

The Night I Saw *Traffic in Souls* An Interview with David Shepard

by Livio Jacob & Russell Merritt

Blackhawk Films has been one of the most important sources for Italian film collecting. How did the company develop and how did you become involved with Blackhawk?

The principal engineer of Blackhawk films was a man named Kent Eastin who started the company in 1927 in the basement of his parent's home in Galesburg, Illinois. Mr. Eastin loved movies as a boy and got a 35mm toy projector for selling blueing door to door. It was a premium. And then he went to Chicago to look on film row for independent distributors that he could show on his toy projector. He discovered that he could buy discarded prints of films for \$1 per reel. So he bought all that he had, looked at them on his projector, and essentially he decided that he'd keep the ones he liked and he had to set up some mechanism to sell the ones he didn't want. So he came up with the idea, since there were lots of these toy projectors, that they would only take little bobbins of about 150-200 feet, of cutting the reels up in pieces and selling each piece for \$1. So that he could get \$5 for a reel when he had paid only \$1 for it. And at the same time pay for his own collecting of the films and keep all he wanted. This was when he was 17 years old.

He was living in Davenport?

He was living in Galesburg. He grew up in Galesburg. He did this for a few years. Then he got the idea that when 16mm sound film came in, which was 1932, that there might be a rental market that far exceeded anything that existed before for 16mm silent film where availability was essentially limited to Kodascope libraries, Universal Show-At-Home, and Eastman Teaching Films. And there wasn't much place for independents because Kodak at that time had a whole network of retail Eastman Kodak stores and they all had Kodascope collections in them. But they didn't seem to be moving towards sound.

So he established a 16mm sound film library and began to buy sound prints as they came out, and also silent prints. He bought a lot of Kodascope films.

He would deal directly with studios, or how would he find...

Well, you couldn't get major studio films, but you could get independent films from companies like Majestic Pictures or — oh, usually the more grandiose the name the cheaper the pictures. Ambassador Films was another. We ended up rights to these films where he used to buy prints. He would actually buy the exclusive non-theatrical rights to some of these films. He did this for about three years out of his parents' home. The business was growing so nicely that he decided to move to Davenport, sixty miles from Galesburg, and I asked him why he moved to Davenport, and he chose it for several reasons. One, was because in those days the best way to ship films was railway express and Davenport was a major rail center. They could get films in and out very quickly. And also because the Victor Animatograph Company was there. It had a certain name as a 16mm town. Because Victor was one of three companies making 16mm equipment in the United States. Bell and Kodak being the other two.

Was there ever any kind of business relationship between Victor and Blackhawk?

No, he knew the people and had a Victor dealership, but no special relationship. So he built up this rental library through the 1930s, and I have a run of the catalogs. And it's very impressive how quickly it grew. He had a great knack for business, and it was obviously a major growth industry. By the beginning of World War II, he had branch offices in Colorado Springs and Chattanooga, TN. They were shipping hundreds of

films a day. During the War, he and most of the other people who had made the company run were in the military. Essentially they ran kind of a holding action with their wives running the company. But they picked it up again in the late 1940s without the Colorado Springs or Chattanooga offices. And they were running a rental business until about 1956 or 1957. They were not at that point selling new or used films. During the war, Mr. Eastin had been in the Navy, essentially in charge of film distribution to ships at sea and navy bases. And since a lot of the films they distributed were not only Hollywood features but also documentaries about the war effort, he got to know the American representatives for the British Information Services and the National Film Board of Canada, and the other English-speaking countries that were producing that the U.S. military showed. He became friends with these people. After the war, there were hundreds of thousands of 16mm prints that were then surplus. They were going to throw them away. So he got the idea: why didn't he try to sell them through his company, Eastin Pictures, and if he was able to sell them, he would just divide the money evenly. They agreed and they sent in hundreds of thousands of prints and he set up a subsidiary company, called Blackhawk to conduct these sales. So that is how he got into film sales, selling these used documentaries after the war for a few dollars each. It went pretty well. Essentially, what happened was, a year or so later, television began coming in. There had been up to that time many 16mm rental libraries — camera stores in towns of any size would have a couple of hundred films and parents could rent the projector and films for the children birthday party. And television took all of that away. He began buying the inventories of these small libraries and selling them.

These companies were going bankrupt?

Well, they were going out of that business. The kind of thing we saw yesterday, where the camera store had a room in the back renting videos. Camera stores used to have film libraries the same way.

