

## Thanhouser Company



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## **Pioneering Silent Movie Studio Celebrates 100 Years October Celebrations set for Library of Congress and Museum of Modern Art**

PORTLAND, OR – One Hundred years ago this October, Edwin and Gertrude Thanhouser established the Thanhouser Company in New Rochelle, New York. It became one of the pioneering silent motion picture studios producing and releasing over 1,000 films to worldwide distribution between 1910 and 1917.

Edwin and Gertrude Thanhouser were the first to head an American film studio with a background in the theater. Thanhouser films were immediately acclaimed for story content, photography, and artistic quality. The Thanhouser film enterprise was one of the “independent” studios which led the rebellion against Thomas Edison’s Motion Picture Patent’s Trust monopoly.

Ned Thanhouser, grandson of founders Edwin and Gertrude Thanhouser, will be celebrating this centenary event with the screening of surviving Thanhouser films at the Hollywood Theatre in Portland, Oregon on Sunday October 18<sup>th</sup>, the Library of Congress in Washington, DC on Sunday October 25<sup>th</sup>, The Museum of Modern Art in New York City on Monday October 26<sup>th</sup> 2009, and in the city of New Rochelle, New York on Wednesday October 28<sup>th</sup>.

Ned Thanhouser is also president of Thanhouser Company Film Preservation, Inc. and he will be releasing on DVD 18 newly restored Thanhouser films that have been out of public circulation for nearly 100 years. This release will be the fourth in a series of three-disc “Collector Sets” bringing to 56 the number of Thanhouser silent films that have been restored and re-released on DVD by the company since 1996.

Films for this new DVD collection were assembled with the cooperation from archives around the world: The Library of Congress in Washington, DC, George Eastman House in Rochester, New York; The British Film Institute in London, England and The Netherlands Film Museum in Amsterdam, Netherlands. Raymond A. Brubacher has been commissioned to compose and perform new and original music exclusively for these films.

Ned Thanhouser will be available for in person interviews while in Washington, DC on Saturday and Sunday October 24 and 25 and in New York City on Monday and Tuesday October 26 and 27. He is available for scheduled telephone interviews before these dates. Contact him at (503) 799-1455 during normal business hours

The three-disc “Thanhouser Collection Volumes 10, 11 & 12” will be priced at \$24.95 and will be available for shipment in October 2009. DVDs may be ordered online at [www.thanhouser.org](http://www.thanhouser.org) or directly from Thanhouser Company Film Preservation, Inc. at 8770 NW Kearney Street, Portland, Oregon 97229 USA.

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## **Background on Thanouser Company Film Preservation, Inc.**

Thanouser Company, including its successor, Mutual's Thanouser Film Corporation, was an extraordinarily active and energetic film company that thrived from its founding in 1909 through the release of its final film *The Heart of Ezra Greer* in August 1917. Based in New Rochelle, New York, the Thanouser film enterprise produced and released over 1,000 silent films to worldwide distribution.

Founders Edwin and Gertrude Thanouser were the first to head an American motion picture studio with a substantial background in theater. Thanouser was an important leader in the rebellion of the "Independents" against the Motion Picture Patents group associated with Thomas Edison.

Thanouser entered the field in 1910 and grew to be a significant force at the time when Edison and Biograph were peaking and then going into decline. Thanouser was an important element in bridging the gap between the earliest pioneers and the establishment of the "Hollywood" industry we know today.

Important Thanouser screen personalities include James Cruze, who rose to fame as a Hollywood director during the 20's and 30's and directed the first full-scale western *The Covered Wagon*; legendary Broadway star Jeanne Eagels who made her screen debut with Thanouser; and popular Shakespearean actor Frederick Warde, star of the recently discovered 1912 feature film *Richard III*.

According to the National Film Preservation Foundation, only half of U.S. feature films survive in complete form; of the American features produced before 1920, only 20% survive. Of the over 1,000 films produced by Thanouser, less than 200 prints have been located. While most surviving Thanouser films have been preserved, new films are discovered each year and over a dozen Thanouser nitrate films currently await preservation.

Important collections of Thanouser films are maintained at the Library of Congress (Washington, D.C.), the Museum of Modern Art (New York), The George Eastman House (Rochester, New York), the British Film Institute (London), Netherlands Filmmuseum (Amsterdam, Holland), The Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences Margaret Herrick Library (Hollywood, California) and in private collections and archives.

Ned Thanouser, grandson of founders Edwin and Gertrude Thanouser, has worked since 1986 to locate, preserve and improve access to early film history. With his family he established in 1989 the Thanouser Film Preservation Endowment at the Library of Congress and he was a member of the 1994 AFI/NEA Film Preservation Grant Advisory Panel. In 1995 he formed a non-profit company, Thanouser Company Film Preservation, Inc., to further his preservation activities. Mr. Thanouser has assisted in the identification and preservation of Thanouser films held in archives and private collections around the world.

Thanouser Company Film Preservation, Inc. holds an important collection of original posters, post cards, production images, sheet music and other ephemera from the Thanouser film enterprise. The company has published fifty-six surviving Thanouser films to four three three-disc DVD "Collector Sets" in addition to the complete history of the Thanouser film enterprise [Thanouser Films: An Encyclopedia and History](#) written by noted historian Q. David Bowers enterprise on CD-ROM.

Thanouser Company Film Preservation, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation established for the research, preservation and publication of educational materials related to early silent era, with a specific focus on Thanouser. For additional information, e-mail [postmaster@thanouser.org](mailto:postmaster@thanouser.org), FAX (503) 226-7961, or on the Internet at [www.thanouser.org](http://www.thanouser.org).

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