

Film Industry

Historical Sites



HISTORICAL MAP OF FORT LEE NEW JERSEY

Established 1904

Palisades Park

Leonia Heights

Englewood

Ridgefield

Grantwood

Englewood Cliffs

Fort Lee Residents :



JOHN BARRYMORE
ACTOR



EMIL COHL
FATHER OF ANIMATION



VIRGINIA PEARSON
ACTRESS



JOAN BENNETT
ACTRESS



RICHARD BENNETT
ACTOR



EDDIE MANNIX
VICE-PRESIDENT OF M.G.M.



1 Palisades Amusement Park- Established in 1898 as a Sunday destination, the Park on the Palisades was purchased by Nicholas and Joseph Schenk, two brothers in the entertainment business who produced films in Fort Lee with stars such as Fatty Arbuckle. The park was used as a location for shoots.



2 Fort Lee Ferry & Trolley Terminal- Located at the bottom of Route 5, in Edgewater, the Palisade ferries and trolleys brought many actors and staff located in New York City to the various studios located in Fort Lee. The trolley stops were informally called out with the studio names.



3 Trolley Loop- This loop in the trolley road was made of stone with a massive curved wall and this served as a favorite location for many movies, as the wall stood in for a facade of a medieval castle. This location was used in such films as the 1913 Solax Studio production "Brennan of the Moor."



4 Kalem Studios- Next to Palisades Amusement Park in the Grantwood section of Cliffside Park, Kalem built an open-air studio and stage at 199 Palisade Ave. in 1913. By 1915, they built a proper studio facility. Some of their productions, "The Vampire" 1913, and "Cabaret Dancer" 1914, were shot here.



5 Fort Lee Trolley Junction- A trolley hub of Bergen County was the Palisade Junction. Here, the Hudson River line trolleys connected Palisade line trolleys. Public Service owned all the trolley lines and later on, used the same routes for buses.



6 The Grant-Lee Theatre- This theatre was a fixture at 815 Abbott Blvd. at the junction in the Palisades section of Fort Lee. In the early 1960's it was a play-house and was the last cinema in Fort Lee when it closed in the 1980's under the name Sharon Cinema.



7 The Richard Bennett House- At 1074 Deerborn Road stands the house of famed Broadway and film actor, Richard Bennett and his wife and children, Barbara, Constance, and Joan. Bennett's daughters would go on to act in films shot in Fort Lee and Hollywood.



8 E.K. Lincoln Studio- Actor, E.K. Lincoln built this studio at 735 Bergen Blvd. in 1915. The studio was leased to Fox in 1916-17 and to other various studios in the 1920's. In 1931, it was outfitted for sound and was then leased to Bud Pollard in 1933.



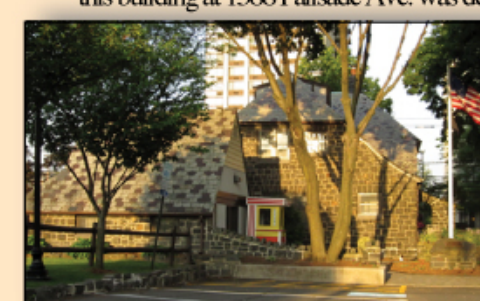
9 First Cable Studio- This studio was located in the basement of Building #2 of the Horizon House and was the first cable station/studio in the area. The first broadcast was in 1973, and was available on two channels, A & B, for what was then the VisionCable Co.



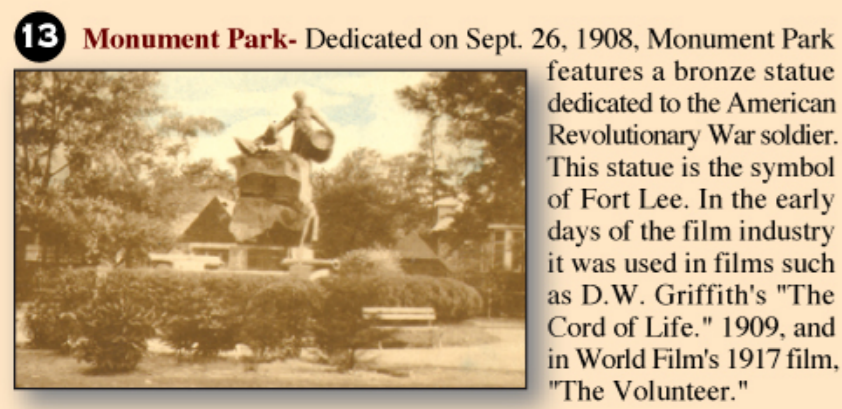
10 Cella's Park Hotel- Peter Cella's place on Center Ave. and Whiteman St. was a gathering place for many of the movie companies of Fort Lee. Scores of film events were held there, including the December 3rd, 1912 wedding of actor, King Baggot, the first "billed" movie star.



