1. The Industry Goes to Town (and Country)

As early as spring 1911, *Moving Picture World* claimed that motion picture manufacturers were shipping “vast quantities of literature free to every exhibitor” throughout the country.¹ Relying on theater managers to serve as unpaid publicity agents, such a strategy was little more than an uncoordinated attempt to promote moviegoing in a very piecemeal fashion. The trade press did suggest all kinds of ideas and share others sent in by contributors—from entrance or lobby decorations and “house organ” formats to handbills and stunts—that exhibitors could devise by drawing on that “literature,” specifically in columns such as Espes Winthrop Sargent’s “Advertising for Exhibitors” in *Moving Picture World.*² At the same time, trade writers complained that exhibitors could not see the benefit of advertising in local newspapers and that, reciprocally, newspapers “were woefully ignorant of the doings in the moving picture world.”³ Labeling newspapers as ignorant, however, was hardly helpful for inducing cooperation. In the *New York Dramatic Mirror,* the “Spectator” offered several good reasons why both exhibitors and newspapers took the attitude they did, even when the trade press was reviewing films regularly. “The large number of new pictures produced each week, their ephemeral character and the brevity of nearly all of them . . . precludes the possibility of general press review of average motion picture productions.”⁴ If newspapers rarely reviewed vaudeville acts or short stories (unless in book form), why should they be expected to review films? Nor should exhibitors be expected to quote from a trade press review in any advertisement they did place in local papers. By the time such a review reached a

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theater manager, often “the picture [was] no longer a fresh feature,” “Spectator” added, and “however favorable . . . of no use,” except in unusual circumstances. This last comment ignored the fact that lots of films would not reach managers in many cities and towns until weeks or even months after their release.

By 1913, not only had exhibitors in some cities undergone a change of attitude and expanded their promotional schemes to include newspaper advertising, but also the latter medium, “which but yesterday would not even deign to admit the existence of the motion picture, [now was] eager to learn and print all the important news in the motion picture field.” As early as the year before, the New York Morning Telegraph boasted that its motion picture department had “a right to claim a large share . . . in the different tone now generally adopted by the press,” but some credit also was due to Moving Picture World and the New York Dramatic Mirror. An equally important reason was that manufacturers and distributors had established publicity departments to produce and supply motion picture news in a more systematic way. Although Robert Grau attributed these departments of “men, and not a few women” to “the advent of the feature film and the coming of the majority of the best-known players of the speaking stage” (which the Mirror had signaled even earlier), there were other plausible causes: the emergence of unusually popular movie stars, many of whom had been only minor stage performers, and the attraction of particular kinds of films, even one- and two-reelers, especially in series and serials. Yet newspapers had to ask (again as the Mirror had): when would manufacturers and distributors, in league with exhibitors, take on the responsibility of turning a greater share of their publicity—“the backbone of every industry,” as Vitagraph publicity director Philip Mindl admitted, “the product of which depends on the patronage of the million”—into paid advertising rather than either ads or copy that exhibitors had to pay for, or free press matter that someone locally had to pick through? Moreover, one also now has to ask, when and how would the industry exploit what Pamela Walker Laird and others call the most current advances in advertising at the time: the “suggestive psychology” of “eye appeal,” as the most strikingly effective sign of modern “good taste”?

Whatever the convergence of factors, the industry only gradually saw local newspapers as a potentially homogeneous, if not quite simultaneous, market—paralleling that of picture theaters—for promoting its products, the movies, and the moviegoing experience itself as a national pastime. Building and sustaining such a market went through several sequential, but overlapping, stages, or what Janet Staiger has categorized somewhat
differently as innovations in advertising strategy. The initial strategy was to establish a trade press devoted primarily to motion pictures, which began in 1906 with Pathé-Frères and Vitagraph sponsoring Views and Films Index and continued in 1907 and 1908, respectively, with Moving Picture World and Motion Picture News—one favoring the “licensed” MPPC (Motion Picture Patents Company) companies, the other the “unlicensed” so-called Independents. Their chief function was to serve as a means for manufacturers and rental exchanges to inform and influence exhibitors. A second strategy, mentioned above, had many manufacturers in both camps shipping publicity material, beginning with bulletins, directly to exhibitors or indirectly through rental exchanges. That, of course, assumed that exhibitors would be only too happy to act as unpaid publicity agents. But once manufacturers made publicity departments a crucial part of their operations, around 1913, another more nationally oriented strategy emerged. This involved the industry supplying film stories to newspaper chains and newsbrokers as a form of paid advertising to promote their new film releases and stars. The stories of series and serials, as is well known, quickly proved successful in turning newspaper readers into regular movie spectators, and vice versa. For a short time in 1914, a few companies also filled newspapers with a daily diet of stories of single-reel, multiple-reel, and early feature-length films. Eventually, major corporations such as Mutual, Universal, and Paramount embarked on national publicity campaigns that targeted hundreds of newspapers and selected mass magazines on a weekly or bimonthly basis. Those campaigns now not only sold individual films, usually features, and specific movie stars, but, more importantly, also sought to systematically circulate the corporation’s trademark as an increasingly consistent guarantee of moviegoing pleasure, supposedly for everyone.

INDUSTRY PUBLICITY FOR INDIVIDUAL FILMS I: CASE STUDIES OF SELIG POLYSCOPE AND KALEM

In summer 1912, Sargent offered some advice to exhibitors who subscribed to Moving Picture World. First, he admonished them to advertise in their local newspaper, especially to promote the growing number of longer films. Second, he outlined how they should write such ads. “Read up what this paper has said about the story. Digest the manufacturer’s bulletin and then bring out the best points of the argument, but leave just a little unsaid. . . . Make it crisp and interesting.” What exactly exhibitors received from the manufacturers and gleaned from the trade press in the early 1910s, what
they thought of it, and, especially, what they did with it has been difficult to determine, and until now of little concern to cinema historians. Most of those ephemera—from “the vast quantities of literature” to managers’ house organs—have not survived, nor have the business records of company publicity strategies. Moreover, cinema historians have been slow to explore whatever forms of contractual relations and even partnerships were emerging between newspaper editors and the industry, from manufacturers and trade journals to exhibitors. Tidbits of information do crop up in the trade press. In fall 1912, Sargent singled out a newspaper editor who also was a picture theater manager in Jefferson City, Missouri. Shortly thereafter, another Moving Picture World column praised William Clune, a major exhibitor in Los Angeles, for hiring “one of the snappiest newspaper reporters in town” to manage publicity for his chain of picture theaters. A little more than a year later, in the Mirror, F.J. Beecroft described how “the wonderful growth of the film business” had recruited “a bright-eyed, keen-minded set of young men [some proved not so young], mostly trained in the newspaper field, to take charge of the advertising and publicity of the manufacturers.”

At least two sets of ephemera, however, do survive and offer, along with trade press discourse, some tantalizing evidence of how exhibitors and newspaper editors could have mined manufacturer publicity between 1911 and 1913, before the industry began to develop more systematic promotional policies. The rarest ephemera can be found among the hundreds of folders in the Selig Polyscope collection at the Margaret Herrick Library: namely, what were called “press sheets,” “electrotype ads,” and “cuts” that Stanley Twist, Selig’s first publicity agent, probably prepared for individual films. Although highly selective, this collection does include material on a dozen wide-ranging titles, many of them especially important examples from the company’s jungle and cowboy pictures. Newspaper ads and “fillers” for one of the earliest jungle pictures, Captain Kate (released July 13, 1911), present at least four “mining” options available to exhibitors and editors. The Anaconda Standard, for instance, played up the Montana origins of the film’s star, “Katie Williams, known personally to half of Butte’s population.” Just days apart, the New Orleans Item and the Oregonian (Portland) printed brief plot synopses that so closely resemble one another, they likely came from the same unknown source. The biweekly Enquirer of Columbus, Georgia, by contrast, apparently had a copy of Selig’s press sheet, for it reprinted almost verbatim the five-paragraph plot synopsis that Twist had written for the film. The Herald of Bellingham, Washington did something more unusual: It reprinted a short review that appeared in the New
York Morning Telegraph, and, unlike the St. Louis Republic, acknowledged the source.25 Along with several reprints of other films, also acknowledged, in the Cleveland Leader later that fall,26 this is one of the few references that confirm the New York newspaper’s surprising claim that others were “republishing our critical reviews of films and our stories about moving pictures and moving picture people.”27

The newspaper ads and “stories” for four more Selig releases from September through December provide similar examples but also different parallels between the trade and public press. Released on consecutive days in late September, Two Orphans was the company’s first three-reel title, although some exhibitors (even in small towns) seem to have shown it as a single film on their programs.28 In late October, the Alton Telegraph (Illinois) reprinted, with slight variations, the entire plot synopsis from the Selig press sheet for a screening at the Lyric theater.29 Both the Jonesboro Sun (Arkansas) and Titusville Herald (Pennsylvania), however, reprinted most of the text from the company’s trade press ad, which boasted that Kate Claxton (the original play’s author) supervised the production and that “no expense” was spared to make “every detail . . . historically correct.”30 The press sheet plot synopses of two single-reel cowboy pictures, Western Hearts and A Romance of the Rio Grande, also made their way into, respectively, the Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette and the Atlantic Telegraph (Iowa).31 Even more interesting is how Selig’s third jungle picture that year, Lost in the Jungle, was represented in several small-town newspapers. Because no press sheet for the film survives at the Herrick Library, one cannot determine whether any of the ads and stories drew on text the company distributed. But two exhibitor ads printed very similar short plot synopses that stressed Kathlyn Williams’s bravery in “this startling and phenomenal animal masterpiece.”32 Most unusual is a large ad for the Cosy Theater in Aberdeen, South Dakota, which includes silhouetted stick figures of a leopard and a human confronting each other.33 Much of the text for this “real thriller” closely matches that published in an anonymous exhibitor’s review in Moving Picture World.34 but the Cosy’s manager could not have been the source of that review (his ad appeared a day before the World’s publication date), nor could the review be the source of the theater’s ad (unless the manager subscribed to the World, and that issue arrived before its stated date).

