

**Chapter 5**  
**THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR (1898)**  
**I. Filming for a visual newspaper**

**INTRODUCTION**

In 1898 the United States fought what was soon to be dubbed ‘the splendid little war’.<sup>1</sup> The war was conducted in two far separate parts of the world: the Caribbean and the western Pacific. When it was all over – and it only lasted a few months – Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines were no longer under Spanish control, and America, almost by accident it seemed, had taken on a new role as an imperial power.

The Spanish-American War was the first major conflict to appear in moving pictures, and merits detailed consideration. In this chapter I will look at how the cameramen tried to film the events on the ground; then in the two chapters which follow I will look at how the war was dramatised, and then exhibited to the public. As we shall see in all these chapters, the war was a very important event for cinema in general, for it had the unexpected effect of giving the new industry a boost: cameramen learned to shoot location stories more effectively; various kinds of dramatizations, even the first ever model-based films, were produced; and exhibitors learned to programme films together in more sophisticated ways. Altogether the cinema medium evolved and developed in quite different ways than if had there been no war.

The role of the ‘yellow press’ in helping to foment the Spanish-American War has long been accepted, and it seems that these powerful press organisations also influenced the filmic coverage of the war. At all stages of filming and exhibiting, the traditions and practices of the newspaper press had a profound effect. Nowhere is this more true than with respect to the various film cameramen who shot events on location, especially in Cuba (little was shot of the war in the Philippines), for throughout their work they had close links with newspapers: cameramen were both conveyed to the war fronts in press boats, and then, once there, worked closely with press reporters, and tended to replicate the newspapers’ patriotic agenda in what they shot.

As we shall see, the film companies themselves were highly pro-active in covering this conflict, acting with great confidence and promptness in arranging to film the various military activities which took place within America, and also in sending cameramen to Cuba. These men – William Paley, Billy Bitzer and Arthur Marvin – tried, against the odds (all of them were struck down by fever), to film the war, and in this chapter I reproduce for the first time excerpts from some eye-witness accounts of their work: that of Paley in particular.<sup>2</sup> These cameramen, in reporting on this war, were true media pioneers, for they helped to establish a genre of news within the moving picture business for the decades which followed.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

### Cuba

Cubans had long sought and fought for independence from Spain, and in 1895 the Spanish sent General Weyler ('the Butcher') to put down the rebellion.<sup>3</sup> His tactics were brutal – Weyler's troops killed livestock and burned fields in an attempt to starve the insurgents into submission. He criss-crossed the country with vast trenches to restrict rebel movement, and turned Cuban towns into protected areas (the forerunners of the 'protected hamlets' in the Vietnam war). This policy of 'reconcentrado' might have worked, had the points of concentration been efficiently supplied, but as it was there were shortages, notably of food – and thousands of Cubans died, possibly two hundred thousand or more.<sup>4</sup> This fuelled more resentment in Cuba, and outrage in neighbouring America. Indeed one important factor leading to the Spanish-American War was the perception by the American public that Cuba was being cruelly mis-governed, and this was an important motivation for many Americans in volunteering to fight.<sup>5</sup>

The injustice in Cuba was played up by newspapers in the United States (notably those published by Pulitzer and Hearst, and other so-called 'yellow press' titles) which printed sensational stories of Cuban suffering and Spanish atrocities – sometimes embellished or even invented – simultaneously reflecting and stimulating public outrage. Many Americans were soon looking upon Cuban deliverance from Spain as 'a holy crusade'.<sup>6</sup> In November 1896 McKinley was elected president with a campaign promise to free the Cuban people.

Negotiations took place between Spain and America to improve conditions on the island, but broke down after a letter from the Spanish ambassador, which spoke slightly of President McKinley, was published in Hearst's *New York Journal* in February 1898. Later the same month there occurred what was to be a key event leading to war. The Americans had sent a battleship, the U.S.S. *Maine*, to protect US interests in Cuba and on 15 February it blew up in Havana harbour, killing 260 American sailors. The cause was never established for sure, but the yellow press blamed Spain and called for war, a call which became increasingly accepted by the American public and politicians, and by March even parts of the business community had adopted a pro-war stance (they had hitherto considered that their interests in Cuba would be best served by the Spanish remaining in power). It is sometimes assumed that the Spanish-American War was fought by the United States mainly or merely to gain territory and commercial advantage. While such motives clearly played some role, the reasons for going to war were complicated, and indeed it is questionable whether the country ever gained a pecuniary advantage from its new acquisitions commensurate with the costs of the conflict – which eventually came to a quarter of a billion dollars.<sup>7</sup>

## **America**

One important factor leading to war was the resolve and bellicosity of Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Theodore Roosevelt, who had long conspired for US intervention in Cuba.<sup>8</sup> He quietly began building up America's armaments and military supplies while managing to place the action-oriented Admiral Dewey in charge of the Pacific fleet, with orders to blockade or attack the Spanish fleet in the Philippines if war broke out with Spain. As tension rose, conflict became inevitable, and on 25 April 1898 a formal declaration of war was recognized between Spain and the United States.<sup>9</sup> Within days, Dewey located Spain's Asian fleet in Manila Bay, and on 1 May 1898 managed to sink all vessels (with the loss to his own crews of just one man killed).

After this overwhelming victory, the focus then shifted to Cuba. General Shafter had been put in command of a force of up to 17,000 troops, consisting of much of the small US regular army at the time, plus volunteers, this being the largest foreign expedition to depart from America to date.<sup>10</sup> In June the troops invaded Cuba, landing near Santiago. Fighting soon broke out, though the defending Spaniards rarely offered the Americans a major military challenge. The decisive battles took place on 1 July, and one of the most memorable actions was when American troops, including the volunteer 'Rough Riders' led by Theodore Roosevelt, charged up Kettle Hill and San Juan Hill, taking these high points. The American Army soon surrounded Santiago.<sup>11</sup>

Another important American victory took place a couple of days later when the US navy destroyed the Spanish Caribbean fleet off Santiago; as in Manila, every Spanish warship was sunk, with trivial loss of American life. On 17 July, unaware that the US forces were at their lowest ebb due to fever, the Spanish in Santiago surrendered. This was effectively the end of Spain's hopes of staying in power in Cuba, and indeed in the Americas, for the following month America defeated the Spanish forces in Puerto Rico and took the island. An armistice was signed, and at the end of the year the Treaty of Paris formalised Spain's loss of the last vestiges of her once vast American empire. The USA gained Puerto Rico and Guam and acquired the Philippines for \$20 million; Cuba became a nominally independent satellite of the US.<sup>12</sup>

The war had some far-reaching consequences. American observers swiftly started predicting that the coming hundred years would be 'the American century', while the Spanish still call this year in their history when they lost their overseas empire 'the disaster'. British popular support for America during the war led some to talk of a new Anglo-Saxon alliance in the world.<sup>13</sup> And, as many southerners and black Americans fought with distinction, the war (and the following one in the Philippines) helped to unite the American nation in the long, bitter aftermath of the Civil War.<sup>14</sup>

The naval victories had important military consequences. Virtually all the Spanish fleet was sunk at the battles of Santiago and Manila, largely due to the American vessels being more heavily protected, and the lesson was not

lost on the designers of the Dreadnoughts, which were built in Europe before the First World War.

Other aspects of the American war effort had not been so successful, though here too lessons were learned. American ground troops in Cuba were inadequately armed, clothed and supplied. Many had made do with firearms of the Civil War era, and so were easily picked off by Spanish snipers who had the new pattern of Mauser rifles. Yellow fever broke out in the American camps (thousands eventually died), and medical facilities on the troop ships were virtually non-existent: these were dubbed 'the horror ships', as scores of Americans suffered on the voyage home, including one of the cameramen, as we shall see.

## THE WAR AND THE MEDIA

### The press

No study of the media in the Spanish-American War could be complete or even intelligible without mention of the role and effects of the press. It is especially relevant for us because both the Edison and Biograph companies relied on newspaper boats in getting their cameramen to the vicinity of Cuba.

In the 1890s America was a nation of newspaper readers: there were thousands of weeklies and 1,900 dailies.<sup>15</sup> Many of these daily papers were of the 'yellow press' variety, meaning that they emphasised sensational news – crime and similar stories. At the time of the Spanish-American War, up to half of the press was of this type.<sup>16</sup> From the middle 1890s the yellow press started playing up the Cuba issue, so that the island and its population was constantly being reported, with graphic stories of the oppression of the Cuban population by their Spanish colonial masters, and with repeated exhortations for US intervention against Spain.<sup>17</sup> A bitter circulation battle between two New York City papers, William Randolph Hearst's *World* and Joseph Pulitzer's *Journal* kept the issue on the boil. These titles had a huge readership: by January 1898 the New York *World* alone claimed a circulation of five million per week, the largest, it said, in any country.<sup>18</sup> The newspapers increased their visibility by special campaigns, by advertising, and by placing prominent war-news bulletin boards outside their offices.<sup>19</sup> [Fig. 1] The Cuban issue and subsequent war between America and Spain was major news in foreign journals too, and was reported in particularly dramatic fashion by the illustrated papers, such as *Le Petit Journal*, the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*, the *Graphic* and the *Illustrated London News*.<sup>20</sup>

By early 1898 there was no doubt that much of the US public was in a war mood, though there was also much opposition on the grounds of cost (Spain's forces were thought stronger than they turned out to be) and the lack of obvious benefits of winning Cuba.<sup>21</sup> But the outrage over the Maine proved decisive, and the pressure for intervention became so insistent that McKinley could not resist the political consequences of not intervening.<sup>22</sup> Some historians argue that the press played a leading part in creating this mood, a recent review concluding that 'sensational and conservative newspapers

together created an enabling environment for going to war'.<sup>23</sup> Joseph Wisan who studied the Cuban issue as reflected in the New York press concluded: 'The principal cause of our war with Spain was the public demand for it, a demand too powerful for effective resistance by the business and financial leaders of the nation or by President McKinley. For the creation of the public state of mind, the press was largely responsible.'<sup>24</sup> He added: 'In the opinion of the writer, the Spanish-American War would not have occurred had not the appearance of Hearst in New York journalism precipitated a bitter battle for newspaper circulation.'<sup>25</sup> One correspondent for the New York *Journal* unashamedly admitted their responsibility, stating that 'the *Journal* had provoked the war'.<sup>26</sup>

Hearst's appetite for war is legendary, and has become part of film history through a famous scene in the 1940 film, *Citizen Kane*. In the film Kane is a larger-than-life newspaper editor, a character partly based on Hearst, who has assigned a correspondent to a Cuba which is supposedly in the throes of war between Spain and the rebels. Kane receives a plaintive cable from the correspondent saying, 'Could send you prose poems about scenery but don't feel right spending your money. Stop. There is no war in Cuba. Signed Wheeler.' Kane dictates his reply: 'Dear Wheeler, You provide the prose poems, I'll provide the war.'<sup>27</sup> The scene is based on an anecdote of a genuine correspondent, artist Frederic S. Remington, who was sent to Cuba by Hearst during the rebellion.<sup>28</sup>

As far as the Spanish-American War itself is concerned, the first big story was something of a news disaster. The sinking of the Spanish fleet on 1 May took place a long way off in Manila Bay in the little-known Philippines – it was all over within a morning, with virtually no photographic coverage, minimal reporting from the scene, and only the artists could illustrate the stirring event. [Fig. 2] While this was certainly a major and significant victory, and Dewey was glorified in images and articles, Cuba remained the real story for American newspapers. For some weeks after war was declared there was little action on the island, so the journalists waited with the burgeoning US forces in the various military centres in the US, filing stories about war preparations.<sup>29</sup> Then the troops started arriving in the principal jumping-off point in Tampa, Florida, and there was more waiting.<sup>30</sup> As May turned into June and the day of departure loomed, more and more correspondents arrived in Tampa, hoping to go to Cuba with the invasion force.

It is probably fair to say that never before or since have so many correspondents covered such a small war. There is no precise figure of the numbers who came to Florida, but it was certainly into the hundreds, possibly as many as 500. Even if one takes into account only those whose names are known – reporters, photographers and artists – there were about 300.<sup>31</sup> Hearst's New York *Journal* alone had fifty correspondents in the field.<sup>32</sup> As to numbers who actually accompanied the expedition to Cuba, the figures are equally difficult to ascertain precisely, because of the disorganisation and later illness which characterised the expedition, and the fact that some correspondents were also soldiers, etc. One source at the time put the figure at 165, another at a little more than half that figure.<sup>33</sup> They came from several

different countries and various parts of the United States, some being attached to particular military units as proto 'embedded correspondents'.<sup>34</sup> And, this being an age of increasing opportunity for women, three female correspondents also went to Cuba.<sup>35</sup> During the land campaign the journalists staked out a prominent place for themselves, with part of the US landing point of Siboney dubbed 'newspaper row' because three buildings had been occupied by war correspondents.<sup>36</sup>

The costs of reporting wars have always been enormous (though some of the expenditure is returned in increased war circulation) and in this era it was said that a third of the total running expenditure of a paper could go on war correspondents.<sup>37</sup> In the case of the Cuban campaign the total cost must have been astronomical, due to the sheer number of correspondents and the hire of numerous press dispatch boats to convey this army of reporters to the front. One observer calculated that these press boats were about equal numerically to the US fleets of Admirals Sampson and Schley taken together.<sup>38</sup> The *Journal* alone eventually had ten boats. Such were their numbers and such was the desire of their newspaper passengers to get close to the action that these boats actually created some nuisance for the US forces: the *Journal's* boat *Anita* was at one point almost cut in two by the battle cruiser *New York*, and only escaped due to a prompt change of course. (The *Anita* is of more than passing interest, for a film crew was based on board, as I shall describe later.) The press boats prompted other moments of anxiety for the forces, for example, by passing with their lights blazing near to US warships, potentially attracting the attention of Spanish ships.<sup>39</sup>

### **Photography**

Even before the war, photography had a role in the nascent conflict with Spain, for images of starving people in Cuba – victims of the reconcentrado policy – were powerful propaganda for the pro-war lobby in the US.<sup>40</sup> From early in 1898 the American press sent photographers to Cuba in growing numbers.<sup>41</sup> The most significant event in the run-up to war was the sinking of the *Maine*, and three of the top US press photographers went to Havana to photograph the wreck, including J. Hemment and Jimmy Hare.<sup>42</sup> The image of the sunken American vessel became a powerful visual argument for the interventionists. Hare, already an experienced press photographer, had been quite determined to go to Cuba, and visited the offices of *Collier's* magazine to convince them to give him the assignment. As the editor later put it, 'The Maine blew up, and Jimmy blew in'. Hare stayed with *Collier's* in the weeks following, photographing the suffering people of Cuba and then the war itself, and his pictures helped to make the reputation of the magazine.<sup>43</sup> Other famous photographers also took pictures during the events of '98: for example, Burton Holmes apparently photographed the funeral for the *Maine* victims, and his poignant image shows a line of coffins being brought along a busy street in Havana.<sup>44</sup>

During the brief land campaign of the shooting war, there were a lot of men with cameras, indeed one correspondent wrote of 'an army of photographers'.<sup>45</sup> They included professionals such as Floyd Campbell and James Burton, though a number of photographs were taken by ordinary

soldiers and officers, and these images were sometimes acquired and published by the illustrated magazines. Among these amateurs were Lieutenant Wise of the Ninth regiment and Corporal Babcock of the Seventy-First infantry, and there were others whose images never made it to the printed page.<sup>46</sup> Not all the photographers were as considerate as they might have been, and as the Americans took casualties at the battle of El Pozo, one insensitive press reporter with a large camera continued to photograph the agonies of the wounded despite their protestations.<sup>47</sup>

The experiences of the photographers mirrored that of the film cameraman in some ways, most notably in their inability to photograph battlefield action. One of the stills men disclosed: 'I found it impossible to make any actual "battle scenes", for many reasons – the distance at which the fighting is conducted, the area which is covered, but chiefly the long grass and thickly wooded country.'<sup>48</sup> Certainly the Spanish enemy were almost impossible to see, let alone photograph, for many of them remained hidden as they sniped with their long-range Mauser rifles at the US troops. Photographing the American troops in action was almost as difficult and dangerous, as the bullets from the Spaniards sometimes flew thick and fast. The published photographs – in *Harpers* and *Leslie's* for example – tend to show merely the background to the war, with troops before and after battles, rather than in action. The action images are all in the form of drawings by skilled artists, and they are often superb: e.g. in *Leslie's* there is a stunning impression of the exploding *Maine*, and an evocative view of soldiers advancing across a battlefield in Cuba by H.C. Christy.<sup>49</sup> [see illustrations for Chapter 1: Fig. 5 and 6]

Stereographic photographs were a major outlet for photography at this time, and there are more stereographs of the Spanish American war than of any other war. But these too are lacking action, and an expert in this field concludes that among thousands of views from over a score of publishers, 'the combined coverage is marvellously complete, excepting scenes of battle actions'.<sup>50</sup>

There is one intriguing example of how photography could match the artists of brush and canvas. One of the war correspondents on the US warship the *Brooklyn* was George E. Graham, who, as well as taking photographs during the battle with Cervera's fleet off Santiago, also, according to one book, 'photographed a man in the act of replacing the flag at the masthead of the *Brooklyn* after it had been shot away'.<sup>51</sup> The image is not reproduced in the book, but one suspects that this was a posed shot, taken after the battle: a stills equivalent of a trend which emerged in the Philippine War of early film cameramen 'arranging' actions in the war zone for the camera. The description is reminiscent of the famous photograph of the US flag being raised over Iwo Jima in World War II, and the same message of national heroism is unmistakable. Films of flags would be a major film genre during the war of '98.