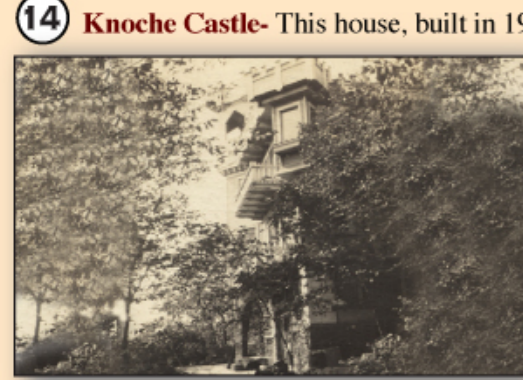
11 Paragon Studio- Film industry pioneer, Jules Brulatour incorporated Paragon on March 31, 1915 and built the studio on John Street in West Fort Lee. Film director, Maurice Tourneur was the creative partner of the studio. The Fort Lee Post Office used the building through the 1970's until most of it was demolished.



12 The Fort Lee Museum- Made of Palisade Blue Stone in 1922, this building at 1588 Palisade Ave. was designed by Judge Moore to resemble the Church of the Good Shepherd. In 1999, it was turned into a museum, housing the Fort Lee Historical Society. The first office of the Fort Lee Film Commission was located here in 2001.



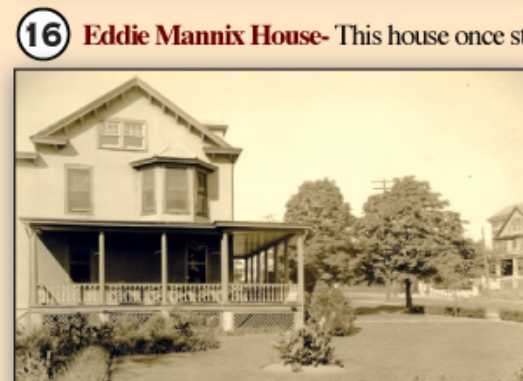
13 Monument Park- Dedicated on Sept. 26, 1908, Monument Park features a bronze statue dedicated to the American Revolutionary War soldier. This statue is the symbol of Fort Lee. In the early days of the film industry it was used in films such as D.W. Griffith's "The Cord of Life." 1909, and in World Film's 1917 film, "The Volunteer."



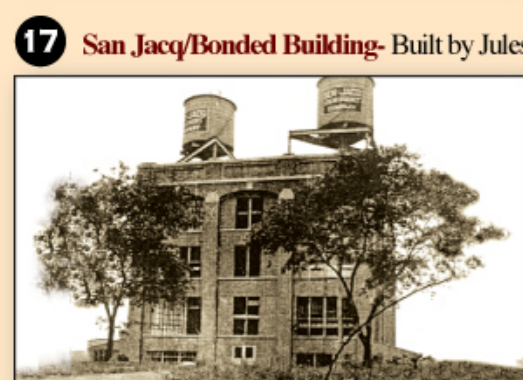
14 Knoche Castle- This house, built in 1911 on Hudson Terrace was built by a businessman to resemble a castle on the Rhine. It was used for its looks in many films. It was a residence, for a time, of artist H. Willard Ortlip and his family. In 1967, it was rented by artist, Peter Max. It was frequented by 60's celebrities and was in the 1973 film "Ciao Manhattan."



