

Chapter 9

THE BOER WAR (1899-1902)

I. The emergence of professional cameramen

INTRODUCTION

The first modern war

The Boer War (or ‘Anglo-Boer War’, as it is sometimes called) broke out in October 1899, pitting the forces of Britain and its Empire against the Boer forces of the Transvaal and Orange Free State. Among the various causes was the Boers’ denial of political rights to the mainly British ‘Uitlander’ workforce, but belligerence from both the British representatives and the leading Boer figure, Paul Kruger, exacerbated matters, and led to a Boer ultimatum. The Boers invaded the eastern territory of Natal on 11 October 1899, and the British forces were overwhelmed. A relief expedition was dispatched from the UK under Sir Redvers Buller which made a two-pronged attack: to the west between Cape Colony and Orange Free State, and to the east in Natal, attempting to relieve a siege at Ladysmith.

Major reverses were suffered at Magersfontein, Colenso and Spion Kop in mid December – in what became known as ‘Black Week’ – and the overall command was taken over by Lord Roberts who began a strong push from Cape Town northwards to Kimberley. By February 1900 the British were winning, and succeeded in the following months in taking first Bloemfontein and then Johannesburg and Pretoria by mid year. The fighting then developed into a guerrilla war which carried on until May 1902, when the Boer forces were eventually subdued by Lord Kitchener’s ruthless approach.¹ The Boer War was a major and costly conflict for Britain, and became a testing ground for novel military technology and tactics; it was discussed for years afterwards by military strategists as exemplifying a new kind of warfare.²

This was an important war for media coverage too, and is sometimes hailed as the first ‘media war’.³ All available means of reporting, from newspapers to film were fully mobilised.⁴ Undoubtedly the coverage was on a large scale: over 200 war correspondents or war artists chronicled the war, with nearly a hundred departing from the UK alone in a period of a few weeks in 1899.⁵ Unlike the Boxer Uprising, which flared up and died down swiftly, there was more warning of an impending war in South Africa, giving journalists and cameramen more time to be sent to the scene. Some pressmen were already in the country in early October 1899, a couple of weeks before the outbreak of hostilities.⁶ Others arrived there in good time, including several film cameramen.

Filming the war

Even before hostilities broke out, the *British Journal of Photography* prophesied, ‘There is little doubt that, if war does unfortunately come about in

South Africa, enterprising cinematographers and photographers will not be far off...⁷ How right this was, and indeed more cameramen covered the Boer War from the war zone than any previous conflict. Some eight cameramen are known to have filmed in South Africa during the war. These were: W.K.-L. Dickson for the British Mutoscope and Biograph Company (with his assistants William Cox and Jonathan Seward); John Bennett-Stanford, Edgar Hyman, Joseph Rosenthal and Charles Sydney Goldman – all for the Warwick Trading Company; Walter Calverley Beevor (and perhaps Sydney Melsom) for Robert Paul; and C. Rider Noble for Walter Gibbons. I have also found some evidence that two other men, A.S. Underwood and René Bull, filmed during the war. On the other hand, the claims for Albert E. Smith are almost certainly false, while plans to film the war by, of all people, Winston Churchill, came to nought. (See Appendix for the latter).⁸

In this chapter I will describe the work of these cameramen in filming the war. I will show that many of them had little experience of camerawork, being the same sundry amateurs and part-timers who had done most filming in wars till then – war correspondents, stills photographers, military officers, etc. But things were changing, and the Boer War was something of a watershed in this respect. Producers were realizing that the amateurs were not really up to the job, and professional cameramen made their first strong appearance in this war, principally in the persons of Rosenthal and Dickson. These men were true professionals, with suitable technical and artistic skills, and not lacking in perseverance, meaning that at least they had a chance of recording some moving images related to the conflict, amid all the inherent difficulties of filming this war. In this chapter I will examine this contrast between amateur and professional cameraman, and show how and why the latter were starting to take over the work of war (and other non-fiction) filming.⁹ But first we will take a look at the main problems these cameramen faced.

Changing warfare, stricter press regulation

Cameramen (and war correspondents in general) had to contend with two major difficulties in trying to report on or represent the Boer War. Firstly, there was the problem of capturing on film a mobile, fast-moving conflict where the foe was using accurate, long-range weaponry, while often being largely hidden from sight (this was the first really modern war in these respects). This problem had confronted cameramen in previous wars, but it was more acute in South Africa: Britain's enemy here were determined, skilled marksmen, using the latest artillery and rifles; and, knowing the landscape, they could find places of concealment. Many British soldiers complained that though they were coming under attack with well-aimed bullets and artillery, they never actually saw a Boer. (I discuss this issue of military visibility in more depth in Chapter 1). [see Fig. 1 and 2]

The other difficulty cameramen had was the increasingly onerous official regulation and censorship during the Boer War. Of course there had been regulation of war correspondents before, but not in such a stringent manner: during, for example, the Sudan campaign, control was exercised in a somewhat piecemeal fashion. But a year on, in South Africa, control over reporters of all kinds was enforced strictly (if unsystematically) through a

system of passes and military censors. This applied to cameramen as much as to print journalists. Both Rosenthal and Dickson, as we shall see, complained bitterly about certain officers and censors who hampered their efforts to get to the conflict zones and to film (despite, in the case of Dickson, having General Buller's written approval).¹⁰ Things became a little easier after Lord Roberts took control in early 1900, for Roberts was a believer in a fairly light regime of censorship. Perhaps he realised that it was mainly unnecessary anyway, as most of the correspondents – and almost all the cameramen – supported the British side in the war. However his censors may have taken a stricter stance and there is some evidence that from mid 1900, when most of the journalists and film men departed, the censorship regime was stepped up. [see **Box**]

Box:

Official regulation of cameramen during the Boer War

From the start of the Boer War, internal discussions were taking place in the War Office about the advisability of letting war correspondents accompany the troops, and some negative comments were made about the media (especially about foreign reporters) by some officers.¹¹ As it transpired, correspondents were allowed to the front, though the censorship, especially in the first weeks, was draconian, with many press dispatches being ruthlessly pruned. As an example of this, war correspondent Winston Churchill sent one report back to his London paper with the words, 'more than 2000 Boers were assembled', only to find that the press censor had substituted the words 'small parties'.¹²

The cameramen were subject to censorship and regulation as much, if not more, than the print correspondents, and it seems to have affected the two main cameramen of the war, Rosenthal and Dickson, more than the others. As I show in my main text, both had to obtain special passes to film and to travel; Rosenthal had to get films approved by the censors, while Dickson faced interference from officers who objected to the camera's presence. But it seems that the regulatory regime was about to get even stricter.

After the main battles of the war were over in mid 1900, a re-think about censorship of the press and visual media was going on in the British military by the middle of 1900. The first indications of this came in June, after the fall of Pretoria and its occupation. At this point, most of the journalists and cameramen left, the conventional explanation being that this seemed to be effectively the end of the conflict, for few expected the Boers to hold out and turn the struggle into a guerrilla war lasting nearly another two years. However, according to one journalist, there was a more direct reason for correspondents to leave, for they were virtually ordered out by the British authorities, being told that if they stayed, 'they would not be allowed to send any matter', and he added, 'Nearly all the correspondents came out at this time'.¹³

Just a month later, the chief censor Lord Stanley wrote a report for Lord Roberts assessing how press censorship had fared during the war, and was not complimentary: he stated that from the start of the campaign there had been no proper regulations for

either censors or correspondents, nor any uniformity for the granting of licences, nor any guidance about which newspapers were allowed to have correspondents at the front; and he had specific complaints about certain correspondents who had turned up at the war representing no newspaper as such. Most significantly for us, Lord Stanley was also not keen on the latest means of reporting, and noted, ‘... it will be a question in any future war whether or no [sic] the Army is to be followed by photographers and cinematograph agents’.¹⁴ (i.e. cameramen).

Early the following year the army produced another report about war correspondents, again with negative conclusions about film cameramen. It was written by Major W.D. Jones, who had been Buller’s main press censor in Natal (so presumably dealt with Dickson in the field), and, over the following weeks the report was circulated and received comments, notably by Lord Stanley. The interesting point for our purposes is that, while Jones and Stanley disagreed about how strictly press correspondents should be controlled, they agreed that film cameramen were unwanted. Jones stated (p.11) that ‘Independent photographers and Biograph-workers should be excluded’,¹⁵ and Lord Stanley also recommended, ‘doing away with biographs, etc.’

Thus, by early 1901, two of the British army’s top censors were recommending that cameramen should be banned from the front during wars. And they attained their wish, at least for the remainder of the Boer War, for no more cameramen covered the conflict in South Africa after the end of 1900. While it is possible that this was solely a decision by the film companies not to send further cameramen (as the war was now less newsworthy than in its earlier phases), perhaps the proposed ban had already, unofficially been put into effect. The outcome in any case was just what the British authorities would have wished, and at just the point, from January 1901, when the Boer War was entering its most controversial phase – with farms being burned and civilians removed to concentration camps – conveniently no cameramen were on hand to film any of this unpleasantness.

THE AMATEURS: 1. BULL, UNDERWOOD, BEEVOR AND NOBLE

By the time of the Boer War, there were several film cameras available for sale in Britain, from fully professional, large affairs down to small models for amateurs. In these circumstances it was perfectly possible, indeed quite straightforward, for an individual or company to obtain a camera, and thereby equip a ‘cameraman’ for the job. However, while there were several film companies which wished to send a cameraman to film the war, very few operators were trained for the job. In this section I shall describe some of the less experienced cameramen who went to film the war, all of whom had recently come from other walks of life (one was a correspondent, another a stage designer, another a military officer). Such was the situation in a film industry which was so new that there was as yet no pool of experienced labour.

René Bull

We last came across the war artist, René Bull (c.1870–1942) at Omdurman, and he had also been present with Frederick Villiers at the Greco-Turkish war, both men working for *Black and White* magazine. It seems that Bull was filming during the Boer War (as perhaps he did at Omdurman), this time using some kind of a portable film camera. The evidence for this comes from a passing mention in a letter home from William Cox, the assistant of Biograph cameraman, W.K.-L. Dickson. Writing from Durban, 7 Apr 1900, Cox noted to his wife with annoyance that he and Dickson were facing competition from René Bull whom they had encountered several time with a film camera. Cox notes that Bull was more mobile than themselves (the Biograph crew had a vast camera), as he was filming with a much smaller machine: or as Cox put it somewhat enviously, an ‘insignificant little machine which he can carry on horseback’.¹⁶ This would most likely have been a Biokam, a small amateur film camera introduced that year.¹⁷ One particular incident rankled: it seems that a British artillery unit (Naval Brigade) based nearby had put on a skit about President Kruger, ‘Hanging of Kruger After a Mock Trial’, and Dickson and Cox had arranged to film this.¹⁸ But the *Black and White* man had managed to film it first, for with a Biokam, Bull could have filmed the skit almost in passing. And this suggests one other possible interpretation of this diary entry from Cox.

Though Cox refers to René Bull by name, I wonder if perhaps he could have mistaken Bull for cameraman Edgar Hyman, for the two men looked quite similar, and Hyman was apparently using a Biokam camera (see Hyman section below). On the other hand, Hyman was predominantly on the western front, and as far as we know was not near Durban in April, so the more likely interpretation is Cox’s own: that it was indeed René Bull. The other question is: for whom was Bull filming? Cox refers to him as ‘the cinematograph man of *Black and White*’, but could Bull have been shooting for a magazine? This seems unlikely, given that it was a print publication, with no known interests in cinema. Perhaps then, Bull was filming on his own account while also working as artist on the magazine, and perhaps hoping to sell any film he would shoot on his return? At present we have no answers to these questions.

A.S. Underwood

By early 1900 the film business was booming in Britain, and at least two companies, John Wrench & Son and Walter Gibbons (involved in film distribution and exhibition respectively), resolved to go into production. They decided that the most important subject to shoot was the war, and therefore each took on cameramen (Underwood and Noble, respectively) who both managed to obtain footage from the seat of war. This was quite an achievement given that the lack of experience of these two companies in film production was only matched by that of their neophyte cameramen.

We begin with Wrench, which was a well known photographic supply business but was moving strongly into the cinematograph trade by early 1900, initially merely distributing film titles made by others. The cameraman whom they found to cover the Boer War was a man called A.S. Underwood (no relation, as far as one knows to the stereoscopic company of that name), and this

seems to have been his first experience of filming, for there is no record of him having shot anything else before the war.¹⁹ Underwood's name crops up in only a handful of trade journal articles. A writer for the *Photographic Dealer* reported visiting Wrench's headquarters in the Spring of 1900 and seeing a letter (dated Bloemfontein, 30 March) which the company had received from 'one of their war staff'. It seems that this man had succeeded in taking 'some very interesting records of the present Boer War', and the journal added:

'The writer of the letter is right at the front with Lord Roberts, and has already sent home excellent films of Sir Alfred Milner arriving at the Presidency at Bloemfontein, a wounded soldier on stretcher being lifted into hospital van and subsequent procession of the ambulance party and troops in Bloemfontein.'²⁰

The *Photographic Dealer* later gave the cameraman's name as A.S. Underwood, and confirmed that he had indeed been 'at the front with a cinematograph'.²¹ In addition to the films mentioned in the quotation above, a trade journal quoted by Barnes credits Underwood with another film: the change of the guard outside the Bloemfontein Presidency. This source also lists two other Boer War films from Wrench, possibly taken by Underwood: *Washing Boer Prisoners* and *The Military Train*.²²

But sadly, Underwood's career as cameraman came to an abrupt end. The following month the *Photographic Dealer* reported that Underwood had 'died recently in Bloemfontein from enteric fever'.²³ I have now found a report of his death in *The Times* which confirms that A.S. Underwood did indeed die of enteric fever on 25 May in Bloemfontein. His profession is given as 'civilian servant', the only non-military man among some twenty British forces personnel who are listed in this report as recently dying of disease.²⁴ But servant to whom? No further details are given, and as it stands, this is the extent of our knowledge about Underwood, though I hope that more details may emerge in future.

Surgeon-Major Beevor: R.W. Paul's cameraman

The pioneer film producer, Robert W. Paul, had a twin track approach to covering the Boer war. As we shall see in the following chapter, he was one of the first to make staged films of the war, released from November 1899, but also claims to have sent two cameramen to film in South Africa: Sydney (or Sidney) Melsom and W.C. Beevor.²⁵ Melsom was reputedly a member of the C.I.V. – the City Imperial Volunteers, a renowned regiment raised in the financial heart of London – though a search of the membership of this regiment has only found an F.A. Melsom.²⁶ I can find no further information about this Melsom, but in any case I believe that all or most of the films shot in South Africa and released by Paul were probably shot by Beevor, and Paul himself stated that the films by Beevor were more successful than whatever Melsom might have produced.²⁷ This must be partly due to the fact that, even if the mysterious Melsom really had a film camera, he arrived in South Africa in the new year, much later than Beevor, for his C.I.V. group departed months after the Scots' Guards.²⁸ Until further information comes to light, I have nothing further to say on Melsom.

Walter Calverley Beevor (1858-1927) was a Surgeon-Major, i.e. a military doctor, in the Scots' Guards.²⁹ Fig. 4] As well as being one of the first war cameramen, he was even more significant for pioneering another piece of new technology on the battlefield: the use of X-rays, as a means of locating bullets in wounded soldiers, and thereby saving lives. Beevor used a mobile X-ray apparatus for the first time in warfare during the Tirah campaign on the Indian North-West frontier, from 1897 to 1898.³⁰ It proved a great success, and when the Scots' Guards were sent to the Boer war in November 1899, Beevor was again accompanied by an X-ray machine, and this technology was used during the campaign.³¹

As regards Beevor's filming activities, it is not clear how his involvement came about, but it may have been via W.J. LeCouteur of the Photographic Association. It is known that before the Tirah campaign Beevor had been in touch with LeCouteur, whose photographic studios were equipped with both X-rays and animated photography. The Photographic Association had a large number of military officers as members, possibly including Beevor.³² LeCouteur, being on the fringes of early filmmaking, may also have known Robert Paul, and have put him in touch with Beevor.

As far as Paul was concerned, there was a certain advantage in entrusting a camera to a military man like Beevor, who was bound to be sent to where the action was, and was also less likely to face official meddling than a journalist (ditto Melsom of the C.I.V.). There were further advantages in Beevor being a doctor, for he would already have some technical expertise, and yet was not a combatant as such, so could pursue other activities from the sidelines as it were. There are several examples from the 19th century of military doctors who took war photographs, so Beevor had some precedent. However the disadvantage for Paul in placing his camera with a combatant like Beevor is that the work would never be anything more than a spare time activity, and Beevor could surely never match the professional commitment and drive of a Rosenthal or Dickson. Nevertheless, Beevor was quite successful both as a war film cameraman and stills photographer.

The Scots' Guards were one of the first regiments to depart, embarking on the 20 October, and Paul may have chosen to entrust the camera to an officer in this regiment to ensure that it would get to the front early.³³ The regiment arrived in Cape Town 13 November and disembarked the next day. Within little more than a week the Scots' Guards were involved in heavy fighting, on the 23rd November at the battle of Belmont, and again at Modder River on the 28th: they suffered badly, losing about 50 men as casualties in each battle. The Scots were luckier at Magersfontein, 10-12 December, where they sustained trifling losses, unlike other regiments, for this was one of the three humiliating British defeats of 'Black Week'.³⁴

Beevor was active in a medical capacity during these engagements, and was notably courageous, being fired on from the Boer side as he led his men in the grim task of collecting dead and wounded from the battlefield at Modder River,

and at the battle of Magersfontein he was again seen leading his men to rescue casualties.³⁵

Despite his medical work amid the carnage, Beevor managed to take both films and still photographs. But these were taken between engagements, and certainly not during the battles themselves, for, as he noted later, about still photos made by his colleagues in the regiment: ‘most of the photographs were, in fact, taken at our leisure, and on sunny days’, and that these did not, ‘illustrate the fighting’.³⁶ Probably the same was true of many of his films, that they were taken during relative lulls in the campaign. There was enough time to film such general military activities, for after the battles of November and December the Scots remained in the Modder River area till 18 February.

In the new year Roberts and Kitchener had arrived in South Africa and the main British army started advancing steadily north from the Cape toward the republics, and Beevor and the Scots’ Guards were part of this general advance. On 27 February General P.A. Cronjé and 4,000 burghers surrendered to Roberts at Paardeberg, the Boers’ most humiliating defeat of the war, and the first important British victory (the news was greeted by wild celebrations in Britain).³⁷ It was also to be Beevor’s greatest moment as a filmmaker.

Beevor was lucky enough to be on hand as the captured Cronjé was taken away in a cart, escorted by British C.I.V.s , and he managed to get a shot of this action. Amazingly enough, we have a brief description of how this film was taken, written by a war artist, Mortimer Menpes, who was present as Beevor was cranking his camera. [Fig. 6 and 7] This description by Menpes (who also drew a picture of Cronje in the cart) is a rare early account of a cameraman at work on the battlefield, almost matching in significance that by Bonsal of Paley in the Cuban war. This account also explains why Cronje is seen ‘peering out at the camera in amazement’ (see film description below), for he was looking at Beevor’s noisy camera. Menpes writes:

We had attached to the brigade a surgeon who was an enthusiastic photographer [i.e. Beevor], and he came with his cinematograph to get a record of this final scene – the departure of General Cronje. This cinematograph was a funny thing. It occupied an entire Cape cart, and received more attention and care than almost any waggon on the march. Wherever the Guards Brigade went, there went this wretched machine. It never missed anything, and whenever you heard its terrible buzz ! buzz! you might be certain that something of unusual interest was happening. All through that long march to Bloemfontein, you would see the doctor and his cinematograph lumbering along in an enormous waggon, always occupying a prominent position. And here he was with his machine again, taken out and carefully placed. On went the procession, mounted C.I.V. and wagons – on went the buzz. The moment Cronje came within earshot, he popped his head out of the window in abject terror. Then Mrs. Cronje was seen to get up hastily, lean over her husband, and tear down the blind in irritation. The buzzing went on, and the procession passed by. The surgeon,

occupied with his machine, had not noticed this little by-play ; but when I told him what had occurred he threw up his cap in great glee, and shouted, "I've got something historic – something historic !"³⁸

The film survives in the NFTVA, and actually, though Cronjé is visible peering out of the window, his carriage passes through shot fairly quickly, and if his wife did 'tear down the blind in irritation' it was done out of shot. One film historian describes the action in this 'remarkable film' as follows:

'... the camera is trained on an open piece of veld. Three C.I.V.s cross to the left, followed by a horse-drawn cart. There the General sits, peering out at the camera in amazement. The cart is followed by an escort of C.I.V.'s.'³⁹

Paul's catalogue highlights this as a 'historical film' – presumably based on Beevor's opinion – and this is not an exaggeration. Though it is on the surface a humdrum shot of a troop escort accompanying a partially hidden Cronjé in a cart (and the portion with the cart lasts only a few seconds), any kind of shot including the real Cronjé, who was such a leading figure in the Boer war, was and is of immense value, and quite a 'scoop' for Beevor. In Paul's catalogue the film is entitled, *Cronje's Surrender to Lord Roberts*, which suggests that the actual process of surrender was depicted – another example of mis-description – but despite this, one feels that audiences would not have been disappointed.