Two slightly later, multiple-reel films introduced other means by which Selig exerted some influence on exhibitors and editors. One was Cinderella, a three-reel retelling of the well-known fairy tale, released on January 1, 1912. Surviving company publicity includes trade press ads and a rare
booklet, “Complete Lecture and Manual or Instruction on How to Exhibit Selig’s Cinderella,” no press sheets seem to survive. As before, several exhibitors, in Seattle and Anaconda, respectively, either reproduced the design and text of a Selig ad or turned some lines of that text into a promotional story. At least two exhibitors, in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, and San Jose, California, drew on either a trade press ad or the Selig booklet to highlight the “great dramatic star” Mabel Taliaferro and the expense of producing the film’s ninety-nine scenes. Another exhibitor in Toledo, Ohio, added a composite image of Taliaferro to its brief ad copy, which set on the tiny drawing of a servant girl figure a publicity photo of her head topped by a cocked hat pinned with a bouquet of flowers. Indeed, the Empire Photo Theatre, in San Jose, paid for three separate newspaper ad/stories, along with free-admission coupons, in a promotional scheme to have “children 12 years of age or under” attend one of two weekend matinee screenings. One ad/story included a plot synopsis of each of the film’s three reels, likely taken from a Selig press sheet, as was done earlier for Captain Kate and Two Orphans. Another invoked a little-used advertising strategy (for motion pictures) by claiming to summarize “a recent full page article on the Cinderella production” written by “Ashton Stevens the eminent Chicago dramatic critic.” Finally, the New Boz Theatre in Boise, Idaho, paid for an attractively designed ad taking up nearly half a page that combined text from a trade press ad, a profile photo of Taliferro that also had appeared on the cover of Selig’s booklet, and four production stills, one of which had been used in an equally large ad for the Mission theater in Salt Lake City. This was just the kind of ad that Sargent later would call exemplary.

Selig mounted perhaps its most extensive publicity campaign for a historical epic, the three-reel Coming of Columbus (released in May 1912). According to a large trade press ad, that publicity included posters, electro-type ads, cuts, a press sheet, a piano musical score, full-page feature stories, and even “Columbus Busts.” Although none of that material survives at the Herrick Library, it had to have informed the lengthy, pre-release articles that both Moving Picture World and Motography published, giving production details, a plot synopsis for each reel, and favorable reviews. And one feature story (whose text framed nine photographs) did appear in a few metropolitan and small-town newspapers, including the Chicago Inter-Ocean, the Baltimore American, the Canton News-Democrat (Ohio), and the Muskogee Times-Democrat (Oklahoma). Surprisingly, the Colonial in Des Moines (Iowa) used two different electrotype ads . . . on the same day.

In one, a column surrounded by white space shows the image of a sailing
caravel framed by a rising sun atop a block of copy that repeats the film’s title and “Selig’s Greatest Masterpiece,” with a tiny trademark insert (fig. 4). In the other, a line drawing of Columbus posed on the seashore like a Christian missionary, with two caravels in the distance and two watchful Native Americans crouched in the nearby reeds (left and right frame), tops a different text of no-less-celebratory language enclosed by a heavy link chain (fig. 5). The Lowell Sun (Massachusetts) as well as the Iowa City Press even reproduced photographs (also likely drawn from the press sheet) of the caravel replicas originally built in honor of the 1893 Exposition and secured for the film by the Knights of Columbus. Perhaps assuming the interests of the town’s textile factory workers, the Sun also reprinted most of another Moving Picture World article on a Father Tonello’s interview with Pope Pius X, who had endorsed the film after a special private screening. Finally, Sargent came up with a promotional scheme that the Selig company first may have floated: “To interest the school teachers and pupils, have a prize contest for the best essay on Columbus, offering one prize of tickets for each grade and letting the various schools compete for the same prize . . . [and] give a special matinee for the schools.” Among an unknown number of exhibitors that picked up on this idea, the manager of the Orpheum in Canton arranged a special children’s morning matinee two weeks before the film’s scheduled weekend run.

Fortunately, press sheets, lithographs, and electrotype ads survive for no less than four Selig multiple-reel films from 1913. The Cowboy Millionaire (early February), a remake of the company’s popular one-reel title of 1909, provides a good example of how Selig’s publicity found its way into a host of newspapers (fig. 6). The Grand Opera House in Canton used two electrotype ads to promote this film. The first had a cowboy lassoing a cowgirl, both mounted on horses galloping at right angles just behind a large black trademark “branded” with the film’s title, with severely reduced copy (fig. 7); months later the second reproduced another electrotype in its entirety that featured a single galloping horse and rider (with two others behind him) atop a rope-bordered block that included the title against a different background, copy that listed several sensational scenes, and oval portrait drawings of a cowgirl and cowboy anchoring the bottom corners. Two other theaters, in Ogden and Anita (Iowa), redesigned an electrotype ad by substituting for its graphic figure, respectively, a bronco rider painting and two production stills from Selig’s press sheet. In their ads and “stories,” other theaters either reproduced text from one electrotype ad or else combined text from two of them. The Princess in Aberdeen and the Grand in Jonesboro reprinted text from the same electrotype: for instance,
Figure 4. Selig’s *The Coming of Columbus* ad, *Des Moines News*, May 19, 1912.
Figure 5. Selig’s The Coming of Columbus ad, Des Moines Register and Leader, May 19, 1912.

“A thrilling, vivid, and humorous comedy drama in cowboy life. . . . Broncho busting, bucking horses, expert roping, reckless riding, steer throwing, cowboy sports.” The Columbia in Toledo, the Alhambra in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, and the Royal in Mansfield, Ohio, by contrast, lifted and spliced text from that and a second electrotype. In a lengthy column, the Colorado Springs Gazette-Telegram reprinted the press sheet’s paragraph
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The earlier film’s “immense popularity” and the detailed plot synopsis (including several telegram intertitles) of the new film’s two reels. Other papers published short pieces that may not have come directly from Selig. The Seattle News told the story of how William Selig purchased Cyle Hoskins’s oil painting of a bucking bronco, similar to Frederick Remington’s more famous one, to hang in the cowboy hero’s Chicago mansion, an “inspirational” memory image that he turns his back on at the end of the film.

A press sheet and two electrotype ads also exist for Pauline Cushman, the Federal Spy (late March 1913), a two-reel Civil War drama based on the well-known actress who, as a spy for the Union, was arrested twice and escaped death both times. Although exhibitors may not have reproduced either of Selig’s electrotype ads or had local newspapers print any production photos, several did draw on the text of one of those ads. Whereas the Casino Theater in Des Moines, the Lyric in Corning, Iowa, and the Ideal in Stevens Point, Wisconsin, all highlighted the descriptive spectacle of “undoubtedly the most timely, remarkable and elaborate war time masterpiece ever produced,” the Orpheum in Titusville and the Royal in Mansfield
condensed the ad’s rhetorical flourishes into one or two sentences. The Oakland Photo Theatre reprinted the first part of Selig’s press-sheet plot synopsis—drawing attention to the famous scene in which, performing Camille at Wood’s Theater in Louisville, Cushman toasted Jefferson Davis and the Confederacy in order to gain passage across Confederate lines—and then briefly summarized her bravery as a spy. As signs of their audiences’ interest in movie stars, both the Princess Theater in Anaconda, Montana, and the Plaza in Montgomery, Alabama, featured Miss Winifred Greenwood, the actress playing Cushman, in their newspaper ads. Moreover, for a return screening of the film in Corning, Iowa (soon after Decoration Day), the Lyric reproduced in its entirety one of the cuts from Selig’s press sheet, telling the story of how Greenwood was chosen for the role because she so closely resembled a photograph of Cushman found in the Chicago Public Library.

A pair of Selig two-reel films released in June 1913 reveal the extent of Selig’s dissemination of publicity material by that summer. The press sheets for Alone in the Jungle provided a variety of texts for more than half a dozen exhibitors. To promote the film’s screening, the manager of the Dreamland in Oelwein, Iowa, got his local newspaper to reprint the full plot synopsis in a page-long column. From the seven “press stories” offered by the company (none featured the film’s star, Bessie Eyton), exhibitors picked out different texts to lure audiences. For the Ark in Logansport, Indiana, it was “Did you ever see a Lion Swim?” For the Majestic in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, “The Leap of a Lioness in a Death Flurry.” For the Lyric in Portsmouth, Ohio, “Wild Animals Rampant.” For the Gaiety in Fort Wayne, “The Call of the Wild.” The Idle Hour in Ada, Oklahoma, took a double-barreled approach, filling its local newspaper with both the “Lion” and “Lioness” stories. A trade press ad for “Selig’s Sensational Western Feature,” by contrast, complemented the press sheets for The Law and the Outlaw. Several exhibitors—the Oakland Photo, the Alcazar in Anaconda, the Palace in Cedar Rapids, the Majestic in Ada, and the Ideal in Stevens Point—borrowed the trade press ad language verbatim or revised it slightly for their own ads. This time, in Oelwein, the Gem had its local newspaper reprint an edited version of the company’s plot synopsis. From the six “press stories” distributed by Selig, the Acme in Olympia, Washington, chose “The All-Round Champion Cowboy” featuring Tom Mix, the film’s star, while the Empire in Lima, Ohio, opted for romance in “All the World Loves a Lover.” Indeed, the growing popularity of Mix led the Isis Theater in Ogden to twice use his press-sheet photo as a newspaper promotion for its three-day screening. Finally, a second ad for the Majestic in Ada concluded with a quote from the New York
A second set of ephemera also survives at the Herrick Library: scattered issues of the Kalem Kalendar, the company’s biweekly bulletin announcing new film releases. By 1913, the Kalendar had a column, running several pages, of “press notices” for individual films that exhibitors were encouraged to send to their “local papers.” One of those films is especially noteworthy: Shenandoah, a three-reel adaptation of Bronson Howard’s Civil War drama. Within the first three weeks of the film’s release in July, at least three exhibitors—the Tokyo in Logansport, the Grand in Fort Wayne, and the Princess in Aberdeen—reproduced the Kalendar’s full press notice in their ads for this “special” film, which concluded with “one of the most striking effects . . . a battle at midnight.” Weeks later, while the American Theatre in Columbus, Georgia, excerpted most of the first paragraph from George Blaisdell’s review in Moving Picture World, the Hippodrome in Gulfport, Mississippi, got its local newspaper to reprint, without attribution, that review in its entirety. Just days apart, two other small-town newspapers, the Rockford Republic and the Anaconda Standard, recycled from the same unknown source a “filler” paragraph of information on the film’s production: scenes were shot on “authentic” locations, using thirty thousand rounds of small-arms ammunition, five thousand rounds from twenty cannon, and several original Confederate and Federal flags. Finally, in his “Motion Pictures” page in the Waterloo Reporter, Arthur Stolte published a story about the “private exhibition of ‘Shenandoah’” that Kalem arranged for the playwright’s widow, and the Family theater in Adrian, Michigan, filled its ad with her expressed admiration and gratitude.

