndicated at least across Oregon, focused on one of the "Campus Movie Head[s]," Beatrice Milligan.⁷⁶ Milligan, a young woman who was from Eugene, was initially listed as one of the film's three "producing directors," suggestive of an unusually egalitarian leadership structure in terms of gender for the amateur film. As late as April of 1929, Milligan continued to be recognized in the student paper for her "directing work," however, without any explanation, her name disappears from all reports after that, and she is simply credited as one of the many "production staff" in the final film itself.⁷⁷ Student women had numerous crew roles throughout the amateur production, but, with the exception of Milligan, most appear to have worked within the subfields, such as makeup, costumes, and publicity, that were by the late 1920s increasingly the only opportunities for women working within the professional studio system.⁷⁸

Ed's Coed was obviously not a product of the studio system, but its initial showing, on homecoming weekend, November 15, 1929, locally mirrored a Hollywood-style premiere at the biggest, most luxurious movie house in town, the 1,400-seat McDonald theater on Willamette Street. Tickets, which cost \$1.25 apiece, quickly sold out for the Friday midnight matinee, so another showing was offered on Saturday.⁷⁹ The gala event included a cabaret set with music and dancing numbers on stage before the film, as well as appearances by the university's president, the mayor of Eugene, and the governor of Oregon himself, Paul Patterson.⁸⁰ The souvenir program was a four-page letterpress booklet with all of the production's key personnel listed, plus a few frames of original film pasted inside.⁸¹

In December 1929 the Fox-Hollywood theater in Portland booked *Ed's Coed* for a three-day run, and the film also went to Raley's hometown of Pendleton for successful screenings there.⁸² After this brief, triumphant, Hollywood-like release period, however, the film couldn't find a commercial audience. The student producers had planned all along to exhibit the movie throughout the state of Oregon, and even beyond, but that didn't pan out, distribution arguably being one of the primary institutional barriers to even the best made of amateur films. Business manager Ronald Hubbs blamed it on bad timing; *Ed's Coed* came out when most movie theaters were increasingly focused

on booking sound pictures. “If they had any interest at all, they generally wanted a discount or guarantee of their costs or some other consideration that was unaffordable to us. Consequently, our anticipated income was devastatingly small compared with what we expected in the days of the silent screen,” wrote Hubbs. Film sound was still an emerging technology in 1929, and it would have added too many more layers of expense and complication to the *Ed’s Coed* production. James Raley and Carvel Nelson had some reason to believe that a silent film could still be profitable in commercial theaters in 1929. Recall that Nelson was a member of the crew on F. W. Murnau’s picture *Our Daily Bread*, which was made as a silent only one year earlier in the summer of 1928. However, Murnau’s film also actually suffered in this liminal moment of technology and culture and was, like *Ed’s Coed*, unable to adjust to the new reality of sound movies. Although the Fox Film Corp. studio had the financial resources to re-edit and re-release *Our Daily Bread* in 1930 as a sound film under the title *City Girl*, it was largely perceived as a failed hybrid and was never widely distributed.⁸³

After *Ed’s Coed*’s limited run in Oregon theaters, it initially disappeared from view, as did most amateur local films, which were usually only seen and remembered by the people who made them. *Ed’s Coed* had a few revival screenings in the 1930s at the Colonial theater in Eugene, probably because George Godfrey, one of the faculty production advisors, was a partner in the theater.⁸⁴ Following the Eugene premiere, Godfrey had taken the film to the Colonial and stored it there. New owners affiliated with the Heilig theater chain acquired the Colonial and relocated *Ed’s Coed* to the Heilig on Willamette Street.⁸⁵ During a remodeling project in 1952, employees at the Heilig stumbled across the nitrate film cans. The film then made its way to the Portland home of Dorothy Burke Rice, who played Joanne in the film. She worried about the safety of having the flammable film in her house and was anxious to get it out. Her husband, banker Milton W. Rice, worked with the University of Oregon Library to have the film transferred to 16mm safety film in the late 1950s. According to donor files in University Archives, several copies were made for other members of the cast and crew and for the library. The new 16mm negative went into the library’s University Archives, and the original 35mm print was destroyed. In these notes Carvel Nelson claimed that the student-producers only had one 35mm exhibition print of the film made, and the original 35mm negative was reportedly destroyed by fire in a Portland photography studio.