It is interesting that Paul's film camera was seen by Menpes as a complicated and laborious device, and bulky ('it occupied an entire Cape cart' or 'an enormous waggon'). A photograph of Beevor on location with this camera does not show it as being enormous (though Menpes was probably exaggerating), but it does have a 'flywheel handle' (typical of Paul cameras) and it is mounted on a tripod, which could explain why the apparatus required a cart to itself.

Beevor filmed another significant scene near Paardeberg at this time, *Boer Shell-proof Pits*, indicating the Boers' aptitude for building defensive works.⁴⁰ After the success at Paardeberg, the route was now open to Bloemfontein, and the British column advanced on this major town, which was captured on 13 March. Beevor recorded the entry into the town of his regiment (filmed at the Market Place). The men were weary after a forced march, but were marching sturdily to bag-pipes, as the catalogue tells us. This film was later released by Paul as *Entry of the Scots' Guards into Bloemfontein*, and survives, being a nicely photographed view of the men as they troop past camera in formation.⁴¹ [Fig. 5]

Through the rest of March and April, Roberts waited for supplies and regrouped in Bloemfontein, before launching north to capture the town of Kroonstad, and then the strategic prizes of Johannesburg and Pretoria. Beevor seems not to have made any films during the break in Bloemfontein, but as the army moved into Transvaal, he filmed the troops crossing the Vaal River (with one film including Lord Roberts), then later some scenes of British

units in and around Pretoria, including a war observation balloon. (see **Box** for list of Beevor's films).

It was now June, and with these scenes Beevor finished his filming activities in South Africa. He continued to serve with the Scots' Guards until 3 October, and then stayed on in the country with the South African Constabulary until May 1902.⁴² Beevor published an album of his experiences during the war, though sadly he scarcely refers to his film work.⁴³ As far as we know, the Boer War marked the beginning and end of Beevor's camerawork, a brief but significant episode in the early days of war filming, when, for a time, the amateur was king.

In all, R.W. Paul released some 21 films shot in South Africa during the war, showing scenes of troops on the march, artillery and ambulances, and locations such as crossing the Vaal and Modder rivers. (I will have more to say about river crossings in the conclusion to this chapter). Of these, 11 of the best were selected to be listed in Paul's catalogue, tallying with the producer's later recollection that Beevor shot 'about a dozen good films'.⁴⁴ A continuing theme in Beevor's coverage is worth remarking: that three of his films are concerned with battlefield casualties. This is, of course, little surprise, given that he was a military doctor. Two of his films depict ambulances, and one of these which survives in the NFTVA, *Ambulance Crossing the Modder*, includes, as the catalogue notes, a wagon full of wounded Boer fighters. This is an indication – evidently felt important to stress by both Beevor and Paul – that the campaign was conducted with relative humanity, one side caring for the other's wounded. Another Beevor film about battlefield casualties, *Telegraphing Casualties*, showed a new type of open-air telegraphic apparatus at work. This is significant in the context of the war, because many thousands of telegrams were sent during the campaign, often conveying details of casualties. The shot also suggests – as does his film of the observation balloon – that Beevor (as pioneer of both X-rays and war cinematography) was keen to depict new technology in action.

Box:

Boer War films shot by W.C. Beevor for R.W. Paul
(December 1899-June 1900)

Notes: These films are listed in the approximate order of shooting (mainly based on dates given by John Barnes). Only some of the films (noted below) were credited to Beevor, though all were, I believe, shot by him. The word [Cat.] indicates that the film title was listed in Paul's catalogue of 1903.

Title	Date filmed	Footage	Review or catalogue date	Notes
Bridging the Modder River	6 Dec	60'	6 Jan	Shows Royal Engineers at the Modder, and another shot of the Horse Artillery watering their horses after a battle at Enslin.
Ambulance Crossing the Modder [aka Modder River Drift]	6 Dec	80'	6 Jan	Ambulances with Boer wounded. Survives in NFTVA at 74'. [Cat.]
Cavalry Watering their Horses in the Modder	6 Dec	40'	13 Jan	
Mule-Wagons crossing the Modder	10 Dec	40'	6 Jan	[Cat.]
Naval 47 Gun	Dec	60'	13 Jan	Shot at Modder river (refers to 4.7 gun).
Ambulance Train	Dec	60'	3 Feb	Shot at Modder river station. [Cat.]
Telegraphing casualties	Dec	50'	3 Feb	Shows an open air telegraph: the first use of this technology in warfare.
Hurrah for the Queen	25 Dec	40'	3 Feb	Shot at Modder river.
Naval Gun	Dec	60'	3 Feb	The catalogue states that this was not a 'brilliant' film due to the colours of the guns and men's uniforms - presumably meaning that these blended into the landscape.
Fording a River	Dec	50'	3 Feb	[Cat.]
Dragging up the Guns	22 Jan	80' & 100'	24 Feb	[Cat.]
Transporting Provisions to the Front	22 Jan	50'	24 Feb	[Cat.]
Cronje's Surrender to Lord Roberts	28 Feb	60'	31 Mar	Credited to Beevor. Survives in NFTVA at 57'. [Cat.]
Boer Shell-proof Pits	28? Feb	?	6 Apr	

Battle of Poplar Grove	7 Mar	?'	14 Apr	
Entry of the Scots' Guards into Bloemfontein	13 Mar	120' & 80'	14 Apr	Paul 1903 catalogue notes that the entire unit was filmed, not only the pipers, as the <i>Era</i> states. As this shows the Scots' Guards, we may be sure it was shot by Beevor. Survives in NFTVA at 56': i.e. much is missing. [Cat.]
Crossing the Vaal	27 May?	55'	28 Jul	Credited to Beevor. Includes Lord Roberts and Guards crossing on a pontoon ferry. [Cat.]
Naval Gun Crossing the Vaal River	27 May?	50'	4 Aug	
The Royal Engineers' Balloon	early June	60'	28 Jul	Credited to Beevor. Taken on road from Johannesburg to Pretoria. [Cat.]
Transport by Mules in a Ravine near Pretoria	June	50'	4 Aug	
Artillery Crossing the Vaal River	June	50'	Sep	[Cat.]

Charles Rider Noble

Like Underwood and several other early film cameramen, Charles Rider Noble (1854?-?) had little relevant prior training or experience for the job. He had been a designer and director at various theatres in England, and then manager of the Brixton Theatre in the late 1890s.⁴⁵ How he turned from this theatrical career to camerawork is unknown, but probably it was due to Walter Gibbons whom he likely met through their shared work in the entertainment business. Gibbons was a leading music hall entrepreneur, and by 1900 was an important film pioneer too, being in John Barnes' words, 'the foremost exhibitor in England'.⁴⁶

In the earlier part of the year Gibbons was merely distributing films of the war made in South Africa by other companies, notably by Warwick.⁴⁷ But later on he took a more active role in production. An article about Gibbons in October stated: 'He has three persons in Africa taking war pictures, one leaving there in about two weeks' time for an extended tour round the world in search of subjects'.⁴⁸ The figure of three persons again appeared in an advertisement by Walter Gibbons in December, which also mentioned Noble's name, stating: 'I have three photographers now in South Africa, my principal, C.R. Noble, being with Lord Roberts in Durban'.⁴⁹ The identity of the other two cameramen is not known, and I suspect that this may have been bluff, and perhaps, apart from Noble, Gibbons simply had an arrangement to acquire films shot by cameramen from other companies. (But this is speculation).

In late 1900 several films from the war were released by Gibbons' company, which had been shot during October and November, probably by Noble.⁵⁰

This late date – many people thought that the war was more or less over by June – means that Noble was the only cameraman (with the possible exception of Goldman, described below) to have filmed this middle stage of the war. The titles listed included the following three films:

The End of the War. This showed the Royal Canadian Regiment embarking on the ship ‘Idaho’ for Halifax, 1 October.⁵¹ The film had just arrived at Gibbons’ London offices at the time of this ad, 10 November.

In Pursuit of De Wet: Departure of General Knox’s Command. This showed the unit setting out from Stockholm, South Africa. Unknown date.⁵²

Funeral of the Late Prince Christian Victor at Pretoria. This event took place 1 November, and both Roberts and Kitchener were present.⁵³

In addition, several scenes showed the C.I.V. regiment in Cape Town, 7 October, prior to departing on the *Aurania*, and included the following four titles:⁵⁴

The C.I.V.’s at Cape Town. This film showed the men throwing their ammunition on heaps in the harbour, prior to departure.

Rifles to the Armoury. The men were depicted handing in their rifles to the ‘Armoured Sergeant’.

The C.I.V.’s Procession. This included the regiment’s cyclists (in khaki), and a captured Boer flag being displayed.

C.I.V.’s at Cape Town. The men were seen gathered in parade, to be seen off by Sir Alfred Milner (British High Commissioner for South Africa), who walked up the gangway with other VIPs.⁵⁵

Extraordinarily, a description of this filming as it took place has come to light, written by one of the members of the C.I.V. regiment, Erskine Childers. Childers wrote a book about his experiences in the war, published just a few weeks after his return to England (he later became a famous novelist). In this book he describes the scene at Cape Town on 7th October, as he and his regimental colleagues paraded at six a.m. and gave in their weaponry and kit preparatory to departure. He noted that in the afternoon:

‘At about three there was a great shouting and heaving of the crowd, and the High Commissioner came on the scene, and walked down the quay through a guard of honour which we and the Infantry had contributed to form, industriously kinematographed on his progress by a fat Jew. Several staff-officers were with Milner, and a grey-bearded gentleman, whom we guessed to be Sir Gordon Sprigg.’⁵⁶

Ignoring the apparently racist jibe (anti-Semitism was rife in this era, and among the British forces⁵⁷), the question is, was the Jewish cameraman he refers to Rider Noble? There are indications elsewhere that Noble was indeed Jewish, and somewhat plump.⁵⁸ An additional argument for it being Noble is that the film in question would seem to match the last title on Gibbons’ list above (the Milner film).

Incidentally, there was something of a trend for Jewish cameramen at this war, for three of Warwick's cameramen were also of this ethnicity: Joe Rosenthal, Edgar Hyman and Sidney Goldman. Indeed, one other possibility is that perhaps the cameraman seen by Childers was one of these men, though if so it could only have been Goldman (as Rosenthal had departed several months before, and Hyman, judging from photographs, could not be described as 'fat'). The likelihood is, though, that it was indeed Rider Noble. And though new to camerawork, he does seem to have worked 'industriously', as Childers states, and did well to have shot the films above, and had them distributed by Gibbons. In fact, though at the Boer War he was an inexperienced amateur (or at least a neophyte) after this period of filming in South Africa, Noble worked as a professional film cameraman in several other places over a number of years.⁵⁹

THE AMATEURS: 2. BENETT-STANFORD, HYMAN AND GOLDMAN

The Warwick Trading Company, a British film company managed by the American Charles Urban, put a considerable effort into filming the war. At one time or another Warwick had four cameramen in the field in South Africa: Edgar Hyman, John Benett-Stanford, Sydney Goldman and Joe Rosenthal, which was more than any other company. However, though there was this strong commitment, probably borne of Warwick's (and Charles Urban's) continuing interest in non-fiction, the first three operators listed here were amateurs. Indeed the operation to film the war began with sending out two of these men, and only two months later was the much more professional, Rosenthal, sent out (whom we shall cover later in this chapter).

John Montagu Benett-Stanford

We last encountered John Benett-Stanford (1870-1947) during the 1898 Omdurman campaign. In the interim he had done little filming, apart from taking a couple of shots on Madeira, where his family had a house, as well as sundry scenes such as a farmyard. When war loomed, Benett-Stanford managed to get himself appointed as a war correspondent for the *Western Morning News* (the same newspaper he'd worked for at Omdurman) and was included in the War Office's first list of approved correspondents of 29 September.⁶⁰

He contacted G.A. Smith for film equipment (Smith regularly supplied Warwick with technical and processing services), but Smith apparently sent him to the equipment manufacturer Prestwich from whom he bought an amount of expensive film gear.⁶¹ Stanford left Southampton 7 October on the steamer *Mexican* bound for Natal, which makes him the first cameraman based in England to leave, a week before Dickson and two weeks before Beevor.⁶²

On 10 November Stanford was near Belmont with Lord Methuen's force, apparently taking still photographs.⁶³ His earliest film taken at the front (and probably the very first film shot at the Boer War) seems to have been made on 12 November when he took two scenes: one of the Northumberland Fusiliers (the 'Fighting Fifth') making trenches at Orange River, and another of the

passing of an armoured train. These were released as a single 40 ft. film, entitled (lengthily), *The Fifth Northumberland Fusiliers Digging Entrenchments at Orange River, South Africa. The Passing of the Armoured Train* [5507].⁶⁴ Stanford must have despatched this double film very quickly, for it was back in England and developed on 5 December.⁶⁵ It is extant in the NFTVA, and offers a tantalisingly brief and evocative snapshot of this early stage in the war, though it also suggests Bennett-Stanford's lack of expertise in filming, in that both segments were cranked very slowly and are brief.

Stanford's next films were shot at the locations of important battles at the Modder River.⁶⁶ Some of these seem to have been made after the battle of Enslin, 8 December, according to the catalogue. One film, which survives, records a troop train carrying the Seaforth Highlanders over the Modder River (*Troops Passing Over Modder River By Train*, [5525]). This is a nicely framed shot, filmed from a high angle, and shows hundreds of troops riding in open coal trucks crossing on a temporary bridge erected in place of the one blown up by the Boers, with both ends of the train guarded by an armoured car and engine. Another scene, which does not survive, showed the Ambulance Corps attending the wounded on the battlefield after the Modder River battle (*Ambulance Corps at Work*, [5524]). As the Warwick catalogue noted: 'While this view was taken, sniping by the enemy was still in progress, and occasionally is noticed a cloud of dust thrown up by a stray bullet'.

At about this time Stanford filmed Lancers under the Earl of Airlie fording the Modder River after these troops had taken part in the battle at Enslin (*Lancers Crossing the Modder River*, [5523]).⁶⁷ Again this survives, and like the earlier title I mentioned, was cranked very slowly. The film offers an interesting detail on the state of British tactics in this war, for the lancers are indeed carrying old fashioned lances, an extraordinary anachronism when their opponents were armed with state-of-the-art Mauser rifles.

The first two of these Modder films arrived back in the UK by the end of the year, and were developed by G.A. Smith on 1 January.⁶⁸ The lancers film isn't listed in the Smith account book, and I surmise this may have been shot later, so despatched later too.⁶⁹ All four films were advertised for sale from January. The films were well received, one journalist writing that Stanford had been responsible for 'many of the best films' of the war seen to date in the UK, and that 'the pictures are interesting and novel'. He described three of the Stanford films as follows:

'One can see the armoured train rushing rapidly by, with the muzzles of guns projecting from its side. The train consists of only two carriages. One of the most vivid and striking pictures of the series, and also one of the most successful bioscope films ever taken, shows the Lancers under the Earl of Airlie fording the Modder River on their return from the Enslin engagement. Another extremely fine film depicts the hospital corps on the battlefield after the Modder River fight picking up the dead and wounded. The rapidity of movement is remarkable, and the celerity with which a wounded man is picked up and driven away in the

ambulance is a great compliment to the skill and energy of the Ambulance Corps.⁷⁰

The comment on the ‘rapidity of movement’ is interesting, and this perception was perhaps as much due to the films having been under-cranked by Stanford as to the actual speed of the ambulance men. In addition to the titles mentioned already, G.A. Smith’s account book has another couple of entries for films, presumably by Stanford too, these being listed as, *4.7 Gun*, and *Roberts Cape Town*. The first was filmed on 26 December, developed by Smith 27 January, and released by Warwick as *The Big 4.7 Inch Naval Gun in Action at Modder River Engagement Firing One Shell* [5539].⁷¹ The Roberts title was apparently unreleased.

In all therefore, Bennett-Stanford had managed to film fewer than half a dozen films during his time in South Africa. (In the circumstances it is lucky indeed that three of the titles survive). As he was filming the last of these, Warwick’s chief cameraman, Joseph Rosenthal, was *en route* to South Africa, and Rachael Low has suggested that the reason that Urban sent Rosenthal was that Bennett-Stanford had sent back so few films.⁷² However this is not credible, for Stanford’s films had not even arrived back in England when Rosenthal departed on 2 December, and I would suggest that Rosenthal was sent out in any case, because covering this war was surely a top priority for the company, meriting the presence of their top cameraman, and the only surprise is that he wasn’t sent earlier. What is entirely possible however, is that after Stanford’s films were received and developed in the UK between early December and early January, Warwick realised that he had not been very industrious, nor very competent (as I’ve mentioned, at least two of the titles were under-cranked), and at that point decided to dispense with his services. Certainly no more films of the Boer War by Stanford ever appeared, and he was effectively replaced as Warwick’s principal Boer War cameraman by Rosenthal when the latter started work in earnest in January 1900.⁷³

Edgar M. Hyman

By the outbreak of the Boer War Edgar M. Hyman (1871-1936) had already been associated with the film business for some time. During the 1890s he was the manager of the Empire Theatre of Varieties, Johannesburg, where magician Carl Hertz gave South Africa’s first film shows in May 1896.⁷⁴ Greatly impressed by this novelty, Hyman ordered a camera and projector, receiving a camera (from Charles Urban) by 1897. Hyman was undoubtedly making films by the following year, among which were street scenes in Johannesburg.

In September 1898 he claimed to have filmed President Kruger leaving his house in Pretoria *en route* to the Raadzaal, though Joseph Rosenthal (q.v.) stated that this film was his own work. Actually there seem to have been two films showing Kruger departing in his carriage, one of him leaving the Volksraad and the other leaving his residence.⁷⁵ Probably Rosenthal and Hyman filmed one apiece. What is certain is that in January 1899 Hyman, together with the Empire’s musical director, Dave Foote, gave a show of one of these and other films also, to the President himself and his guests at the

Residency in Pretoria, and Kruger was said to have been most impressed, especially with the film of himself. These films of the Transvaal's President were distributed by Warwick and were of great significance during the Boer War, for Kruger was a particular hate figure in Britain at this time (as we shall see when we come to deal with film exhibition).

When the Boer War loomed in the Autumn of 1899, Hyman had been visiting England for several months, where he regularly came to book acts for his music hall.⁷⁶ The coming conflict encouraged him to go back to South Africa to safeguard his interests there.⁷⁷ He departed Southampton 23 September on the *Norman*, along with a host of military personnel and war correspondents who were heading for the war zone.⁷⁸

This departure date, exactly two weeks before Bennett-Stanford embarked, makes Hyman (technically) the first cameraman to go to the war, though as a music-hall manager in South Africa he was not, of course, going there solely to shoot films. Nevertheless, camerawork was to be a major part of his life for the following few months, and next to Rosenthal, he was to be Warwick's most reliable and long-lasting cameraman. We know that before leaving on the *Norman* he had already agreed to film aspects of the war for Warwick, because Warwick reported that 'another operator left for the seat of trouble in company with several war correspondents, sailing three weeks ago' (this statement was published on 14 October, which is indeed three weeks after Hyman sailed).⁷⁹ Warwick then proclaimed that Hyman had, 'landed in Capetown [sic] several days before anyone else with like intentions sailed from Southampton'. This was a veiled reference to the company's rival W.K-L. Dickson; and Warwick boasted that, because their man was so fast off the block, Warwick would be able to furnish prints four weeks earlier than any other company.⁸⁰

On arrival Hyman headed straight for Johannesburg, but found that his Empire Theatre was closing that same evening in preparation for the coming hostilities, and he decided to return to Cape Town, with his company of performers.⁸¹ At least 16 artistes made the journey with him, which proved an eventful one, for their train suffered an accident on route, killing some of the passengers. But Hyman and his group arrived safely in Cape Town, and he soon found another venue, the Good Hope Hall, where his shows began from the 17 November, attracting large audiences.⁸² The hall though, proved unsuitable for variety shows, and Hyman closed after a couple of weeks. This loss was probably Warwick's gain, for it presumably meant that Hyman had more time to devote to filmmaking, and he told an interviewer in December that, 'I have been taking some very fine pictures for the Bioscope which I hope will interest you in London'.⁸³

Hyman was certainly in the right place to see a lot of activity, as thousands of British and Empire troops arrived in Cape Town in the following weeks to take part in the fighting inland. From November he recorded a variety of British and colonial regiments disembarking or marching through the city.⁸⁴ The arrival of the Scots' Guards at Cape Town, 14 November, may have been one of his first films (incidentally, this arrival is significant, for another cameraman,

Walter Beevor (q.v.) was with the Guards). Hyman also filmed the Northumberland Fusiliers at Cape Town, 23 November. He seems also to have been commissioned to take still photographs, for some photos attributed to him appeared in a popular illustrated periodical, *The King*, showing the arrival of General Charles Warren at Cape Town (fresh from his defeats on the Natal front).⁸⁵ A couple of Hyman's extant films (held in the NFTVA) give a flavour of his production at this time:

The Australian Mounted Rifles Marching Through Cape Town (23 Dec 1899).

