The Magic Lanthorn

Illusion is the lamp that Memory burns;
Still on the faded pageant of the past,
Set with gay slides the painted lanthorn turns,
With jeweled lights and changing colors cast—
As the dim scene grows blurred or bright again.

Strange seasons rise, strange forests flower and fade,
Between the boles, along the dusky grass,
Threading the ancient marble colonnade
Rich-vested shapes, with eyes averted, pass—
Or the long rays illumine autumn leas
With quiet waters and with golden trees.

Rosamund Marriott-Watson
The Pall Mall Magazine
May 1899

The cover of this issue of The Magic Lantern Gazette says “Fall,” but the weather outside says winter, so I have hedged my bets and included a winter scene on this page. I always seem to be about one season behind in producing the Gazette, but at last this issue is done. I am particularly grateful to Yoriko Iwata, Susanne Wray, and Mark Butterworth for their contributions. I have added an article on postcard projectors as a follow-up to my earlier one on toy magic lanterns. There also is a short Research Page devoted mostly to recent articles on exhibition practices.

Originally, I had intended to include a special Research Page on Spanish and Latin American perspectives on the magic lantern, but I ran out of pages, so that will be deferred until the Winter issue. I have some book reviews ready for that issue as well, but am much in need of a lengthy research article or two to fill out the issue.

Research on the magic lantern is now moving into the digital age, and the amount of material available on the internet is remarkable (nearly all of the quotations on The Editor’s Page come from online sources). To help people make sense of all of this material, I have developed a webpage, or more precisely, a group library, called the Magic Lantern Research Group. The group library is available to the public and can be accessed at the following address: https://www.zotero.org/groups/magic_lantern_research_group. It is best viewed using Mozilla Firefox as your web browser, although it is visible with Internet Explorer.

Currently there are nearly 1000 items in the Group Library, including direct links to scores of websites of magic lantern collectors, museums, shows and showmen, and 100 online collections of digitized lantern slides in university libraries, museums, and other institutions. There also are direct links to hundreds of copyright-free, full-text books from the 17th to the 20th centuries, including such treasures as Kircher’s Ars Magna Lucis et Umbrae (1671), with the first published illustrations of a magic lantern, Marcy’s Sciopticon Manual, T. C. Hepworth’s The Book of the Lantern, and many other key sources on the magic lantern. Please visit the site and browse through centuries of magic lantern history. If you find items that should be added to the Group Library, please email the information to me. You also can email me for directions on how to join the Magic Lantern Research Group.

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Lantern slide of a child skiing in a winter snowfall, by an unknown photographer. Wells collection.
A Lantern Reading Competition: How People Understood Lantern Lectures in Victorian Britain

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Various periodicals for new kinds of readers, including children, housewives, and laborers, were established in the Victorian period, as the greater reading public enjoyed more leisure time. Religious or political groups supplied members with their own publications to promote their activities. Prize competitions invited readers into the networks created by these periodicals. *The Primrose League Gazette*, a Victorian political periodical, once held a lantern reading competition, which illustrates how amateurs understood magic lantern lectures.

The British Conservative Party founded ‘The Primrose League’ in November 1883 to promote its policies by organizing ‘habitations’ throughout the nation. ‘Habitations’ mean local branches of ‘The Primrose League’ in various districts.1 A ‘primrose’ was said to be a favorite flower of former Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli (1804-81, Lord Beaconsfield). April 19 is celebrated as ‘Primrose Day’ to commemorate Disraeli by decorating his statue with primroses in Parliament Square, London. *The Primrose League Gazette* was first issued in October 1887. This periodical lasted for more than a century, until 1989. It began as a weekly publication, then became a monthly, a bi-monthly, and eventually, a quarterly.

Appendices 1 and 2 show the results of competition No. 6 that appeared in the issues dated January 19 and 26, 1889. The competition has a long title: “The Best Set of Subjects for Magic Lantern Slides, not exceeding Fifteen, which would most powerfully tend to set forth the principles and vindicate the action of the Unionist Party.” The authors of the proposed lantern slide lectures are mostly identified with pseudonyms. The results reveal how people, not professional lanternists or slidemakers, but amateurs, understood magic lantern shows as ‘media’ to promote particular ideas or thoughts. Unfortunately, slides adopting the participants’ ideas have yet to be found. Fintan Cullen has called this competition a “fantasy lecture.”2 The series of “fantasy lectures” would reveal the most precise image to the general audience of what the lantern shows should be like. Ten selected competition entries appeared on the 19th of January, 1889 (Appendix 1). They are evaluated, as the headline says, as “Good and Bad”. The readings by “Lindum” are evaluated as one “best fulfill[ing] the conditions of the competition” in the next issue dated on the 26th (Appendix 2). The competition editor also points out that “special merit” is shown in the readings by “J. Hermann D.,” “Coningsby,” “Allegro,” “Coup -de-Main,” and “Quantock.” This means that the contributors to the competition appear to have acquired the ‘characteristics’ of lantern readings.

The ‘Characteristics’ of Lantern Readings

I would like to point out two examples of these ‘characteristics’ of lantern readings. One is making the best use of ‘contrast’ as a visual effect, and another is frequent appearances of ‘portraits.’
Contrasts—it is easy for us to remember the famous temperance slides entitled “A Strong Contrast” between the abstainer and the drunkard. The use of such vivid contrasts helps us to visualize the different sets of values. Since the Conservative Party organized this competition, the slides often presented Irish nationalists as villains who would allow farms and houses to fall into ruin and decay. On the other hand, the Unionists are depicted as industrious and prosperous people. The list of slides from “St. Mary’s” (see Appendix 1) includes these contrasts: no. 4: An Irish farm in the days of prosperity; no. 5: The same farm in the days of the Land League; no. 6: Interior of an Irish farmhouse in the days of industry and prosperity; no. 7: The same in the days of the Land League. Clear negative feelings toward the Land League are evident in this sequence. A sequence of readings from “Unity” contrasts conditions in Ireland on a larger geographic scale: no. 8, 9, 10, and 11 show scenes from disturbed Ireland, whereas no. 12, 13, and 14 show scenes from peaceful Ulster.