Most manufacturers sent out bulletins and other press materials on individual films well into 1915, and exhibitors, especially in small cities and towns, continued to find them useful for placing ads and story “fillers” in local newspapers. This was certainly the case with the Kalem Kalendar press notices for the company’s Alice Joyce and Helen Holmes series in late 1914 and early 1915. The Star Theatre manager in Chillicothe, Ohio, for instance, reproduced most of the press notice (except the brief plot synopsis) for The Price of Silence (December), “a two act feature of the Alice Joyce series.” The managers of the Ray in Olympia, Washington, and the Orpheum in Fort Worth excerpted similar material from the press notice for an episode in the Hazards of Helen series, The Flying Freight’s Captive, in which Holmes, as a female railway telegraph operator, is “possessed of an unusual amount of daring and nerve.” So did the managers of the Colonial in Rockford and the Bon Ton in Jackson, Michigan, in their story.
ads for another in the series, *The Black Diamond Express*. The manager of the Grand in Reno ran a prominent column in his local newspaper, clipping the entire press notice for *The Stolen Engine*, in which “Holmes leap[es] from a locomotive going at high speed, into the cab of another engine, running on a parallel track.” While the Ray’s manager repeated the same tactic, excerpting much of the press notice for *The Escape on the Limited*, papers in Fort Wayne and Santa Fe published the exact same publicity column, likely also supplied by Kalem, that included not only a lengthy plot synopsis (in prose with “punch”) accompanied by a production photo, but also an admiring profile of Holmes in a film that gives her the chance to “display . . . . her varied dramatic talents, to say nothing of exhibiting her skill as pilot of a handcar.”

PUBLICATION STRATEGIES FOR INDIVIDUAL FILMS II: “READ THIS STORY TODAY—THEN SEE IT IN MOVING PICTURES”

Alongside this barrage of press sheets, electrotype ads, and cuts shipped to local exhibitors, manufacturers also engaged in a second strategy for publicizing individual films that targeted newspapers more directly. Perhaps spurring this strategy was the rapid success of *Motion Picture Story Magazine*, whose monthly issues throughout 1911 were full of fictional versions of MPPC films. From November 1911 to April 1912, for instance, the Chicago Sunday Tribune printed “a Photoplay in Story Form” in its “Features” section. Unlike the short stories and serialized fiction commonly published in mass magazines and Sunday newspaper magazine sections, this was an early version of the fictional tie-in—in this case, a one-page text based on a film about to be released by the Chicago manufacturers Selig or Essanay—in which each photoplay story seemed designed to instill in readers the desire to experience the same story at a local picture theater. For a brief period in early 1912, the Boston Evening Traveler also printed each Saturday a fictional tie-in from one of the MPPC companies as “The Traveler’s Moving Picture Story.” Also briefly if less regularly, American Film tried a similar strategy of single photoplay stories that, according to a trade press ad, went out to sixty newspapers nationwide. The most successful fictional tie-in that year involved Edison’s popular monthly series *What Happened to Mary?* (released in July 1912). But a mass magazine, not one or more newspapers, was the medium of circulation. Each story of the film’s twelve episodes was published simultaneously in McClure’s *Ladies’ World*, with its nearly one million readers, largely working-class and rural women.
In the films, Mary Fuller, Edison’s top female star, plays a stenographer in New York, a “modern girl” who voluntarily uses her skill and cunning to aid strangers in need. Whereas the films highlight Mary’s athleticism and agency, Shelley Stamp argues, the magazine stories show her “preoccupied with romance and beauty.” As the series drew to a close in summer 1913, Edison plotted a second monthly series, *Who Will Marry Mary?*, which aligned its heroine more closely with the Mary of *Ladies’ World*.

What led the fictional tie-in to become such an immensely influential publicity strategy was the deal that Selig worked out with the *Chicago Tribune* in late 1913 to jointly produce and promote *The Adventures of Kathlyn*, a serial of thirteen two-reel episodes. The trade press quickly recognized the Selig-*Tribune* strategy as an innovative “campaign of motion picture advertising” because it guaranteed the biweekly publication of a full-page “installment of [the] serial story,” written by Harold McGrath, in fifty Sunday newspapers—many of them contracted with the *Tribune’s* syndication service—soon after the showing of a new film episode. Throughout much of December, the *Tribune* ran “teaser” ads, initially on the daily “Women’s Page,” to whet readers’ curiosity about who was “Kathlyn.” Women readers were warned, for instance, that their “husbands” or “sweethearts” might find Kathlyn too “dangerously beautiful.” In later ads that moved closer to the front page and targeted a broader readership, Kathlyn was threatened by jungle-picture stereotypes (in image and word): first, a “man-eating tiger” and then a scowling, knife-wielding “Hindu chief.” The “teasers” culminated in large ads that ran on the daily *Tribune’s* second page: one was a profile halftone of Williams, identifying her as the serial’s star; the other, a full-page ad announcing the first film episode that could be seen at ten Chicago picture theaters (fig. 8).

What seems a widening appeal across gender in these ads also complemented an overall cross-class appeal that Barbara Wilinsky found in her analysis of the Selig-*Tribune* enterprise. Whereas Selig had a core audience assumed to be working class and white collar, the *Tribune* had a “largely white, native-born, middle-class readership.” The story installments and film episodes, Wilinsky argues, together allowed the two partners to “blend their class-based audiences to attract men and women from all classes [my emphasis].”

The publicity campaign for *The Adventures of Kathlyn* had at least three new components that would soon become characteristic. The most important was McGrath’s fictional tie-in—“never been printed before” and illustrated with production stills—the first installment of which appeared in the *Sunday Tribune* on January 4, 1914. The newspapers that ran these installments, in conjunction with film episodes, were unusually widespread, from major cities (for instance the *Salt Lake Telegram, Buffalo Times,*...
Detroit Free Press, New Orleans Item, Syracuse Herald, and Cleveland Plain Dealer) to smaller cities and towns (Fort Worth Star-Telegram, Youngstown Vindicator, Hamilton Republican-News, Lima News), making the campaign nearly nationwide.101 Even exhibitors in cities such as Des Moines, Fort Wayne, and La Crosse, Wisconsin (where installments did not appear) told customers to “read the stories . . . printed every two weeks in the Chicago Sunday Tribune,” implying that the edition circulated far beyond the metropolis.102 A second component was special ads in certain papers that repeatedly called attention to both the serial and its fictional
tie-in. The Tribune adopted this practice, immediately following the initial installment with a different large ad each day of the week, boasting of the film’s production cost, its “most beautiful moving picture actress,” “love and danger and intrigue,” and “biggest thrills to come.” In mid-March, it even printed a full-page ad for “Kathlyn’s Own Story,” appearing in the April issue of Photoplay “now on sale at newsdealers’ and moving picture theaters.” A third, which the Tribune also put in practice, was a listing of the picture theaters where fans could see The Adventures of Kathlyn that day or any day during the week. Following the Tribune, other newspapers combined these latter practices with large ads that included appeals to read McGrath’s latest installment and listings of where the latest serial episode would be shown. The Detroit Free Press highlighted “McGrath’s latest and greatest novel” in its Sunday edition, compiled two small columns of picture theaters (extending from Detroit to Toledo and other Michigan towns from Grand Rapids to Saginaw) and the dates of the film’s screenings (through February 15), as well as a production still of “Kathlyn’s father chained in a dungeon.” Along with its appeal to readers, by contrast, the Cleveland Plain Dealer printed large graphed columns noting exactly when during one week each serial episode could be seen, and where, in nearly fifty cities and towns from Corry, Pennsylvania, to Columbus and Bowling Green, Ohio.

Seizing on Kathlyn’s unexpected success, another MPPC company, Pathé-Frères, quickly teamed up with the Hearst newspaper chain to produce and promote The Perils of Pauline, which became even more popular with audiences. One reason was that Hearst’s News Service was extensive enough to publicize this twelve-episode serial and its stars, Pearl White and Crane Wilbur, coast to coast. Beginning in mid-March 1914, Charles L. Goddard’s fictional tie-in appeared in Hearst newspapers from the New York Sunday American and Atlanta Sunday American to the Los Angeles Examiner, but it also ran in others contracted with the Hearst service, for instance the Pittsburgh Leader, Detroit News and Tribune, New Brunswick Times, Columbus Ledger (Georgia), Cincinnati Enquirer, and Cleveland Leader (the latter not until early June). Some Hearst papers and exhibitors even found ways to advertise in unaffiliated papers. Ads in the New York Journal enticed readers to look for Goddard’s story in the New York American, and, according to an ad in the St. Paul News, at the Blue Mouse theater moviegoers could pick up copies of the Chicago Sunday Examiner (from which Edna Vercoe would read and clip Goddard’s story for her scrapbook; see chapter 5). The Pittsburgh Leader, Detroit News and Tribune, and New York Journal all ran Pathé ads that listed when episodes
of Pauline could be seen, and in which picture theaters, during the course of a week. At least sixty theaters featured the serial’s first episode in Detroit and its suburbs, and a lengthy column listed another fifty-five doing the same in Pittsburgh and surrounding cities and towns (from western Pennsylvania to northeastern Ohio and West Virginia). As if acknowledging the serial’s popularity, the Cleveland Leader even printed weekly ads inviting readers to “Follow the Crowds” (illustrated by a line of mostly women at a box office) to a score of theaters in the city and nearby towns. Despite not printing Goddard’s story, the New York Journal ran weekly ads informing its readers “where Pauline’s reels can be seen” in nearly one hundred picture theaters not only in New York City but also in cities and towns from New Jersey to New York state and Connecticut. Most of those included an illustration depicting the crowds lined up to see Pauline, but one illustration had a well-dressed couple in front of a theater, with the man pointing his cane at the film’s title.