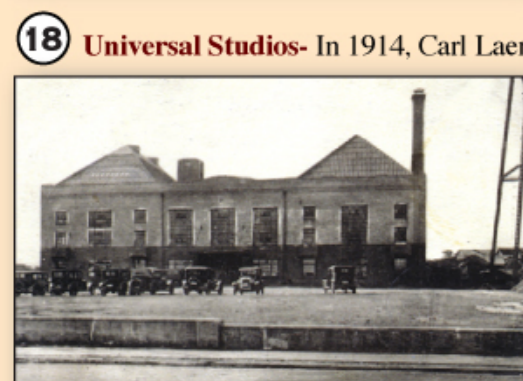
15 The Fort Lee Theatre/Metro- This theatre, built in 1919, was the second movie house in Fort Lee and the first to be constructed as a theatre. This theatre was later renamed the Metro, in honor of Fort Lee native and MGM studio executive, Eddie Mannix. The building still stands at 250 Main Street and is the home of the Fort Lee VFW.



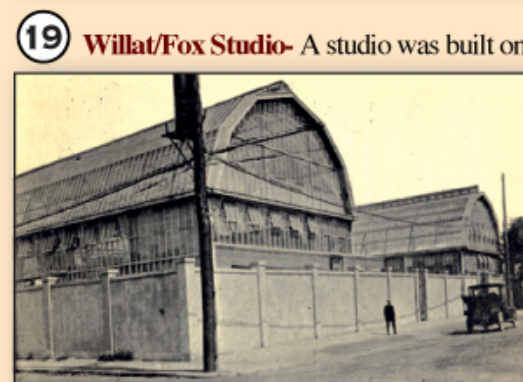
16 Eddie Mannix House- This house once stood at 320 Main Street where the Fort Lee Public Library now stands. Originally, it was occupied by the Mannix family. Eddie Mannix, in his early years, started his career working for the Schenck brothers at Palisades Amusement Park. He was brought out to Hollywood and became Vice-President of MGM.



17 San Jacq/Bonded Building- Built by Jules Brulatour in 1920 at 504 Jane Street, the San Jacq occupied the property he owned adjacent to the Paragon studio. The building, seen here on Sept. 15, 1923, is still active today as a motion picture/video warehouse, known as Bonded Film. The Fort Lee Film Commission stores its restored prints at this facility.



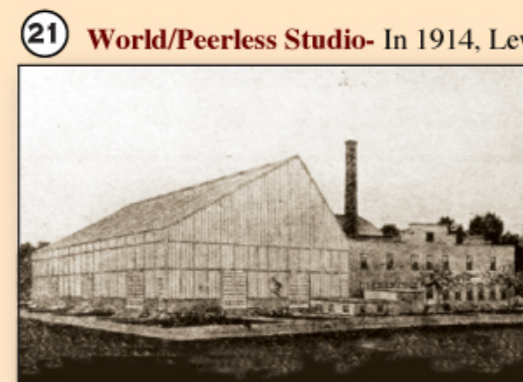
18 Universal Studios- In 1914, Carl Laemmle, founder of Universal Studios purchased land on Main Street and built what was the largest and most modern movie studio in the country. The building was leased to various picture companies such as Goldwyn and Selznick Pictures. Consolidated/Republic Pictures, also operated from this site from 1930 to 1961.



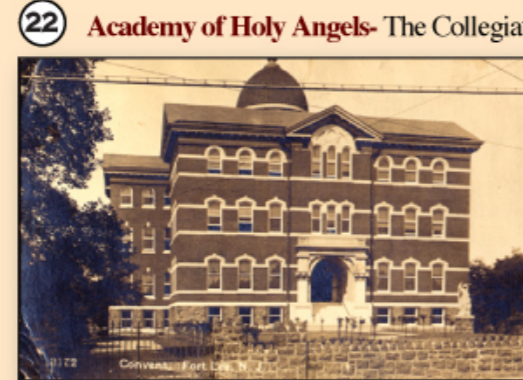
19 Willat/Fox Studio- A studio was built on 429 Main St. and the corner of Linwood Ave. which was leased, in 1914, by William Fox for the first Fox Studio. Theda Bara, the first screen vamp, made many films in this studio. Companies such as Triangle-Fine Arts would also lease here, producing films starring Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle and Douglas Fairbanks.