The visual record of the war, and especially the photographic record, was of some interest to the authorities, and one commander even seems to have had his own photographer in tow: one J. C. Wheat Jr. is listed as 'Photographer for

General Ludlow'.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, in 1899 the US War Department planned to compile a photographic history of the war, and tried to trace all who had carried cameras into the region of operations.<sup>53</sup> This was just after the Philippine American war had broken out, which, as we shall see, was to be very well documented by photographers who were actually based within US units, as was a film cameraman, Carl Ackerman, who was effectively working for the US War Department. The US military were swiftly learning to appreciate the value of photographic images as both a record and as propaganda.

## **FILMING THE WAR**

### **War-related filming in the USA**

Several companies filmed preparations and other aspects of the war in the United States: such activities as troops on the move, life in army camps, parades and the like. In this way, the war stimulated production. For example, the high demand for war films led the Selig company to start filmmaking for the first time. In May 1898 Selig's cameramen shot a series of films about life at Camp Tanner, Springfield, Illinois, including *Soldiers at Play*, *Wash Day in Camp* and *First Regiment Marching*. In April and May the Lubin company too filmed war preparations, including ships, troops and camp life in Philadelphia, Virginia and Georgia.<sup>54</sup> Much of this kind of US-located filming was undertaken, including by Biograph and Edison (some of it shot by the cameramen whom I feature below). Such scenes were shown in the programmes of war films, and therefore will be covered briefly in that context in my chapter on exhibition.

### **Plans to film the war**

Before the start of the war Cuba had only once been filmed, when, early in 1897, a Lumière cameraman, Gabriel Veyre, came to Havana to exhibit views with his cinematograph and also, allegedly shot Cuba's first film, a view of the local fire brigade. It may be that the military crisis on the island affected filmmaking even then, for Veyre is reported to have been required to make some films for the Spanish authorities.<sup>55</sup> However, no Cuban views appeared in the Lumière film catalogue, and there is no mention in Veyre's letters – though apparently some of these missives were lost.<sup>56</sup>

In the Spring of the following year, even before the outbreak of hostilities, pundits were predicting that film would play its part in reporting the coming war. A couple of days before the Battle of Manila Bay, a British photographic journal opined: 'The cinematograph will, there is very little doubt, be brought into use by some of our enterprising transatlantic cousins'.<sup>57</sup> Only a few days later another journal surmised that films would probably be made of the war, but warned, correctly, that one of the problems in filming would be the great distances over which modern war could be fought – especially naval battles. 'What can the camera-worker expect to get?' it asked, pessimistically, and answered its own question:

‘The attacking ships will, for fear of mines, keep quite two and a half miles from the shore, nor is it needful that they should go any nearer, for splendid gun practice is possible at that distance. The vessel bearing the animatograph apparatus will probably not be allowed to get within a mile of the fighting ships, and will be three times that distance from the shore. What kind of a picture will be possible under such circumstances? A few dots to represent ships – a dark line to indicate the shore, and some white blots which will mean puffs of smoke. Such will be the representation by the animatographic camera of a naval battle.’<sup>58</sup>

Perhaps the solution was to use some kind of special lens? A month later a proposal for exactly this emerged from the US War Department, as part of an apparently official plan to film the war. The distance problem was to be surmounted by using ‘a new-fangled contrivance... called a “telephotographoscope”’. In fact, at this date, no film camera had yet been fitted with a telephoto lens, so this was wishful thinking, as was probably the rest of the scheme. The detailed plan, as reported in the press, was to base ‘a biograph or vitascope apparatus’ on – of all places – an ambulance ship (along with other photographic apparatus for medical use).<sup>59</sup> By periodically going ashore, it was said, the government photographer, ‘confidently expects to get some biograph views of land engagements – possibly of those incidental to the siege of Havana – and his hope is that he may obtain a vitascopic series of glimpses of a naval fight off shore’. This is where the ‘telephotographoscope’ or telephoto lens would come into play, and using this equipment some stirring scenes might be obtained:

‘What a marvel, indeed, would be a moving photograph of a duel between two warships, American and Spanish, terminating, of course, in the destruction of the enemy's vessel, exhibited on a stereopticon screen before wildly enthusiastic audiences from Boston to San Francisco. How the enthusiastic American audiences aforesaid would yell if they could see with their own eyes that monument to medievalism, Morro Castle, actually falling into a heap of its own debris before the fire-vomitting guns of Admiral Sampson's fleet. Then, like the Corbett-Fitzsimmons fight in its vitascope reproduction, they would behold the glorious performance again and again until satisfied that the Maine had been remembered sufficiently.’<sup>60</sup>

I haven't managed to discover any more about this filming plan, and it might well have been an invention of press agents rather than a genuine possibility. Certainly no-one ever managed to film anything like the ‘fire-vomitting guns’ of the American fleet attacking the Spanish, though some activity was filmed in the war zone (and some of the re-enactments were quite action-packed as we shall see). The plan might all have been a lot of whimsy, like the suggestion from one wag in early May that the reason for the delay in the commencement of hostilities between America and Spain: ‘has been the settlement of certain animatograph concessions!’<sup>61</sup> The same idea was seen in a cartoon of the time, and the cameramen, interestingly, are portrayed with long, telephoto-type lenses as they film the naval battle off Cuba.<sup>62</sup> [Fig. 4]

## **False claims**

Whimsical and false claims seem to have characterised the cinematic coverage of this war. While a number of cameramen genuinely filmed aspects of the war in Cuba, there are two claims which I consider specious and unfounded, and which I will therefore deal with first before moving on fairly swiftly.<sup>63</sup> James H. White, an early Edison cameraman and director, claimed to have filmed the battle of Manila Bay on 1 May 1898 in some accounts, adding that he was assisted by Frederick Blechynden. Similarly Albert E. Smith and James Stuart Blackton, founders of the Vitagraph Company, later claimed that they went to Cuba and succeeded in filming aspects of the war.

White relates his filming experiences in various sources. The claim to have filmed Dewey's victory first appears in a 1927 interview, where he states that he was aboard the *SS Baltimore*, one of the ships in Dewey's fleet. On the morning of the battle, the 1st May, White claims that, 'From the Baltimore, I was enabled to get some splendid "shots" during the action.' He adds: 'I hurriedly developed my negatives to show the officers of the fleet, before rushing them back to New York'.<sup>64</sup> He says that the films were then screened at Huber's Museum in the city. But the story lacks a shred of substantiation: no film was advertised or survives, and there is no corroborating evidence that White was at the battle. The inconsistency between his accounts, and the wild claims in some of them, are further reasons to doubt him: for example, in an 1899 article he doesn't mention being at the Manila Bay battle at all, but states rather that he had had his film camera at the assault on San Juan Hill in Cuba!

As for Smith and Blackton, they claimed to have gained passage on William Randolph Hearst's boat, the *Buccaneer*, with their film camera, succeeded in taking some shots of the war in Cuba, and then returned to New York, 'with the first moving picture newsfilm of war ever made'.<sup>65</sup> By 1952 with the publication of Smith's colourful autobiography, the story had grown significantly, with some ten pages devoted to the alleged filming of the Cuban war, including that the filmmakers met with Theodore Roosevelt and travelled to Cuba with the Rough Riders, and were present at the charge up San Juan Hill (1 July).<sup>66</sup> This claim by Smith – to have gone to the war and filmed there – has been taken seriously by several historians.<sup>67</sup> But J. Stuart Blackton's daughter stated that neither her father nor Smith ever set foot in Cuba.<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, there are no original sources to confirm these stories, and dates established by Charles Musser prove that Smith and Blackton were in the USA when Smith claims they were filming in Cuba.<sup>69</sup> Musser suggests that: 'The assertion that Smith and Blackton went to Cuba to film the Spanish-American War... probably began as a face-saving gesture designed to conceal their duping activities.'<sup>70</sup>

## **BIOGRAPH'S CAMERAMEN: ARTHUR MARVIN AND BILLY BITZER**

### **Bitzer films the stricken *Maine* before the war**

In contrast to these 'tall tales' of Smith and White et al, some companies and cameramen really did succeed in filming aspects of the war. By 1898,

American film production was dominated by two companies: the American Mutoscope and Biograph Company ('AM&B' or 'Biograph') and the Edison Manufacturing Company. Biograph had a strong news agenda and was not slow to take up the challenge of filming this war. The sinking of the *Maine* was their cue to send a cameraman to film the wreckage and cover other aspects of the growing tension in Cuba. The cameraman in question was Billy Bitzer, who already had much experience of filming actualities ('news happenings'), and was later to achieve fame as D.W. Griffith's cameraman.<sup>71</sup>

The Biograph camera at this time was a very large affair, using wide film, and run by a motor with heavy batteries: not the best instrument for capturing news events, and Bitzer later recalled his travails in using this 'cumbersome camera' on the Cuba assignment. He says he travelled there from the USA on a transport ship called the *Seguranca*. Bitzer doesn't mention it, but a stills photographer, John Hemment (mentioned earlier), embarked on the same ship. He was working for some of the pictorial papers on this job, through the Arkell Publishing Co., and possibly for the US Government too, and his aims were similar to Bitzer's: to record the sunken *Maine* (which was still partly visible above water), and other aspects of the growing tension in Cuba.<sup>72</sup> An ex-athlete and future film cameraman, Hemment was in 1898 a leading news photographer – 'the foremost snap shottist in all America' – who would later photograph other subjects and personalities related to the war, including Admiral Dewey.<sup>73</sup>

Bitzer and Hemment arrived in Havana in late February while the bodies were still being recovered by divers from the sunken *Maine*. They may have worked together on their similar assignments, for they seem to have filmed/photographed several sites in common: both men recorded the wreck of the *Maine*, their main objective, and also another visiting US ship, the *Montgomery*, as well as a local landmark, Morro Castle, and groups of Cuban reconcentrados – victims of the Spanish policy of concentration.<sup>74</sup> Both Bitzer and Hemment experienced hostility from Spanish officials in Havana as they tried to film or photograph sites, and Hemment claims he was arrested briefly when about to photograph the Morro Castle.<sup>75</sup> He was not the only photographer to be harshly treated, and several journalists who reported from Cuba were hindered by the Spanish authorities.<sup>76</sup> Bitzer notes that 'Visiting Cuba under Spanish rule was highly dangerous.... The grins and leers on the faces of the bystanders gave me to understand this was unfriendly territory'. He adds that he tried 'to get pictures from a tow-boat' but in fact 'all I got was moving pictures of the *Maine* as seen from the shore'. The list of films (below) seems to show that he shot rather more than this, including a moving shot of the stricken *Maine* and a separate scene of divers working on her. As we shall see, William Paley, Edison's cameraman also secured a moving view of the sunken battleship from a launch.

Biograph's production register lists nine films seemingly shot in Cuba at this time, just before the war, and all were presumably the work of Bitzer. The register gives no further description, but many of these films were shown in the UK from late April or early May, and the descriptions by British journalists give us more details.<sup>77</sup> (See list of Bitzer's films below). There is quite a

variety of subjects, many of which would have been of great interest to US audiences, and some would have had quite an emotional impact: those of the wrecked *Maine*, obviously, but the *Cuban Reconcentrados* too would have struck a chord with the US public. These after all, were the people that many Americans were thirsting to avenge: Cubans forced from their homes and brought into population centres like Havana so they could not offer support to the rebels in the countryside. Interestingly Bitzer also shot a film of the Spanish forces in Havana, *Crack Regiment Spanish Volunteers Marching to Gen. Blanco's Palace*, perhaps at the instigation of the authorities.

**Box:**

**Films shot by Billy Bitzer in Cuba, approx February-April 1898**

(with Biograph register numbers, descriptions with sources, and my annotations)

- 475 *Christian Herald's Relief Station, Havana*
- 476 *Divers at Work on Wreck of 'Maine'* – ‘shows the dismemberment of the battleship Maine’ (BJP)
- 477 *Wreck of the Cruiser 'Maine'* – ‘...taken from the Biograph Company's steam yacht in Havana Harbour. The result of the explosion which sunk this fine warship is vividly reproduced. The wreck lies in about 28ft of water, and a considerable part of the upper works is still standing above the surface, which, together with a part of the deck bent over upon itself, tells of the terrible force which hurled hundreds of lives into eternity and destroyed the vessel.’ (*The Era*)
- 478 *General Lee Leaving Hotel Inglaterra, Havana* – ‘Consul-General Lee's departure from the Hotel Inglaterra, [sic] Havana.’ (*The Era* and *BJP*) Consul General Lee was investigating the *Maine* sinking. If this was Lee's final departure from Havana, it would have been shot 10 April. (Incidentally, Bitzer was also staying at the Hotel Inglaterra.)
- 479 *A Run of the Havana Fire Department; aka Primitive Fire Engine of Havana on its Way to a Conflagration*
- 480 *U.S. 'Montgomery' in Havana Harbour*
- 482 *Crack Regiment Spanish Volunteers Marching to Gen. Blanco's Palace* [Havana] – ‘These volunteers are the militia in the service of Spain in Cuba.’ (*The Era* and *BJP*)
- 484 *Cuban Reconcentrados; aka Reconcentrados at Los Fosos Relief Station, Havana, Cuba* ‘a gathering of "Reconcentrados" at the Los Fosos relief station, Havana. The children as well as adults are sent to these stations to secure food for the members of their family. A scramble is depicted for food and money, which is being distributed amongst them.’ (*The Era*)
- 485 *Steamer 'Olivette' Passing Morro Castle in Havana Harbour* – ‘An excellent view... of Morro Castle, Havana Harbour, with the Olivette sailing out.’ (*The Era*) ‘Morro Castle, Havana, with the steamship Olivette sailing out of the harbour’. (*BJP*)

It is not certain how long Bitzer remained in Cuba in this pre-war period, as, in his memoirs he is confused about his dates of both arriving and departing. I

conclude, based on a number of clues, that he arrived in Havana 23 February, and may have departed as late as 10 April.<sup>78</sup> Back at home in the USA, as war became more likely, by mid-April Bitzer and other Biograph cameramen were assigned to filming war-related news actualities, notably scenes of the military's preparations in several localities in America. Biograph crews filmed such things as warships, cavalry, troops training and departing for the war; and in Washington, D.C. they filmed Assistant Secretary of the Navy Theodore Roosevelt.<sup>79</sup> The company advertised the resulting films as 'American Biograph authentic war views'. It is worth underlining that in covering the *Maine* issue so fully, and shooting other military scenes, Biograph and Bitzer were following a similar agenda to that pursued by the newspaper press.

### **Arthur Marvin's adventures on the waves**

Meanwhile another Biograph cameraman, Arthur Marvin, was about to get a taste of war. Sent to Tampa, Florida as troops assembled there, his task began in a rather mundane fashion, filming the sort of background activity 'war views' that I have just mentioned. As he put it, he spent 'weeks of tedious waiting in Tampa', filming troops and anything else that seemed of interest (even including an execution by hanging!)<sup>80</sup>

But as tension rose in this pre-war period, Biograph wanted their cameras to be closer to Cuba itself, and from about April they managed to place Marvin on board the *Anita*. This boat had been chartered by William Randolph Hearst's New York *Journal*, and was cruising around Cuba weeks before the American invasion, searching for any news to report.<sup>81</sup> Interestingly, Biograph's other cameraman, Billy Bitzer, and the Edison company's William Paley, had similar arrangements to travel on the *Journal's* press boats. Perhaps Hearst had some interest in promoting moving pictures, though it might simply be that he had so many press boats available that using his transport was the most obvious choice for other media representatives.

