

CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT IT: DEMYSTIFYING THE PRIVATE COLLECTOR BY
UNPACKING THE “ROB BROOKS MARY PICKFORD COLLECTION”

By

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Abstract

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Private collectors have a long history of generous donations to cultural heritage institutions, but donors and said institutions have had a contentious relationship. Both private collector and institution have a different relationship to the objects in the collection and this is reflected in the narratives attached to them, which can create tensions between the private collector and the public institution that accepts the donation. Film memorabilia collections and donations are subject to these very same tensions, but they have not been discussed at length in academic literature. This thesis examines the "Rob Brooks Mary Pickford Collection" at the TIFF Film Reference Library (FRL). It assesses the emotional narrative of the collector, Rob Brooks, who as a private collector gifted his collection, as well as the aims of the cultural institution, the narratives that are attached to the collection once it received, and how touring the collection may change that narrative.

Table of Contents

Abstract	iv
Introduction	
Everyone has a story	1
Chapter 1	
Passionate Chaos: The tumultuous tale of star, collector, and ownership	6
Chapter 2	
The Accidental Collection: A conversation with Rob Brooks	20
Chapter 3	
Cultural Property: The stories institutions create and preserve	30
Chapter 4	
America's Sweetheart: The Pickford exhibition and Canadian tour	42
Conclusion	
Every story must end	52
Appendix	
Objects	57
Documents	95
Exhibition photographs	104
Bibliography	107

Introduction

Everyone has a Story

People love a good story to pull them in, tug at their heartstrings, and make them feel satisfied when it ends. Human civilization is based upon storytelling; it is how we understand our place in the world presently, and it helps us conceptualize what the future may hold. Historians date storytelling to 30,000 years ago through cave paintings. These paintings displayed an identifiable narrative that leads scholars to believe they were accompanied by oral storytelling.¹ *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, the oldest surviving work of literature, describes how a commoner challenged the arrogant and tyrannical king to a battle, befriended him, taught him morals and how to be a good person. Morality is but one of many themes seen in literature, history, film, television, comic books, video games, and any other format where tales can be told. Story-telling has been a powerful method of binding people together in groups, establishing rules and building civilization.² Our ability to create narratives, through words, images, and objects, is a fundamental aspect of human history.

With this in mind, I am going to tell a story that begins in my childhood and that only in retrospect I can see led me to this point in 2019. On my first road trip as an eight-year-old with my parents and sister to Ottawa in 2003, we made one of what felt like many stops for gasoline and roadside snacks. At this age, every moment driving felt like an eternity, and I, being desperately bored (this was prior to smartphones and tablets), asked my mother to tell me a story. She spoke of the girl with the golden curls, who like me, was born in Toronto, but over 100 years

¹ Robson, David. "Culture - Our Fiction Addiction: Why Humans Need Stories." BBC. May 03, 2018. <http://www.bbc.com/culture/story/20180503-our-fiction-addiction-why-humans-need-stories>.

² Ibid.

before in 1892. She told me about how this girl came from nothing to become one of the first movie stars, back when movies were black-and-white and were silent. What a shock this was for me in the early aughts! This girl, of course, was actress and producer Mary Pickford. To me, Pickford was like a real-life Cinderella rags-to-riches hero, whose story was old enough to me to be mythical, but recent enough to be relatable. I became immediately enthralled and fascinated by her. I gobbled up all the information about her I could find, made my mom retell her story to me over and over, and in the fourth grade, read Eileen Whitfield's biography *Pickford: The Woman Who Made Hollywood*³. I even presented my interest in Pickford to my class for a project about famous people and bought a poster from her film, *The Eternal Grind* to show as an example with my work.⁴ When my classmates mocked my interest in someone so old and outdated, I became ashamed and my passion waned. However, I still keep the poster on display in my bedroom.

In high school in the fall of 2011, I went on a trip to the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) Bell Lightbox and Film Reference Library with my 12th-grade writer's craft class. Being from the suburbs, the heart of the entertainment district seemed very glamorous and sophisticated, occupied by incredibly chic people. When I heard that the Film Reference Library (FRL) revered Pickford as their "mother", with her photograph kept behind the front desk, I felt my childhood infatuation with her race back into the spot in my heart it once occupied, and my love for her was validated. On this trip, I first heard about an exhibit called "Mary Pickford and

³ Whitfield, Eileen. *Pickford: The Woman Who Made Hollywood*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1997.

⁴ *The Eternal Grind*. Directed by John B. O'Brien. Performed by Mary Pickford. USA: Famous Players Film Company, 1916.

the Invention of the Movie Star” and I, being saddened that I had missed it, picked up a programme they still had and have kept it to this day.

Doing my graduate research at the TIFF Film Reference Library has felt like accomplishing my high school and undergraduate ambitions to somehow be involved with the TIFF Film Reference Library. It only made sense to come back to Pickford, whose story felt tied to me since childhood, and to finally see the exhibition I was so disappointed to miss.

The history of my relationship with Pickford is important not only because it shows an example of the emotional drive and love that I, as a fan, felt and still feel for someone who never lived in my lifetime, but why this emotional connection is important for understanding collecting. Private collectors seek objects for many reasons, but I want to focus on the drive to create narratives and stories that lead to collections. Over the past 100 years, members of the public have collected various kinds of movie-related memorabilia, including posters, lobby cards, cigarette cards, dolls, and many other items. Yet, movie memorabilia collectors have not been fully studied as a category of scholarship. This gap persists despite the energies that many people have poured into collecting, and despite the fact that movie memorabilia often rivals fine art in prices at auction.

I have mentioned the word “drive” a number of times already and this is intentional. Drive is what leads us to act, and often to create. Without various drives, little can happen. At the same time, narrative is what allows us to establish and communicate the meaning of these drives, and why they are important. Interpreting meaning is what affect is.⁵ Collectors who experience urgent drives to collect also tend to want to create a story about the items they have accumulated.

⁵ Tomkins, Silvan S. “Affect Theory.” *Approaches to Emotion*, Psychology Press, 2017, pp. 163–196, 163.

This validates their actions and gives further meaning to their collections. In this paper, I examine how Rob Brooks, the owner of the largest Mary Pickford collection in the world until donating it in parts to the TIFF Film Reference Library in 2009, amassed such a collection and created a narrative about it. As in my own experience, Mary Pickford was important to him because her story occurred long enough ago to be mythical, but recently enough for him to relate to her as a fellow Torontonians.

Just as films physically capture moments in time and render their stars immortal, movie memorabilia are equally an extension of a movie, actor, or filmmaker. Physical objects related to the films or stars are accessible to fans and provide them with something to cherish. In this way, a star becomes a part of a fan or collector's imagined identity, despite the fact that the star and collector have (likely) never met. The objects belonging to a film star also tell us a great deal about their cultural milieu and provide scholars with clues about the era in which they were made. Despite the fact that movie ephemera are clearly very culturally significant, the collection of it is an understudied aspect of film history, preservation, and collections discourse. In my thesis, I intend to illuminate the importance of ephemera; in my view, it is equally important as studying the films themselves. I will examine the massive Mary Pickford collection at the TIFF Film Reference Library and provide a study of notable materials. By studying the collection and discussing building and donating the collection with Rob Brooks, I gained a deeper understanding of Pickford and, more importantly, how her audience (during the silent era and decades after) interpreted and consumed her stardom. My discussion with Brooks and research into private collecting and donation will also provide a perspective on collecting from the point of view of both the collector and the institution. In this, I will attempt to untangle tensions

between collector and institution (real or imagined) and add insight into how the donation and accession process can be improved.

I will also be examining literature that discusses the nature of movie celebrity and fandom and how distinct it is in its own right as a cultural phenomenon. Alongside this, I will discuss literature about private collecting, and affect theory and drive. I will be examining the Rob Brooks Mary Pickford Collection, which currently holds over 3,000 objects, ranging from promotional materials such as posters, lobby cards, and signed photographs, to personal objects that belonged to Mary Pickford. These personal items include a family photograph of her mother, items from her kitchen, and costumes she wore in films. I am dedicating a chapter of my thesis to conversations I have had with Rob Brooks himself, who was happy to speak to me over email, and in person at his home near Toronto. Finally, I will discuss how collectors and cultural heritage institutions interact with one another, sometimes smoothly, sometimes not, and how they benefit each other.

It is fortunate that my passion for Mary Pickford and silent cinema as a child blossomed into a fascination that led me to this study of her stardom and legacy in a graduate-level setting. It is a tale that has come full-circle in a way that is almost too good to be true. While my personal story got me to this point, it now leads me to open up the way for others whose obsessive love of stars has created even more fantastical, mythical stories through collections of movie memorabilia.

Chapter One

Passionate chaos: The tumultuous tale of star, collector, and ownership

To understand the relationship between collector and object, as well as collector and institution, I will be expanding the scope of my review of existing collection practices to include literature, fine art, and natural history. I will use methodologies borrowed from these collection practices to demonstrate what makes collecting movie memorabilia significant on both the personal and institutional level. My aim overall, however, is to make sense of the Rob Brooks Mary Pickford collection. Part of the goal is to establish credibility for research about movie memorabilia and its collectors.

I begin by studying the relationship between movie celebrities and their fans, specifically by looking at what many scholars call “the cult of celebrity”. Historian Samantha Barbas argues in her book, *Movie Crazy: Stars, Fans, and the Cult of Celebrity* (2008), that audiences connect with film stars on a personal level because actors have “personality”; a certain set of traits that people both want to be around and want to see in themselves. The emergence of film celebrity and the concept of “personality” arose at the same time in the early 20th century. Psychologists claimed that a winning personality was the key to success and audiences looked to the dashing, funny, and charming film stars for inspiration.⁶ Barbas suggests that movie stars are both accessible and unattainable for fans and the goal of meeting or being like their favourite star is in large part what drives film fandom.⁷ According to Barbas, audiences initially did not realize that

⁶ Barbas, Samantha. *Movie Crazy: Fans, Stars and the Cult of Celebrity*. New York: Palgrave, 2008.

⁷ Ibid., 56-57.

actors on screen were “acting” because film acting is comparatively natural than exaggerated stage acting. Still, fans were aware that actors had lives off-screen, but often believed that their on-screen personas and real life personalities were one in the same.⁸ Star studies is a related field that has been ongoing since the beginning of film stardom. Richard Dyer’s book, *Stars*, is a seminal text in this area of study.⁹

While the term “personality” is part of the common vernacular in North America today, at the turn of the 20th century, the phrase “she has a lot of personality” or “he has a shy personality” would not have meant anything. Americans took to the idea of “personality” when they began searching for their individual identities in a growing mass society. This idea of identity is in part established through economic growth, consumer culture, and in this case, the advertising industry’s influence on celebrity culture. While “personality” can refer to any number of traits, when it is used in this context it usually describes the following characteristics: charm, attractiveness, and magnetism. For fans and celebrities, the concept of “personality” rests on pleasing and charming other people.¹⁰

The link between film actors and “personality” can be traced back to 1910 and the article “Picture Personalities” in the trade journal, *Moving Picture World*. This developed into a section of the magazine that discussed and often praised the work actors were doing week by week. The Biograph Girl, Florence Lawrence, is widely discussed as she became one of the first recognizable figures in film. She made headlines when she signed with Carl Laemmle’s Independent Moving Pictures (IMP) so that she could receive name recognition on her films.

⁸ Barbas, *Movie Crazy*, 63-65.

⁹ Dyer, Richard. *Stars*. London: BFI Publishing, 1979.

¹⁰ Barbas, *Movie Crazy*, 65-66.

Moving Picture World was among the first to suggest that film actors were simply being themselves on camera. Mary Pickford was said to have been so blessed with “personality” and that it “pervades her work and carries over into the audience. It seems as though she was not acting at all but was simply having a good time.”¹¹ This is an important to remember when we examine the Mary Pickford collection, as she was able to capitalize on her “personality” for significant financial gain. Pickford was the first star to earn a contract as a representative face for a beauty product — Pompeian’s Night Cream — in the mid-1910s. She also endorsed countless cigarette boxes and chocolate cards, as well as the Mary Pickford branded products that were sold because they bore her name or image.

In their book, *Stargazing: Celebrity, Fame and Social Interaction* (2011), sociologists Kerry O. Ferris and Scott R. Harris seek to understand celebrity from the fan’s side as opposed to traditional celebrity scholarship, which has focused on the stars themselves.¹² Ferris and Harris take a much less flattering approach to celebrities and the reasons why fans feel a connection with them. They outline some of the previous scholarship about celebrity as a kind of pathology fandom can become, and argue that star worship is an empty, valueless concept. They remind the reader that actors are not more skilled, intelligent, or talented than everyday people, but rather that they have been more successfully packaged and promoted to audiences.¹³ This point leads Ferris and Harris to argue that celebrity is a commodity, a product of capitalist media to sell to hungry audiences. They argue that celebrities embody two of the most dominant ideologies of

¹¹ Barbas, *Movie Crazy*, 70.

¹² Ferris, Kerry O., and Scott R. Harris. *Stargazing: Celebrity, Fame, and Social Interaction*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2011.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

Western culture: individualism and market capitalism, which together allow the star to be used as a “tool of mass deception.”¹⁴ Still, most audiences are aware to some degree that stardom is a commercial construct, but this does not interfere with their consumption and enjoyment. The meaning that fans project onto celebrities is what is pleasurable about being a fan.¹⁵ The participation in media fandom differs from other group hobbies or activities because fans interact with both the imaginary and real worlds of fictional characters played by real actors. Their interest leads fans to interact with the world of fiction and reality and to ‘get to know’ the people onscreen through their so-called real and crafted personas. Farris and Harris suggest that interactions between audience and performer are an “illusion of intimacy,” which create imaginary simulations where the performer and fan are interacting in a normal way. It is very easy to fall into this trap, and that is the appeal of film over other media. It is the easiest to “engage” with an actor, but this can become very dangerous quite quickly.

Beyond the study of fan and celebrity intimacy is the question overall of why people collect anything at all. Most of the scholarship in this area focuses on private collectors and fine art because that is where the buying power and big money are located. To account for why people collect different kinds of items, we have to first ask why so many people are drawn to collect and what lengths they are willing to go for their collection. Philosopher Walter Benjamin devotes a chapter in his book, *Illuminations* (1968), to the act of unpacking his book collection and why he is so drawn to collecting.¹⁶ Benjamin begins this train of thought by saying, “Every

¹⁴ Ferris and Harris, *Stargazing*, 6.

¹⁵ Ibid., 7.

