

# The Golden Age of Film

## Silent Films



# The Gold Rush (1936)

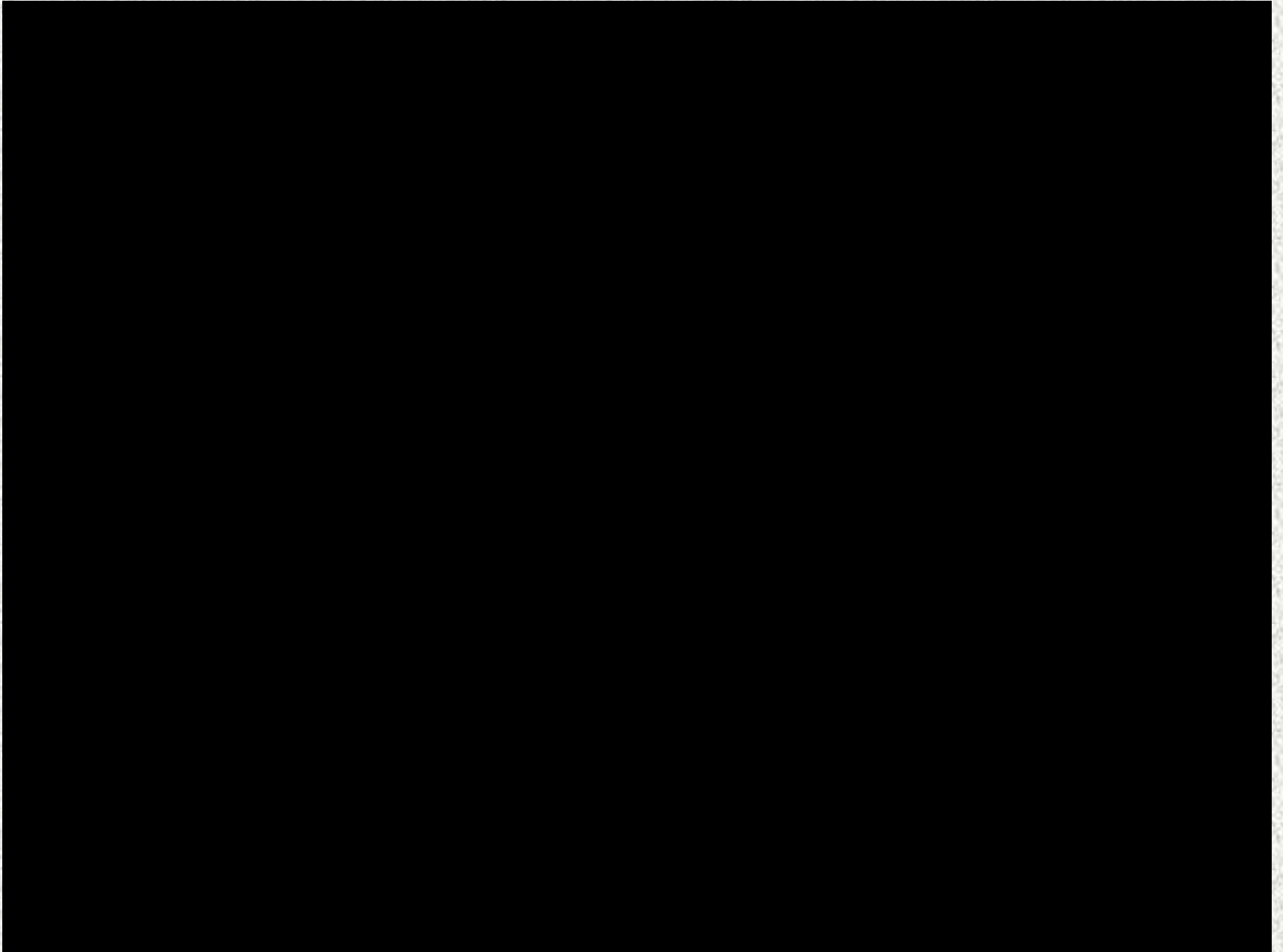




# The Gold Rush (1936)

1. Did you like the clip? Why or why not?
2. What did you notice about the film?
  - Sound?
  - Was there any dialogue (spoken words)?
  - What was the quality of the film?

Mr. Bean





# Mr. Bean

1. Did you like the clip? Why or why not?
2. What did you notice about the film?
  - Sound?
  - Was there any dialogue (spoken words)?
  - What was the quality of the film?
3. What was similar and what was different in the 2 clips?

A decorative white frame with ornate, symmetrical scrollwork at each corner, enclosing the text. The frame consists of two parallel lines forming a rectangle.