When, in April 1914, Universal joined the rush to release its first serial, Lucille Love, the Girl of Mystery, starring Grace Cunard and Francis Ford, Joe Brandt hired A. P. Robyn Syndicate in Chicago to get at least forty newspapers to publish the serial story, written by a mysterious “Master Pen.” Within two weeks, between mid- and late April, the first story installment—subtitled “A Soul Thrilling Story of Love, Devotion, Danger, and Intrigue” and illustrated with a line drawing of the heroine piloting an airplane and threatened with drowning at sea—appeared in newspapers from Chicago, Cleveland, and New Orleans to Omaha, Lexington (Kentucky), and Duluth (Minnesota). In fact, in Cleveland, for whatever contractual reasons, Universal muscled Lucille Love into one newspaper and dozens of picture theaters two months before Pathé could arrange for the first episode and installment of Pauline to appear. In several major cities, Universal followed Selig in promoting both story and film in advance, with full-page ads in the Cleveland Leader, Atlanta Constitution, and Chicago Herald, or with full-column ads in the Syracuse Herald and Omaha World-Herald (fig. 9). The line drawings in those advance ads all whetted audience interest in the heroine: Cunard slightly slouched in a slinky gown; Lucille protecting her lover from her father, captioned “Her Father’s Honor! Her Lover’s Peril!”; and the sensation scene of her rescue at sea. Again, metropolitan newspapers such as the Cleveland Leader and Chicago Herald—and even the Chicago Tribune, which did not run story installments—sought to sustain interest in the serial by combining weekly lists of where and when fans (again, Edna Vercoe was one) could catch an episode with either a printed installment or a large ad for the film. At
“Lucille was pleading for the honor of the man she loved—pleading as only a woman can plead. There at the water’s edge a soul stirring tragedy was enacted. The aviator—a man among men, was being asked by the girl he loved to risk her life, and his own, to save the name of his strongest rival. Torn between conflicting emotions, he stared at her, half unbelievingly, as with appealing intensity she pointed wildly out across the bright blue water to where the majestic liner was steaming rapidly towards the horizon. Lucille hung breathless on the aviator’s every action. His lips opened for protest, but there was something in the entreaty of eyes he could not resist. Breathlessly she watched him, awaiting his decision. There was a curiously twisted smile upon his lips when he faced her again. ‘Get in,’ he whispered. She had won her appeal.”

Extract from the first instalment of “Lucille Love, the Girl of Mystery.”

Watch for Other Announcements of

“Lucille Love,
THE GIRL OF MYSTERY”

It will be the story sensation of the year

Startling the World in Its Thrilling Intensity

THE FASCINATING NEW SERIAL STORY

“LUCILLE LOVE,
THE GIRL OF MYSTERY”

BY "THE MASTER PEN."

It-Stands Pre-eminently a Literary Masterpiece and an Assured Dramatic Triumph

To make this wonderful production still more captivating and interesting to the reader, it has been dramatized by

The Universal Film Manufacturing Company

and will be exhibited at all leading motion picture theaters in this city, and vicinity supplied with their service. Remember, you can read this great story of “Lucille Love, the Girl of Mystery,” in this paper and see each dramatic situation reproduced on the screen at your favorite moving picture theater.

Read the Opening Chapters in THE CONSTITUTION, Sunday, April 12th,


least three times during the serial’s run, the Leader also printed large graphed columns, much as the Plain Dealer had for Kathlyn, listing when and “where you may see ‘Lucille Love’” (whichever of its episodes) in seventy theaters throughout northern Ohio.118

So successful were these publicity strategies that Thanhouser adopted them—probably with the support of Mutual and, apparently, Syndicate
Film—to promote a fourth serial, *The Million Dollar Mystery*, starring Florence LaBadie and James Cruze. Joining the *Chicago Tribune* to publish story installments of this serial (written by McGrath again) were supposedly two hundred newspapers, many of which may have been doing this for the first time.\(^{119}\) The first installment initially appeared on June 29 in dozens of papers, from the *Tribune, Buffalo Courier, Baltimore News*, and *Washington Times* to the *Canton Repository, San Antonio Light*, and *Ogden Standard*.\(^{120}\) Within another few weeks it had reached others, including the *Cleveland Plain Dealer, Tulsa World*, and *Macon Telegraph* (Georgia).\(^{121}\) A day or even a week before the first episode’s release on June 22, Thanhouser followed Selig’s model by inserting teaser ads in several city newspapers. Initially these not only displayed the title in boldface but also a line drawing of a magic lamp emitting a plume of smoke curling into a question mark enclosing a woman’s face with a black mask over her eyes, the mask indistinguishable from her hair.\(^{122}\) A later teaser spelled out the mystery: “One million dollars disappears [when a] balloon is wrecked and drops into the ocean.”\(^{123}\) On the day of the film’s release, something novel enticed readers and movie fans: a contest with a prize of “$10,000 for 100 words” that solved the mystery (fig. 10).\(^{124}\) The *Tribune* made an extra effort to sustain interest in the serial in early July by carrying an ad that encouraged readers to pick up the latest issue of *Movie Pictorial*, where Detective Wm. J. Burns offered clues to the mystery’s solution, and later printing an interview with McGrath by the Sunday movie page editor, Mae Timee.\(^{125}\) Whereas ads in the *Tribune* and *News* included a list of the theaters showing the first episode, the *Plain Dealer*, in conjunction with McGrath’s first installment, printed a graphed column of when and where in northeastern Ohio any of the first three episodes could be seen that first week. The Cleveland paper then kept tracking the circulation of the serial for fans, almost week by week, through October.\(^{126}\)

Universal’s second serial, *The Trey O’ Hearts*, confirmed the industry’s success in its efforts to establish something like a nationwide publicity campaign, although still tied to a single film and one or two stars. Again, A. P. Robyn arranged for Louis Joseph Vance’s story installments to appear in early August (just as those for “Lucille Love” were ending), in papers from the *Cleveland Leader* to the *Iowa City Press* and *Richmond Times-Dispatch* (Virginia); by late August, this list included the *Atlanta Constitution, New Orleans Times-Picayune, Augusta Chronicle* (Georgia), and *Aberdeen American* (South Dakota).\(^{127}\) Interestingly, Universal and its regional exchanges gave much more attention to Vance than to the film’s stars, George Larkin and Cleo Madison (Edna Vercoe would favor the stars).\(^{128}\) As
Harold MacGrath’s Latest Novel Starts in Today’s Repository

The Sunday Repository offers its readers one of the most expensive works of modern fiction as a part of its regular Sunday Edition—AT NO EXTRA CHARGE. The Million Dollar Mystery, the latest and most interesting novel from the pen of Harold MacGrath, famous author of “Kathryn,” “The Man on the Box,” etc., will be presented free to readers of the Sunday Repository in weekly episodes STARTING TODAY, in the form. Thanhouser’s million dollar motion-picture version of this story is now appearing in the theatres.

The Million Dollar Mystery is entirely new; it has never before been published. Into this thrilling story Harold MacGrath has brought—more feverish action—more unique adventure—more exciting romance—that have ever before appeared in his novels. His beautiful heroine, Florence Gray, will command your admiration by her beauty only. Her extraordinary crimes are told to graphically. Read the start—read the first episode—read the novel written by Harold MacGrath—starting in this issue of the Sunday Repository.

Appearing in TODAY’S REPOSITORY—the First Episode of

$10,000 for 100 Words

If you’ve ever read any of Mr. MacGrath’s novels you’ll be sure to read The Million Dollar Mystery. But, as you read this wonderful new novel, bear in mind that $10,000 will be paid for the best 100 word episode of the mystery. $3,000 for 200 words, the greatest price ever offered! Everybody is eligible to compete for the $10,000. Close to the mystery will be given in each week’s issue. Full details of the $10,000 for 100 word offer will be found on page 17 of today’s Repository. Read this great story TODAY.