This shows the troops riding down the street as crowds wave to them. The film was shot from the side of the road at head height, and interestingly, Hyman (or someone very like him) appears in shot, suggesting that he was working with an assistant to crank the camera.⁸⁶

Arrival and Reception of Lord Roberts at Capetown (10 Jan 1900). Depicts a guard of honour arriving, then Roberts inspecting them and driving off in his carriage.

Another title in the NFTVA is less positively attributable to Hyman: *Arrival of Wounded at Hospital Ship* (March 1900), shot from beside a ship's gangway, showing the wounded going aboard. This is a good example of how even such apparently mundane films as troops arriving and departing might have more significance than is immediately apparent. This film shows the sacrifice that soldiers were making in this war for Britain, some of the wounded being in stretchers, some limping, and three – significantly – have their right arms in slings. This was a common place for a wound among the British in this war,⁸⁷ for the arm was vulnerable to Boer snipers when aiming a rifle from cover.

If the last mentioned film was really made by Hyman in March, it must have been at the beginning of the month, for he left Cape Town in the first week in March to join General Clements' brigade at Colesburg, a town on the railway line to Bloemfontein. It seems that Hyman had been appointed an officer on Clements' staff, like his colleague Rosenthal, who was also temporarily assigned to Clements' brigade which was transporting portable pontoon bridges.⁸⁸ This was part of French's operation under Lord Roberts, pushing north towards the Orange River. Hyman and Rosenthal seem to have joined forces here for a time (see Rosenthal section).⁸⁹

There is some confusion over which film format Hyman was using during the war. Thelma Gutsche reproduces a picture of him in uniform during the Boer War holding a case for what she states is a Biokam, a 17.5 mm amateur film camera.⁹⁰ Another photograph shows him on location, holding the same or similar camera case, but with a mule carrying a 'Bioscope' case (i.e. 35 mm camera), as well as a tripod (apparently a lightweight type) and another camera case. [Fig. 13] This latter photograph is reproduced on the same page of a photographic journal as one of Rosenthal, and both are standing next to the identically loaded mule.⁹¹ The pictures were reproduced elsewhere too. [Fig. 12] My suspicion is that both these photographs were taken when the two men met near the Orange River, and that the loaded mule, and therefore

the camera equipment, was Rosenthal's. Perhaps Hyman was indeed working just with the Biokam which he was holding.

But would Hyman really have filmed for Warwick with such a small camera? I suggest that he might well have done so after he left Cape Town when on the march, for such small equipment and films would have made travelling easier. Other Boer War cameramen had to wrestle with large amounts of equipment: Dickson had great problems with the huge Biograph camera,⁹² Beevor's gear occupied a cape cart, and while Rosenthal managed to strap his two 35 mm. cameras to one mule during filming forays, this still meant that he needed another animal for himself and his personal effects. For release, presumably the 17.5 mm. Biokam images could have been blown-up by Warwick to 35 mm.⁹³

It is unclear what Hyman did after meeting Rosenthal at the Orange River in March, or indeed during April and May. Will Day says he went to film with the Boers, though no such films appear in the Warwick catalogue; alternatively he could have gone back to Cape Town, returning to the front later; or equally, Hyman may have carried on with the British advance. A photograph of correspondents waiting in the road into Kroonstad, shows two cinematograph cameras, one of which was presumably Rosenthal's, but the other could have been Hyman's, and possibly Hyman himself is one of the figures seen standing there too. (For more on this episode, see Rosenthal section).

Hyman was back with the troops in Pretoria in early June of 1900 (along with colleague Rosenthal) for he is credited in the Warwick catalogue for a film *Entry of Troops into Pretoria* [5725]. This was the last that both cameramen would film of the war, Rosenthal returning to London (and then on to film the Boxer events in China) and Hyman presumably back to the now British-controlled Johannesburg, though may have done a little more war-related filming.⁹⁴ Despite being a part-timer, Hyman had proved reliable and energetic, and should go down as Warwick's second most important Boer War cameraman after Rosenthal.

Charles Sydney Goldman

Though the main set-piece battles of the war were over by mid-1900 and many correspondents left, it soon became clear that the war was not over. The Boers failed to surrender, and so the British war effort had to be maintained, even stepped up, and more troops were eventually in southern Africa than had been involved in any previous British campaign, these men including many volunteers from all walks of life. There was therefore some interest 'back home' to hear and see news from the field about these thousands of men, and Warwick presumably felt this pressure.⁹⁵ But their chief cameraman Rosenthal had left South Africa with the bulk of correspondents around June, so Warwick had to find an alternative, and this they did, announcing:

'Important Notice. Mr. Sydney Goldman has replaced Mr. Rosenthal on our War Staff in South Africa, and operates with Ld. Kitchener's Army at the Front. Mr. Hyman will also continue to photographically record

important events in connection with the Transvaal War in South Africa.⁹⁶

Who was this Sydney Goldman? John Barnes notes that he was a newspaper reporter, though gives no further details. A little more is revealed in lists of war correspondents at the front, for these included two mentions of the name 'Goldmann' and one of 'C.S. Godmann'.⁹⁷ It turns out that there were two Goldmann (or Goldman) brothers, both, confusingly, war correspondents, and one of them was indeed the man acting as Warwick's cameraman, Charles Sydney Goldman (1868-1958), his brother being called Richard.⁹⁸ Until recently he has not been noticed by film historians mainly because Sydney was not his first but his second name.

C.S. Goldman was born in Burghersdorp, Cape Province, in 1868, and became an expert in mining in the 1890s, based in both the UK and South Africa.⁹⁹ During the Boer War Goldman acted as correspondent for the *Standard* and *Telegraph* newspapers, initially with Buller's forces in Natal and then with General French on the western front.¹⁰⁰ How did Goldman become a cameraman? I would suggest that, as both Rosenthal and Hyman were also with French's army on the march to Pretoria, probably Goldman met one of the Warwick cameramen in these weeks and they discussed the possibility of Goldman becoming a 'stringer'.

John Barnes suggests that Goldman probably had had no previous experience of film work, though was perhaps briefed by Rosenthal before the latter's departure in June, both of which seem reasonable suppositions; and I suspect that Rosenthal left his film camera with Goldman, presumably with the permission of Warwick. The company may have felt that, while it was not worth sending a company cameraman from the U.K. to cover this tail end of the war, a freelancer like Goldman was just what was required, at little extra cost, for he was on the spot in any case.

Other factors recommending Goldman were that he was knowledgeable about South Africa, having been born and brought up there, and he knew the country well from his mining work. More importantly, he was a skilled photographer, to judge from the many stills (presumably his own work) reproduced in his book, *With General French and the Cavalry in South Africa* (1902). This volume is illustrated by over 100 half-tone plates, which are technically competent, well composed images.¹⁰¹

Unlike so many other correspondents' accounts of wars, which are full of their own personal actions at the front, Goldman's is a non-anecdotal account, not mentioning himself, but merely detailing the campaign. In this case this is somewhat unfortunate, for Goldman fails to write anything about his filming activities.¹⁰² Actually though, it seems there was not much filming. There is only one film credited to Goldman in the Warwick catalogue, *The Annexation of the Two South African Republics*. This was a record of a formal ceremony by Lord Roberts which took place 25 October 1900: the hoisting of the Royal Standard in Pretoria, followed by Roberts awarding medals to soldiers.¹⁰³ (The film title was a misnomer: actually only the Transvaal was annexed, not the

Orange Free State). Goldman may have filmed other scenes, but there seems to be no further record of them. In any case, in early November Goldman went back to his home in Johannesburg (the town was now back in British control) and Warwick's coverage of the Boer War ceased. Perhaps this was because the company's executives felt that the conflict was now off the news agenda, or perhaps because the British authorities no longer tolerated cameramen in the war zone (see **Box** on censorship above).¹⁰⁴

Goldman's brief career as a cameraman also ended at this point, another of these amateur operators who filmed for a while and then dropped out of view. As mentioned, he had taken over as cameraman in South Africa from Joseph Rosenthal, and the latter's Boer War work will be the subject of the following section, along with that of W.K.-L. Dickson. These two men – Rosenthal and Dickson – were examples of a new breed of professional cameramen who were appearing at this time, and helping to re-shape the future of non-fiction filmmaking, especially the filming of war and conflict.

THE PROFESSIONALS: 1. DICKSON'S BIOGRAPH IN BATTLE

By 1899 the Biograph company was probably the leading film company in the world, given its relatively high capitalisation and its multinational character, with principal branches in the United States and Britain. It is an indication of Biograph's major financial resources at this time that during almost exactly the same period that the company's cameraman, Ackerman, was filming the war in the Philippines, another crew of three people was following the war in South Africa. This crew was led by William Kennedy-Laurie Dickson (1860-1935), a man who had played a major part in the invention of moving pictures, and was now carving out a role for himself as a leading non-fiction cameraman and director.¹⁰⁵ Dickson, together with his assistants, William Cox and Jonathan Seward, filmed in South Africa from October 1899 to July 1900, and Dickson himself also took stills.¹⁰⁶ Their assignment began on the Natal front, before shifting to follow the new British advance from the Cape up through Bloemfontein and finishing in Johannesburg and Pretoria.

Dickson and his crew faced significant problems in filming in South Africa, in gaining permits to film, and also in managing to film aspects of this elusive war using the vast Biograph camera and its attendant equipment. In the circumstances they managed to obtain a fair amount of relevant footage, and even managed a couple of experiments with film technique which I describe below.

Their is the best documented of any enterprise to film war during the early era of the movies. Dickson published a well known book about his experiences as cameraman, *The Biograph in Battle* (1901), which is a rich and detailed account of the expedition in diary form.¹⁰⁷ Until recently this was the main source of information on the enterprise, but myself and other historians have unearthed new sources and revisited older ones which add important details to Dickson's account. Significant works have appeared by John Barnes, Richard Brown and others.¹⁰⁸ A series of contemporary articles

by Dickson has come to light, as well as, most surprisingly, diary entries written by Cox during the war, which I found in the National Army Museum.¹⁰⁹

These and other sources have been skilfully put together by Paul Spehr into a full narrative of the expedition in a forthcoming biography of Dickson. Because these other accounts are available, I will be keeping my description of Biograph at the Boer War relatively short, and basing it largely on the summary account by a previous historian of the cinema, Thelma Gutsche (to whom much praise is due) along with additional details from some of the above sources, and some new details that I have found.¹¹⁰

On the *Dunottar Castle*

Dickson's crew left Britain on 14 October 1899 (three days after the declaration of war) on the *Dunottar Castle*. On the same ship were General Sir Redvers Buller, his officers and troops, as well as several journalists, including a young Winston Churchill going out as war correspondent for the *Morning Post*.¹¹¹ The *Dunottar* took fifteen days to Cape Town and during the voyage Dickson filmed as much as he could, though not too successfully. General Buller was notably camera shy, and only through great persistence did Dickson manage to get a shot of him on deck.¹¹²

One major problem which was also to bedevil the crew on land, was that the camera was enormous and very cumbersome to prepare. At one point they found that the *Dunottar* was going to pass another ship (the *Nineveh*) which was carrying colonial troops bound for the war – significant passengers indeed, exemplifying the Empire's wider involvement – and a suitable scene to film, Dickson would have thought, but they could not set up the 'cumbersome' camera (as Churchill called it, who witnessed this incident) in time to capture it.¹¹³ Another fellow passenger, Earl de la Warr, also noticed the ungainly size of the camera, and expressed doubts about its ability to film events:

'I must not forget to mention that we have a cinematograph on board; an enormous machine which has to be present at any cost at all the actions. Those are the orders, but I think it is doubtful whether they will be carried out. The gentlemen in charge of it are not very military in appearance, and are, I believe, quite new to this kind of work.'¹¹⁴

Filming the campaign

The ship made land at Cape Town, and Dickson filmed Buller coming ceremoniously down the gangplank the following morning, this from a camera platform he had quickly improvised on shore.¹¹⁵ Dickson and his crew didn't tarry long in Cape Town; but due to military restrictions he found it impossible to proceed to the western front and decided to go on to Natal instead. He and his two assistants sailed on to Durban, and there bought a Cape cart, horses, and provisions for the front. The Biograph camera, owing to its enormous weight, was mounted on to the back of the cart 'so as to be able to fire at a moment's notice'.¹¹⁶

Dickson had trouble obtaining the necessary permission to film at the firing line (he met with much opposition from staff-officers), but eventually

succeeded in getting a pass from Buller. On 8 December 1899 the Biograph crew joined the Naval Brigade, a force recruited from the British Navy as a means of providing Buller's force with long-range artillery (4.7 inch guns). In the area between the settlements of Frere and Chieveley, Dickson's crew accompanied the guns of the ships *Forte* and *Terrible* which were firing on the Boer fighters from the tops of hills ('kopjes'). The ground was steep and rough, and Dickson and his assistants had great difficulty in getting their cart into position. They were often at real risk, and the Biograph camera offered a large target to the sharp-shooting enemy. [Fig. 8 and 9] At one point Dickson only escaped death by a whisker as a shell exploded nearby. Nevertheless they succeeded in securing films of the British guns firing during hostilities, and of daily life in the British camps. A remarkable film which survives shows a view of the British retreat from Spion Kop, as troops including the ambulance corps ford the Tugela river.¹¹⁷

The Naval Brigade men were welcoming to Dickson and crew, and some of the gunners became quite affectionate toward their media colleagues, one officer writing, '...our Biograph friends from home were taking views of us and they took two of myself and my guns firing'.¹¹⁸ One officer in particular, Lord Dundonald, was helpful, and informed Dickson of military movements and engagements which he might film. Dundonald even set up a unit of cavalry to charge past the Biograph camera, dismount and appear to engage some Boers.¹¹⁹ With this action, Dickson was making the same kind of 'arranged' subject that Rosenthal produced with his 'skirmish' film, and that Holmes and Ackerman were making in the Philippines (and stills photographers were doing too. See Fig. 3]). Though Dundonald had been so supportive, other officers were obstructive: in the course of just a couple of days Dickson was confronted by two senior officers, one of whom, a certain Colonel Reeves, waylaid the crew with loud and indignant challenges, 'you must fall out', 'who are you?',¹²⁰

In February 1900, Cox and Seward became ill with enteric fever, and for a time Dickson had to work with only an untrained sailor to help, but he continued to film as the British forces learned to overcome their Boer adversaries. The way to Ladysmith was finally secured at the end of the month, and on 3 March Dickson filmed the British entry into the besieged town.¹²¹ In a photograph of this event, the Biograph cart can be discerned at the side of the street as the relieving troops pass by.¹²²

Soon after this, Dickson himself contracted enteric fever and the crew returned to Durban, where he partly recovered. Towards the end of April 1900 they sailed back to Cape Town, the idea being to join General Roberts' campaign in Bloemfontein. But again they needed to obtain a permit, and while waiting for this to be granted the crew filmed at the Cape, and also called on Cecil Rhodes, with whom the British Biograph company already had had some dealings.¹²³ Rhodes gave Dickson a letter of introduction to Lord Kitchener.

Dickson and his crew managed to reach Bloemfontein by the end of May, and filmed the annexation ceremony. Then onward to Kroonstad and Pretoria, and

on the 6 June they ‘biographed’ the raising of the Union Jack over the Transvaal capital. This was a crucial, indeed *the* crucial part of Dickson’s entire mission, for he had received an instruction from the company’s executives on England that, above everything else, he must film the raising of the British flag at Pretoria. In the event, Dickson seems to have set this shot up artificially with a larger flag (see Rosenthal section). After this success, he sent a cable back to Biograph in June confirming that he had indeed secured the much-wanted shot.¹²⁴ His cable also included two extra words: ‘Roberts helping’.

These two words are very significant, because they indicate that General Roberts was offering help in Dickson’s attempts to record the war for the British (and world) public. Roberts was something of an expert in media management, particularly when it came to promoting his own image. He had met his match in Dickson, who was a past master at capturing celebrities on film. So at this point, with the war apparently almost over, Dickson spent some time filming Roberts in suitable scenes.¹²⁵ Some of these were totally posed, though in one case events worked to Dickson’s advantage: the day after the flag-raising was filmed, he had his camera in position with Lord Roberts and his staff just as a despatch-rider rode up with papers, and Roberts was photographed in the act of opening them.¹²⁶ What had happened is that, fortuitously, a party of C.I.V. troops arrived with despatches about casualties. [Fig. 10] As one of the C.I.V. later noted:

‘we... delivered our despatches to Lord Roberts himself, just as the ubiquitous and estimable biograph was holding a seance over the person of the Commander-in-Chief and his Staff. And thus, should the film survive, a memento of our adventurous ride will appear in due course on the famous screen of the Palace Theatre long before any of us see England again.’¹²⁷

Incidentally, this shows that ordinary soldiers were already aware of cinema, and were interested in being filmed (so becoming part of history, as it were). Dickson also filmed Roberts meeting with Baden-Powell, the hero of the siege of Mafeking. At this time Dickson attempted to follow the British forces as they pursued Boer guerrillas, but it was a hopeless task, and the crew left Pretoria for Johannesburg, here filming scenes at the mines, native war-dances and so on. Then onward to Cape Town, and on the 13 July 1900 they sailed for England on the *Carisbrooke Castle* after what Dickson described as ‘ten months’ fever-heat of excitement, toil and peril’ in South Africa.

Problems and achievements

This expedition had been a major investment for the British Biograph company. In mid 1900 the company reported to its shareholders about the ‘heavy expenses’ they had borne to keep Dickson and his crew in the war zone.¹²⁸ The expenses would have been less and the task easier if the Biograph equipment had been smaller. Dickson and his crew had brought out what was probably the Model A Biograph camera, one of the biggest film cameras ever used for actuality work. Dickson’s book records some of the difficulties of dealing with this size of camera, but if anything he underplays

this issue. One of his colleagues later stressed the truly gargantuan task of dealing with the ‘heavy and unsuitable apparatus’ in South Africa, with the camera weighing 240 lbs, the tripod 110 lbs, and four boxes of batteries weighing 1,200 lbs:

‘The whole of this enormous weight had to be driven up mountains and over broken rocky ground in a Cape cart by two wild horses, often in intense heat or rain and frequently under fire.’¹²⁹

The camera clearly was far too big and heavy for such an assignment, and when in actual use the size and noise it generated made it very noticeable. The crew were desperate for a smaller camera which would make easier their task of filming a highly mobile war. In March 1900 a frustrated William Cox cabled to London ‘to say that a more portable apparatus was indispensable’.¹³⁰ The company was working on the problem, and a smaller hand-cranked model was in development. Biograph cabled back to Dickson’s team that ‘the long promised camera to work by hand was already on the way from America...’¹³¹ In April the crew expected to receive the new portable camera in Cape Town, though it seems that it never arrived.¹³²

It is quite an achievement that Dickson and his crew in South Africa managed to record what they did with such an encumbrance, for the Boer war was, after all, a guerrilla campaign, with an almost invisible enemy – the world’s first conflict so dependent on long-range weaponry. On top of all this the crew had to deal with sickness, uncooperative officers, and other practical problems. In the circumstances they did surprisingly well. Their films do capture British soldiers on the battlefield, sometimes during actual military operations. There are even some technical experiments: *Repairing the Broken Bridge at Frere* includes a pan, and the crew used a telephoto lens to try to capture images on film of this spread-out war (though it didn’t work as planned). This the only proven attempt in the early period to use such a lens, and it is no surprise that it was Dickson who did it. His expertise in both the technology and ‘art’ of non-fiction filmmaking, meant that he could turn his hand to almost anything.

