



Wharton Film Studio Promotional Brochure: Why Santa Cruz...

Has been selected as the location for the studio and production activities of
Wharton Film Classics, Inc.

[The following text is from a booklet issued by Wharton Film Classics, Inc. On the booklet's front cover, the company advertises "Temporary Offices" at 12 1/2 Pacific Ave., Santa Cruz, Calif. Although no date of publication is given, activities described in local newspaper articles indicate that it was probably written around 1927-1928.]

Announcing its formation, organization and plans of operation for the benefit of the entire community, so that they may employ for their own benefit, the information contained herein and at the same time make clear to the public in general, its various plans of operation and leave to the vision of the reader, the many benefits that can come to him and his community.

For where there is an active motion picture production company in their midst, there must be reflected a considerable portion of its prosperity and success in the community.

As to the right place and conditions for the production of motion pictures, the fallacy that picture production can only be carried out successfully in any single community, has long since been exploded.

The ever-increasing costs of production are due largely to the efforts of large producing organizations toward confining their activities to one locality. Southern California as a producing center has long since lost its advantages. That this is so, is proven by the fact that producing organizations are continually sending their producing units great distances in search of more suitable backgrounds for their needs.

In the early days of the industry, when out-door pictures were the vogue, as they still are to a great extent, the consistent climate of the southern part of the state was, of course, preferable

to the erratic climate of other sections of the country, and as the fame of Los Angeles was already being heralded, what was more natural than to seek the sunshine, inasmuch as the sunshine could not be brought to them? They heard nothing of the wonders of SUPERIOR CALIFORNIA, nor of the delightful climatic conditions that prevail in Santa Cruz during the greater part of the year.

This was before the development of the wonderful lighting equipment that now frequently takes the place of sunlight, making the need of sunshine 365 days in the year not entirely necessary.

An intensive study of producing conditions in Hollywood has shown that the greater part of the wonderful production facilities of the motion picture industry in that community have been either built or imported. These facilities consist chiefly of studios and equipment. There is an insufficient variety of natural and architectural backgrounds for the needs of the producing organizations.

This is proven by the fact that 65 per cent of the California made pictures are laid in backgrounds that are from 300 to 500 miles from the many Hollywood studios. This means that most of the producing organizations are compelled to transport their companies this great distance to secure the necessary exterior backgrounds, and later, reproduce in the studios the interior settings of such architectural structures as may have been used while on such locations.

From two to four days are lost each time such trips are made. The salaries of a large force of actors, technical staff and extra people must be paid during such lost time. In addition, there is the cost of transportation of the great amount of equipment and properties necessary for the use of the company. Much of this is rented by the day at exorbitant rental prices and must be paid for whether used or not. Every day that is lost adds to the burden of expense.

When the scenes on location have been photographed, the film must be returned to the studios or laboratories in Hollywood to be developed. The company meanwhile must remain at location until it is determined whether or not the scenes must be retaken, otherwise an additional trip might be necessary for that purpose.

This all proves conclusively that efficiency of production can best be maintained by locating studio facilities in closer proximity to the greatest VARIETY of natural and architectural backgrounds.

The fact that Southern California producing organizations are compelled to send their companies to central and northern California points for the purpose of securing these necessary advantages has convinced Mr. Wharton of the advisability of conducting his own operations in Superior California, and he has selected Santa Cruz as the most logical location for that purpose.

Scenic Advantages

Within a radius of 125 miles of Santa Cruz can be found the rare scenic beauties of every character and description that play such an important part in the making of successful motion pictures.

Every climate may be found, and stories dealing with the wide stretches of the sands of the Sahara to the deep blue waters of the Mediterranean, or from the South Sea Islands to the snow-clad peaks of Alaska, as well as metropolitan cities and rock-bound, storm-swept coasts, may be brought within range of the camera within a few hours' ride of Santa Cruz.

Recent excursions into the country surrounding and contiguous to Santa Cruz, have disclosed wonderful new scenic locations that have never been screened, and that will prove a revelation when utilized as backgrounds for photoplays.