Portraits—Lantern lectures often included portraits of prominent people, used to represent their characters or careers. These readings by amateurs clearly show how the ‘characteristics’ functioned: portraits were used to add authority to the particular point of view presented in the lecture. “True Blue” included a number of portraits of important Conservative political figures and Protestant Leaders: no.3, Portrait of Martin Luther; no. 4, Portrait of the Queen; no. 5, Portrait of Disraeli (Fig. 2); no. 6, Portrait of Marquess of Salisbury; no. 7, Portrait of Hartington; no. 8, Portrait of the leading Home Ruler; no. 9, Portrait of Parnell and his glorious party. Presumably portraits were to be used sparingly; too many would make the lantern lecture rather monotonous. Conservative statesmen such as Lord Salisbury, Lord Beaconsfield, and Mr. Balfour were often featured in The Primrose League Gazette. The Queen typically was the most distinguished of the celebrities, and her portrait usually appeared at the very beginning or the end of a lantern show (no.1 by “Unity,” no.1 by “Coningsby,” no.1 by “Quantock”, no.15 by “Coup-de-Main,” no.14 by “Excelsior.”)

Sometimes it appears that drawings of multiple political figures were substituted for individual portraits. For example, no.15 by “J. Hermann D.” shows “The Queen is shaking hands with Lord Salisbury”. Presumably an actual photograph of this scene would not have been available, so a drawing or caricature would have been used. Some lantern readings also included caricatures of symbolic political figures instead of portraits of real politicians: “Erin” for “Ireland,” “Britannia” for feminine “Britain,” and “John Bull” for masculine “Britain” (Fig. 3). For example, the readings by “St. Mary’s” included a sequence of slides used to illustrate John Bull’s (England’s) patronizing attitude toward Erin (Ireland): (1) John Bull holding out his hand to Erin, who is looking downcast, deeply in trouble and despair; (2) Erin looking up into John Bull’s face, and places her hand in his; (3) John Bull once more united in peace with Erin, with Britannia in the background, the group surrounded by an Englishman, Scotchman, Welshman, and Irishman.

Fig. 2. Portrait of Benjamin Disraeli, Prime Minister of Britain.

Fig. 3. Caricature of John Bull (right) as a symbol of Britain, of a type that might have been made into a lantern slide. Here John Bull is departing for the Paris Exhibition of 1889. From Punch (1889). Wells collection.
Amateurish Mistakes in Competition

However sufficiently the competitors had learned the ‘characteristics’ of lantern lectures, these readings were not free from deficiencies. Common problems included the uses of ‘unrealizable slides’ and those deemed ‘too violent or bloody’ for a ‘habitation’ meeting.

Unrealizable Slides—Some readings went into too much detail, so it would have been almost impossible to paint the scenes on plates of glass that were just the size of a floppy disc. As the competition editor humorously points out (Appendix 2): “Some of the suggestions, however, would make slides of such a size as to necessitate a lantern as big as St. Paul’s Cathedral.” The readings by “Coup-de-Main” can be examined from this viewpoint. The last line of No.5 reads “showing portraits of the distinguished guests.” Is it possible, however, to tell A from B among the guests in a projected image? As for No.6, is it possible to read through the letter projected on the screen by a lantern? Though the competition editor finds some merits in the readings by “Coup-de-Main” (Appendix 2), it seems that the editor evaluates political views manifested here. To make a set of slides for a lantern show from the readings by “Coup-de-Main” seems almost impossible. On the contrary, some readings are so simple, so concise that any painter would be at a loss as to what to draw. No.10 by “Akual” reads: “Round table conferences, from original portraits.” How can the artist put the original portraits at the round table conference on one single slide? Readings by “True Blue”, as well as those No.8-14 by “Unity” examined above, lacked descriptive directions, saying only “Sketch of…”.

Too Shocking to Show—Slides proposed for some lectures were too shocking to entertain an audience. For example, “Akual” included the following ones: no. 2: Patrick Quirke murdered by moonlighters; no. 3, the Irish eviction at Falcarragh by the military; no. 9: Murder of Lord Frederick Cavendish in the Phoenix Park. “Coningsby” proposed to include the following rather violent scenes: no. 4: An eviction scene in Ireland, showing tenants attacking police and soldiers with boiling water, stones, pitchforks, & c. Tabulated statement at side showing amount of, and number of, years rent owing, and what reduction landlord willing to grant; no. 5: The Mitchelstown Riot—(a) The police flying to their barracks pursued by the mob, (b) Firing on the mob, and wounded constable crawling to barracks for shelter; no. 6: Scene of an outrage in Ireland, such as the murder of the farmer Curtin. It seems unlikely that any ‘habitation’ of the Primrose League would have welcomed these sets full of violent, bloody scenes.

Conclusion

I have tried to find and identify the slides of the Primrose League. Fig. 1 is the only example currently available on the web. This is the title slide showing the address of “Primrose League, 64 Victoria St. London SW.” It might be projected at any lantern show as a welcome slide. What kinds of slides followed the title slide in ‘habitation’ meetings still remains a mystery. Are they political, as the reading competition reveals, or are they non-political slides just for entertainment? Do any slides still exist that were used for lectures on political situations? Where are the slides, if any, that were used in each ‘habitation’? I hope my paper will lead to more information and more examples of the Primrose League slides, or slides based on amateur ideas. I would greatly appreciate it if anyone gives me some information for further research.

Notes and References


3. Land League: Irish political organization of the late 19th century, which aims at allowing tenant farmers to own the land of their own.


5. Hartington: Spencer Compton Cavendish, 1833-1908. Once a liberal MP, then founded the New Liberal Party and got against Home Rule.


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Appendix 1

12

THE PRIMROSE LEAGUE GAZETTE.

January 19, 1889.

COMPETITION No. 6.

SELECTED ANSWERS, GOOD AND BAD, TO COMPETITION No. 6.

"The Best Set of Subjects for Magic Lantern Slides, not exceeding Fifteen, which would most probably win the prize, and vindicate the action of the Unionist Party."

