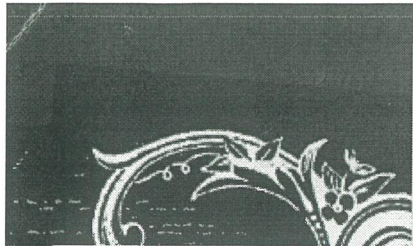


1898

V2

(Kaye, M., 2001)

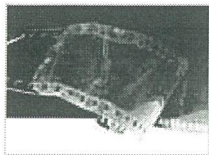
THE FILM ARCHIVE PRESENTS



1896

1898

First film

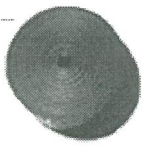


Picking Up the Pieces

At the end of 1993, a small piece of film was deposited with the Film Archive. While being accessioned, it was realised that the contents demanded a closer look. Could it be early New Zealand footage?

What's All This Then?

When the film that came to be called *The Departure of the Second Contingent for the Boer War* was first deposited, it was unclear exactly what the film actually depicted. At first, it wasn't even certain that the film was from New Zealand. However, the film was so old that, even if it turned out to be a foreign film, it had to be important to someone.



A Volatile Subject

Despite its popularity, nitrate film has always been chemically unstable. Not only does it decompose easily under adverse conditions, but it is also highly flammable.

The First Picture Show New Zealand History Gets Moving

1 | 2 | 3 | 4

The Departure of the Second Contingent for the Boer War is the oldest New Zealand film in the Film Archive's collection. It depicts a parade of young New Zealand soldiers on the eve of their departure to fight alongside their British countrymen in the South African Boer War. The fact that such an event was recorded at the time is remarkable enough, but the story of how the fragile footage survived, was identified and lovingly restored by the Film Archive's team of conservators and historians is testament to the important role that film plays in defining our culture and heritage.

The early days of film

Through the last decade of the nineteenth century, many developments spurred the growth of moving pictures. In Europe and the United States, inventors and scientists worked, often with surprising similarity, to create a viable moving picture system that would capture an image and allow it to be seen by an audience. By 1900, moving pictures were being filmed and shown all over the world, including in New Zealand.

Of the earliest filmmakers, three are most well-known: Thomas Edison, and the Lumiere brothers, Auguste and Louis. Working on different continents, these men were very influential in making pictures move.

In the United States, in 1891, Thomas Edison patented a camera he called the Kinetograph, and the Kinetoscope, a machine that the viewer

could look into to watch short moving pictures.

In 1893 and 1894, using the Kinetograph, Edison filmed well-known performers and sports figures in his New Jersey studio. Often less than 60 seconds long, these early

Still photography in the nineteenth century used single plates for capturing an image. Early moving image machines, such as the Zoetrope and the Praxinoscope, used these still photographs (as well as drawings) to create the illusion of movement. These machines worked by flicking a series of pictures quickly past the eyes of the viewer, producing short sequences that could be watched through a viewing apparatus. These systems were limited, however, by the fact that only one person at a time could watch.

THE FIRST PICTURE SHOW

>> 1981

>> John O'Shea & Pacific Films

Watch Now



See the fully restored Boer War Departure film

Requires QuickTime 5

The Film Archive Reference Catalogue

Listed below is a small sample of the Film Archive's extensive collection of resource material relating to New Zealand's film history and cultural heritage.

If you would like to view these items, or learn more about this topic, please Contact Us.

Related Film & Video

[The Departure of the Second Contingent for the Boer War](#)

[Boer War Veterans Parade, 1948](#)

[Royal Visit of the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York to New Zealand, 1901](#)

[Work Horse to Dream Horse: The Story of the New Zealand Horse, 2001](#)

Related Books

[Kiwi Versus Boer](#)

[Scars on the Heart](#)

[To Fight for the Empire](#)

3rd