¹⁶ Benjamin, Walter. "Unpacking My Library: A Talk About Book Collecting." In *Illuminations*. New York: Schocken Books, 1968.

passion borders on the chaotic, but the collector's passion borders on the chaos of memories."¹⁷

Collecting is tied to the mysterious relationship of the ownership of an object and the person who has an emotional attachment to it. The passion and chaos are part of the collector's love affair with the object. The collector loves the object not for its usefulness but for its value and the feeling it evokes. Its provenance and history, and the final thrill for the collector, its acquisition, is part of the process that passes the desired object into one's property and creates order from this chaos of emotions.¹⁸ Benjamin moves on to say,

Property and possession belong to the tactical sphere. Collectors are people with a tactical instinct; their experience teaches them that when they capture a strange city, the smallest antique shop can be a fortress, the most remote stationary store a key position."¹⁹

This is to say that the collector needs to have multiple skills in their arsenal to find important pieces and fill gaps in their collections. He explains this by discussing how his acquisition of books is done through both money and knowledge, along with an attention to detail and sheer luck. He notes that dates, place names, formats, provenance, and bindings together tell a story about the objects in a harmony that will allow a collector to recognize if that piece is for them or not.²⁰ He concludes with the following observation: "The phenomenon of collecting loses its meaning as it loses its personal owner. Even though public collections may be less objectionable

¹⁷ Benjamin, *Unpacking My Library*, 60.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., 63.

²⁰ Ibid., 63-64.

socially and more useful academically than private collections, the objects get their due only in the latter. Only in extinction is the collector comprehended.”²¹

Objects and collections as a whole are only significant when they have meaning and love attached to them, otherwise they are just objects. No wonder museums and galleries attach descriptions and ownership histories beside the objects they display. In many cases, it is only after reading these documents that visitors understand the significance of the object. In some instances, they may even experience a “Eureka” moment, when the importance of the object becomes clear to them.

The individual collector is also important to public collections, since the collector may possess objects traditionally ignored by public collections. Private collectors may illuminate gaps or aspects of existing collections that have been overlooked or forgotten. Finally, if one person finds something meaningful, it is also possible that others can appreciate it as well.

With limited budgets for purchasing items for their collections, galleries, archives, museums, and libraries rely on individuals to donate items from their collections in order to acquire high-value and rare pieces. But the relationship between donor and institution has been known to be rocky, with animosity coming from some institutional disciplines towards private collectors. In some quarters, curators of public galleries feel that collectors are taking away materials that could be studied for the benefit of the community at large. Donors on the other hand, have their own tensions with institutions; they are often unhappy with how they are left out of the picture once ownership is signed over and they are sometimes displeased with how pieces

²¹ Benjamin, *Unpacking My Library*, 67.

from their collections are stored. While it is difficult to undo decades of these attitudes, scholars are beginning to understand that they need to work with collectors and not against them.

In “The Sacred Gift: Donations from Private Collectors to Public Museums”, published in *Museum Anthropology Review*, anthropologist Paul Van der Grijp²² argues that

the coherence of a collection is both (narrative) fiction and (material) reality. A collector — private or public — not only accumulates objects, but also searches for the backgrounds and meanings of these (the educational motive), and preserves the collection according to a plan”.²³

Collecting has been compared to drug addiction and alcoholism, while others see it as an organized, passionate obsession. In his literature review, Van der Grijp cites a number of authors who have discussed the psychological side of collecting, but he argues that cultural and economic dimensions also need to be considered when understanding collectors. Cultural capital and social status are major incentives for collectors, as is monetary value. He asks, “Who recognizes the value of collecting and how are those values recognized? What is the ideal career of a collection?”²⁴ He discusses the economic investment motive of collecting citing that people often collect items that will later go up in value. Thus, eventual profit is a strong motivator for the collector. Lastly, Van der Grijp delves into the educational side of collecting and how many people collect items to learn something about them and where they come from. While many writers limit their understanding of collectors to one or two of these motives, Van der Grijp argues that to determine the motivations of collectors, all of these factors need to be considered.

²² Grijp, Paul Van Der. "The Sacred Gift: Donations from Private Collectors to Public Museums." *Museum Anthropology Review* 8, no. 1 (2014): 22. doi:10.14434/mar.v8i1.3099.

²³ Ibid., 23.

²⁴ Ibid., 29.

Objects become sacred to collectors and donating them is a sacrifice they make to benefit the community as a whole. Collectors often admit to themselves that they owe their work at collecting and the collection itself to society more generally. According to Van der Grijp, donating collections while a collector is still alive can help them cope with the idea of their own mortality.²⁵

Moving into the psychology of collecting, affect theory can provide a different way of thinking about why collectors are drawn to collecting. Affect refers to the drives we feel and act upon in order to continue the survival of our species and why we feel those drives. In psychologist Silvan S. Tomkin's article, "Affect Theory", he views affect as "the primary innate biological motivating mechanism, more urgent than drive deprivation and pleasure, and more urgent than even physical pain".²⁶ He argues that affect is a system of interpreting meaning based on need — like hunger leading to eating — because without the amplification of these desires, humans would not accomplish anything, including the requirements to survive. Tomkins identifies nine types of affective emotion that cause physical reactions: startle, fear, interest, distress, anger, joy, contempt, disgust, and shame. For each of these, Tomkins illustrates how emotions are stimulated and acquire a physical manifestation, such as "the smile of joy", which he describes frequently as an antidote to anger and distress.²⁷

Looking back on this work decades after it was published, social psychologist, Margaret Wetherell's 2014 essay, "Trends in the Turn to Affect: A Social Psychological Critique," explores the social psychology of affect and notes that "aspects of the ones currently deployed in social

²⁵ Van der Grijp, *The Sacred Gift*, 37.

²⁶ Tomkins, Silvan S. "Affect Theory." *Approaches to Emotion*, Psychology Press, 2017, pp. 163–196. 163.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 176.

and cultural research are ill-fitting.”²⁸ Her argument fills the gaps that Tompkins work has left, by exploring affect through a social psychological lens of “affective practice.” This approach may better fit the research on affect and emotion as opposed to Tompkins’s categorization of reactive emotion. She examines the literature on affect theory and considers Sara Ahmed’s more recent “cultural politics of emotion” theory to be the most immediately useful in understanding social emotion. Ahmed’s argument – one that is useful to my research – is that the emotion about an object transforms that object into something else. Ahmed argues that a strong emotion, like love or hate, transforms the object associated with that feeling into something hateful or loveable. Based on this, Wetherell claims that affect is distributed, meaning that subjects cannot be separated from objects or individuals from situations.²⁹ Objects amass into collections and collections themselves are transformational in that it was one object that stated a curated selection of items in a collection. This is a useful way to look at the connections collectors create with objects, as they engage with a star’s persona and with an object itself through its provenance, or to the star through the object. Owning and donating ephemera forever writes a story of a collector into the history of a movie star and objects associated with them. Rob Brooks, for example, is now linked to Mary Pickford through his decades of collecting objects associated with her. Connoisseurs of Mary Pickford memorabilia and early film history will now be familiar with Brooks through the name of the collection at the TIFF Film Reference Library, “The Rob Brooks Mary Pickford Collection”.

²⁸ Wetherell, Margaret. “Trends in the Turn to Affect: A Social Psychological Critique.” *Body & Society*, vol. 21, no. 2, 2014, pp. 139–166.

²⁹ Ibid., 158.

In an interview with sociologist, David Beer, for *Culture, Theory, & Society*, about the previously discussed paper, Wetherell explains how affect theory is so difficult for scholars to narrow down into one category of study because it is a multidimensional concept that is linked with semiosis (the process of signification in language).³⁰ She explains that, “human affect and emotion are distinctive because of their immediate entanglement with very particular human capacities for making meaning. These entanglements organize the moment of embodied change and are crucial to the ways in which affect articulates and travels. They need to be centre-stage in any social theory of affect and emotion.”³¹

G Thomas Tanselle’s, “A Rationale of Collecting” describes the psychological and historical origins of collecting.³² The acquisition of objects most likely predates written history, so the origins of collecting are open to speculation. It has been posited that collecting is instinctive practice, but one that can also be learned; some have even suggested it can also become a mental illness (*mania* is a term often associated with collecting).³³ However, I believe it is unfair to chalk up a complicated human behaviour to mental illness, which is sometimes used as a catch-all for behaviour that an observer either does not like or does not understand. Tanselle believes that everyone is a collector because collecting is simply the acquisition of tangible things – an everyday behaviour. By viewing everybody who has ever purchased or kept

³⁰ Beer, David. "The Future of Affect Theory: An Interview with Margaret Wetherell." *Theory, Culture & Society*, October 2014. <https://www.theoryculturesociety.org/the-future-of-affect-theory-an-interview-with-margaret-wetherall/>.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Tanselle, G. Thomas. "A Rationale of Collecting." *Raritan* 19, no. 1 (Summer 1999): 23-50.

³³ Ibid., 23.

an object as a collector, Tanselle believes we can better understand why humans seek to collect.³⁴

One reason why people have collected items is a matter of need. Food, clothing, tools and valuables were hoarded in case they were needed for survival. But when the “need” no longer exists, people collected and hoarded anyway. This leads to the question of what “need” really is. One person will regard collecting as done haphazardly, while others hoard by careful design. Tanselle argues that these are just two versions of the same thing: “Every accumulation, whatever additional significance it may be found to possess, has the unity that comes from its telling something about a human being who lived in a particular time and place.”³⁵ This storytelling rings true for Rob Brooks, who would spend years tracking down a single item, while at the same time buying other Pickford items impulsively, without any planning.

In her 2010 book, *A Museum of One's Own: Private Collecting, Public Gift*, art historian Anne Higonnet explains how collectors try to cheat death through the hoarding and private exhibition of their collections.³⁶ When displaying a collector's work, one is preserving the personality and stories of the collector as well as of the objects. “Collectors left behind emblems, inscriptions, talismans, and the tokens as well as portraits, both of themselves and others, to represent their ideal selves. The museum was their medium. Shielded from death and by the permanence of their creations, collectors haunt their museums.”³⁷ For this reason, museums are often blamed for playing to the egos and narcissism of collectors. Many psychologists have argued that collecting is a behaviour done to create an ideal self, or an alter ego – such as the

³⁴ Tanselle, *A Rationale of Collecting*, 23.

³⁵ Ibid., 25.

³⁶ Higonnet, Anne. *A Museum of One's Own: Private Collecting, Public Gift*. Reading: Periscope Publishing, 2010.

³⁷ Ibid, 123.

creation of a cultured image. While this may be true, it is not the only reason people collect.

There is also the compulsive drive or obsession that comes with an unfulfilled desire in childhood. Collecting is an attempt to heal the damaged self, to fill a perceived void.

Alternatively, childhood trauma may not have occurred in a collector's life, but the fear of death creates a need to create a timeless self.³⁸ The collecting process is about a way to control the cycle of life and death through a system of objects that survives the human lifespan. The collection represents the dream and impossibilities of immortality and the connection to fame and stardom.

Private collectors and institutional collections face different challenges, and Museum studies scholar Stephen E. Weil's, "Collecting Then, Collecting Now: What's the Difference", illuminates the legal and ethical restrictions on institutions. In many cases, private collectors do not face these restrictions, which more often apply to institutions like museums with their own codes of conduct.³⁹ Private collectors typically work using a mixture of passion, instinct, and impulse on the one hand, along with caution and calculating connoisseurship on the other. Museums and cultural heritage institutions, for their part, have greatly shifted their collecting practices from the 1960s to the early 2000s. The changes began in the 1960s when institutions realized that with more modern management methods, their collections began to grow at a rate that they could not accommodate.⁴⁰

³⁸ Higonnet, *A Museum of One's Own*, 126-127.

³⁹ Weil, Stephen E. "Collecting Then, Collecting Today: What's the Difference?" In *Reinventing the Museum: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on the Paradigm Shift*, 284-91. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2004.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 284.

As they often keep a low profile, private collectors may avoid the legal considerations with which museums must grapple. An example of this concerns Nazi-era objects and items with Nazi-era provenance. As these artifacts were often acquired through theft, confiscation, coercion, or other methods of exploitation, museums are strongly urged by governments to either resolve these issues or refuse to accept these items.⁴¹ There are similar guidelines in place for Native American objects under the Native American Graves and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), which states that objects acquired may be subject to reparation claims. Institutions that collect firearms need to be aware of the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms regulations regarding gun ownership. Artifacts containing animal parts (ivory chess pieces, feather headdresses) must also observe the endangered species legislation and ensure they are in compliance. Private collectors do need to follow certain import and export laws, but they do not live under the threat of having their funding jeopardized if they purchase and collect these objects like cultural heritage institutions do.⁴² The Rob Brooks Mary Pickford collection does not present any ethical dilemmas in this way and all the material is available to be examined by scholars if they wanted to use it for research.

One major difference between personal and institutional collecting that Weil does not mention is money. Cultural heritage institutions are restricted to a certain amount of funding, and only a few can actually afford to purchase items that private collectors can. Art and artifacts can be expensive and difficult for institutions to purchase for their collections. Collectors are often thought of as incredibly wealthy, but more often than not, they are people who have a bit of

⁴¹ Weil, *Collecting Then, Collecting Today*, 288.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 289.

disposable income. Taken as a group, however, private collectors may amass far bigger collections than cultural heritage institutions can afford. As such, cultural organizations rely on private collectors for donations.

As the literature demonstrates, the relationship between private collectors and cultural heritage institutions is nuanced and highly individual on a case to case basis. No one collector/institution relationship is alike, making the writing about these relationships challenging. Institutions and collectors face different legal and ethical dilemmas that give private collectors the upper hand in acquiring items for their collections. However, institutions do not interact with their collections on the same emotional level as private collectors. While curators and archivists may feel an affinity towards a collection or certain items in an institutional collection, they themselves did not personally build it and develop an intimate relationship with the collection, driven by the need to collect. Yet collecting combines many disciplines that require other types of study. Film memorabilia collecting intersects with star theory and fan studies, which traces what about celebrity people are drawn to, why they seek ephemera relating to movies or film stars, and the social implications of movie stardom. As a case study, I have examined the “Rob Brooks Mary Pickford” collection at the TIFF Film Reference Library to document this particular type of relationship. My foray into this research began by first talking to Rob Brooks about his collecting and what led him to Mary Pickford.

Chapter 2

The Accidental Collection: A conversation with Rob Brooks

Rob Brooks was born and raised in Toronto, but now lives in Mississauga, just west of the city.⁴³ He has retired from a career as a music industry marketing manager for Canadian and international artists. While Brooks was working in the music industry, film was his hobby and passion. Even while on the job, his hobby took up a lot of his time; in some instances, he says, he left workplace meetings to place bids on eBay for film collectibles. Brooks has amassed thousands of items; his specialty is Canadian stars like Marie Dressler, Marie Prevost, and Mary Pickford. He is best known for his Pickford collection. At one point, he had the largest Pickford collection in the world, prior to donating to the TIFF Film Reference Library, with items that date back to her childhood as Gladys Smith.⁴⁴ How many items he currently has remaining from that collection is uncertain; for its part, the library now holds approximately 3,000 items donated by Brooks over the course of 10 years in three separate donations. The collection includes a variety of objects, from promotional items for Pickford's work like posters, lobby cards and glass slides, to personal belongings, including a 1920 Jeanne Lanvin dress, monogrammed napkins, and a silver gelatin photograph of Pickford's mother. There are also items explicitly made for fan consumption, such as a Pickford branded cap from 1914, collectable chocolate cards bearing her image, and items from her cosmetics line.⁴⁵

⁴³ Information based on the interview date in 2019.