1. John Bull holding out his hand to Brit, who is looking downward, deeply in trouble and off. Brit is thinking "What can I do?"
2. John Bull looking up to John Bull's face, and placing his hand in his. Brit is thinking "I can do it, I can help him."
3. John Bull over a table, speaking to Brit, who is looking away, deep in trouble. Brit is thinking "I can't help him, I can't do anything."
4. John Bull standing by a table, Brit is looking away, deep in trouble. Brit is thinking "I can't help him, I can't do anything."
5. John Bull speaking to Brit, Brit is looking away, deep in trouble. Brit is thinking "I can't help him, I can't do anything."
6. John Bull pointing at Brit, Brit is looking away, deep in trouble. Brit is thinking "I can't help him, I can't do anything."
Appendix 2

The Yearly Subscription (6s. 6d., post in such ladies and gentlemen as have "THE PRIMROSE LEAGUE GAZETTE" October, 1887—or who subscribed later, supplied with BACK NUMBERS—was due for next year) after the publication was of September 29th, 1888. Subscriptions should be PREPAID, and cheques are preferred by Postal Orders or crossed, to "THE MANAGER, PRIMROSE LEAGUE No. 1, Prince’s Mansions, Victoria Street, S.W., N.W.

Walden Habitation (Essex).—In our last issue we omitted the address of the last meeting was small owing to the illness of Mr. J. H. Temple. On Saturday, 1st of April, delivered an address upon the Primrose League and politics, and a hearty vote of confidence was passed in the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that the Primrose League should be maintained in the same spirit as that which animated the late Mr. John Bright, and that the members of the above Habitation should continue to support the same.

The meeting was attended by a large number of ladies and gentlemen, who expressed their satisfaction with the address given by Mr. Temple.

The suggestions for Magic Lantern Slides, which would most powerfully tend to set forth the principles and vindicate the action of the Unionist Party, are very good, and no doubt many of them will "see the Light."

The suggestions for Magic Lantern Slides, which would most powerfully tend to set forth the principles and vindicate the action of the Unionist Party, are very good, and no doubt many of them will "see the Light."
Postcard Projectors: The New Magic Lanterns for Boys?

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The need has long been felt for a magic lantern in which other pictures might be displayed than those painted on a glass slide. One is always finding cuts in the magazines or pictures on cards that would make a pretty parlor exhibition, if they could only be thrown upon a sheet by some means that would not be too complicated or costly. Such an apparatus has now been invented. It is known as the Polyopticon….

Christian Union, October 26, 1882

Keep the boys home at night. They will be satisfied to stay if you get a Radioptican…. This Great Home Entertainer will throw on a wall or screen a copy of a postcard, photograph, clipping or drawing greatly enlarged and in all its own colors. The pictures shown look like stereopticon or magic lantern views.

Ad for Sussman’s store, Baltimore American, January 24, 1911, p.16

As for the cheap tin toys which are flooding the market, there is no question that they, too, have their place as a home amusement for the little ones, but they bear the same relation to the real thing that the toy magic lantern with its tiny colored views—six or twelve to a slide—and its oily, smelly burner bears to a modern dissolving stereopticon.


“Don’t buy magic lanterns until you have seen the latest thing out, the Polyopticon, an Optical Wonder,” cried one advertisement. “Magic lanterns outdone by the Polyopticon!” said another. The instrument in question was an early attempt, in the 1880s, to provide children with a type of magic lantern that could project ordinary opaque pictures from magazines, advertising cards, or images supplied by the projector’s manufacturer, the Murray Hill Publishing Company of New York. Ads for this device typically showed a circular image projected on a wall, like the images produced by a magic lantern (Fig. 1). Polyopticons actually came in two different models. The cheapest, which sold for $2.50 with 200 printed pictures, was essentially a cardboard lampshade, fitted with a reflector and lens to project opaque images. The “improved” $5.00 model was a two-tiered wooden box, fitted with its own kerosene lamp, a reflector to illuminate a picture placed in the back of the projector, and a lens to project the image (Fig. 2). The picture was placed against a cardboard mask with a circular opening, presumably to mimic the traditional round shape of the image of a magic lantern slide projected on a screen (Fig. 3). The polyopticon was sold with a supply of printed pictures, including “ten chromolithographic portraits of eminent actors and actresses.”

Fig. 1. Advertisement for the Polyopticon (lampshade model), Christian Union, November 30, 1882
Fig. 2. Advertisement for the wooden model Polyopticon, Christian Union, November 9, 1882.

Fig. 3. Wooden box model of the Polyopticon from the front (top) and back (bottom). This example is missing the lamp and chimney shown in Fig. 2. A card to be projected is placed in a holder that swivels into place behind a round mat that simulates the round shape of an image projected from a magic lantern. Wells collection.

Various kinds of opaque projectors, technically called episcopes or megascopes, had been around since the mid-18th century and had been used in venues such as the Royal Polytechnic Institution in London. Prof. John Henry Pepper even used such a projector to throw an image of a living person’s face on a screen. Opaque projectors for use in schools, universities, and lecture halls were perfected in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and many of the major magic lantern manufacturers produced opaque projectors, or combination projectors that could show glass lantern slides, vertical opaque pictures, or even horizontal opaque pictures from books. These instruments were equipped with powerful light sources and high-grade mirrors and lenses to produce high-quality projected images. These projectors tended to be large and expensive and not suitable for home use or handling by children (Fig. 5).
made or lacking in merit. A cheap opaque lantern was put on the market several years ago, but it was so badly constructed, and gave so little satisfaction, that honest dealers returned what stock they had and declined to be in any way identified with it. Not discouraged by this attitude of careful dealers, the manufacturers of the meretricious article referred to above acted upon the well-known principle that extensive advertising in periodicals of good standing would bring business, and this has proved to be the case.... Those who are intelligent, realizing they had purchased an inferior article, succeeded in having their money refunded.9

Some German magic lantern manufacturers also began making crude toy opaque projectors, probably in the 1880s and 1890s, although these projectors are very difficult to date accurately and often do not have maker’s marks on them. Some of these projectors are little more than a camera obscura with an internal light source, usually a kerosene lamp, and would have provided a relatively poor quality projected image (Fig. 6).