The Spanish navy tended to look upon all foreign boats with suspicion at this time, and treated American journalists as common spies. It is likely that a boat representing the *Journal* – a newspaper which had led the call for war with Spain – would have been regarded with especial animosity if its identity had been known. In the circumstances, Biograph executive Mr. Koopman was professing blind optimism about the boat's status when he said: 'No, we are not likely to be interfered with, as we are to be regarded by both sides as taking up a position of "benevolent neutrality."' Of course they may object to some of the pictures being shown.'<sup>82</sup>

In fact the *Anita* was indeed menaced by the Spanish navy, and Koopman's claim of neutrality was in any case disingenuous. For a start, part of the boat's mission was military, as at one point it dropped off a US Lieutenant in Puerto Rico to contact the insurgents.<sup>83</sup> And according to another source, the *Anita* was 'under the British flag', rather than neutral.<sup>84</sup> This might have been safer than flying under US colours, but, if previous experience was anything to go by, being British would not necessarily have helped them, especially in allowing access to film in Spanish waters, as another British-registered boat

had been blocked by a Spanish patrol boat while trying to steam into Havana.<sup>85</sup>

So the *Anita's* status was uncertain as, in early May, the boat followed Admiral Sampson's North Atlantic squadron from Key West to Puerto Rico (the other Spanish owned island in the region which the US had its sights set on). On 12 May, Marvin, together with other journalists aboard, witnessed the US navy bombarding Puerto Rico's main city, San Juan.<sup>86</sup> He was keen to record some of this action on film, and later described his experiences:

'As that bombardment was our first opportunity to do any work, we were anxious, naturally, to get some good views. When the firing began we steamed up toward the battleships and got where we could take in the whole range of operations pretty well. We kept urging the captain of the yacht to get in nearer the shore, and he gradually did so. Pretty soon the Spanish batteries began a reply to the American fire. Some of their shells came within three or four hundred yards of us, I presume, and we began to congratulate ourselves on the fact that there might be a good exhibition before long. Presently the Spanish shots began to come faster and to splash up the water a little nearer to us.'<sup>87</sup>

Fascinated by this spectacle, the journalists didn't at first notice that the yacht's captain had prudently decided to move rapidly away from the zone of fire. They tried to stop the retreat but neither the Captain nor crew would listen until they were 25 miles out at sea. When finally, a couple of days later, they returned to the site of battle to try and get some shots of the damage and the warring parties, Marvin sadly reported that, 'the performance was over, and the American fleet had sailed away'.<sup>88</sup> At that point two small Spanish gunboats spotted the *Anita*, and headed for them at speed. This time the journalists made every effort to help their crew effect an escape, allegedly offering the stokers beer and champagne, and throwing oil, coal, even sides of bacon and anything else they could lay their hands on into the boilers, 'until we had flames coming out of the top of the smokestacks and were leaving Porto Rico in our wake at the rate of fifteen knots per hour'.<sup>89</sup>

Even though they had doused the yacht's lights, one of the gunboats managed to locate them and fired repeatedly, fortunately without effect. Finally, 'after the most nerve-trying ordeal I have ever undergone', as Marvin put it, they reached the neutral harbour of St. Thomas in the Virgin Isles.<sup>90</sup> Some time later Marvin tried to persuade the yacht's captain to sally forth again, but he refused to risk it. Marvin was eventually forced to return to New York – in a tramp steamer – and though he apparently brought back with him a number of films to show for his experiences, it's not clear what these were. By this stage he was much the worse for wear, and as one article put it, he returned to America, 'with his health broken by hardships and his spirit crushed with worry'.<sup>91</sup> Another article about Marvin concluded that: 'Altogether, following the fortunes of war with a camera that weighs a quarter of a ton is likely to be about as exciting as following them with a gun'.<sup>92</sup> The tone of exploit and adventure which suffuses these anecdotes of Marvin fits into a pattern seen in other newspaper reports which were appearing at this

time. Again, the new film medium was following the newspaper agenda in relation to the war.

### **Bitzer films the war in Cuba**

Though war had been declared in April, the bulk of US forces did not leave Tampa until mid June and only set foot in Cuba from the 22<sup>nd</sup> of that month. Bitzer was with the expedition, aboard a 'towboat' along with several newsmen and two still photographers (possibly including Hemment), again in an arrangement with the *New York Journal*. He had every incentive to succeed in this assignment, for he had been promised a bonus for war scenes. They landed in Cuba and Bitzer got to work quickly, later recalling that at the small port of Siboney, 'I took some shots of the troops landing from the "Yale" and "Harvard" transports, and other shots along the beach'.<sup>93</sup> It was probably one of these scenes – '...depicting General Shafter's troops landing in Cuba...' – which was exhibited a few months later in Biograph's venue in London.<sup>94</sup> It might also have been this film which was screened by a US showman the following year, showing, as one article put it: '...our marines rowing in open boats, jumping into the water waist high, forming [a] line with military precision and advancing up the beach with their rifle[s] popping like corn'.<sup>95</sup> Another Biograph film, which survives in the Library of Congress, is likely to be Bitzer's work too: *Wounded Soldiers Embarking in Rowboats* was filmed in Siboney after the battle of La Guásimas and shows wounded soldiers embarking for the hospital ship *Olivette*.

At this point, given that he was lumbered with such ponderous camera equipment, the problem for Bitzer was what to do and how to do it.<sup>96</sup> He later recalled that he couldn't go inland to film near any military action because of the lack of horses (to pull a wagon) – which would indeed have been required to transport his large Biograph camera.<sup>97</sup> So instead, from the towboat he observed and filmed – so he claims – the bombardment of Santiago (he writes 'Havana' in error) from offshore.

Then after some time, Bitzer saw one of William Randolph Hearst's yachts, the *Sylvia* across the water, and he was taken over to her. He recalled: 'Aboard was Hearst of the *New York Journal*, accompanied by Jack Follansbee, James Creelman [a well known war correspondent], and two pretty young ladies who were sisters'.<sup>98</sup> Also on board, though not mentioned by Bitzer in his memoirs, was his photographer colleague, John Hemment, who, with his usual professional thoroughness had fitted out a darkroom on the *Sylvia*, complete with quantities of ice to keep his developing solutions sufficiently cool.<sup>99</sup> As Bitzer and Hemment had been together in Cuba before the war (see above), it's not unlikely that they worked together for some of this time too, though neither men mention one another. Bitzer recalled his next part in covering the land war:

'I decided at this juncture to land with my Frankenstein-like camera and exert new efforts to obtain battle scenes. Frederic Remington, who was returning to the States, gave me his horse to view the prospects and pull the camera ashore. Then I was ready to follow the troops inland. The outposts were within a few miles of Havana, [again, he means

Santiago] so I started with my camera toward General William R. Shafter's headquarters, halfway between my starting point and the front line. I took movies of the general with his staff, crossing a stream on horseback. He was a portly gentleman and filled the area of the postcard movie field so well that it was unnecessary to worry about filling in the background.<sup>100</sup>

As with the accounts of this war by Albert Smith and James White, though to a lesser extent, Bitzer's also has its points of exaggeration, error and possible fabrication. Remington, the famous war artist was certainly not 'returning to the States' at that time – he stayed in Cuba for the main battles on 1 July. Bitzer's claim to have filmed Shafter is also dubious, as no film of Shafter is listed in the Biograph catalogue or register.<sup>101</sup> (Paley, on the other hand, did film Shafter).

Bitzer then goes on to relate that, while he was some way inland he came across correspondent James Creelman, who had been hit in the shoulder by a Spanish Mauser bullet. Bitzer continues:

'I rushed up to him, picked him up, got him to put his good arm around my neck, and we started back. It was a slow descent. When we did reach first aid, they were able to stop the flow of blood. Slowly we wended our way from the battle, resting repeatedly. As the journey from Kettle Hill, which we were on, to Siboney was some fourteen miles and we had to walk all the way, it took us almost two days to get back.'<sup>102</sup>

Much of this is credible. Creelman was indeed wounded at the battle of El Caney on 1 July in leading an assault against a Spanish fort (incidentally, a further example of a war correspondent intervening in the events).<sup>103</sup> But Bitzer wasn't the only one to claim to have rescued Creelman: John Hemment stated that he 'lugged James Creelman... out of the fight when he became wounded, carrying him some three miles on a tree bough litter'.<sup>104</sup> It seems likely that Bitzer and Hemment actually saved their fellow journalist Creelman together, but, as usual in accounts by war correspondents, they fail to mention heroics by anyone but themselves.<sup>105</sup> A further clue that the rescuer wasn't Hemment alone comes from a throwaway phrase from Creelman himself, who writes that his litter was carried by 'several correspondents' – Bitzer could well have been one of these.

They must have reached the coast at Siboney by 3 July, for the naval battle of Santiago took place just a few miles away on that date, and Hemment photographed the aftermath on 4 July. This time again he was based on Hearst's yacht *Sylvia*, and used a large plate camera to take some fifty views of the destroyed fleet including the wreck of the *Vizcaya*.<sup>106</sup> A film of the latter was made too, and I would suggest it was shot by Bitzer.<sup>107</sup> This film was later released as *The Wreck of the Vizcaya*, and it survives: it is a tracking shot from another, moving vessel – presumably the *Sylvia* – along the side of the wrecked *Vizcaya*, showing the still-smoking hull, partially sunken in the sea.<sup>108</sup> The film was screened the following month in London, along with Biograph's

film of the *Vizcaya* prior to the war, as a vivid ‘before and after’ depiction of the US victory.<sup>109</sup>

Soon after photographing the wreck, Bitzer and the wounded Creelman returned to the USA on the *Sylvia*, and by this time Bitzer was sick with fever.<sup>110</sup> To avoid having to spend a lengthy time in quarantine he disembarked covertly in Baltimore, but this proved a precarious action for a man in his condition, for he was seriously ill. He wandered around in a state of confusion through Hoboken and New York, where finally he was taken in at Post-Graduate Hospital. He recalls that he was sick for many weeks afterwards with typhoid malaria.<sup>111</sup> Some of this account by Bitzer has some near contemporary corroboration, with one article saying of him (though not by name):

‘...when he eventually reached New York, he sent in his films — and disappeared completely. After weeks of tracking and manhunting, it was found that he had suffered so severely from his exposure that he became delirious, and walked about the streets in a semi-unconscious manner, finally stumbling into a hospital, where for a long time he lay in a precarious state.’<sup>112</sup>

There is some limited contemporary corroboration for other aspects of Bitzer’s account of filming in Cuba. This is important to state, as much of my above account has been based on his autobiography, published over seventy years after the events. An article of 1901 noted: ‘The first war operator, William Bitzer, was landed at Siboney with the American forces and succeeded, in spite of almost overwhelming odds, in catching many stirring scenes until he was stricken with tropic fever’.<sup>113</sup> A Biograph publication of 1898 adds that cameramen for the company, ‘were in Santiago for the landing of the troops; they were with our soldiers on battle fields and in camp, and the results of their efforts form a complete pictorial history of the war’.<sup>114</sup> This is rather an exaggeration, but the aim had certainly been to create a pictorial report on the war, much as the news media were doing. And Bitzer’s working closely with Hemment and Creelman underlines just how closely filmmakers were linked to the established press during this war. A Biograph film showing ‘a charge by American troops in Cuba during the late war’, may well be Bitzer’s work, though it is possible that it was a US-shot fake. Four frames of this film of 900 frames were reproduced in *The Quaker* (1899, p.468). [Fig. 3]

## **EDISON’S CAMERAMAN: WILLIAM PALEY**

### **Paley’s pre-war filming in Key West and Havana**

Though the Edison company had less expertise in filming news and actualities than Biograph, by early in 1898 it was increasingly likely that war was approaching, and this would be such a major event that Edison could not let Biograph have the field to themselves. Lacking a cameraman with sufficient experience, the Edison executives decided to hire William Paley.<sup>115</sup> Born in England, William C. Paley (1857-1924) emigrated to the United States, where

he became a photographic technician and showman.<sup>116</sup> He moved into the film business in 1897, and was soon working as a cameraman.

Paley was offered a contract by the Edison company on 7 March 1898 to film the Spanish-American War, the arrangement to last a year. Edison was to supply Paley with raw stock and then to pay him \$15 for each film that he shot for them, plus a 30 cent royalty on every copy sold.<sup>117</sup> Over the next four months he would film aspects of the war successively in Key West, Havana, Tampa, and then with the invasion forces in southern Cuba. Paley's experience therefore would be similar to Bitzer's in that both went twice to Cuba: in the run-up to conflict and during the war itself. Both too became seriously ill.

To facilitate Paley's work, Edison had made a deal with Hearst's New York *Journal* whereby the newspaper supplied transportation for Paley on their press dispatch yacht, *Buccaneer*, and also offered him a collaborator in the form of Karl Decker. Decker was one of the *Journal's* most energetic reporters: 'a Viking by nature and appearance', as a fellow journalist put it.<sup>118</sup> He had already been in Cuba, where, true to the *Journal's* motto of 'the journalism that acts', he had arranged the escape from jail of a young woman opponent of the Spanish regime, Evangelina Cisneros, and brought her to the US, this being a major coup for the *Journal*.<sup>119</sup> The benefits for Paley of teaming up with Decker were considerable, for a second person in the camera team, especially a go-getter like this one, would be a great help to any news cameraman. Equally, the offer of passage on the *Journal's* yacht was a great boon, for hiring boats could cost hundreds of dollars a day.<sup>120</sup> On the other hand, it is not at all clear what the *Journal* got out of this linkup with Edison, and as we've seen, they had made a similar deal with Biograph. They didn't need money (Hearst had plenty of that) even if Edison had offered any, so perhaps the *Journal* was helping Paley simply for the publicity value of an association with the very newest medium of communication, the cinema, which had the magic name of 'Edison' attached.

For the first stage of his assignment, in the pre-war period, Paley left New York City on about 15 March 1898, his initial assignment with Decker being to film US military activities related to the Cuban crisis in the Key West area (Florida).<sup>121</sup> As American forces assembled, the new team of Paley and Decker initially shot several films of US battleships, sometimes photographing from Hearst's yacht on the move. They shot *U.S. Battleship "Indiana"*, for example, and the film is described as follows:

'...shows the most powerful fighting machine in the world to-day as she lies at anchor taking on coal. The decks are covered with marines and sailors. ... The view is taken from a moving yacht and gives the effect of the vessel itself passing through the water.'<sup>122</sup>

The *Journal* praised these films, taken from their own yacht: 'The moving battle ships shown by this method give a better notion of their great size and power than could be obtained by really seeing them unless one had exceptional facilities for getting very close to them'.<sup>123</sup> Paley and Decker also

shot a kind of promotional scene for Hearst, *New York Journal Yacht "Buccaneer" War Correspondents on Board*; and on 27 March in Key West filmed the funeral cortege for the *Maine*, released as *Burial of the Maine Victims*.

They then travelled down to Cuba itself, arriving at Havana Harbour probably in early April, where the plan was to continue the *Maine* theme by filming the wreckage of the battleship itself. This proved to be as difficult an assignment for Paley and Decker as it had been for Bitzer a few weeks earlier, and was to be less productive than Bitzer's mission. They were working in a city where Americans were highly unpopular both with the Spanish authorities and with many of the inhabitants. Paley and Decker made three attempts to film in the vicinity of Havana, but, as an ad for Edison films stated, 'They were run out of the city by Spanish officers, insulted, and spat upon by the people'.<sup>124</sup> But Paley proved resilient, the *Journal* reporting in mid-April:

'Mr. Paley was warned that if he took his photographic apparatus to Havana the Spanish officials would make him pay dearly for such a reckless proceeding, for they do not desire the *Maine* and its surroundings reproduced. When he entered the harbor at Havana the pilot attempted to throw the photographic apparatus overboard. This caused a personal encounter, in which Mr. Paley was victorious. Spanish officers also boarded the yacht and attempted to arrest the photographer.<sup>125</sup> [possibly the latter is a reference to the previously mentioned pilot]

A later article, probably based on Paley's own statements, claimed that the cameraman suffered further persecution at the hands of the Spaniards, who:

'...threw him into a dungeon in Morro Castle, where he could hear a firing squad launching souls into eternity. They had caught him with eighteen moving pictures of the *Maine*. When the American consul got him out he started filming again and a Cuban tried to stiletto him. Daddy Paley chucked him into the harbor.'<sup>126</sup>

Some of these latter two accounts may be embroidering the facts, but harsh treatment of journalists was not unusual in Cuba at the time, and, as I've mentioned, other photographers visiting Havana reported similar hostility. Despite these difficulties, Edison optimistically claimed that Paley and Decker 'managed to evade them [the Spanish authorities] sufficiently to get all the important scenes that are worth reproducing in the harbor'. The company's executives expressed themselves very satisfied with Paley and Decker's work in Havana and Key West, boasting on 9 April that the filmmaking pair were 'sending up negatives of most supreme interest of the Cuban imbroglio'.<sup>127</sup> The two men were genuinely working as a team, apparently, and 'Karl Decker rendered all assistance possible in aiding' Paley.<sup>128</sup>

By 10 April all Americans were having to leave Havana, and the filmmaking pair departed at this time too (about the same date as Bitzer). They had been in the city, it would appear, only about a week.<sup>129</sup> This was surely less time

than had been planned and the trip was remarkably unproductive, for it seems that all that came out of it were some shots of the *Maine* and views of Morro Castle, which is less than Bitzer managed to achieve during his admittedly longer stay in the city.<sup>130</sup> Perhaps this paltry result was partly because the Spanish authorities had confiscated some of Paley's films (such as the eighteen films of the *Maine*, mentioned above) ?

### **Paley back in the USA**

In the United States Paley and Decker continued filming war subjects together and the Maine theme was maintained when they filmed Captain Sigsbee, ex-commander of the *Maine* with the Secretary of the Navy, John D. Long, on the steps of the Navy Department in Washington. The *Maine* outrage was, of course, a major story in the printed press at this time, and Paley's moving picture coverage was in this respect 'led' or at least mirrored by the newspaper agenda.

Paley returned to New York City about 14 April.<sup>131</sup> But this was just a brief respite. War was now looming, and Edison called upon the cameraman's services again. On 20 April Paley sent a letter to the Edison company agreeing to go to film in Key West and Havana again, 'to take animated pictures of the hostilities'. He also agreed that he would send the negatives to Edison as quickly as possible, 'with proper descriptions'. The latter is an especially interesting clause of the contract. Descriptions were and are vital for documentary/news films, where the subject of the film is all important, and not always apparent from the film image alone: unlabelled or anonymous scenes might be virtually useless. (A film taken at a battle site, for example, would be far more valuable than a film of another location).