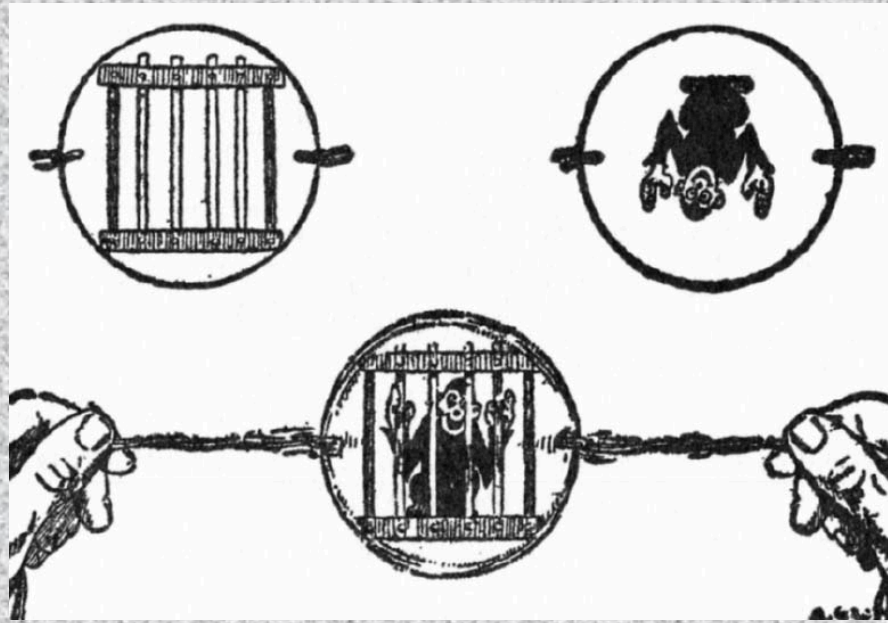
*The Birth  
of Film*

# Origins of film

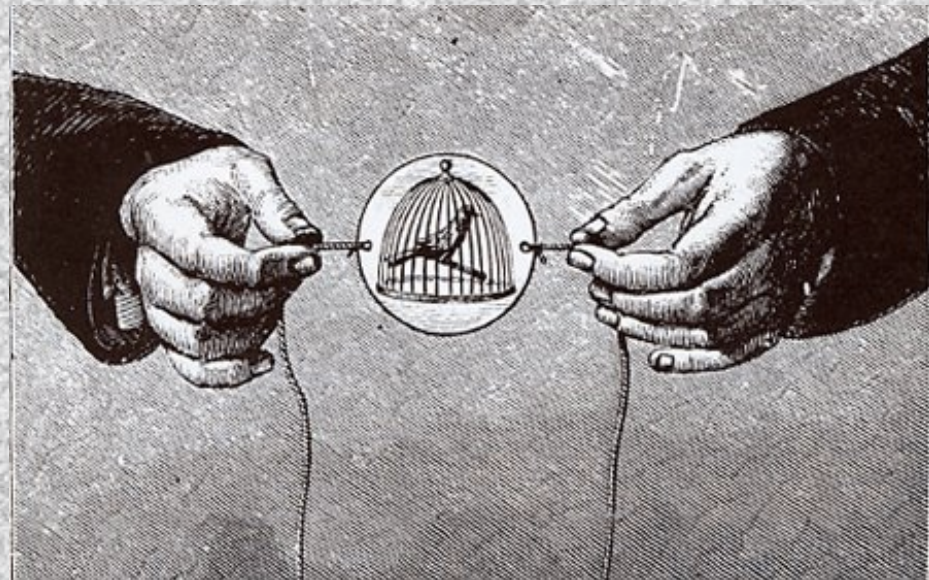


- The first simple short films were shown in the U.S. in the 1890s.
- Before that it took decades to figure out HOW to make pictures move on a screen.

# Early Film Efforts (1800s)



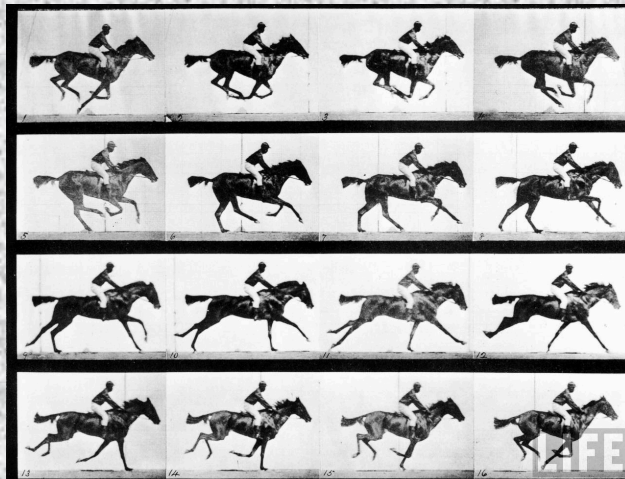
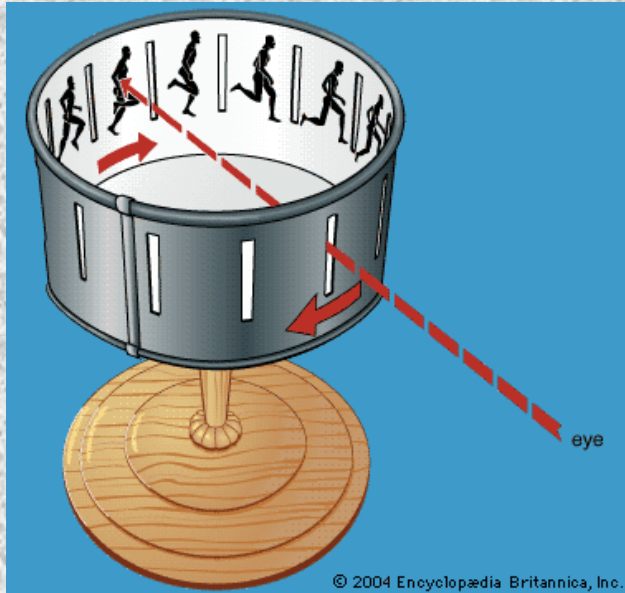
Thaumatrope  
(1820s)