The Polyopticon was one of the earliest attempts to apply principles of opaque projection to a toy magic lantern. This toy was heavily advertised in newspapers and magazines throughout the United States from about 1881 through 1890. Many ads made exaggerated claims about the quality of the pictures produced by the Polyopticon, and some even claimed that “Polyopticon Parties” were “all the go in social circles from New York to San Francisco.” Indeed, a few announcements appeared in various periodicals describing public lectures using the Polyopticon, including an address delivered at a Christmas festival for working girls in Brooklyn in 1889. For the most part, however, the Polyopticon seems to have been a failure and quickly disappeared from view. Probably there were two reasons for the short lifespan of this device. First was the shortage of suitable pictures to project—the manufacturer supplied comic pictures, chromolithographs, etc., but photographic postcards had yet to be invented, and family snapshots were not yet available. Second, it was a pretty lousy projector. The main problem with opaque projection is to provide a sufficiently bright light to illuminate the image and a lens suitable for long-distance projection.8 With a dim kerosene lamp and a crude lens scarcely an inch in diameter, the Polyopticon produced rather small and poorly lit images. An editorial published years later in a photographic magazine pointed out the deficiencies of these early projectors: “Without being too specific, we do not hesitate to state that this publication has steadfastly refused to advertise or endorse opaque lanterns of inferior construction. Because a simple type of this device is low-priced, it does not follow that it is either honestly

German toy manufacturers also made combination magic lanterns and opaque projectors that could show either glass slides or pictures printed on paper. Some of these toy lanterns were of higher quality. For example, the model shown on p. 23, made by Bing Brothers sometime after 1923, was equipped with an electric light set to one side, with a moveable glass mirror on the other side that could be adjusted with a small knob to properly reflect light onto the a postcard placed in the back of the lantern. The lens for opaque projection is on the wide side of the lantern, whereas the lens for projecting glass slides is on the narrow side. This lantern would have produced a more satisfactory projected image than the cheap one shown in Fig. 6, but was still limited by the relatively small diameter of the projection lens.
Combination toy magic lanterns with special “polyoptacon” attachments for opaque projection also were offered to the American market as subscription premiums by *The Youth’s Companion* magazine (Fig. 7 and 8). The models offered by the magazine were relatively poor quality opaque projectors due to the dimness of the light, small image size, and small diameter of the projecting lens, but they were inexpensive. These sorts of relatively unsatisfactory toy opaque projectors continued to be available on the American market from the 1880s until the early 1900s. Some models, such as the American-made Reflectoscope (see p. 23) retained some of the design features of a magic lantern, whereas many such toys were little more than square boxes equipped with a lens. It was not until around 1909, however, that postcard projectors capable of projecting reasonably large, bright images on a screen first appeared on the market. Using the same online newspaper databases that I used in my previous article on toy magic lanterns, I searched for advertisements for postcard projectors under various model names, including spelling variants, and found that the vast majority of such ads appeared between 1910 and 1919, although some models continued to be advertised well into the 1920s. Two factors probably account for the increasing popularity of postcard projectors at a time when toy magic lanterns were beginning to fade from the market. First, Kodak introduced its Brownie snapshot camera in 1900, making inexpensive family photographs on paper widely available for the first time. Second, production of photographic postcards took off in the years after 1907, providing suitable material for projection with these new devices. Indeed, the years from about 1907 to 1915 are widely considered to be the “golden age” of picture postcards, with thousands of manufacturers producing both fine colored lithographic cards, and starting around 1905, real photographic postcards. Real photographic postcards with the entire front of the card devoted to the photograph and the back used for the message were introduced in the United States in 1907. It is not surprising, therefore, that the heyday of postcard projectors, estimated from the number of ads in newspapers, was 1909-1915.

Fig. 7. Two models of toy magic lanterns with “polyoptacon” attachments, offered as premiums by *The Youth’s Companion*, which published premium lists every October. The “Brilliant” magic lantern was little more than a metal chimney fitted with a condensing lens to direct light through a glass slide, or with the “polyoptacon” attachment, onto an opaque picture. The “Ideal” magic lantern had an internal metal chimney with a condensing lens and worked in the same way as the “Ideal” model. Image quality with the polyoptacon attachments would have been limited in both models by the dim kerosene lamp, the small size of the opening for the printed picture, and the very small diameter of the projecting lens (less than an inch in diameter). Both advertisements from *The Youth’s Companion*; date unknown (top), but probably early 1880s; October 29, 1885 (bottom). Wells collection.

Fig. 8. Example of the “Ideal” magic lantern of Japanned tin, equipped with a “polyoptacon” attachment. Wells collection.
Judging from the frequency of advertisements, two brands of postcard projectors dominated the American market. One was the Mirroscope, first produced in about 1909. Originally called the Little Buckeye Postcard Projector, it was produced by the Buckeye Stereopticon Company of Cleveland, Ohio, founded by Walter L. McCaslin, a company that produced a variety of magic lanterns and stereopticons for home use (Fig. 9). By the Christmas season of 1909, the company was offering several models of postcard projectors, now renamed the Mirroscope. One early model of the Mirroscope was a simple cylindrical projector, possibly adapted from the body of the company’s magic lanterns (Fig. 10).

Most Mirscopes, however, were boxy-looking projectors usually equipped with two light sources, either gas or electric, in the front corners of the projector box. Reflectors directed light onto postcard placed in the back of the machine, and images were projected with relatively large lenses, 3-4 inches in diameter (Fig. 11). Although there were many different models and sizes available, this basic design was largely unchanged at least through the 1920s (see p. 23).

Fig. 9. Advertisement for the Little Buckeye Postcard Projector, alongside an ad for The New Buckeye Magic Lantern. Ad is for Woodard, Clarke & Co. in Portland, Oregon, from the Morning Oregonian, February 23, 1909, p. 6.

Fig. 10. Advertisement for a simple Mirroscope postcard projector. From the Kentucky Irish American (Louisville), December 18, 1909.

Fig. 11. Ad for the Mirroscope made by the Buckeye Stereopticon Company. Note the description of this projector as “the successor of the Magic Lantern, but much better.” From the Simpson Crawford Company Yearbook, 1910. Simpson Crawford was a New York department store.
Mirroscopes became the most successful product manufactured by this company, and the name of the company itself was changed to the Mirroscope Company around 1915. Mirroscopes in a wide range of prices were heavily advertised in American newspapers and magazines from 1909 through the years of the First World War, no doubt benefitting from the virtual disappearance of German-made toy magic lanterns during the war. The war, however, apparently brought added difficulties in the form of severe labor shortages brought about by workers enlisting in the army. From 1916 through 1920, the Mirroscope Company placed many classified ads in the Cleveland Plain Dealer offering jobs for sheet metal operators, drill press operators, die makers, machinists, welders, and even clerks and night watchmen. No such ads had appeared prior to 1915. The company itself was dissolved in March, 1921, although it apparently was reconstituted under the name The Metal Stamping and Manufacturing Company and continued to make Mirroscopes at least into the 1920s (Fig. 12).