Edison offered Paley an advance of \$500, which he was to return if the war was over quickly (war's end would make the films of less value, or even unsaleable).<sup>132</sup> [Fig. 6] Altogether this deal was, as Edison representative F.Z. Maguire confessed to a fellow executive (but didn't of course tell Paley), 'a very good arrangement for us. The trip will practically cost us nothing'. Maguire noted that their rivals, Biograph, had paid out a thousand dollars for their first expedition to Cuba and were currently 'spending money without stint', and even hiring a special yacht. (In fact Biograph's financial arrangements for boat transport are unclear, and both they and Edison may have made deals with Hearst.) The plan was that Paley would travel back to Cuba on one of the *Journal's* yachts, the *Buccaneer* or the *Anita*, (as with his previous trip), though eventually he made other arrangements.<sup>133</sup> This time Paley was to work on his own, without Decker or apparently any other colleague to assist. This was to prove a mistake.

The day after his new agreement with Edison – he had been back in New York only about a week – on 21 April Paley set off to Florida for a second time, in anticipation of a declaration of war. He had with him 3,500 ft of negative – enough for some fifty films. He had instructions from Edison that if there was time before he boarded the ship for Cuba, to try and film the troops in Florida, and this he indeed managed to do, as the departure of the expedition was delayed for another couple of weeks.<sup>134</sup>

By the end of April, the municipality of Tampa was becoming the assembly point for the invasion of Cuba, and thousands of men were arriving at makeshift camps. Paley filmed the troops in various day-to-day activities as they prepared for their mission. He also filmed escaped Cuban *reconcentrados* – Cubans who had escaped to Florida from forced ‘concentration’ centres on the island. In addition, he managed to get a shot of the first ship to leave with troops to the front, the transport *Whitney*, which carried a battalion of the 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry.

He sent the resulting films back to Edison in West Orange, where they were processed and then listed for release in ‘War Extra’, a special supplement to the Edison Manufacturing Company’s catalogue.<sup>135</sup> This bulletin promised that the motion pictures it listed would be ‘sure to satisfy the craving of the general public for absolutely true and accurate details regarding the movements of the United States Army getting ready for the invasion of Cuba’. Unfortunately some of these films shot by Paley before the invasion suffered from poor registration on his Gaumont camera – such as *Colored Troops Disembarking*<sup>136</sup> – but presumably he solved this problem, as his later films during this assignment are well in register, though the camera was not to prove reliable in other respects.

While Paley was filming in Tampa, the Edison company sent a telegram (signed by Thomas A. Edison himself) to the Secretary of War in Washington requesting a war correspondent’s pass for Paley who, the company said, would be taking ‘kinetoscopic records’ of the war. This was granted the same day by the War Department, with Paley being described on the pass as a war correspondent ‘from Edison’s laboratory’.<sup>137</sup>

### **Paley goes to Cuba again**

After the long wait in Tampa, finally on 8 June the troops assembled in Port Tampa to go aboard the flotilla of transport ships bound for Cuba. As the soldiers arrived, Paley was ready with his camera in the rail yard adjacent to the dock, and he even appears in a still photograph of the yard – a rotund figure, standing confidently next to his tripod and camera in the midst of the crowds of soldiers – apparently about to start filming. [Fig. 7] The film that he took from this position survives, entitled *71st New York Volunteers Embarking for Santiago*.<sup>138</sup>

At this point there was another delay, with the fleet held up off the Florida shore, but on 14 June the ships started on their way. Paley was with them, sailing, it seems, on the hospital ship, *Olivette*.<sup>139</sup> A dedicated press boat would have been more suitable for his assignment, but perhaps the arrangement to travel on one of the Hearst boats had broken down, along with the partnership with Decker?

The troops started landing in Cuba, at the jetty of a small town called Daiquiri or Baiquiri, on 22 June and were fully landed by the 26<sup>th</sup> of the month. On one of these days Paley took what was probably his first film of the Cuban

Expedition: *U.S. Troops Landing at Daiquirí, Cuba*. [Fig. 8] Some time later he filmed the mule trains as they made their way from Daiquiri toward Santiago.

He later claimed to have taken a variety of other shots during the next few days. He mentioned some especially interesting-sounding subjects: Teddy Roosevelt and General Wood going into action, a US gun battery firing during the advance on Santiago on 1 July, an exchange of prisoners, and, he adds, other 'action stuff'.<sup>140</sup> But there is no record of these kind of shots in what was released, so either these scenes are simply spurious, or were among the negatives he lost later on when his troubles began, as we shall see below.<sup>141</sup>

He undoubtedly managed to secure a shot of Major-General William R. Shafter, the commander of the U.S. Expeditionary Force, for this survives, though it is probably the least effective of Paley's efforts. Shafter appears fleetingly on horseback, moving swiftly through the frame and partially masked by other riders. This seemingly grabbed shot does not suggest that Shafter had been very cooperative, and so doesn't support Paley's later claim in an article that he and Shafter had become friends in Cuba. He claimed they were drawn to one another by their similarly vast size and weight – Paley was over 6 ft tall and tipped the scales at 335 pounds, and Shafter was 20 pounds more. Because of this, says the article, 'Paley was given every facility to pursue his work'.<sup>142</sup> Yet there is no indication in Shafter's swift progress through frame that the General was willing to make any effort to help the filmmaker to get an effective shot. This was entirely in character, for Shafter was not an easy person to deal with, and many of the correspondents heartily loathed him.<sup>143</sup>

### **Paley as war cameraman**

By contrast with Shafter, Paley was of a far more affable disposition, and was soon known affectionately among the war correspondents as 'the Kinetoscope Man'. With his huge bulk and his novel camera, he cut a conspicuous figure in the Cuban expedition; evidently industrious in his work, though facing difficulties due to his weight, as one journalist recounted:

'He is a large man, corpulent and slow-moving, and his work with the navy and the army during the present war has been more difficult than a younger and more wiry man would have found it. He has had to climb in and out of small boats that tipped dangerously under his weight, and the personal discomforts he endured while following the troops in Cuba would have discouraged a less plucky man. With it all he was so good-natured that the war correspondents, in whose company he found himself often, liked him immensely and assisted him in his work whenever the opportunity offered.'<sup>144</sup>

Sheer size was not his only problem. On this second trip to Cuba he was without any other colleague to assist and advise: the energetic Decker would have been a great help, though a colleague with military experience might have been even better, for Paley's lack of knowledge of military affairs soon became apparent. I have discovered a unique account of Paley during the Cuban war, which sheds light on his problems and disappointments, as well

as on his unrealistic expectations about the kind of films he hoped to obtain of the war, and on his character.

Stephen Bonsal was a correspondent with the forces in Cuba, and wrote a book about his experiences, *The Fight for Santiago*, published the following year.<sup>145</sup> He met Paley, 'the kinetoscope man', during the Cuban expedition, and described him, accurately, as 'a stout man, almost as big as Shafter'. Bonsal seems to have spent some time talking to Paley, and he writes that the cameraman was 'to me one of the most interesting of the irregular forms of energy displayed upon the outskirts of the army'. Bonsal relates with some sarcasm that Paley had high expectations for the historic footage that he would take of the war in Cuba:

'...he often told me that he could not have endured what he did had the purpose of his mission simply been to amuse the patrons of dime museums and country fairs. He was inspired with a nobler purpose. "My idea is," he said, "that when the war is over and Congress meets, they will vote to have my pictures strung around the Capitol on revolving screens, where everybody can see them. You see it's un-American, those old Greek façades and Roman porticos, with which we have been putting up so long. The people of the United States want something with a little snap and go to it, and won't they be pleased when they see my pictures moving and quivering with life right under their eyes, as they move around the base of the Capitol."

Though Bonsal is making fun, it seems plain that Paley had a genuine sense of mission to posterity. Perhaps these hopes for recording his nation's history were one reason why he accepted this assignment from Edison for such a low rate of remuneration? In any case, Paley was soon to be disappointed by the war, for like other correspondents present, he expected more action, especially, it seems, cavalry charges. Bonsal met him at one point at the start of the campaign and describes the encounter as follows:

'With a speed that was altogether surprising, and altogether honorable for a man of his weight and girth, I now met him as he came prancing up the road carrying his pack and perspiring – well, profusely... He shouted as he saw me, "Have the cavalry charged yet ?" And when I assured him they had not, he sat down with a sigh of relief. His inquiry showed finer artistic perception than actual knowledge of the army; and when I told him that all the cavalry were dismounted, he almost wept, and wished he had not come. We walked on, however, he hungering and thirsting for epic incidents to catch on the fly and commemorate for all time. At this moment we stumbled upon General Shafter in his shirt-sleeves, with his grip on the telephone trumpeter, talking so energetically that the back of his head rolled up in wrinkles. "Is the general ordering the cavalry to charge ?" he inquired suspiciously. For a moment he evidently thought that I had lulled him into a false sense of security. "No," said the orderly, "he's only cussing at the quartermaster's folks at Siboney for not getting more sour-belly and grub up to the front." It seemed to me, as he sat down with a sigh upon

the turf, that the kinetoscope man now began to regard his heavy pack with a certain aversion. Then he said, with the weary accents of a man with whom all illusions are over: "Well, I don't think there is much in this campaign for the kinetoscope." And there wasn't.'

Again I suspect that Bonsal here is exaggerating Paley's disappointment for comic effect, for it was common knowledge that few horses had been brought to Cuba on the transport ships because of space limitations. Even Teddy Roosevelt's so-called 'Rough Riders' regiment fought in Cuba without their mounts. But the writer may be roughly correct in describing the cameraman's general sense of frustration in trying to film the war, and he noted that Paley soon became, 'the most disgusted and disillusioned' of the correspondents. Certainly his physical size contributed to his ordeals, as an increasingly sarcastic Bonsal relates:

'Personally, the kinetoscope man had had a very hard time during the week after landing. Physically he had been designed to sit in a great, broad-backed, soft-cushioned chair and take in gate-money. He had waited some days for the American Army to carry him and his outfit up to the front, and when the American Army failed to do so, he turned to our Cuban allies, and ordered General Garcia to detach a body of men to serve as porters and carriers of his machine. He thought everybody ought to contribute to perpetuate and popularize the story of the war. General Garcia paid no attention to his request, which was a pity; though, of course, the general had some other things to attend to. The kinetoscope man asserted that in all his life he had never been disappointed in any people so much as he had been with the Cubans.'<sup>146</sup>

Bonsal's account of Paley is scarcely sympathetic, and much of it may be exaggerated and even made up.<sup>147</sup> But my suspicion is that the core points of his description are probably correct: that Paley arrived at the Cuban war with high hopes of capturing this landmark event – America's first colonial adventure – and that he was sadly disillusioned with the little that he could film. The nature of modern war, in which the enemy remained hidden and the commanders operated by telephone from far in the rear, was not to the liking of Paley nor of the other 'romanticists' (as Bonsal called them) among the press corps, who had an old-fashioned conception of the commander leading his troops into battle.<sup>148</sup>

### **Paley's mishaps**

Paley's filmic output from the war was not substantial: I count only six films that he shot during the war in Cuba (and which survive). I suspect that the reasons for this paucity were partly the intrinsic problem that I have just mentioned of filming modern warfare, combined with the fact that Paley was less-than-fit, and that, as we shall see, he became ill. A number of accounts, however, try to go further than this, and suggest that Paley suffered particular war-related accidents which hindered his work and may even have stopped him filming.

Some of these anecdotes do not name Paley, though clearly do refer to him: trade journalist Homer Croy noted that during an American assault in Cuba, a cameraman started filming, but 'just as the hill was won, his camera had buckled and all that he had to show for his efforts was a quantity of twisted film'.<sup>149</sup> Another anecdote stated that while filming the war an unnamed operator's 'large and cumbersome' camera 'was upset in the San Juan River, together with its unfortunate corpulent operator, and never took a picture'.<sup>150</sup> The 'corpulent operator' must refer to Paley, though the anecdote is clearly untrue, for Paley managed to film several scenes which survive.

Some stories about Paley's mishaps, often giving his actual name, suggest that the mishap involved a bullet hit. An article from many years after the events states that Paley 'got a Spanish bullet through his camera' at the battle of San Juan Hill, but stoically he 'went on cranking'.<sup>151</sup> Another article – also it seems based on information from Paley himself – says a Spanish bullet tore through his coat sleeve and smashed a hole in the film box on his camera. Paley plugged the hole and thereby managed to save the film inside: when developed it was just slightly fogged, 'but was shown with a sub-title explaining the incident'.<sup>152</sup> I have found no report of such a subtitled film being screened, so this part of the story remains in the 'doubtful' category.

The bullet incident itself, though, receives some support from a more contemporaneous source – the *Phonoscope* magazine in 1899 – which claims that while filming the war, an unnamed 'daring operator... was shot through the shoulder'. This source goes on to state that the apparently wounded operator then entrusted his precious packet of films to a Cuban boy, with instructions to mail them back to the USA, but the boy was killed by a Spanish shell, and the 'absolutely unique' films were lost.<sup>153</sup> The account is vague as to the extent of the cameraman's injuries, and other accounts are inconsistent; but the accounts taken together – from the period and from later – do suggest that Paley did suffer some kind of incident with a bullet strike, perhaps just a bullet through his sleeve. Equally one might conclude that a river mishap of the kind described is not out of the question, though there is no solid evidence for it. But if these filming incidents are debatable, there is no doubt about the more serious problems of illness which were soon to strike the hapless Paley.

### **Paley becomes ill**

In the Spring of 1898 one of the main worries among the military about launching a war against Cuba was that the rainy season was fast approaching, when disease regularly became rife on the island. For this reason, preparations for the expedition were hurried as much as possible, but even so the invasion didn't begin until June, and as was soon to become apparent, it had been left too late. Inevitably sickness struck, and struck with a vengeance. Less than a week after the Spanish surrender there were 5,000 men in the US army Corps in Cuba ill with fever.<sup>154</sup> By the end of July Shafter reported 75% of troops were unfit for duty. The problem had been exacerbated by poor rations and supplies, and when troops did get sick the treatment facilities were minimal.<sup>155</sup> Disease was to kill more American soldiers who fought in Cuba than Spanish bullets: while only 365 soldiers died in action in Cuba, some two and a half thousand would die of disease.<sup>156</sup> This

was a wake-up call for the American military and, arguably, they never made such logistical mistakes again.

The journalists were as badly affected by disease as the troops, partly because, it was said, some of their number chose to stay at Siboney in the former huts of Cubans which were contaminated with fever, and this, combined with the hot sun and lack of proper food, 'incapacitated over thirty of the newspaper representatives'.<sup>157</sup>

Paley was one of the worst affected, and as the story of his tribulations has never been told before, I offer it here. Being overweight certainly didn't help when he was exposed to the Cuban climate and disease, and Paley already had a history of sickness. Indeed just a few days before leaving for his first assignment to film in Key West, he had written to the Edison Company to say that he had done no filming for a while, 'having been confined to my bed for over a week with a severe sickness'. Though he added that he hoped to be working again in a few days time.<sup>158</sup> [Fig. 5]

As we have seen, Paley was initially unable to secure ground transport for himself and camera equipment from the coast at Siboney to nearer the action. It seems that he finally managed to find a wagon to take him nearer the front line. This according to a British journalist at the front, Charles Hands, who met the cameraman at this point, and noted that, 'Paley got an army teamster finally to carry his machine and himself from Siboney to Shafter's headquarters'.<sup>159</sup> But Hands adds that Paley's problems then really started, for on the way to El Caney (where a battle took place on 1 July) the wagon broke down, and Paley was forced to sleep out that night. To make matters worse, it rained.

When he finally got into El Caney an exhausted Paley found that his camera wouldn't work. As Hands relates: 'Whether it was water-soaked or whether it had got broken by the jolting in the rough wagon I don't know, but anyway, it refused to take pictures'.<sup>160</sup> Paley was 'pretty well broken up' by this, and with the British journalist's assistance he made his way disconsolately back to the coast. Incidentally, Hands himself was in poor shape, having been wounded while reporting on one of the battles.<sup>161</sup> Obligated again to spend the next two nights in the open and the rain, by the time Paley arrived back at Siboney 'he was a wreck', as his companion Hands put it.<sup>162</sup> The two men managed to get passage out of Cuba on the *Seneca*, supposedly fitted out as a hospital ship, but here the cameraman's ordeal only continued.