Yes, I can remember renting but also buying films — especially in 8mm — in the early 1950s.

Yes, Castle films had been selling 8mm and 16mm for camera stores since about 1932. So Blackhawk was by no means the first company to do this sort of thing. But they got into it essen-

tially by liquidating libraries. There was a company that existed during the War that was part of Mills Music in Chicago that had a coin-operated 16mm juke box machine and produced films called "The Soundies" — "Mills Panaround Soundies", which were three-minute music acts, popular music things, the MTV things of their day. And when they closed that up, they bought 800,000 prints of Mills Soundies. They spent years selling them off. Anyway, in the course of all that, they purchased the inventory of a competitor to Castle Films based in Chicago, a company called Pictoreel. Included among all these 16mm Pictoreels, which were like the Castle films, 10-minute silent films and Grantland Rice Sportlites and things like that, were bunch of 8mm films. So they listed those for sale too and they sold very well. So then they got the idea that there was also a market for selling 8mm films. All this, meanwhile, going on as a sideline to a film rental business. But the film rental business, they could see, was not a growth area, declining because of television. They couldn't find a large supply of 8mm films to liquidate, so they would try some new ones. So in about 1951 they licensed from Hal Roach Studios 8 or 10 of the silent Laurel and Hardy and Our Gang Comedies. And they also made a little group of compilations, things like *Bathing Beauties Then and Now*, a film called *Follies, Foibles, and Fashions* — some of them we still sell — great moments from *The Birth of a Nation*. They made a deal directly with Harry Aitken to get access to whatever materials he had on Keystone Comedies. Some of the early Blackhawks carry a title that says "Keystone Comedy Authorized Edition" because they paid a royalty to Harry and later to Roy Aitken on any film they sold that would have belonged to them had they been copyrighted.

He got rights to The Birth of a Nation at this time?

No, at that point he just had rights to make a little 10 minute film. Everything they were doing were in 10-minute formats, except for Laurel Hardies which were in 20-minute formats. And they were selling them in both 8mm and 16mm for \$5 or \$6; the 16mm started off at \$15.98 per reel. Anyway, it grew from there very modestly.

They never borrowed money. Everything they ever did was re-investing profits from their own business. And they were in various businesses in addition to the film rental. They bought out a

company called Midland Audio-Visual, simply a local projector and audio-visual equipment business. They ran that for a while. So it was all these various things put together. They were in this rented space in Davenport. They moved to larger and larger quarters. Eventually they liquidated their own rental library and they sold the audio visual business. And they decided that the 8mm and 16mm film sales was the business they were going to be in. It grew to the point that they bought an old brewery building built in the mid-19th century which was very good for films because the beer brewing tunnels which were very large underground caverns maintained constant temperature and humidity all year without any kind of heating or air conditioning. So they bought this 27,000 square foot building, and the business continued growing along these lines. As Super-8 film came in and then Super-8 sound, briefly Reg 8 sound, they were experiencing growth rates of 20% and 30% per year.

What years would this have been?

This would have been about 1967 or 8 to the next ten years.

That would correspond to the peak years in academic film courses and college film acquisition.

Yes, although that was never a major part of their business. All the 16mm activity taken together was less than 20% of the business and most of that was public library sales. The 80% of the business — and we're talking dollar volume, not unit volume — was in 8mm prints that were being sold to individuals who enjoyed them as home movies. And also they had 8mm collections placed in about 1500 public libraries at one time.

So it was a company being driven by 8mm rather than 16mm.

Yes. The 16mm as far as they were concerned... I mean 20% of your business is worth paying attention to... The 16mm more than anything else was an intermediate stage they needed to achieve on the way to 8mm. As long as they were doing it, they would offer them. But they weren't doing films primarily to make them available in 16mm nor for serious collectors, nor for academicians. Most of their business was the casual 8mm buyer with comedy always being the common denominator. But because it was such a

profitable business and they quickly became the company that set the standard in quality and variety and so on they were prepared to do a certain number of projects for the sake of making historically important films available, for the sake of the art, for the sake of prestige. So that certain projects, like the restoration of *Foolish Wives* which cost many thousands of dollars, or the issuing of those 50 Biographs that we did from the original negatives for the Griffith Centennial — those weren't done primarily for profit. Mr. Eastin's feeling was that he got into this because it was a hobby. He was able to make his living out of his hobby. And he always wanted it to stay that way. And so as long as there was always a fair profit for the money invested, he was happy to do things well and not strictly to maximize profits.

