

Document Citation

Title	Index to motion picture collection
Author(s)	
Source	<i>Image Magazine (George Eastman House)</i>
Date	1957 Mar
Type	article
Language	English
Pagination	72
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	The big swallow, Williamson, James, 1900 Fire!, Williamson, James, 1901

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FIRE!

1901-02. Produced in Great Britain by James Williamson, Hove, Brighton. 280 feet, 35mm positive. Duplicate negative.

James Williamson, an active and important pioneer, began producing motion pictures in 1897. Like Edwin Porter's *Life Of An American Fireman*, Williamson's picture contributed to the development of screen narrative by connecting various fire-run and rescue scenes and presenting them in a logical continuity of action, some real, some staged. Original prints were tinted red throughout the flame scenes.



A BIG SWALLOW

1901-02. Produced in Great Britain by James Williamson, Hove, Brighton. 26 feet, 16mm positive.

Williamson's trick film was one of the most celebrated of its day. It shows a reluctant camera subject who approaches nearer and nearer until his mouth fills the entire screen, blacking it out as he appears to swallow the photographer and his cam-

era. He then retreats, munching up his victim. Williamson constructed a special bellows extension for his motion picture camera in order to photograph the subject as he approached and receded from the camera in apparently the earliest follow-focus shot of film history.

Williamson also pointed out that he had made another innovation in the film. The middle scene, showing the photographer and his camera as both topple into blackness, was made some time after the shots of the advancing and retreating subject. This second scene, which had been shot last, was only put in its proper place when the negatives were prepared for making positive prints. Thus Williamson at this early date had come upon the essential factor of film editing. By his cinematographic implication that the swallower passed right through the screen, Williamson probably gained for himself priority in aesthetical dispensing with the concept of the motion picture screen as solely a two-dimensional plane surface.