The *Seneca* departed Cuba on 14 July.<sup>163</sup> It was loaded with sick and wounded military personnel, along with a score or so of civilians and journalists, at least half of whom were sick, including Hands and Paley. But if the passengers on the *Seneca* thought that they were escaping the disease-ridden conditions on the island to recover on a well run hospital ship they were to be sadly disappointed. Indeed the *Seneca* was later known as 'the first of the horror ships' – the first of a number of badly prepared ships bringing the sick and wounded from Cuba back to the USA. According to Irving Hancock, one of the dozen or so journalists aboard:

'There were next to no medicines ; despite the fact that the commissary at Siboney was well stocked, there was so little food on the *Seneca* that the passengers were compelled to subsist on two scanty meals per day. The water aboard was two months old.'<sup>164</sup>

Hancock adds that though fever had been anticipated, there wasn't even a thermometer aboard for taking patients' temperatures. The ship's surgeon had no instruments and had to do operations with his pocket knife; there were no bandages.<sup>165</sup> While a couple of the medical personnel aboard did their best, some officers on board treated the sick with disdain.<sup>166</sup> A major newspaper ran a headline, 'Voyage full of misery', and its correspondent went on to describe the suffering of Paley in particular:

'When William Paley, the Vitascope man, was brought aboard the *Seneca* there was no doubt he was a sick man. There was no berth for him and Paley threw himself down upon the aft part of the main deck. He did not have a blanket for three days, and began getting weaker, and at times talked deliriously. Paley's condition finally became so bad that an appeal was sent to one of the contract doctors to examine him. It was a day before this appeal was answered – in fact, three different requests had to be made before Paley was given attention.'<sup>167</sup>

The *Seneca* arrived in New York on 20 July, after six days voyage from Cuba.<sup>168</sup> During the journey seven cases of fever had developed and one report noted that 'William Paley, the Vitascope man, is in the worst condition'. He was among several patients to be quarantined as suspected of having yellow fever. The health officer reportedly found the ship at this stage to be in 'an almost unbelievably bad condition... the passageways were described as too filthy to walk through'.<sup>169</sup>

The *Seneca* suffering created quite a stir: 'the whole country was aghast', said one observer.<sup>170</sup> Other 'horror ships' returned full of sick soldiers: many of the once strong and healthy troops who had gone out to fight full of patriotic pride, returned to their country and '...were shattered beyond recognition'.<sup>171</sup> Many came back to the recovery and quarantine centre at Camp Wikoff (or Wyckoff) on Long Island, where conditions were far from ideal. A film taken there, *71st Regiment, Camp Wyckoff*, revealed the pitiful condition of the returnees, as the Biograph catalogue noted:

'Of the thousand and more men who left New York for the Cuban Campaign, scarcely three hundred were able to shoulder their rifles to march before the Biograph camera at Camp Wikoff. The picture shows many of the companies reduced to seven or eight men, and the whole regiment, rank and file is in a sad condition.'<sup>172</sup>

As for Paley, he was lucky to escape death, and he was kept in quarantine (while other *Seneca* passengers were discharged). Fortunately it turned out that he didn't have yellow fever, and he did finally recover.<sup>173</sup> Some time later he returned to camerawork, and continued in that capacity for many more

years, though mainly in the relative comfort of studio dramas – he was cameraman on Gaston Méliès' American films, for example. Paley was held in great regard and affection by many in the industry, in later years his nickname being 'Daddy'.

### **Paley's accomplishments**

It may seem from the foregoing that Paley's filming of the Spanish-American War was a failure. But it would be a shame and a mistake, I believe, to dismiss it as such, though it is true that only six short films came out of his time in Cuba with the military expedition, before his camera malfunctioned and he became sick.<sup>174</sup> These were probably all filmed in the ten kilometre stretch between Daiquiri and Siboney – i.e. between where he'd landed and where he departed – and none, I believe, were shot far inland where the battles took place. Not an impressive track record it seems. But to those six films should be added the many views he managed to secure in the run-up to the war, of the troops in Tampa and in pre-war Cuba. In all, some 44 films related to the war may be attributed to Paley.<sup>175</sup> No mean achievement, especially given the high quality of these films: I have viewed at least half of his Spanish-American War films, and find that most of them are skilfully made and better than the run-of-the-mill actuality from this period.

Despite being portrayed in such a sarcastic fashion by Bonsal, it is evident that Paley knew his business, and the great efforts he made to film the war, and the great suffering he endured were not without result. In early cinema, when films mainly consisted of one (usually static) shot, camera position is crucial. Paley's films are almost all well-composed, and taken from an appropriate angle and standpoint for the subject (see critical appraisal in **Box**). However, his filming of the war cannot be judged a success, and going to Cuba alone was a mistake: Paley's travails on this trip, in contrast to his relatively untroubled previous visit to Cuba, proved the value of a two-man unit instead of a lone operator. His earlier successful collaboration with Decker showed that the newspaper press could offer practical support to filmmakers as well as a guiding agenda, and that particular lesson should have been learned. However, even when alone, Paley's footage from Cuba continued to follow the principles of the press in terms of content, so in that sense the newspaper influence never deserted him.

## Box:

### William Paley's Spanish-American War films: a critical appraisal of selected titles

It is very apparent from viewing Paley's films that he had the photographer's instinctive understanding of good composition. For example, *Pack Mules With Ammunition on the Santiago Trail* is beautifully framed, and taken from an ideal camera position in relation to the sun and in order to observe the subject to best effect.<sup>176</sup> The mules and handlers are seen to come past camera in both background and foreground. This use (or allowance, rather) of foreground space is unusual in early cinema, for most cameramen tried to prevent subjects coming too close to the lens. The use of action in foreground is seen again in Paley's *Roosevelt's Rough Riders Embarking for Santiago* and to some extent in his *War Correspondents*.

Paley was not afraid of filming from unusual angles if this was suitable for the subject: his *Burial of the Maine Victims* is shot from a high enough position to show the action and to see over the heads of spectators watching in the foreground, but not too high to feel overly distant from this highly poignant scene. Similarly in his *10th US Infantry Battalion Leaving Cars* the choice of a high camera position means that not only is the movement of the troops clearly seen, but they are beautifully backlit by the sun. Taking shots from a moving position was a novelty at this time, but Paley did not hesitate to do so, for example in *Morro Castle Havana Harbor*, or equally in *Military Camp at Tampa Taken From Train*.

Perhaps the technique that best distinguishes Paley from an average operator is his use of appropriate backgrounds. His first film shot in Cuba, *US Troops Landing at Daiquiri* is taken from about the best angle one could imagine for this subject, given the inability to pan. The soldiers come ashore along a jetty, toward and past camera, while in the background we can see ships and the sea. Interestingly, a war artist, and a very good one, H.C. Christy chose to depict this scene from the other direction, from the ocean side, which, while successfully showing a sea full of transport ships and the landscape of Cuba beyond, gives less emphasis to the men arriving to fight.<sup>177</sup> Paley's view, on the other hand, throws the emphasis on the men coming toward us, while behind we can clearly see the ships on which they arrived. The whole story of a military force coming from across the seas is effectively told in a single static shot (which is all he had available).

A similarly well-judged 'one-shot aesthetic' applies to *Packing Ammunition on Mules, Cuba*. This clearly shows the action of the packing, but beyond this is a background of several US transports moored in the sea. The shot tells us very simply that this ammunition has come to the *island* of Cuba from overseas, with the insinuation that it has come from America to liberate Cuba. Even Paley's *Major General Shafter* – disappointing because Shafter is seen so fleetingly and so far away in the shot – is framed pleasingly, with the action on a diagonal, the ocean beyond, and trees tempering the white of the sky.

## CONCLUSION: THE WAR, THE CINEMA AND THE PRESS

No discussion of filming the Spanish-American War could be complete without understanding the press context. The newspapers made a massive effort to cover this war, and the filmmakers inevitably hung on their coat-tails in two senses: for practical support, and in following their news agenda.<sup>178</sup>

All three cameramen who filmed this war in the region of Cuba – Marvin, Bitzer and Paley – received material assistance from Hearst's empire in terms of boat transport. Two of them worked directly with Hearst journalists: Bitzer with photographer John Hemment, and Paley with reporter Karl Decker. In addition, as none of the cameramen had any previous experience as war correspondents, they doubtless received vital assistance from some of the veteran press men in Cuba with whom they came in contact (such as Charles Hands).

As for the news agenda, with cameramen often sent to the same places as newspapermen, films were shot which mirrored press coverage, both in terms of stories covered and in patriotic attitudes to those stories. Clearly the cameramen were working with more or less the same assumptions and guidelines as newspaper reporters, viz., broadly, to profile the forces of 'our' side and the victories that they were accomplishing, and to denigrate the opposition. For example, films of the activities of US troops showed Americans in a positive light, while the view of the stricken Spanish vessel the *Vizcaya*, showed the feebleness of the Spanish forces. In short, whether the medium was the newspaper page or the photographic moving image, the message was much the same. As Lauren Rabinovitz has astutely observed about films of the conflict, 'Many of these views seemed to illustrate the front-page stories in William Randolph Hearst's chain of newspapers ardently covering the war'.<sup>179</sup>

The filming of the war had important consequences, for it affected the future direction of the moving picture industry: the steep rise in numbers of news films produced, and their sheer popularity, had the effect of changing the balance of production in the USA. Whereas before 1898, most actuality films had been non-topical subjects – views of scenic places, general activities, street scenes, etc – the reporting of the conflict introduced greater current awareness to the new medium. Indeed Terry Ramsaye maintained that the most important development in cinema in 1898 was 'the birth of a topical or news bearing function in connection with the war'.<sup>180</sup> Later film historians have dubbed this new war-influenced role for cinema as that of a 'visual newspaper', and this role continued to be important ever afterwards.<sup>181</sup> In this shift to news, the moving picture in 1898, in reporting on the biggest story of the day, also acquired a higher status, helping the US public to realise that, in the words of a later commentator, 'films had other than amusement values'.<sup>182</sup>

The cameramen of the Spanish-American War, therefore – heavily influenced by their press counterparts – pioneered the genre of moving picture news. However, it was a small beginning in a sense, for it must be said in summing up the achievements of these war cameramen, that they managed to take

relatively few films of the military events, and none of the decisive battles. To give audiences a sense of the Spanish-American War as a whole would need more than the scanty images that people like Paley and Bitzer could provide. It would need artifice in producing dramatised versions of the war as well as skilful exhibition programming of a wide diversity of war-related images – all of which is the subject of our next two chapters.

## Notes:

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<sup>1</sup> As the war neared its end the US ambassador to England, John Hay, wrote to Theodore Roosevelt: 'It has been a splendid little war; begun with the highest motives, carried on with magnificent intelligence and spirit, favored by that fortune which loves the brave.' Quoted in Frank Burt Freidel, *The Splendid Little War* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1958), p.3. Freidel adds sensibly that for some participants the conflict was grim rather than splendid.

<sup>2</sup> This chapter and the next are heavily dependent on the ever reliable work of Charles Musser. My account adds to Musser's, mainly in changing the emphasis from the motion picture industry to the war film as such, and in adding some more information about the personalities involved, such as details of Paley's filming work in Cuba.

<sup>3</sup> New historiographical work is suggesting how, as an American victory became more likely, the composition of the rebel movement shifted from being mainly black and mulatto to becoming more white and urban. See Rebecca J. Stott, 'The provincial archive as a place of memory: the role of former slaves in the Cuban war of independence (1895-98)' *History Workshop Journal* no.58, Autumn 2004, p.156-7.

<sup>4</sup> *Leslie's Weekly* (LW) 31 Mar 1898, p.199 and 7 Apr, p.215 notes the 'frightful privation in Cuba'. *Leslie's* correspondent in Havana claimed half a million of one and a half million population of Cuba had died in last two years from hunger and privation. Spanish officials apparently agreed with these figures.

<sup>5</sup> For example, one soldier asserted in his account of the war in Cuba, that they 'were here to fight for' the Cubans. Herbert O. Hicks and Fred A. Simmons, *Company M and Adams in the War with Spain* ([Adams, Mass.]: Press of the Adams Freeman, 1899), p.32. Another man enlisted after the affront of the *Maine* explosion, which he thought was the work of the Spanish government, whose General Weyler, he added indignantly, had killed thousands of Cubans. See Carl Sandberg, *Always the Young Strangers* (NY, 1952), in final chapter, 'Soldier'.

<sup>6</sup> Clodfelter's apt phrase. Micheal Clodfelter, *Warfare and Armed Conflicts : A Statistical Reference to Casualty and Other Figures, 1618-1991* (Jefferson, N.C.; London: McFarland, 1992), p.550. In this period in America, there was a widespread sense that the nation had come of age, and now could and should do good works and uplift others, both domestically and in other countries. See David Traxel, *1898 : The Birth of the American Century* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1998), passim, and TLS 22 May 1998, p.27. This interest in foreign affairs was relatively new. As late as 1892 the *New York Herald* was proposing the abolition of the State Department as it had so few foreign matters to address. The events of 1898 changed all that, and foreign intervention came onto the US agenda, and stayed there. See Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers : Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (New York, NY: Random House, 1987), p.246.

<sup>7</sup> Cuba made great fortunes for some Spaniards in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and by the 1890s the Spanish colonies were estimated to bring in annual revenues of some \$43 million, though this was not such a vast sum, and the majority of the Spanish population didn't benefit significantly. For fortunes, see: Hugh Thomas, 'Cuban Fortunes, National Tragedy', *TLS*, 7 Aug 1998, p.6. For revenues, see: *The Spanish-American War: The Events of the War Described by Eye Witnesses*, (Chicago & New York: Herbert S. Stone & Co., 1899), p.227. The latter book adds that Spanish losses from the war were put at about \$1 billion, including the value of lost of territory. Some claimed that the real reason for conquering the Spanish territories was that they'd add to America's national strength and the new citizens would be purchasers of American goods. A *Washington Post* editorial to this effect is quoted by Michael

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Chanan in *The Cuban Image* (London: BFI, 1985), p.33. This is a partial reading of the evidence, however, as Gleijeses' research (below) makes clear.

<sup>8</sup> H. Paul Jeffers, *Colonel Roosevelt : Theodore Roosevelt Goes to War, 1897-1898* (New York ; Chichester: John Wiley, 1996), and George J. A. O'Toole, *The Spanish War, an American Epic – 1898* (New York, N.Y.: Norton, 1984), argue strongly for Roosevelt as a main instigator. President McKinley had other views and probably wanted to negotiate with Spain, but was pushed into war by the bellicosity of his fellow politicians, the media and public opinion.

<sup>9</sup> Spain declared war and the US followed suit. Thomas H. Johnson and Harvey Wish, *The Oxford Companion to American History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), p.740.

<sup>10</sup> Some say the expedition to Cuba was 12,000 men, but Abbot says 17,000 men. See Willis John Abbot, *Blue Jackets of '98. A History of the Spanish-American War* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1899), p.194. They were sent on 32 troop ships with an escort of 14 war ships. Richard Harding Davis, *The Cuban and Porto Rican Campaigns* (London: W. Heinemann, 1899), p.83. James W. Covington, 'The Rough Riders in Tampa', *Tampa Bay History* 20, no. 1, Spring/Summer 1998, p.5-16, says that at the 14 June departure from Tampa thirty-five transport ships were filled with 803 officers and 14,935 enlisted men. The US army at this time was 'small in the extreme' with only 25,000 men all told. (*Naval and Military Magazine*, May 1898, p.82.) Most of the nation's army was sent to Cuba: 18 out of 25 regiments of infantry and 6 out of 10 of cavalry. Herbert Howland Sargent, *The Campaign of Santiago de Cuba* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co., 1907), vol 1, p.105.

<sup>11</sup> On 1 July, though America made her greatest military gains in the Cuban war, she also suffered her greatest losses of personnel, with over 80% of the entire US battle casualties occurring on this one day alone.

<sup>12</sup> The so-called Teller Amendment pledged that the U.S. would guarantee self-rule to Cubans. Clodfelter, *Warfare and Armed Conflicts : A Statistical Reference to Casualty and Other Figures, 1618-1991*, p.445. But in 1902 a London newspaper claimed that Cuba was in effect under the US thumb. Cited in Michael Chanan, *The Cuban Image*, op. cit., p.33.

<sup>13</sup> There was much discussion and editorialising on this 'Anglo-Saxon' theme. See Paul Alexander Kramer, 'Empires, Exceptions, and Anglo-Saxons: Race and Rule between the British and United States Empires, 1880-1910', *Journal of American History* 88, no. 4, March 2002, p.1315-1353; Enrique de Alba, *Latins & Anglo-Saxons, Etc* (Paris: Librairie A. Charles, 1898); John Randolph Dos Passos, *The Anglo-Saxon Century and the Unification of the English-Speaking People* (New York ; London: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1903). Frank Norris who reported from the war, wrote of the thrill of capturing Santiago, which he put down to the Anglo-Saxon practice of 'conquering and conquering'. Larzer Ziff, *The American 1890s. Life and Times of a Lost Generation* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1967).

<sup>14</sup> Significantly, in the years after the Spanish-American War, celebrations for the Grand Army of the Republic included southern veterans. Cecilia O'Leary, "'American All:' Reforging a National Brotherhood, 1876-1917', *History Today*, Oct 1994. During the war southern songs like Dixie became popular. See 'Martial spirit in song', *The Phonoscope*, May 1898, p.14. Some modern scholars fail to appreciate the widespread admiration for black soldiers in this war, one arguing that in Spanish-American War films, blacks are perceived as a threat. Amy Kaplan, 'The Birth of an Empire', *PMLA* 114, no.5, Oct 1999, p.1074.

<sup>15</sup> Charles H. Brown, *The Correspondents' War : Journalists in the Spanish-American War* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1967), p.11.

<sup>16</sup> By 1898 almost half the dailies in 26 major cities were 'yellow', says *ibid.*, p.19. A 1900 study concluded that about a third of US newspapers were 'yellow', based on the prominence given to sensational stories. Gerald F. Linderman, *The Mirror of War : American Society and the Spanish-American War* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1974), p.157.