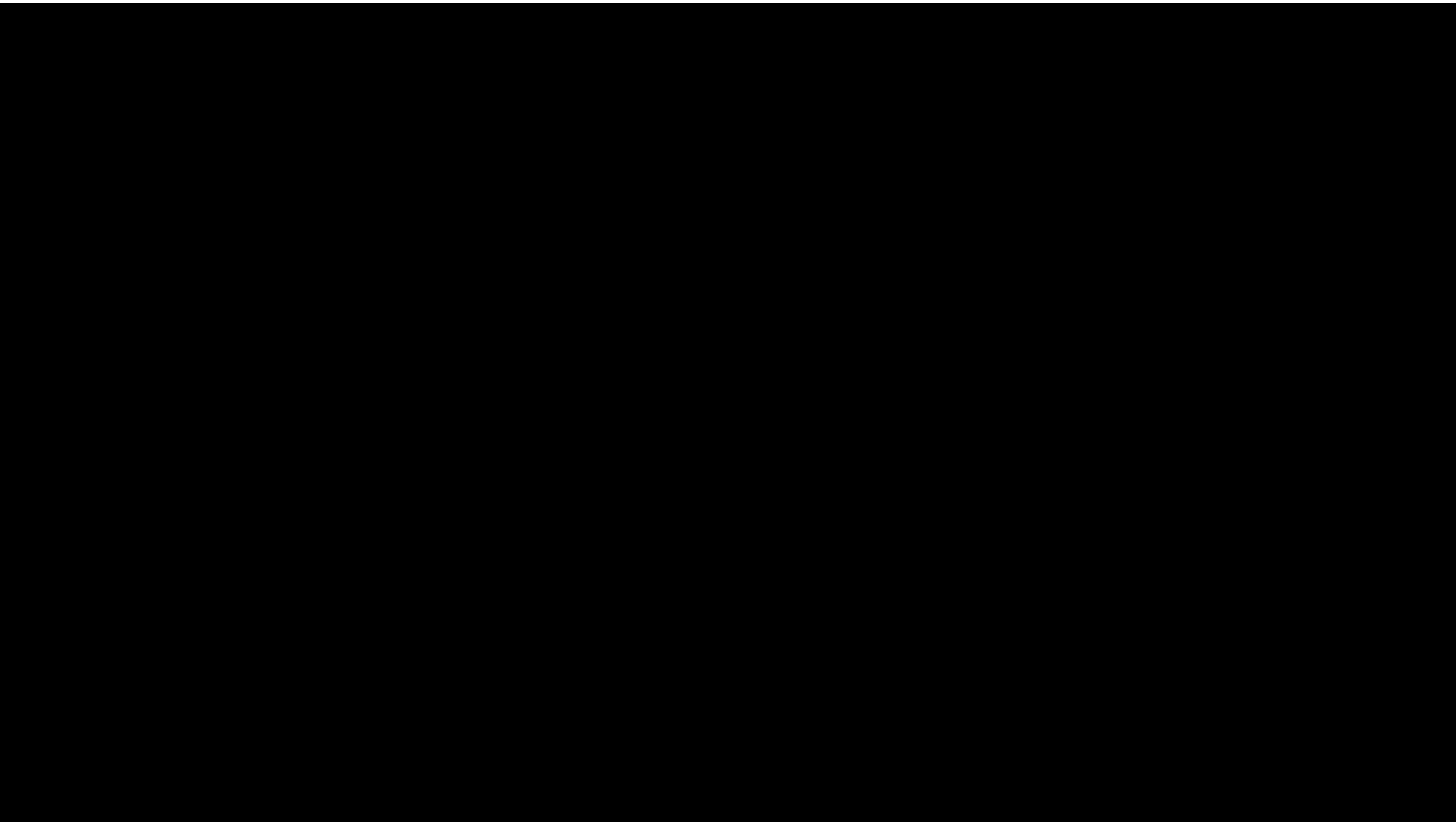




# Early Film Efforts (1800s)

## Zoetrope (1830s-1870s)







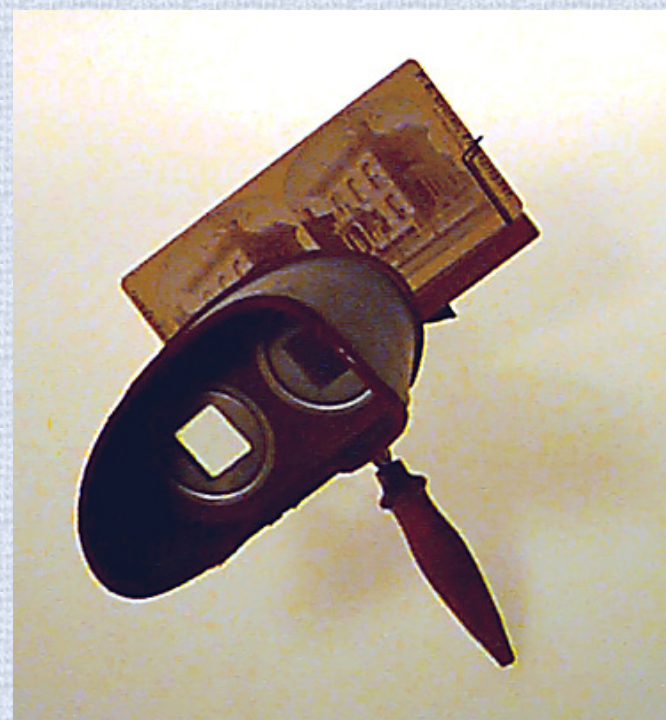
Then: Stereoscope



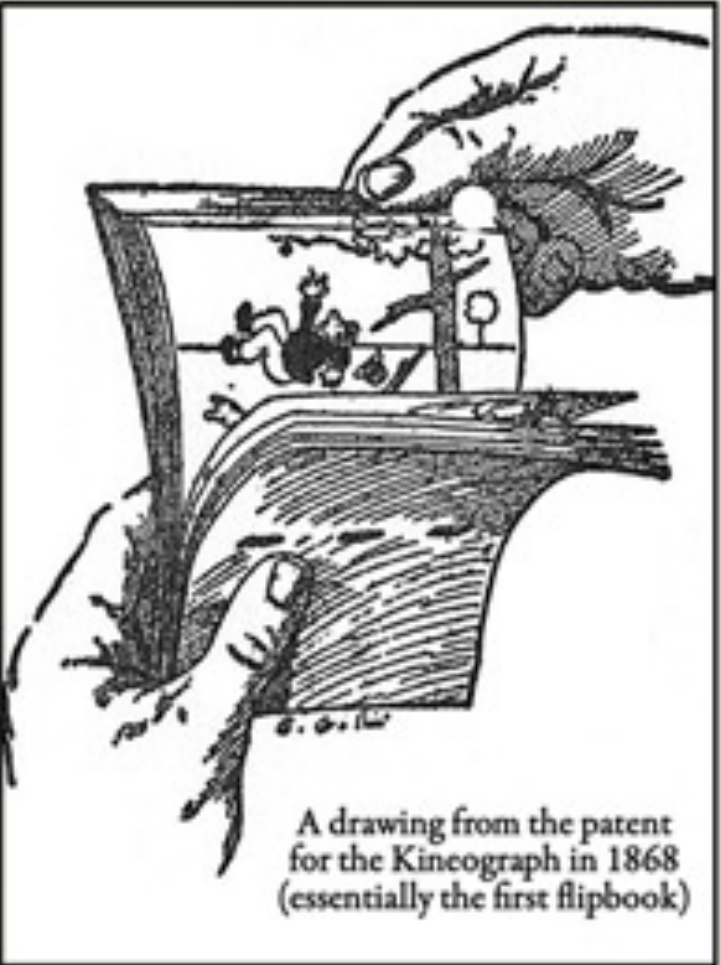
Now: View Master

# Early Film

- By the early 1900s millions of Americans owned a stereoscope – a handheld device that made pictures look 3-dimensional.
  - It was sold in mail order catalogs. People collected pictures of famous events like the Wright Brothers' airplane flights and the building of the Panama Canal.



# Thomas Edison's Kinetograph



A drawing from the patent for the Kineograph in 1868 (essentially the first flipbook)



**Kineograph, 1868**

# Early Film

- In 1900 Kodak came out with a cheap, handheld, easy-to-use camera made for kids, which cost \$1.
  - Advertised the camera in children's magazines, set up camera clubs & photography contests
  - This easy-to-use camera got millions of Americans more interested in photography
- The Kodak camera made it possible for anyone to take pictures.

THE COSMOPOLITAN.