There is one further achievement by Dickson in filming this war, and that is in respect of setting up or ‘arranging’ shots for the camera. Dickson had been doing this kind of ‘directing’ of non-fiction subjects for some time, setting up posed scenes with celebrities for filming purposes. Here in South Africa he managed something similar, except under war-time conditions. We have mentioned earlier three examples of such arranging: the gallop past by Dundonald’s men, complete with a mock skirmish with Boers; the scenes of Roberts in Pretoria; and the filming of the large British flag being raised instead of the small, genuine one. There were other examples of arranging during this war, including among still photographers. [Fig. 3]. Ackerman at about the same time in the Philippines was doing a similar kind of arranging of moving images with US troops. But it seems that the American troops were far more co-operative in this regard than the British – for as Dickson tells us in his book, several British officers were actively hostile to the presence of his film camera, whether or not any active ‘arranging’ was asked for. In these circumstances Dickson’s task was inevitably tough, and he did well to get

what he got. Furthermore, being the professional that he was, Dickson's footage was technically better and more consistent than that of Ackerman, who was a newcomer to the camera game.

THE PROFESSIONALS: 2. JOSEPH ROSENTHAL

As we have seen, the Warwick Trading Company at one time or another had four cameramen covering the Boer War. The most experienced and best known of these was Joseph Rosenthal (1864-1946), who really made his reputation in filming this war, and this was the springboard for a career involving years of travel round the world as one of the first professional news cameramen.¹³³ The professionalism was evident even at this early stage in his career, and distinguished him from his fellows at Warwick and from other cameramen at the war apart from Dickson, for his work was more extensive and often better shot than that of these amateurs.

Largely thanks to Rosenthal, Warwick filmed and released more films from the war than any other company. By the end of the war, their catalogue (July/August 1902) listed no fewer than 111 films related to the 'Transvaal War', though many of these were of troops back home.¹³⁴ Of those shot in South Africa, Rosenthal accounted for more than any of his colleagues, with perhaps 40 films. The figure would no doubt have been higher if some of his films had not been lost in transit (as we shall see), but here too Warwick had made the best plan they could, and had a special arrangement with Donald Currie of the Castle Line of steamers to return films to the UK.¹³⁵ Warwick also made a special effort to gain official approval for the enterprise, and was the only film company to be included in a list of officially approved correspondents, appearing as, 'Cinematograph – Warwick Trading Co. Ltd. – Messrs. Rosenthal, Hyman'.¹³⁶ Warwick trumpeted this approved status as, 'the first instance in history where the cinematograph is officially recognised by the War Office', which was almost certainly true.¹³⁷

Warwick's forward planning – both in arrangements for the shipping home of their war film negatives, and in their care in officially registering their cameramen – reflects an increasing professionalism in the company. However this 'professionalisation' was still an ongoing process, and was undercut by a lingering belief in amateur cameramen, and in a half-hearted commitment to their experienced professional man. As a result, Rosenthal was sent belatedly to cover the war, two months after Warwick's first amateurs, Hyman and Bennett-Stanford, were sent out. But professional or not, Rosenthal's task was not easy, for he faced repeated official restrictions on his movements, and it is to his credit that he persisted, and managed to cover the war in a quite effective manner.

Rosenthal's pre-war work

Rosenthal had come into the business almost by accident. He was from a humble Jewish background in east London, and initially found work as a pharmacist. But in the mid nineties his sister was employed by the Maguire and Baucus film company, and Joseph joined her there, staying on when, in

1898, the company became the Warwick Trading Company under Charles Urban. Urban steered the company from sole reliance on film distribution into film production too, and found in Rosenthal a skilled photographic technician and cameraman. The one-time east ender was sent on various filming assignments in the UK and Europe, and then as far afield as South Africa.

During his 1898 South African trip (which provided valuable experience for his Boer War work), Rosenthal obtained two very news-worthy items: a scene of the Johannesburg 'Zarps' (police) who at the time were brutalising the Cape Coloured population; and also an 'animated portrait' of President Kruger which showed him, as the Warwick catalogue put it, 'as he leaves his residence and steps into his carriage ... The well-known figure of "Oom Paul" is unmistakably delineated'. Rosenthal later said of his film of Kruger: 'That was the only one ever taken of him in South Africa. I had to approach him through his son, Chard Kruger, as the old man would never speak English.'¹³⁸ The first claim was untrue, for Warwick itself distributed another, similar film of Kruger departing from the Volksraad (see Hyman section). In any case these films were important in depicting Kruger, the key figure on the Boer side.

The War

Early in 1899, Rosenthal was apparently sent again to South Africa, on the SS *Carisbrooke Castle* to record the voyage to the Cape.¹³⁹ Thus when the Boer War began later that year, Rosenthal had already been in South Africa twice and was therefore uniquely qualified to cover the conflict. It is somewhat strange therefore that Warwick initially relied on two other men to film the war, Hyman and Bennett-Stanford, neither of whom was a 'professional' cameraman. While these two arrived in South Africa in October, Rosenthal himself, now dubbed Warwick's 'head operator', didn't even depart for the seat of war until 2 December. He travelled out on the *Avondale Castle*, bound for Durban in Natal.¹⁴⁰

Rosenthal was well equipped with film cameras and film stock, and equipment for stills photography also, for as well as working for Warwick, he was also taking photographs for the *Illustrated London News*, which were also used for illustrating the Warwick catalogue. (Many of Rosenthal's glass negatives of the war survive). It was stated at the time of Rosenthal's departure, that he was travelling:

'...with Government permission to photograph all incidents on board the troopship during the voyage to South Africa, also to accompany the troops and photograph everything of interest transpiring on the march, including camp life, skirmishes, etc.'¹⁴¹

It seems from this quotation as if 'Government permission' had granted for his entire mission, but in fact permission to film still needed to be obtained from the military command in the war zone, and this involved Rosenthal in something of a maze of bureaucracy, as we shall see.

Arriving by the turn of the year, Rosenthal initially went to the Natal front (in the east). He later recalled being at the second crossing of the Tugela in the

middle of January, and at the British defeat at Spion Kop the following week, where 'a lot of my friends were killed'.¹⁴² Rosenthal made at least one film of General Buller's forces, *General Buller's Transport Train* – a film which survives, though may not have been released at the time.¹⁴³ This was apparently the only film he made of Buller's forces, and his other films in Natal were not shot with the British forces at the front. For example, he shot a film released as *Scene on Mr N. Smit's Ostrich Farm, Impanzi, Natal* along with another film of the ostrich farm, *Driving the Ostriches*. Then he shot a view from a train on the line from Durban to Ladysmith, and three films of British forces in the port of Durban.¹⁴⁴

That he had filmed mainly non-war films in Natal suggests that things were not going well for him there. Perhaps he was barred from the front by the censors, as was to happen to him later. In any case, commander Redvers Buller was suffering setbacks in Natal, and several correspondents seem to have given him up as a lost cause in early 1900 and travelled west to join the other British front. Rosenthal joined them.

In Kimberley: arranging action; filming the Boers

Rosenthal seems to have managed to get to the neighbourhood of Kimberley at this point, and made a very interesting film with the British cavalry, later released by Warwick as *A Skirmish With the Boers Near Kimberley*. This film, which survives, was clearly set up or arranged *in situ* (as the catalogue suggests, for it uses the word 'portray' in its description).¹⁴⁵ The film is in three parts, and shows the troops setting up their weapons to feign an attack on the Boers. It begins with a scene depicting, 'The scouts in pursuit of the Boers', with the mounted troops riding up and past camera. Then in the second part (shot over a hedge) the troops gallop towards us, their leader brandishing a sword(!); they stop dramatically, and set up Maxim guns pointing directly towards the camera. In the third part the troops ride up, dismount to fire a fusillade, and then get back on their horses and ride off. Viewers today would immediately realise that the second part of this film in particular could not possibly have been shot on a real field of battle because Rosenthal would have been in the middle of the crossfire. (A point which I discuss in Chapter 2 in relation to fakes). Nevertheless, it is a very dramatic shot.

The film is also notable for depicting the outmoded tactics still being employed by the British: notably the officer brandishing a sword, and the troops shooting a fusillade, in contrast to the Boers with their free-fire technique (using the latest Mauser rifles). But the real interest of *Skirmish With the Boers* as a film is that Rosenthal, somewhat like Ackerman in the Philippines, was shooting non-fiction scenes by 'arranging' the action, and the two cameramen were doing this at about the same time too. (Though it seems that Ackerman was a more consistent exponent of the technique).

It may have been about this time that Rosenthal filmed with the Boers themselves. Warwick later released two films of the enemy forces credited to Rosenthal: one entitled, *War Supplies and Provisions Arriving at a Boer Laager By a Train of Ox Teams* and another (probably filmed at the same time) also showing an ox team, *A Boer Supply Crossing the Veldt*. I suggest

that, while there is no indication of location in the catalogue, these were, like the ‘skirmish’ film, shot near Kimberley. My only evidence is that in the Will Day collection is a pass issued to Rosenthal to film with the Boers in Qriqualand West (an area west of Kimberley).¹⁴⁶

In any case, this was quite a coup for Rosenthal, for Warwick stated, correctly, of the *War Supplies* film that it was, ‘One of a very few pictures secured on the Boer side’.¹⁴⁷ Indeed these two scenes might have been the *only* films ever taken on the Boer side (though Boer prisoners were filmed). This achievement was not out of character for Rosenthal, for as well as being highly professional he was independent too, and interested in showing various aspects of a conflict. He was again to exhibit this independent spirit later in the year in China, as we shall see in my discussion of his work at the Boxer Uprising.

Obtaining permission

At about this point Rosenthal seems to have come away from the front, to Port Elizabeth.¹⁴⁸ It may have been at this time that he filmed half a dozen shots of troop arrivals at Port Elizabeth, and perhaps he also filmed one departure scene which survives, a high angle view entitled *Troops Leaving Port Elizabeth Jetty*. Such arrivals and returns were scarcely what Rosenthal had come to South Africa to film, but there was not much else he could do right then. He had returned to the coast to get filming permission to go to where the fighting was taking place, but this authorization proved difficult to obtain.¹⁴⁹ In recently discovered extracts from some of his letters back to Warwick, published in a rare photographic journal, he notes that by this stage (this would be about February 1900) he had already been to the front twice – presumably meaning once to Natal and once to the neighbourhood of Kimberley – but he complained that his further progress was being thwarted by British military officials:

‘I am beginning to think that my third trip down here will have to be recorded a failure, owing to the many spokes put in my wheel by the various officials, who should be most willing to grant their permission for me to get to the front to procure true pictures of the various events connected with the present war, the reproduction of which are of such interest to the British public.’¹⁵⁰

In Port Elizabeth, Rosenthal complained in the same article, he had been shunted from pillar to post as he attempted to go up to film with General French near the Orange or Modder Rivers. No reply to his telegraphed requests for permission came from French. Then he made a long journey inland to Naauwpoort to see a British ‘Commandant’ (officer) who could supposedly give him the requisite approval, that night sleeping, as he wrote, ‘...on the dusty ground, with nothing but my waterproof for a cover... and my camera for a head-rest’.¹⁵¹

Rosenthal was then advised to travel further inland to De Aar to see another Commandant, and he did as much. (A Warwick film *From Naauwpoort to De Aar*, taken from an armoured train, may have been filmed during this frustrating trip.) Again he slept rough, but then, after arrival, was told that it

was a mistake and permission must rather be granted in Cape Town. Frustrated and dishevelled Rosenthal set off for the Cape, and by this time the pressure was starting to tell:

'I tell you I felt sick of the business... I should have felt most embarrassed [sic] to have you or any of my friends see me after this trip. You would have taken me for some worn-out tramp dressed in dirty kharki. Oh, the pleasures of photography !'¹⁵²

He started back: first by train to Port Elizabeth and then by steamer round to the Cape.¹⁵³ At this point he seems to have become so fed up that he wrote to Warwick that 'unless I get my pass, which I anticipate receiving to-morrow, I shall return home by the next Castle steamer'.¹⁵⁴ In the event this did not prove necessary, and in a letter to Warwick dated 21 February (others are undated) he stated:

'Just saw the Press Censor. He states that there are no objections to me going to the front, and that I shall receive my pass to-morrow. My luck is on the up-turn at last, so you may expect some most interesting films if these are at all possible to be procured. Hoorah! Send me another £100 and 10,000 feet of film.'¹⁵⁵

These extracts from Rosenthal's letters are revealing. They suggest a man who was passionate about his work but perhaps not someone who was as adept or subtle as he might be in dealing with authorities. One also wonders if his time filming with the Boers had told against him? However, General Roberts was known to be relatively 'light' on regulating correspondents, and I suspect that Rosenthal was benefiting from this new regime.

Back to the front: a mobile cameraman

In any case Rosenthal now had his pass, and he was temporarily assigned to General Clements' brigade under General French's overall command, which was transporting portable pontoon bridges. His first film from this period of the war may have been *Pontoons and Guns En Route for Orange River*.¹⁵⁶ Edgar Hyman, who was also commissioned as an officer under Clements, seems to have joined forces with Rosenthal at the Orange River, and as if to celebrate the meeting, Hyman filmed Rosenthal crossing the pontoon bridge, carrying his Bioscope camera and tripod.¹⁵⁷ From the Orange River crossing, Roberts' army headed for the interior of the Orange Free State, and Rosenthal went with them, following the troops to the victory at Paardeberg in the middle of February.

Rosenthal had devised a fairly portable kit of equipment for covering the war. He had a tent, 'portable dark room', and a few chemicals for testing a small piece of film before sending it home.¹⁵⁸ His film gear included two Warwick Bioscope film cameras, models A and B, the one loaded with 650 ft. of film, and the other carrying 165 ft. (less than 3 minutes). Either was portable enough to be carried by hand (this being in marked contrast to Biograph's monster camera). Still, with his other equipment, food and provisions, the total

load was fairly substantial. Sensible packing was therefore essential in order to allow him to film.

Any documentary crew knows that portability in equipment must somehow be combined with comprehensiveness, and these seemingly incompatible objectives are reconciled by splitting the gear into what is required for day-to-day filming, with the main supplies kept at base (the bulk of the film stock, food etc). Rosenthal had developed a system for achieving just this. His main means of transport was a 'Cape cart', which acted as his 'base', carrying supplies etc. But to get closer to the action for filming he rode off with two mules, one carrying himself, and the other his cameras, films etc, leaving the cart at base. Rosenthal's system was summarised by a writer of the time:

'When reconnoitring or scouting the cameras were slung over the back of one mule, the other being mounted by the operator who accompanied the troops, while the assistant watched the balance of the outfit in camp and reloaded a relay instrument ready in case of accident.'¹⁵⁹

Incidentally, this is a rare mention of Rosenthal's assistant, elsewhere referred to as his 'negro attendant'.¹⁶⁰ The fact that this assistant was actually loading Rosenthal's camera (a skilled job in these early days of bioscope cameras) shows that he was acting as a proper assistant cameraman, surely one of the first black camera assistants in history. That he remains nameless is typical of the general 'invisibility' of blacks during this war, though recent historical writing assigns the black African populations quite a significant role in the war.

By travelling on mules, with his assistant keeping an eye on the base cart or camp, Rosenthal could be especially mobile, sometimes moving, as he boasted, 'as quickly, and very often quicker, than the army'. He added with some pride: 'Thus I was in Bloemfontein before Lord Roberts arrived there'.¹⁶¹ Another source states that Rosenthal, 'rode all the way in the front of the British army through Bloemfontein, Kroonstad, and Pretoria'.¹⁶² Rosenthal's portable, pared-down kit of filming equipment was clearly working well, and he must be one of the first field cameramen to have so skilfully mastered the logistics of location shooting.

Bloemfontein: lost footage; railway filming

But for a while Rosenthal didn't need to be mobile. On 13 March 1900 Bloemfontein, the capital of the Orange Free State, surrendered to Lord Roberts, and the army remained in the town for several weeks in March and April as Roberts consolidated his position. Thus Rosenthal had time to have his portrait taken by a photographer in the town called 'Deale', in full military attire with his stills camera case by his side, for once looking reasonably presentable (though even here in the studio he is scarcely as neatly turned out as colleague Hyman).

Rosenthal filmed several scenes around Bloemfontein at this time, including one showing the Cameron Highlanders entering the town [5639] and the Coldstream Guards leaving it [5663].¹⁶³ A point of interest in the latter film was

that it included a famous American scout called Burnham, one of the heroes of the campaign, Warwick's catalogue drawing attention to this selling point.¹⁶⁴ Rosenthal also filmed *Hoisting the Union Jack* and *The Balloon Contingent*, though these and 'some of the best sets of films mailed to London' were lost when the ship carrying them back to England went down:

'One series, comprising an interview with Sir Alfred Milner [the High Commissioner] and Lord Roberts at Bloemfontein, was sent by the *Mexican*, and the fate of the steamer, which went down shortly after leaving Cape Town, was of course shared by the films, so that a very interesting set of pictorial records is concealed by the briny waves.'¹⁶⁵

This was not the only loss that Rosenthal suffered. Another set of his films, also taken at Bloemfontein, was unfortunately part of a convoy sent to the coast which the Boers captured (at the end of March), including *Hoisting the Union Jack*, *The Balloon Contingent*, and *Entering Bloemfontein*, etc.¹⁶⁶ Raw film stock too was lost to the Boers: in his raid on Roodewal junction on 7 June, famous Boer commander De Wet captured and destroyed many items, including five thousand feet of film stock destined for Rosenthal: 'The boxes were opened, and the precious films were strewn over the veldt,' as one of writer put it.¹⁶⁷ (Perhaps the Boers sensed that the cameramen were not telling an even-handed story). Other consignments were simply delayed.¹⁶⁸ War cameramen like Rosenthal were having to learn the hard way that their work would never be straightforward, and any number of perils could mean that their hard-won footage might never actually be seen by the public.

As ever, Rosenthal was technically innovative. He didn't yet have a panning head (he only managed to get one to cover the Boxer events later that year) but in South Africa he did take several inventive tracking shots from trains, and a couple seem to date from this period while based in Bloemfontein: *Panorama of Modder River* [5632] and *Off to the Front By Armoured Train* [5633]. John Barnes describes Rosenthal's railway films at the war, based on catalogue descriptions, as 'stunning' and 'spectacular', for they were not run of the mill views.¹⁶⁹ In this era, most shots from trains – called 'phantom rides' – were filmed from the front of the engine, showing a point of view only, and not including any of the train. The distinctive feature of Rosenthal's South African train shots is that they were filmed from the 'projecting platform' on the train, so including some of the train in the foreground, with passengers leaning from windows etc., thus giving more of a feeling of depth. His *Off to the Front By Armoured Train* [5633] went even further, and was a mini narrative, with views of a journey between Belmont and Modder River showing the landscape and another passing train, and then the engineer stepping from the cab to see to the engine before proceeding again. 'New and novel', 'never portrayed' before, Warwick claimed – and this film apparently caused a 'sensation' when screened at the London Hippodrome.

Travel in the war zone was rigidly controlled by the British authorities, and it seems that even for such seemingly innocuous railway filming Rosenthal needed permission. Two passes survive in the Will Day collection which may refer to this filming, one being for free travel on Cape Government Railways,

from 6 March, and a handwritten one to 'pass Mr Rosenthal over the river', dated 18 March.¹⁷⁰

Kroonstad, and censorship

By the beginning of May Roberts began to move north again out of Bloemfontein en route to Kroonstad. There were several rivers to ford in the Orange Free State, for the Boers had blown up many of the bridges, and these became Rosenthal's favourite places to film (I will have more to say about this at the end of the chapter). But river crossings could be hazardous: in crossing the Vet river drift, Rosenthal recalled, 'a shell exploded right in front of me, and it was very lucky indeed that I was not hit'.¹⁷¹ Nevertheless he got his shot: of a naval gun crossing the Vet River. Rosenthal also managed to film a siege gun, and most notably he shot *Boer Prisoners Under Escort*, the Warwick catalogue noting of these prisoners that, 'As they all pass closely by the camera every face is... wearing a most dejected look'. [5674-5676] Such a film was, of course, valuable propaganda for the British cause.