The unlikely survival of *Ed’s Coed* is part of the film’s remarkable story, and it serves as a strong reminder that while our impulse may be to compartmentalize modes of film practice, films were rarely consumed or produced in such singular ways, even when they are derived from well-established institutional patterns and generic archetypes. This is particularly true for amateur

local films, by very definition diverse and decentralized products. Confronting the multiplicity and the sheer number of these non-Hollywood films made across time and space, historiographically scholars can often be faced with a kind of dialectical balancing act. On the one hand, scholars must work to synthesize from the varying traces of thousands of films an understanding of what is “general in the unique.”⁸⁶ On the other hand, they must remain open to recovering an individual film’s inimitable worth and potential to be positioned for what nontheatrical scholars Marsha Gordon and Allyson Nadia Field have described as “canonical retrieval.”⁸⁷ *Ed’s Coed* is worthy of our attention simply as a surviving representative of a subcategory of amateur local filmmaking, college-life films made by college students, that remains underhistoricized and hidden across a broad range of institutions and archives. Student-made films have not been systematically preserved and cataloged, even after formal film-school programs began. While, unlike most amateur films, these types of works were typically produced in close approximation to libraries and archives, even when they have been saved, little work has been done to locate and contextualize them within film’s broader histories.⁸⁸ Unlike the histories of the itinerant professional cameramen who moved from town to town repeatedly producing the local Hollywood films that Johnson has recovered, films of the type *Ed’s Coed* generically represents were produced by a much different cadre of transitory and largely untrained, if highly energetic, filmmakers. The resulting student works collectively need to be included and better understood within the growing diverse assemblage that encompasses amateur local filmmaking. Excavating the myriad histories of student filmmaking requires different kinds of detective work and labor than traditional film research methods, and while sources like college newspapers can present significant challenges to access, as evident in this particular film’s history, they offer the potential to provide meaningful context and insight into the production. At the same time, *Ed’s Coed* isn’t a simple case of inexperienced but precocious college youth magically producing an accomplished feature-length film. The unlikely confluence of the influential experiences of Raley and Nelson on Murnau’s Oregon set with the fortuitous availability and subsequent engagement of a young, hungry, and talented Hollywood cameraman resulted in what is in many ways an exemplary film. *Ed’s Coed* ultimately, however, is to be remembered as much for its seeming contradictions—an amateur film with commercial intentions made by a neophyte crew helmed by an accomplished professional—as for its expressive photography and skillful fidelity to Hollywood’s narrative and aesthetic conventions.