Equipment Proposed for Studio

The Wharton Film Classics Studio will be fully equipped in every respect, containing facilities for no less than four producing units. The latest and most up-to-date lighting and laboratory equipment and a complete property and costume department will be available for all needs.

The studio will contain interior reproductions of all unusual architectural locations that may be discovered in the vicinity of Santa Cruz.

The general equipment will include motor-driven 150 k.w. generators, wind machines and powerful lightings of the sunlight arc type, as well as all other necessary lighting equipment. Everything will be portable for location purposes, thus obviating the necessity of transporting such equipment the great distances now necessary. A laboratory will also be a part of the studio equipment for the purpose of enabling the working companies to "screen their work" daily.

Service Unit for Use of Other Companies

These facilities will not only greatly reduce costs of production on the pictures to be made by Wharton Film Classics, Inc., but the same service will be offered for the use of visiting companies at a price that will enable such companies to take a like advantage of the reduced expense, and at the same time make a profit for the Wharton Service.

In other words, WHARTON SERVICE STUDIOS will be all that their name implies--SERVICE, for Wharton companies and for others at a fair price.

Several of the prominent production managers of Hollywood have stated that they would consider such service "a godsend," as it would relieve them of many burdens that they are at present compelled to shoulder, regardless of expense.

While only the larger production organizations are able to afford these location trips under the present conditions, our plan will throw open a wonderful field of backgrounds to the many smaller organizations who have heretofore been limited in their operations and compelled to produce only such stories as can be filmed in the limited backgrounds now available to them. All will be able to take a like advantage of the scenic beauties of Superior California.

Possible Advantages to the Community

Immediately there becomes necessary the vast numbers of workers in the profession. It is a recognized fact that labor follows its hire, and it is also a recognized fact that in every community there have been discovered individuals whose talent and art was a latent power, and all that was needed was the development of a means by which that talent might be expressed or exposed. It is also true that there is an attraction for labor in its various branches when there is any activity apparent. This activity attracting as it does, the labor that is needed, is that same activity that has so characterized the various sections of the country, whether it be the building of a railroad, the opening up of a mining town, or the building of the studios that have proven to be the magnet by which thousands of talented and gifted people have been brought together to offer their services in the lines that they were suited to, and there is no question but what Santa Cruz residents will have the same privilege and enjoy the same prosperity that other studio centers have enjoyed.

Publicity and Salesmanship

Another drawback to the successful operation of any studio desiring to supply service for other producers is lack of publicity and salesmanship. This will be well taken care of under the Wharton plan, as a Hollywood office will be maintained, in charge of an experienced production manager, who will continually canvas producers who are seeking service, keep them informed of the facilities available to them, and co-operate in every way to supply their needs, so that when their companies arrive in Santa Cruz, everything will be ready for immediate operations.

The following interview appeared in *The San Francisco Examiner* of March 8, 1927:

S. F. SEEN AS A FILM CENTER BY PRODUCER Leland Stanford Ramsdell Says That City Has All the Advantages To Be Found in Hollywood

"After two years of successful photoplay production," said Mr. Ramsdell yesterday, "I am convinced that, if necessary facilities were provided here, the motion picture producers would not be slow to transfer many of their activities to this section. I am for San Francisco first, last and all the time."

"Beautiful studios are already available at San Mateo, but a producer finds himself at a loss for costumes, extras of the proper type, technical workers for the building of scenery, the kind of lighting apparatus that is required, camera repairers, and a

multitude of other details which keep Hollywood the center of the motion picture industry, because all those facilities are available there and nowhere else."

"When I went into the production of motion pictures my bankers here said I was crazy. But I have applied business principles to the making of movies, and I have succeeded."

The above is also considered a partial confirmation of Mr. Wharton's statements and claims.

II: THE PRODUCTION PLAN

The great essentials of life are spiritual welfare, food, clothing and shelter. Next in importance comes entertainment, for without a reasonable amount of the latter, life would be at best, a drab existence.

