

MOTHERS OF MEN/EVERY WOMAN'S PROBLEM

Early Woman's Suffrage Film With Local Bay Area Roots

"Must marriage mean the sacrifice of woman's ambition – her most cherished ideals?"

The Fate of Early Cinema

It is estimated that only ten to fifteen percent of the motion pictures created during the silent-era still survive in complete form today. The other 85-90% of all motion pictures created prior to 1930 are considered "lost" – titles for which not a single surviving print is known to exist.



Early suffrage film discovered

Mothers of Men, made in 1917, is one the few surviving women's suffrage films with the further distinction that it was made in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Starring Dorothy Davenport, *Mothers of Men* is a melodrama at its finest, penned by Hal Reid (father of silent film actor Wallace Reid), who knew his way around the art of crafting a melodrama. A suffrage film made just three years before the 19th Amendment was ratified, allowing women the right to vote, *Mothers of Men* attempted to enter into the suffrage campaign by showing the nation how strong women can be if allowed to hold a political office.

The 100-year anniversary of the 19th amendment is just around the corner and this is a perfect time to reveal this film once again.

The only known film elements are held outside the United States and have been deteriorating to the point that it is imperative to begin the restoration.

"The intense impression *Mothers of Men* would make upon millions of people in behalf of women's suffrage, the heights of motherhood and of womanhood." – Hal Reid

Rediscovering our local history in early cinema

In 1916, members of the Santa Cruz community were desperately trying to participate in the film industry, and they succeeded when they attracted Willis L. Robards, owner of a studio in Santa Paula, California. Wanting to relocate, Robards found exactly what he needed to shoot his next film, a community eager to demonstrate that they had what it took to make films.

Santa Cruz was no stranger to working with film companies, boasting the likes of Tom Mix, Bronco Billy Anderson, Marshall Neilan, Beatriz Michelena, and Mary Pickford. There was even a Film Studio built and ready for Robards to take control of.

Mothers of Men gives a rare glimpse of the Santa Cruz community. Local leaders and a cast of 500 local extras appeared in the film, against a backdrop of locations that can still be found today. It is also a record of a lost Chinese center that was displaced in the later development of the downtown area.

It is exciting to find such a time capsule of our local history and rediscover when our Bay Area community lent its voice to an important cause of the time. When *Mothers of Men* was released, Robards was commended by the National Woman's Party and the Woman Suffrage Party and would continue to pick up endorsements thru 1921 from the League of Women Voters, the Business and Professional Women's Association and The Women's Club.

Unique Theater

Monday and Tuesday—Robards' Players present

"Mothers of Men"

The only big features ever filmed entirely in this city.

See yourself, relatives, friends, city and county officials, school children, everybody, in the movies.

Admission—Adults, 25c; children, 15c.

Performances—2:30, 7, 8:40.

PRINCESS

Prices—Adults 25c, Children 10c—Plus War Tax

TODAY

WHAT IS WOMAN'S GREATEST DUTY?

IS IT TO HER
HUSBAND?
HER HOME?

Must marriage mean
the sacrifice of wom-
an's ambition—her
most cherished
ideals?

The screen's greatest
tribute to woman-
hood, featuring



DORTHY DAVENPORT

(MRS. WALLIE REID) IN

'Every Woman's Problem'

Also



Ben Turpin

In

"Why Men
Leave Home"

Every Woman's Problem

In 1921 *Mothers of Men* resurfaced, this time under a new title, *Every Woman's Problem*. Nat Levine (producer and former employee of Lowes Theater) purchased the film and attempted to exploit it once again. He re-titled the picture as *Every Woman's Problem*, most likely because just one year before a film based on a popular WWI novel was released under the title *Mothers of Men*.

It is clear that Nat Levine was able to continue to find an audience for this film, which screened thru 1923.

Restoration

With the discovery of the only surviving film material, now begins the quest to preserve the fragile footage and restore the film to the screen.

We intend to complete a digital restoration of the film, including restoration of the original color tinting.

The final result will be a new 35mm film negative for archival preservation, and new color 35mm film prints and DCP digital cinema packages for theatrical presentation.

Following the premiere in San Francisco in (TBD) the film will be available for festival screenings and revivals worldwide.

The restored materials, 35mm preservation negative, and digital masters will be archived at the United States Library of Congress, Packard Campus for Audio and

Visual Preservation in Culpeper, Virginia.

Underwriters Needed!

The project to restore and preserve *MOTHERS OF MEN/EVERY WOMAN'S PROBLEM* is a collaboration between The British Film Institute, the San Francisco Silent Film Festival, and the Library of Congress.

These organizations are dedicating their resources and the time of their staff and employees at no cost - all that remains is to raise the funds for the laboratory work.

Underwriting

We are seeking your help by asking you to join a select group of individuals who will share equally in underwriting the laboratory cost to restore and preserve *MOTHERS OF MEN/EVERY WOMAN'S PROBLEM*.

In addition to the satisfaction of restoring and preserving a historic and cinematic treasure, your tax-deductible minimum \$5,000 contribution will be recognized through:

- Your name in the opening film credits.
- An exclusive personal digital copy of the restored film
- VIP entrance for you and your party to the North American premiere in San Francisco.
- A unique personalized memento for your home or office.

Rescuing and resurrecting *MOTHERS OF MEN/EVERY WOMAN'S PROBLEM* presents an incredible opportunity to save and share this important film.

We eagerly look forward to telling you more about the project and discussing options for possible support.



Underwriting contributions will be processed through the San Francisco Silent Film Festival Film Preservation Fund, a certified non-profit 501(c)3 organization, and as such are fully tax-deductible.