See the Motion Pictures at These Theaters

Orpheum Theater—Canton—Every Friday and Saturday

Dreamland Theater—Manhattan—Every Mon. & Tues.
before, Universal placed advance ads to promote both the story and “the pictures.” Some exploited the playing card in their design and posed this question to readers: “Could a Woman Love Her Father Enough to Kill Her Sister?”\footnote{At least one offered a new variation on \textit{The Million Dollar Mystery}’s puzzle contest, asking moviegoers to identify those situations in the film that “the producer . . . claimed could not be portrayed in pictures. But they were.”\footnote{Once again, several newspapers carried ads that let fans know where and/or when they could catch an episode. The \textit{New Orleans Times-Picayune} printed a listing of more than twenty picture theaters in the city and surrounding area that would run the serial and connected that listing to the first story installment.\footnote{The \textit{Cleveland Leader} repeatedly ran weekly graphed columns that, in mid-August, included twenty-one theaters in northeastern Ohio, and, by mid-September, had expanded to nearly fifty.\footnote{The \textit{New York Evening Mail}, which printed Vance’s story installments daily, listed more than forty picture theaters in a four-state area that would be screening \textit{The Trey O’ Hearts} each day of the week.}}}}

Shortly after Selig and the \textit{Tribune} launched their campaign to promote \textit{The Adventures of Kathlyn}, the industry initiated a second fictional tie-in strategy involving many more films. Further research may determine who came up with this strategy and how it was coordinated, but it was relatively widespread in metropolitan and big-city newspapers by early February 1914. With “half of Cleveland’s entire population attend[ing] moving picture shows at least once a week,” the \textit{Cleveland Leader} was one of the first to “publish each day a short story of one of the best films now being shown in the city or about to be shown.”\footnote{Bannered as “Today’s Best Moving Picture Story,” this daily column initially printed the single story of a multiple-reel film such as Edison’s \textit{An American King}, Pathé’s \textit{In the Mesh of Her Hair}, or Selig’s \textit{Reconciled in Blood} (along with a halftone of each film’s star), then shifted to shorter versions of two to four films of mixed reel length from General Film, Universal, and Mutual.\footnote{The first Mutual story, “Withering Roses,” includes this tantalizing note: “Storyized by Helen Bagg in Photoplay Magazine.”\footnote{Very few foreign features found their way into the column, and when those such as Pathé’s \textit{Germinal} or Messter’s \textit{The Life and Work of Richard Wagner} did, they never enjoyed top billing—but, then, neither did American features such as Famous Players’s \textit{Tess of the Storm Country} (with Mary Pickford) or Selig’s \textit{The Spoilers} (with Dustin Farnum).\footnote{In early June, the \textit{Leader} printed an ad promising that “a complete new story of the best motion picture film released by the producers for the day will appear every morning in The Leader,”\footnote{That promise, however, soon gave way to a greater interest in promoting \textit{The Perils of Pauline} and Lucille Love.}}}}
Among other newspapers that quickly joined the Leader within the next few weeks in February, I want to single out half a dozen. Heading its column bannened “Here’s Today’s Best Moving Picture Story,” the Toledo Blade announced that it had assigned a newspaper man “to view the films in advance of their release, and to write for Blade readers short stories of what he considers the best films shown.” But the first story of Edison’s Rorke’s Drift belied that claim, for it was exactly the same as the one printed that day in the Leader. In each column the Blade also printed several stories of mixed reel length—again like those in the Leader—initially favoring releases from General Film and then including those from Universal, Mutual, and Famous Players. Yet there was a difference. The column appeared only once a week in the Saturday edition and soon was subsumed within a larger bannened group of columns and accompanied by a brief star profile and photo—from G. M. Anderson to Lillian Gish—not connected with any of the stories. Although the Blade’s stories ran until mid-July, they became fewer and shorter, finally reduced to a single column. Two weeks after the Blade, the Philadelphia Times and Washington Times were no less forthright in announcing their stories’ publication. In almost simultaneous ads printed a day or two before the first story, both reported having “just completed negotiations for the daily publication of the stories of the best moving picture films,” stories that “cover all the best films, whoever makes them.” Although they too claimed their own “representatives” as authors, stories like that for Edison’s “Sophia’s Imaginary Visitors” had the same format, text, and halftone of a film’s star (in this case, Mac MacDermott), whether in the Leader, the Blade, or either Times. Much like the Leader, the Washington Times continued its column of stories into early June; in Philadelphia, by contrast, the stories disappeared from the Times sometime in March, only to reappear in the Philadelphia Telegraph in early April under the banner “Best Photoplay Stories of the Day,” where they were replaced in late June by installments of The Million Dollar Mystery.

Finally, two big Chicago newspapers adopted different fictional tie-in strategies, only confirming Paul Moore’s point that “the mass audience for moviegoing was . . . an extension and supplement to the readership of popular print culture.” The bannened column found in the Cleveland Leader, “Today’s Best Moving Picture Story,” also appeared in the Tribune two days earlier, on February 5, 1914. Like the Leader, the Tribune justified the column with the claim that “moving picture plays present the drama of daily life . . . to more than a half million Chicagoens”; but, like the Philadelphia Times and Washington Times, it attributed the daily short stories to its own
newspaperman “assigned . . . to view the films in advance of their release.”148
“The story may be read in the morning,” the Tribune added, and “the picture may be seen in the afternoon or at night.” This column initially printed single stories of feature-length films, with exactly the same text as in the Leader but in a different order; in less than a week, it too was including up to half a dozen stories of mixed reel length, again from General Film, Universal, and Mutual. At the same time, an added notice alleged that the newspaper employed “a staff of trained story writers . . . instructed to look at ALL of the films and write the stories of the best ones.”149 This probably was an empty boast meant to get readers to think the Tribune was one up on all other newspapers and nearly on a par with the trade papers. More interesting, however, is a gradual shift in the language of the stories that, unlike those in the previous newspapers, faintly at first and then more strongly read like reviews. Here is the opening assessment of Vitagraph’s Lost in Mid Ocean: “This is a three reel feature film that heaps up more horrors on a lone woman’s head than one would expect twenty of even the strongest feminine examples to endure.”150 Or this initial sentence of Rex’s The Babies’ Doll: “The pathos of this sad little story is relieved somewhat by the exceedingly charming acting of the two children.”151 This sounds less like a publicity man and more like a critic—and a woman at that—as chapter 4 will explore.
Slightly late in publishing such fictional tie-ins, the Chicago Record-Herald took a rather different route from most other newspapers. First, it bannered its daily column “Read This Story TODAY—See It in Moving Pictures” and boasted that its stories came exclusively from “the Universal Film Manufacturing Company, which represents the ten foremost American film producing companies.”152 Second, each column included only one story of a two- to three-reel film, beginning with IMP’s The Marine Mystery (in the King, the Detective series) and Gold Seal’s The Leopard Lady, starring Grace Cunard and Francis Ford.153 For at least a few weeks, each story was copyrighted by Henry Barrett Chamberlin. Third, Universal placed a small ad on the same page with the column, listing two dozen theaters in Chicago and the surrounding region where the motion picture of that particular day’s story could be seen over the next two weeks—and encouraged readers to “cut this out and save it.”154 Although the column’s banner soon changed to simply “Today’s Picture Story,” these Universal stories ran well into August; then, on August 11, under a new contract and banner, “In the Picture Playhouses,” the Herald started printing daily stories from all of the American manufacturers, beginning with Essanay’s Topsy-Turvey Sweedie, starring Wallace Beery as a “giant servant girl.”155
Universal, however, continued placing its small ads for where and when fans could find that day’s film release at least through the month of September. One of the few newspapers that seems to have kept to the strategy of printing a daily story, the Herald, maintained the practice until mid-March 1915, just days before its initial daily review column, “Seen on the Screen,” appeared, soon to be signed by Louella O. Parsons. By then, a much more intensive nationwide publicity campaign was well entrenched.

NATIONAL PUBLICITY STRATEGIES FOR TRADEMARKS AND BRANDS

During the first decade of motion pictures’ emergence, trademarks and brand names had become part of the industry’s overall marketing effort to both stimulate and control the consumption of motion pictures. In amusement trade papers such as the New York Clipper and Billboard in the early 1900s, ads ballyhooed the “good will value” of company names such as Edison, Lubin, and AM&B. At the same time, Pathé-Frères initiated the practice, soon followed by others, of “branding” the titles and intertitles of its film products with its trademark Gallic cock or red rooster. One aim of these marks was to limit the widespread duping of film prints, and most manufacturers, well into the early 1910s, also stuck their trademark or brand name, often conspicuously, on the background element of an interior set and occasionally even posted it somewhere in an exterior scene. The primary purpose, however, was what Susan Strasser has called “product education,” an essential component of the new system of mass marketing exemplified by Quaker Oats, Ivory Soap, Kodak, and others at the turn of the twentieth century. That “education” involved a process of “incremental repetition,” writes Richard Ohmann, connecting consumers’ expectations about a product with recurring symbols. Indeed, an early treatise asserted that the very foundation of American business was “built upon the significance and guaranty conveyed to the purchasing public through the medium of those particular marks, names, and symbols.” Through the nickelodeon period, film manufacturers relied on the repetition of such marks for moviegoers at two different points: nationally in the ads regularly placed in trade press issues mailed to exhibitors, and locally in the posters displayed at picture theaters’ entrances, in house organs handed out to customers, and in the films’ title cards and intertitles. Only in the early 1910s did manufacturers hesitantly seek to exploit their trademarks and brands in local or regional newspapers, and it took several years for the strategy to gain traction on a national scale.
Perhaps the first to test this strategy was Pathé-Frères, in early 1910, with its “national” advertising campaign in Sunday newspapers in such metropolitan centers as Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, and Baltimore. The initial ad reminded moviegoers that “the Rooster trademark means quality,” which the company’s short yet influential dominance of the American market had once guaranteed, and appealed to women and their “little daughters.” Subsequent ads targeted every member of the family by promoting a different one of Pathé’s wide range of “genres” each week: comedy, tragedy, travel pictures, educational pictures, juvenile pictures, and historical pictures. Although this campaign lasted only two months, it made the bold claim that a motion picture company (even a French one) might have a status similar to those like Kellogg’s, Coca-Cola, or Kodak, that advertised their products nationally in magazines and newspapers. Within another year, several American companies tried out variations on this strategy, but still in a limited way. In late 1911, the General Film Company began placing an ad on each “Photoplays and Players” page of the Cleveland Sunday Leader. Once the distribution system of “Independent” films underwent a radical restructuring in the summer of 1912, Universal and then Mutual also enlisted in the practice, but initially, like General Film, through one of their regional rental exchanges. By November 1912, the Leader also was printing large ads for the Victor Film Service, exclusive distributors of Universal films in northern Ohio; within another month, it was taking similar ads for Lake Shore Film & Supply and its “unexcelled Mutual Service.” By mid-March 1913, in the Cleveland Sunday Plain Dealer, not only was the name of Universal now much bigger than Victor Film in the latter’s ads, but also a nearby column listed “advance releases for the week” from General Film, Universal Victor, and Lake Shore Film (Mutual). At the same time, the Buffalo Times also began to place ads from regional exchanges for General Film, Mutual, and Victor Film Service.