Any school-boy or girl can make good pictures with one of the **Eastman Kodak Co.'s Brownie Cameras** **\$1.00**



**\$1.00**

Brownies load in daylight with film cartridges for 6 exposures, have fine meniscus lenses, the Eastman Rotary Shutters for snap shots or time exposures and make pictures  $2\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{1}{4}$  inches.

Brownie Camera, for $2\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{1}{4}$ pictures, . . . . .	\$1.00
Transparent-Film Cartridge, 6 exposures, $2\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{1}{4}$ , . . . . .	.15
Paper-Film Cartridge, 6 exposures, $2\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{1}{4}$ , . . . . .	.10
Brownie Developing and Printing Outfit, . . . . .	.75
Brownie Removable Finder, . . . . .	.25

*Take a Brownie Home for Christmas.*

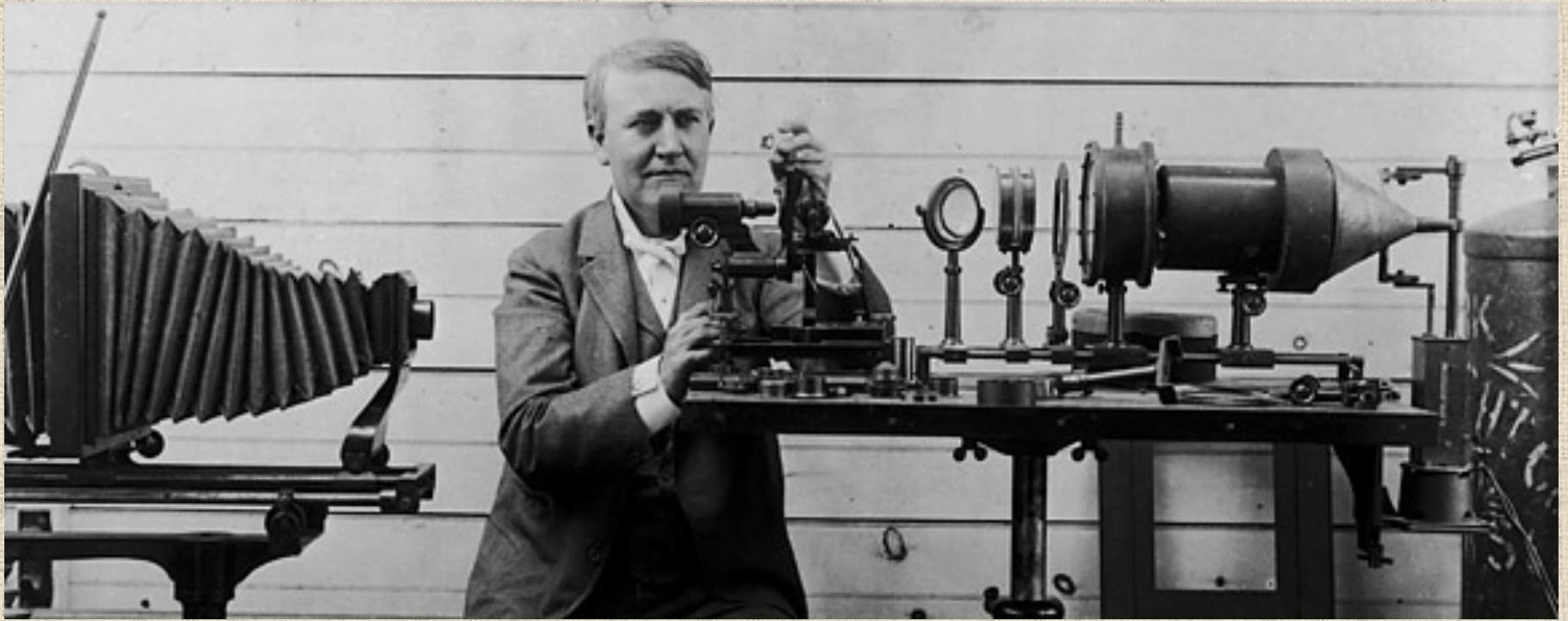
Brownie circulars and Kodak catalogues free at the dealers or by mail.

**EASTMAN KODAK CO.**  
Rochester, New York.

21 (1900)



# Origins of Film



- The problem:
  - Had the technology to take pictures **BUT** couldn't figure out how to actually record movement.