There are, of course, many and varied classes of entertainment, and it is safe to say that the motion picture ranks first as the entertainment of the great majority of the peoples of the world, who buy their entertainment just as they buy their food.

The demand for this type of entertainment is ever increasing, never diminishing. It is the quality of the product manufactured that brings the large returns to the producer in any line, whether it be the farmer, the tailor or the entertainment producer.

It is, therefore, the intent and purpose of Wharton Film Classics, Inc., to concentrate on entertainment values in their proposed productions.

It is the purpose of this organization to become permanently identified with the motion picture industry as producers and distributors of motion pictures, but it is not our intention to attempt to revolutionize motion picture production methods, nor to outrival the spectacular accomplishments of Griffith or DeMille. We shall merely strive to give the public such entertainment as close observation has proven without question they prefer, viz: melodrama. By "the public" we mean the greater proportion of picture-goers. In other words, we intend to cater to the masses, and not to "the classes." Nothing has ever survived in business or industry that has catered to an exclusive following. Therefore, it is our intention to make productions that are certain to be popular with the "rank and file," but, at the same time, be careful always not to offend more delicate sensibilities.

Owing to the fact that styles in motion pictures are subject to periodical changes, and the type of story that may be in demand today might possibly be entirely unsuited for production three months from now, it is not deemed advisable that this organization go on record definitely as to the stories that are to be filmed during any given period.

While the Wharton Film Classics, Inc., has a number of splendid stories available for production, they cannot, with any degree of certainty state just which stories are to be produced during the first year, for the reasons given above.

It can be stated, however, that a minimum of four feature productions will be made during the first year of production activities, unless it be later determined advisable to produce a serial.

This latter course may possibly be followed due to the fact that distributing interests in the industry have frequently urged Mr. Wharton to produce a high-class serial of the type made famous by him in the past; it being a matter of record in the industry that the Wharton Serials are the only pictures of this type that have ever been shown in the "first-run" theatres.

The cost of the feature pictures will range from \$25,000 to \$50,000 each, and the Serial \$100,000. These estimates include cost of exploitation and allow for delays that might be caused by illness or weather conditions.

The casts will be chosen from players of recognized merit, whose popularity is on the upward trend, and who are peculiarly fitted to portray the types depicted in the story that may be selected for production. The field in which to engage high-class talent is practically unlimited, as comparatively few stars are now under long-term contracts. In fact, the great majority of them are engaged for one picture at a time and their services are at the disposal of the highest bidder offering CASH and IMMEDIATE EMPLOYMENT.

III: RESUME OF MR. WHARTON'S CAREER

THEODORE WHARTON, President of Wharton Film Classics, is a man who, with over seventeen years of successful experience in the film industry, is recognized as a producer and director of note and ability, internationally, and whose character and integrity are above reproach. He is directly responsible for the creation and success of a vast number of Motion Picture Stars who are numbered among the headliners in the industry.

A recent review of press and other articles from stage and screen periodicals furnishes a record which reads like the pages of a theatrical blue-book.

Starting his business and professional career in 1890 as treasurer of the Dallas Opera House, Dallas, Texas, Mr. Wharton rose rapidly in his chosen profession, serving not only in the business end of the theatrical profession, but also as an actor and stage director. His engagements included two seasons in the famous Hopkins Stock Company of St. Louis, before his appearance with E. H. Sothorn in the Lyceum Theatre, in New York. Then he appeared in the Charles Frohman Drury Lane productions, "Sporting Life" and "The White Heather," in the old Academy of Music, and later with John Drew in "A Marriage of Convenience." He afterward served with the Augustin Daly Company up to the time of Mr. Daly's death, after which he became stage manager of "The Great Ruby" during its road tour. He subsequently served in that capacity with other New York productions. His last two seasons of theatrical life were spent as manager of the famous Hanlon Brothers "Superba" Company, and as acting treasurer of Hammerstein's Victoria Theatre in New York.