Notes

1. While McBride and others mention that he was in the Pacific Northwest to recuperate, his actual infirmity remains unknown. Tuberculosis was still a significant disease in the 1920s in the US, and fresh air and removal from crowded city environments was often prescribed for its sufferers. McBride eventually died from colon cancer in 1950 at age forty-nine (James Frank McBride, death certificate, 4 March 1950, file no. 50-180441, Federal Security Agency, Public Health Service, Utah).
2. Correspondence between James McBride, Ronald Hubbs, James Raley, and Cecil B. DeMille. All documents from folder 8, box 52, MSS 1400, Cecil B. DeMille Collection, L. Tom Perry Special Collections Library, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.
3. News articles and promotional materials used two different spelling variations for the film's title, one with a hyphen in *coed* and one without. The title credits on the actual film itself do not use a hyphen, so that is the version we have chosen to use in this article. *Ed's Coed*, directed by James Raley and Carvel Nelson (1929; Eugene, OR: University of Oregon Cinema Studies, University of Oregon School of Music and Dance, and the University of Oregon Libraries, 2014), DVD.
4. Martin L. Johnson, *Main Street Movies: The History of Local Film in the United States* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018). See also Dwight Swanson, "Inventing Amateur Film: Marion Norris Gleason, Eastman Kodak and the Rochester Scene, 1921–1932," *Film History* 15, no. 2 (2003): 126–36.
5. E. H. Carr, *What is History?* (New York: Vintage, 1961).
6. Johnson, *Main Street Movies*, 114–15.
7. Wiley Lee Umphlett, *The Movies Go to College: Hollywood and the World of the College-Life Film* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1984).
8. Frederick James Smith, Amateur Movies, *Photoplay* 36, no. 6 (1929): 72, 122. For example, Stanford University's Amateur Motion Picture Club produced *The Fast Male* in 1928 on 16mm film; see "Stanford Technique," *Movie Makers* 3, no. 7 (July 1928): 456. A copy of the film still survives in the Stanford University Film Collection, Department of Special Collections and University Archives.
9. H. Cyril Dusenberg, "Standard and Sub-standard Film for Amateur," *American Cinematographer*, October 1926, 11.
10. Swanson. "Inventing Amateur Film."
11. Charles Tepperman, *Amateur Cinema: The Rise of North American Moviemaking, 1923–1960* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015); and Ryan Shand, "Theorizing Amateur Cinema: Limitations and Possibilities," *Moving Image* 8, no. 2 (2008): 52.
12. Arthur L. Gale, "Extensive Plans," Amateur Clubs: News of Group Filming, *Movie Makers* 4, no. 5 (May 1929): 343.
13. "Oregon University Will Film Picture," *Morning Oregonian*, December 23, 1928, sec. 4, 1.
14. James T. Wyatt, "Portland, Ore.," *Variety*, December 18, 1929, 62; Frederick James Smith, Amateur Movies, *Photoplay* 35, no. 2 (1929): 70–71, 110; "Week's Regional News from Portland, Ore.," *Motion Picture News* 34, no. 9 (March 2, 1929): 717; "Film at University About Completed," *Sunday Oregonian* (Portland, OR), June 2, 1929, sec. 4, 1; and "Movie Star!" *Central New Jersey Home News* (New Brunswick, NJ), May 24, 1929, 27.
15. Melinda Stone and Dan Streible, "Introduction: Small-Gauge and Amateur Film," *Film History* 15, no. 2 (2003): 123–25.
16. Heather Nicholson Norris, *Amateur Film: Meaning and Practice, 1927–1977* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012).

17. Swanson. "Inventing Amateur Film."
18. Patricia R. Zimmermann, *Reel Families: A Social History of Amateur Film* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995).
19. Tepperman, *Amateur Cinema*.
20. In 2008 at the annual Pordenone Silent Film Festival, *Ed's Coed* was shown two days in a row because the first showing created such a buzz about the unknown film's quality.
21. F. W. Murnau Production, advertisement, *Exhibitors Herald and Moving Picture World*, June 2, 1928, 13.
22. "Farrell-Duncan Set," *Exhibitors Daily Review*, July 31, 1928, 4. *Our Daily Bread* was originally supposed to shoot in Kansas, but because the film's stars, Mary Duncan and Charles Farrell, were also committed to Frank Borzage's *The River*, both Fox productions, it was agreed they would both shoot in Oregon, with Pendleton for Murnau's wheat fields and the nearby Columbia Gorge for Borzage's river.
23. "Campus Movie to Be Filmed in Spring," *Old Oregon* 11, no. 5 (1929): 8, 12.
24. It is worth noting that James Raley's father, Roy Raley, was the founder of the Pendleton Roundup, a large-scale show and series of western events that continues to this day. Ron was, because of this, known as local royalty and championed for his ability "to make things happen." The apple appears to have not fallen far from the tree.
25. "Campus Movie to Be Filmed in Spring."
26. Carvel Nelson to Ken Metzler, 11 November 1968, folder 14, box 10, UA Ref 6, University Archives alphabetical subject files, Special Collections & University Archives, University of Oregon Libraries, Eugene, Oregon (henceforth UA).
27. "Professional Photographer Gives Advice to Campus Movie Directors," *Oregon Daily Emerald*, February 16, 1929, 1.
28. Tepperman, *Amateur Cinema*.
29. "Oregon Movie Will Be Made on Large Film," *Oregon Daily Emerald*, February 15, 1929, 1, 4.
30. "McBride a Second," *International Photographer*, January 1930, 32.
31. "Professional Photographer Gives Advice to Campus Movie Directors," *Oregon Daily Emerald*, February 16, 1929, 1–2.
32. George Fenin and William K. Everson, *The Western, from Silents to Cinerama* (New York: Orion Press, 1962), 288.
33. "Oregon Movie Will Be Made on Large Film."
34. Ronald Hubbs to Keith Richard, 25 July 1990, UA.
35. Nelson to Metzler.
36. "McBride Tells of Use of Tin Foil in Movie," *Oregon Daily Emerald*, May 8, 1929, 1.
37. "McBride Tells of Use of Tin Foil in Movie."
38. Patrick Keating, *Hollywood Lighting from the Silent Era to Film Noir* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 37.
39. Keating, *Hollywood Lighting*, 43–54.
40. "McBride Tells of Use of Tin Foil in Movie."