Roberts' army pressed on to Kroonstad, and Rosenthal filmed views of the entry of the forces into the town on 12 May [5685-5686], including the brigade of General Pole-Carew, a commander later notorious for burning Boer farms. A still photograph (or rather stereograph) taken at the time shows correspondents standing near to the ford across the river on the outskirts of Kroonstad, waiting for the conquering army to enter after the town's surrender – and two cameras are set up ready to film. One of them is a Warwick Bioscope, Model A camera (the model with the longer film capacity), the other is smaller, possibly being Hyman's Biokam? Rosenthal may be the figure standing between the two cameras.¹⁷²

Perhaps it was at this same location that Rosenthal took a film entitled, *The Surrender of Kroonstad to Lord Roberts*. A trade journal enthused:

'We have seen this on the screen and can testify to its excellence, it really being one of the best we have ever seen. It shows Lords Roberts and Kitchener, with Staff officers, entering Kroonstadt [sic] at the head of the mounted column of Foreign attachés, bodyguard and waggonette, in which are seated the Landrost and other officials who went out to surrender the town to Lord Roberts. The portraits are very good ones, and we believe this is the only cinematograph likeness of Lord Kitchener ever obtained. This scene is particularly pretty apart from its historical value and will draw large houses wherever it is exhibited.'¹⁷³

This film would have been shot with Roberts' and Kitchener's co-operation, and it was perfect propaganda: the British commanders leading their army, with the humbled town officials seated in a wagon. The film survives, and Kitchener is indeed very apparent in the shot, along with several war correspondents, who occasionally stare at camera, one mimicking Rosenthal cranking his camera.¹⁷⁴ Another record relating to this film survives in the form of a photograph of the press censor, Lord Stanley, in the act of impressing his stamp upon some frames of this very film. In the picture Rosenthal stands

watching the censor, having had to come dozens of miles back to British headquarters to get this film approved.¹⁷⁵ This is a telling image, perhaps the first ever photographic record of film censorship in action! [see bottom right of Fig. 11]

Censorship and regulation seemed to stalk Rosenthal throughout this campaign. The regulatory system was implemented through a system of passes, permitting travel and other activities (as we have seen from his railway filming). When Roberts arrived at Bloemfontein, Rosenthal stated that he was issued with an open pass which apparently enabled him to travel freely. But this did not mean, however, that he could *film* freely as well. While Roberts was fairly relaxed about controlling correspondents, he believed in a certain degree of military censorship (he had after all introduced it during the Afghan campaigns twenty years earlier) and this was enforced by press censors at the front. Rosenthal later recalled that he had to give a complete *description* of the film before it could be despatched home:

‘I had to make a report to the censor of what I had taken. If he thought it could safely be allowed through he gave me a pass and at the same time reported home what I had stated. If it had been found that I had mis-stated the contents of the parcel, I was, according to the terms of my license, liable to be court-martialled just like a soldier.’¹⁷⁶

But judging from the photograph of Rosenthal with Lord Stanley, it seems that he had to give more than a description, and in some cases at least had to show an actual sample of the film. Rosenthal tells us he had the necessary chemicals to test-develop films, and perhaps the reason was not only to see the results himself, but to let the censor see them too.

Perhaps this system to develop a section of each film to show to the censor was instituted by Warwick or by Rosenthal himself in response to censors opening exposed rolls.¹⁷⁷ G.A. Smith, who developed films for the Warwick Trading Company, said that one batch of film that arrived from the front ('almost the first lot'), with pictures taken in the wake of battles near the Modder River (by Bennett-Stanford), bore the initials of the censor at Cape Town, and was marked 'in violet-coloured pencil', with the ominous words, 'Opened under martial law'. Smith added:

‘I was scared to death, I can tell you. When I examined them I found that about twenty feet of each film had received light; but they were otherwise unhurt. It must have been a dim light – probably an oil lamp in a tent. By using a couple of extra fifty-candle-power lamps I was able to develop them all right.’¹⁷⁸

Press censorship was instituted more rigidly during the Boer War than in almost any previous British campaign, and this affected cameramen for virtually the first time during any of the wars in the early years of cinema (unless one includes isolated incidents such as the Spanish in Cuba confiscating film from cameramen). In future wars censorship would be an important factor in regulating what sort of images cameramen could shoot or

film companies publish, which makes Rosenthal's experience here with the censors, and that of Dickson too in this regard, all the more significant, being such early examples of military/government control being exercised over the filming of war.

To Pretoria: filming under fire

Eight days after occupying Kroonstad, Roberts' army set off again, and Rosenthal filmed the celebrated C.I.V.s departing the town [5664]. From here the army crossed over the Vaal river, the major river in South Africa, which marked the boundary between the two Boer republics of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal. This was an important place therefore, and Rosenthal (possibly with Hyman) gave full rein to his fondness for filming river traversals, and took no fewer than six such films, on or about 25-28 May. These showed all manner of troops and vehicles of Roberts' vast 60,000 man army fording or otherwise crossing this major waterway: ambulances, water carts, artillery, as well as part of the Essex Regiment on a punt, and the Army's war balloon convoy. Some of the films survive.¹⁷⁹ A still photograph also survives, indicating how important he considered this location for filming, for Rosenthal is seen on the Vaal river bank as the ox-drawn wagons cross the river, with both his bioscope cameras, Models A and B, set up ready on tripods. He is standing nearby, his stills camera over his shoulder, ready to crank the Model B.¹⁸⁰ Here was an industrious cameraman who realised that this was a symbolically significant location for the British advance – the junction of the two defiant Boer republics, which were finally being tamed by the 'mother' nation – so a place where it was worth cranking out half a dozen films.

At this point Rosenthal began to face more hazards. In Elandsfontein on 29 May, Roberts' army was ambushed by the Boers, and Rosenthal found himself under fire in this strategic junction, taking cover in a building as the roof above him was perforated by bullets.¹⁸¹ Then the army advanced to Johannesburg where he filmed the British flag being raised over the town on 31 May. Almost immediately Roberts pushed on to the final prize of Pretoria, where both Rosenthal and Hyman shot films on 4 and 5 June, depicting the battle for the city and the final raising of the Union Jack [5721-5726].

Again the work was hazardous. Rosenthal shot four films during the taking of Pretoria, some of which he managed to crank during actual battle action – something that he'd scarcely managed to do before – taking his greatest risks. As the catalogue put it, these were 'the only subjects yet photographed while the guns were in action (not prearranged for the occasion)'. He filmed the Essex Regiment actually advancing and looking for cover, with an artillery piece firing in the background. Rosenthal also filmed the Naval brigade gunners in action, firing at the Boers outside Pretoria (4 June), and here he himself came under return shell fire, and at one stage ran for his life. This was described by one rather cynical officer in an account of the battle which I have found:

'... one bold photographer at least got more than he bargained for this day. He had arrived, early in the fight, with a cinematograph, and

requested the officer in charge of the marines' gun to let him know when he was going to fire, as he wanted to take the gun firing. The officer gave some orders and then turned round to the photographer. Meanwhile some Boer shells had come whizzing close over our heads, and all the officer saw was the photographic machine standing disconsolate and the operator in full flight to the rear of the column!¹⁸²

But while Rosenthal might have run off at that moment, at other times he did film the naval gunners at work during portions of the fighting, and the catalogue description of a resulting film, *The 4.7-inch Gun in Action at the Battle of Pretoria* [5722] showed the risks he was running:

'Mr Rosenthal photographed this incident in company with Mr Bennett Burleigh, war correspondent of the "Daily Telegraph," while bullets fell thick and fast, and both gentlemen were almost smothered twice by the dirt thrown up by bursting shells, which fell in rather too close proximity for comfort. One of the officials, within 30ft of our photographer, was wounded in this battle, and several horses and mules were killed.'

Taken in a different part of the battlefield, equally under fire, another of Rosenthal's films (which also, sadly doesn't survive) must have been quite a scene. The catalogue states of *The 5-inch Siege Guns in Action at the Battle of Pretoria* [5723]:

'Little clouds of dust are thrown up constantly by the enemy's bullets striking the ground. Our photographer's horse was shot in this battle. Mr Rosenthal, referring to the taking of the film, writes that Boer shells were bursting all around and overhead, and that but very few of the thousands of people who will see the reproductions of these films "will think of the poor devil who turned the handle of the camera".'¹⁸³

That night Pretoria surrendered, and the following day, 5 June, Rosenthal walked into the town intending to film in the newly captured town. But not all the Boers had surrendered, and some didn't recognise his non-combatant status; Rosenthal records that 'they started firing on me'.¹⁸⁴ Fortunately he was saved by the intervention of some Canadian scouts and went over to the town square to make what was to be his last film of the war, *Lord Roberts Hoisting the Union Jack at Pretoria* on 5 June.¹⁸⁵ This latter film deserves some comment.

Filming flags: Rosenthal and Dickson's different approaches

This ceremony – raising the British flag over Pretoria, capital of the Transvaal – was of course of great symbolic importance, for it represented the final subjugation of the rebel Boer republics to Britain. (One of the popular published accounts of the war was indeed entitled, *With the Flag to Pretoria*).¹⁸⁶ This was not the first flag-raising film that Rosenthal had made, for he had also filmed the British flag being raised over Johannesburg a week earlier. In each case the flag used was a very small silk one made by Lady Roberts, which Lord Roberts had promised her to raise over every town that he occupied.¹⁸⁷ It was a fine sentiment, but the flag was so small as to make

little impact, and each time it was raised over conquered towns, a short time later it was replaced by larger, permanent Union Jacks.¹⁸⁸ This was of little help to Rosenthal however, for as a filmmaker he needed to see the actual ceremony as the flag was raised. And that is what he filmed with Lady Roberts' tiny flag being raised, the catalogue having to note, however, that this flag 'is only just visible in the picture'.

This was in contrast to what Dickson filmed, in what was, as Richard Brown has pointed out, the Biograph cameraman's only deliberate case of 'faking'. The Biograph company had instructed Dickson that on no account should he miss filming the raising of the British flag at Pretoria, and Dickson himself considered that making such a film was, 'the principal aim of our enterprise'.¹⁸⁹ To ensure his shot had real impact, Dickson, ever the enterprising cameraman, had another flag run up (probably it was the big flag which the authorities installed in place of Lady Roberts' one) and filmed it with just the upper part of the building as a background, thereby disguising the fact that the square in front was now devoid of crowds.¹⁹⁰

But the deception was revealed when both Dickson's and Rosenthal's films of the hoisting were shown in South Africa later in the year, for it was noticed that the 'Biograph' showed a much larger flag than the 'Bioscope'. A letter to the press from a Mr. Wilkes pointed this out, and Warwick's representative in South Africa wrote in to explain that Warwick (Rosenthal) had filmed what actually occurred, whereas their rivals at Biograph had resorted to deception. The flag that had actually been raised, he noted, was the 'mere pocket-handkerchief' made by Lady Roberts, and while it was regrettable that such a small flag had been used – 'thus depriving historical events of all impressiveness' – this was what had *actually* happened, and this is what they had filmed. He contrasted their British cameraman, Rosenthal, with the over smart 'yank', Dickson:

Whereas the British operator present at the hoisting ceremony was content to photograph the actual occurrence and thus produce a picture lacking impressiveness (though genuine), the enterprising 'Yank' had a large Union Jack hoisted a few days after the event for the purpose of photographing it; and, as the public of Durban and probably Mr Wilkes had the pleasure of seeing a magnificent picture of the hoisting of the Union Jack at Pretoria a few weeks ago, they will admit the smartness of the "Yank"; and the taste of Mr Wilkes for a pretty picture rather than a true one, must have been amply satisfied. The company I represent, 'The Warwick Trading Company of London', refuse absolutely to accept and develop any film not a genuine reproduction of passing events.¹⁹¹

Here we have an early instance of an important debate in non-fiction filmmaking, between those who believe that documentary cameramen should film only what literally happens, and those who believe that some intervention is desirable – a debate which has been revisited several times in the history of the cinema, and is unlikely ever to be resolved.¹⁹²

Rosenthal's achievements

Although the war was to drag on as a guerrilla campaign for another two years, most of the correspondents, including Rosenthal, went home after the surrender at Pretoria on 5 June, leaving the writer/photographer Sydney Goldman as Warwick's cameraman representative in South Africa. I estimate that Warwick released some forty short films of the war by Rosenthal (of which some half dozen survive in the NFTVA). Not a huge number, given that he had been in the country for nearly half a year, but he had shot many more which never made it back due to accident and enemy action. In all he apparently shot some 15,000 ft. of film (about four hours worth).¹⁹³ This is not a bad record, bearing in mind his practical difficulties and issues with officialdom.

During his time in South Africa Rosenthal managed to travel to, and film at several of the fronts, including in Natal and along the railways from Cape Town and Port Elizabeth to Pretoria; and had even filmed with the Boers for a time (the only cameraman to do so). There is a wide range of subject matter in his resulting films, including troops on the march; various different kinds of military equipment in use, such as artillery and balloon observation units; the leading commanders; images of Boer prisoners; victory ceremonies; and even, from Pretoria, some 'action' footage filmed under fire.

In terms of content and technique, Rosenthal's Boer War films are quite impressive in a number of respects. There seem to have been few 'dud' films. The Warwick catalogue often praises his films – unlike films of some other cameramen – with words such as, 'splendid', 'interesting', 'full of action', 'magnificent', 'photographically perfect', 'clear, sharp photography', 'fine definition'.

Rosenthal's ability to cope and overcome difficulties and his willingness to experiment are impressive. He travelled to several fronts in the war, he developed a pared-down shooting kit, and shot visually interesting images (such as his train films). All this despite suffering several problems: official controls on his movements, dangers while filming under fire, the 'invisible' nature of this new kind of warfare; and with many of his films being lost or destroyed. One trade journalist, who described Rosenthal's tribulations and adventures filming the war, came to this conclusion about Warwick's head cameraman:

'It is evident that he who would send animated pictures home from the battlefield has much to contend with, and must find his path a thorny one, though it has some roses in the form of honour and glory, while there is a pleasure in knowing that your trials are endured in the service of the fatherland.'¹⁹⁴

This was obviously phrased with the patriotic spin of the time, but the general drift seems well-founded. Rosenthal had indeed surmounted a number of practical problems and bureaucratic hurdles, and managed to film several key moments and important events in the conflict. He was deservedly praised in Warwick's catalogues, and he was interviewed by magazine journalists after

his return from the war, one of the first film cameramen to be lauded in such a manner.

CONCLUSION

Aesthetics

I have suggested above that an interesting aspect of the filming of this war is the differing degree of professionalism (and competence) among the cameramen. I would suggest that this was not just a variation, but a development, for while amateurs would still be recruited for filming wars in the future, they were increasingly replaced by professional cameramen. Here at the Boer War the professionals, Rosenthal and Dickson, generally managed better than their amateur colleagues, especially given the greater problems they faced of onerous regulation and (in the case of Dickson) ponderous camera equipment. But all Boer War cameramen confronted one main problem: that of managing to capture and depict a war fought by soldiers who were often hidden from view in a vast theatre of operations

In these circumstances, little visible conflict could be secured, and most of the films which were shot showed little more than the background to the war, with British troops on the move and guns firing at distant targets. Nevertheless, some had the unmistakeable aura of actuality about them, and captured some hints of the fighting and of how Britain's forces were adapting to this changing battlefield. So it would wrong to describe this war, as some commentators have implied or stated, as a failure in the history of war filming.

For one thing, there were some important cinematic developments; principally aesthetic advances in terms of what the cameramen managed to film and how they did it. I have mentioned some of these above, and they include such matters as: Dickson's pioneering efforts with a telephoto lens, a device which would revolutionise war filming (and other actuality filming); Rosenthal's development of a mobile shooting system, allowing him to keep up with the advancing front line, and even, at short notice, to record moments of action; also a significant feature of the filming of this conflict was the 'arranging' of shots – a technique which both Rosenthal and Dickson employed effectively.

I should mention one other aesthetic point of interest, a common theme found in several films from the war zone. On the face of it this might seem a somewhat trivial point, but I suggest that it exemplifies wider issues. I refer to the tendency of some cameramen who covered the war to film extensively at river crossings. Certainly it was a marked trend among the cameramen. Of Beevor's twenty-one films of the war, no fewer than seven of them – a third – depict the crossing of a river. One finds a similar inclination for river crossings in the war coverage by Rosenthal, though to a lesser extent. And while Goldman shot few films, he took up the same water theme in his still photographs: his book about the war includes several photographs of river traversals, including the crossing of the Vaal River at Viljoen's Drift.

Why so many such scenes? One reason is that these river landmarks were often the most interesting features in the wide landscape of the interior of South Africa, providing a visual marker and some relief. A river crossing also offered interesting activity: the armoured column would be in dense formation, giving maximum ‘animation’ to the picture as drivers struggled with draft animals, etc. And a river at the least was an identifiable location; whereas a shot of soldiers merely crossing a landscape – even if the location were identified – would offer no visual cues as to its actual locality. But there was more to it than that. This ‘river theme’ is an example of how actuality cameramen were learning about the power of visual symbolism. A river suggests a mark of definite progress in the military advance, and indeed was sometimes a frontier between provinces or states. In this way, a river crossing could have wider significance than a scene of troops simply marching across the open veldt. So this penchant for rivers suggests to me that actuality cameramen were learning to be more selective in what they shot; were learning to film scenes which were not only picturesque but also symbolic of some wider theme. (One might add that the flag raising scenes which I have mentioned above are another such example of the use of symbolism in actualities).

Propaganda

But while aesthetic developments were important, an even more significant filmic development during this war was in the relationship between the moving image and the military. It is evident from the British army’s proposals for official regulation – written while the war was still in progress – that the Boer War cameramen had not made a good impression with the authorities, and some officers effectively called for the banning of cameramen entirely in future wars (see my discussion in the first **Box** above). Some of the cameramen at the front had already faced considerable antagonism from officers (I am thinking of Dickson). It is hard to see why this should be so, as the cameramen themselves had – as far as one can tell – cooperated fully with officials, and had gone out of their way (hundreds of miles out of his way in the case of Rosenthal) to obtain the relevant official permits to film at the front; they had also submitted to having their hard won films officially approved.

What’s more, they had also done their best to ‘fit in’ to the military units which they were filming. In one case this was a foregone conclusion, for cameraman Beevor, being a officer, was actually part of the army. But this ‘fitting in’ is also evident in the case of ostensibly ‘independent’ cameramen. All or most of the cameramen at the Boer War were attached to particular military units, and were wearing British uniforms. The photographs of Hyman and Rosenthal in South Africa show them in khaki uniform, and both were, as we’ve mentioned, for a time attached to General Clement’s brigade. Photographs show that Dickson and his crew too were wearing British military issue, complete with solar topee hats; and they were traveling with a Naval artillery brigade.¹⁹⁵

These cameramen were, in short, *attached* to the British army which they were filming, almost as tightly as Ackerman in the Philippines was tied to the US Army (and he too, of course, was in military uniform). This suggests that a system was emerging among the British military and among the Americans, in

which war cameramen, as well as being regulated heavily, would be tied closely to the forces which they were filming.

There is another sense, too, in which these cameramen ‘fitted in’ with the military of their own side, for they were, as Elizabeth Strelitz has noted, effectively self-censoring their filming: as she puts it, ‘through selection, omission and emphasis’. In other words, they tended to film those subjects which were favourable to the British side, and avoided those aspects which would cast a poor light on Britain or British tactics in the war.¹⁹⁶ Thus the British army – the chief subject of the films – was recorded in active, ascendant mode, with only occasional scenes of casualties (and even these could be given a positive spin, showing that the wounded were well cared for).

On the other hand, when the Boers were filmed, it was generally when they were prisoners or had otherwise been subdued. And this was a rarity, as the cameramen themselves had doubts about filming Britain’s enemy. At one point Dickson thought he might have a chance to film from the Boer side, but then wondered if he could do so, ‘without disloyalty to my people’. He concluded that this could only be done when the conflict was over or nearly so.¹⁹⁷ Even Rosenthal, more independent than the others (as we shall see from his work in China), only filmed a couple of shots with the Boers, during an apparently short sojourn in their territory. Thus, even if there wasn’t explicit censorship, the mainly British cameramen and companies were to some extent tied to the ‘home’ side, and largely shared the aspirations of the British authorities.

I will conclude this discussion about the filming of the Boer War with these observations. That, while cameramen in this era were becoming ever more competent and professional, able to represent a war in more imaginative and technically adept ways than their more amateurish predecessors, the corollary of this growing ability to film warfare was that official regulation on such filming was becoming stricter. The authorities in South Africa were increasingly zealous in controlling cameramen’s activities, through a variety of strategies, voluntary and otherwise. The Boer War does therefore seem to mark a new, more ‘serious’ attitude toward the moving picture from those in authority, and in this sense above all this war was a very significant conflict for the media.