⁴⁴ Brooks, Rob. The Mary Pickford Collection: About Us. <http://www.211university.ca/about.php>.

⁴⁵ "Rob Brooks Mary Pickford Collection." TIFF Film Reference Library. <http://collection.tiff.net/mwebcgi/mweb/mweb?request=record;id=44420;type=902>.

I had a discussion with Rob Brooks about his passion for collecting and how it all started. He began by telling me about watching James Cagney films as a child on television on Saturday mornings, instead of cartoons. The Cagney films always seemed to be playing on weekend mornings. Cagney resonated with Brooks, leading him to remain a fan for decades. Yet Brooks does not collect Cagney materials and did not seek out anything Cagney-related. He did build other kinds of collections in childhood, as many serious collectors do. Brooks explained that he collected coins and hockey cards, specifically those of the Toronto Maple Leafs. Later, he began collecting baseball cards. His card-collecting got to a point where he knew he was a “completist” — meaning he had to have every card from every series printed. There was no logic behind this obsessive behaviour — especially when the baseball card companies reprinted cards with gold and silver frames and claimed them to be a new series. Brooks said he knew these were the exact same cards he already had in his collection, but he had to have all of them anyway.

Brooks said he always felt a special connection to old movies, especially what he identified as their power of escape. When VCRs became available to the public in the early 1980s, Brooks began to record classic movies that ran on television and added them to his growing film collection. He described the emergence of the VCR as a turning point for film fans, because not only could they record films and programs that ran on television, to be watched at any time, but the technology also created a marketplace for vintage films that could be purchased or rented. This led many companies to rerelease their classic films on VHS for the public to watch, decades after they were released and were no longer widely distributed.

Until the early 1980s, Brooks was under the impression that all silent films were comedies. It makes sense that someone would think this way, as many people associate the silent

era with the slapstick comedy of Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, and Harold Lloyd. Silent film, for many, seems synonymous with pie throwing, slipping on banana peels, and getting soaked with water. For this reason, Brooks was not interested in silent films until he was given a VHS copy of D.W. Griffith's, *Birth of a Nation* (1915). Brooks regrets, in part, that this particular movie introduced him to silent film, considering its racism. However, he was impressed not only by how long and gripping the film was, but by details like the emotions on Lillian Gish's face in the close-up shots. This is the movie that, "changed my life", he said. *Birth of a Nation* led Brooks to look into the lives and careers of Lillian Gish and her sister, Dorothy. The girls worked on stage together and started appearing in films at around the same time, while in their teens. For her part, Mary Pickford starred in her first film in another Griffith picture, *The Lonely Villa* (1909), and quickly gained regular work in films. Through his research on Lillian Gish, Brooks became acquainted with Pickford and picked up a "signed" photograph of her in 1983 (the signature, he later found out, was actually a stamp used to sell and send photographs to fans). Brooks's interest shifted from Lillian and Dorothy Gish to Pickford when, at around this time, someone told him she was born on University Avenue in Toronto. As an avid Canadian history fan, he was shocked that he did not know this about Pickford. To be fair, many Canadians still do not know that Pickford was born in Toronto and was a Canadian citizen her whole life.

In the early- to mid-1980s, Brooks began collecting movie posters and aside from some interesting finds in Toronto at local shops, the place to do serious collecting was at classic and silent cinema conventions. Some of the popular ones were CineFast and CineCon in Los Angeles. CineCon still runs, and is going on its 55th year this Labour Day weekend, in 2019.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ "Cinecon 55." Cinecon Classic Film Festival in Hollywood. <http://www.cinecon.org/>.

These conventions have rooms where people buy and sell film memorabilia, including posters, lobby cards, and other promotional materials.

The turning point for Brooks's collecting came in the 1990s with the internet and websites like ebay.com. He repeatedly said that his collection "would not exist" without the internet. Now, the posters and photographs that he travelled to Los Angeles every year to purchase were available at the tips of his fingers. The internet solved the problem of distance for private collectors, who could suddenly purchase items from all over the world from the comfort of their homes or offices. Brooks pointed out that many items in his collection came from outside North America, from as far away as New Zealand.

While he began by acquiring movie-business paraphernalia, such as Pickford posters, along with glass slides and lobby cards, Brooks decided in the 1990s to expand the scope of his collecting to include her personal belongings, like clothing and household items. This would capture Pickford's private and public personalities and how she engaged with her fans in a more comprehensive way. Part of the motivation for this turn was Brooks's desire to donate the collection at some point to a cultural heritage institution. In passing, he learned that organizations of this kind would likely desire a more comprehensive collection. This was not something he thought about during approximately the first ten years of collecting Pickford items, but a fact that he kept in mind when choosing to purchase Pickford materials going forward.

The idea of collecting to donate is a fascinating one because it is not a common reason for why collectors collect. The phrase I have read and heard a number of times from different types of collectors is that they "had to have it" or they "couldn't live without it", and that usually means they cannot see themselves parting with it. Collectors often donate after death, leaving

their collections in their wills, or they have specific conditions that must be met in order for them to donate. An example of this kind of behaviour is noted in Thomas Hoving's book, *Making the Mummies Dance* (1997), about his work as the director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art:

One day I received word that ex-governor Averell Harriman wanted to talk about giving the museum his collection — I knew he had a superior early Picasso, *The Woman in White* — as well as his townhouse across from the museum on 81st Street just off Fifth Avenue. The next morning I was ushered into a smallish living room where the elderly patrician sat in a chair, bundled up against the cold like some character out of a Dickens novel. He wanted the Met to have his paintings and elegant townhouse, too, with only one proviso — that both collection and house be reserved only for the use of the trustees and certain highly selective members of the staff. No public. The paintings could not be sent across the street for viewing even on a temporary basis. I told him I couldn't recommend this elitist proposal since it wasn't in the best interests of the museum. He reddened but said nothing. Subsequently, the paintings were given to the National Gallery and the townhouse sold.⁴⁷

This is just one example of requests from donors. It was refreshing, and a bit of a surprise, to hear that Rob Brooks wanted to donate his massive collection without irksome conditions (Brooks noted that he was not particularly concerned with the tax benefits, but they were a nice bonus). But it does make sense, given that the Pickford items were taking over his house. He recalled one day in 2004 when his sister visited. She looked at his overflowing Pickford collection and asked, "what are you going to do with all this stuff?" It was a good question, as there was no plan for it. Brooks said that he could "get hit by a bus" at any time and there would be no way to know that the collection was in good hands. His family would not know what to do with it or how to handle it, and he could not trust that any outside party would have the best interests of the collection in mind. The TIFF Film Reference Library came up as a

⁴⁷ Hoving, Thomas. *Making the Mummies Dance: Inside the Metropolitan Museum of Art*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2000. 92-93.

potential recipient of the collection; it was local and well-known in the film community. In fact, he commented that there really was not anywhere else he wanted it to go. At the same time, he said that for him, donating never involved financial considerations. Money is often a very big incentive for collectors, and people who collect often want to eventually sell their collections for top dollar, even if it means only a tax receipt. Brooks said that he collected because he loved it and donated because he wanted to teach Canadians about Mary Pickford.

Brooks reached out to the TIFF library to see if they would be interested in the collection, and how the donation process worked. The library, he said, was thrilled to have someone with such a massive and culturally significant collection be willing to donate, but he said they were confused about his request. They thought that he wanted to donate it all right away, when really he was only inquiring about donations. Still, the process began in 2004 but took five years until all the items were accessioned into the FRL.

Initially, the library was unable to take the objects because of its move to the TIFF Bell Lightbox. The Lightbox began construction in 2007 and was completed in 2010, with the library inside the building on the fourth floor. Prior to this, the library and its holdings and special collections were located in a building separate from the other TIFF operations. Brooks was not ready to donate initially, as he knew that the items would be going on tour in the United States in 2009 for Mary Pickford's 100th anniversary of appearing on screen. After that, putting the items back in storage in his home would be too much work and did not make sense, so at that point, he felt it was the best time to donate.

Once the deed of gift had been signed and the library had approval to begin accessioning the items in the spring of 2009, Brooks was not involved in what was happening with the

collection, other than when Sylvia Frank (the director of the library at the time) or Julie Lofthouse (the special collections archivist) would come over to take items to accession. This process began in May 2009 and ended in November 2009 and the collection was appraised by two appraisers by the end of December of that year.⁴⁸ This all happened relatively quickly, especially in comparison to some of the other special collections accession and rehousing projects done by the library. For example, the Peter Mettler collection, which was donated to TIFF in 2017, is still being inspected, rehoused, and awaiting appraisal.

The one issue that Brooks raised about the otherwise smooth donation process was the appraisal process. Brooks argued that some “non-professionals” may be better at appraising movie memorabilia — like the people who work at and attend the cinema conventions, or store owners — because they are familiar with the material. Still, he told me that he did not make a fuss about it because the final figures balanced out and there was no point in nitpicking every item’s value when the entire collection was given roughly the same value that he had in mind.

In 2011, the collection was shown in an exhibition called “Mary Pickford and the Invention of the Movie Star”. Due to space limitations, the library could display only 300 of the 1,900 items in the collection and had to work hard to narrow down what would best tell the story of Pickford’s transformation from a working-class Canadian girl to the rich and powerful actress known as “America’s Sweetheart”. Brooks was invited to a preview of the event; upon viewing, he felt that some items that were displayed should be replaced with others. An example of this was two posters from the film, *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*.⁴⁹ One poster had previously been

⁴⁸ The accession process will be discussed further in chapter 3.

⁴⁹ *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*. Directed by Marshall Neilan. Performed by Mary Pickford. USA: Artcraft Pictures Corporation, 1917.

owned by William Randolph Hearst and was the only known version at that time, but was not displayed (another version of the poster later appeared at auction, in Texas in 2017.) He refers to this one as the blue Rebecca poster because Pickford's co-star, Helen Jerome Eddy, is pictured wearing a blue and green dress. Instead, another more common version was displayed, which Brooks calls the pink version, because of the pink dress Pickford is wearing. Brooks did say that when he told the curators that the blue poster was much more significant than the pink, they replaced it. Still, he feels he could have been a more valuable resource for the exhibition if he had been included in the planning from the start.

When interviewing him, I asked Brooks how many memorabilia he retained and whether he still acquires Pickford memorabilia. After donating three times to the TIFF Film Reference Library (the last donation happened in 2018), he said there are now too many gaps in his Pickford collection to want to continue collecting. Most of it is at the library, and he said that deaccessioning so much of it ended his own desire to collect. It took 30 years to create what he had, and building a similar collection again would take too much time and cost too much money. He did keep many objects, and Pickford items and other movie memorabilia still crowd his home. I wanted to know what items he chose to keep, and I was surprised that everything he mentioned was kept for sentimental reasons. One item is the first photograph he ever bought of Mary Pickford, the one with the stamp signature. Another item is a reproduction of the blue *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* poster, which was the first Pickford poster that he purchased. Both of these items can be considered "inauthentic" by the standards of movie memorabilia collectors, but they evoke important memories that still hold Brooks's personal collection together, despite the gaps that donating to the library created.

I also asked what items that he believes are significant in the TIFF collection that I should take a look at. I found it hard to narrow down what I should be looking at specifically because the collection has approximately 3,000 items in it. The first of course, is the blue *Rebecca* poster due to its provenance and its appraised value. Brooks told me that prior to donating the poster to the library, it was appraised at \$50,000 US.

Brooks also mentioned a small, sepia-coloured pin from the Valentine Stock Company, a Toronto-based theatre troupe, from November 1900. The pin has a photograph of an eight-year old Gladys Smith on it and was used to promote the young star. The pin is mentioned in Eileen Whitfield's biography of Pickford, and Brooks knew what it was when he saw it from her description of it:

As Cissy [in *The Silver King*, put on by the Valentine Company in Toronto in 1900], Mary looked morose but striking: a plaid scarf wound around her faced showed the mournful eyes to advantage. By the close of *The Silver King* on November 24th, Pickford had become the Valentines' official child actress. Later in the season, the Princess [a theatre] distributed 'souvenirs of Gladys Smith.' These were cream-coloured tin buttons, stamped in brown with Mary's name (oddly misspelled 'Glady's Smith), the name of the troupe, and a photo of Mary with a radiant smile. The Valentines honoured each member this way, as part of their publicity; even the box office man was immortalized on a souvenir.⁵⁰

One more item Brooks noted as significant is a silver-gelatin portrait of Pickford's mother, Charlotte Pickford (also known by her maiden name, Charlotte Hennessy) taken by Fred Hartsook from Mary Pickford's personal items. This is likely the only one to exist. Charlotte is sitting on a chair in long shot. She is looking off past the camera and holding what look like roses. The portrait was taken in 1915 and photos of Charlotte with Mary Pickford from the same

⁵⁰ Whitfield, *The Woman Who Made Hollywood*, 30.

photo shoot can easily be found online, but not the photograph with just Charlotte Pickford.⁵¹

Hartsook shot a number of Pickford's publicity photos and had other high profile celebrity clients including Charlie Chaplin, Henry Ford, Charles Lindbergh, and the American president, Woodrow Wilson.

These are just a few of the items in the Rob Brooks Mary Pickford collection, and I will discuss more of them in chapters three and four, which focus on the donation process and the exhibition of the collection. Talking with the collector in depth about his process, including his feelings, and his story about building the world's largest Mary Pickford memorabilia collection, and then choosing to part with it, opens up an avenue of conversation about private collecting that is not often seen in academia. We cannot understand collectors, their working methods, and the materials they give to cultural heritage institutions without learning from the collectors themselves.

⁵¹ When Mary changed her name from Smith to Pickford, the whole family followed suit.

Chapter Three

Cultural Property: The stories institutions create and preserve

The Toronto International Film Festival began in 1976 at the Windsor Arms Hotel, and was informally dubbed “the Festival of Festivals” because it sought to show the best new films from around the world.⁵² The official “Festival of Festivals” title was axed in 1994 and replaced by the “Toronto International Film Festival” or “TIFF” to establish itself alongside other major festivals like the Sundance and Cannes Film Festivals. Aside from the annual film festival, the umbrella organization that oversaw TIFF’s operations, including the Film Reference Library (FRL), was called the “Toronto International FILM Festival Group” or “TIFFG”. The TIFFG title appears on documentation from 1994-2009. The TIFF Bell Lightbox, the current headquarters of the festival and home to yearly programming and the TIFF Film Reference Library, began construction on King Street West in Toronto in 2007 and opened its doors on September 12th, 2010. The five-storey facility includes five cinemas, archives, two gallery spaces, the reference library, film inspection lab, two restaurants and a gift shop. It cost \$181 million to build and was named after its main sponsor, Bell Media, but the building and organization also received funding from the Province of Ontario and Government of Canada.⁵³ TIFF is a non-profit organization that continues to be supported by its founding sponsor, Bell

⁵² Hall, Alix. "A Brief History of The Toronto International Film Festival." *Culture Trip*. August 09, 2016. <https://theculturetrip.com/north-america/canada/articles/a-brief-history-of-the-toronto-international-film-festival/>.