Now there was a partner in the business. His name was Martin Phelan. He had met Phelan during the war in the Navy. Phelan had been a buyer of readywear women's clothing for Montgomery Ward. He really knew the mail-order business very well, because that was essentially M-W's business much more than retail stores. And Phelan came in as a partner to develop the mail order aspect, and Eastin became the film specialist. But it was a very good partnership and was a closely held corporation.

How long was Phelan involved in the company?

From 1947 until they sold it in 1975. Mr. Phelan is still alive.

So this was the state of the company when you arrived. When did you join Blackhawk?

In 1973, I think. Like every other kid in the United States who loved movies, I got the Blackhawk catalog which was a newspaper tabloid. And even today, looking at them because I got a run of the old catalogues when I bought the company, I could see why I got excited. They made the films sound so wonderful, so interesting.

That was Eastin's writing?

He wrote a lot of the copy, but he had some other people wrote too in exchange for films. One of his major suppliers was Edward Wagenknecht, Professor of English at Boston University. And then for a period, Kalton Lahue did some. But in any event, I knew Blackhawk first as a customer. And when I went to work at the

AFI, within a few months I was in contact with them to see whether it was possible to gain access to some of the material they had found to do proper archival preservation from it. I remember very well the first night I spent in Davenport because it was the night of the American landing on the moon. I left California when the capsule was about to put down, got into Davenport just when it was there, and watched men walk on the moon in my hotel room.

See, in Davenport, Chief Blackhawk was this local Indian who owned the whole joint before the white men got there. So you have everything — the Blackhawk paint company, Blackhawk hotel — if you said I'm with Blackhawk, they wouldn't know what you meant. But in any event I got to know Mr. Eastin fairly well, because he was very generous about sharing the location of the materials they no longer possessed. Or giving us copies of what they were holding in their nitrate vaults. After several years, they asked whether I was interested in joining their organization. I was under contract that had 6 or 7 months. Six or seven months later they called and said they didn't want to hire anybody else; would I do it. And I said I'd give them an answer in a month, and then I forgot about it. It really wasn't something I was pursuing. And he called back in a month and I realized I promised him I'd had an answer, so I had to say something. So I said yes.

So it was as casual as that.

And I remember wondering on the way out there whether I had made a terrible mistake. It was in December, very cold and snowy, and the fuel line in my car froze in Ohio, and it was really tough to get there. When I got there, they took me to dinner...

It was very funny. Mr. Eastin loved trains. If he hadn't gone into films, he would have wanted to be a locomotive engineer. He lived his schedule. He had this big pocket train watch. He'd say I'd like to take you to dinner tonight at the Davenport Club. I made a reservation for 7:30. I'll pick you up at 7:23. We should get there at 7:29 and walk in right on the stroke. And that was the way the company ran, too. So, he took me to dinner. Then he sent me back to the hotel room with a projector and a bunch of the latest films they had been working on, which included *Traffic in Souls*. I ran it that night for the first time — it had been a lost film for all these years — and then and there I decided, yes, this is what I wanted to do.

What is it that he had you do? When he was

being so insistent in getting you into the company, in what direction did he want you to take the company?

He wanted me to use my knowledge of film history and film sources to supplement the range and variety of what they had. After all, his knowledge of film history was essentially his memories of what he he'd seen growing up in Galesburg. But he didn't have any kind of academic perspective. He had no knowledge of foreign films because there weren't any in the Midwest during those years. So he wanted that; he wanted to move into sound film, and he didn't really know that much about sound production techniques. He needed me for that. He also needed some writing skills and my knowledge of scoring silent films.

The new direction into foreign films — silent foreign film — was particularly important. Remember, they were essentially silent film house because the home projectors were silent. They were only able to get into sound film as could be market-driven by the appearance of a reasonable number of Super-8 sound machines. But one of the problems they had as time went on was that a lot of their customer base of repeat buyers were people of Eastin's generation, to whom Rosemary Pheby meant something or who would be interested in a Vitagraph with Norma Talmadge. And that generation had died.

So essentially he is looking to supplement his product and find a new customer base. So he's going to a more academic market...

Exactly. The Hal Roach license always provided the base of films, and still does. But I was able to initiate a license agreement with Fox-Movietone News which led to a whole range of newsreel and documentary-based subjects. And get into the business of producing the television series for them. And get a lot of foreign language films out.

What was your first one?