Notes:

¹ My summary is largely based on Luke McKernan’s pithy introduction to the Boer War filmography on the BFI website, as is my summary listing of the cameramen.

² The war cost Britain £250 million, which is more than each side expended in the Russo-Japanese war. As a proportion of national income, at some points it cost the country more than the First World War: the costs in 1902 amounted to 14.4% of the British national income, compared, for example, to war expenditure of 12.6% in 1915. Clive Trebilcock, ‘War and the Failure of Industrial Mobilisation: 1899 and 1914’, in *War and Economic Development : Essays in Memory of David Joslin*, ed. J. M. Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p.141. Jeffery argues that Britain’s military didn’t learn the lessons of the Boer War and continued to believe in the ‘offensive spirit’, etc. See Keith Jeffery, ‘Kruger’s Farmers,

Strathcona's Horse, Sir George Clarke's Camels and the Kaiser's Battleships: The Impact of the South African War on Imperial Defence', in *The South African War Reappraised*, ed. D. Lowry (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p.188-202.

³ In Simon Popple's words, this was the 'first fully mediated conflict in British imperial history'. See Simon Popple "But the Khaki-Covered Camera is the Latest Thing": The Boer War Cinema and Visual Culture in Britain' in *Young and Innocent? The Cinema in Britain 1896-1930*, ed. Andrew Higson (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 2002), p.13-27.

⁴ For more about the press during the war, see Donal Lowry, ed., *The South African War Reappraised* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p.5-6 and chapters 3 and 4. The latter chapter especially, by Jacqueline Beaumont, is excellent.

⁵ These hundred departures for South Africa were in the past few weeks, stated 'Our Special War Correspondent', *Bookman* 17, Nov 1899. The total number of known licences issued to correspondents in London, Natal and Cape Town was 108, representing 74 different newspapers and agencies. See 'Report on the issue of licenses to press correspondents accompanying troops in the field' by Major W.D. Jones, 4 Feb 1901. PRO: WO 32/7141.

⁶ At least four war correspondents – James, Burleigh, Maud and Steevens – were in South Africa before the war started, from the beginning of October. Lionel James, *High Pressure : Being Some Record of Activities in the Service of the Times Newspaper* (London: J. Murray, 1929), p.112. The first military transport set sail from the UK 17 Sep 1899. See Kenneth Griffith, *Thank God We Kept the Flag Flying: The Siege and Relief of Ladysmith, 1899-1900* (London: Hutchinson, 1974), p.6.

⁷ *BJP* 22 Sep 1899, p.596.

⁸ I hope to publish an article in the future exposing the false claims of Smith.

⁹ I am indebted to Frank Kessler for this insight into the varying/growing degree of professionalism among Boer War cameramen.

¹⁰ W. K-L. Dickson, *The Biograph in Battle : Its Story in the South African War* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1901), p.64-5. Earlier, when Dickson departed England, one journalist predicted hopefully, 'The biograph ... will tell the truth in all things, owing neither loyalty to chief nor submission to esprit de corps', then added more cynically, 'How far its truthfulness will please the authorities remains to be seen'. From 'A novel war correspondent', *Today*, 26 October 1899, p.403. Quoted by Elizabeth Grottel Strelbel, 'Imperialist Iconography of Anglo-Boer War Film Footage', in *Film before Griffith*, ed. J. L. Fell (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

¹¹ The comments in the file PRO: WO32/7137 date from September to October 1899, and make clear that of the foreign journalists, American ones were viewed much more sympathetically than their Continental cousins, and particular ire was directed at certain German correspondents. There was to be some reason for this: after the British defeat at Spion Kop, a German photographer had been seen piling up the bodies of British dead to make a more effective photograph. It is said that a British soldier, outraged by this disrespect, shot him dead.

¹² Winston Churchill, *Ian Hamilton's March* (London, 1900), p.97.

¹³ So states James Archibald, 'The war correspondents of today', *Overland Monthly* 37, March 1901, p.797. The feeling that the war had ended is reflected in the *Illustrated War Special* for 6 June 1900, p.28 which stated that, '...the war has now practically come to an end', and the paper ceased publication at that point. Another war-related periodical published an article, 'The end of the Boer War and the growth of the trouble in China', *Under the Union Jack* 14 July 1900, p.843.

¹⁴ 'Report on press Censorship by Lord Stanley', Headquarters, Pretoria, 7 July 1900. PRO: WO 108/262. The report was specifically addressed to Field-Marshal Lord Roberts.

¹⁵ 'Report on the issue of licenses to press correspondents accompanying troops in the field', by Major W.D. Jones, 4 Feb 1901. PRO: WO 32/7141. This file also includes comment by Buller. Stanley recommended that in future wars there should be three categories of correspondent, A, B and C: C being blacklisted ones. And as well as excluding cameramen, he suggested the army should also limit the number of correspondents for illustrated papers. As an indication of how sensitive this subject was, the file was closed in the PRO until 1956 !

¹⁶ William Cox diaries, National Army Museum, 8209-33-11. Cox calls Bull, '... the cinematograph man of *Black and White*'. An article, 'Journalism and the South African War', in Sell's *Dictionary of the World's Press*, 1901, p.51, confirms Bull was working for *Black and White* as does another article in *Black and White Budget* 3 Feb 1900, p.6-8, which notes that

Bull worked independently, travelling away from the main towns. He seems to have been quite a maverick, and his stealing a march on Cox and Dickson was therefore in character. Cox notes that Bull 'has gone home to England for some unexplained reason': only a search of the pages of *Black and White* is likely to reveal the reasons for Bull's departure from the front. The Kruger skit is also mentioned in Dickson's book, *The Biograph in Battle*, and in other sources about the Naval Brigades at the war.

¹⁷ It could perhaps have been a Kinora or a Birtac, other early amateur film cameras, and it is possible that it may even have been a standard 35mm film camera, which Cox simply thought 'insignificant' compared to the enormous Biograph camera which he and Dickson were using.

¹⁸ Incidentally, the 'Hanging of Kruger' skit to which Cox refers was based on a common theme of the time. The South African leader, Ohm Kruger had become an object of hatred for the British (and of admiration for much of the rest of the world), and several films deriding him were released about this time. However, I can find no record of a film of this exact description, depicting a hanging, in any company's releases.

¹⁹ The name 'Underwood' immediately brings to mind the stereoscopic firm Underwood and Underwood, but it seems that this is just a coincidence of names, and though they had sent a man to photograph the war in stereographs, the intrepid American photographer/reporter Henry F. Mackern, he is not believed to have shot any films. I have traced two other A.S. Underwoods – a well known doctor and a man who exhibited a painting in 1885 (both London-based) – but the doctor was still living after the Boer War and the artist seems an unlikely identity for our Bloemfontein cameraman.

²⁰ 'John Wrench & Son', PD, May 1900, p.115. See 'Films from the front', *The Optician*, 18 May 1900, p.347, quoted by John Barnes, 1900 volume, pp.109-10: this stated of the last film that it depicted the ambulance van driving off (which is what PD must have meant by 'procession of the Ambulance party') so was effectively a continuation of the wounded soldier film.

²¹ PD June 1900, p.128. *The Optician*, 18 May 1900, p.347 named the cameraman as simply A. Underwood.

²² Barnes, 1900 volume, p.110.

²³ PD June 1900, p.128.

²⁴ 'Deaths from disease: Bloemfontein', *The Times* 30 May 1900, p.12, col.1. The majority of the deaths in this report were from enteric fever, mainly in the period 24 to 26 May (as 'reported by the General at Cape Town').

²⁵ 'In 1899 I sent two cameras to the Boer War,' Paul recalled, mentioning Beevor and Melsom. See Robert W. Paul in 'Before 1910: Kinematograph Experiences', *Proceedings of the British Kinematograph Society*, no. 38, 1936, p.5. Paul's two brothers were in the C.I.V. so probably this is how Paul decided to give a camera to Melsom. The C.I.V. did indeed include two men with the name Paul, with initials A.L. and G.H. See Barnes, 1900 volume, p.20; and *Reports on the Raising, Organising, Equipping and Dispatching the City of London Imperial Volunteers to South Africa* (London, 1900-1903), p.33.

²⁶ Nicholas Hiley initially did a search for Melsom, discovering the name F.A. Melsom. I have since examined other printed accounts of the regiment and can find little further information. F.A. Melsom is mentioned in, for example, William Henry Mackinnon, *The Journal of the C.I.V. In South Africa* (London: J. Murray, 1901), p.251. This states that he was a Private from the 3rd Middlesex V.A. The regiment included, printed sources state, a journalist, three to five photographers and two artists, but no names are attached to these. Further research in the papers of the C.I.V. in the PRO and Guildhall might reveal more details. One other possibility occurs to me: was Paul mis-remembering the name Sidney Melsom for the cameraman with a vaguely similar name, 'Sidney Goldman', who was filming the war for Warwick?

²⁷ Paul wrote to Thelma Gutsche: 'Colonel Beevor's films which I developed here... were the more successful. They included...' and he lists 5 films, with variations on titles which appear in his catalogue. Thelma Gutsche, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa, 1895-1940* (Cape Town: Howard Timmins, 1972), p.45.

²⁸ The C.I.V. departed on 13 January, two and a half months after the Scots' Guards. However, F.A. Melsom was in the C.I.V. 'draft', the second batch to be sent out, so was in South Africa even later than the main group, making it even less likely that he could have filmed much. Mackinnon, *The Journal of the C.I.V. In South Africa*, p.251. Incidentally, Paul shot and released a film of the main C.I.V.'s departure: *Embarkation of the City Imperial Volunteers for South Africa*. See details in Barnes, 1900 volume.

²⁹ Some sources describe him wrongly as 'Colonel', but he was a Surgeon-Major until 1904 and only thereafter a Colonel. See *Roll of Commissioned Officers in the Medical Service of the British Army, 1727-1898* (Aberdeen, 1917). This states that he had been attached to the Scots' Guards since 1885. He was educated at Edinburgh University.

³⁰ In the Tirah region the British faced a formidable danger from snipers, and if a soldier was hit it was sometimes difficult to locate the bullet. For this reason Beevor brought an X-ray apparatus from Britain, thus being the first person to use this technology on active service.

³¹ BJP 3 Nov 1899, p.700 notes that Beevor 'took with him a Röntgen-ray outfit for the purpose of localising the bullets'. There is much literature on this issue, including: 'The working of the Röntgen Ray in warfare', BJP, 27 May 1898, pp.342-43; L.J. Ramsey, 'Bullet wounds and X-rays in Britain's little wars', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, v.60, 1982, pp.91-102.

³² St. Veronica, May 1899.

³³ See W.C. Beevor, *With the Central Column in South Africa* (London, 1903). They sailed on the *Nubia*, and Paul later released a film of this embarkation. See Barnes, 1899 volume. Stirling states that they sailed on 20 Oct and arrived 13 Nov. See John Stirling, *Our Regiments in South Africa, 1899-1902 : Their Record, Based on the Despatches* (Edinburgh: W. Blackwood, 1903), p.19-21. Other sources state the sailing was the 21 Oct. A photograph of Beevor on the *Nubia* en route to S. Africa is in Cuthbert (see below), 1904, p.1, and another image of his on p.257.

³⁴ Stirling, *Our Regiments in South Africa, 1899-1902*, passim. The British lost nearly 900 men killed and wounded at the battle of Magersfontein, though the Boers also suffered one of their worst numbers of casualties in this battle, with 320 killed or wounded. Casualty figures from Clodfelter. Stephen Badsey has an interesting view on these 'Black Week' defeats, noting that they were less significant militarily than for their effect on the publics in Britain and the colonies through the media, and arguing that though the British suffered losses in these battles, they had also had some successes earlier. Stephen Badsey, 'The Boer War as a Media War', in *The Boer War : Army, Nation and Empire*, ed. P. Dennis and J. Grey (Canberra: Army History Unit, 1999); Stephen Badsey, 'War Correspondents in the Boer War', in John Gooch, ed. *Boer War: Direction, Experience and Image* (London: Frank Cass, 2000), p.187-203.

³⁵ Based on reports from the *Times* correspondent, reproduced in Raymond Sibbald, *The War Correspondents: The Boer War* (Bridgend: Bramley Books; Sutton, 1997), p.53 and 73. Beevor was later awarded medals and mentioned in despatches for his work in the war. John Barnes has dated some four of his films here to the days just before Magersfontein.

³⁶ Noted in an account of the Scots in the campaign, which was heavily illustrated with still photographs taken by members of his regiment who had amateur stills cameras. James Harold Cuthbert, *The 1st Battalion Scots Guards in South Africa, 1899-1902* (London: Harrison, 1904): prefatory remarks. Their number included Lord E.D. Loch, in the Grenadier Guards (associated with the Scots' Guards for this operation), who had also photographed in the Sudan. This profusion of cameras meant that Beevor would not have been entirely out of place with his movie camera. Incidentally, some photographs, published in a popular history of the war, were credited to Beevor/Paul. See Herbert Wrigley Wilson, *With the Flag to Pretoria : A History of the Boer War of 1899-1900* (London: Harmsworth Brothers, 1900). p.154 photo credited to R.W. Paul: 'Thirsty soldiers at the water-wheel at Belmont', Nov 1899; p.232 photo credited to Surgeon-Major Beevor – of a volunteer on a Burmese pony, probably Dec 1899; and p.432, photo credited to Surgeon-Major Beevor: of 'Cronje's cavalry, after the surrender'. Beevor's 1903 album was published by *The King* periodical for whom he had presumably been photographing at the war.

³⁷ Peter Warwick and S. B. Spies, *The South African War : The Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902* (Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1980), p.59. Significantly, the 27th was the anniversary of the Boer victory at Majuba in 1881. The siege of Kimberley ended in mid February, so this was a hopeful time for the British campaign. On this Paardeberg victory, see Jacqueline B. Hughes, 'The Press and the Public During the Boer War 1899-1902', *The Historian* 61, Spring 1999, p.14. Hughes is apparently working on a book about the press during the Boer War.

³⁸ Mortimer Menpes and Dorothy Menpes, *War Impressions : Being a Record in Colour* (London: A. & C. Black, 1901), p.201. Menpes was not taken with Cronje, and wrote (p.200), 'General Cronje is a heavy man, cunning and vulgar, with a long, unkempt beard, and rude manners. He sulked all the time.' Menpes was a skilled artist working for *Black and White*

magazine. He is on the list of approved war correspondents as Mr. Mortimer Mempes [sic]. Quoted from *The Friend* April 1900: cited in Unger, *With Bobs...*, p.408-9.

³⁹ Description including assessment as a 'remarkable film', from Elizabeth Grottel Strebler, 'Imperialist Iconography of Anglo-Boer War Film Footage', in *Film before Griffith*, ed. J. L. Fell (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), p.268. In Paul's catalogue the synopsis notes that, 'as the cart passes the camera, Cronje is seen to look out in astonishment at it'. This source adds that Cronjé was being taken away in the early morning. Presumably, therefore this was shot on the day *after* the battle, the 28 February. Incidentally, stills photographers also recorded the defeated Cronjé: see Thomas Pakenham, *The Boer War - Illustrated Edition* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1993), p.178-9. See also Wilson, *With the Flag to Pretoria : A History of the Boer War of 1899-1900*, p.429: this has an uncredited photo of Cronjé just after he surrendered. Mackern (photographing stereographs) managed to take a picture of 'General Cronje and party leaving headquarters for the train'. See 'Stereoscopy at the seat of war', BJP Suppl. 4 May 1900, p.36.

⁴⁰ We know that it was filmed near Paardeberg, because a report in BJP 6 April 1900, p.221 describes the scene of the captured Cronjé, adding that Paul also has 'a view of the Boer shell-proof pits in their camp, showing the camp exactly as it was left by Cronjé's army on its surrender'.

⁴¹ This film survives in the New Zealand Film Archive, (though is missing some footage) and two others by Beevor are in the NFTVA: *Ambulance Crossing the Modder*, and *Cronje's Surrender to Lord Roberts*. Richard Brown suspects that a Beevor film collection existed in the mid 1930s, but hasn't managed to find its whereabouts.

⁴² Cuthbert, *The 1st Battalion Scots Guards in South Africa, 1899-1902*, p.257.

⁴³ Beevor, *With the Central Column in South Africa*, p.23. The book includes a photograph of him with camera, captioned 'Surgeon-Major Beevor's biograph at Modder River'. And in Cuthbert, 1904, op. cit., is a photograph showing him with his colleagues on the ship to South Africa. After the Boer War, Beevor served in India from 1902 to 1903, and during the Great War he came out of retirement to work with the Territorials in a medical capacity.

⁴⁴ Robert W. Paul in 'Before 1910', op. cit., p.5. See 'Pictures of the Transvaal War', in R.W.Paul Catalogue, 1902, and also in the 1903 catalogue, an example of which is held in the BFI, and another copy is in the Cinémathèque Française. Film descriptions are also reproduced in Barnes' 1899 and 1900 volumes of the 21 films originally advertised in the *Era etc* (though it is possible Beevor shot more which were not released). See Paul's ad in *The Era* 8 Sep 1900, p.28.

⁴⁵ He worked at theatres in Exeter, Bristol and Northampton, from about 1890, according to the 'Backstage' database website of RSLP. The 1901 British Census records a Charles Noble, aged 47 living in Lambeth, south London (born Cheshunt, Herts). He is described as an out of work theatrical manager, and I believe that this is the man known as Charles Rider Noble.

⁴⁶ Barnes, 1900 volume, p.113.

⁴⁷ 'Bio-tableaux: a chat with Mr. Gibbons', MHTR 18 May 1900, p.315. In this article a Warwick film is described, filmed by Edgar Hyman (and presumably being exhibited by Gibbons).

⁴⁸ 'A chat with Walter Gibbons', *The Era* 20 Oct 1900, p.22.

⁴⁹ Walter Gibbons ad, *The Showman*, Dec 1900, p.4. The text with its list of films is reproduced in J. H. De Lange, *The Anglo-Boer War, 1899-1902 on Film* (Pretoria: State Archives Service, 1991), p.114-116, though omits the source. The ad lists a series of films relating to the war, totalling 611 ft. None of the films were apparently new, and the headliner films depicted the victory parade in Pretoria, which had taken place back in June.

⁵⁰ Listed in, 'Gibbons' latest film subjects', *The Era* 10 Nov 1900, p.30. Also listed in J. H. De Lange, *passim*.

⁵¹ On 1 Oct 1900 the first returning draft of the Royal Canadian Regiment embarked at Cape Town, aboard the S.S. *Idaho* for Halifax (16 officers and 430 other ranks). See R. C. Fetherstonhaugh, *The Royal Canadian Regiment, 1883-1933* (Montreal, 1936), p.149.

⁵² Doyle mentions General Knox, but gives no date for this particular event. Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Great Boer War : A Two Years' Record* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1902). Chapter 33 concerns the northern operations from January to April, 1901.

⁵³ The latter two titles are listed in J. H. De Lange, op. cit., p.117. Prince Christian Victor of Schleswig-Holstein was a grandson of Queen Victoria, born at Windsor Castle 1867 and died

of malaria or enteric fever at Pretoria (while serving in the war) on 29 October 1900, aged 33. He was interred in the Pretoria cemetery on 1 November 1900. From Wikipedia.

⁵⁴ Date noted by Childers. Also *The Times* 8 Oct 1900, p.5e: 'Dateline Cape Town, Oct. 7. The transport *Aurania* left here with the C.I.V. on board at 5 30 pm.'

⁵⁵ J. H. De Lange, op. cit., pp.118-119. An ad for Gibbons, *The Era* 3 Nov 1900, p.31, lists three films taken in South Africa, including two re the C.I.V. preparing to return home and then embarking.

⁵⁶ See chapter 13 of Erskine Childers, *In the Ranks of the C.I.V.: A Narrative and Diary of Personal Experiences with the C.I.V. Battery (Honourable Artillery Company) in South Africa* (London: Smith, Elder, 1900). Sprigg was Cecil Rhodes' nominee in the Cape government. Childers notes that during this departure ceremony, 'the quays were swarming with soldiers and civilians'. He adds that just after the filmed episode, 'The pilot appeared on the bridge, shore-ropes were cast off, "Auld Lang Syne" was played, then "God save the Queen." Every hat on board and ashore was waving, and every voice cheering, and so we backed off, and steamed out of the basin.'