⁵³ Ibid.

Canada, along with the City of Toronto, Province of Ontario, the Government of Canada, the Reitman family, The Daniels Corporation, and the Royal Bank of Canada.

The Film Reference Library (FRL) was established in 1990, but reopened in the Lightbox in 2010. This happened when TIFF accepted and accessioned the Ontario Film Institute's (OFI) archive of films and began year-round programming.⁵⁴ The FRL also took in the OFI's non film materials including texts, books, and periodicals. The FRL took on the OFI's mandate of "promoting Canadian and global film scholarship by collecting, preserving, and providing access to a comprehensive collection of reference resources and film materials."⁵⁵ The library now has a collection of 60,000 film research files, 20,000 books, 13,000 film and television titles, 2,000 film scripts, 700 magazines and journal titles, 80 special collections, 300,000 images, 11,000 posters, and 6,000 soundtracks. These materials are accessible to students, researchers, screenwriters, and film and television professionals. The TIFF Film Reference Library is an affiliate member of the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF), The Association of Moving Images (AMIA), and The Canadian Museums Association.⁵⁶

The "Rob Brooks Mary Pickford collection" is a special collection that contains artifacts, posters, printed, textual, and graphic materials from over a century, with items dating back to 1900 and from as recently as 2003. As a special collection, the Pickford items have been placed under a "research only" designation, allowing for easy access for interested scholars, but not readily available to the public to view and interact with. This is not unusual for the library, as a

⁵⁴ Berry, David. "TIFF: An Oral History." National Post (Toronto), January 24, 2016. <https://nationalpost.com/entertainment/movies/tiff-an-oral-history>.

⁵⁵ "Library Collections." TIFF. <https://www.tiff.net/library?tab=about>.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

large number of items accessioned have been categorized as “special collections,” and as a reference library, scholars must request to see or work with any part of the collection. These items may only be viewed in the designated space for research, the reading room. As many of the items kept in the collection on-site at the Lightbox and those in off-site storage are worth a lot of money, it is in the best interest of the library to maintain these kinds of restrictions.

While there are various forms of paperwork for Brooks’s initial inquiry about donating to the library in 2004, the official letter of intent (LOI) that started the donation process was signed on August 30th, 2006. This document states that the library accepted Brooks’s “personal archive” of Pickford items as a donation and that Brooks would agree to the following terms: “By signing this Letter of Intent you are indicating that you are agreeing to begin the donation process as outlined in the provided Sequence of Events, with the understanding that the logistics of how the donation will be handled and arranged remain to be negotiated.”⁵⁷ The letter then lists three options for how the donor wishes to donate their materials: donation without a tax receipt, a charitable donation tax receipt, or for the donation to be accepted under a Cultural Property Certification (also known as “Status B”). Brooks chose the last, which led the donation process to be delayed for three years. The major difference between a donation just for a charitable donation tax receipt and a donation done under a Cultural Heritage Property Certification is that the former would issue a tax receipt that could only be used for five years. The latter would allow the donor to use the given tax receipt indefinitely.

Cultural Property Certifications are issued by the government of Canada for “movable cultural property” to “support the preservation of artistic, historic, and scientific heritage through

⁵⁷ "Letter of Intent." Julie Lofthouse to Rob Brooks. May 3, 2006. Toronto.

designation, tax certification, grants, and by regulating the export of cultural property.”⁵⁸ The certification of cultural property is a process created as an incentive for private collectors to donate their collections to cultural heritage institutions. “The certification process encourages the transfer of significant examples of Canada’s artistic, historic, and scientific heritage from private hands to public collections.”⁵⁹ This initiative shows how challenging it can otherwise be to get collectors to part with their collections, and it suggests the dynamic between collector and government-funded institution: collectors often have the upper hand. For large, valuable collections, the charitable donation certification is the most appealing, because collectors receive a financial benefit in the form of a tax receipt. However, the Category B designation under which the Rob Brooks collection was classified, involves a long certification process and took the FRL over two years to complete, but has the potential for the tax benefit to be spread out over many years.

The Category B designation differs from a Category A designation by how the institution collects according to its mandate.

Because many public authorities, universities, and other publicly funded educational facilities do not have as their principal mandate the collection, preservation, and exhibition of cultural property, the entire facility would not be eligible for Category ‘A’ designation.⁶⁰

As TIFF’s mandate is “presenting the best of international and Canadian cinema and creating transformational experiences for film lovers and creators of all ages and backgrounds,”⁶¹ they

⁵⁸ Heritage, Canadian. “Movable Cultural Property.” Canada.ca, 19 Jan. 2018, www.canada.ca/en/services/culture/history-heritage/movable-cultural-property.html.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ “About TIFF.” TIFF. <https://www.tiff.net/about/>.

would not be categorized as a primarily collecting institution. To apply for a Category B designation, institutions need to prove to the Cultural Heritage Board that they can meet the necessary standards to preserve cultural property and to make it accessible to the public. Institutions also need to prove that the cultural property meets the criteria of “outstanding,” “significance” and “national importance” as outlined by the Cultural Property Export and Import Act of 1985. This qualification is defined as

whether an object is of outstanding significance by reason of its close association with Canadian history or national life, its aesthetic qualities, or its value in the study of the arts and sciences; and whether the object is of such a degree of national importance that its loss to Canada would significantly diminish the national heritage.⁶²

Most importantly, applications for Category B designation can only be made when “a specific acquisition is in view and a preliminary agreement has been established between the institution and the donor or vendor.”⁶³

In her LOI for the application for the Rob Brooks Mary Pickford Collection’s Category B designation, archivist Julie Lofthouse explained that

Mr. Brooks has been collecting Mary Pickford and related items since 1980. The collection consists of roughly 1,900 items either personally owned by or about Mary Pickford and contains items dating as far back as the 1890s and includes but not limited to items such as fan magazines, books, photographs, memorabilia/artifacts, posters, lobby cards, and photographs. The collection has been well cared for and upon viewing, appeared to be in very good to excellent condition.⁶⁴

⁶² Legislative Services Branch. "Consolidated Federal Laws of Canada, Cultural Property Export and Import Act." Cultural Property Export and Import Act. May 23, 2019. <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-51/FullText.html>.

⁶³ Lofthouse, Julie. “Application for Status ‘B’ Designation -- Rob Brooks Mary Pickford Collection.” Received by The Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board, 24 Sept. 2008, Toronto.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

As for claiming the significance of the collection, Lofthouse explains that

Mary Pickford was a pioneer of the movie industry and a founder of United Artists Studios as well as the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS) and has been credited to establishing the 'Star System'. Though often referred to as 'America's Sweetheart', Mary was born in Toronto in 1892 as Gladys Louis Smith.

Lofthouse concludes the proposal by saying that,

Having received a star on Canada's Walk of Fame in 1999, Mary has already received some well-deserved recognition as a key Canadian figure, and the acquisition of this Mary Pickford collection by The Film Reference Library, an institution devoted to the study of film as art and industry, would be a wonderful resource and serve as tribute to this remarkable Canadian and pioneer in film history.⁶⁵

The application was completed by the library and submitted on September 24th, 2008 and approved by the Canadian Cultural Property Review Board on December 20th, 2008. Creating the application took a very long time but the approval to accession Brooks's collection only took a few months. With the approval, the library could begin to accession the Mary Pickford collection, but there was one more restriction. The Category B designation requires that a donor must own an item for at least three years before donating it, meaning that Brooks could only donate objects he had purchased in December 2006 or earlier. This is one of the main reasons why Rob Brooks has donated Mary Pickford items in three separate donations.

One of Brooks's conditions for donating was that he wanted the Pickford collection to be easy for people to see and learn from, as he believes that Mary Pickford is a significant historical figure whose legacy is overlooked by the Canadian educational system. Like many donors, Brooks's love for the collection overlooked many practical ways of exhibiting it from an

⁶⁵ Lofthouse, Application for Status 'B' Designation.

institutional perspective. From TIFF's perspective, the donation process and working with Brooks was an easy and smooth process. But he, like many other collectors, wanted to have a more active role in how the collection was exhibited and how often. Unfortunately, the library was unable to meet these requests, as explained to Brooks by Noah Cowan, TIFFG's Artistic Director in a letter from April 8th, 2009:

The Rob Brooks Pickford Collection is a major 'special collection' and we intend to feature the collection in as many ways as possible in the future. Pickford is a central figure in Canadian film history and the quality of the Rob Brooks Mary Pickford Collection allows us to pay tribute to her using many avenues. I am aware of the desire to showcase the collection in its entirety and to have it exhibited annually. Having built up such a collection over many years I understand your passion for Mary Pickford and your wish to ensure that the collection has a certain level of visibility, however, we cannot incorporate such additional and specific exhibition parameters beyond those already present in the Deed of Gift. Cultural institutions need the freedom to explore new and creative ways of exhibiting collections. As has been suggested on various occasions interchangeable and/or alternate methods of exhibition need consideration, and can include external loans/exhibits, publication, web exhibition, and even directed education opportunities. We reserve the right to exhibit without donor restrictions or parameters in order to make the collection far more accessible. In fact, we are considering an exhibit that may run up to six months so that school groups studying Canadian history can learn about this unique individual.⁶⁶

The Deed of Gift Cowan is referring to was officially signed by Brooks on May 28th, 2009 — the day when accessioning the Pickford collection began. The deed of gift states that the FRL will adhere to archival standards for maintaining and preserving "PART I" of the Rob Brooks Mary Pickford Collection (they likely knew there would be more donations). The deed also states that the materials will be only used for research purposes by approved users of the library, but will be made readily available for scholarly researchers and the public.

⁶⁶ Noah Cowan to Rob Brooks. April 8, 2009. Toronto.

The donation process began in May and ended in late November 2009, with many trips made to Brooks's home to collect and inspect items. Once the library had all the items on site at 2 Carlton Street (before the TIFF Bell Lightbox was completed), they needed to have two appraisals of the collection completed to assess the collection's "fair market value". The government of Canada defines this as, "the highest price, expressed in terms of money, that a property would bring, in an open and unrestricted market, between a willing buyer and a willing seller who are both knowledgeable, informed, and prudent, and who are acting independently of each other."⁶⁷ Appraiser A's evaluation was completed on December 16th, 2009 after inspecting the collection on December 6th.⁶⁸ He estimates the fair market value of the Pickford collection as of May 28th, 2009. He states that the appraisal was prepared to accompany the final application for certification to the Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board, the Category B designation. Appraiser A presents his qualifications after sharing the contents of the appraisal and his final sum by saying he has worked in Canadian motion picture production and archiving for over 20 years, specializing in moving image archival appraisals. At the time of his writing, he was a member of the Archives Association of Ontario and was working to preserve the content of a major Canadian television corporation. He cites that his appraisal report was completed in reference to the Description information of property from Rob Brooks and the condition report prepared by Tanya Fleet (an archivist working at the FRL at the time). He gathered statements of authenticity from: Todd Muller Autographs Inc., Corner Collectibles, Star Wars Collectibles, Norma Jean's Celebrity Memorabilia. Appraiser A used research from eBay,

⁶⁷ *Certification of Cultural Property for Income Tax Purposes by the Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board Application Guide and Supplementary Information*. PDF. Canadian Heritage, May 2015. 41.

⁶⁸ The appraisers identities will be kept anonymous in this paper and will be referred to as "Appraiser A" and "Appraiser B".

Alexander Autographs, Heritage Auction Galleries, Julien's Auctions, Ruby Lane, and Abe Books to estimate the values of the 1,900 items in the collection.

Appraiser B's letter arrived a day after Appraiser A's on December 17th, 2009. He and Appraiser A were both at the December 6th inspection with Julie Lofthouse and Tanya Fleet. Appraiser B identifies his qualifications by saying that he has a BA and MLIS, and that has been a member of the National Archival Appraisal Board. He has been an independent appraiser for 20 years and is working as an archivist and librarian in Toronto. He provides his estimation of the total value of the collection, which varies slightly from Appraiser A's evaluation, and says that he used the following approaches: the sales comparison approach for the same or similar objects on eBay, but also researched smaller websites like historyforsale.com, autographsforsale.com, toddmullerautographs.com, owensarchive.com, heavenandearthandyou.com, allposters.com, movieposters.ha.ca, and abebooks.com. However, the more accurate resources for pricing came from Julien's Auctions Winter 2006 sale and their November 2008 sale.

To determine a final value for the collection, an amount between Appraiser A's and Appraiser B's estimations was settled upon. This demonstrates that value is a concept that can be negotiated. Appraisals are only educated guesses, and value is not a fixed figure. Both are constantly changing and unreliable, but are the best way to determine an individual item or overall collection's worth. People understand monetary value more easily than cultural value, which has no specific dollar figure attached to it. Creating a financial narrative is the easiest way for institutions to establish why their work is important to the general public, and to justify why significance should be given to collections by the federal government.

Appraisal is a challenging area of cultural heritage. It is important for assigning value to collections, but it also is very rarely taught within an academic or accredited setting. This makes finding credible appraisers difficult. There are very few schools that teach the art and science of appraisal; those that do focus mostly on fine art or real estate.⁶⁹ For items outside these parameters, there are few resources for learning how to appraise items and collections. The people whom the FRL chooses to work with are usually archivists, librarians, and people with film studies degrees. Still, appraisers often make educated guesses, due to a lack of available information; in most cases, they attempt to arrive at a value by referencing the prices at which similar items have been sold.

The items pointed out by Appraiser A and Appraiser B as significant vary from those Brooks deems important. They, unlike Brooks, have no emotional attachment to the items and cannot create an emotional narrative for the collection. One photograph among over 700 similar photographs would not mean anything to them, as they had no role in the acquisition of the items. The appraisers mentioned three posters, all valued very highly and worth significantly more money than the other 45 posters. One is the famous blue *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* poster, which we know is valuable for its provenance and rarity. Brooks did not mention the *Dorothy Vernon of Haddon Hall* or *Captain Kidd Jr.*⁷⁰ posters, however and these were identified by the appraisers and then FRL staff as “big ticket items.” The reasons why these posters were valued much higher than the rest of the posters in the collection were not disclosed by either Appraiser A or Appraiser B. When asked about this, Rob Brooks said that these posters were

⁶⁹ *International Society of Appraisers -- Canadian Chapter*, www.isa-appraisers.ca; Appraisal Institute of Canada, www.aicanada.ca/province-ontario/ontario/.