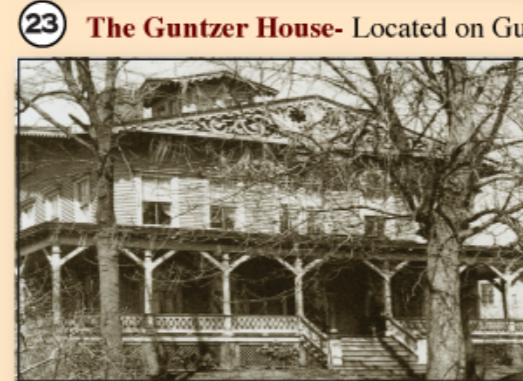
20 American Éclair Studio- The French Éclair company opened an American branch in Fort Lee in 1911. The studio was built on Linwood Ave. (the present day site of Constitution Park). The facility included a modern film laboratory. In 1914, the first major film fire destroyed the laboratory. The studio would later be used by Willat/Fox.



21 World/Peerless Studio- In 1914, Lewis Selznick, following his short period with Universal, formed a new company, Equitable Pictures. They joined with a company founded by the Schubert Theatrical Co. and Jules Brulatour's Peerless Pictures to form World Pictures. Production was centered at the Peerless Studio built in 1914 on Lewis Street.



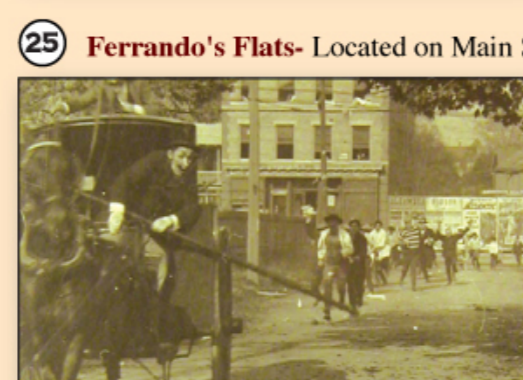
22 Academy of Holy Angels- The Collegiate Institute of the Holy Angels was a Catholic girls school until its demolition in 1965. Its walls and buildings were used as a backdrop for films such as "A Reckless Romeo" 1917, starring "Fatty" Arbuckle. In 1947, Fox came back to film in the school for the feature "Kiss of Death." It is now the Mediterranean South High-Rise.



23 The Guntzer House- Located on Guntzer Street, this Victorian 17 room house was built in the 1860's as a summer home by a New York alderman and tavern owner, John W. Guntzer. It was used frequently as a backdrop by American Biograph's D.W. Griffith as a setting for movies such as "The Lonely Villa" in 1909, starring Mary Pickford.



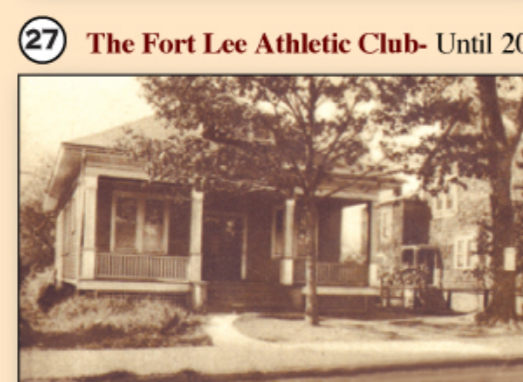
24 The Fort Lee Auditorium- Ferrando's opened by 1910, the first movie theatre and was converted from a school house. Jack Van Epps, brother-in-law of Judge Moore presented movies here and there were film exhibitions, as well as daily rushes being viewed. The Fort Lee Post Office parking lot now occupies the space.



25 Ferrando's Flats- Located on Main Street, across from Gerome Avenue was used as backdrop for film because of its resemblance to a New York City walk-up. In the 1912 Biograph film "Musketiers of Pig Alley" it became the back alley of this first "gangster" film. The Flats is shown in the background of this still from Biograph's "The Curtain Pole," 1908.



26 The Blaché/Doublier House- The Victorian house that stood at 2011 Lemoine Avenue was owned by Alice Guy Blaché while she was at her Solax Studio. When Solax closed, Blaché went back to France and sold the house to another film pioneer, Francis Doublier, of Éclair studios. He set up labs and lived at the house until his death in 1947.



27 The Fort Lee Athletic Club- Until 2011, the Club building stood at 2029 Lemoine Avenue. The club was built in 1910, hosted many affairs and was frequented by sports figures including Babe Ruth and Lou Gherig. In back, was a ballfield, now the Municipal Lot. Film companies, such as George B. Seitz Productions had their own ballclubs.