The second widely-advertised brand of postcard projector was the Radioptic (often misspelled as “Radiopticon” in newspaper ads). The basic design of this projector is nearly identical to that of the Mirroscope, with the most expensive models having two light sources, either gas or electric, along with reflectors and a large-diameter lens (see p. 23). Radiopticans were widely advertised by toy departments of large department stores and other retail outlets, often alongside toy magic lanterns, beginning in about 1910 (Fig. 13). The projector came in several sizes and a wide range of prices, the smallest being the “Radio Junior” projector.

The Radioptic was something of a sideline for the company, but evidently a very successful one. In about 1915, the Keystone View Company took over production of the Radioptic, which continued to be widely used in schools for the next couple of decades (see photo on p. 23). Mail-order retailers like Montgomery Ward sold unbranded postcard projectors that appear to be Radiopticans (Fig. 14).
Fig. 14. Several models of postcard projectors offered for sale in the 1917 Montgomery Ward catalog. The postcard projector is described as “the modern magic lantern,” and pictures on the screen are said to “look like stereopticon or magic lantern views.” Note the rectangular image projected on the screen, a correct rendition of how the projected image actually looked. The magic-lantern iconography of a circular image has been abandoned in favor of the more modern rectangular view from a stereopticon projecting standard photographic slides. Wells collection.

An examination of newspaper ads for postcard projectors reveals many parallels with the advertising for toy magic lanterns. Many of the same stores that sold toy lanterns also sold postcard projectors, and often mentioned them in the same ads. Retailers included the toy departments of major urban department stores, as well as photographic shops, sporting goods stores, drugstores, bookstores, and stationary shops. Department stores advertised postcard projectors almost exclusively during the Christmas season, whereas some other types of retailers offered these projectors for sale throughout the year. Of 115 newspaper ads for postcard projectors from 1908 to 1920, 87 (76%) were published in December, 18 (16%) in October and November, and 10 (8%) from January through June. I did not find any ads for these projectors from July through September. Clearly many retailers treated these projectors as toys, and specifically as toys suitable for Christmas gifts, despite language in some ads declaring that a postcard projector “is not a toy.”

As shown in Fig. 14, some ads specifically compared postcard projectors to magic lanterns, or stated that the images projected by these machines looked like magic lantern pictures. One newspaper article on Christmas toys in 1910 described the radioptican as “an improvement on the ancient magic lantern.” A store ad from 1914 stated, “The microscope is half brother to the magic lantern, but like most half brothers, it is vastly different.”

As with toy magic lanterns, postcard projectors often were described as gifts most suitable for boys, although gender-specific references to these projectors seem to be less numerous than those for toy magic lanterns. Some store ads included both magic lanterns and microscopes or radiopticans in lists of toys suitable for boys. From 1911 through about 1915, when ads for toy magic lanterns had largely disappeared, stores continued to list radiopticans and microscopes as toys for boys (Fig. 15).
Fig. 15. Advertisement describing a radioptican as the ideal Christmas gift for a boy. The ad also states that this projector “is not a toy, or a plaything, but a scientific instrument which portrays in life size any photo or picture on the screen.” Salt Lake Telegram, December 1, 1913, p. 3.

Fig. 16. Advertisement from an unknown newspaper, probably from 1908-1910, touting the Reflectoscope postcard projector as a potential money-maker for boys. The projector is described as “greater than the magic lantern or moving picture machine.” The ad also lists some of the limitations of the magic lantern compared to the Reflectoscope: “The magic lantern with its dim lamp-light can show only specially made glass slides, usually of some trivial subject…. The magic lantern owner has just 6 to a dozen pictures to show over and over again.” Wells collection.

Postcard projectors sometimes were touted as potential money-makers for young boys, who were urged to put on picture shows for a small admission fee (Fig. 16). This sort of ad was less common than those proclaiming the potential of magic lanterns as a source of income for boys or girls, and also less common than those extolling the virtues of motion picture projectors as sources of income. Ads offering postcard projectors as premiums or gifts for selling some product, as in Fig. 16, also were rare, perhaps because postcard projectors generally were much more expensive than were toy magic lanterns, and also less “modern” than toy motion picture projectors.

With the popularity of toy magic lanterns fading dramatically after 1910, and the interests of children perhaps turning toward more “modern” types of toys, the manufacturers of postcard projectors moved to broaden the appeal of these projectors by advertising them as ideal forms of entertainment for whole families. The Mirroscope Company, for example, suggested using their projectors to illustrate songs with photographs instead of lantern slides (Fig. 17). Other full-page ads in leading magazines suggested that the Mirroscope provided a far better method of viewing family photographs than the “old way” of handing pictures around by hand. The ads also listed all manner of family-related uses for these projectors, from giving spelling lessons to children to telling fairy tales and showing pictures of flowers, birds, and animals. It was, claimed the ads, as easy to operate as that other great family entertainer of the era, the phonograph (Fig. 18).
Fig. 17. Advertisement for the Mirroscope from the Buckeye Stereopticon Company suggesting the use of the projector to illustrate songs with snapshots or postcards. “A gale of laughter will greet the singing of this song or any others, in your home, before your family and friends, if you illustrate it in burlesque with the Mirroscope. If you use snap-shot of two people known to all the company, the enjoyment of picture and song can’t fail to be funny—whether the poems are appropriate or not. Previous experience with a hall has produced an unusually large output of illustrations for giving you pleasure in home or social entertainment, if perhaps by using your neighbors in such a comic perspective. You can show the sensibilities of the young men by giving him a different conception in a real picture.” From postcards—so they are called with Buckeye Stereopticon photographs and printed. Thus a little ingenuity will provide unique entertainment for many weekly evenings...

Write for Free Booklet: “Mirroscope Entertainments.”

