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A Closeup on D. W. Griffith

By GEORGE E. PHAIR

Hollywood, July 27.

He invented the fadeout.

He invented the flashback.

David Wark Griffith lived enough to realize that a fadeout is something more than a technical term on a motion picture lot. He is no longer on earth to witness the flashback of his career, nor the closeups of his bygone triumphs, nor the misty photography of the days when Griffith and film art were synonymous. He lived long enough to become a myth in the rush of modern invention, remembered only by the elders who had seen the transition of motion pictures from the nickelodeons of yesterday to the deluxers of today.

For 15 years Griffith had not made a picture in Hollywood although his name had appeared in the newspapers now and again in an advisory capacity, or as a partner in a future film production project, or as the author of a still-to-be written document of the film industry. But none of the studios gave him a job.

He was not broke, in the ordinary sense of the word, during the last years of his life, although he was no longer the affluent spender he had been in halcyon days. Almost any evening he could be found in the Hollywood-Knickerbocker hotel, which is not by any means a log cabin, breaking out now and then with a \$50 bill and inviting the boys to listen while he recounted tales of the good old days when Hollywood was Hollywood.

He was always going to make that one last film, a picture that would revolutionize the industry, even more than "The Birth of a Nation" did. He had a lot of startling ideas, he told the boys, but the studio executives had grown too prosperous and conservative to risk a detour from the old and profitable formula. A little while and there would be a new formula and a newer and wiser Griffith who wouldn't be taken for a ride by a lot of businessmen who knew more about boxoffice than they did about drama. He was talking about the new picture the night before he died.

There was talk about Hollywood that Griffith had been accepting charity in his later years but that rumor was scotched after his death by his attorney. The estate, according to the lawyer, is somewhere between \$20,000 and \$50,000, exclusive of motion picture properties.

There was a handsome funeral, with the mortal remains of David Wark Griffith lying in state and newsreel cameramen taking shots of mourning film executives who knew him when, but not lately.