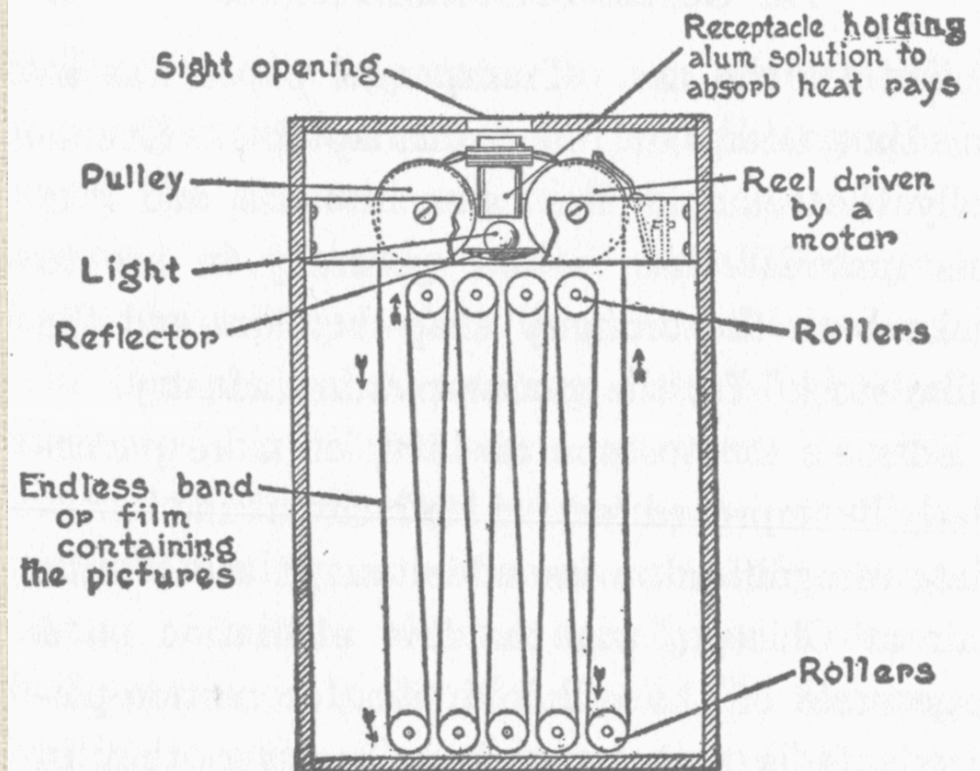
# The Kinetoscope



First displayed at the 1893 Chicago's World's Fair, Thomas Edison's Kinetoscope was the first truly moving image.

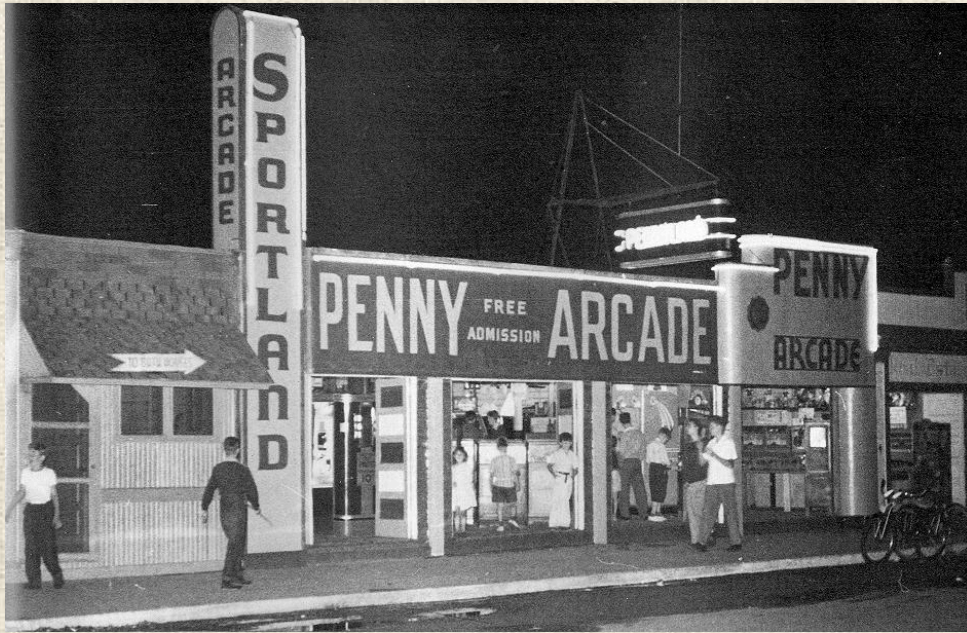
46

## Animated Cartoons



PLAN OF EDISON'S FIRST KINETOSCOPE.