⁷⁰ *Captain Kidd Jr.* Directed by William Desmond Taylor. Performed by Mary Pickford. USA: Paramount Pictures, 1919.

considered more valuable because of the rarity, condition of the poster, and the artwork itself. Brooks noted that the Dorothy Vernon poster displayed “magnificent artwork” with a “very real likeness of Mary”. These are attributes that would hike up the price of a poster if it were to go to auction. The appraisers also did not identify items mentioned by Brooks as rare, like the Valentine Co. pin, or a porcelain doll of Pickford made and sold in 1924. Posters are already established as sought after items by collectors and consequently sell for the most money, so this could be why the posters were singled out in the appraiser’s reports. Moreover, when working with 1,900 items, it is often difficult to give a clear description and reason for the value of each article, especially if the appraiser may be unfamiliar with the object or cannot verify its value through research.

Financial and emotional narratives often collide over the question of why collectors collect, keep items, and choose to sell them. But the emotional relationships collectors forge with their work can prove to be challenging for institutions, for whom the collections are like strangers rather than old friends. They have not known the collection as intimately as the donor and view it in a different way, without the emotional connections. Moreover, unlike a collector, an appraiser may be an expert in a field like movie memorabilia, but not an expert on specific collections or people, like Mary Pickford. In a sense, they are creating a new story for a collection; the relationship with the donor is ending, and as with many breakups, things can be messy. Film memorabilia can be considered pieces of art and historical artifacts, but most items were originally produced as consumer items, created as part of the film “business”. One could argue that film memorabilia are as important as fine art in shaping society and culture. Yet their provenance as commercial items, created for a mass market, makes them difficult to value.

Memorabilia could have been considered part of the “stench” of mass deception that Ferris and Harris describe in their writing, and therefore, culturally worthless, the implication being that consumers of mass-mediated products (films, popular music, television, and memorabilia), are being duped into thinking what they are doing is culturally valuable.

At this point, we can also make a comparison between personal and institutional collecting, after looking at how Brooks created his collection in Chapter 2 and how the TIFF Film Reference Library accessioned it. We assume that cultural institutions have a different idea about obtaining a collection and organizing, assigning value, and curating it than private collectors. We may place a higher cultural value on institutional collections because we assume they have deep knowledge in their field and are comprehensive in their collecting. Nevertheless, institutions need private collectors, as they simply do not have the resources to build complete collections on their own. This adds to the cultural value that is lacking from private collections. At the same time, collectors rely on cultural heritage institutions to provide secure homes for their collections after they decide they can no longer house them, or often, after they die. Many collectors cringe at the thought of their collections, which they worked hard to build, rotting away somewhere because there was no one to look after them. Personal collections are like lovers — the affair with them is passionate and consuming. However, the relationship between private collector and collection must evolve and ultimately end. For this reason, personal and institutional collectors cannot live without one other.

Chapter 4

America's Sweetheart: The Mary Pickford Exhibition and Canadian tour

"Mary Pickford and the Invention of the Movie Star" opened at the TIFF Bell Lightbox on January 13th, 2011 and ran until July 3rd. The exhibition showcased 300 of the 1,900 items donated. The items chosen were posters, photographs, and other materials that outlined Pickford's life and career in the spotlight. The idea of the show was to chronicle "America's Sweetheart" from her early career on the stage at age six, to her beginnings on the screen in the disreputable "flickers", to her work as producer and industry pioneer. Pickford became one of the most powerful people in Hollywood, despite the fact that she was a woman in an industry dominated by men. She produced and starred in her own films under her own companies: The Mary Pickford Film Corporation, Pickford-Fairbanks Studios, and United Artists. Through her work on-screen and off, she was one of the first "celebrities" as we understand the term today. She endorsed skincare products and automobiles, influenced fashion, and inspired global adoration.⁷¹

After the Category B designation was completed in March 2010, the library was able to start gathering objects from the Rob Brooks Mary Pickford collection to use in the exhibition. Over the summer, FRL archivists inspected, reported on, and rehoused some of the chosen items to prepare them for exhibition. The TIFF Bell Lightbox opened on September 12th, 2010 and the exhibition was set to be the first one in the new space in the New Year. The choice to exhibit the

⁷¹"Mary Pickford and the Invention of the Movie Star." Browse Exhibitions. <http://collection.tiff.net/mwebcgi/mweb/mweb/mweb?request=record;id>.

Pickford materials at this TIME fell in line with TIFF's mandate of highlighting Canadian filmmakers and educating the public about Canadians in film. It only made sense to showcase her legacy prior to any other exhibitions. After the Pickford show, many other Canadian filmmakers were the subject of exhibitions, including David Cronenberg and Guy Maddin, in addition to international filmmakers like Stanley Kubrick, Federico Fellini, and Andy Warhol.

The show had four major sections, each focusing on a different aspect of Pickford's life and celebrity. The first section focused on her early life and rise to movie stardom with four subsections: *211 University Ave.* (Toronto location of Pickford's birth), *Biograph Girl*, *Star Power*, and *United Artists*. It included items dating back to Pickford's life working on the stage. Items under this category included the Valentine Co. pin, along with a program from a Broadway play from 1907 that billed her as Mary Pickford instead of Gladys Smith. *Biograph Girl* featured postcards that featured Pickford in her films made at Biograph from 1909 to 1912, including her first film, *The Lonely Villa*.⁷² The items categorized under *Star Power* included promotional posters, photographs, and lantern slides of Pickford on set in the 1910s prior to her co-founding United Artists. Photographs of Pickford with her fellow co-stars and filmmakers were displayed together. Of special interest was a photograph of Pickford and her mother, Charlotte Hennessy, shot by Fred Hartsook; it is the only photo of them together in this period that is known to exist. The last part of this chapter of the exhibition, *United Artists*, focused on Pickford's work done for the studio. It included photographs of Pickford in meetings with fellow executives, and memorabilia from films such as *Little Annie Rooney*.⁷³

⁷² *The Lonely Villa*. Directed by D.W. Griffith. Performed by David Miles and Mary Pickford. USA: Biograph Company, 1909.

⁷³ *Little Annie Rooney*. Directed by William Beaudine. Performed by Mary Pickford. USA: United Artists, 1925.

The second section of the exhibition focused on Pickford's star persona and was divided into three parts: *The Brand*, *Trendsetter*, and *Hollywood Royalty*. *The Brand* exhibited various kinds of Pickford related ephemera, including chocolate cards, buttons, items from Pickford's self-branded makeup line, and anything else that the public would have been able to purchase with Pickford's image on it. These items were collectables available to fans, unlike her posters and personal photographs seen in the previous section. Items from this section range from the early 1910s into the 1930s, depicting Pickford's long career as a film star. *Trendsetter* included photographs of Pickford in different outfits, along with period sheet music with her face on the cover. The largest part of this section, *Hollywood Royalty*, contained items that showed Pickford and her second husband, Douglas Fairbanks. Together they were known as "the king and queen of Hollywood", and photographs of them together on film sets or at home at their mansion, dubbed "Pickfair", were gathered here. Personal items of Pickford's were also part of this section, including monogrammed linens and a black and white Lanvin dress.

Section 3 chronicled her later stardom and was broken down into three parts: *Philanthropy*, *New Persona*, and *Fade Out*. Pickford was known to support a variety of causes and lent her celebrity to help those in need. *Philanthropy* highlights Pickford's charity work, through photographs of Pickford at different fundraising events, self-help books she published in the 1930s, and even her Academy of Motion Arts and Sciences membership card. *New Persona* highlighted Pickford's later work as an actress, after she famously cut off her golden curls in 1928 in favour of a more fashionable bob. This was right after her mother passed away and she decided that since she was in her mid-thirties, she "couldn't go on being Rebecca and Tess and

Pollyanna and Annie forever.”⁷⁴ One of the famous photographs of Pickford getting her hair cut was included in this section, along with promotional materials from the films she made post-hair-cut, including *Coquette* and *Kiki*.⁷⁵ The last sub-section, *Fade Out*, displayed promotional materials from Pickford’s final film, *Secrets* as well as photographs at home with her third husband, Buddy Rogers.⁷⁶ The last part of the exhibition, Section 4, showcased photographs and posters that did not fit in with the narrative of the other three sections, but highlighted Pickford’s work as an actress and producer. Items associated with films from 1914 to 1927 were featured and included photographs, posters, and sheet music.

The FRL has kept a number of press articles about the Pickford exhibition printed in a folder detailing the exhibition’s history. Interestingly enough, a number of these articles are from non-professional bloggers that used websites like blogspot.com to publish their writing. Nearly everything kept is from some sort of online article, or are articles that were published both in print and online. For the sake of this discussion, and to maintain credibility, I will only be discussing articles written by professional journalists. This being said, not everything published was entirely accurate. No major errors appeared in the published materials, but they did contain misconceptions, possibly with the purpose of creating a flashier story for readers. Still, I was surprised to see how the exhibition was reported on when it opened in January 2011.

Many of the articles are no longer online. Some of them have been archived on archive.org and can be accessed through the Wayback Machine. Most of them are very short and

⁷⁴ Beauchamp, Cari. "Mary Cuts Her Hair." Mary Pickford Foundation. June 20, 2018. <https://marypickford.org/caris-articles/mary-cuts-her-hair/>.

⁷⁵ *Kiki*. Directed by Sam Taylor. Performed by Mary Pickford. USA : United Artists, 1931.

⁷⁶ *Secrets*. Directed by Frank Borzage. Performed by Mary Pickford. USA : United Artists, 1933.

only chronicle the bare-bones story of the exhibition and Rob Brooks's collecting. One of these pieces is St  phanie Verge's *Toronto Life* article titled, "The one thing you should see this week: a peek at the birth of a star", which is a three-paragraph article that briefly outlines Brooks's collecting, who Mary Pickford was, and notable items being exhibited.⁷⁷ According to this article, the Rob Brooks Mary Pickford collection began with a single photograph of Pickford in 1980 that spawned a decades-long obsession with the star, resulting in a collection of almost 2,000 items. It claims that to "spread the mania", all these items were donated to the TIFF Film Reference Library, and three hundred of them were put on exhibition.⁷⁸ This is true but he did not donate his entire collection as the article states. We know this because he donated Pickford items two more times and still has a number of Pickford items at his home.

Verge mentioned that the exhibition displayed ephemera along with clips from some of Pickford's films. She singled out the Pickford-Fairbanks Studio mailbag, which Brooks also mentioned to me as a significant item for its rarity. She also mentions a tube of lipstick from Pickford's namesake makeup line, but overlooks several other items from the line, including a powder blusher, loose powder, cold cream, and bars of facial soap. Lastly, she mentions copies of Pickford's self-help books "(who knew?)"⁷⁹ that she published after retiring from acting. The self-help route is noteworthy, but not a surprising route for Pickford. The actress "wrote" an advice column called "Mary Pickford's Daily Talks" from 1915 to 1916, ghostwritten by her

⁷⁷ Verge, St  phanie. January 18, 2011. "The One Thing You Should See This Week: A Peek at the Birth of a Star." *Toronto Life* (Toronto). October 28, 2015. https://torontolife.com/food/the-one-thing-you-should-see-this-week-a-peek-at-the-birth-of-a-star/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Preview_for_January_20-26_2010&utm_content=Preview_for_January_20_26_2010_CID_b2ce5e4d

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

frequent collaborator and friend, Frances Marion.⁸⁰ It is likely that these books were ghostwritten as well, as Pickford was not a writer.

Another article, titled “Mary Pickford, Early cinema's savvy star” was published by the CBC to accompany a video interview (which is no longer online) with Shane Smith, the TIFF Bell Lightbox’s director of public programs.⁸¹ The article is shorter, but more accurate than Verge’s piece, but it does begin with, “Forget J.Lo, Sarah Jessica Parker or Elizabeth Taylor: a new Toronto exhibit says that the original queen of endorsements and personal branding was Mary Pickford, the Toronto-born silent film superstar.”⁸² It makes sense to tie in celebrities from various generations to attract today’s readers to the story. It should be noted that Pickford was the real trailblazer. In modern times, Elizabeth Taylor, J.Lo and Parker simply followed suit.

The most detailed article is Eric Veillette’s piece for *The Toronto Star*, “Exhibit put Toronto’s Sweetheart Back in the Spotlight”. It offers a more detailed history of Brooks’s collecting and his relationship with Pickford memorabilia, along with the donation, accession, and exhibition process.⁸³ He begins by telling readers of Pickford’s stardom in her lifetime, and how that stardom led to her image appearing on magazine covers, cards, posters, and various other memorabilia. He correctly notes that many items fell into the hands of the collector, Rob Brooks, whose cache of Pickford materials, starting with the purchase of an autographed photo

⁸⁰ Barbas, *Movie Crazy*, 77.

⁸¹ CBC News. "VIDEO: Mary Pickford, Early Cinema's Savvy Star." CBC News - Film - VIDEO: Mary Pickford, Early Cinema's Savvy Star. <https://web.archive.org/web/20110115185912/cbc.ca/arts/film/story/2011/01/13/f-pickford-mary-exhibit-lightbox.html>.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Veillette, Eric. "Exhibit Puts Toronto's Sweetheart Back in the Spotlight." *The Toronto Star* (Toronto). January 13, 2011. https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/movies/2011/01/13exhibit_puts_torontos_sweetheart_back_in_the_spotlight.html.

of the film starlet at a shop on The Danforth, grew to 1,900 items – the largest collection in the world. Ultimately, he notes that Brooks donated the collection to the TIFF Film Reference Library (also noted as the “Toronto International Film Festival” in the article).

Veillette’s article is the only piece kept by the FRL that includes an interview with Sylvia Frank, who offered the following insights about Brooks’s educational aims and how TIFF chose the items that were put on display:

When donated to institutions, collections are often archived and rarely see the light of day. Brooks wanted none of that. ‘It’s a much richer experience when you can display a collection,’ says Sylvia Frank, director of TIFF’s Film Reference Library and curator of the exhibit. With a limited acquisitions budget, TIFF depends on donations from private collectors. But a collection of this size also carries a personal touch. ‘Institutions tend to have policies on what to collect,’ says Frank, explaining why they might have focused on two-dimensional items and ignored a sturdy leather mailbag from the Pickford-Fairbanks Studio, or samples from Pickford’s signature cosmetics line from 1937. ‘She was such an icon,’ says Frank. ‘Like many celebrities these days, she was doing that back then as well.’ Frank has selected 300 items for display: correspondence, a dress, photos from Pickfair (the home which she shared with Fairbanks until 1936) and posters, including the only known existing poster for *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*. ‘We used as many posters as possible because they’re so visually amazing’ she says.⁸⁴

Veillette was interested in the items Brooks pointed out as rare or culturally significant: “Brooks, whose home is still full of other memorabilia, touts a Toronto-centric item as one of his favourites: a metal pin from the Valentine Stock Company, a theatre troupe in which Pickford performed before ascending to stardom, ‘Each season they would promote an adult and a child star,’ says Brooks. ‘In November of 1899 they promoted Gladys Smith. I tracked one down.’”⁸⁵ Brooks told me this story as well, and how he only knew about this pin’s existence because it

⁸⁴ Veillette, Exhibit Puts Toronto’s Sweetheart Back in the Spotlight”.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

was mentioned in Eileen Whitfield's biography of Pickford (the quote describing the pin is included in Chapter 2). However, the pin itself is not pictured in the book, likely because it is so rare. Brooks found it at a little shop outside Toronto, and he said that no one else knew what it was, or its significance.

