Theatre De Hula Hula (19--)

The nitrate print (since decomposed) from which this was preserved was only slightly incomplete, coming nearly to a conclusion. Here is an instance where a missing end title was duped from another subject and cut into the preservation dupe negative. Since this film was not part of any series, there was no way to determine what its original end title would have looked like from surviving entries.

The Enchanted Drawing (1900) and How Jones Lost His Roll (1905)

In the early days of the motion picture, the only way a film could be copyrighted was by treating it as if it were an item of print, like a book. Many of the films made prior to 1915 exist today only because they were copied frame-by-frame onto rolls of photographic paper which were then deposited with the Library of Congress for copyright purposes. In the 1950s, the Library instituted a program to re-photograph these “paper print” rolls back to film. To economize, most were shot only on smaller-gauge 16mm negative rather than their original 35mm format. In the 1980s, the Library contracted UCLA to copy again the paper prints--this time to 35mm film--on one of the two original machines constructed three decades earlier for this purpose, which the Archive had acquired. The quality of the re-photographed paper prints depends on their storage condition over the years and how well the prints were copied to paper originally, some being soft and unsteady, others crisp and appearing practically pristine.

Bob’s Electric Theater (1906)

Until 1950, theatrical prints in the 35mm film gauge were made on nitrocellulose, or nitrate, film stock, after which time the industry standard switched to acetate, or safety, film. Nitrate film is highly flammable, and it also decomposes over time, turning eventually into powder. One quarter of Bob’s Electric Theater (the entire third act, except for an opening snippet) was lost to decomposition before the print could be copied. The entire nitrate print has since deteriorated, as have the nitrate prints of several of the preserved films in this presentation.

Indoor Sports (1920) and Joys and Glooms (1921)

Both subjects were preserved in the early 1980s from nitrate prints which remain in good, if today more shrunken, condition. UCLA has preserved two additional “Indoor Sports” subjects; this is the only one of the three that is a relatively complete subject, with main and end titles intact. For its more recent preservation efforts, UCLA frequently restores missing title cards by copying them from other sources, when a title is generic, or re-creating them to a semblance of what they should have looked like originally.

A Pool Plunge (1922)

Originally part of a one-reel “magazine format” short subject in UCLA’s collection, this is the only section of it that was relatively intact or not badly decomposed. Some of the other sections (all non-animated) made use of stencil-coloring, like in Bob’s Electric Theater, and combined tinting and toning to create a two-color effect. This sort of complex and costly coloring was rarely used in animated subjects.
Animated Hair Cartoon (1925)

When only single prints survive of a film, generally they are well-used, and frequently the beginnings and ends of those prints exhibit heavy wear and splices, or sometimes are missing entirely. Although the nitrate print of Animated Hair, No. 18 was in relatively nice condition and otherwise proved pretty much a straightforward preservation, the end titles were short, and so were copied multiple times and edited together to provide a semblance of what they might have looked like originally. To date, UCLA has preserved two of the "Hair" cartoons in its collection and a fragment of another; a third remains to be preserved.

The Lost World promotional film and trailer (1925)

For many years, The Lost World could be seen only in abbreviated five-reel version 16mm prints, half the feature's original ten-reel length. When UCLA Film & Television Archive preserved the trailer from a nitrate print, it was assumed these snippets of action were all that remained in 35mm from the film. But it turned out that the film archive at George Eastman House held nitrate dupe negatives on three of the five reels; later, a battered, but more complete, nitrate print was discovered in an eastern European archive. Even so, the eventual restoration of The Lost World (which is still missing some footage) made use of a couple of shots from the trailer which survived in no other form. The nitrate prints of both the trailer and the promotional short for The Lost World are now decomposed.

The Wandering Toy (1928)

A sizeable amount of the silent features and short subjects still in existence do not survive on theatrical 35mm film gauge but in the smaller 16mm amateur and home-movie format. At UCLA, preservation from a 16mm print entails making a duplicate negative through enlargement to 35mm by optical printing. The Wandering Toy was preserved from what is thought to be the only 16mm print in existence.

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