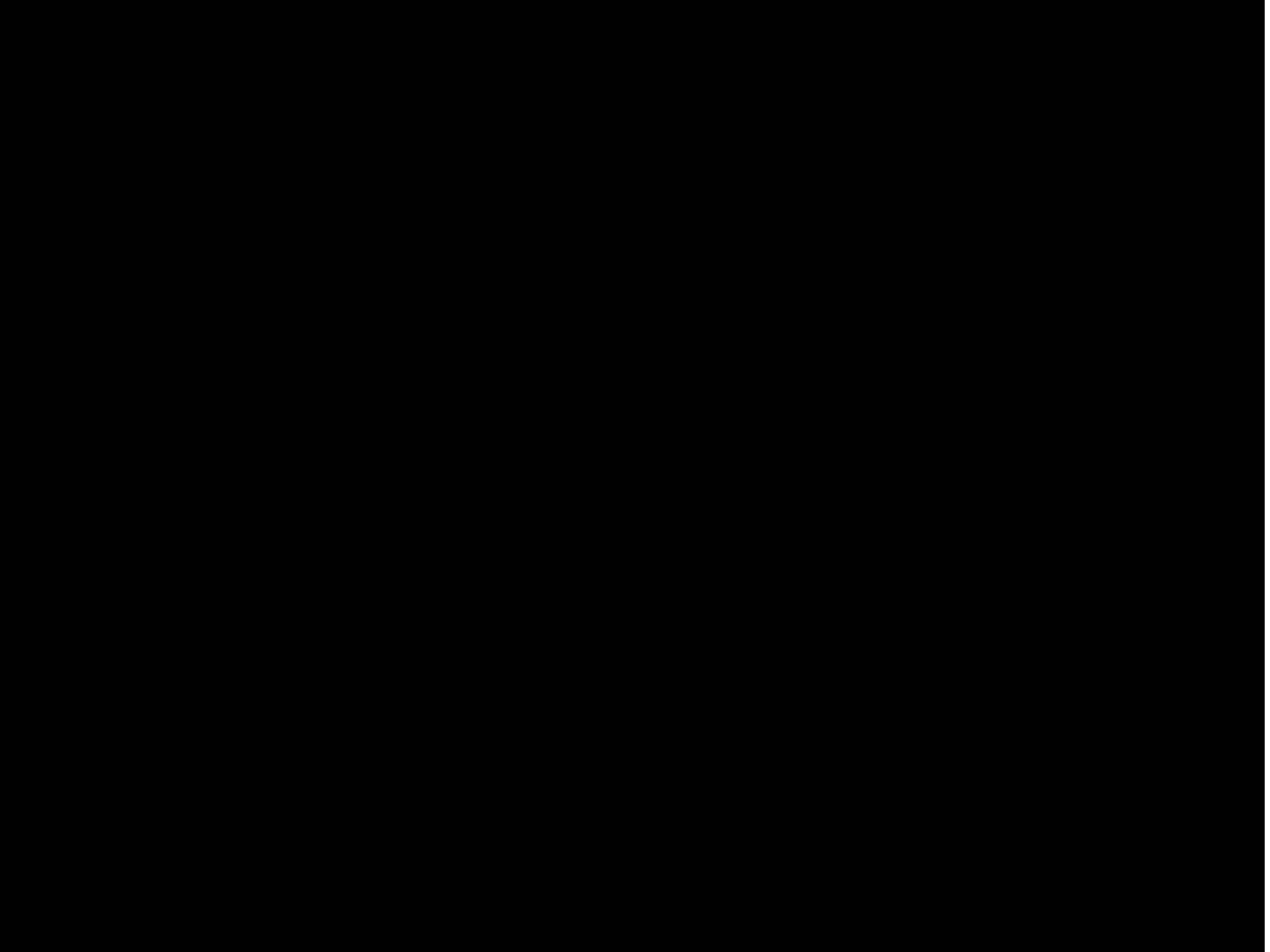
Modified from the Patent Office drawing.



- Penny arcades began to pop up around the country to show these new short films.
  - Allowed viewers to see **short scenes of everyday life** – a girl dancing or a man sneezing.



- People realized they could make more money if many people could watch a movie together.



**EDISON  
KINETOSCOPE FILMS  
1894-1896**

© 1:51

▶ SP -0:06:51

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# Film = Motion picture



- Motion: the action or process of moving or being moved
- Picture: photograph/image



- Motion picture (film) takes a series of still pictures, projects them one after another quickly, which gives the illusion of movement

# Birth of the Flickers

- What does the word “flicker” mean?
- Thinking about the films you just watched, why might you call them “flickers”?



# Birth of the Flickers

- Flickers were makeshift theaters that showed short movies.
- Business owners made space in their stores for these movies.
  - People sat & watched “flickers” projected onto a screen or a bedsheet hung on the wall.



# Nickelodeons

- **The first official movie theaters were nicknamed “nickelodeons”**
  - The name combined the cost of admission, a nickel, with the Greek word for theater.