⁵⁷ Several members of the British forces complained that they were fighting in South Africa to defend the interests of Jewish money men (who were profiting from the Johannesburg goldfields) and even expressed admiration for their enemies, the Boer farmers with their rural, 'ideal' way of life. See Donal Lowry, ed. *The South African War Reappraised, Studies in Imperialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p.205 re anti-Semitism among British officers; and see Deian Hopkin, 'Socialism and Imperialism: The ILP Press and the Boer War', in *Impacts and Influences: Essays on Media Power in the Twentieth Century*, ed. James Curran et al (London: Methuen, 1987), p.17-18: this covers anti-Semitism among left wingers in the UK, some of whom maintained that it was Jewish capitalists and the Jewish-owned press which had fomented the war. However, for British Jews at the front, fighting in the war was often seen as an affirmation of their Englishness: see Richard Mendelsohn, 'The Jewish war: Anglo-Jewry and the South African war', in *Writing a Wider War: Rethinking Gender, Race, and Identity in the South African War, 1899-1902*, ed. G. Cuthbertson et al (Athens: Ohio University Press ; Cape Town : David Philip Publishers, 2002), p.247-65.

⁵⁸ His sister is listed in the Census as Ida Gabriel, a very Jewish-sounding name. I suspect that Noble himself had changed his name, perhaps to enter the theatrical profession. A photograph of Noble in 1909 shows a somewhat stocky man, though scarcely fat.

⁵⁹ The following year Rider Noble went to film in Morocco, being based in the court of the Sultan, and by the autumn of 1903 was in the employ of Charles Urban, for whom he travelled to the Balkans and filmed scenes with the insurgent rebels in Macedonia. In 1905 Noble was filming in South America, again for Urban. It is not clear what happened to him after this, though he seems to have continued travelling.

⁶⁰ Listed 'Mr. J.B. Stanford', as the correspondent for the *Western Morning News*, and not as a cinematographer. In this list are 36 names of accredited correspondents. PRO: WO 32/7137.

⁶¹ Low and Manvell, p.25.

⁶² The *Mexican* departed 7 Oct 1899. Among the passengers listed were Mr Benatt-Stanford [sic], single male, no age or profession given. He was bound for Natal, though it seems he disembarked before there. The passenger manifesto also lists a hundred-odd troops on board, bound for the war. PRO: BT 27/312, 'Departures from Southampton'. W.K-L. Dickson departed on the *Dunottar Castle* 14 October, and Walter Beevor, filming for R.W. Paul, left on the *Nubia* 21 October. Edgar Hyman left England even earlier than Stanford (on 23 September), but he was based in South Africa, and was returning home as much as going out to film.

⁶³ Nick Hiley informs me that on 10 November 1899 Benett-Stanford was near Belmont in Cape Colony, taking still photographs of a reconnaissance by Lord Methuen's force. (A battle later took place at Belmont, 23 Nov, a loss for the British, with over 70 killed and 220 wounded.)

⁶⁴ Number 5507 in 'New Warwick Subjects', c. Jan 1900. A copy of this slim catalogue is at the back of the Warwick 1899 catalogue in the Urban Collection. Unusually, no lengths are given for the four Stanford films listed, the catalogue simply noting that they were, 'Photographed by Mr. Bennett Stanford, of our War Staff now with Lord Methuen's Column in South Africa'. The Warwick Apr/May 1901 catalogue, p.134, reprints comments on the film

from the *Times* 12 Dec 1899 ('Cinematograph enterprise and the Transvaal War') and *Morning Post* 13 Dec 1899.

⁶⁵ This information comes from George Albert Smith's Account Book, 1898-1899. It lists several entries for J. Bennett-Stanford, 9 Charles Street, Berkeley Square, W., mainly for developing negatives, from August 1898 to April 1900, including for 5 Dec 1899, 'Dev neg "Armoured Train"'. In addition, Smith's cash and account books show that raw film stock was purchased by Stanford from Smith, probably for filming the Boer war. Thanks to Tony Fletcher for these details regarding Smith.

⁶⁶ The main Modder River battle took place 28 November, and was a loss for the British, with over 70 killed and 413 wounded.

⁶⁷ These three films appear under the heading, 'The Modder River Engagement' in 'New Warwick Subjects', c. Jan 1900.

⁶⁸ Warwick announced on 19 January 1900 the release of the four films taken by 'Bennett Stanford', who was then with General Gatacre.

⁶⁹ Smith's Account Book, 1898-1899 includes these entries: 1 Jan 1900, Dev neg 'Collecting Wounded'; 1 Jan 1900 Dev neg 'Troops Crossing Modder, train'.

⁷⁰ 'Triumph of the War Bioscope', *Daily Mail* 22 Jan 1900, p.7, cols.4 -5. Reference from Nick Hiley. This article characterised Mr. Bennett Stanford [sic] as 'a millionaire with a strong love of adventure'.

⁷¹ Smith's Account Book, 1898-1899, includes these entries: 27 Jan 1900, Dev '4.7 Gun' 'Roberts Cape Town' (fogged); 19 Feb 1900, Dev '4.7 Gun' (fogged). It is not clear why Smith developed the '4.7 Gun' film twice. Apparently, though, while this was being filmed, the 4.7 gun came under sniper attack. When the negative reached Smith, he noticed that the filming had been 'left off in a hurry', and states that Stanford had been wounded, though the catalogue says that Stanford was merely 'compelled to retire' under the enemy fire. (see V.W. Cook, 'The Humours of 'Living Picture' Making'). These films were presumably fogged by being opened by the censor in South Africa, as Smith claimed.

⁷² Low and Manvell, p.25.

⁷³ A newspaper as late as 22 January described Bennett-Stanford as 'head of the bioscope war staff' for Warwick in South Africa, but I believe this was probably based on out-of-date information. See 'Triumph of the War Bioscope', *Daily Mail* 22 Jan 1900. Incidentally, Stanford was not included in the long list of war correspondents granted the South African war campaign medal in 1902, Nick Hiley informs me.

⁷⁴ *Variety Stage* 13 June 1896, p.5: this is about Hertz at the Empire, Johannesburg. See also interview with Hyman in the same journal, 8 August, p.6, which is interesting even though he does not mention cinema.

⁷⁵ Both are noted in a Warwick ad in *The Era* 14 Oct 1899, p.28.

⁷⁶ Hyman's music hall business was heavily reliant on booking international acts. His brother Sydney was based in London to manage this end of the operation, though Edgar himself also paid regular visits to the British metropolis. His name regularly crops up in the British theatrical press of the time.

⁷⁷ MHTR 1 Sep 1899, p.122; 22 Sep 1899, p.171: he planned to move his artistes to Cape Town in the event of war. Two weeks later Sydney received a cable to hold artistes in London as Johannesburg was 'closed to amusements'. MHTR 29 Sep 1899, p.201; and MHTR 13 Oct 1899, p.217.

⁷⁸ There was a great send off for Hyman. MHTR 29 Sep 1899, p.186. Warwick later added that correspondents on board were from 'two principal London illustrated journals'.

⁷⁹ Warwick ad in *The Era* 14 Oct 1899, p.28. This statement was made in the context of Warwick commenting on its pre-war filming trips to South Africa.

⁸⁰ *The Era* 21 Oct 1899, p.28. In BJP 10 Nov 1899, p.705, Warwick also claimed that they would get negatives and furnish prints of war films 'four weeks earlier than any other concern on earth'.

⁸¹ MHTR 20 Oct 1899, p.233 and *The Era* 21 Oct 1899, p.19. In my *Sight and Sound* article on Rosenthal I wrongly stated that Hyman was manager of a music hall in Cape Town – but this was only a temporary activity, and as stated here, his music hall was in Johannesburg.

⁸² MHTR 24 Nov 1899, p.314. The company included J.B. Fitts, a pioneer film exhibitor, who had previously given film shows in the Good Hope Hall. See Gutsche, op. cit., p.25. The music hall audiences in Cape Town were notably jingoistic and violent. See Ernest Nathaniel

Bennett, *With Methuen's Column on an Ambulance Train* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1900), p.9-11.

⁸³ 'In South Africa: an interesting letter from Edgar Hyman', MHTR 29 Dec 1899, p.428. 'Mr. Edgar M. Hyman... is constantly sending negatives of events he succeeded [in] photographing.' This was stated in 'Special Warwick Films', PD Dec 1899, p.146.

⁸⁴ Hyman's films of the Cape Town Volunteers [5488, 5490] may have been the first that he shot.

⁸⁵ *The King* 3 Feb 1900, p.138: photographs attributed to Edgar M. Hyman. Pakenham calls the General, 'poor, plodding General Warren'. Pakenham, *The Boer War* (London: Cardinal; Sphere, 1991), p.302.

⁸⁶ Warwick's catalogue stated: 'The Australian Mounted Rifle Volunteers - 100 feet. Just arriving at Cape Town are shown marching down Adderley Street on their way to the Front. This View was photographed opposite the Grand Hotel, Cape Town, on December 22nd, 1899, by Mr. Edgar M. Hyman, of our War Staff. Excellent.' (no. 5526 in 'New Warwick Subjects', c. Jan 1900). On the same day he filmed the arrival of the New South Wales Lancers in Cape Town.

⁸⁷ A still in the Rosenthal collection (BFI) shows two wounded soldiers at Kroonstad, both apparently with arm wounds.

⁸⁸ Hyman: MHTR 30 March 1900, p.202; Rosenthal: *Entr'acte* 31 March 1900, p.6.

⁸⁹ Nick Hiley has suggested too that at some point during Benett-Stanford's South African filming he was joined for a short while by Edgar Hyman.

⁹⁰ Gutsche, op. cit., p.39.

⁹¹ PD July 1900, p.8.

⁹² Gutsche, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa, 1895-1940*, chapter 3, note 15, states that, 'Many years later, Edgar Hyman recollects how "my rival in the Natal theatre of war who worked for the Biograph company had a far more bulky equipment" than his own compact camera which gave him greater mobility and range of subjects.'

⁹³ After all, the company had to do the converse (reduction printing) when releasing their films on Biokam (and Biograph were having to do a similar thing when releasing their 68mm films onto 35mm.) Furthermore, it seems that another correspondent-cameraman, René Bull (q.v.) may also have had such a small film camera, which he could carry on horseback.

⁹⁴ After the war Hyman continued in the music hall business, and in 1912 formed a company running a chain of theatres and distributing films in South Africa, though the following year this company went into liquidation. He later became a stockbroker in Johannesburg. See E. Rosenthal, *Southern African Dictionary of National Biography* (London: Warne, 1966). This source also states that Hyman was born in England and came to South Africa in 1894, opening the Empire music hall in December 1894.

⁹⁵ Hughes, 'The Press and the Public During the Boer War 1899-1902', p.12.

⁹⁶ *The Era* 4 Aug 1900, p.24a (cited in Barnes); Warwick April 1901 catalogue.

⁹⁷ In a list of war correspondents reproduced in the Warwick catalogue of 1901, the *Outlook*'s man is given as Goldmann and the *Telegraph*'s as S. Goldmann. In an issue of *The Friend* in April 1900 a list of war correspondents includes Mr. Goldman for the *Outlook* and Messrs Burleigh (i.e. Bennet Burleigh) and S. Goldmann for the *Telegraph*. Cited in Frederic William Unger, *With "Bobs" and Krüger* (Cape Town: Struik, 1977), p.408-9. The first War Office list of approved correspondents, probably of 29 September, included a 'C.S. Godmann' for the *Outlook* among 36 names of accredited correspondents. The list is in PRO: WO32/7137. C.S. Goldman appears in later sources as acting for the *Telegraph*, the *Argus* and the *Standard* newspapers during the war, and he himself stated in his 1902 book that he was acting as correspondent for the *Standard*. See Charles Sydney Goldman, *With General French and the Cavalry in South Africa* (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd, 1902).

⁹⁸ Charles' older brother was Richard Goldmann (b.1861), also born in Burghersdorp but 7 years earlier, in 1861. This Goldmann was a correspondent for several newspapers, including the *Outlook*, and in his autobiography describes being besieged in Ladysmith and the subsequent campaign to take Pretoria. Richard Goldmann, *A South African Remembers* (Cape Town: Cape Times, 1946-47): see esp. p.108, 119-124.

⁹⁹ Data on his birth date and spelling of his name are inconsistent: some sources state 'Goldmann', some that he was born in 1869 or 1866. He was apparently educated in Germany, but came to England in 1891 to work for a mining firm with South African interests,

later marrying into the British aristocracy. He moved in high circles in the UK, became proprietor of the *Outlook* periodical, and was elected a British MP. See various biographical sources cited under the Saur database, especially *The Jews' Who's Who* (London: Judaic Pub. Co., 1920) and Wills and Barrett, *Anglo-African Who's Who* (London: Routledge, 1905).

¹⁰⁰ Goldman was especially impressed with the cavalry in the campaign, and in the preface to his 1902 book, he wrote that the Boer War proved the value of cavalry, which role was likely to increase in future wars. He was proved correct in the sense that the Boer War demonstrated the need for mobility, though wrong in the sense that the horse was even then being replaced by mechanical transport. Sadly Goldman's book contains no photograph of the author, and I can find no manuscripts by him.

¹⁰¹ Goldman's 1902 book also includes numerous folding maps. Before the war he had published an authoritative mining map of the Witwatersrand.

¹⁰² Probably a search of the *Standard's* columns for the period might reveal some more personal details.

¹⁰³ Warwick catalogue, 1901, p.181.

¹⁰⁴ Goldman's book details the war until about October. It is his brother who tells us that Charles returned to Johannesburg in early November. Richard Goldmann, *A South African Remembers*, p.124.

¹⁰⁵ Dickson was a pioneer motion picture inventor and engineer, of Anglo-Scottish parentage who worked in the USA for Thomas Edison from 1883 to 1895, where he was instrumental in developing the Kinetoscope film viewer, before joining the Mutoscope and Biograph company and moving to Britain as technical manager and cameraman of its British arm. See McKernan/Herbert, *Who's Who*.

¹⁰⁶ Some of Dickson's still photographs were published, though in many cases publishers used blow-ups from the movie film, and these, credited to Biograph, regularly appeared in illustrated periodicals, as well as in some books and newspapers.

¹⁰⁷ W.K-L. Dickson, *The Biograph in Battle: Its Story in the South African War* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1901). As Richard Brown indicates in his introduction to the 1995 reprint, the volume has another significance, for it was the first book ever published by a film cameraman. The book came out a year after the events described, being reviewed in March 1901. See PD, March 1901, p.70.

¹⁰⁸ Perhaps the most complete single work available is the reprint of Dickson's book, with a brief introduction by Richard Brown: *The Biograph in Battle* (Trowbridge: Flicks Books, 1995); John Barnes in his 1899 and 1900 volumes distils many details from the photographic and entertainment press; J.H. DeLange, *The Anglo-Boer War, 1899-1902* (Pretoria: State Archives Service, 1991) offers many filmographic details.

¹⁰⁹ The articles by Dickson appeared in *The Illustrated War News* from October 1899. This periodical is held uniquely at the British Library in Colindale. Another important source is *The War by Biograph*, a brochure published by the company for their London screenings. Both of these include details and photographs which do not appear in Dickson's book, particularly of the voyage to South Africa. The William Cox diary pages are in the National Army Museum, MSS number 8209-33. See also *Leslies Weekly* 10 Feb 1900, 'How the Boers and the British fight', a long account by Dickson, and William J. Sparks, 'Under fire with a moving picture camera', *NY Herald*, 12 July 1903, literary section, p.8. I wonder if this author could be a pseudonym for William Cox? Incidentally, William Cox's son, Mr. Francis J. Cox (of 37 Carter Avenue, Exmouth, Devon) wrote to the National Film Archive in 1976, donating five Biograph films. This from Luke McKernan, 11 Aug 1999.

¹¹⁰ Thelma Gutsche, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa, 1895-1940*, p.42-45. See also Michael Eckardt, 'Pioneers in South African Film History: Thelma Gutsche's Tribute to William Kennedy Laurie Dickson, the Man Who Filmed the Boer War', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 25, no. 4, Oct 2005, p.637-646.

¹¹¹ The passenger manifest for the *Dunottar Castle*, departing 14 Oct 1899, includes Mr. W.K.L. Dickson, 'Traveller', 27 yrs, Scotch, single. His destination is given as Algoa Bay, presumably meaning Delagoa Bay, which is puzzling, given that it is farther along the coast than Durban. The manifest also includes these three press men: Mr. A. Collett, 'Reporter', 22 yrs, English, single, bound for Natal (interestingly, Collett is not on the official list of correspondents); Capt. the Hon. A. Campbell, 'Press', 36 yrs, Scotch, married, bound for Cape Town (he worked for Laffans, says the official list of correspondents); Mr. Winston

Churchill, 'Press', 36 yrs, married, English, bound for Cape Town. Also on board was photographer H.C. Shelley. See PRO file, BT 27/312, 'Departures from Southampton'.

¹¹² Though in one source Dickson is cited as claiming that Buller was very cooperative on the *Dunottar!* See H.L. Adam, 'Round the world for the Biograph', *Royal Magazine*, v.6, 1901, p.127.

¹¹³ Dickson makes no comment on this, but fellow passenger Winston Churchill noticed the incident: 'We have a party of cinematographers on board... and when they found we were going to speak the *Nineveh*, they hustled about preparing their apparatus. But the cumbrous appliances took too long to set up and, to the bitter disappointment of the artists, the chance of making a moving picture was lost forever.' Winston Churchill, *London to Ladysmith Via Pretoria* (London, 1900), p.8; Pakenham, *The Boer War*, 1991, p.157.

¹¹⁴ Gilbert G. R. Sackville, *Some Reminiscences of the War in South Africa* (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1900), p.3. (Earl de la Warr's surname was Sackville).

¹¹⁵ Again the filming was noticed by Churchill: 'The crew and the stokers of the 'Dunottar Castle' gave three hearty cheers; the cinematograph buzzed loudly; 40 cameras clicked; the guard presented arms, and the harbour batteries thundered the salute.' Churchill, *London to Ladysmith Via Pretoria*, p.20. The ship reached Cape Town 30 October, and Buller's disembarkation took place the following day.

¹¹⁶ Dickson, *The Biograph in Battle*.

¹¹⁷ Three versions of this are held in the NFTVA. A still photograph from it was reproduced in *The Biograph in Battle* (p.129) and in the *New York Journal* 30 March 1900 (p.16) where it is captioned 'most remarkable war photograph ever made' (filed in the Biograph scrapbook, A2923-33 at the Seaver Center).

¹¹⁸ Charles R. N. Burne, *With the Naval Brigade in Natal, 1899-1900* (London: E. Arnold, 1902), p.15. This was referring to the 4.7 naval guns assault on Gun Hill on 12 Dec 1899. And of the Boxing Day sports in camp the officer wrote, 'The Biograph people who are still with us took a scene of the Tug o' War, our Oom Paul and then a tableau of the hanging of Kruger.' (*ibid*, p.26)

¹¹⁹ See *The War by Biograph*, op. cit., p.267, which reproduces frames from the film.

¹²⁰ Dickson, *The Biograph in Battle*, p.69-70.

¹²¹ At Dickson's side stood Winston Churchill. See *The Biograph in Battle*, p.174.

¹²² From Wilson, *With the Flag to Pretoria*, p.480. Gutsche states that this is the only still of the Biograph cart with the camera in position for shooting, which may be correct, though others show the crew filming with the huge camera on the battlefield.

¹²³ Cecil Rhodes was involved peripherally in the mutoscope business before the war ('...Mr. Rhodes has ordered half-a-dozen machines!' stated the *Westminster Gazette*, 21 Sep 1899, p.4). There was a South African branch of the Biograph company (mentioned by Gutsche). Dickson's discussions with Rhodes, therefore, were presumably aimed at developing an existing business, though the novel angle seems to have been to use moving pictures as a means of encouraging immigration or investment in the country, 'showing the public the beauties of South Africa'. (Gutsche, p.43) Rhodes' brother, Major Frank Rhodes, was with Dickson on the *Dunottar* and they apparently discussed these plans, though nothing seems to have come of them despite Dickson's later meeting with Cecil.

¹²⁴ *Report of the Ordinary General Meeting Held on Monday, July 9th, 1900...* (British Mutoscope and Biograph Co. Limited) pp.6, 10-11. This report is held in the Van Guysling collection at Seaver Center, Los Angeles. Dickson says of the flag scene, 'Thus was the principal aim of our enterprise accomplished, and the heart of the Biographer was at rest.' (From *The Biograph in Battle*, p.237).

¹²⁵ This filming with Roberts is detailed in *The Biograph in Battle*, p.249-256.