Illustrated Songs Burlesqued in the Home with the Mirroscope

A GALE of laughter will greet the singing of this song or any others, in your home, before your family and friends, if you illustrate it in burlesque with the Mirroscope.

Notes and References


2. Ads with “magic lanterns outdone” appeared in Saturday Evening Post, Sept. 10, 1881; Christian Union, Nov. 10, 1882; Texas Siftings, Jan. 6, 1883; Sacramento Daily Record-Union, Dec. 7, 11, 1883; McCook Nebraska Weekly Tribune, Nov. 20, 1884.

3. Ad for polyopticon, Christian Union, Nov. 9, 1882.


5. The principles of opaque projection are discussed in detail in Chapter 7 of Simon Henry Gage and Henry Phelps Gage, Optic Projection (Comstock, Ithaca, New York, 1914).


8. Gage and Gage, Optic Projection, pp. 166-178 (see note 5).


13. Sometimes misspelled in ads as “Mirrorscope.”


18. Kentwood D. Wells, “Magic Lanterns: Christmas Toys for Boys” (see note 10).


Fig. 18. Advertisement for the Mirroscope, Saturday Evening Post, November 9, 1909, p. 35. Wells collection.
# 2010 Financial Report

## Magic Lantern Society of the United States and Canada
### Annual Financial Report
#### November 1, 2009 through October 31, 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operating Balance October 31, 2009</th>
<th>$7,213.80</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Award Fund October 31, 2009</td>
<td>$1,103.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Cash Balance October 31, 2009</strong></td>
<td><strong>$8,317.41</strong></td>
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### INCOME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Membership Dues</td>
<td>$4,770.03</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gazette Sales - Hard Copy and CD's</td>
<td>$66.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>$1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal Income</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,827.61</strong></td>
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### 2010 CONVENTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registration, Sales, Tables, and Visitor Income</td>
<td>$5,071.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auction Proceeds net 10% of Auction Gross Sales</td>
<td>$429.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinner</td>
<td>$(177.32)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Convention Center</td>
<td>$(1,001.72)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Registration and Welcome Packet Printing/Supplies</td>
<td>$(773.71)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal Convention</strong></td>
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### OPERATING EXPENSES

#### Administration

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<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Postage</td>
<td>$(46.52)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supplies</td>
<td>$(55.24)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal Administration</strong></td>
<td>$(101.76)</td>
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</table>

#### Membership Directory - Spring 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Postage</td>
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<td>Printing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supplies</td>
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<td><strong>Subtotal Directory</strong></td>
<td>$(478.45)</td>
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#### Gazette - 4 Issues

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Postage</td>
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<td>Printing</td>
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<td>Supplies</td>
<td>$(87.90)</td>
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<td><strong>Subtotal Gazette</strong></td>
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#### Membership

<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awards/Memorials</td>
<td>$(69.78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Member Welcome Postage</td>
<td>$(28.79)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Member Welcome Supplies</td>
<td>$(2.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renewal Member Postage</td>
<td>$(82.58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renewal Member Printing</td>
<td>$(11.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renewal Member Supplies</td>
<td>$(25.71)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal Membership</strong></td>
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#### Publicity

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<tr>
<td>MLS Flyer Printing</td>
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<tr>
<td>MLS Flyer Postage</td>
<td>$(32.14)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal Publicity</strong></td>
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#### Website

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hosting Fees</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal Website</strong></td>
<td>$(107.40)</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal Operating Expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>$(4,042.38)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Balance October 31, 2010 - All Accounts</td>
<td>$12,850.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Award Fund held in Savings Account</td>
<td>$1,104.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Operating Balance October 31, 2010</strong></td>
<td><strong>$11,745.38</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All funds held in traditional checking/savings account at Bank of America.
Dues Income listed above is Net Income and does not include $30.54 in PayPal service charges.
Convention income/expense are for this reporting period. The net gain shown does not include $575 of expenses paid in 2009.
Respectfully submitted, Ron Easterday, Secretary/Treasurer, November 13, 2010
The American Museum of Natural History’s Magic Lantern Slide Collection

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gribble@earthlink.net

On November 13, 2010, New York’s American Museum of Natural History presented a show of their magic lantern slides as part of the 34th Annual Margaret Mead Film & Video Festival. A panel discussion by Museum Archivist Barbara Mathé, media historian Alison Griffiths, and science historian Constance Areson Clark reviewed the Museum’s collection of slides and how they were used. While some of the slides shown had been “translated” to Power Point images, a Beseler projector was used to show many original glass slides from the collection.

Albert Bickmore, one of the founders of the Museum, was an advocate of lantern slides and visual education. Lecture series were presented for New York City public school teachers, beginning in 1892. These were so popular that the main theatre (now an IMAX theatre) was built to house them; at one point 5,000 people signed up for the lectures.

After 1908, lectures listed motion pictures on each program as well, but then-President paleontologist Henry Fairfield Osborn insisted on showing static images—lantern slides—as it was felt that moving pictures alone were too frivolous. Care was taken to present the lectures as “educational” rather than “putting on a show.”

In 1915, an agreement between the American Museum of Natural History and the New York Board of Education made 20,000 slides available for school use. By the early 1920s, the Museum’s Education Department had a huge library of magic lantern slides: teachers and students could come to the library to study slides, or borrow them for their lectures. Slides were also available in boxed series with titles such as “Traveling in Eskimo Land,” “Our Atlantic Coast Fisheries,” “Pond Insects.” Boxes of slides were shipped throughout New York State, and trucks delivered slides, taxidermy wildlife specimens, and miniature dioramas to New York City schools; a motorcycle with a sidecar was available for quick delivery. The activities of the Museum’s Education Department were in turn well documented by lantern slide images, which Archivist Mathé used to illustrate her lecture.

In the 1960s, it was decided to replace glass slides with 35 mm slides, which were easier to handle, copy, and distribute. When the “outmoded” lantern slide collection was phased out, Carlton Beale, a member of the Education Department, took many, many boxes of slides, and some projectors, to his 17th century farmhouse on Staten Island. There they remained, in boxes stacked in the basement and attic until his descendants contacted the Museum about returning them, as the house was to be turned into a museum. The huge job of collecting and cleaning the slides, and returning them to the Museum for conservation was done by volunteers and the museum staff. Approximately 20,000 slides remain of the original 140,000.