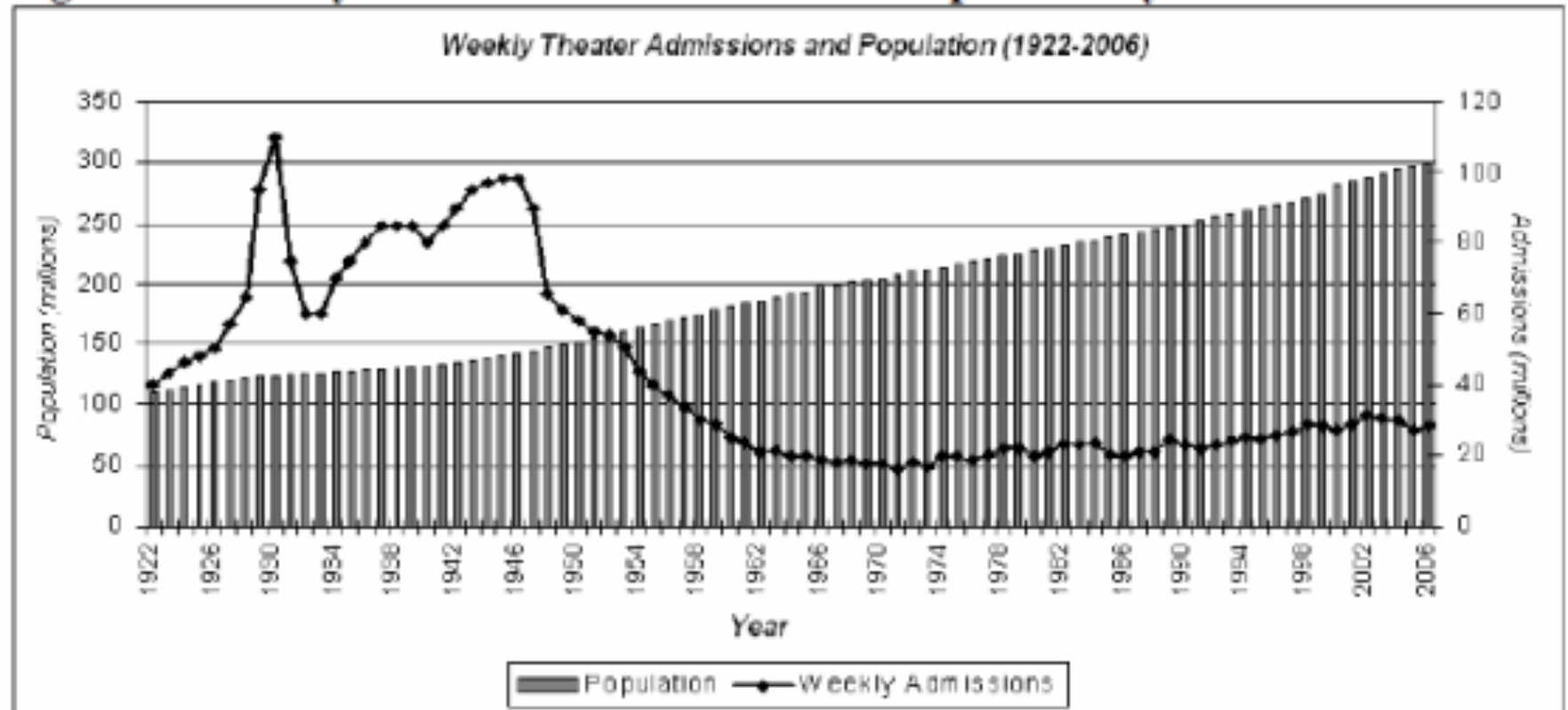




- By 1910 more than 10 million people were going to the movies each week.

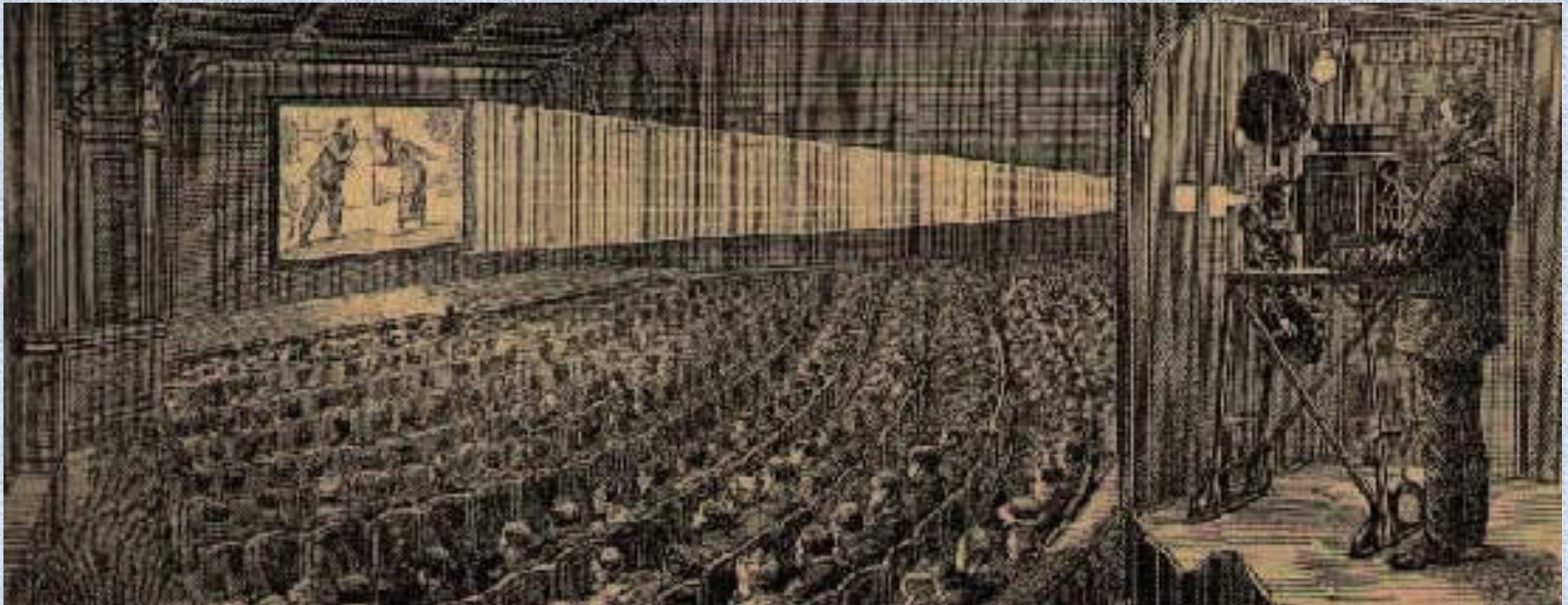
Is that a lot of people? Well, take a look at the chart below:

**Figure 2.2 Weekly Theater Admissions and US Population by Year**



Data Sources: US Census Bureau; International Motion Picture Almanac 1947, 2008, (Steinberg 1980)

- Nickelodeons weren't just movie theaters
  - They showed a short film & also had live entertainment (singing, dancing, comedy acts, etc.)
  - Shows were **15-90 minutes long** and changed every couple of days.



- Nickelodeons were usually located near working-class and immigrant neighborhoods.

➤ Why?

*“You have to understand what was happening in this country to see why movies were catching on. From 1900 to 1910, about nine or ten million immigrants poured in, and because nickelodeon movies were new, cheap, silent and set up no language difficulties, they became a popular pastime.”*



- Early films had:
  - Simple & funny plot points to make them interesting.
  - Limited text (in the form of printed title cards placed in and between scenes to explain the plot.)
  - No spoken words.



# The Changing Audience for Films



**Early film audiences: the working class & immigrants**



**Later film audiences included the rich (and the working/middle classes)**

- At first, rich people looked down on the movies, for being cheap & low quality. (They were used to Broadway theater!)
- Eventually business owners began to open up theaters in nicer neighborhoods. To draw rich customers in, they made the films longer and better quality.
- Soon, people of all social classes (rich and poor) were enjoying films.