¹²⁶ Wilson, *With the Flag to Pretoria*, p.660. This book reproduces a photograph of 'Lord Roberts receiving despatches on the lawn of the British Residency, Pretoria' which had been 'enlarged from a Biograph film'. It notes: 'The operator happened to have his camera in position at the very moment when a cyclist despatch-rider rode up with papers requiring immediate attention, and Lord Roberts was photographed in the act of opening them.'

¹²⁷ John Barclay Lloyd, *One Thousand Miles with the C.I.V* (London: Methuen, 1901), p.235. This author notes that his unit of C.I.V. was bringing despatches about casualties at Schwartz Kop, having evaded the Boers and just ridden fifteen miles to Pretoria. He adds of Dickson's film: 'This scene was shown at the Palace Theatre for some nights.'

¹²⁸ *Report of the Ordinary General Meeting*, op. cit., p.6. This had been, the report notes, 'an exceptional year for expense' for the company. Though Biograph did, apparently, make a profit out of filming the war.

¹²⁹ Joseph Mason in a letter of 1938, quoted in Gutsche, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa, 1895-1940*, p.45. And making the camera even heavier, there was another attachment which was (Paul Spehr believes) to power a pump to maintain the film against the gate. This cycle wheel mechanism may be seen in illustrations of the camera in use in South Africa. Such wheel mechanisms were used in this era to power devices such as projector dynamos. e.g. see illustration in G.M. Coissac, *Histoire du Cinématographe* (Paris: Editions du Cinéopse ; Gauthier-Villars, 1925), p.294.

¹³⁰ Cox wrote to his wife (Durban, 17 March): 'After the relief of Ladysmith we cabled to Windmill St to say that a more portable apparatus was indispensable.' William Cox diaries, NAM: 8209-33-9.

¹³¹ William Cox diaries, 8909-33-11.

¹³² Later that year, 1900, Biograph did indeed develop a smaller, hand-cranked camera, though Bitzer wasn't able to use it until September. Bitzer had had similar problems with the huge camera in Cuba and so managed to film very little.

¹³³ I described Rosenthal's career in one of the first articles I wrote on early cinema: Stephen Bottomore, 'The Most Glorious Profession', *Sight and Sound*, 52, no.4 (Autumn 1983) pp.260-65. I have since discovered new information, and some of the data in this article is therefore unreliable.

¹³⁴ This figure comes from Strebel, 'Imperialist Iconography of Anglo-Boer War Film Footage', p.265.

¹³⁵ Warwick's 1899 catalogue, p.110 (held in the Urban collection). Sir Donald Currie (1825-1909), ship-owner and politician, was founder of the Castle Line between England and South Africa.

¹³⁶ In Warwick catalogue, 1901. In *The Friend*, April 1900, the entry is given as : 'Cinemetograph [sic] - Messrs. Rosenthal, Hyman'. Cited in Unger, *With "Bobs" and Krüger.*, p.408-9.

¹³⁷ OMLJ Aug 1900, p.93.

¹³⁸ 'Round the World with a Camera', *Bioscope* 17 Dec 1908, p.22. In another interview Rosenthal stated that, 'he cinematographed Kruger coming out of his house before the war rose'. See 'Some odd characters – the cinematographer', *Glasgow Evening News*, 9 Sep 1901, p.2.

¹³⁹ This South African trip may alternatively have been on the *Tantallon Castle*, for the Warwick catalogue of Sep 1900 lists some films shot on board this ship *en route* to South Africa (or perhaps the Tantallon voyage was the return journey, or during his first trip to the Cape).

¹⁴⁰ 'Special Warwick Films', PD Dec 1899, p.146. This gives the departure date as 2 December, though Barnes states it was 1 December. The ship left Las Palmas for the Cape 8 December, but I have so far not found the arrival date in South Africa from shipping information.

¹⁴¹ 'Special Warwick Films', PD Dec 1899, p.146.

¹⁴² 'Round the World with a Camera', op. cit., 1908. The second crossing was at Trichard's Drift, 17 Jan 1900.

¹⁴³ The Buller film was not listed in *The Era*, or at least is not in Barnes, though it survives in the NFTVA as *General Buller's Transport Train of Ox-Teams* and is 91 ft. long. He mentioned this film in a later letter back to Warwick. Rosenthal wrote: 'I am sending you by this mail seven negatives, which I hope will turn out perfect. I have not as yet heard from you with reference to the twenty-odd negatives I sent you from the front on my previous trip, including the "Skirmish," "Ostrich Farm," "General Buller's Transport Train," "Boer Laager," etc.' Letter quoted in 'At the Front With a Cinematograph', PD Apr 1900, p.75-76. The Buller film we have mentioned; the three other titles were later released by Warwick as *A Skirmish With the Boers Near Kimberley*; *Scene on Mr N. Smit's Ostrich Farm, Impanzi, Natal*; and *War Supplies and Provisions Arriving at a Boer Laager By a Train of Ox Teams*. These were all advertised in the *Era* on 3 March (see Barnes, 1900 volume, p.206).

¹⁴⁴ These may have been part of Rosenthal's other consignment of 7 films. The Durban films were *Carrying the Wounded on Board the Hospital Ship at Durban* [5551] and two views of

sailors training [5635 and 5536]. A *Bit of Natal Scenery* [5630] showed a view from a train between Mooi River and Estcourt, on the Ladysmith line.

¹⁴⁵ The catalogue states: 'These scenes portray one of the many brushes with the Boers...' The full title of the film is, *A Skirmish With the Boers Near Kimberley by a Troop Of Cavalry Scouts Attached to General French's Column*. The three sections were given as *The Scouts in Pursuit of the Boers, Bringing the Maxims into Action and A Charge and General Fusillade*.

¹⁴⁶ The pass was issued by a General Schugt(?), though the date on the pass looks like 4.3.1900, which would be too late, as these two films were released in Britain on 3 March. But perhaps the pass date is a time-limit, rather than a date of issue?

¹⁴⁷ *The Era*, 3 March 1900, p.27c (quoted in Barnes).

¹⁴⁸ Rosenthal wrote to Warwick, 'I returned to Port Elizabeth after my second trip and requested permission to again get to the front...': quoted in 'At the Front With a Cinematograph', PD April 1900, p.75-76. This and other articles about Rosenthal were recently discovered by the author in the *Photographic Dealer*, a rare periodical which was not collected in its entirety in any British library, and it appears that the sole issues for this Boer War period are held in the NYPL.

¹⁴⁹ The Port Elizabeth films were Warwick numbers 5556, 5557, 5618-5621, advertised like the previously mentioned titles on 3 March, suggesting that they were sent in the same batch, and at least some of which were shot the first week in February, which we can deduce as follows. One of the films showed the Derbyshire Regiment arriving, and shipping sources record that the *Umbria* left Cape Town for Port Elizabeth on 3 Feb, carrying 89 officers and 2,034 men belonging to the 4th Derbyshire Regt. (the ship departed Southampton circa 12 Jan). Four of the six films showed a naval brigade and its 4.7 inch guns arriving. This could be from the *Upada*, which left Bombay 28 Jan for Natal with 320 reserve horses, a transport section, twelve 15-pounder guns, and six 4.7 naval guns. The sixth film showed the Queen's Lancers disembarking their horses.

¹⁵⁰ Rosenthal quoted in, 'At the Front With a Cinematograph', op. cit.

¹⁵¹ Rosenthal wrote: 'I began to think taking war films was a bit off from my point of view, and used some strong language inwardly.' Inwardly on this occasion, though apparently Rosenthal's strong language was sometimes made in full voice !

¹⁵² 'At the Front With a Cinematograph', op. cit.

¹⁵³ He notes that 'I went to the Castle Line Office to get my berth to Cape Town : found there would be no boat for eleven days, so decided to go by the Union steamer, the "Briton." Got into Cape-town Sunday night.' He means that his preference was a Castle line ship (with whom Warwick had a special arrangement), but took the earlier Union line ship to save time.

¹⁵⁴ 'At the Front With a Cinematograph', op. cit. He also notes, 'I received your wire and remittance sent care of Castle Line, Capetown', which helps confirm that there was a special arrangement between Warwick and the Castle Line.

¹⁵⁵ 'At the front with a cinematograph', op. cit. Another source reports the gist of Rosenthal's letter but probably inaccurately, stating that the pass was issued on 21 Feb, and that 10,000 ft. of film was actually sent to him. AP 30 Mar 1900, p.242.

¹⁵⁶ This is film no. 5646 in the Warwick catalogue. Hyman's film of Rosie is no. 5652, and nos. 5653-5654 are other Orange River scenes shot by Rosie at or near the pontoon bridge.

¹⁵⁷ This film, shot by Edgar Hyman, depicted war supplies crossing a bridge over the Orange River, and the film also caught, as the first to cross, Rosenthal with his camera and tripod, who had just taken some shots on the other side of the river. See 'Bio-tableaux: a chat with Mr. Gibbons', MHTR 18 May 1900, p.315. The fact that the two cameramen were here together, and at Pretoria, somewhat belies Warwick's claim that, 'Mr. Rosenthal will go through a different section of South Africa than that covered by Mr. Edgar M. Hyman...' 'Special Warwick Films', PD, Dec 1899, p.146.

¹⁵⁸ 'How war films are made', *The Showman*, Sep 1900, p.11-13. His food was mainly hard biscuit, with tinned meat as an occasional luxury, we are told.

¹⁵⁹ W.T. Stead, 'The Mission of the Cinematograph', in *Review of Reviews Annual, 1902* (London, 1901), p.179. The gist of this Stead article is also in: 'Cinematograph Chats: no.1 The Warwick Trading Company', *Talking Machine News*, Jan 1904, p.178. Another article adds: 'As regards luggage, it was found that the cinematograph apparatus, supplied by the above firm, could be strapped on the back of one mule, while another would carry the personal luggage. By this arrangement it was possible to keep pace with the troops, but if the instruments be conveyed by waggon they must remain in the rear, and therefore the operator

is unable to obtain pictures of the most interesting scenes.' 'The cinematograph in warfare', PD July 1900, p.7-8. The article continues: 'It is noteworthy that Messrs. Rosenthal and Hyman are the only cinematographers out at the front ; others with like instruments have been content with the waggon method of transport, and have consequently been left behind. When long marches are contemplated, both mules are used with a waggon, but as soon as more rapid progress is desirable the waggon is out-spanned, and the mules used separately as described.' See also 'Special interview with Mr. J. Rosenthal', *Jewish World*, 3 August 1900, p.292-293. As well as covering the war in general, this interview deals with Rosenthal's meetings with members of the Jewish community in South Africa during the war.

¹⁶⁰ Presumably this being the same 'negro attendant' who (see note 165 below), had on one occasion innocently brought a hoard of dynamite into the camp.

¹⁶¹ 'Special interview with Mr. J. Rosenthal', op. cit., 3 Aug 1900.

¹⁶² W.T. Stead, 'The Mission of the Cinematograph', op. cit., p.179.

¹⁶³ These two were advertised on different dates, suggesting they were also mailed on different dates. Also filmed in Bloemfontein and released with the other Coldstream Guards film were nos. 5665 and 5666.

¹⁶⁴ Burnham's role in the war is mentioned in Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Great Boer War* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1901), p.439.

¹⁶⁵ 'The cinematograph in warfare', op. cit. An almost identically worded report of the loss appeared in 'How war films are made', *The Showman*, op. cit. An 'interview' probably means a shot of the two men chatting together. The *Mexican* sank on 5 April after colliding with another ship, and though all hands and the mails were saved, some cargo was lost, including some photographs and Warwick's films. See C. Hocking, *Dictionary of Disasters at Sea* (London: Stamp Exchange, 1990). The loss on the *Mexican* of one photographer's entire set of photographs of the war to date is reported in H.C. Shelley, 'War and the camera', AP 21 Sep 1900, p.230-32. The unfortunate photographer was Mackern.

¹⁶⁶ 'The cinematograph in warfare', op. cit.; and 'How war films are made', op. cit. The former article details some other adventures Rosenthal had been through, including an incident of filming a field gun which fired mistakenly, and another occasion when his 'negro attendant' came back with some dynamite that he'd found, giving the cameraman a severe scare.

¹⁶⁷ 'Mr. J. Rosenthal – Representing the Warwick Trading Co., England', *Australasian Photographic Review* 22 June 1901, p.9. Also in 'Important notice', WTC April 1901 catalogue.

¹⁶⁸ For example, the Warwick April 1901 catalogue notes that, 'Owing to the activity of the Boers around Johannesburg after the British Army occupied the town, and the difficulty in getting the convoy carrying the mails through to Cape Town, much delay was occasioned in receiving the negatives showing the Johannesburg incidents.'

¹⁶⁹ Barnes, 1900 volume, p.88. Film numbers 5630-5633. These were taken on both transport and armoured trains.

¹⁷⁰ Will Day Collection, Cinémathèque française. These dates are around the time of the surrender of Bloemfontein (the Modder River is nearby). The latter pass was signed Major J.H. Turss, or similar name (it is hard to read).

¹⁷¹ 'Special interview with Mr. J. Rosenthal', op. cit., 1900. This presumably happened 5 May 1900 while he was filming *Naval Gun crossing the Vet River Drift* [5674].

¹⁷² The photograph is reproduced in Gutsche, op. cit. A war correspondent, Lord Cecil Manners, in reporting Kroonstad's surrender, stated: 'I noticed a "cinematograph" at work during the march in, so I hope that the public may be enabled to witness for themselves this interesting and memorable scene as it actually occurred'. This cinematograph camera presumably must have been operated by Rosenthal. See 'War letters', *Morning Post* 21 June 1900, quoted in the Warwick 1901 catalogue, p.154. Also in: 'Mr. J. Rosenthal – Representing the Warwick Trading Co., England', op. cit. Incidentally, Rosenthal also recorded Pole-Carew's forces in still photographs.

¹⁷³ 'The cinematograph in warfare', op. cit.

¹⁷⁴ The film survives in the Imperial War Museum at full length, and a fragment in the NFTVA. One of these versions was screened at the NFT, Oct 1999.

¹⁷⁵ This was at Smaldeel, on the railway just north of the Vet River, some 50 miles back from Kroonstad. 'The cinematograph in warfare', op. cit. The article notes: 'Very important to the correspondent is the good-will of the Press Censor – Lord Stanley'.

¹⁷⁶ 'Our Latest Manufacturer, Mr. J. Rosenthal and Some of His Experiences', *Kinematograph and Lantern Weekly*, 15 Oct 1908, p.555, 557.

¹⁷⁷ Perhaps Warwick learned their lesson from this: better to have a small section looked at by the censor in the field and marked as such, thereby avoiding the danger of the cans of exposed films later being opened by military officials.

¹⁷⁸ From V.W. Cook, 'The Humours of 'Living Picture' Making', *Chambers Journal*, 30 June 1900, p.488; and earlier details from 'Triumph of the War Bioscope', *Daily Mail*, 22 Jan 1900, p.7, cols.4-5. The latter added: "'Martial law" is thus responsible for the loss to the British public of some exceedingly interesting pictures. However, most of the large consignments that the Warwick Company have received from the front have arrived intact.' Reference from Nick Hiley. As we have seen, the Boers too applied a de facto censorship on filming at one point, for when they captured a consignment of raw film stock destined for Rosenthal's use, they threw this film 'all over the veldt'.

¹⁷⁹ Film nos. 5731-5733 and 5737-5739. The latter three films were possibly cut from a single 150 ft. film, and two of these survive in the NFTVA, as does the war balloon film (though decayed, as is the shot of ambulances). Lords Roberts and Kitchener may have appeared in one of these films: they are in a still of the Vaal crossing in ILN 11 Aug 1900, p.203. Rosenthal's still photographs survive of the artillery drawn by ox teams crossing the Vaal, and of the Essex Regiment crossing by punt.

¹⁸⁰ The photo is reproduced in Warwick's 1901 catalogue, p.135.

¹⁸¹ A soldier next to Rosenthal was shot during this battle. See 'Round the World with a Camera', op. cit. Elandsfontein was a strategic railway junction some 8 miles east of Johannesburg.

¹⁸² Thomas T. Jeans and Charles N. Robinson, *Naval Brigades in the South African War, 1899-1900* (London: Sampson Low & Co., 1901), p.127. This writer doesn't mention Rosenthal by name, but I believe that the cameraman in question can be no-one else. This section was apparently written by Capt. Leslie O. Wilson, who felt some cynicism toward photographers such as Rosenthal, for he begins the section with this statement: 'It was a curious thing, but our guns, especially the large ones, always offered, apparently, a most tempting bait to every owner of a cinematograph or camera. Whenever we were in difficulties, if we were fast in a bog, or delayed in a drift, or had broken a bridge, then was the moment for every camera within a range of two miles to make its appearance and fix its penetrating eye on us. The same happened when in action...'

¹⁸³ Incidentally, Rosenthal was not unique among the media men in facing risks in covering this war, and 33 per cent of correspondents in South Africa were killed or wounded or died of disease incurred in the course of their work – a much higher rate than for combatants. See James Archibald, 'The war correspondents of today', *Overland Monthly* 37, March 1901, p.802. Unger, *With "Bobs" and Krüger*, op. cit., p.409-12, lists over 40 pressmen who were war casualties.

¹⁸⁴ 'Round the World with a Camera', op. cit. Another source states: '...he tried – under a misapprehension – to enter Pretoria an hour or two before it surrendered, and had to retreat hurriedly without shutting up his tripod'. From 'Some odd characters – the cinematographer', op. cit.

¹⁸⁵ Roberts was keenly aware of the importance of being recorded by the media at the right moments, and his triumph in Pretoria was evidently especially image-worthy. See Kenneth O. Morgan, 'The Boer War and the Media (1899-1902)', *Twentieth Century British History* 13, no. 1, March 2002, p.6.

¹⁸⁶ Such symbolism is always important – one might recall the destruction of statues of Saddam, after the fall of Baghdad.

¹⁸⁷ Personal and family relationships played a significant part in Lord Roberts' campaign in South Africa, for his son, a Lieutenant, had been killed in action in Natal a week before Roberts departed from England.

¹⁸⁸ Wilson, *With the Flag to Pretoria*, p.544-45, 650-51.

¹⁸⁹ Dickson, *The Biograph in Battle*, p.237. Richard Brown and Thelma Gutsche state that by the time Dickson arrived in Pretoria the ceremony was over, though this is not proven.

¹⁹⁰ As Richard Brown points out, in his book, Dickson rather disingenuously suggested that the scene was too large to include both the flag and the crowds.

¹⁹¹ Letter from W. Wolfram in the *Natal Mercury*, 19 Nov 1900, quoted in Gutsche, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa, 1895-1940*, p.44. Dickson was not

actually a 'yank', but of Scottish French origin. The Biograph film was exhibited by Perkin's Biograph. One might recall in this connection that other such images of flag raisings have been re-shot: the famous photograph of the raising of the US flag at Iwo Jima was posed, it was later revealed.

¹⁹² In the former camp would be cinema vérité exponents such as Lee/Pennebaker, and in the latter would be filmmakers such as Nick Broomfield.

¹⁹³ 'He used 15,000 ft. of film in photographing scenes on [the] march, and he would have used 5,000 more if the ubiquitous De Wet had not seized the fourth 5,000 ft. of film at his lucky haul at Roodevaal.' W.T. Stead, 'The Mission of the Cinematograph', op. cit., p.179.

¹⁹⁴ 'The cinematograph in warfare', op. cit.

¹⁹⁵ Though while on the ship to South Africa Dickson and his men were probably in 'civvies' (one officer remarked that the crew were 'not very military in appearance').

¹⁹⁶ Strelbel points out that there was an 'absence of film footage on the concentration camps or on the razing of farms and crops, etc.' Actually, there was another reason for the lack of these latter kind of scenes showing British targeting of Boer civilian and economic life, for these practices mainly happened in the latter part of the war (1901 to 1902), by which time few cameramen were being sent to South Africa (though one might in turn ask why this was, as I have done in my Box on official regulation in the introduction to this chapter). Strelbel, 'Imperialist Iconography...'. Strelbel refers to an article by Ferro which raises the issue of distortion through gaps in visual documentation: Marc Ferro, '1917: History and Cinema', *Journal of Contemporary History*, no. 4, 1968, p.45-62.

¹⁹⁷ This was when he met a Boer fighter at one point. See Dickson, *The Biograph in Battle*, p.83. Biograph, of course, was doing business with Cecil Rhodes, the arch imperialist, who had done much to ensure that South African newspapers toed a British line. See Deian Hopkin, 'Socialism and Imperialism: The ILP Press and the Boer War', op. cit.