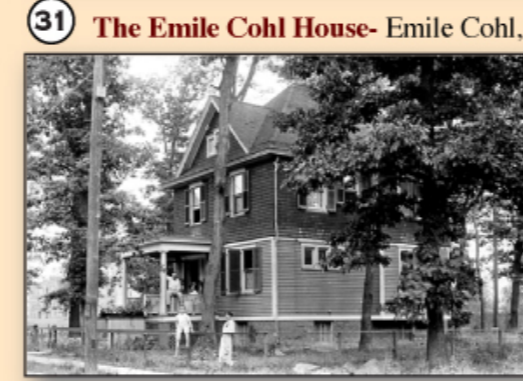
28 The Lee Theatre- Built near the George Washington Bridge on Lemoine Avenue in 1950, the Lee Theatre offered a large balcony area. The theatre was demolished in 1973. This spot has remained undeveloped for 38 years but as of 2011, a new development of the area will include a new three screen theatre and film museum.



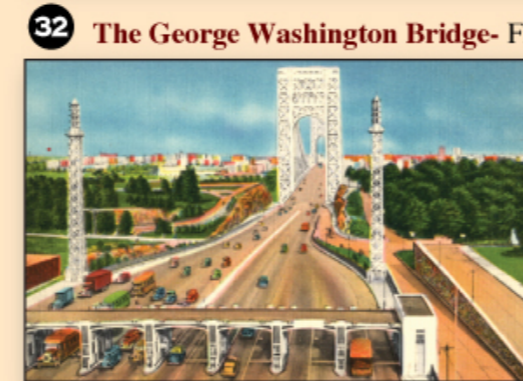
29 First National Bank- In the early 1900's, a new bank was built on the southeast corner of Main Street and Palisade Avenue. Among some of the directors were John C. Abbott and Daniel McAvoy, who both served as Mayors of Fort Lee. The bank facade was used many times in film shoots such as Biograph's 1911 film "Her Awakening" starring Mabel Normand.



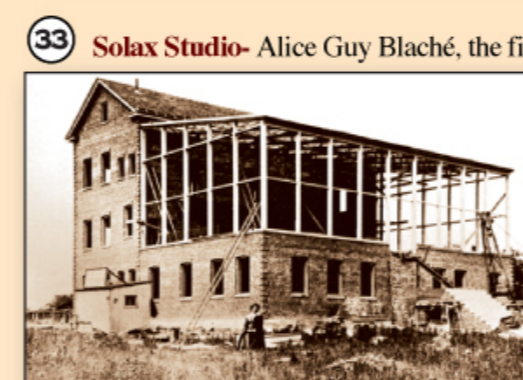
30 Buckheister's Beer Garden- On the corner of Main Street and Central Avenue, was a German beer garden called Buckheister's, a tavern that catered to Broadway actors and entertainers. In 1900, famed actor and Fort Lee resident, Maurice Barrymore, threw a fundraiser to establish Fire Dept. #2, in which his son, John, made his acting debut.



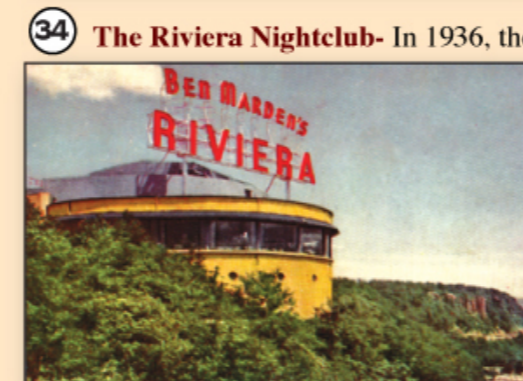
31 The Emile Cohl House- Emile Cohl, "the Father of the Animated Cartoon," came to Fort Lee from France with his family in 1912. In France, Cohl created the first fully animated film and upon his arrival in Fort Lee, he went to work for American Éclair. The Cohl house was located on Hoyt Street where the approach to the G.W.B. is now.



32 The George Washington Bridge- Finished in 1931, the George Washington Bridge is not only the busiest bridge in the world, it is also one of the most photographed. It is an architectural wonder, technically and esthetically. From its very beginning, the bridge has been used as a backdrop in hundreds of films and videos from the 1930's to the present.