Media historian Alison Griffiths discussed the history of the magic lantern and the role of magic lantern slides in education, while original slides from the Museum’s collection were projected. These showed people and places, the museum’s expeditions, in black and white, and hand-colored slides. In the 1880s, improvements in the camera allowed all museum expeditions to record their work with photographs, which were made into glass slides. Images from the expeditions to Mongolia by paleontologist Roy Chapman Andrews were shown.

Professor Constance Areson Clark spoke about, and showed, slides from the 1920s that were used to teach of evolution, a controversial subject at the time of the Scopes trial. Visual representations of how evolution worked—might have worked—were careful collaborations between scientists and artists. One slide showed several skulls, showing a progression from “primitive” to “modern” man, with a black band in the center. Professor Clark explained that originally the skull of Piltdown Man had occupied that space, but was taped out when it was revealed that Piltdown man was a hoax, a fake.

The Museum plans to digitize the entire collection of lantern slides: about 1,000 images are now on line at: http://images.library.amnh.org/photos/index.html. The images now on line all relate to New York City, due to conditions of a grant received for the digitization. An article describing the collaboration between the Museum and schools can be found in a 1922 issue of Natural History; this contains several of the images that were shown in the November 13 panel discussion.

Sorting boxes of lantern slides for shipment to schools, 1926. Photo: American Museum of Natural History.
From Magic Lanterns to Movies, The Optical Magic Lantern Journal 1889-1903

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mark@markbutterworth.co.uk

The Optical Magic Lantern Journal was the premier publication for the Magic Lantern fraternity in the UK between 1889 and 1903. Its aim, as defined by its editor J.H. Taylor, was “to keep our readers au courant with all that transpires in the world of lanternists”. Running to a total of 160 issues, it covered all aspects of the lantern trade from new developments to lengthy discussions on technique and the history of projection. Only one known complete set of the original Journals is currently available (at the Bodleian Library in Oxford). Most other known copies and bound volumes are incomplete, as their extensive advertisement pages were usually ripped away. Now the entire run of issues is available in PDF format on a DVD, produced by UK Company PhotoResearch, who have included some additional biographical details of individuals and companies mentioned in the issues.

Several years ago the Magic Lantern Society in the UK arranged for a few issues of the Optical Magic Lantern Journal to be reprinted and offered to Society members. It was a small selection (perhaps 6 issues) that represented a somewhat random sample of this late 19th century Journal. However, this DVD offers so much more than just copies of the full run of 160 issues. The files are fully indexed, including all the advertisements. This makes the contents an extremely important resource for anyone interested in the magic lantern, its history, its role in 19th century photography, and how the lantern played a part in the development of moving pictures. The index gives access to all published copies of the journal, which can be browsed issue by issue, or searched for individual entries. Over 2,200 content items are listed individually under different headings, approximately 600 people who contributed to the journal are listed, with basic biographical details, where known, and over 400 companies and other organisations that appeared as advertisers in the journal are listed, with links to the facsimiles of their advertisements. There also is a powerful search function, allowing you to search for any particular word or term. It requires the user to understand the Adobe Reader search function, but this is easily mastered.

This complete compilation offers something for everyone and in abundance. In a typical issue (volume 6 number 76, September 1895) there are articles on “How to try the new gas (acetylene)”, “A visit to York and Son”, “Lighting for Tableau Vivants”, “Screens”, “New apparatus”, “Notes and Queries”, “Substitutes for limes for oxy-hydrogen light”, “How to purchase a lantern (part 1)”, “New patents” and more. All are fully indexed and searchable, including over 60 advertisers complete with some fabulous illustrations.

For the collector or active lanternist, there are wide ranging articles about the practise and practicalities of lantern lecturing. The advertisements offer an extensive “catalogue” of items produced during the 14-year run of the Journal. For the lantern historian, there are long running discussions of late 19th century opinions on the history of the lantern and its 19th century developments; a unique insight from many people known today as major figures who contributed to the development of the lantern into the late Victorian popular entertainment it achieved. For the social or media historian, there are endless snippets on lantern news, lecturing news, and how the lantern was used with the general public.

Opening the index file on this DVD transports you back to a previous age where the lantern was as familiar as the TV is today. It is easy to lose yourself for hours, jumping from article to article, advertisement to advertisement, exploring all the information you never knew and discovering new items and pieces of equipment, or reading first-hand accounts of something you may have seen or heard about. It is easy to jump in with some serious line of investigation, only to allow oneself to be “slightly diverted” and discover that enjoyable hours have passed without you actually making any real progress at all.
I am hard pressed to think of another publication on the magic lantern that offers so much for so many different types of reader. Perhaps the *Encyclopedia of the Magic Lantern* comes close, but it is, of necessity, our current view of past events. This publication was written at the time the magic lantern/optical projector/stereopticon was at its peak, and the contents are of that time. Written by people intimately involved with the lantern and lantern practice who were not writing for posterity, but for contemporaries, it is full of news, advice, suggestions and articles of general interest reflecting the hands-on experience of its creators.

This is not really a publication about which you can find anything to fault or criticize. Any errors, omissions, or lack of coverage are the responsibility of authors and editors now long gone. If something is missing, it is because they felt it wasn’t important or of current interest. If I had to find a drawback, it would be that the single DVD in its standard case disguises the volume of material available here. It represents 160 issues of the original Journal and therefore replaces a few feet of books occupying shelf space. If you possessed the original publication, you would appreciate the amount of information (and pleasure) on your bookshelf. This DVD requires you to open the files to make the same assessment. However, modern technology not only makes it more accessible (you can take it with you easily), but now it is fully indexed, so it is much easier to make full use of the contents. This is something the original publishers never could have imagined.

If you buy anything with the intention of improving your enjoyment of the magic lantern, it should be this DVD. I believe it is the most important contribution to lantern history published in a long time.

*From Magic Lanterns to Movies - The Optical Magic Lantern Journal 1889 – 1903.* Published by PhotoResearch, DVD Format, 2010. Copies are available at £60.00 (£45.00 for The Magic Lantern Society of the United States and Canada Society members) direct from the UK Magic Lantern Society Honorary Secretary, Mike Smith. For details, see the Magic Lantern Society website: www.magiclantern.org.uk/omlj/.