<sup>17</sup> From March 1895 to April 1898 there were fewer than 20 days when Cuba was not in the day's news in New York. Joseph Ezra Wisan, 'The Cuban Crisis as Reflected in the New York Press (1895-1898)', Ph.D., Columbia University, 1934, p.458. For a satire on sensational newspaper headlines about naval battles between America and Spain, see *Punch* 7 May 1898, p.209.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p.24.

<sup>19</sup> Photographs of the offices of the New York *Journal* and *Tribune* in adjacent buildings show war news boards outside. In Stan Cohen, *Images of the Spanish-American War, April-August 1898* (Missoula, MT: Pictorial Histories, 1997), p.29-30. See also *Photographic History of the*

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*Spanish-American War*, (New York: Pearson Pub. Co., [1898]), p.45 – a photo of ‘Newspaper Square’ in New York with a crowd looking up at the *Journal and Tribune*’s boards of war news; and similar is in the *Graphic*, 21 May 1898, p.628, and in Nathaniel Lande, *Dispatches from the Front : A History of the American War Correspondent* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p.126.

<sup>20</sup> *Le Petit Journal* supplement illustré had several full page coloured illustrations about the Spanish-American War in May and June 1898 (courtesy Frank Kessler and Sabine Lenk), and the *Graphic* and *Illustrated London News* published many reports and images about the conflict from Spain and the USA. *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*, sometimes spelled *Illustirte*.

<sup>21</sup> Piero Gleijeses, ‘1898: The Opposition to the Spanish-American War’, *Journal of Latin American Studies* 35, no. 4, 2003, p.681-719. This excellent article is based on the author’s reading of dozens of US and foreign newspapers in the months leading up to war.

<sup>22</sup> Thomas Andrew Bailey, *The Man in the Street : The Impact of American Public Opinion on Foreign Policy* (New York; Gloucester, Mass.: Macmillan Co. ; Peter Smith, 1948), passim.

<sup>23</sup> John M. Hamilton, et al, ‘An Enabling Environment: A Reconsideration of the Press and the Spanish-American War’, *Journalism Studies* 7, no. 1, Feb 2006, p.78-93.

<sup>24</sup> Wisan, ‘The Cuban Crisis as Reflected in the New York Press (1895-1898)’, in his Preface. Even in 1898 the press influence was admitted: in an extensive study of the yellow press, one commentator suggested that ‘yellow journalism forced him [McKinley] into a declaration of war’. Elizabeth L. Banks, ‘American “Yellow Journalism”’, *The Nineteenth Century*, Aug 1898, p.328-340. For a brief overview of the various opinions on the role of the press in fomenting the war, see the section on the press/newspapers in Brad K. Berner, *The Spanish-American War : A Historical Dictionary* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 1998).

<sup>25</sup> Wisan, ‘The Cuban Crisis as Reflected in the New York Press (1895-1898)’, p.458. A more recent study, though, has found no conclusive evidence that the Spanish American War was greatly influenced by the yellow press newspapers. W. Joseph Campbell, *Yellow Journalism: Puncturing the Myths, Defining the Legacies* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger Publishers, 2003).

<sup>26</sup> James Creelman, ‘My Experiences at Santiago’, *American Review of Reviews* 18, no. 5, Nov 1898, p.546.

<sup>27</sup> Michael Chanan, *The Cuban Image* (London: BFI, 1985), p.23.

<sup>28</sup> According to fellow *Journal* war correspondent, James Creelman, Remington’s telegram to Hearst read: ‘Everything is quiet. There is no trouble here. There will be no war. I wish to return.’ Hearst, so the story goes, replied: ‘Please remain. You furnish the pictures. I’ll furnish the war.’ Michael L. Carlebach, *American Photojournalism Comes of Age* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997), p.58. Also quoted in Wisan, ‘The Cuban Crisis as Reflected in the New York Press (1895-1898)’, p.459. A 1906 version gives the reply as: ‘Stop where you are: you provide the pictures, I will provide the war.’ Capt. G. Windsor-Clive, Major G.J. Farmer, and Capt. R.J. Drake, *Shafter’s Expedition to Cuba, 1898* (1906?), p.6. Campbell doubts this ever happened. See Campbell, *Yellow Journalism: Puncturing the Myths, Defining the Legacies*. Interestingly, a possible allusion to the anecdote appears in a story by a former Cuba war correspondent: in ‘A derelict’ the manager of a press syndicate offers the advice to its correspondents: ‘We do not want descriptive writing... We do not pay you to send us pen-pictures or prose-poems. We want the facts, all the facts and nothing but the facts.’ Richard Harding Davis, ‘A Derelict’, in *Ranson’s Folly* (New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1902), p.110.

<sup>29</sup> A photograph taken 18 May 1898 indicates the extent of press coverage at home. It shows so-called ‘Newspaper Row’ at Camp Black, Long Island, New York, with a prominent New York *Journal* War bulletin board and a sign for the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*. This is reproduced in Cohen, *Images of the Spanish-American War, April-August 1898*, p.147 and is held in the Museum of the City of New York/Byron Collection/Getty Images.

<sup>30</sup> R.H. Davis called these weeks of waiting in Tampa ‘the rocking-chair period of the war’. (*Scribner’s Magazine*, Jul-Dec 1898, p.131). Military officers and the better paid correspondents like Davis stayed in the opulent, oriental-style Tampa Bay hotel, which he described as ‘like a Turkish harem with the occupants left out’. Davis, *The Cuban and Porto Rican Campaigns*, p.46. The departure was repeatedly postponed for one reason or another from mid-May until 14 June. See Paul Eugen Camp, ‘Army Life in Tampa During the Spanish-American War: A Photographic Essay’, *Tampa Bay History* 9, no. 2, Fall/Winter 1987, p.17-28; see also Gary R. Mormino, ‘Tampa’s Splendid Little War: A Photo Essay’, *Tampa Bay History* 4, no. 2, Fall/Winter 1982, p.45-60.

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<sup>31</sup> See Brown, *The Correspondents' War : Journalists in the Spanish-American War*, p.206-208, 274-5, 446. Brown captures the mood in saying that these reporters were 'as unruly as schoolboys on a picnic'. There may be even more names than 300. Files about war correspondent passes are held in the National Archives at RG 107/E.80 from approximately file no. 2462 onwards. These passes were issued beginning on 21 April, numbered consecutively, and go up to at least no.400, 11 July 1898 (RG 107/E.80/5212) and there may be more after that, which I didn't manage to ascertain. Some familiar names in these files include: Decker, Crane, Hands, Davis, Hearst, Hemment, and Hare.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p.446. Berner, *op. cit.*, p.89 gives a figure of 300.

<sup>33</sup> Miley states that some 89 war correspondents accompanied the expedition, while Archibald says about 165 went to Cuba, adding contemptuously that hardly a score of them knew anything about war or things military. John D. Miley, *In Cuba with Shafter* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1899), p.45. James Francis Jewell Archibald, 'The War Correspondents of to-Day', *Overland Monthly* 37 [ser.2] Mar 1901, p.790-803. Berner, *op. cit.*, p.90 gives a figure of over 150.

<sup>34</sup> See for example, Richard C. Gotshall, 'John J. Poppendieck, Jr.: Spanish-American War Correspondent', *Milwaukee History* 3, no. 2, Summer 1980, p.59-64. This article notes that in 1898 correspondent Poppendieck accompanied the Wisconsin regiments through their training and then (15 July) set off with them to Puerto Rico.

<sup>35</sup> These were Kathleen Blake Watkins, Anna Benjamin and Mrs Trumbull White. See Barbara M. Freeman, "'An Impertinent Fly": Canadian Journalist Kathleen Blake Watkins Covers the Spanish-American War', *Journalism History* 15, no. 4, Winter 1988, p.132-140.

<sup>36</sup> H. Irving Hancock, *What One Man Saw : Being the Personal Impressions of a War Correspondent in Cuba* (New York: Street & Smith, 1900), p.133. In addition, at least two other women applied for official war correspondent passes: Elizabeth Cherry Haire of Ohio requested a pass 14 May 1898, and received pass no.372 on 28 June 1898, too late to go to Cuba. RG 107/E.80/3754 and 3828. Clara B. Colby also applied for a pass (see file no.4851).

<sup>37</sup> Edwin Emerson, 'The Making of a War Correspondent', *The Reader Magazine* 4, no. 2, July 1904, p.168. A publisher told Emerson that in time of war a third of the running costs of his illustrated weekly went to 'correspondents, and artists and photographers in the field'. At \$1.20 per word, a single telegraphed despatch could cost \$2000, so correspondents had to keep plenty of cash on them, 'preferably in gold'. It was claimed that circulation of newspapers quadruple during a war, but on the other hand the reporting costs are such that had the Spanish-American War continued for two years, one expert stated, it would have bankrupted every paper in New York city. Berner, *op. cit.*, p.297.

<sup>38</sup> George F. Kennan, *Campaigning in Cuba* (Port Washington ; London: Kennikat Press, 1899 [1971]), p.31. Berner, *op. cit.*, p.298 claims there were over 20 press boats.

<sup>39</sup> William Athelstane Meredith Goode, ed. *With Sampson through the War ... Being an Account of the Naval Operations of the North Atlantic Squadron During the Spanish American War of 1898* (New York: Doubleday & McClure Co.; Thacker, 1899), p.33. For more on news dispatch boats at the war, see Trumbull White, *Pictorial History of Our War with Spain for Cuba's Freedom ...* ([Boston]: Freedom Pub. Co, 1898), p.29. For some useful opinion on press reporting during this war, see Murat Halstead, *Full Official History of the War with Spain* (New York: W. W. Wilson, 1899), p.20-21, 'Preface'. See also Jess Giessel, 'Black, White and Yellow: Journalism and Correspondents of the Spanish-American War', on the website [www.spanamwar.com/press](http://www.spanamwar.com/press) ; and John Baker, 'Effects of the Press on Spanish-American Relations in 1898' (2001) on website at [www.humboldt.edu](http://www.humboldt.edu)

<sup>40</sup> Examples are in the Hulton/Getty picture library, credited to the New York *Journal's* staff and from *Black and White*, 7 May 1898.

<sup>41</sup> No historian has as yet fully dealt with photography in relation to the Spanish American war, though there is a good section on this theme in Freidel, *The Splendid Little War*, p.308 etc.

<sup>42</sup> BJP 19 Jan 1900, p.38, from *American Annual of Photography*. This article mentions Hare and Hart as a team who photographed the wreck, though it's not clear if this refers to Jimmy Hare. See also *National Geographic*, Feb 1898, p.132 for a stereo photo of a diver on the wrecked Maine. A trade journal reported that a Mr. Guth of Kansas City planned to 'take pictures' (still photographs) of the stricken *Maine*, the fleet and divers, and would be gone about two weeks. See 'General news', *The Phonoscope*, Feb 1898, p.9.

<sup>43</sup> Robert E. Hood, 'The Intrepid Jimmy Hare', in *12 at War; Great Photographers under Fire*, edited by Robert E. Hood (New York,: Putnam's Sons, 1967), p.31-3. Lewis L. Gould, Richard

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Grefe, *Photojournalist : The Career of Jimmy Hare* (Austin ; London: University of Texas Press, 1977), p.11-30.

<sup>44</sup> See Genoa Caldwell, *The Man Who Photographed the World : Burton Holmes : Travelogues, 1886-1938* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1977), p.198. A film crew at work appears in this image: possibly Paley?

<sup>45</sup> Davis, *The Cuban and Porto Rican Campaigns*, p.176. Photographers Charles M. Sheldon, William Dinwiddie and Gomez Carrera are mentioned in LW 18 Aug 1898, p.138, 150-1; 20 Oct 1898, p.279; 30 Mar 1899, p.246.

<sup>46</sup> Floyd Campbell was a notably brave photographer, says Davis: see *ibid.*, p.214, 221, 248. One photographer, E.C. Rost, accompanied the US Army: see Donald M. Goldstein, et al, *The Spanish-American War : The Story and Photographs* (Washington, D.C.; London: Brassey's, 1998), p.1. *Harpers Weekly's* pages in the second half of 1898 include several photographs from Cuba by James Burton and some by Harold Martin. Re Lieut. Hugh D. Wise of the 9<sup>th</sup>, see 'The Santiago Campaign', *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* 4 Apr 1899, p.3, and Jorge Lewinski, *The Camera at War...* (London: W.H. Allen, 1978), p.53. Corporal Babcock of the 71<sup>st</sup> New York took pictures during the San Juan fighting in Cuba, and a brief interview with him is in LW 17 Nov 1898, p.382. Also photographing with the 71<sup>st</sup> was Wagoner Frank K. Potter (or Frank R. Potter), says the illustration credit in John Emerick Elmendorf, *Memorial Souvenir; the 71st Regiment New York Volunteers in Cuba* (New York: priv. print, 1899).

<sup>47</sup> The behaviour of this man (unnamed, but who was from Boston) was described contemptuously by war correspondent H.C. Christie in LW 29 Sep 1898, p.246.

<sup>48</sup> James Burton, 'Photographing under Fire', *HW*, 6 Aug 1898, p.773-74.

<sup>49</sup> The exploding *Maine* image is in LW 3 Mar 1898, p.136-7.

<sup>50</sup> William Culp Darrah, *The World of Stereographs* (Nashville, Tenn.: Land Yacht Press, 1997), p.143, 190, 194. The 'genres' of these stereographs seem to mirror early war film genres, up to a point – eg. there are images of training camps, naval vessels, field hospitals, public celebrations, and war personalities – though Darrah doesn't list any fakes or symbolic images among stereo views of the conflict.

<sup>51</sup> A. S. Draper, *The Rescue of Cuba : An Episode in the Growth of Free Government* (Boston; New York [etc.]: Silver, Burdett and company, 1899), p.163.

<sup>52</sup> He is among the passenger list of the *Seneca*: see 'Voyage full of misery', *Chicago Tribune* 22 July 1898, p.3.

<sup>53</sup> BJP 14 Apr 1899, p.226. See also, 'History photographed', LW 20 Oct 1898, p.302.

<sup>54</sup> Musser, *Emergence*, p.255, 257. Cohen, *Images of the Spanish-American War, April-August 1898*, p.323-6. This was on 16 May.

<sup>55</sup> Veyre showed films on 24 Jan 1897. Alfonso J. Garcia Osuna, *The Cuban Filmography, 1897 through 2001* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 2003), p.9-10. It has been claimed for Veyre that, 'as a condition of being allowed into the country, he was required by the Spanish authorities to take military propaganda scenes, views of the artillery in action and of troops on the march'. Michael Chanan, *The Cuban Image* (London: BFI, 1985), p.29.

<sup>56</sup> Information from Frank Kessler.

<sup>57</sup> BJP 29 Apr 1898, p.260. On another theme, the journal argued that taking stills photographs of actual battles might be possible for the first time in this war, due to the availability of faster gelatine emulsions.

<sup>58</sup> AP 6 May 1898, p.350.

<sup>59</sup> *St. Louis and Canadian Photographer* July 1898, quoting 'Photos of the Conflict', *Indianapolis News* 6 June 1898. From the interesting website: <http://chnm.gmu.edu/aq/war/recep1.htm>. The first half of this article appears in BJP 22 July 1898, p.475. The ship was a passenger steamer, the *John Inglis*, recently purchased by the Government, and renamed the *Relief*. The photographer is unnamed but may refer to pioneer X-ray expert Dr. William Gray, who did go on to serve in Cuba aboard the *Relief* during the Spanish-American War. The other photographic equipment was to be some 'photo-micrographic appliances' and an X-ray machine for taking 'shadowgraphs' of bullet wounds.

<sup>60</sup> The article adds: 'the expert in charge hopes to obtain satisfactory views of one or more of the battles at sea or possibly of the storming of Havana'. The Corbett-Fitzsimmons fight film referred to had been a big success in 1897.

<sup>61</sup> AP 6 May 1898, p.350.

<sup>62</sup> Reproduced in *The Photogram* May 1898, p.153. This claims that it first appeared in the *NY World* in its issue of 21 March, but I cannot find it in this source. The same idea of delaying or

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rearranging a battle to film it appears during later wars: in 1900 – see my Boxer Uprising chapter – and *Punch* in 1912.

<sup>63</sup> I hope to cover this issue in more detail in a future article.

<sup>64</sup> Charles Edward Hastings, 'A Cameraman Runs into a War', *Moving Picture World*, 29 January 1927, p.327, 362; 'Around the world with a kinetoscope', *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 31 Dec 1899, p.17.

<sup>65</sup> William Basil Courtney, 'History of Vitagraph', *Motion Picture News* (14 and 21 February, 1925), p.662 and 793.

<sup>66</sup> Albert E. Smith, and Phil A. Koury, *Two Reels and a Crank* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1952), p.56-66.