As manufacturers and distributors set up publicity departments the following year, their brand names and trademarks cropped up in more newspapers, in even smaller cities. In April, the Ogden Standard began to accept small strip ads from Universal, Mutual, and Famous Players, each of which prominently displayed its trademark. But those same ads also soon appeared in other papers, from the Des Moines Register and Leader to the San Antonio Light. Similar strip ads for Universal, Mutual (now without the mark), and Warner’s Features (rather than Famous Players) continued to run in other papers such as the Plain Dealer well into 1914. In the Ogden Standard, they also were joined briefly by ads for Kinemacolor and World Special Films. It seems quite plausible that these companies had a
financial arrangement with Syndicate Film Publishing, because their ads often appeared alongside the “News of Photoplayers and Photoplayers” columns shipped by Leslie’s syndicated service. In late September, one block of ads in the Standard even claimed that they were “published in other newspapers throughout the United States” and read by “thousands of exhibitors.” It was also in early 1913 that certain local picture theaters became identified with a single brand. In late January, Mutual combined with the Unique Theatre to place in the Des Moines News a half-page ad that celebrated their “alliance” within a “frame” of ten Mutual stars. A week later, the Cleveland Leader began referring in its columns to “Mutual houses” and theaters showing Universal films in the city. Four months later, the New Royal in San Antonio was promoting its “Mutual Program—‘Few as Good, None Better.’” By late 1913, more theaters were closely allied in their ads with one of the three major distributors. In the Buffalo Times, Mutual began running a full column ad listing thirty-five theaters in the region where moviegoers could “look for the Mutual Trade Mark.” In Cedar Rapids, Iowa, the Columbia Theatre was now the “Home of Mutual Movies.” In Janesville, Wisconsin, the Royal was the “Home of the Mutual Movies,” while Myers Theatre was “The Home of the Universal Program” and the Lyric-Majestic showed only “licensed photoplays” from General Film. In December, while a Dream Theatre ad in Columbus, Georgia, depicted a medal won by Universal, a Gamble Theatre ad in Altoona, Pennsylvania, displayed a clock logo over a new slogan, “Mutual Movies Make Time Fly.”

In The Theatre of Science (1914), Robert Grau claims that Philip Mindl, who headed Mutual’s publicity department, was the first to inaugurate a publicity campaign that was truly “national in scope and directed to the attention of the general public.” The claim seems well founded, especially in that Mutual’s campaign aimed to promote the company’s trademark and slogan in a range of metropolitan newspapers. The General Film publicity department, headed by Chester Beecroft, had set a precedent of sorts by launching a short series of ads illustrated with half a dozen people posed at different moments of attending a generic picture theater, but those ads had run solely in the New York Morning Telegraph’s Sunday supplement. In late 1913, the Mutual campaign, by contrast, placed unusually large ads in Sunday newspapers such as the Kansas City Star, St. Paul News, and Chicago Tribune. The earliest was a full-page ad that heralded the new trademark of a winged clock (set at 8:00) framed by “Mutual Movies Make Time Fly” as the sign that “you” should look for before entering a picture theater because it “Marks the Very Best Motion Picture Entertainment in the World!” More
prominent was the line drawing of an imagined audience around the opulent lobby box office of a palace cinema (fig. 11). Among the crowd are two well-dressed young women, an elderly rural couple, several young children, and a single dapper young man—most of their clothing suggestive of white middle-class or at least white-collar patrons. This ad clearly asked readers to see themselves in those moviegoers, find the nearest theater brandishing the
Mutual trademark in the extensive list of more than one hundred in the
region designated the “home of Mutual Movies,” and “get the habit and go
every night.” Other, smaller ads depicted a mother sending her three excited
children off by themselves to a neighborhood theater (with this caveat: “but
be sure it’s [to] the ‘Mutual Movies’”); a satisfied group of patrons exiting a
similar theater lobby, with one man crying out to a couple (as well as the
reader) that it was “The Best Show I Ever Saw”; and a fashionably dressed
woman urging her husband, “Let’s See the Mutual Movies”—concluding
with this advice: “Take HER to See MUTUAL Movies Tonight!”  

In the summer of 1914, Mindl himself summarized the principles behind
the publicity machine he had created at Mutual. “Having something to sell
which the American people want, the Mutual believes in letting them know
about it. To do this effectively, organized, systematized and intelligently
directed publicity is necessary.” Mutual publicity, consequently, took a
range of forms. There was the usual weekly news sheet, “Mutual Movie
Fillers,” along with “a cut and matrix service” sent to “6,000 editors of daily
and weekly newspapers to clip from.” Supposedly, it was one person’s job
in Mindl’s department to read through “the sixteen hundred newspapers”
on Mutual’s exchange list for how much material actually was being
collapsed. There was a forty-four-page weekly magazine called Reel Life
that provided advance information on upcoming film releases and promo-
tional items, presumably shipped to exchange offices and exhibitors, “with
a constantly increasing circulation” that allegedly reached thirty thou-
sand. Perhaps most interesting was the sixteen-page magazine Our
Mutual Girl Weekly, published in conjunction with weekly episodes of the
company’s fifty-two-reel series starring Norma Phillips and showing off
“the very latest fashions in gowns and hats and furs and shoes and linge-
rie.” Although special ads for Our Mutual Girl did appear in small-town
newspapers such as the Sheboygan [Wisconsin] Press (the source of that
quote), Mutual arranged for only a few of the episodes’ stories to appear in
the “Today’s Best Photoplay Stories” columns. Instead, according to Reel
Life, the magazine was available free wherever the series was shown—and
thus targeted moviegoers directly. Mindl claimed that one hundred thou-
sand copies of the first issue had been printed in January, and that the
number was closing in on one million that summer. At least one house
manager in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, suggested that the figure may not
have been the usual hype: in order to give the magazine “to each lady who
buys a ticket” at his theater, he had to increase his own weekly order to one thousand copies.\textsuperscript{192}

Just as Mindl was launching Mutual’s publicity campaign in late 1913, either Robert H. Cochrane or Joseph Brandt came up with a parallel national campaign for Universal’s publicity.\textsuperscript{193} In early November, Laemmle announced that he planned to expend $250,000 “to teach the people of the United States and Canada to patronize the theaters that exhibit that Universal program. . . . We are going to make that Universal Program a household name.”\textsuperscript{194} The Universal campaign differed, however, in that it continued to ask exhibitors to pay for publicity materials. Those included weekly “Moving Picture Stories” that cost exhibitors “$1.75 per hundred, postage paid”; they could then sell them for five cents each or “give them away as souvenirs.”\textsuperscript{195} More interesting was the early 1914 offer of electro cuts (twenty cents each) of the Universal trademark (in various sizes), along with smaller marks of the company’s contracted manufacturers, that exhibitors could use to brand either their local newspaper ads or house organs.\textsuperscript{196} Also available were electro cuts of Universal stars (twenty-five cents each) that could illustrate ads and stories. The success of this campaign is difficult to determine, although at least a few picture theaters were willing to spare the expense. In January, the Universal trademark took a prominent central position in a Red Moon ad in Baltimore; six weeks later, it appeared in a Myers Theatre ad in Janesville.\textsuperscript{197} At the same time, the Hippodrome in Lebanon framed an ad for \textit{The Leper’s Coat} with oval portraits of Philip Smalley and Lois Weber, and weeks later the Faurot Opera House in Lima, Ohio, anchored its ad for \textit{The Triumph of Mind and Lucille Love} with four star photos framed by the Universal “U” shaped like a lucky horseshoe.\textsuperscript{198} By year’s end, Laemmle still was exhorting exhibitors to “advertise, and keep advertising [because] shrewd business men understand the power of daily advertising—that never ceasing, constant force that compels trade.”\textsuperscript{199} To make their work easier, Universal also now offered four stock electros of bordered ad templates (from thirty to sixty cents) within which an exhibitor could add his theater’s name and, in the two largest, his current motion picture program.\textsuperscript{200}

The most systematic and expensive of these national publicity campaigns quickly emerged from the formation, in the summer of 1914, of Paramount Pictures Corporation. That too had a precedent in what Famous Players Film, a major partner in the new firm, already had been doing.\textsuperscript{201} In the summer of 1913, as Michael Quinn first argued, Famous Players set up five state rights companies—in Boston, New York, Pittsburgh, Minneapolis, and Chattanooga—to both distribute and help finance an expected “30 Famous
The company also contracted with half a dozen other exchanges—in New York, Detroit, St. Louis, Kansas City, San Antonio, and San Francisco—to extend the distribution of its features, especially in the West. Not only was this strategy a success, partly due to a series of Mary Pickford films, but either Al Lichtman or B. P. Schulberg also organized a publicity campaign to place ads for the company in several metropolitan newspapers, with an especially large one in the Boston Journal that listed a circuit of nearly forty theaters in New England contracted to screen Famous Players films. Many exhibitors—often managing the most prestigious theaters in a city—also were induced to highlight the company’s name in their local ads. Those included the Knickerbocker in Cleveland, Saxe’s Lyric in Minneapolis, Gordon’s Olympia in Boston, Talley’s Broadway in Los Angeles, and Grauman’s Imperial in San Francisco. Finally, in late March 1914, in parallel with many newspapers’ “Today’s Best Picture Stories” columns, Famous Players announced a deal made with the Boston Journal to publish daily the “illustrated stories of all . . . Famous productions, the most instructive and interesting reading for the whole family,” beginning with “The Pride of Jennico.” Those stories seem to have run for only a few weeks, because either the Journal’s circulation was less widespread than was hoped in New England or else negotiations that would lead to Paramount’s formation were far advanced.