Well, the first thing I did was none of that. They had just licensed all the Our Gang comedies, and we had to convert the films and re-record the sound tracks and line them up and get answer prints and write bulletin copy for a hundred Our Gang comedies.

But in terms of acquisition?

The silent *Oliver Twist*. I'd located an original negative in Yugoslavia when I was at the AFI, and we imported a fine grain. But the print had no titles. Essentially, I knew Sol Lesser and Jackie Coogan. I was able to get Lesser to give commercial rights to the AFI, then got the AFI to license the film to Blackhawk, and worked with Lesser and Coogan to reconstruct titles. Lesser and Coogan had seen the film so many times that these titles came back to them; several years later we found one reel of the picture with the English titles and they were so accurate in their memories that only a word or two differed. And then we scored it: I knew Gaylord Carter and John Murey and was able to produce these tracks.

Which leads to one of the most controversial aspects of the restorations, which is the idea of inventing titles for films. Because the tiling facilities at Blackhawk were so versatile, you could recreate both the fonts and formats of these original titles. So it was sometimes difficult to determine whether the actual title was something that came from the original materials or whether it was something invented.

Well, the introductory titles always stated whether the intertitles were conjectural. Our standard phrase was "The titles are conjectural but were reconstructed according to the best available evidence." So they were always labelled as such. But, our object ... my feeling was that the films should be available to the public. At Blackhawk we were finding ways to keep the films alive for new audiences. That was the whole point. That was for me the appeal of it. And in terms of the reconstruction work, I don't know whether the music was like what might have been heard in any given theater or whether the titles were exactly what might have been. But we did the best we could. And the point was we were trying to bring the films alive.

The projects that you were most closely identified with at Blackhawk, the gearing up of the international films, the Biograph restorations and the like, how did they do for the company? They were of course of great importance to film historians, but what were they like as business propositions?

The Biographs lost a lot of money, but we never expected them to make a lot. They were something worth doing for credibility. It wasn't that expensive and it was a high visibility project.

But Mr. Eastin had always stressed the value of the backlist. So that if you spent a lot of money now on *Oliver Twist* or *Foolish Wives* or *Siegfried*, you might not make it back in a year or two, but those films would go along and earn money forever.

When the company was sold to Lee Enterprises, they didn't understand that approach to marketing and they wanted the films to recoup what they cost. The Blackhawk hope was that the product line would be at a break-even point a year after release. Lee Enterprises wanted to go into profit within three months, and then within two months. And if they couldn't see the film going to profit within that time, they didn't want to release it. So the release schedule dropped from 18 films per month, which we were maintaining while I was working there, to 2 or 3 per month.

The Lee people were very nice, very smart people. But they acquired this thing in the 1970s when conglomerates and diversification and merger and all those buzz words were in the air. They saw themselves as acquiring a diversified media group.

Blackhawk was that anomaly, a private company that became one of the leaders in film preservation. You don't find many of those. Usually that work comes from either the government, a museum, or a university-related archive. What do you consider your most important projects?

Probably the most important projects weren't the most famous ones — *Foolish Wives* or Dovzhenko's *Earth*. I think they were the little, anonymous one and two-reel films that wandered in there in the 1950s and 1960s when the Museum of Modern Art didn't care about anything that couldn't be labelled Art and the Library of Congress wasn't collecting nitrate films, and the Eastman House, with its very large and wonderful collection, had no money to conserve it. So, here was this company where someone would write to them saying he'd found a two-reeler with August Carney and Blackhawk would copy it and send the original film back. In many cases, those originals never found their way into an archive and those negatives became the best surviving element on those films. I think in perspective, that's the most important thing that the company did. But I'm sure it has also contributed a great deal in indirect ways to the present film generation. Because it's getting a long past it now, but when I started teaching after leaving Blackhawk, there

were always two or three people coming up saying I got interested in film by buying films from Blackhawk when I was ten or twelve years old. That was a major service, I think.

As far as the expensive projects, things like *Foolish Wives* and Fritz Lang's two *Nibelungen* films, and *Spies*, plus very good prints of *Earth* and *End of St. Petersburg*. None of those films were really unique. They would have been preserved somehow, even if not as readily available. But there are many films in the collection that are unique.

Another thing the company did was set up their own way of photographing paper prints. This was after Kemp Niver had begun to do it and after the Academy had funded it. But the Library of Congress at that time was not to give access to the copies sponsored by the Academy and made with Congressional grants. But if you gave them some evidence of insurance or responsibility, they would lend you the original paper. So in 1958 Blackhawk built its own printer and got for the most part much better results than Niver.