<sup>67</sup> Michael Chanan takes Albert Smith's account of travelling to Cuba to film the war at face value, and repeats the story in a new edition. Michael Chanan, *The Cuban Image* (London: BFI, 1985) p.22, 25 and 31 and *Cuban Cinema* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004). Raymond Fielding in *The American Newsreel, 1911-1967* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972) assumes Smith is telling the truth (p.31-32) though mentions some doubts on the matter (p.321). The author of a study of journalism during the war also seems to swallow Smith's account whole, and quotes from the book at some length. Brown, *The Correspondents' War: Journalists in the Spanish-American War*. A recent text book on the war also takes the claim as fact. (Berner, op. cit., p.251). Theodore Huff's review in *Films in Review*, 4, no.2, Feb 1953, p.99-102 queried Smith's accuracy, though, curiously, not in relation to the alleged Cuba trip; see also Smith's hurt reply in the May issue.

<sup>68</sup> Marian Blackton Trimble, *J. Stuart Blackton: A Personal Biography* (Metuchen: Scarecrow, 1985), p.13; historian Anthony Slide told me of this conversation with Marian in a letter of 12 Nov 1992.

<sup>69</sup> In order to have got to Cuba (with the Rough Riders) and filmed there, Smith and Blackton would have had to have left the US about mid June and returned about a month later. But Blackton had been hired by Proctor's Theatre in New York on 6 June for two weeks, and then the pair exhibited films there after that. Also they were definitely in New York on 12 July, as a subpoena was served on them in person on that day – ironically, for infringing copyright on war films. See Musser, 'American Vitagraph...', p.34-37.

<sup>70</sup> Musser, 'American Vitagraph...', p.37-8.

<sup>71</sup> See G. W. Bitzer, *Billy Bitzer; His Story* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1973), p.33-40. Bitzer's account appeared over 70 years after the events, so must be read with some caution, but some of the events he describes are corroborated by others. There is a suggestion elsewhere (McCardell, p.231) that Arthur Marvin went to Cuba as well, but neither Bitzer nor other sources mention Marvin in Cuba. One historian claims that 'The site of the wreck was filmed by Cuba's own film pioneer, José G. González.' This is possible, though I think it more likely that this is a confusion. Perhaps González filmed the wreck when it was salvaged over a decade later? Michael Chanan, *The Cuban Image*, op. cit., p.24. Chanan adds, p.32, that González was an innovator in advertising too.

<sup>72</sup> John C. Hemment, *Cannon and Camera: Sea and Land Battles of the Spanish-American War in Cuba, Camp Life, and the Return of the Soldiers* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1898), p.3. He was not the only photographer in Cuba to cover the victims of the *Maine* explosion, as we have seen.

<sup>73</sup> 'John C. Hemment', MPN 3 Aug 1912, p.8. The 'foremost snap shottist' is claimed in: 'John C. Hemment', *The Photo-American* 9, Aug 1898, p.315-7. J.C. Hemment, 'How I met the Admiral', LW 9 Sep 1899, p.200, 210.

<sup>74</sup> A letter from W.J. Arkell to Russell A. Alger, 17 Nov 1898 states that Hemment photographed the reconcentrados. In RG107/E.80/#8300, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

<sup>75</sup> Hemment, *Cannon and Camera*, p.3, 19. After release he went back to work and took a photograph of the US ship *Montgomery*; and also took one of the Spanish fort in Havana, 'just for spite', as he put it. Hemment, *Cannon and Camera*, p.3.

<sup>76</sup> A photographer, Mr. Halstead, was arrested while photographing in Porto Rico for the *New York Herald* which led to protests in the British parliament and a formal request to Madrid for his release, which was finally granted in August. BJP in 1898: 10 June p.372; 22 July p.469; 29 July p.484; 26 Aug p.550.

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<sup>77</sup> See 'The Biograph', *BJP Supplement* 6 May 1898, p.40, and a reference in *The Era*, both quoted in Barnes. See also 'Cinematography and the War', *BJP* 6 May 1898 p.293 and Musser, *Emergence*, p.245.

<sup>78</sup> Re Bitzer's date of arrival: He states that he reached Havana on 19 February morning, but adds wrongly that this was a Wednesday, 'four days after the news broke' of the *Maine* explosion. Actually the explosion happened on 15 Feb and the news broke 16 Feb. I suggest he departed the US on the 19<sup>th</sup>, for that is the day John Hemment states he departed New York on the *Seguranca* – Bitzer was also on board – which arrived in Havana on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. The 23<sup>rd</sup> was indeed a Wednesday, so that at least tallies with Bitzer's autobiography. See Hemment, *Cannon and Camera*, p.3. Re Bitzer's date of departure from Cuba: in his autobiography he states that 'we were ordered back to New York on the same day Ambassador Fitzhugh Lee evacuated Havana'. Lee departed Havana 10 April, Easter Sunday (says O'Toole, 1984). Bitzer writes in his autobiography: 'it was not until April 21 (my twenty-sixth birthday, incidentally) that I returned, as war was then declared by the United States'. His implication is that this was the date he *returned to Cuba*, but this date is unrealistic as this was well before US forces were sent to the island. If 21 April has any significance, I suggest it might be the date of his *return to the US* after his first trip, though 11 days to get back to America seems too long.

<sup>79</sup> The Biograph frame clippings files (in MoMA), from about image no. 500 onwards, reproduce frames from many of these war-related films.

<sup>80</sup> 'Taking views a perilous art', *The Phonoscope* 3, no.6, June 1899, p.10.

<sup>81</sup> An ad in the *New York Clipper*, 21 May 1898, p.200, stated: 'American Biograph authentic war views. Camera now following North Atlantic squadron on New York Journal yacht, Anita'. The *Buccaneer* and the *Anita* were among the first press boats to be chartered. John Randolph Spears, 'Afloat for News in War Times', *Scribner's Magazine* 24, October 1898, p.501. British periodicals were reporting from 29 April that Biograph was maintaining a private yacht off Cuba to film war-related events. See *The Music Hall* 29 Apr 1898, p.10, and also reported in *Variety* and in *London Entr'acte* on 30 April. Biograph executive Koopman stated that 'We have a yacht cruising about in the vicinity of hostilities', wrongly implying that it was his own company's boat, rather than Hearst's. 'Life through a Lens: Mr.Koopman on the Biograph', *The Rival* (London) 21 May 1898, p.65. See also illustration of sending carrier pigeons from the *Anita* to Key West. *Graphic* 28 May 1898. A photograph of Marvin on board the *Anita* operating the huge Biograph camera is reproduced in Musser, *Emergence* and other sources.

<sup>82</sup> 'Life through a Lens', op. cit. Koopman had been asked by the interviewer: 'I presume you are busy with war pictures?' and he replied 'Very busy'.

<sup>83</sup> See Edwin Emerson Jr., 'Chased by a Spaniard', *LW* 9 June 1898, p.371.

<sup>84</sup> R.H. Mere, 'The Wonders of the Biograph', *Pearson's Magazine* 7, Feb 1899, p.196.

<sup>85</sup> Spears, 'Afloat for News in War Times', p.504. Both the Spanish and American navies were blockading some Cuban ports.

<sup>86</sup> Marvin does not give the date, but the bombardment indeed happened on 12 May. See O'Toole, p.209.

<sup>87</sup> 'Taking views a perilous art', *The Phonoscope*, June 1899, p.10, reprinted in 'Perils in Photography: men who take the Biograph pictures are often in danger', *The Sun* (NY), 13 Aug 1899, section 3, p.2. A briefer account of these run-ins with the Spanish navy appears in R.H. Mere, op. cit., p.196.

<sup>88</sup> While Marvin didn't manage to film the bombardment, other representations of the event were produced. For example, a vivid artist's impression of the action, in glorious colour, appeared in *Illustrated War News* (New York: F. Tousey), no.2 – a large format periodical, with superb quality of photographs and coloured, drawn illustrations.

<sup>89</sup> This might sound exaggerated, but it is confirmed in other accounts. *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, 25, 1898, p.555 reported that the *Anita* was chased by two gunboats from Puerto Rico all the way to St. Thomas, and kept ahead 'only by pouring coal oil into its furnaces'. A fictionalised – but apparently factually-based – account of such a night escape in the war also describes pouring oil into the boilers and having flames come out of the funnel. See: Stevens Vail, 'A Night Escape: An Episode of the War', *Scribner's Magazine* 24, Nov 1898, p.633.

<sup>90</sup> They arrived back 15 May, says Edwin Emerson Jr. in 'Chased by a Spaniard', op. cit.

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<sup>91</sup> R.H. Mere, op. cit., p.196: the entire adventure is reported in this article. It is also described, replicating Marvin's account fairly closely in 'Chased by a Spaniard', op. cit., which reproduces an illustration of this night chase by F. Cresson Schell, *Leslie's* war artist aboard.

<sup>92</sup> 'Taking views a perilous art', op. cit. Another account suggests that some of the films never made it out of the boat, as they were eaten by a goat on board(!) It wrongly attributes the adventure in Puerto Rico to cameraman 'Dickinson', i.e. W.K.-L. Dickson, and given this misattribution of person, it is hard to credit the goat anecdote in this account. 'A Plucky Biograph Man', *Pittsburgh News*, 6 Feb 1900: from Biograph scrapbook, Seaver Center.

<sup>93</sup> G.W. Bitzer, *Billy Bitzer, His Story*, p.35. Neither of these two ships, *Yale* and *Harvard*, are listed among those leaving Tampa but perhaps they were smaller landing craft which wouldn't necessarily have been listed as part of the fleet. See Musser, *Edison Motion Pictures: Filmography*, p.450. Troops started coming ashore at Siboney on 23 June. See O'Toole, p.269.

<sup>94</sup> Shown in Britain at a Biograph screening at the Empire, London. See *Brighton Society*, 10 Sep 1898, p.5.

<sup>95</sup> This 'cinematographe picture' was exhibited by showman Dwight L. Elmendorf. See 'The Santiago Campaign', *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* 4 Apr 1899, p.3, col.2. Cited in Musser and Nelson, *High-Class Moving Pictures*, p.326. The same account seems to suggest that another film was also screened during this show, depicting Cubans coming ashore, apparently fearful of the water.

<sup>96</sup> George Mitchell, 'Billy Bitzer..' p.692.

<sup>97</sup> *Billy Bitzer, His Story*, p.35. An account from 1899 of the misadventures of an unnamed Biograph 'photographer', could be a garbled version of this part of Bitzer's experiences. It states that as the press yacht approached the Cuban coast, a Spanish vessel passed and sighted the yacht and gave chase. The cameraman on board was set ashore and had to wait there, unable to move his heavy camera, but not daring to leave it. 'So there he remained for four or five days, with mighty little to eat and not knowing at what moment the Spaniards might come up and capture him.' From: 'Taking views a perilous art', *Phonoscope*, op. cit. R.H. Mere says the cameraman was on the beach for 3 days and 3 nights.

<sup>98</sup> *Billy Bitzer, His Story*, p.36. O'Toole, p.286 confirms that Hearst was present at this time. The yacht had been there from well before the commencement of the US invasion.

<sup>99</sup> Hemment, *Cannon and Camera*, p.65. A problem regularly faced by photographers, and later by cameramen, in working in the tropics, was that an over warm development might damage the film photographically or physically, hence ice was advisable.

<sup>100</sup> *Billy Bitzer, His Story*, p.36-37.

<sup>101</sup> Bitzer claimed to have witnessed the Rough Riders at the battle of El Caney, but this doesn't seem credible.

<sup>102</sup> *Billy Bitzer, His Story*, p.37.

<sup>103</sup> James Creelman, 'My Experiences at Santiago', *American Review of Reviews* 18, no. 5, Nov 1898, p.542-6. Such intervention by a war correspondent would be frowned upon today, but Creelman considered himself virtually part of the US forces: he was, he tells us, p.545, wearing clothes indistinguishable from those of American officers. (cf. Ackerman in the Philippine War).

<sup>104</sup> 'John C. Hemment', *The Photo-American* 9, Aug 1898, p.316. Hemment had gone ashore at Siboney and photographed during the battles of 1 and 2 July. See Hemment, *Cannon and Camera*, p.76; also letter from W.J. Arkell to Russell A. Alger, 17 Nov 1898. In RG107/E.80/#8300, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

<sup>105</sup> Hemment's account is more likely to be correct in the detail as he was interviewed only a month or so after his return from the front, whereas Bitzer was reminiscing half a century later.

<sup>106</sup> Hemment, *Cannon and Camera*, p.214. states that he photographed the wreck of the *Vizcaya* on 4 July. A photograph of it is on p.208 of his book. His *Vizcaya* images were taken on a large 11 x 14 format, whereas the land battle ones were shot on 6 x 10, because such mobile work required a more portable camera. Arkell later offered the US War Department a set of all Hemment's Cuban war photographs in an album – 500 to 600 images – for some \$3,000, but the offer was turned down. Letter from W.J. Arkell to Russell A. Alger, 17 Nov 1898 and reply Alger to Arkell, 18 Nov 1898. In RG107/E.80/#8300, National Archives, Washington, D.C. Arkell was associated with *Leslie's Weekly*.

- <sup>107</sup> I have found no actual data about the filming of the wreck. The closest thing to information about this is probably misinformation: a contemporary article claimed that Arthur Marvin 'was present at the battle of Santiago aboard the *Journal's* despatch-boat and got pictures of the destruction of Cervera's fleet'. McCardell, p.231. I suggest that rather than the actual battle, it was the *aftermath* which was filmed, and Bitzer is more likely to have been the cameraman than Marvin, for he was already near at hand at Siboney, as we have just discussed.
- <sup>108</sup> Musser *Emergence*, p.248. The film survives in the Library of Congress. (Also see photograph of Hearst in *Cosmopolitan*, vol.25, 1898, p.545.)
- <sup>109</sup> Shown at the Palace, London, according to *The Music Hall* 19 Aug 1898, p.122.
- <sup>110</sup> Creelman, p.546, notes that while waiting, wounded, for the *Sylvia* at Siboney, 'beside me lay another civilian down with yellow fever'. Presumably this was Bitzer.
- <sup>111</sup> G.W. Bitzer, *Billy Bitzer, His Story*, pp.33-40. William Paley was also invalided out of Cuba with fever (see below).
- <sup>112</sup> R.H. Mere, op. cit., p.196. See also 'Taking views a perilous art', op. cit.
- <sup>113</sup> Roy L. McCardell, 'Pictures That Show Motion', *Everybody's Magazine* 5, August 1901, p.231.
- <sup>114</sup> *The Mutoscope – a Money Maker* (New York: AMC, November 1898). This is in Musser, Motion Picture Catalogs microfilms, op. cit.
- <sup>115</sup> This section relies on the solid work of Charles Musser, especially his admirable Edison filmography.
- <sup>116</sup> Paley's middle initial is something of a mystery. I have followed Terry Ramsaye in making it 'C'; d'Agostino's *Filmmakers in the Moving Picture World* follows the *World* in making it 'A'; *Variety* makes his middle name "Daley" or "Daly". More detailed biographies of Paley appear in Stephen Bottomore, 'Book Review', *Film History* 11, no. 3, 1999, p.387-391; and in 'The Daddy of Them All', *American Cinematographer* 2, no. 19, 15 Oct 1921, p.6-7.
- <sup>117</sup> William E. Gilmore to Paley 7 Mar 1898, Edison Historic Site, file 'Motion picture – film'. The contract was backdated from 21 February 1898. Paley agreed to these terms in a letter of 12 March.
- <sup>118</sup> George Clarke Musgrave, *Under Three Flags in Cuba: A Personal Account of the Cuban Insurrection and Spanish-American War* (London; Cambridge, U.S.A. [printed]: Gay & Bird, 1899), p.103 etc.
- <sup>119</sup> Brown, *The Correspondents' War : Journalists in the Spanish-American War*, p.95. Decker and the girl made their escape on the *Seneca*, ironically so, given that this was the same 'horror ship' on which the sick Paley was to come back from Cuba. Musgrave, *Under Three Flags in Cuba*, p.104. Musgrave notes that Decker had come up with another rescue plan in the winter of 1897-98, to snatch Alfred Dreyfus from Devil's Island, but the sinking of *The Maine* disrupted this extraordinary scheme.
- <sup>120</sup> It is not stated, but Edison were apparently getting Paley's berth free of charge, though even if a fee had applied this would surely be cheaper than hiring their own yacht. The lowest rental fee for a tug was \$1000 per week, and port and telegraph charges added a lot more. John Spears of the *Sun* estimated that his newspaper spent \$1000 a day on their war boat. Spears, 'Afloat for News in War Times', p.504.
- <sup>121</sup> Paley to Edison Mfg Co., 12 Mar 1898, Edison Historic Site. He was also contracted to film in Cuba itself.
- <sup>122</sup> Edison *War Extra* catalogue. This film was shot off the islands of Dry Tortugas, some 80 miles west of Key West, where the navy had a fort and other facilities.
- <sup>123</sup> 'The Journal's vivid moving war pictures', *Journal* (New York) 16 Apr 1898, p.11: quoted in Musser Edison catalogue p.421. I don't describe some of these films in detail, as they are well covered in this catalogue by Musser.
- <sup>124</sup> Ad, F.Z. Maguire and Co., *NY Clipper*, 30 Apr 1898, p.153.
- <sup>125</sup> 'The Journal's vivid moving war pictures', op. cit.
- <sup>126</sup> Paul H. Dowling, 'He's Sixteen Years Ahead of All War Photographers', *Photoplay* 11, no. 4, March 1917, p.122-23. One wonders what happened to those 18 films of the *Maine*?
- <sup>127</sup> Ad by F.Z. Maguire and Co. 'Special! Cuban War Pictures', *NY Clipper* 9 Apr 1898, p.99.
- <sup>128</sup> 'Cuban War Pictures' *The Phonoscope* 2, no.4, April 1898, p.7.
- <sup>129</sup> Paley remained in Cuba until US Consul Lee departed, states 'The Daddy of Them All', op. cit.
- <sup>130</sup> 'The Journal's vivid moving war pictures', describes the Morro film as showing: 'the narrow passage by Morro Castle, under the very walls of the grim Cabanas and up to the side of the

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Viscaya and Alfonso XII'. The article adds: 'This series of moving pictures give the first adequate idea of what will probably be a scene of battle in the near future'. Paley's films apparently included a scene of the wrecking companies' tugs at work, though this might simply refer to the view of the wrecked *Maine* in which tugs are visible.