41. In the early 1990s, one of the authors of this article, who was an assistant cameraman at the time, regularly had to go to a lingerie store in Beverly Hills to acquire a certain preferred style of French silk stockings for his bosses' filter kit.
42. "Professional Photographer Gives Advice to Campus Movie Directors."
43. Umphlett, *Movies Go to College*.
44. "College Yells Bah! Bah! Bah!" *Motion Picture Classic* 28, no. 3 (November 1928): 29, 78–79.
45. "College Yells" and "A Bouquet for Dix," *Motion Picture Classic* 28, no. 3 (November 1928): 78.
46. "Movie Showing Gives Staff Many New Ideas," *Oregon Daily Emerald*, May 22, 1929, 3.
47. Arthur L. Gale, "College as Is," *Amateur Clubs: News of Group Filming, Movie Makers* 4, no. 11 (1929): 716.
48. "Campus Movie Trial Screen Tests Taken," *Oregon Daily Emerald*, February 8, 1929, 1.
49. Tepperman, *Amateur Cinema*, 254.
50. *Number of Inhabitants: Oregon*, United States Census Bureau, US Department of Commerce (Washington, DC, 1960?), <http://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/37749197v1p39ch2.pdf>.
51. *Polk's Eugene City and Lane County Directory* (Portland, OR: R. L. Polk, 1928).
52. Arnold B. Hall, "The Fee Situation at the University of Oregon," *Old Oregon* 9, no. 5 (1927): 12.
53. Alan D. Kattelle, "The Amateur Cinema League and Its Films," *Film History* 15, no. 2 (2003): 238–51.
54. "CPI Inflation Calculator," Bureau of Labor Statistics, United States Department of Labor, <https://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl>.
55. "Photography Ended on University Film," *Morning Oregonian*, June 23, 1929, sec. 4, 1.
56. Cyril H. Dusenberg, "Amateur Cinematography: Standard and Sub-Standard Film for Amateur," *American Cinematographer* 7, no. 7 (1926): 11.
57. Hubbs to Richard.
58. "Oregon Movie Will Be Made on Large Film."
59. Hubbs to Richard.
60. Johnson, *Main Street Movies*, 118.
61. "Aspiring Actors to Receive Film Proof Saturday," *Oregon Daily Emerald*, March 8, 1929, 1.
62. "Movie Camera Snaps 531 Prospective Cinema Stars during Screen Tryouts," *Oregon Daily Emerald*, February 19, 1929, 1–2.
63. "Cinema Tryouts Held; 75 Embryo Actors Show Up," *Oregon Daily Emerald*, February 16, 1929, 4.
64. "Cheers and Hisses Greet Initial Showing of Screen Aspirants," *Oregon Daily Emerald*, March 6, 1929, 3.
65. Masthead, *Oregon Daily Emerald*, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR, May 17, 1929, 6.
66. "Freckles or Sunburn; Director Wants Sun," *Oregon Daily Emerald*, May 16, 1929, 1.
67. "Campus Movie Call List," *Oregon Daily Emerald*, May 17, 1929, 4.
68. "Movie Aspirants to Appear on 'Location,'" *Oregon Daily Emerald*, May 17, 1929, 1.
69. Arthur L. Gale, "Extensive Plans," *Amateur Clubs: News of Group Filming, Movie Makers* 4, no. 5 (May 1929): 343; Arthur L. Gale, "College as Is," *Amateur Clubs: News of Group Filming, Movie Makers* 4, no. 11 (November 1929): 716; and Arthur L. Gale, *Amateur Clubs: News of Group Filming, Movie Makers* 4, no. 12 (December 1929): 796.