So it was through Blackhawk that the paper print collection was actually disseminated. In 35mm or 16mm?

Some were done in 16mm, some in 35mm. Mostly they did the railroad films in 35mm and the other things in 16mm. The people who did the lab work was a father-son team, David H. Bonine Sr and Jr. The Bonines were wonderful technicians. Niver in fact had no technical background. He had been a divorce detective. And had handled Margaret Herrick's divorce and so developed a friendship with her. And the paper print rephotographing technique, which Niver tends to claim as his own, was actually developed by Carl Lewis Gregory who had worked with Edison and Dickson on motion picture projects at the dawn of cinema. Gregory at that time in the 1950s was the manager of the motion picture labs for the U.S. Department of Agriculture. He built a machine at the request of Howard Walls to photograph the paper prints in which he had been involved for a long time. The Dept. of Agriculture did rephotograph them in the 1940s. And Gregory got better results than anyone. But unfortunately he was filming on 35mm wartime nitrate. So most of his work is gone. But Gregory published an article about in the *Journal of the SMPTE* about the paper program with the design for the machine. So all that

Niver or Bonine had to do was follow Gregory's blueprint.

But Gregory, I gather, never actually worked at the Library of Congress project?

Well, until the AFI came along and the volume got large, the Library of Congress did all of its motion picture preservation work at the Dept. of Agriculture laboratories.

But didn't Niver receive an Oscar for his machine?

Not for the machine; for the process. But that was really the Academy drawing attention to its own work. Because they funded Niver's work. The first 500 films were paid for by the Academy. After that, the Academy through the display of these films was able to lobby Congress to make a one-time grant to finish the project.

Back to Blackhawk. You leave the company, Kent Eastin sells it, and within a few years the company begins to fail...

Yes, although the bizarre thing about that company is that as the business went down and down and down, everyone still made money on it. Eastin and Phelan sold the company when it was at its peak, and they both retired millionaires. And the next buyer was Lee Enterprises, a newspaper chain, and they never succeeded in running Blackhawk at a profit, but they ended up making a lot of money by shuffling the assets for tax purposes.

Lee Enterprises then sold it to a group of managers who had been running it under Mr. Eastin. They had a very difficult struggle because they didn't have capital. By the time they took it over, the company had shrunk from 90 employees to 10 employees, but they managed to stay in business long enough to sell it to Republic, getting out with a decent amount of money themselves.

So you'd think that Republic would be the one left holding the bag. But they did extremely well with what they retained. They quickly discovered that Blackhawk videos were getting practically no shelf space in stores, so they turned Blackhawk into a mail order business for videos. They kept the Blackhawk name, closed the Davenport operation and moved everything to Los Angeles, and turned the video operation over to a fulfillment house. The result was that the

videos were aggressively marketed with an extremely-well designed catalog, and Republic prospered.

Then, in 1989, you end up owning the place.

What was the appeal for an astute businessman like yourself in buying a 8mm and 16mm film library in the age of video cassette?

... But, first of all, anything can be a reasonable buy if you buy it at the right price.

We had an experience with Blackhawk in 1984 when they were on hard times and I went back and bought all the prime 35mm materials on the Chaplin Mutual comedies which were in public domain and which had been in distribution all over the world from hundreds of sources for dozens of years. And I took what was then a large risk to secure these elements and spent a lot of money in improving and restoring from them and bought the films to market and did extremely well with them. I realized that if one looked on the film library not as material for a mail order business, which was what Blackhawk had become after Mr. Eastin sold... the people who bought the film library from Eastin & Phelan saw it as a mail order business ... but instead as something that could be used for other purposes... This doesn't require any oracular wisdom. It's just that the people who were sitting on them didn't know what they had.

So they sold me the Mutuals. We were very successful in licensing them to television and home video cassette. All of this despite the fact that the films were not protected by copyright and the exclusivity could only be limited to our restored versions. In the course of dealing with those films over a few years, I began to get a lot of ideas about other ways the films might be utilized. Also, there was some element of ego in it in that I worked terribly hard when I was there and had accomplished a lot of things that I thought were worthwhile for the art of films. And it bothered me that the films weren't available; nobody knew what eventually was going to happen to all these elements.

So I initiated the contact and offered initially to lease the library. It took a year of going back and forth when Republic offered to sell the library, which I never thought they would. When they offered...

Barkis was willing...

