

### **The Birth of Film**

(Excerpted from < [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_film#The\\_Birth\\_of\\_Film](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_film#The_Birth_of_Film)>)

A two second experimental film, *Roundhay Garden Scene*, filmed by Louis Le Prince in October 1888 in Leeds, Yorkshire, is generally recognized as the earliest surviving motion picture. William Kennedy Laurie Dickson, chief engineer with the Edison Laboratories, is credited with the invention of a practicable form of celluloid strip containing a sequence of images, the basis of a method of photographing and projecting moving images. Celluloid blocks were thinly sliced; the slice marks were then removed with heated pressure plates. After this, the celluloid strips were coated with a photosensitive gelatin emulsion. In 1893 at the Chicago World Fair Thomas Edison introduced to the public two pioneering inventions based on this innovation: the Kinetograph, the first practical moving picture camera, and the Kinetoscope. The latter was a cabinet in which a continuous loop of Dickson's celluloid film (powered by an electric motor) was backlit by an incandescent lamp and seen through a magnifying lens. The spectator neared an eye piece. Kinetoscope parlours were supplied with fifty-foot film snippets photographed by Dickson, in Edison's "Black Maria" studio. These sequences recorded mundane events (such as *Fred Ott's Sneeze*, 1894) as well as entertainment acts like acrobats, music hall performers and boxing demonstrations.

**All Quiet on the Western Front** (1930) Directed by Lewis Milestone. Lew Ayres, Louis Wolheim (138 min.) Based on the novel by Erich Maria Remarque (Excerpted from: <[http://www.moviediva.com/MD\\_root/reviewpages/MDAllQuietWesternFront.htm](http://www.moviediva.com/MD_root/reviewpages/MDAllQuietWesternFront.htm)>).

Erich Maria Remarque was born with the middle name Paul. After his mother died, he adopted her name, giving his to the hero of *All Quiet on the Western Front*. It was based on his experience in the trenches, and is told entirely from the German foot soldiers' point of view. Remarque's first professional writing was as an advertising copywriter, part of the reason for the novel's accessible style. When it was published in 1929, it swiftly became **the best selling novel of the 20th century**, although the complete text was not available in the US until 1975. The translator, A. W. Wheen, made a valuable contribution when he rendered *Im Westen nichts Neues* as not the literal *Nothing New on the Western Front*, but as the more poetic *All Quiet on the Western Front*. It remains in print, in effect an early cross-over hit, a serious literary novel that was widely read. It is still required reading in schools. The book and movie made him a fortune, and he spent the rest of his life trying to equal its success. He became a refugee from the Nazis (and they murdered his youngest sister for her anti-fascist activities)....

**The 1930s** movie version, adapted by Maxwell Anderson, George Abbott, Del Andrews, C. Gardner Sullivan, Walter Anthony (uncredited) and Lewis Milestone (uncredited), won the **Academy Award for Best Picture in 1930** for its producer Carl Laemmle Jr., and an **Academy Award for Directing** for Lewis Milestone. The movie starred Louis Wolheim, Lew Ayres, John Wray, Arnold Lucy and Ben Alexander. It also received two further Oscar nominations: Best Cinematography - Arthur Edson, Best Writing, Achievement - George Abbott, Maxwell Anderson and Del Andrews. The film has also been selected for preservation in the United States National Film Registry. In the late 20th Century and early 21st the United States Library of Congress undertook an exhaustive restoration of the film, which is vastly superior in sound and picture quality to most other extant prints. The film remains harrowing today with its superbly filmed battle scenes.

**Film in the 1930s** (Excerpted from <<http://library.thinkquest.org/29285/history/et3.html>>)

The major advance of the 1930's was the introduction of synchronous sound and dialogue in the late 1930's. First invented and shown in the 1920's, it became the standard by the early 1930's,

partly due to the invention of a device based on the radio that could effectively amplify sound in the theater. Initially there were two available systems with which to record sound. The first was similar to a phonograph, and recorded the sound to a separate disc. The second, more popular, system recorded the sound directly onto the celluloid strip. Initially sound hindered the filmmaking process, since the cameras had to be encased to muffle the noise of their motors and actors could not stray far from the stationary microphones. However, technological advances soon made up for this and the sound became an integral part of filmmaking. The incorporation of sound into film and the resulting movie theater draw triggered a number of mergers in Hollywood as companies tried to consolidate their power (and their wealth). The result of these unions was the creation of the first major studios that dominated the industry for decades, Fox Studios (later 20th Century Fox), Leow's Incorporated (later Metro-Goldwyn-Meyer), Paramount, RKO, and Warner Bros. These studios monopolized the industry through vertical consolidation, meaning they controlled every part of the production process. They owned the writers, the directors and producers, the actors, the equipment and crew, even the theaters. They controlled every step and dominated Hollywood until 1948 when the U.S. Government found them to be an illegal monopoly. It was also during this time that color in movies became possible through the use of the Technicolor system. Technicolor was created using a special camera that ran three strips of film, one in red, one in blue, and one in yellow. When the three strips were consolidated, the resulting image was in full color, though the colors were frequently very exaggerated as can be seen in two such films that were filmed in this manner, *Gone With The Wind* (1939) and *The Wizard of Oz* (1939).

**Terms:** What you see is determined by the conditions under which a film is shot, the way the camera angles, AND editing.

**Cinematography:** The art or technique of movie photography, including both the shooting and development of the film. This includes shot angles (low, middle, high), lighting, use of wide lens or other types of lenses and lens filters, point of view, and so forth.

**Edit:** 1. The cutting and arranging of shots. 2. In the different stages, or at the completion of editing the edited film itself can be referred to as "the cut" or "the edit."

**Questions:**

- 1) How do the boys greet Sgt. Himmelstoess when he arrives at the front? How do they treat him?
- 2) What was the pattern of a battle? What preceded each attack? What followed one?
- 3) What happened to Paul Baumer when he found himself in a shellhole in No Man's Land with the French soldier? Why did the French girls welcome the German soldiers?
- 4) After four years of war, how has the war affected the German homefront? Are there still the parades, crowded streets, and joyous sounds of going off to war?
- 5) What were the attitudes of the men in the beer hall? Do they listen to what Paul has to say? Do you see a conflict between the old men's fantasies and Paul's experience of war's reality? What does that indicate to you?
- 6) How does Paul Baumer confront his former teacher? How do the young students react to his vision of the war? How did the company change during Paul's absence?
- 7) The war ended on November 11, 1918. Does this make Kat's and Paul's deaths ironic?