

Henry Ford's Moving Picture Show, Vol. 1 (1914-1920)

Phillip W. Stewart

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Book Review

How often does one enjoy viewing old movies of historical events? I certainly do! Would it surprise you to know that in 1914 the Ford Motor Company (FMC) released a professionally produced 35mm film titled: "How Henry Ford Makes One Thousand Cars a Day" to advertise and educate the public about his Model Ts.

In 1913 Henry Ford purchased a movie camera that had been invented by his friend Thomas Edison. Ford recognized the potential of moving pictures for his company. He instructed the head of advertising at FMC "to set up a moving picture department." The department grew to a full time staff of 25 utilizing the most modern movie equipment. Henry wished not only to educate his work force but the public as well.

One of their first major projects was the "Ford Animated Weekly." In late 1916 it was changed to the "Ford Educational Weekly." FMC offered these films to movie theaters at no cost and were non-commercial except for a "Distributed by FMC" on the title graphic. The book author Phillip Stewart notes that "the Ford films are shown at more than 3500 theaters and it is likely they are viewed by four to 5 million people each week." He also describes that "between 1915 and 1920 Henry Ford was a **Movie Mogul**, overseeing one of the largest motion picture production and distribution operations on the planet."

In 1962 FMC transferred all rights to their surviving 1,800,000 feet of motion picture film to the **National Archives and Records Administration** (NARA). Henry Ford was very much interested in preserving Americana and he undoubtedly would be pleased. In Volume 1, the author has organized 935 of the FMC

films by title, year of production, length and a brief summary of the content. Some of these films are currently available on YouTube and other postings on the Internet. The author outlines how an interested person may obtain copies of these rare and historic films. The author also describes more about this book and others he has written on his website: <https://www.pwstewart.com>. He has posted information about all of his Books as well as links to Articles he has written, including several dealing with the Henry Ford movies.

There are a few copies of this limited-publication book listed on Amazon and a copy is in the MTFCA library in Richmond, IN. This book is an example of what an

inquisitive mind can create when researching a single topic. The copy of Stewart's book that I read for this review was loaned by Tin Lizzie member Tom Miles who thought that a book review on the FMC movie production would be of interest to Club members. I agree, it is a real addition to our Henry Ford knowledge.

