

## Fiesta on Film

BY DANIEL KOSHAREK



**Ernest Knee**, *Some Gay Highlights of Santa Fe's 223rd Fiesta*, Taken and Presented by the Lentic Theater, 1929.

Courtesy Palace of the Governors Photo Archives (NMHM/DCA), HP.2009.19.4.

In 1877, when Eadweard Muybridge set out to determine whether all four feet of a running horse leave the ground at the same time, his photographic studies of motion inadvertently set the stage for moving pictures. Muybridge's linear progression of rapid-fire, stop-motion photographs of horses running, men wrestling, and women walking were the unlikely precursors to movies as we know them today.

The above stills (which depict every fifth frame to enhance the illusion of movement) are from a 1929 film shot by Ernest Knee titled, *Some Gay Highlights of Santa Fe's 223rd Fiesta*, Taken and Presented by the Lentic Theater. It shows a parade up San Francisco Street and on the west side of the Plaza. Films like this capture a series of moments, instead of still photography's single moment in time. Most archives, Palace of the Governors Photo Archives included, have holdings of film reels that are commonly considered problematic in most collections, as they are expensive and time-consuming to digitize, difficult to properly catalog since you cannot "see" them, and challenging

to store. It's also difficult to make viewable copies available.

The Photo Archives has several thousand reels of film and various forms of videotape, all of which have been patiently waiting for their day in the sun. Preservation of this material is now possible with grants from the Frank D. Gorham, Jr. and Marie K. Gorham Charitable Foundation and an allocation by the state legislature. These funds have made it possible to purchase the necessary equipment to begin the digitization process. It is imperative that this work is done now, as most experts agree that time is running out to save fragile films and videos.

Working with the Old Santa Fe Association, we hope to uncover movies squirreled away in the closets and garages of Santa Fe families before they disintegrate or, as old nitrate film is wont to do, spontaneously combust. ■

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