33 Solax Studio- Alice Guy Blaché, the first woman director in cinema history, is seen here in front of her new \$100,000 Solax Studio being built at 2160 Lemoine Ave. in Fort Lee in 1912. Solax had its own film processing laboratory and state-of-the-art stages. The studio was eventually used by Goldwyn, Selznick and Pathé to shoot films. An A & P now stands here.



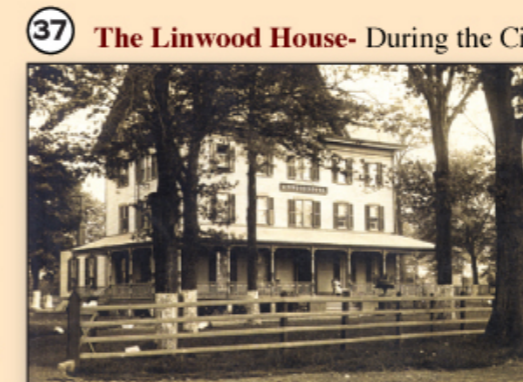
34 The Riviera Nightclub- In 1936, the Riviera, formerly the Villa Richard, was destroyed by fire. In six months, a new art deco nightclub was built just north of the George Washington Bridge, the cutting edge of architecture, with an electric skylight, open-air dining and a revolving stage. The nation's top stars, including Frank Sinatra, performed on its stage.



35 CNBC/Telemundo Studio- In a more recent Fort Lee history, this building at 2200 Fletcher Avenue was the studio of Cable T.V.'s CNBC. The channel was owned by Cablevision and NBC and in 1989, chose Fort Lee as its headquarters. In 2003, CNBC moved and NBC/Universal's Telemundo moved into the studio facility.



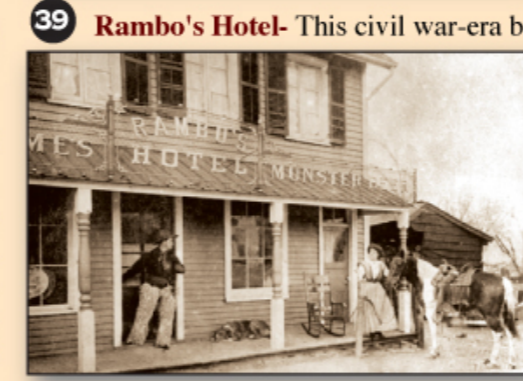
36 The Linwood Theatre- This theatre, the newest of all the Fort Lee movie theatres, was located in the Linwood Shopping Plaza at 1681 Fletcher Avenue in the Coytesville section of Fort Lee. It was a favorite destination for moviegoers from the 1960's until it finally closed its doors in the late 1980's. A CVS now occupies the building.



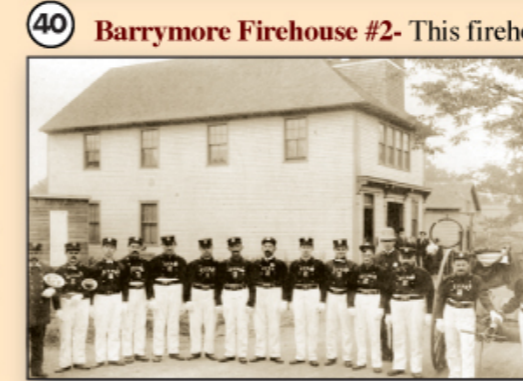
37 The Linwood House- During the Civil War, Joseph Coyte built this hotel in Coytesville on Linwood Avenue near Maple Street and supposedly featured water from a nearby sulfur and iron spring which was bottled and sold in New York. The hotel was used by movie industry people to lodge at while shooting. It was demolished in 1938.



38 The Barrymore House- Stage actor Maurice Barrymore lived in this house along with his son, John, on Hammett and Myrtle Avenues at the beginning of the last century and staged a number of events to raise funds for the construction of a firehouse in the neighborhood along with equipment. The house, built in 1876, was demolished in 2002.



