

**MAKING
BETTER MOVIES**

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Making better movies by Arthur L. Gale & Russell C. Holslag

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ARTHUR L. GALE & RUSSELL C. HOLSLAG

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BY

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OF


 Mr John Rose
164, Bridgham St
Providence, R.I.
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WHY THIS BOOK?

An amateur movie camera opens for its owner a whole new world of interest and satisfaction. Like every good hobby, personal movies bring immediate rewards and an increasing repayment for the increasing effort devoted to them. There is no painful period of floundering among the "a b c's" of making personal motion pictures and there is no possibility of exhausting their capacities in a few short months or years. Here is an avocation for a lifetime.

Few recreational activities are as rich and varied as amateur movie making. The initial equipment is inexpensive and the periodical supplies are within the reach of everyone who has any money at all to spend on his pleasures. Movie making is both mental and manual, indoor and out, individual and collective, a good weather and a bad weather sport and an avocation that appeals to young and old. It is healthful and constructive. It lends itself very quickly to practical and serious application and it can bring the maker financial rewards.

The new movie amateur first wants to convince himself, by personal trial, that his camera will "work" and that he can, at once and without previous training, make it work. The production of professional and theatrical movies has, ever since motion pictures became generally popular, been veiled in a cloud of mystery for the average person and we have accepted, too readily, the concept of movie making as a very specialized and abstruse practice performed by a very special and unusual kind of person. Very few new industries have entrenched themselves into

a technical fortification as has the theatrical movie industry. Some of this intrenchment has been a necessary protection against swarming hordes of curious persons; most of it has been highly effective advertising. A technical jargon has been created and ordinary English has been laid aside for special terms to make the whole movie making process sound extremely complicated and difficult.

The operation of an amateur movie camera to take interesting motion pictures is a very simple process. There is nothing like the difficulty attendant upon learning how to ride a horse, use a bicycle or drive an automobile. One does not have to develop any automatic reflex actions or to learn any new bodily postures. Anyone with even sub-normal muscular coordination can use an amateur movie camera. Success is bound to result from the simple process of doing a few definite things in regular order unhurriedly. Failure almost invariably is caused by getting "flustered" or by speeding up the few things that are to be done, in an effort to manipulate the camera in the offhand fashion that so many of us seem to think is a mark of superior ability.

The purpose of this book is to clear away any of the remaining mystery of movie making on an amateur basis and to discuss making better amateur movies in the natural order in which we approach them. It is, therefore, broken up into chapters devoted to the newcomer, the average amateur, the developed movie maker and the advanced practitioner. This method of discussion lacks some of the advantages of grouping information under such heads as Exposure, Focus, Portraiture, Continuity, Tempo and others that have developed as the terminology of photography and photoplay production. However, an index is added to make ready reference easy and chapters are broken up into topical discussions as an aid to the quick location of any particular bit of information. The advantage of the present chapter division lies with the aver-

age person who comes into amateur movies with no previous experience in photography or professional movie work, and that average person is far greater in number than the one who is already a trained photographer or motion picture employee. This book is written largely for the average amateur and it departs deliberately from tradition in the way it presents what it has to offer.

A word about the authors will not be out of place. Arthur L. Gale, now editor of *MOVIE MAKERS*, has since 1927 been the continuity consultant of the Amateur Cinema League. Russell C. Holslag, now advertising manager of *MOVIE MAKERS*, has since 1929 been the technical consultant of the same organization. These men have answered more individual problems, submitted by practicing amateurs, than anyone and they have, as a result, developed a knowledge of amateur difficulties and amateur needs that is unexcelled. They have replied to an average of fifteen thousand amateur questions each year. Necessarily, in this process, they have had to recatalog and revalue the earlier concepts of terms and of methods of giving aid to amateur cinematographers. Starting from the traditional photographic and photodramatic viewpoints inherited from still photography and the professional screen, they have blazed new trails and have established a new and—happily—a more simple technology of which the Amateur Cinema League is proud. This book represents their contribution to the practice of amateur movies, made as they advance to larger responsibility with their organization.

In presenting this book, the Amateur Cinema League offers it, above all else, as a service volume designed to accomplish practical things for men and women who are fundamentally untechnical and who believe, as the League believes, that making personal movies is no abstruse thing but, on the contrary, an entirely practicable and perennially delightful human occupation. It is published for the benefit of the members of the League and it is probably unnecessary

to remind those members that the consulting services of their organization are continually at their call, upon demand, to discuss more fully the things that this book may have covered too briefly as well as any other problem that League members may face.

ROY W. WINTON
Managing Director
Amateur Cinema League, Inc.