The announcement of the alliance among Famous Players, Jesse L. Lasky Feature Film, and Bosworth Inc. that established Paramount Pictures as their “big distributing company” came in late May 1914. Paramount’s president and general manager was William W. Hodkinson, formerly a newspaperman and picture theater manager in Ogden, Utah, and later a major distributor of General Film releases in the West. Thorough planning for a systematic schedule of feature film production and distribution, of course, was essential to the new corporation’s success, but so too was the unusual publicity campaign launched that fall. Hodkinson spelled out the stages of that campaign in a July 2, 1914, letter to Herman Wobber, his principal exchange man in San Francisco. Much like Laemmle, Hodkinson aimed to invest in a level of advertising over several years that would “make Paramount Pictures a household name.” To that end, he planned to “register our name and trademark in each and every state” in order to promote the Paramount name in “the papers of the big cities throughout the country.” “The opening gun about September 1st” would be “preliminary announcements filling billboards all over the United States and allowed to stand for a month.” At the same time, a two-page ad would be placed in the Saturday Evening Post, followed by several more ads over the next few
months.\textsuperscript{211} When that ad appeared, it included an image of the billboard, photos of the corporation’s officers and producers, a “Paramount Theatre standard,” and the Paramount trademark.\textsuperscript{212} Within a week of that first ad in the \textit{Post}, another Paramount ad covering two pages in \textit{Moving Picture World} reproduced letters of endorsement from William Fox, Stanley Mastbaum (head of the Stanley theaters in Philadelphia), and S. L. Rothapfel (director of the Strand in New York), along with fifty exhibitors “contracted for the Paramount Service,” most of them in New England, the mid-Atlantic, the Midwest, and the far West.\textsuperscript{213}

As Hodkinson promised, Paramount carried through on its plan for monthly full-page ads in the \textit{Post}, with illustrations that stressed its seriousness. The second filled a screen with photos of thirty contracted authors and playwrights; the third was framed by photos of an equal number of actors and actresses; the fourth had three lines of film stills (with sprocket holes) emanating from a corner trademark; the fifth was dominated by the centrally positioned trademark; and the sixth reproduced the fronts of a dozen Paramount theaters across the country.\textsuperscript{214} But Hodkinson also expected exhibitors “to do special advertising” of their own in local newspapers—and they did. In September alone, at least twenty picture theaters, not only in metropolitan cities but also in small towns—from the Knickerbocker in Cleveland, the Studebaker in Chicago, the Lyric and Wm. Penn in Pittsburgh, and Tally’s Broadway in Los Angeles to the Ogden (in that city), the Crystal in Cedar Rapids, the Kozy in Ludington (Michigan), and the Broadway in Muskogee (Oklahoma)—were running ads promoting their exclusive Paramount Pictures.\textsuperscript{215} In advertising lengthy screenings of \textit{The Virginian} (with Dustin Farnum), the Knickerbocker featured the Paramount Pictures brand in its serif font, while the Wizard in Baltimore may have been the first to display the Paramount trademark: a sunlit mountain and darkening sky encircled by small stars that evoked the sense of “endurance and protective strength” long characteristic of the Rock of Gibraltar in Prudential Insurance ads.\textsuperscript{216} During the next three months, another twenty theaters, especially in relatively small cities and towns—from Lowell, Williamsport (Pennsylvania), and Massillon (Ohio) to Oshkosh (Wisconsin), Moberly (Mississippi), and Colorado Springs—brandished the Paramount name in their ads.\textsuperscript{217} In Washington, DC, Tom Moore took out an unusually large ad in the \textit{Washington Post} for the “inauguration” of Paramount Pictures at his downtown Strand and Garden theaters.\textsuperscript{218} And the Bijou Theatre in La Crosse celebrated its exclusive contract with Paramount by reproducing the screen image of the thirty authors and playwrights that appeared just weeks before in the \textit{Saturday Evening Post}.\textsuperscript{219}
By early 1915, Paramount boasted that it was “the only organization in the industry which co-operates with its exhibitors and assists them to build their business by a national advertising campaign, and by other efficient cooperation.”220 That campaign continued in the Post with another full-page ad featuring the large, centered Paramount Pictures trademark surmounted by its named producers and with a complementary ad for Mary Pickford’s tied-in story in the January issue of Ladies’ Home Journal.221 More picture theaters banded their ads the “Home of Paramount Pictures,” from the New Theatre in Portsmouth (New Hampshire) to the Grand in Centralia (Washington) or Grogg’s in Bakersfield (California) and from the Regent in a major city such as Syracuse to the Plaza in the small town of Waterloo (Iowa).222 Certain theaters also branded their ads not only with the company’s trademark but also its name in script, for instance the Faurot Opera House in Lima, Wigwam #1 in San Antonio, and De Luxe in Hutchinson (Kansas).223 The New Davis in Pittsburgh even “cooperated” with Paramount on a full-page story promoting the company’s “extraordinary feature moving pictures” and its “handsome new theatre.”224 Besides “spread[ing] the gospel of ‘Better Pictures’ through the pages of leading magazines and newspapers,” the company launched a magazine in parallel with Paramount Progress, a weekly mainly intended “to assist each Paramount exhibitor and exchange.”225 This was the monthly Paramount Magazine, whose aim was “to reach the public directly” with contents “bristling with interest for picture goers.”226 Very few copies seem to survive, but its sixteen pages included articles about the “development of motion picture art” and producers’ “experiences in picture making,” stories of current and forthcoming releases, profiles and photos of “favorite stars,” and “novelties of interest to women” such as “the latest fashions.”227 In an attempt perhaps to emulate Mutual’s Our Mutual Girl Weekly, Paramount shipped the monthly directly to exhibitors so they could distribute issues as free souvenirs at performances. This strategy apparently met with such success that, according to New York Dramatic Mirror, at least three hundred thousand copies of Paramount Magazine were being published and, by late May 1915, issues were “now sold on news stands throughout the United States.”228

Confronted with the enviable success of what Paramount called its “efficiency system,” other major distributors of feature films had to consider investing in their own publicity for moviegoers.229 In late December 1914, the World Film Corporation’s trademark elephant head appeared in an ad for Schanze’s in Baltimore, but paired with Paramount’s mark because that theater became an exclusive venue for both in early January 1915.230 Shortly thereafter, Fox Film (William Fox’s former Box Office Attractions)
had its exchange offices in Cleveland and Pittsburgh stamp their ads with its distinctive new trademark: the brand name in modernistic bold block letters. The exception was Mutual, once the corporation’s producers—American, Majestic, New York Motion Picture, Reliance, and Thanhouser—agreed to cooperate and guarantee the release of two Mutual Master-Pictures per week. Mutual challenged Paramount directly with a series of “Mutual Master-Picture” ads (signed by its president, Harry E. Aitken) in the *Saturday Evening Post*, beginning in March 1915. Those ads highlighted D.W. Griffith, Majestic’s “chief director” (as might be expected), but even more so its authors-turned-scriptwriters, Richard Harding Davis and Thomas Nelson Page. Unlike Paramount, Mutual continued the practice of featuring individual films and their stories and de-emphasized stars such as Robert Herron and Mae Marsh. And it hedged its bets by including among those ads two for Reliance’s serial *Runaway Jane*, written by George Randolph Chester. Simultaneously with these magazine ads, picture theaters in several metropolitan centers began advertising their programs of “famous Mutual Master-Pictures,” for instance the Alhambra and Quality in Pittsburgh, the Dreamland and Alhambra in Cleveland, and the Strand in Atlanta. But the brand name also appeared in small-town theater ads, whether misspelled (deliberately?) as “Mutual Masterpieces” by a theater named Mutual in Harrisonburg (Virginia) or boldly bannered in half-page ads by the Ogden Theater (where Paramount Pictures earlier had been featured). And both theaters noted that, as the Ogden put it, these “superb, thrilling, artistic photoplays [were] advertised each week in The Saturday Evening Post.”

In August 1915, Paramount upped the ante against its competitors with trade press ads announcing that it was expanding its publicity campaign to newspapers in order to target moviegoers more directly—a campaign that *Motion Picture News* celebrated for “acquainting the press and the public with the true status of the present-day motion picture, its artistry, its educational force and purpose, its appeal to all classes.” From September through at least May 1916, as many as three dozen major newspapers arranged to carry a “goodly sized Paramount advertisement,” usually on the same day each week. The campaign began with a quarter-page ad highlighting a half-tone close shot of Mary Pickford, together with her signature (for added authenticity) that also encouraged moviegoers to “ask your theatre for a free copy” of one of the Paramount magazines (fig. 12). For several months, these weekly ads promoted a spectrum of Paramount stars in halftones (mostly women), and only occasionally their new films, for example Charlotte Walker, Elsie Janis, Hazel Dawn, Blanche Sweet, Pauline Frederick, Geraldine
Farrar, Marie Doro, and Marguerite Clark. Some papers also ran a contest asking readers to name the greatest number of unidentified Paramount players’ photos inserted in a specific picture theater’s ad. In December, “incremental repetition” became the determining principle, and the ads now trumped a recurring refrain of what the “TRADE MARK means to YOU”: it “stands for quality” (fig. 13). What evidence was offered for that “quality” or superiority? The corporation’s “high class” producers and “celebrated” stars in the “best theaters,” the shorts (newsreels, travel pictures, cartoons) filling out its programs, its role in supporting the shift from nickelodeons to picture palaces as the primary venue of exhibition, and its contract with Pickford (for $500,000) guaranteeing her performances in Paramount pictures throughout 1916. In May 1916, it launched an ad campaign against “sensational and suggestive pictures”—asking moviegoers to sign “protest” cards at their theaters—a campaign that actually promoted Paramount’s “better pictures.” New theaters continued to adopt the name “Home of Paramount Pictures”—for instance the Bijou in La Crosse, the Lyric in Atlanta, the Star in Sandusky (Ohio), the Colonial in Oelwein (Iowa), and the Iowa in Emmetsburg (Iowa)—whether they showed those pictures
Abel - 9780520286771.indd   57  27/04/15   4:24 PM

Paramount Pictures' Producers were the first to feature famous stars of the stage in photoplays.

Paramount Pictures were the first to distinguish between high quality photoplays and mediocre "movies."

Paramount Pictures were the first to provide your community with a consistently high class motion picture entertainment and maintain it week after week.

Paramount Pictures were the first to establish the standard of a clean program of high grade pictures.