And I asked them how much. They said they

had no idea how much it was worth. Make us an offer. So I made an offer. They said we want more. I said I'm tired of haggling; how much more? And we agreed on a price on the phone. And I said if you have the money, will we be finished with these negotiations? They said yes and I said, you have your money.

Ultimately, Fox-Movietone News wouldn't transfer the license, so Republic reduced my price back to my original offer minus the Movietones.

So that's how I got it. It will never return to a company with a 27,000 sq ft building and 94 employees again, but you can have a privately-held specialty press, the film equivalent of a Scarecrow Press, for example.

You bought in March, 1989. So it's been little more than a year since you've been in business as Film Preservation Associates. How have you been doing?

Very well. But it's still too new. We have exactly two cassettes on the market right now. One is Lang's *The Spiders*, the other is *Phantom of the Opera*. And the sales on them have been absolutely tremendous, far beyond anything we could have expected. There are no laser disks on the market yet, but there will be about 25 within two years.

The only way our Chaplin materials are out right now are on laser disc. They got rave notices from Siskel and Ebert, which helped them a lot. Those laser disks are about to come out on Media Home Entertainment video. Meanwhile, the Chaplins made so much more money than I had expected that I decided I was now in their debt and spent a lot of money doing new music for them and a new level of video clean up and put back the original titles in their original typography.

Any surprises?

First of all, the thing came to me in two chunks.

A few years earlier, when Blackhawk was closing down, I had a phone call from the then-president of the company, and he said we had to be out of the building, do you want our old equipment? In a word, I said yes. And shortly I was getting 6 tons of stuff. So my wife and I bought an industrial building to put it in, because some of the equipment needed compressed air, some had special water and power requirements and we didn't want to be hostage to some landlord.

So by the time we had the equipment shipped out here — it cost some \$7,000 by the time we were done — we felt we needed some kind of business in order to recover our investment. So we did begin to restore films on a commercial basis for archives and studios. We did it for a couple of years and paid off the building.

You couldn't exploit the library without having the equipment and it was just fortuitous that we ended up with both halves.

So we have not only the films, but all the special equipment built for handling the shrunken films, the old printing presses for title cards, and custom-built splicers and synchronizers, step-primers we gathered from the 1910s and 1920s, printers for 28mm films... all these things that would take a lifetime to recreate.

So all these things are in place. Now, where do you go for business? Who calls you?

We decided to go in two directions. The secondary one which I mention first because it's closest to my own heart, is to get the library back in print in 16mm so that serious collectors, archives, and schools can acquire copies. We set out a program to put 150 films per year into print until we had between 400 and 500 films available. We have 150 in print now; we'll announce another 50 in September and October, which means we have to put one film a day in print to keep to the schedule... We've been doing that. It's a break-even proposition. Some months we break even; other months we lose money.

But our real profit comes from what Blackhawk did in the first place by reaching a mass market. In this case this means putting them in the current technologies of video tape and laser disk. What we've done here is enter into licensing agreements with companies already established in those markets. We simply become one of their suppliers, enriching their product mix with our library. We have three licensees for the library in general: one in Denmark, one in the U.S. for video-tape, one in the U.S. for laser disk, and we have a fourth licensee which has taken only the 125 railroad films. We're also moving into television distribution, an area that Black-

hawk never tried before.

Then, in each instance, we decide how much of the income we can afford to reinvest. So, for instance, most of the laser disk money is going into scoring more films. We've been very successful in selling our animated cartoons to television. All of those were only on nitrate film, and so we're investing in 35mm preservation negative and track. We've also entered into an agreement with the Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Academy and have deposited our fine grain masters with them.

Have you been going outside your collection to acquire new films or new elements for your films?

All the time. We've been able to get a lot of Vitaphone disks for scores for silent films and have been synchronizing those for our Roach Films.

Then stuff has been coming in from collectors. I've been building up Pathe Actualites to make a compilation that I think I'll call "Pathe Freres Presents the World".

Any movement with Fox-Movietone?

I ended up in a settlement with Fox and I got some film. We're still negotiating.

Did Blackhawk have any connection with Classic Images?

They were both owned by Lee Enterprises. Lee still owns *Classic Images*. The company was quartered in Blackhawk's old headquarters. But that was the extent of the connection. The *Classic Images* thing is still going on under Lee's management. It's a kind of moonlighting operation for two Lee employees who run it. It was a hobby business for Sam Rubin who started it. He's now retired, but Blackhawk never had any commercial interest in *Classic Images*. They were simply the landlord.

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