Veillette noted rare items like the Valentine Co. pin and the Rebecca poster in the article. However the Rebecca poster is not the only existing poster from that film, just the only existing version of that artwork (which is actually no longer considered the only one like it, as one was put on auction in 2017 in Texas) that belonged to William Randolph Hearst.

After the Toronto run of the show, the FRL wanted to tour the exhibit to other Canadian cultural heritage institutions. Initially, there was a long list of potential destinations for the show, but due to the cost of insuring the collection while it was on display, only a few sites were visited, including the McCord Museum in Montreal. The McCord seeks to "celebrate our past and present life in Montreal— our history, our people, our communities."⁸⁶ The choice to take on the Mary Pickford collection, with Pickford famously being from Toronto with no ties to Montreal, is an interesting one. It is unclear why they wanted to exhibit the Pickford collection when their mandate is to specifically feature works that represent Montreal. However, in a press release for the opening of "Mary Pickford and the Invention of the Movie Star" at the McCord, they claimed that

The McCord Museum is dedicated to the preservation, study, and appreciation of Montreal's social history, as recounted by its people, artists and communities. The

⁸⁶ "Mission." Musee McCord. <https://www.musee-mccord.qc.ca/en/mission/>.

McCord Museum produces exciting exhibitions that engage visitors from Montreal, Canada and beyond by offering them a contemporary look at the world.⁸⁷

It is likely that the McCord was willing to look past Montreal for the Mary Pickford exhibit because of her contributions to Canadian history.

The show at the McCord ran from May 3rd, 2012 to October 14th 2012 and since then, the material has not been formally exhibited. Items from the Pickford collection are sometimes displayed informally at the FRL for school tours and for Doors Open Toronto. This latter event was launched in 1999 by the City of Toronto as an initiative for people to visit cultural heritage institutions in the city.⁸⁸ At the most recent Doors Open Toronto weekend, May 25-26 2019, the FRL displayed some items from the Mary Pickford Cosmetics line. With the exhibitions staff having been laid off in 2017, there are no current plans for a large-scale exhibit Mary Pickford collection again in the near future. Still, these items are available for researchers to study at any time.

As Rob Brooks had hoped, his collection has been kept in very good hands. All the Pickford items are kept in cold storage either on site at the TIFF FRL or in the off-site storage facility, which is also temperature controlled. Materials are kept up to archival standards in acid-free paper and boxes. It is truly a fascinating collection of wonderful gems from the film industry and while it is a shame it cannot be seen on display, it has lived a good life at the FRL so far.

“Mary Pickford and the Invention of the Movie Star” was a fantastic way to celebrate one of Canada’s biggest film stars, and Canadian history. I believe it is important to keep telling her

⁸⁷ “Spotlight on Silent Film as New Exhibit Opens at the McCord Museum Opens: Mary Pickford and the Invention of the Movie Star.” 2012.

⁸⁸ City of Toronto. "Doors Open Toronto." City of Toronto. May 25, 2019. <https://www.toronto.ca/explore-enjoy/festivals-events/doors-open-toronto/>.

story in these ways as many Canadians still do not know who Mary Pickford is, or if they do, that she was a Canadian citizen (she never became an American citizen despite living in Los Angeles for most of her adult life). Even though the show had completed its run in 2012 at the McCord, TIFF has continued to acknowledge Mary Pickford in their work. In June 2019, it was announced that the Toronto International Film Festival would begin to honour “outstanding female talent” with the “Mary Pickford Award”,

In recognition of outstanding female talent, TIFF will present the Mary Pickford Award, named in honour of Mary Pickford, the pioneering actor, producer, and Co-Founder of United Artists. The annual award will launch in conjunction with United Artists’ 100th anniversary this year, and will honour an emerging female talent who is making groundbreaking strides in the industry, as Pickford did. A Toronto native, Pickford was the highest-paid actor — male or female — during the late 1910s and was a savvy businesswoman who helped shape the industry as we know it today. The award will be presented by MGM.⁸⁹

“Mary Pickford and the Invention of the Movie Star” was a landmark show for the Film Reference Library and for TIFF. The show brought Mary back home to Toronto, and kicked off TIFF’s subsequent high profile exhibitions afterward. The show set the standard of what the library was capable of achieving, and highlighted the remarkable work that can be done by a single collector. As the curator, Sylvia Frank was able to streamline the items in the collection and to showcase the narratives of both Pickford’s private life and public career, as well as Brooks’s skillful collecting. The exhibition sought to create a clear story that patrons would be able to understand and learn from, even if they were not familiar with Mary Pickford.

⁸⁹ “TIFF Tribute Gala.” TIFF. <https://www.tiff.net/tiff-tribute-gala>.

Conclusion

Every story must end

When “Mary Pickford and the Invention of the Movie Star” wrapped up at the McCord Museum/Musée McCord, it came back to its new home in Toronto and has since been kept in the library. Despite the lack of continuing exhibition that he had hoped for, Brooks did donate to the library twice after his initial 2009 donation in 2011, and again in 2018. The library has a specific amount of money that donations would have to be at least valued at in order for them to accept them into their collection. Gathering items that hit this dollar figure, which cannot be disclosed in this paper, did take a bit of time. This explains why Brooks waited seven years to donate the third group of items, for which the documentation is still being finalized.

The 2011 donation was submitted and completed a lot faster than the initial 2009 donation, because it was completed under a charitable tax receipt instead of Cultural Heritage and because the donation paperwork already existed. The original deed of gift and negotiations had already been written, so the library was able to simply request that Brooks agree to the previous terms and conditions from the 2009 agreement. The 2011 donation would be accepted as Part II of the Rob Brooks Mary Pickford Collection. This donation, along with the 2018 donation, were completed under a charitable tax receipt, meaning that the government did not issue the tax receipt, it was all done internally at TIFF. This of course meant that Brooks would only have up to five years after it was issued to use it, but it made more sense to complete to donation under this designation as this, and the 2018 donation, were much smaller donations. The charitable tax receipt donation also gave Brooks more freedom to choose what to donate, he

did not need to own items for at least three years. The incredibly ornate headpiece worn by Pickford in *Dorothy Vernon of Haddon Hall* was purchased by Brooks at auction in June 2011, but then donated to the library a few months later.⁹⁰ This would not have been possible under a Cultural Heritage donation because he had only owned the piece for a few months. Along with this, the collection only needed to be appraised by one appraiser as opposed to two for the Cultural Heritage donation. As the paperwork is still being completed for the 2018 donation at the time of this writing, I cannot speak about the specifics of that donation, but it was likely conducted in the same way as it was also completed for a charitable tax receipt.

When I asked Brooks if he still collects Mary Pickford materials, or anything else, he told me that his passion for collecting has wound down. He is now retired and no longer has the disposable income he once had to spend on memorabilia and other collectables. He also commented on the massive holes that now exist in his collection, and that it would be impossible to fill them. His collection at its peak took over 30 years to build, along with a large amount of money. As he puts it, there just is not enough time or money to try and fill those gaps. It is worth mentioning that there is no longer a narrative or emotional connection to what he has, so he does not feel the drive he once did to create a story. Rob Brooks's Mary Pickford story has come to its conclusion.

TIFF does not have an exhibitions staff and with the organization putting their money in different avenues, the Film Reference Library does not have the resources to create a grand-scale exhibition to display the Rob Brooks Mary Pickford Collection. Unfortunately, this work is very

⁹⁰ "Mary Pickford Hat from Dorothy Vernon of Haddon Hall - Jun 18, 2011 | Profiles in History in CA on LiveAuctioneers." *Live Auctioneers*, www.liveauctioneers.com/item/9297611_mary-pickford-hat-from-dorothy-vernon-of-haddon-hall.

expensive and TIFF is not a primarily collecting institution so this is no longer their focus. Attention goes toward the annual film festival and various other projects related to screening film. These avenues simply seem to draw in more income for the organization. This is unfortunate because even if TIFF no longer puts on regular touring exhibitions (which they did for visiting shows like Stanley Kubrick, or permanent collection shows like David Cronenberg), they still have a massive amount of interesting material, including the Pickford items, that do not get seen enough. One of the main reasons why Brooks wanted to donate his collection was so that it would be shown to the public and so that people could learn about Mary Pickford.

While it is too difficult, time-consuming, and expensive to put on a Pickford show every year like Brooks wanted, displaying the work online could be a possible solution to this issue. People are becoming more and more immersed in online content, and even though TIFF does have a page online still about “Mary Pickford and the Invention of the Movie Star”, it is difficult to get a grasp of what was exhibited. Items in the collection are shown as records but the JPEGs are very small, and many records do not have associated images at all.⁹¹ Nowadays, many institutions exhibit their materials online and the great thing about this is that there is no closing date. Anyone who wants to see the exhibition could see it indefinitely. This would also appease Brooks’s desire to have the materials exhibited, and it would highlight the fantastic items the FRL has in their collection. It would take some time to photograph items and curate an exhibition online, but it would be much less expensive and time-consuming than a physical exhibition.

In this paper, I have discussed the idea of different narratives that people and organizations assign to their work, be it private collectors accumulating items, or cultural

⁹¹ “Browse Exhibitions.” TIFF, collection.tiff.net/mwebcgi/mweb/mweb/mweb?request=viewlist;type.

heritage institutions wanting to create an image for their collections, or media outlets wanting to put out the flashiest story. Each narrative is driven by different desires and goals, with collector's narratives being the most emotionally oriented. Collecting is a compulsion driven by passion, but passion cannot exist forever. Passion dies down, and in this case, it is eventually overpowered by practical issues such as insufficient space to store massive collections. Donating collections to cultural heritage institutions is often the best choice for a collector to make when they decide that it is time to part with their collections, but the end of this relationship is difficult. Collectors must grapple with the idea that their story insofar as their collectibles is concerned is ending, which can feel like grieving. Perhaps collectors can be difficult to work with because they are in mourning. But donating is not the end of the story for the collection, it is in fact a new beginning. Cultural heritage institutions can preserve and maintain collections very well, and they are usually in safe hands. But it can be challenging for the collector to remove themselves from the history of their work as it takes on a new life and new narrative within a cultural heritage institution.

I believe that in order to cultivate the most successful collector/institution relationships, that both sides need to do a bit of give and take. As I have compared this type of relationship to a romantic one in this paper, much of the same advice given to romantic partners can be given to donors and institutions. On the one hand, donors need to be aware that institutions do not have as much money as they may believe they do. That in fact, cultural heritage institutions do not have much of an acquisitions budget (if any) to purchase items or to even compete with them at auctions. In this way, they have the upper hand. But they also need to be aware that these institutions are working on many different collections all at once and that their work is just as

worthy of preservation and time as another's. Cultural heritage institutions need to be aware of the type of emotional attachment donors have established with their collections and that it is difficult to donate, even if it is the best choice. It is important to be sensitive to these pre-established emotions and that for collectors, the items they have accumulated are not just "things".

While it may often not feel like it due to tensions between how a collector may want their work handled and how an institution can work with a collection, everyone is on the same side. Collectors and institutions are working for the greater good of cultural heritage—yet may perceive their value differently. Each narrative adds to the overarching story for a collection. Collectors and institutions need one another in order to continue their work in maintaining the integrity of our art and histories.

Appendix

Images



Jeanne Lanvin black and white lace dress from Pickford's wardrobe, 1920. Silk muslin and eyelash Chantilly lace.



Charlotte Hennessy shot by Fred Hartsook, 1915. Personal item of Pickford's.



“The Mary Pickford Cap”, 1914. Cotton and silk muslin.



“The Mary Pickford Cap”, 1914. Cotton and silk muslin.



“Mary Pickford Cosmetics” range of products: bar soap, cold cream, loose powder, cleansing cream, rouge, lipstick, pressed powder packets, 1937. Part of *The Brand* section of “Mary Pickford and the Invention of the Movie Star.”



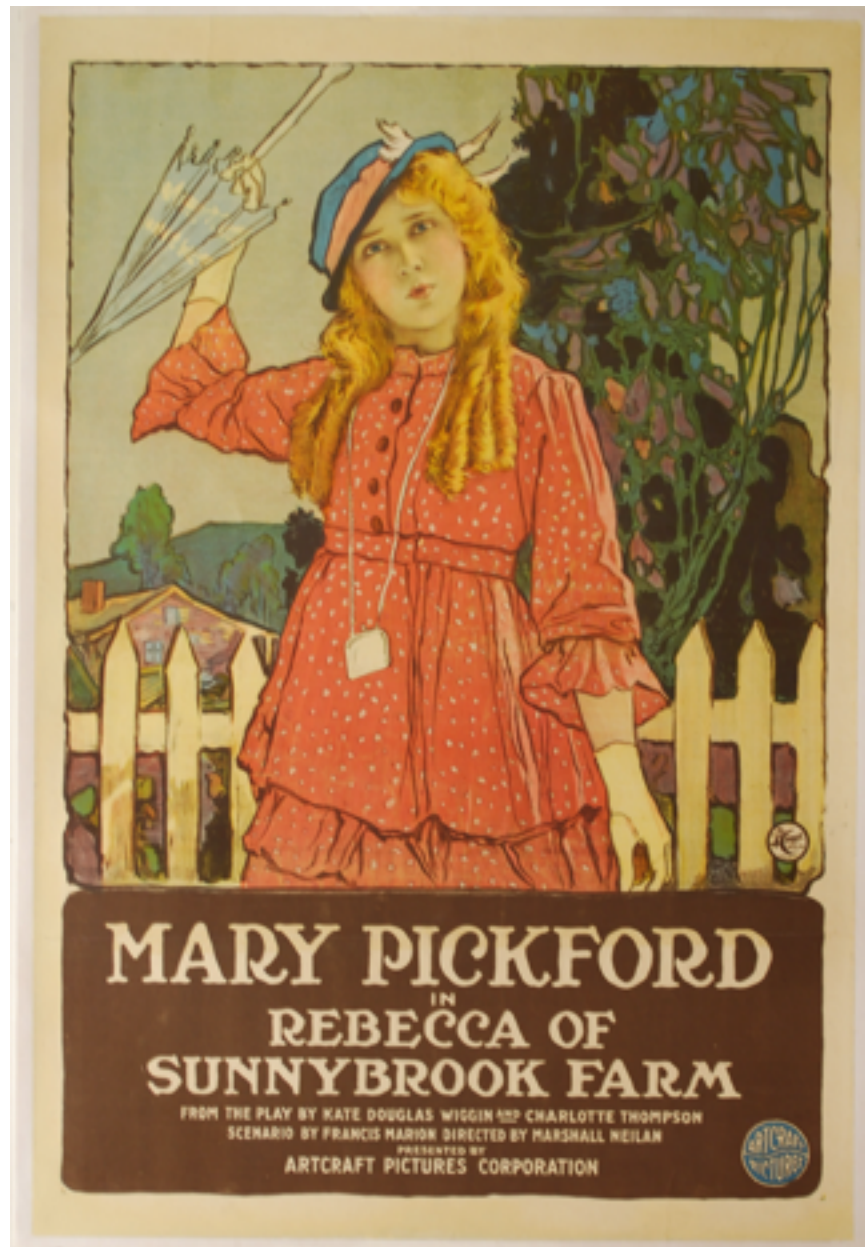
Brooks's first Mary Pickford purchase, photograph with fake autograph.