Inspiration to Enter Moving Picture Industry

In 1907 numerous visits to the old Edison Studios in New York aroused Mr. Wharton's interest in motion pictures. His unusual background of theatrical experience, both as an actor and manager, created a wide demand for his services. He was offered and accepted a position as

technical director of the Edison Studios. In 1909 he was engaged by the Kalem Company to establish their studio, and the following year he established the Pathe American Studio, remaining with that company for two years. Later he became identified with the Essanay Company at Chicago. During this period Mr. Wharton wrote and directed more than five hundred screen plays.

Producer by Government Authority

During the fall of 1912, Mr. Wharton was commissioned to reproduce "The Late Indian Wars" by authority of the United States Government. This production was the first **seven-reel** feature made in America. It was produced on the original battlefields of South Dakota, Montana, Wyoming and Oklahoma, more than five thousand Indians and soldiers taking part, as well as such historical celebrities as Generals Nelson A. Miles, Baldwin, Maus and Lee; also Col. Sickel and Wm. F. Cody ("Buffalo Bill"); also General Charles King, famous as the author of Indian stories, who prepared the scenario. Prints of this production were the first to be placed in the archives of the War Department, where they now exist as a permanent record of "The Wars for Civilization in America."

Establishes Studio at Ithaca, N. Y.

In 1914, Theodore Wharton joined his brother, Leopold, and they established "The Whartons, Incorporated" at Ithaca, N. Y., and entered the producing field under their own banner. "The Whartons" were the first directors to establish their own studios as independent producers. Their efforts were successful from the start, and many noteworthy productions were made by them. Many of the productions made in the Ithaca Studios are spoken of as among the most successful, from both a financial and artistic standpoint, in the history of pictures.

Famous Stars Directed by Mr. Wharton

Among the famous stars whose early film experience was gained under the personal direction of Theodore Wharton are included:

Francis X. Bushman	Milton Sills	Lolita Robertson
Lionel Barrymore	Frank Brownlee	Grace Darling
Bryant Washburn	Beverly Bayne	Gladys Hulette
Henry Walthall	Olive Thomas	Doris Kenyon
King Baggott	Irene Castle	Warner Oland
Allan Holubar	Pearl White	Hamilton Reville
Jack Pickford	Dolores Cassanelli	Richard Barthelmess
Arnold Daly	Dorothy Phillips	Edgar Davenport
Max Figman	Jean Southern	Burr MacIntosh
Creighton Hale	Ruth Stonehouse	Edwin Arden
Harry Fox	Marguerite Snow	Johnny Hines

Some of His Screen Successes

Some of the more notable feature productions made by Theodore Wharton include:

- "Dear Old Girl" (Bushman and Bayne)
- "A Brother's Loyalty" (Bushman and Bayne)
- "The Hermit of Lonely Gulch" (Bushman and Bayne)
- "The Eye That Never Sleeps" (Bushman)
- "Out of the Night" (Bushman)
- "Lost Years" (Bushman)
- "The Virtue of Rags" (Bushman)
- "The Turning Point" (Bushman and Washburn)
- "Waiting" (Henry Walthall)
- "Dad's Boy" (Henry Walthall)
- "Two Men and a Girl" (Bushman, Washburn, Cassanelli)
- "Sunshine" (Ruth Stonehouse)
- "Napatia, the Greek Singer" (Dolores Cassanelli)
- "The Swag of Destiny" (Dorothy Phillips)
- "The Great White Trail" (Doris Kenyon)
- "The Boundary Ride" (All Star)
- "A Prince of India" (All Star)
- "The Black Stork" (All Star)

All of the above were **original stories** by Mr. Wharton.

Mr. Wharton also produced and directed the following well-known stage successes in pictures:

"Hazel Kirke" (featuring Pearl White)

"The City" (All Star)

"The Lottery Man" (All Star)

The following famous serials were produced and co-directed by The Whartons:

- "Exploits of Elaine"--36 episodes (featuring Pearl White, Lionel Barrymore and Arnold Daly).
- "Patria"--15 episodes (featuring Irene Castle, Milton Sills and Warner Oland).
- "Mysteries of Myra"--15 episodes (featuring Jean Southern).
- "Get Rich Quick Wallingford"--15 episodes (featuring Burr MacIntosh and Max Figman).
- "Beatrice Fairfax"--15 episodes (featuring Grace Darling and Harry Fox).
- "The Eagle's Eye"--20 episodes (featuring King Baggott and Marguerite Snow).