70. James T. Wyatt, "Portland, Ore.," *Variety*, December 18, 1929, 62; and Frederick James Smith, Amateur Movies, *Photoplay* 35, no. 2 (1929): 70–71, 110.
71. Smith, Amateur Movies, 70–71, 110.
72. "Campus Stars Enjoy Planes and Car," *Oregon Daily Emerald*, May 17, 1929, 5; and "U. of O. Movie Stars Enjoy Air Ride," *Oregon Daily Emerald*, May 4, 1929, 3.
73. "Oregon's Movie Star Has Her Hobbies Too," *Oregon Daily Emerald*, May 23, 1929, 2.
74. Richard Abel, *Menus for Movieland: Newspapers and the Emergence of American Film Culture, 1913–1916* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015), 6.
75. See "Movie Start," *Pittsburgh Press*, May 28, 1929, 27; and Helena, Montana's *Independent Record*, May 27, 1929, 7, as well as: *Central New Jersey Home News*, May 24, 1929, 27; *Republic* (Columbus, IN), May 24, 1929, 8; *Chippewa Herald* (Chippewa Falls, WI), June 8, 1929, 3; *Messenger-Inquirer* (Owensboro, KY), May 23, 1929, 6; and *Arizona Republic*, June 14, 1929, 23.
76. "Campus Movie Head," *Albany Democrat-Herald*, March 12, 1929, 8. This piece appears to have been adapted from a longer piece in the *Oregon Daily Emerald*, "Director of Campus Movie," *Oregon Daily Emerald*, February 23, 1929, 3.
77. Milligan did not actually disappear from Eugene; she graduated at the end of that year and maintained her life in the town, marrying and becoming part of the town's social elite. See, for instance: "To Convention," *Eugene Guard*, May 25, 1931, 5.
78. Karen Mahar, *Women Filmmakers in Early Hollywood* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 2008).
79. "Campus Movie Is Ready for First Showing," *Eugene Guard*, November 15, 1929, 1.
80. "'Ed's Co-Ed' Hit at First Midnight Matinee Friday," *Eugene Guard*, November 16, 1929, 12.
81. *Ed's Coed* souvenir program, 16 November 1929, folder 8, box 11, UA Ref 1, UA.
82. "Campus Movie Goes to Portland," *Old Oregon* 12, no. 3 (1929): 8.
83. "City Girl," 1930, *AFI Catalog*, American Film Institute, Proquest LLC.
84. "The Colonial Has an Ace Double Bill for the Rest of the Week," *Eugene Guard*, April 27, 1934, 8.
85. George H. Godfrey, untitled document, folder 14, box 10, UA Ref 6, UA.
86. Carr, *What is History?*
87. Marsha Gordon and Allyson Nadia Field, "The Other Side of the Tracks: Nontheatrical Film History, Pre-Rebellion Watts and *Felicia*," *Cinema Journal* 55, no. 2 (Winter 2016): 3.
88. Snowden Becker, "On Janus and Juvenilia: Collecting and Preserving Student Films" (conference presentation, Archival Education and Research Institute, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 2010).

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