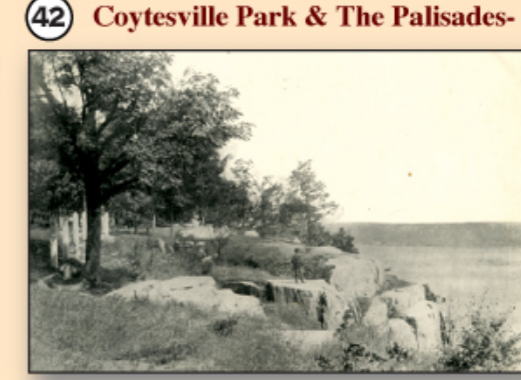
39 Rambo's Hotel- This civil war-era building on First Street in the Coytesville section was a popular saloon in the silent movie era. D.W. Griffith and Mack Sennett used the location for movie shoots, dressing rooms and cattle calls for hiring extras. In the back was a 90 ft. long grape arbor with tables where film crews would meet and discuss the shoots.



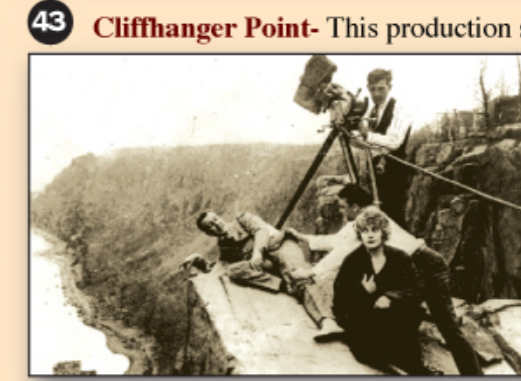
40 Barrymore Firehouse #2- This firehouse, located on Washington Avenue was built and equipped by funds secured through a fundraiser in 1900 by Maurice Barrymore, stage actor and Coytesville resident. Barrymore, had tried somewhat unsuccessfully to start his own fire brigade made up of fellow actors and guests at his house on Hammett Avenue.



41 The Villa Richard/Ben Marden's Riviera- Located on the edge of the Palisades off Hudson Terrace, this establishment was the setting for many film shoots. The location also had a radio station, WRNY, which became the first station to broadcast a television signal to 500 people in Manhattan on Aug. 13, 1928. It later became known as the Riviera.



42 Coytesville Park & The Palisades- One of the prime attractions of Fort Lee for early filmmakers was the natural beauty of the Palisades. The term "cliffhanger" found its origin on these rocky precipices. From the stone walls in front on Hudson Terrace, Coytesville Park, and the surrounding area became the focal point of many films shot in Fort Lee.



43 Cliffhanger Point- This production still from Pathé's 1918 serial "House of Hate" shows actress, Pearl White atop the Palisades on what is now called "Cliffhanger Rock." The "cliffhanger" term came about because of the sudden ending of a serial leaving the moviegoer "hanging." This symbol of the Fort Lee Film Commission has gone unchanged.



44 Champion/Universal Studio- Film pioneer Mark Dintenfass built the Champion studio in 1910 on Fifth Street in Coytesville. The studio was the first in Fort Lee and the oldest standing studio structure in the country. In 1912, Dintenfass became an executive in the new Universal Film Co. and the studio began making films under that name.

Fort Lee Residents :



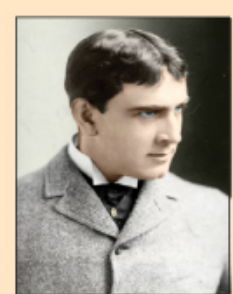
BABY ROSE MARIE
ACTRESS/
ENTERTAINER



CONSTANCE BENNETT
ACTRESS



BUDDY HACKETT
COMEDIAN/ACTOR



MAURICE BARRYMORE
ACTOR



CHARLIE CALLAS
COMEDIAN/ACTOR



FRANCIS DOUBLIER
FILM PIONEER/
CAMERAMAN



ALICE GUY BLACHE
FILM PIONEER/
DIRECTOR



BARBARA BENNETT
ACTRESS



Designed by Blue Point Graphics, 2011



HISTORICAL MAP OF FORT LEE NEW JERSEY
Established 1904

Film Industry Historical Sites

The Fort Lee Film Commission (FLFC) was formed in 2001 by ordinance of the Mayor and Council of Fort Lee, New Jersey. The role of the film commission is to preserve films made in Fort Lee, to promote Fort Lee as a location for current filmmakers, and to educate through film retrospectives and exhibits about Fort Lee's role as the birthplace of the American film industry.



Funding has been made possible in part through grant funds administered by the Bergen County Department of Parks, Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs through a General Operating Support Grant from the New Jersey Historical Commission, division of Cultural Affairs in the Department of State.