Opinions of the Public Press

A few of the hundreds of press comments of Theodore Wharton's productions:

"THE CITY"

Wids: "It is a smooth-running, well-told human story that will carry conviction and register in a human manner with any audience in the smallest town or largest city, and proves that Theodore Wharton knows the importance of early impression made by the characters."

Moving Picture World: "'The City' is a picture that will appeal to those who delight in dwelling on the wickedness of New York, because it will work them up to an intense point of excitement, not only once, but many times. It leaves a great deal to the imagination and consequently is a picture that will stick in the memory. The photo drama is staged admirably."

"THE LOTTERY MAN"

Wids: "Making a five-reel comedy which will hold all the way is a difficult task. In this offering we get a different idea smoothly worked out, with a lot of good laughs, and just enough of the dramatic touch here and there to make it hold together nicely. It is a comedy drama played by a nicely balanced cast and it is clean."

"I want to comment particularly on the football scenes, since I believe it is better handled than any football stuff I have ever seen incorporated in a screen story."

"THE WARS FOR CIVILIZATION"

Washington Post: "The pictures shown brought before the audience such stirring scenes that the intense interest of every person was held from first to last. Many of the scenes are beautiful, many are inspiring, others impress through the terrible realism they show. All defy a detailed description, but the verdict of the audience, who sat spellbound for two hours, may be indicated by the remark of Brigadier General Hall, a veteran of the Custer and many Indian campaigns:

"'Nelson, I did not think it could be done,' he said, clasping the hand of General Nelson A. Miles. 'I did not think until I saw these pictures that it would be possible to reproduce what we went through.'"

"One complete set of reels will be preserved in the archives of the War Department as a record of the frontier campaigns. A record such as never before was taken of a similar set of scenes."

"DEAR OLD GIRL"

Moving Picture World: "Director Wharton has produced a splendid story. It pulls the heartstrings all the way, at times uncomfortably hard. Although throughout the greater part of the picture everything is gay and happy, there is a feeling of impending tragedy."

It is inescapable. That this is so is a tribute to the builder. Inquest clubs in search of material for a discussion on the 'psychology of the punch' will find an abundance in this picture.

'Francis Bushman never had a better medium for showing what he can do, and he never had better support or better direction. 'Dear Old Girl' is a rare picture--don't miss it."

"THE GREAT WHITE TRAIL"

New York Clipper: "Worthy of the reputation of Theodore Wharton as a producer of exceptional pictures. A picture of highest quality."

"A BROTHER'S LOYALTY"

Motography: "Unlimited praise is due to Director Wharton, who is responsible for this production and whose careful timing of the scenes and a skillful stage direction enabled Francis X. Bushman to make so much of the dual role he enacts. The writer has seen more than one of the featured dual role dramas, but is quite sure that in naturalness of action, absolute accuracy of timing and skillfulness of business, he has never witnessed anything superior to this."

"THE EAGLE'S EYE"

Exhibitor's Trade Review: "It fairly bristles with unexpected happenings. New thrills are awakened every instant. One of the great successes of the year."

New York Morning Telegraph: "Bound to win nation-wide approbation. Exhibitors could not show a more effective drawing card."

Exhibitor's Herald: "Staggering in its import, supreme in suspense, magnificently handled."

Billboard: "It is the first time this reviewer has heard applause from blase critics at a private showing of any motion picture. It will create a positive sensation. Held everyone breathless. For pep-giving, excellent photograph and direction, 'The Eagle's Eye' starts a new era in the silent drama."

Dramatic Mirror: "'The Eagle's Eye' is more than a fine picture. It is a great picture and any manager that shows it is doing his patrons a service."