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**Advertisement from July 15, 1889 issue of *The Optical Magic Lantern Journal.***

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**Early Popular Visual Culture**, vol. 8, no. 4 (November 2010).

*Early Popular Visual Culture* is one of the few academic journals with a specific focus on the magic lantern, among other topics, and this special issue on Exhibition Cultures in the late 19th century is particularly rich in magic lantern material. The articles in this issue continue the rather Anglo-centric orientation of the journal; even the articles by German and Australian authors deal with Victorian Britain.

Karen Eifler’s cover article, “Between Attractions and Instruction: Lantern Shows in British Poor Relief” (pp. 363-384) provides a detailed look at the ways in which magic lantern shows were used by various organizations to raise money for charitable causes, call attention to the plight of the poor, and educate the poor in both rural and urban settings. Organizations such as the Band of Hope, the Church Army, and the Clarion Movement developed new venues for showing lantern slides that moved beyond the typical church or lecture hall. One of the most interesting was the use of traveling missionary vans to bring magic lantern shows to urban and rural areas, as illustrated by the Church Army lantern slide show on the cover. In
1896 and 1897, the journalists Robert Blatchford and William Palmer took to the road with the “Greatest Lantern Show on Earth” under the auspices of the Clarion Movement, using a former soup van to transport their travelling magic lantern show. The Church Army took its travelling lantern services to more rural areas, using the shows to complement other activities, such as door-to-door proselitizing and book distribution. Eifler’s article is illustrated with examples of announcements of lantern shows and some of the slides used in these shows. The slides included those with a temperance message, hymns, or morality tales, but the charitable organizations were not above throwing in an occasional humorous slide to draw a crowd. One illustration in the article shows a lantern slide show given to poor and destitute children by members of the Fulham Liberal Club and Institute in which the famous catcher motion slide is being projected on the screen. Overall, Eifler’s article shows the pervasive influence of the magic lantern in many facets of Victorian culture.

Another article with frequent references to the magic lantern is Simon Popple’s “Fresh from the Front: Performance, War News and Popular Culture During the Boer War” (pp. 401-418). He explores the way in which news of this far-off colonial war permeated popular media and entertainment, from newspapers, magazines, and books to theatre productions, popular songs, magic lantern shows, and the movies. Indeed, the Boer War in South Africa inspired the same type of popular interest with British audiences as had the earlier Spanish-American War with American audiences. In both cases, popular presentations of the wars were heavy on propaganda about the virtues of the country’s brave fighting men and the treachery of the enemy. In both cases, media from newspapers to lantern slide shows depicted the home country’s soldiers as agents of civilization, whereas the opposing forces were depicted as somewhat barbarous and underdeveloped. As an example of depictions of Boer treachery and abuse of the rules of war, Popple cites the frequent references to Boer forces pretending to surrender under a white flag of truce, only to launch an attack on the British forces. Such scenes often appeared in illustrated newspapers, and Popple includes illustrations of several lantern slides, in some cases with images taken directly from newspapers or popular books.

Magic lanterns also are featured in the “Archive” section of this journal issue. Joe Kember has assembled original articles from publications such as The Optical Magic Lantern Journal and The Bioscope from 1897 to 1909 giving advice and instruction to lantern-slide and film lecturers on effective ways to present their shows. Often this advice emphasized the importance of a lecturer effectively conveying his ideas with his style of speaking and presentation, with lantern slides serving as a supplement to illustrate key points of the talk. Kember also emphasizes the vast scale of the magic lantern lecturing enterprise in Britain, with as many as five major lectures given each night in cities such as Plymouth. This huge demand for lectures supported an enormous industry dedicated to the manufacture of magic lanterns and slides.


Here Vanessa Toulmin continues her prolific output of books and articles on late 19th and early 20th century exhibition practices, fairground shows, and other forms of popular entertainment. It also follows the theme of exhibition practices in the special issue of Early Popular Visual Culture discussed in the previous summary (Toulmin is one of the editors of that journal). Although magic lantern shows are mentioned only briefly, the article expands on a view of cinema history that is taking hold in much recent British scholarship, the continuity between early motion picture exhibitions and previous forms of popular entertainment, including magic lantern shows and lectures, which preceded the arrival of film. Toulmin discusses three popular venues for the exhibition of motion pictures by itinerant showmen in the years before 1906: music halls, fairgrounds, and town halls, all of which also served as earlier venues for magic lantern shows. She concludes that exhibitions by traveling showmen in town halls, rather than the brief movies shown in music halls, most closely represent the origins of stand-alone movie theaters that began to appear in Britain around 1907.


The theme of intersections between different forms of media entertainment continues in this article, which describes early attempts to combine visual entertainment with the phonograph. Some of these attempts involved magic lantern slides. By 1902, for example, Sears, Roebuck and Company, was offering for sale recordings of popular songs along with sets of lantern slides to illustrate the songs, a little-known parallel to the use of illustrated song slides in nickelodeon theaters. The authors mention the use of lantern slides to accompany and illustrate recorded band pieces, such as “The Bugle Calls of the Rough Riders at San Juan Hill” (1898). There also were a variety of machines invented in the years around 1900 that were designed to automatically display sequences of still pictures, accompanied by recorded sound, including spoken commentary and sound effects.


In this commentary, Gauthier argues for the importance of neglected forms of visual entertainment such as Hale’s Tours, a type of simulated train ride involving projected motion pictures. Although magic lanterns are not discussed in this article, the overall theme of the diversity and integration of different forms of visual media helps to illuminate the culture of the magic lantern and its place in media history.
Postcard projectors from the early 20th century.

A. Combination magic lantern and postcard projector by Bing Brothers of Nuremberg, Germany. The trademark on this projector indicates it probably was made after 1923.  B. American-made Reflectoscope postcard projector from about 1910.  C. Radioptican postcard projector made by the White Company of North Bennington, Vermont, about 1912-1915.  D. Radioptican postcard projector made by the Keystone View Company, probably after 1920.  E. Mirroscope postcard projector made by the Metal Stamping and Manufacturing Company of Cleveland, Ohio, probably after 1921.  Wells collection.