One example of these higher quality films:

***The Great Train Robbery*** (1903)

- One of the first films to tell a story was *The Great Train Robbery*.
- The 11-minute film was simple compared to films today but it was a significant step forward in moviemaking.
- Preview: Why was it so significant at the time?  
(WATCH!)



# *The Great Train Robbery* (1903)

1. What did you think of the film?
2. What made this an IMPROVEMENT over the short films we watched yesterday? (the man sneezing, the dancer, etc.)
3. What FILM TECHNIQUES did you notice?
4. WHY was this movie so significant at the time?





*Hollywood: A Celebration of  
the American Silent Film*

The Pioneers



IN-CLASS READING:  
“How American Movies  
(Hollywood) Became Great”



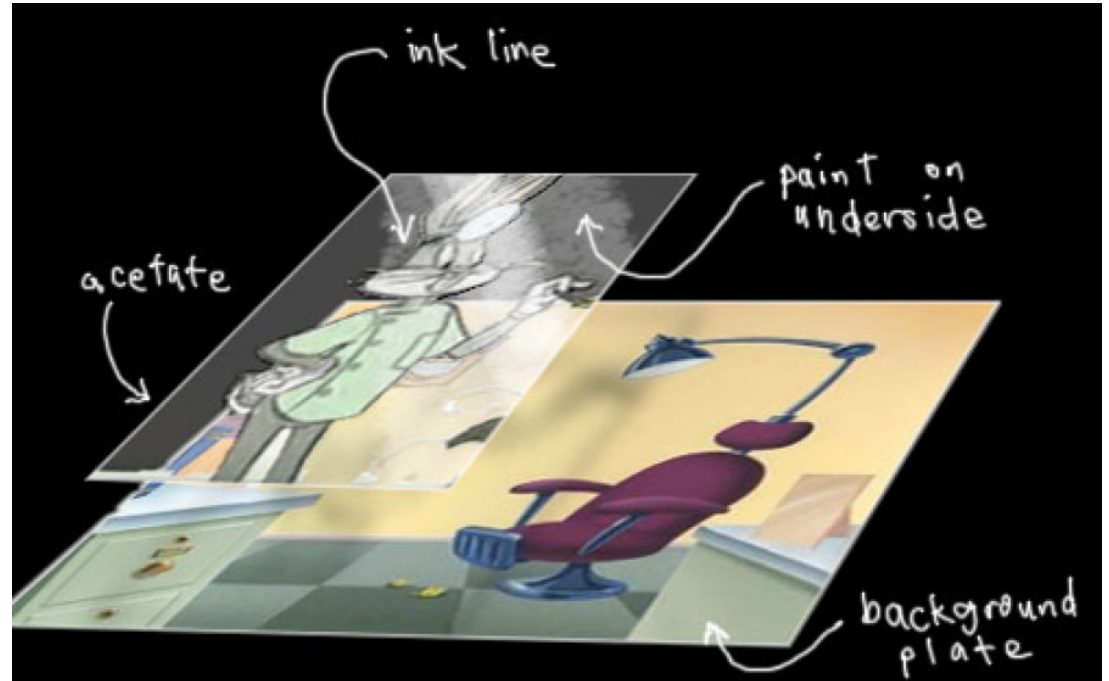


# Early animation

- Early animation started before 1910 and was made up of simple drawing photographed one at a time.
  - TONS of work as there were 100s of drawings per minute of film.



- By 1913, animation was made easier:
  - Celluloid technology made it so the animator could draw a detailed back/foreground on paper and then paint drawings of the action onto a clear sheet which was then held over the background image
    - This made it unnecessary to repeatedly draw the background.
    - This layering created the illusion of depth as well.

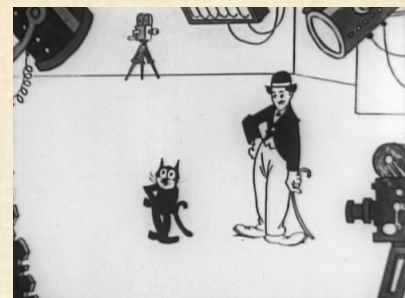




# *Felix in Hollywood* (1923)



- **Plot:** Felix the Cat auditions for a job as a Hollywood actor, but "ruins his chances" when Charlie Chaplin catches him doing his Chaplin impersonation. By inadvertently saving the day in a western scene being filmed, he is offered a long-term contract.



- **WHILE YOU WATCH, CONSIDER:**

1. How is the plot conveyed without spoken words?
2. How is "sound" conveyed without sound? (The original version did NOT have sound – it's been added in for our entertainment today.)

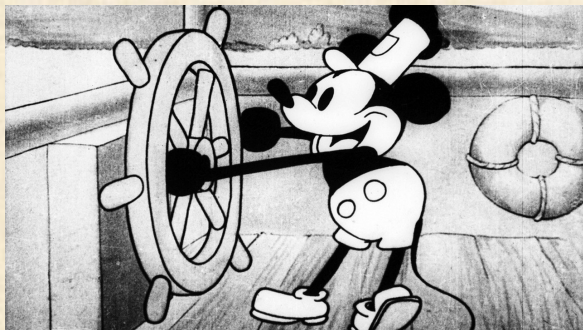


ACCEPT MEDIA  
PRESENTS

THE  
ANIMATION  
STATION

PODCAST

[WWW.ANIMATIONSTATION.INFO](http://WWW.ANIMATIONSTATION.INFO)



## *Steamboat Willie* (1928)

- Walt Disney took animation to a new level. **He was the first animator to add sound to his movie cartoons.**
- ***Plot:*** Mickey Mouse as a steamboat pilot, entertaining himself, Minnie & the audience by making music with kitchen pots-and-pans to barnyard animals.
- ***SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT AS YOU WATCH:***  
How is *Steamboat Willie* different from *Felix in Hollywood*?