New York Herald: "Amazing detail. Vastly interesting."

New York Clipper: "One of the best serials ever produced. Box office value--full run everywhere."

Among those associated with Mr. Wharton in this new enterprise are Michael J. Leonard, of Santa Cruz, California, Secretary, and Mrs. Helene Card, of Santa Cruz, California, Treasurer, both of whom are well known and bear enviable reputations.

Mr. Wharton's reception by the business men of Santa Cruz is a tribute to the farsightedness of the Wharton Film Classics, and an appreciation of what can be accomplished when a man of character and integrity presents such a proposition of merit, with the substantial Board of Directors that go to make up the Wharton Film Classics, and where with a well-planned program, definitely worked out can be carried to a successful conclusion.

Many great opportunities are overlooked through failure to appreciate the importance of a project, or when too little attention is paid to the possibilities of a proposition. It is a conservative statement that the advent of the Wharton Film Classics in this territory has only been slightly touched upon. For when one has a thorough understanding of this plan, he cannot help but feel that the profit possibilities to every business and industry in the community are unlimited by virtue of the fact that the success of any undertaking is reflected in the general condition of the community, so with our success in the City of Santa Cruz and its surrounding country will come the success to other allied lines.

IV: A Word to the People of Santa Cruz County

In this great nation of ours, teeming with its millions of souls, there is a large percentage who have accumulated a sufficiency of wealth, and are now seeking the ideal playground and climate. California is generally known through the East and Middle West as Los Angeles or Hollywood, and it is quite natural for all those coming west with money to spend in return for climate and comfort, that unless they have been personally directed by some friend living in other beautiful parts of the state, they will head for and settle within or near the boundaries of Los Angeles.

Los Angeles and Hollywood, the latter by reason of the moving picture industries, are the two best advertised cities in the world. Their always active Chambers of Commerce and various booster organizations have taken care of that, with the valuable aid given by the motion picture industry.

Santa Cruz is off the beaten path, and if you are to divert the stream of travel, it will be necessary to call attention to this city through the various mediums that are offered. Let the world know of your hidden paradise, which it can properly be termed.

What more fitting medium can be used for that purpose than an active motion picture studio and organization in the community?

Santa Cruz has everything desirable and beautiful in nature to offer all who now turn aside and come into your empire. What single locality in all California has been more kindly endowed with the beauties of nature combined with climatic ideality, where the great Pacific kisses and caresses beautiful, verdant mountain slopes, bathed in sunshine and clothed with magnificent redwood trees.

Much more could be said in truth and still justice could not be done. If Los Angeles had the beautiful Santa Cruz Mountains instead of the barren Tehachapis, they would throw a stone wall around the entire group and charge admission.

The advent of Wharton Film Classics, Inc., into Santa Cruz, and the opportunity offered for the advancement and general welfare of the entire community through their proposed activities will be of everlasting benefit to every person in the community.

The City of Santa Cruz offers wonderful possibilities for development and there is no one industry that will benefit the city more than a Motion Picture Production Company. For with its many needs, most of which can be met by the man-power of the city that is available, and the talent that will be developed through close association and training, who can say but what there will be an influence for good felt, as has been the case in every other locality where the film industry thrives?

The people of Santa Cruz are alive to the needs of their community and will welcome the Wharton Film Classics, Inc. Every effort should be made to encourage that which will benefit the community and make of Santa Cruz a City of Progress and Activity.

The Wharton Film Classics, Inc., is a corporation organized under the laws of the State of California, with a capitalization of One Million Dollars, consisting of one million shares of stock, par value, one dollar.

We wish to announce to the public in general the establishment of temporary offices at 12 1/2 Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz, California, where every attention will be paid to the curious or those who may be interested in our plan of operation, or those who may be searching for information of whatever nature, that we may be able to give.

It is the library's intent to provide accurate information, however, it is not possible for the library to completely verify the accuracy of all information. If you believe that factual statements in a local history article are incorrect and can provide documentation, please contact the library.