“Blue” *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* poster, 1917.



The “blue” *Rebecca* poster in Brooks’s front hall prior to donating.



The“pink” version of the Rebecca poster, 1917.



The “pink” *Rebecca* poster in Brooks’s front hall prior to donating.



The “pink” *Rebecca* poster in Brooks’s front hall prior to donating.
The reproduction *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* poster that Brooks had first purchased.



The Valentine & Co. promotional pin featuring 7-year old Gladys Smith.



Dorothy Vernon of Haddon Hall poster, 1924.



Captain Kidd Jr. poster, 1919.



Mary Pickford doll to promote her film, *Little Lord Fauntelroy*, 1924.



Postcard of Mary in *The Lonely Villa*, 1909. Part of the *Biograph Girl* section of “Mary Pickford and the Invention of the Movie Star.”



Postcard of Mary Pickford in *The New York Hat*, 1912. Part of the *Biograph Girl* section of
“Mary Pickford and the Invention of the Movie Star.”



Mary Pickford, Charlie Chaplin, and Douglas Fairbanks working on a United Artists film. Part of the *United Artists* section of “Mary Pickford and the Invention of the Movie Star.”



Mary Pickford and United Artists executives in a meeting. Part of the *United Artists* section of
“Mary Pickford and the Invention of the Movie Star.”



Postcard of Mary on her honeymoon in Europe wearing Lanvin in 1920. Part of the *Trendsetter* section of “Mary Pickford and the Invention of the Movie Star.”



Mary Pickford "Sweetheart of Mine" sheet music, cover. Part of the *Trendsetter* section of "Mary Pickford and the Invention of the Movie Star."



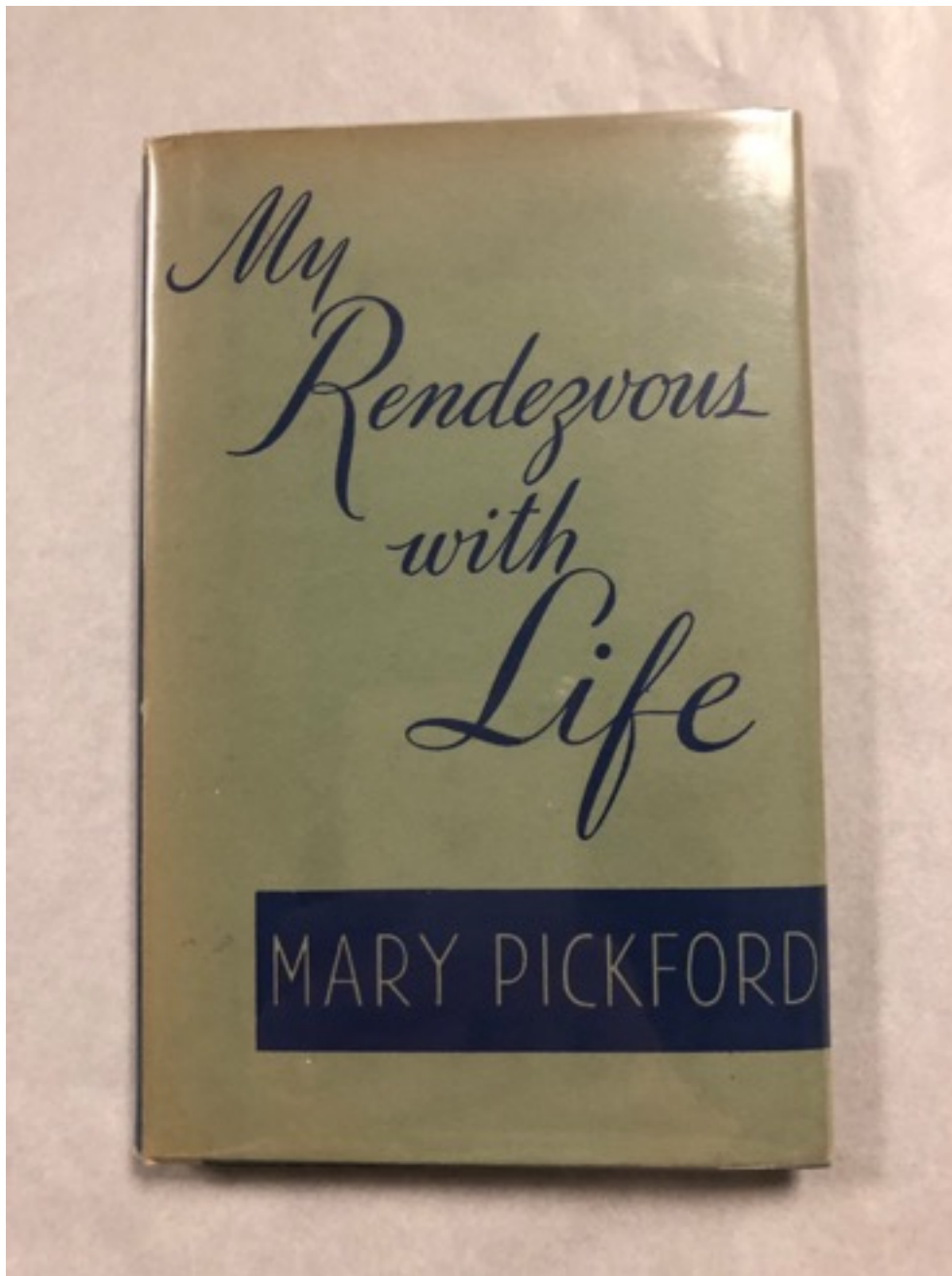
“The Mary Pickford Waltz” sheet music, cover. Part of the *Trendsetter* section of “Mary Pickford and the Invention of the Movie Star.”



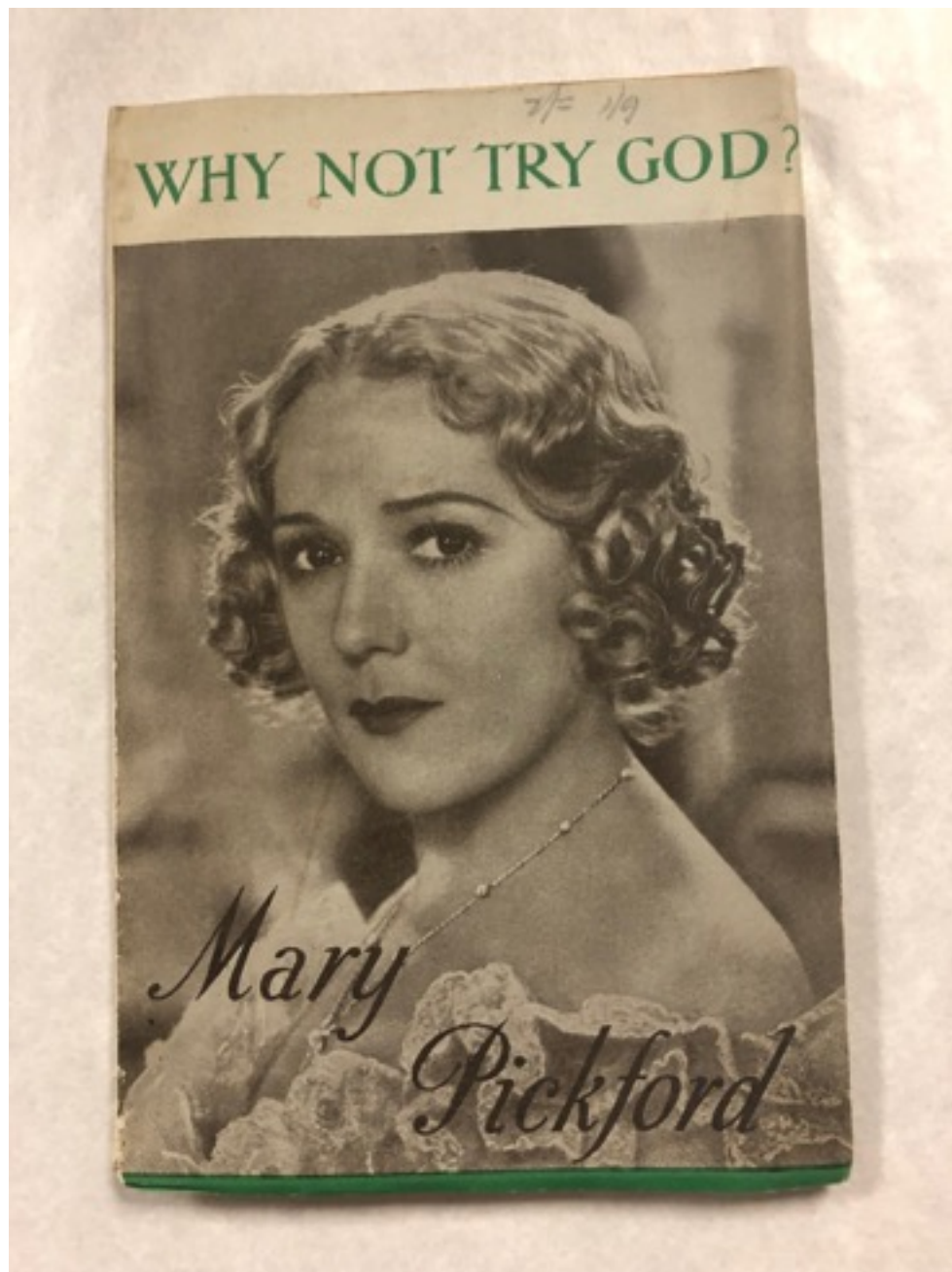
Postcard of Doug and Mary at their home, Pickfair. Part of the *Hollywood Royalty* section of "Mary Pickford and the Invention of the Movie Star."



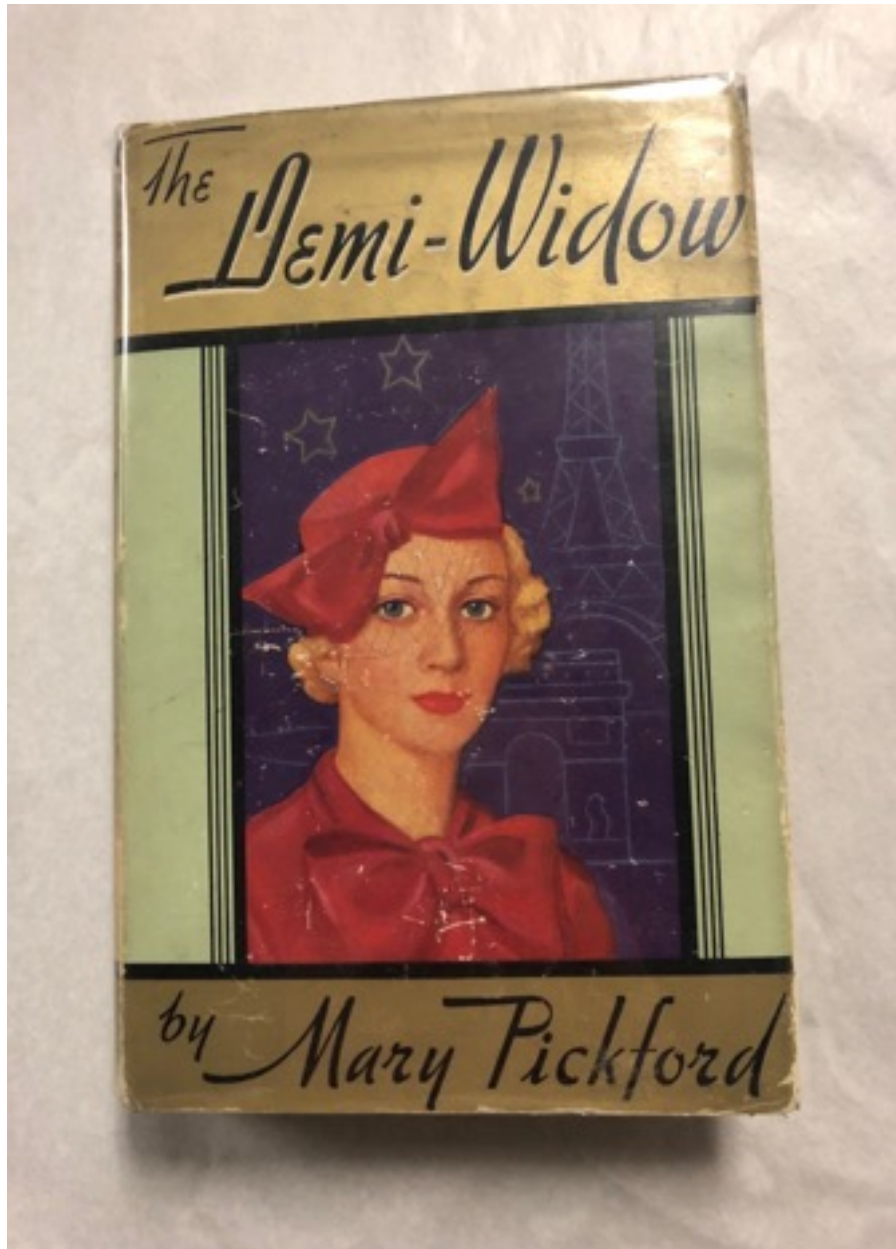
Postcard of Doug and Mary on their European honeymoon. Part of the *Hollywood Royalty* section of “Mary Pickford and the Invention of the Movie Star.”



Mary Pickford's self-help book, *My Rendezvous with Life*, 1935. Part of the *Philanthropy* section of "Mary Pickford and the Invention of the Movie Star."



Mary Pickford's self-help book, *Why Not Try God?* 1934. Part of the *Philanthropy* section of "Mary Pickford and the Invention of the Movie Star."



