

Sigmund Lubin's Lubinville

By Paul LaFollette, Editor

This issue's "interesting places near Temple" features a building which no longer exists.

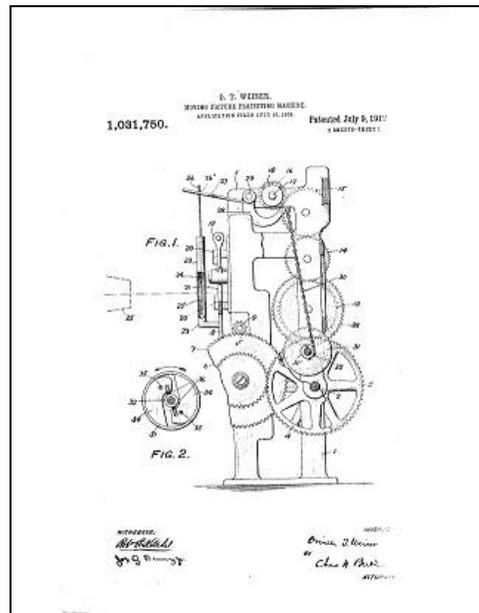
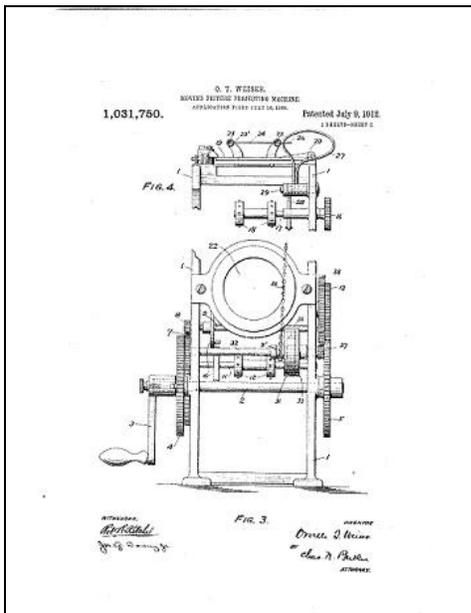
In 1841, Sigmund Lubin was born in what is modern day Poland. He graduated from Heidelberg University with a degree in ophthalmology. In 1876 he came to the United States, and by 1882 he had changed his name to Sigmund Lubin and settled in Philadelphia. Here, he established a business which produced optical products. He soon became interested in the developing technology of motion pictures. He and his firm created a number of patents related to this industry, some of which can be seen [here](#).

He was, for a time, an agent for Thomas Edison. By 1897 he was creating his own films. In 1910, he created Lubinville, which was, at the time, the largest movie production studio in the United States. Located at Indiana Avenue between 19th and 20th Streets, just West of North Philadelphia Station, it would be an easy walk from Temple's Health Sciences campus if there were anything left to see there. In this location, he made hundreds, perhaps thousands of movies before he moved his studio outside the city in 1912. Several important actors, including Oliver Hardy, began their careers in Lubinville.

By 1916, Lubin's business was in serious difficulty. World War I cost him most of his distribution of films to Europe. An explosion in one of his film vaults destroyed all of his negatives, as the nitrate based film was essentially the same material as gun cotton and thus highly flammable. In addition, he was most comfortable producing one reel films. This was a length suitable for news, comedies, and re-creations of boxing matches. By this time, however, the public was more interested in longer dramas, and he began to lose his market. He went bankrupt, and returned to his first business as an optometrist. He died in 1923. However, for a time, one of the busiest motion production studios in the world was a short walk from the Temple University School of Medicine. ♦



Sigmund Lubin



Kinetoscope and Projector patents by Sigmund Lubin