<sup>131</sup> Date given in: New York *Journal* 16 Apr 1898, p.11: cited in Musser, *Edison Motion Pictures: Filmography*.

<sup>132</sup> Paley to F.Z. Maguire and Co., 20 April 1898, Edison Historic Site.

<sup>133</sup> F.Z. Maguire to William E. Gilmore, 20 Apr 1898.

<sup>134</sup> F.Z. Maguire to William E. Gilmore 20 Apr 1898.

<sup>135</sup> *War Extra* came out 20 May 1898.

<sup>136</sup> According to Musser, *Emergence*, p.252. The film is indeed very 'jumpy'. Incidentally, 'colored' was a common term for African Americans at the time, but although racism was rife in this era, the Spanish-American War was something of a turning point in that the major contribution of black troops was recognised.

<sup>137</sup> War Correspondent's Pass no. 202, issued 10 May. RG107/E.80/#3208, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

<sup>138</sup> The photograph is captioned by hand, 'The Kinetoscope [sic] and the Santiago Expedition 1900(?)'. It appears in Paul H. Dowling, op. cit.; and in 'The Daddy of Them All', op. cit. The photograph seems to bear the inscribed number 1180. By chance, I have found two similar photos of the 71<sup>st</sup> New York infantry at the docks, captioned/numbered in the same style, 1176 and 1179, reproduced in Cohen, *Images of the Spanish-American War, April-August 1898*, p.186; and photo 1179 is in Frank Tennyson Neely, *Neely's Panorama of Our New Possessions* (New York [etc.]: F.T. Neely, 1898). The three photographs were apparently taken only minutes apart, probably by the Ensminger Brothers; no.1179 is held in the archives of the University of South Florida. According to another source, the 71<sup>st</sup> went aboard their transport ship, the *Vigilancia*, at Port Tampa on 10 June. See Riley Brothers, *The Spanish-American War*, lantern set no. 1047.

<sup>139</sup> 'The Daddy of Them All', op. cit. The *Olivette* was later filmed by Bitzer in Siboney.

<sup>140</sup> 'The Daddy of Them All', op. cit. This article is also inaccurate in giving his departure date as being after the Spanish surrender ceremony on 17 July, whereas in fact Paley departed Cuba on 14 July (on the *Seneca*). A film of the surrender is wrongly credited to Paley in the Edison catalogue, March 1900, p.9-11.

<sup>141</sup> 'The Daddy of Them All', op. cit. Though this same article states that 'with the help of General Shafter he managed to get all his film safely away to the Edison company'.

<sup>142</sup> 'The Daddy of Them All', op. cit. This article about Paley, presumably based on the cameraman's own words, mentions the supposed friendship as due to 'the fellowship that naturally exists between men of large displacement'. The British military attaché wrote of Shafter: 'Physically he was gross beyond belief, over 25 stone in weight, and he had not glimpsed his feet for years'. Alan Clark, *A Good Innings: The Private Papers of Viscount Lee of Fareham* (London: J. Murray, 1974), p.63.

<sup>143</sup> General Shafter's manner of speech was rough and he didn't care whom he offended, 'so he alienated all the correspondents, paying for this in public reputation', said the British military attaché (ibid). He managed to antagonise the journalists from the outset, keeping them at sea during the landing, for the cynical reason, one scribe believed, 'to prevent the correspondents from seeing any possible bungling'. (Charles Hands in *Daily Mail* 14 July 1898, p.4.) Even the eminent Richard Harding Davis was held back, and in his subsequent accounts of the war had nothing good to say of the General. E.J. McClernand, 'The Santiago Campaign', *Infantry Journal* 21, no. 3, Sep 1922, p.280-302. One correspondent, Sylvester Scovel, became so infuriated that at one point he slapped Shafter's face. (*Daily Mail* 20 July 1898, p.5.) While some military analysts generally applauded Shafter's leadership in the Cuban war, the correspondents disagreed. Sargent, *The Campaign of Santiago de Cuba*, vol.2, p.162-3. Atkins asked, why land in a yellow fever area instead of making straight for Santiago as Admiral Sampson had wanted? J. B. Atkins, *The War in Cuba: The Experiences of an Englishman with the United States Army* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1899), p.286. Photographer Hemment criticised the gross mismanagement of the war, comparing it unfavourably to the 'triumphal' campaign by Kitchener in Sudan. Hemment had problems in photographing Shafter, though in the event managed to secure a good image, and better than Paley's filmed version. See Hemment, *Cannon and Camera*, p.260-1, 90-2. The General continued to restrict the correspondents, refusing access to the surrender ceremony for all but

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a favoured few. Musgrave, *Under Three Flags in Cuba*, p.347-8. (Musgrave was one of the few allowed to attend.)

<sup>144</sup> Monte Cutler, 'Bill Paley, the Kinetoscope Man', *The Phonoscope*, August 1898, p.7-8.

<sup>145</sup> Stephen Bonsal, *The Fight for Santiago: The Story of the Soldier in the Cuban Campaign from Tampa to the Surrender* (London: Doubleday & McClure Co., 1899), p.161-162. As a mark of the value of patience in historical research, I found this unique account of Paley after looking at some 27 other accounts of the war by correspondents (not to mention periodical articles).

<sup>146</sup> Bonsal continues poetically: 'He sat on the beach at Siboney until the battle began, and the booming of the big guns announced that the pictures he was to perpetuate for all time were being exhibited by the god of war.' Bonsal, 1899, op. cit. The jibe about taking in gate-money might be a reference to Paley having at one time been an exhibitor.

<sup>147</sup> Bonsal notes, for example, that Paley carried his movie camera around in some kind of pack, though the description is whimsical and puzzling: 'The pack of a kinetoscope man is a difficult pack to carry. It seems to consist of a chest, which you must carry on the end of a pole, suspended about thirty feet up in the air.' Perhaps this 'pole' is an exaggerated description of a tripod?

<sup>148</sup> Bonsal notes, p.160, that during the crucial battles of San Juan and El Caney on 1 July, General Shafter, rather than being in the thick of the action, was well in the rear, from where he was constantly talking to front-line units by telephone (Bonsal says admiringly that he seemed to be talking common sense). This commanding from the rear was one of the inglorious aspects of the war which put off some correspondents.

<sup>149</sup> Homer Croy, *How Motion Pictures Are Made* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1918): see chapter, 'Motion Pictures of the War', p.257, though it doesn't actually mention Paley by name.

<sup>150</sup> 'An instrument of warfare', *Reel Life* 31 Jan 1914, p.10: from the description of the cameraman as 'corpulent', it must surely refer to Paley.

<sup>151</sup> Paul H. Dowling, op. cit.

<sup>152</sup> 'The Daddy of Them All', op. cit.

<sup>153</sup> Stated by a certain Robert Pitard, a 'cinematographe expert', in 'Trick pictures: How Strange Effects in Moving Photographs are Produced', *The Phonoscope* 3, no. 7, July 1899. Pitard noted that the destroyed films '...would have created a sensation'. The report doesn't mention Paley by name, so this could in theory refer to Bitzer, who was also filming on the island at about this time.

<sup>154</sup> Roosevelt reported that only a fifth of his men were fit for duty. Abbot, *Blue Jackets of '98. A History of the Spanish-American War*, p.302-304.

<sup>155</sup> By the end of the first week of July most troops were living on hard tack and hard bread; there were no kettles so water couldn't be boiled, and troops were forced to drink polluted brook water; there was little provision for shelter, and sick soldiers lay unattended on the bare earth. Wexler, 'The Santiago Campaign of 1898', *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 18, no. 1, Feb 1976, p.59-73, especially p.66-67.

<sup>156</sup> O'Toole, *The Spanish War, an American Epic – 1898*, p.374-5.

<sup>157</sup> Almost all war correspondents at the front suffered from fever, partly due to having been poorly equipped with tents, clothing etc by their employers, the press. Only one or two escaped sickness. Richard Harding Davis, 'Our War Correspondents in Cuba and Puerto Rico', *Harper's Monthly* 37, no. 588, May 1899, p.947.

<sup>158</sup> See letter from Paley to Edison Mfg. Co., 12 March 1898, Edison Historic Site. A few years earlier Paley had given up work as an X-Ray exhibitor as his health started to suffer from the effects of this apparatus.

<sup>159</sup> Hands is quoted in: Monte Cutler, 'Bill Paley, the Kinetoscope Man', *The Phonoscope*, August 1898, p.7-8. Charles Hands was a British newspaperman covering the war for the *Daily Mail* of London. He was notably popular, and fellow correspondent Philip Gibbs later described him as a small man who made many friends due to 'his dead honesty of mind, his whimsical humour, his gift of comradeship with all manner of men...' He concluded, 'Everyone loved Charlie Hands'. One of Hands' greatest talents, demonstrated in his help offered to Paley, was an ability to manage even in desperate circumstances. Gibbs noted: 'He could find a good dinner in the midst of ruin, or in a war-beleaguered city'. Philip Gibbs, *The Pageant of the Years : An Autobiography* (London ; Toronto: William Heinemann, 1946), p.41.

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<sup>160</sup> Perhaps this was the same Gaumont camera which had malfunctioned back in Florida, losing registration.

<sup>161</sup> Hands had witnessed the storming of a hill during this campaign (possibly San Juan Hill or El Caney) and was wounded going down the hill from the battlefield on 3 July, as noted in his last reports about the war in *Daily Mail* 4 Aug 1898, p.4; and 5 Aug, p.4.

<sup>162</sup> A later article about this ordeal stated, probably based on the cameraman's own words, that Paley succumbed to fever 'and he staggered miles through calf-deep mud and the rain, in the night, to reach a hospital ship that had no quinine'. Paul H. Dowling, op. cit. This wrongly says that he had yellow fever.

<sup>163</sup> Hancock, *What One Man Saw : Being the Personal Impressions of a War Correspondent in Cuba*, p.174-75. The *Seneca* was chartered for the war on 10 May 1898. She was 2,729 tons, with a capacity for 627 men, though some 900 were aboard for war service. The *Seneca* brought to Cuba the 8<sup>th</sup> Infantry, two companies of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Massachusetts Volunteers and the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade HQ of 2<sup>nd</sup> Division. Grace Inez Smith, 'Cuban Expedition, 1898: Mobilization at Tampa' (M.A., Univ. of California, 1943), 98, 124. Her chief officer at this time was called 'Decker' (not Karl Decker, of course).

<sup>164</sup> Hancock, *What One Man Saw : Being the Personal Impressions of a War Correspondent in Cuba*, p.174-5, 177.

<sup>165</sup> Abbot, *Blue Jackets of '98. A History of the Spanish-American War*, p.302-304.

<sup>166</sup> 'Voyage full of misery', *Chicago Tribune* 22 July 1898, p.3. There was also favouritism, and some influential passengers were allowed to leave the ship at will in the US and not go into quarantine.

<sup>167</sup> 'Voyage full of misery', op. cit. This is by correspondent John Maxwell, a fellow passenger. Also quoted in Brown, *The Correspondents' War : Journalists in the Spanish-American War*, p.434. Maxwell added that the ship's officers were often drunk. Incidentally, war correspondent Emerson described the plight of an unnamed English photographer (possibly Hare?) whose case parallels Paley's, for he too went down with fever in Cuba and had a hard time returning to America. He was then offered little support by his editors. Emerson, 'The Making of a War Correspondent', p.165-6. Paley's sufferings on the *Seneca* are also mentioned in Joyce Milton, *The Yellow Kids : Foreign Correspondents in the Heyday of Yellow Journalism* (New York; London: Harper & Row, 1989), p.346.

<sup>168</sup> John Maxwell of the *Chicago Tribune* gave this date. Brown, *The Correspondents' War : Journalists in the Spanish-American War*, p.434.

<sup>169</sup> All in *Chicago Tribune* 21 July 1898, p.1. Another report listed only six men to be quarantined on Swinburne island, including Paley. It also referred to the extreme crowding on the ship and a failure to control 'the accumulation of filth'. See 'The *Seneca* quarantined', *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* 20 July 1898, p.3. A list of sick and wounded civilians from the *Seneca*, detained at Hoffman Island in New York is given in 'Voyage full of misery', op. cit., as part of the news report. This lists the following 13 individuals, many of them correspondents, though not including Paley for some reason: H.C. Christie, New York; Charles G. Hands, London *Daily Mail*; J. O'Donnell Bennett, *Chicago Journal*; M. Smith, *Atlanta Journal*; H.I. Hancock, *Golden Hours*, New York; C.R. Francis, *Minneapolis Times*; J.C. Wheat Jr., Photographer for General Ludlow; K.G. Bellairs; J.C. Ewan, *Toronto Globe*; L. Langland, *Chicago Daily News*; J.E. Chamberlain, *Boston Transcript*; G.F. Harris, *Chicago Record*; H.L. Beach, Associated Press.

<sup>170</sup> Stephen Bonsal, op. cit, p.536.

<sup>171</sup> Hancock, *What One Man Saw : Being the Personal Impressions of a War Correspondent in Cuba*, p.175, 177. Many of the troops returned to the US 'as mere shadows of their former selves', wrote a doctor who accompanied one regiment. Quoted in Freidel, *The Splendid Little War*, p.295, and see 298.

<sup>172</sup> Biograph picture catalogue. The film was 55 feet in length. Biograph made additional films at Camp Wikoff in September, including *President McKinley's Inspection of Camp Wikoff*, no.783; and at Camp Meade: *22<sup>nd</sup> Regiment, Kansas Volunteers*, no.785. Cited in Musser, *Emergence*, p.248/250.

<sup>173</sup> Monte Cutler, op. cit.

<sup>174</sup> The six titles are: *U.S. Troops Landing at Daiquiri, Cuba*; *Mules Swimming Ashore at Daiquiri, Cuba*; *Major General Shafter*; *Packing Ammunition on Mules, Cuba*; *Pack Mules with Ammunition on the Santiago Trail, Cuba*; *Troops Making Military Road in Front of Santiago*. The last film (film no. 600 in Musser's catalogue) was copyrighted 3 Sep 1898, about a month

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after his five other films of the US forces in Cuba. The late copyright date might indicate that the film was sent back at a later date than the five other films – possibly because of Paley's sickness?

<sup>175</sup> Not including some war fakes, possibly attributable to him. Some 23 Spanish-American War films by Paley are on the Library of Congress website, among 68 films produced during the war and the Philippine Revolution at <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/>. This site, 'The Spanish-American War in Motion Pictures', also includes a list of the films in chronological order along with essays offering a historical context for their filming. A good general article on films of the two wars is Karen C. Lund, 'The Motion Picture Camera Goes to War : the Spanish-American War and the Philippine Revolution', *LC Information Bulletin* 57, March 1998, p.48-49, 53.

<sup>176</sup> A film, possibly this one, of 'a train of these pack mules bound for the front' was described enthusiastically by a reporter as a 'capital cinematographe'. 'The Santiago Campaign', *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 4 Apr 1899, p.3, col.2. The film was shown by Dwight L. Elmendorf. Hemment also covered the ammunition mule trains – in still photographs: see LW 18 Aug 1898, p.129.

<sup>177</sup> LW 1 Sep 1898, p.178.

<sup>178</sup> Even prior to the war, the Biograph company was developing plans for news filming based on an agenda similar to that of newspapers of the time, and using press agencies and other sources as a means of alerting the company's cameraman to hot news stories. See Stephen Bottomore, "'Every Phase of Present-Day Life": Biograph's Non-Fiction Production', *Griffithiana*, no. 66/70, 1999/2000, p.147-211.

<sup>179</sup> Lauren Rabinovitz, *For the Love of Pleasure : Women, Movies, and Culture in Turn-of-the-Century Chicago* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1998), p.108.

<sup>180</sup> Terry Ramsaye, *A Million and One Nights: a History of the Motion Picture* (London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 1964), p.389.

<sup>181</sup> Robert C. Allen, *Vaudeville and Film, 1895-1915 : a Study in Media Interaction* (New York: Arno Press, 1980), p.139.

<sup>182</sup> Lee Royal, *The Romance of Motion Picture Production* (Los Angeles: Royal Publishing Company, 1920), p.9, 11. David Nasaw writes that thanks to the Spanish-American War, '...the moving pictures leapt out of the realm of cheap novelty amusements to assume a new and relatively exalted role as visual newspapers and patriotic cheerleaders.' David Nasaw, *Going Out : The Rise and Fall of Public Amusements* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), p.149-150.