Paramount Pictures were the first to give a "$1.00 show" at popular prices from 10 to 50 cents.

Paramount Pictures are shown by the better class theatres throughout the country.

If your favorite theatre is not showing Paramount Pictures ask the manager to get them.

exclusively or in combination with others.\textsuperscript{245} And Paramount started acquiring or leasing a few downtown theaters, from Chicago and Toledo to Newark and Logansport, making the brand name and trademark a permanent part of a theater’s design and decor.\textsuperscript{246}

Mutual and Fox could hardly match this 1915–16 ramping-up of Paramount’s publicity campaign. Mutual, for instance, cooperated with the Lyric in Atlanta on a rare half-page ad for William Russell in \textit{The Thoroughbred}, a “Mutual Masterpictures De Luxe Edition.”\textsuperscript{247} To compete
with Paramount’s *Carmen*, starring Geraldine Farrar, Fox sponsored unusual full-page ads for its own *Carmen*, starring Theda Bara, to promote the film’s week-long run at the Standard Theatre in Cleveland and a three-day run at the Palace Theatre in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.\(^{248}\) The company also ran two half-page ads displaying a challenging poster of Bara and an interview with her by Archie Bell of the *Cleveland Leader* for a short run at the American Theatre in nearby Elyria, Ohio (fig. 14).\(^{249}\) Surprisingly, Fox joined Paramount to place a full-page Christmas ad announcing three weeks of their films, with small photos of their stars, at the New Rex in Bluefield, West Virginia.\(^{250}\) One of two new major distributors, Metro Pictures, also placed very few newspaper ads, such as those extolling its own stars in the *Detroit News-Tribune* and *Buffalo Times*, although certain theaters highlighted Metro features on their programs, from the Paris Theatre in Santa Fe to the Strand in Atlanta.\(^{251}\)

The only distributor to mount a competitive national publicity campaign was the Triangle Film Corporation, which Aitkin founded after leaving Mutual in June 1915.\(^{252}\) The initial plan was to release each week, through its own film exchanges, two features (supervised by D.W. Griffith and Thomas Ince) and a Keystone comedy, charge $2 a ticket to play them at several leased “model theaters” (in New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia), then let other exhibitors show them at regular prices.\(^{253}\) From September through December, Triangle placed an expensive series of lengthy ads, with lots of fine print about its stars and directors, in “163 newspapers,” including the *Chicago Tribune*, *New York Tribune*, *Syracuse Herald*, and *Omaha World-Herald*.\(^{254}\) Smaller ads soon followed from picture theaters contracted with Triangle, ads branded by its trademark and often bordered by thick geometrical “chains” of triangles in papers from Cleveland, Buffalo, Kansas City, and Fort Wayne to San Antonio, Salt Lake City, Alton (Iowa), and Kennebec (Maine).\(^{255}\) When the model theater policy went bust by early 1916, rather than distribute its films individually on the open market, Triangle adopted a block booking policy,\(^{256}\) promoted each week by large ads imitating those of Paramount that focused on a single star—for instance Mae Marsh, Billie Burke, Lillian Gish—along with a recent film release.\(^{257}\) In Chicago, the company introduced a variation on the earlier ads for serials by listing nearly forty theaters within the city where “Triangle Plays,” supervised by D.W. Griffith, Thomas Ince, and Mack Sennett, could be seen that week.\(^{258}\) As Rob King argues, those that could afford to brandish the Triangle trademark in their local ads—from the Colonial in Chicago, which opened in February 1916 as “the Western home of Triangle films,” and the Liberty in Pittsburgh to the Foto Play in Grand Forks, North
Dakota—rarely included smaller neighborhood houses. Ultimately, that policy also proved much too risky for the company.

Paramount’s boast, in early 1915, that it alone was supporting exhibitors with a national advertising campaign actually ignored one scrappy competitor, perhaps because the latter was less committed to feature films. That was Universal, which, also in February, announced its own “tremendous national advertising campaign.” This advertising would complement the free “press stuff” and “at cost” electros of its seven weekly “multiple reelers” (two or three reels each) now available to exhibitors. In contrast to the earlier electro cuts, these were heavily bordered and tended to promote a single film and its stars, along with the Universal trademark. The national campaign, however, involved contracts for placing large ads weekly in more than sixty newspapers, from metropolitan centers such as New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles to small towns like Bangor, Maine, and Butte, Montana. What may have been trial runs for these appeared in December and January and promoted individual feature-length films such as Damon and Pythias and Williamson’s Submarine Expedition Ninety Miles Under the Sea. Some of the weekly ads that began running in February singled out, in line drawings, specific Universal stars such as Cleo Madison, Billie Richie, Mary Fuller, Bob Leonard, Warren Kerrigan, and Francis Ford. In early May, one ad even depicted line drawings (in three rows) of these and other “players who make pictures for Universal” and asked readers to “Pick ‘Em Out”—that is, match each of those faces to one of the scores of “top-notchers” listed in the fine print below. What was especially unique about these national ads—which may well have spurred Paramount, in fall 1915, to undertake its own national newspaper campaign, distinguished in part by halftone photos of its stars rather than line drawings—was the celebratory opening of Universal City, the corporation’s new manufacturing facility in the Los Angeles area. In late September 1914, in a six-page ad in Moving Picture World, Universal first announced its investment of “a million dollars” to construct this “entire city,” from studios, a laboratory, carpentry shops, and a zoo to a villa of cottages, a school, a hospital, and police and fire departments. In early February 1915, the initial newspaper ad had Carl Laemmle lording over the land (like the figure of Science in a then-current AT&T ad), striking “a strong personal note” that made “reader[s] feel on intimate terms” and welcoming them as potential tourists to the dedication of his city on March 15 to see “how the movies are made [and] all your favorite screen stars at work” (fig. 15). The weekly ads that followed singled out one spectacular attraction after another, highlighted by sometimes-vivid
line drawings and “plain speech” copy colored by slang: “They Ain’t No Place Like It Nowhere,” “a roaring, tearing, smashing, dashing flood,” blown-up scenery, buildings with a “different architecture on the four sides,” a menagerie of “every kind of animal from the ookyzook to the fil-maze,” and a “trio of actorines” (referring to Grace Cunard, Marie Cahill, and Lois Weber). Universal also syndicated full- and half-page stories in many small-town newspapers, from Elyria (Ohio) to Galveston (Texas) and Albert Lea (Minnesota). It even arranged to have Universal City included in many railroad tours of the Pacific coast. The Atlanta Constitution was one of more than thirty newspapers to join the corporation in sponsoring a
beauty contest whose winner would receive “a luxurious trip” to the San Francisco Exposition, San Diego Exposition, and Universal City. \(^{275}\)

Finally, Laemmle organized a special Santa Fe train of four coaches and a dining car to leave Chicago for Universal City with a big party of industry people and others from New York and the Midwest; among them was Kitty Kelly, the *Chicago Tribune*’s young film critic, who will be a central figure in chapter 4. \(^{276}\) On the trip, between March 6 and March 15, Kelly posted a series of four “Flickerings From Filmland” columns: one profiled Laemmle; the last reported from “Hollywood, Cal.” (one of the word’s earliest appearances). \(^{277}\) Having reached Universal City in “Filmland,” Kelly was there “when amidst music, gun salutes, and cheering, the flag went up, the Universal banner swept the air, and the gates went open” and crowds poured in to marvel at the city’s “wide open” buildings. \(^{278}\) She also reminisced about the conversations and amusements she witnessed during the special train trip and (after visits to various sites in Los Angeles) interviewed Universal City’s chief of police, Laura Oakley, perhaps “the only woman in the world holding that office.” \(^{279}\) Distributed in other Midwest newspapers through the *Tribune*’s syndicated service, Kelly’s columns served, much like later industry-sponsored junkets, to repeat and thus accentuate the Universal brand name. And one of those visits involved executives from Western Union and AT&T, whose telegraph networks made that and other syndicated services possible. \(^{280}\)

By 1915–16, industry publicity was heavily invested in the daily smorgasbord of newspaper discourse about motion pictures, directly or indirectly, in advertisements, syndicated stories about stars and serial installments, electro cuts and other “press stuff,” and recurring brand names and trademarks. That investment arguably proved crucial to making a national pastime of “going to the movies,” a pastime that engaged more than half the American population in attending downtown, suburban, or neighborhood picture theaters once or sometimes several times a week. Industry publicity also may have helped to create the “information environments” \(^{281}\) of what now might be called niche markets, defined according to whether a moviegoer was especially attracted to certain movie stars, one or more brands of films, or even specific theaters. This was as true of small-town newspapers as it was of metropolitan ones. In early September 1915, in Grand Forks, North Dakota, a movie fan could indulge her or his taste for Paramount Pictures at the Grand (e.g., Mary Pickford in *Rags*), Universal “features” at the Theatre Royal (e.g., Harry D. Carey in *Just Jim*), Mutual Master Pictures, Metro Pictures, and World Film features at the Foto Play (e.g., Bessie Barricale in *The Mating*), and/or Pathé serials and other
General Film releases at the Met (e.g., *Who Pays?*). Two months later, in Cleveland, another moviegoer could devour the initial installment of *The Girl and the Game* and a week later rush to see Mutual’s first serial episode, starring Helen Holmes, at the downtown Bijou Dream. In early March 1916, in Chicago, a third movie fan could savor a Paramount Picture at the downtown Studebaker, La Salle, or Castle (e.g., May Murray in *To Have and to Hold* or Marie Doro in *Diplomacy*), a Mutual Master-Picture at the Strand (e.g., Crane Wilbur in *A Law Unto Himself*), or a Triangle Play at the Colonial (e.g., Frank Mills in *The Moral Fabric*). That publicity as a whole—its incremental repetition in newspapers paralleling that of the films and stars on screens—encouraged the growing sense of a homogeneous American film culture, now defined to include the target audience that Paramount revealingly assumed: “native white families.” Wherever such movie fans lived, on whatever day or night of the week, they could feel bound together with millions of others through their shared reading of what newspapers were writing about the movies and moviegoing.