Mary Pickford's self-help book, *The Demi Window*, 1934. Part of the *Philanthropy* section of "Mary Pickford and the Invention of the Movie Star."



Photograph of Mary at a charity event with Ginger Rogers and third husband, Buddy Rogers.
Part of the *Philanthropy* section of “Mary Pickford and the Invention of the Movie Star.”



Postcard of Mary chopping off her curls, 1928. Part of the *New Persona* section of “Mary Pickford and the Invention of the Movie Star.”



Coquette lobby card, 1929. Part of the *New Persona* section of “Mary Pickford and the Invention of the Movie Star.”



Coquette lobby card, 1929. Part of the *New Persona* section of “Mary Pickford and the Invention of the Movie Star.”



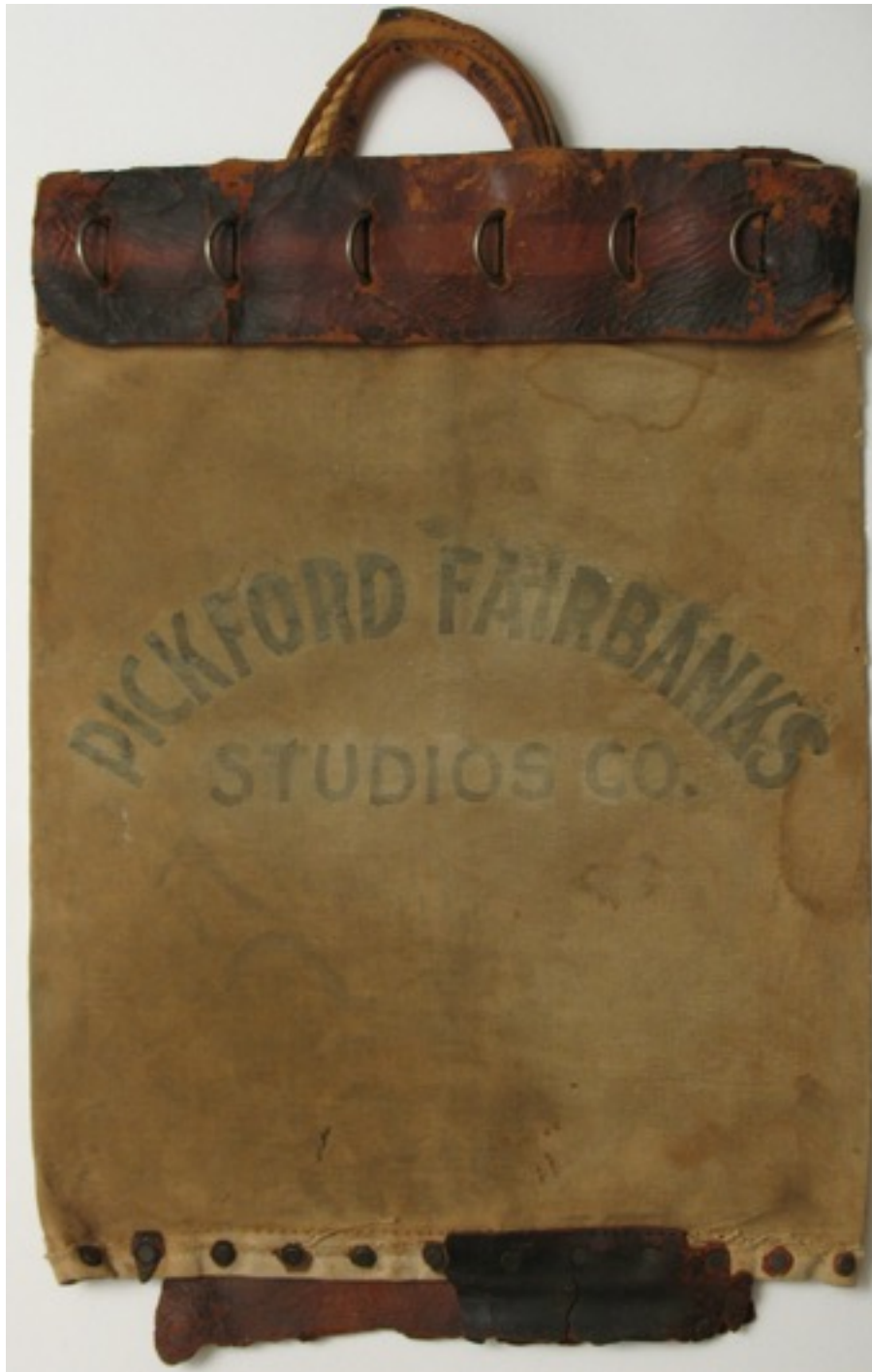
Kiki lobby card, 1931. Part of the *New Persona* section of “Mary Pickford and the Invention of the Movie Star.”



Photograph of Mary in her final film, *Secrets*, 1933. Part of the *Fade Out* section of “Mary Pickford and the Invention of the Movie Star.”



Mary at home with third husband, Buddy Rogers, with their children, 1944. Part of the *Fade Out* section of “Mary Pickford and the Invention of the Movie Star.”



Pickford-Fairbanks studio mailbag.



The *Dorothy Vernon of Haddon Hall* headpiece, 1924. It is kept with the matching collar, which came from a separate donation. Made of wire, silver thread and pearls (possibly faux).

Documents

THE [Donor name] COLLECTION

PART 1

DEED OF GIFT

TIFF Film Reference Library Deed of Gift template.

DEED OF GIFT

[Donor name] (THE “Donor”), of [donor address], warrants that he/she is the owner of the materials described in the [Accession number of collection] Finding Aid which is Schedule A of the Deed of Gift.

SCHEDULE A - FINDING AID: [DONOR NAME] COLLECTION dated _____
(X pages of listings)

These materials shall be collectively referred to as Part I of *The [Donor name] Collection*.

The Donor unconditionally gifts and transfers full title and privilege of ownership in Part I of *The [Donor name] Collection* to The Film Reference Library, of the **TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL INC.** (“TIFF”) on the following terms:

1. TIFF will adhere, whenever reasonably possible, to archival preservation standards in storing and caring for PART I of *The [Donor name] Collection*;
2. TIFF will observe access to and confidentiality of materials in Part I of *The [Donor name] Collection* as follows:
 - a) Materials will be made available for “RESEARCH USE ONLY” to approved users of The Film Reference Library, unless the records have been otherwise designated or restricted. Before granting access, the Library Senior Manager or the Library Senior Manager’s designate shall be reasonably satisfied as to a person’s credentials or authorization.
 - b) For materials listed as “RESTRICTED (annotated with an R), access shall be given, during the lifetime of Donor, only to persons with authorization in writing given by Donor or designate (who shall be appointed in writing by Donor).
 - c) [Donor name] or designate, will be advised in the event of the closing, winding up or dissolution of the Library. The collections shall be distributed only to other non-profit, publicly-owned, charitable organizations in Canada as stated in the TIFF’s Acquisition Policy.
3. TIFF will encourage observance of the provisions of the Copyright Act of Canada by all who have access to Part I of *The [Donor name] Collection*. Any copyright which the donor possesses is personally retained by the donor. The donor hereby grants TIFF a non-exclusive, perpetual transferable license to exploit in any manner (including the right to reproduce for research and study purposes) all archive property except for the restricted material. Prior to any exploitation of specific material, TIFF must obtain rights from any third parties other than the donor who have pre-existing legal rights in that material which would be violated by such exploitation.
4. TIFF will make Part I of *The [Donor name] Collection* reasonably available to scholarly researchers and the public subject to the restrictions placed on access to Part I of *The [Donor name] Collection*
5. TIFF will catalogue Part I of *The [Donor name] Collection* in accordance with accepted archival standards.
6. TIFF will attach, whenever, reasonably possible, a prominent legend to each item

in Part I of The [Donor name] Collection identifying it as part of **The [Donor name] Collection.**

7. TIFF will facilitate, wherever reasonably possible, preferential access by [Donor name] to Part I of *The [Donor name] Collection*.

For greater certainty, the Donor retains all his/her copyright in the materials and does not waive any of his/her moral rights in the materials unless otherwise agreed in writing.

DATED the __day of_____, 20XX

Witness to [Donor name]'s Signature

[Donor name]

September 22, 2008

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Re: Application for Status "B" designation - Mary Pickford Collection.

Dear [REDACTED]

I would like to request a Category "B" designation for a collection of Mary Pickford materials being offered to The Film Reference Library by a Canadian collector. The collection consists of roughly 150 items either owned by or about Mary Pickford including but not limited to fan magazines, books, photographs, memorabilia, posters, lobby cards, photographs (see rough inventory enclosed/attached) - approximate value [REDACTED]. Please note that this is not the fair market final archival appraisal value which will be submitted when application for certification is made.

The Film Reference Library attests that the material will not be legally transferred until Status "B" designation is given by the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

Mary Pickford was a pioneer of the movie industry and founder of United Artists Studios as well as the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS) and has often been credited with the establishing the "Star System". Though often referred to as "America's Sweetheart", Mary was born in Toronto in 1892 as Gladys Louis Smith. Having received a star on Canada's Walk of Fame in 1999, Mary has already received some well deserved recognition as a key Canadian figure, and the acquisition this Mary Pickford collection by The Film Reference Library, an institution devoted to the study of film as art and industry, would be a wonderful resource and serve as tribute to this remarkable Canadian and pioneer in entertainment history.

The collection will be housed on site at 2 Carlton Street in the library's monitored and temperature & humidity controlled stacks. All materials will be processed and described according to RAD standards and will be stored according to archival standards as set by the CCI, and will include re-housing in approved acid-free enclosures.

As you know, the Toronto International Film Festival Group has embarked on the construction of our new home named Bell Lightbox. Construction of our five-story podium building began on February 1, 2007 and includes five cinemas, two galleries, three learning studios, and also our Film Reference Library and Archive. TIFFFG,

The library's application for "Status B" approval.

architectural firm KPMB, The Daniels Corporation and the King & John Festival Corporation have worked closely with Siegfried Rempel (CCI) in the design and construction of the building with the goal of receiving a Category A designation for our new home. The galleries are being designed to meet the highest specifications, with hopes of exhibiting both our materials as well as other noteworthy collections from around the world. Currently under construction, TIFFG expects to move into and be operational in our new home as of late 2009, early 2010.

For more information about Bell Lightbox go to <http://belllightbox.ca/belllightbox.aspx>

Please contact me should you have any questions or require any further information. I look forward to receiving your reply.

Yours truly,

Julie Lofthouse
Archivist, The Film Reference Library /a division of TIFFG

The library's application for "Status B" approval.



CATEGORY "B" DESIGNATION UNDER THE
CULTURAL PROPERTY EXPORT AND IMPORT ACT

The Deputy Minister of Canadian Heritage, on the authority delegated to her by the Minister of Canadian Heritage, and pursuant to subsection 32(2) of the *Cultural Property Export and Import Act*, is pleased hereby to designate the Film Reference Library, a division of the Toronto International Film Festival Group for the purposes of subparagraph 39(1)(a)(1.1), paragraph 110.1(1)(c), subsections 118.1(1), 118.1(10) and section 207.3 of the *Income Tax Act*, the designation to be in effect for an indefinite period of time relative to the proposed acquisition of the Rob Brooks Mary Pickford Collection.

The designation, effective December 20, 2008, will enable the Film Reference Library to apply to the Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board for certification of this collection.


Judith A. LaRocque

Dated at Gatineau this

13th day of February 2009.

Canada



Approval from the Cultural Property and Import Act to proceed with accessioning.

PRESS RELEASE

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Spotlight on silent films as new exhibition at the McCord Museum opens: *Mary Pickford and the Invention of the Movie Star*

Organized by TIFF (TIFF Bell Lightbox)

Montreal, April 18, 2012- The McCord Museum is proud to present *Mary Pickford and the Invention of the Movie Star* from May 3 to October 8, 2012. The exhibition, which offers a selection of 209 objects from the archives of the Rob Brooks Mary Pickford Collection and the TIFF Film Reference Library, including photos, postcards, posters, and a range of merchandising products of the era, is a testament to the heritage left by one of the world's greatest silent film stars.

The silent screen and America's sweetheart

Designed by Denis Carrier of Carrier Communication and curated by Sylvia Frank, Director of TIFF's Film Reference Library and Special Collections, this exhibition not only underscores the importance of silent films and their impact on the industry, but also chronicles key moments in the life of this talented woman who had such a profound effect on it. *"Mary Pickford was a Canadian pioneer in the film industry, a movie star, a producer, and an astute businesswoman, which in itself was exceptional in the 1920s. She was a true source of inspiration for the stars that followed,"* states Suzanne Sauvage, President and Chief Executive Officer of the McCord Museum.

The exhibition will enable visitors to delve into the world of motion pictures and discover rare items that either belonged to Pickford or depict her illustrious career. Film buffs will be captivated by the many original movie posters on display. Also featured are screenings of clips from Pickford's films on the big screen, just as they were shown during the Roaring Twenties.

Born Gladys Louise Smith on April 8, 1892, in Toronto, Mary Pickford became recognized at an early age for her many talents. Nicknames such as "America's Sweetheart" and "The girl with the curls" followed her throughout her career and stand as reminders of the rapid and lasting impression she made on the public.

An independent producer and co-founder of United Artists with Charlie Chaplin (1919) and of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (1927), Pickford was one of the most powerful women in the male-dominated Hollywood of her day. She was the face of a multitude of products, a fashion icon, and universally loved, and in the 1920s and 1930s she became one of the most recognized and admired women in the world. In 1976, after a career that had spanned 27 years and with some 236 films to her credit, Mary Pickford received an honorary Oscar from the institution she had helped establish. She died on May 29, 1979, at the age of 87.

About the McCord Museum

The McCord Museum is dedicated to the preservation, study and appreciation of Montreal's social history, as recounted by its people, artists and communities. The McCord Museum is home to one of the largest historical collections in North



Mary Pickford as she appears in *Coquette*
Vintage print
Unknown Photographer
1929



Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford at the entrance to the Pickford-Fairbanks Studios
1922

P. 1/2

The Musée de McCord "Mary Pickford and the Invention of the Movie Star" press release.

America, consisting of First Peoples objects, costumes and textiles, photographs, decorative and visual artworks, and textual archives totalling more than 1.4 million artefacts. The McCord Museum produces exciting exhibitions that engage visitors from Montreal, Canada, and beyond by offering them a contemporary look at the world. The McCord Museum also offers educational and cultural activities as well as innovative projects on the Internet. *McCord Museum: Our People, Our Stories.*

-30-

Photographs available upon request.

Source and information:

[REDACTED]

The McCord Museum thanks the Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine du Québec, the Conseil des arts de Montréal, and its partners Astral and The Gazette, for their support.

tiff.

Exhibition photographs

Photos of “Mary Pickford and the Invention of the Movie Star” at the TIFF Bell Lightbox.







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