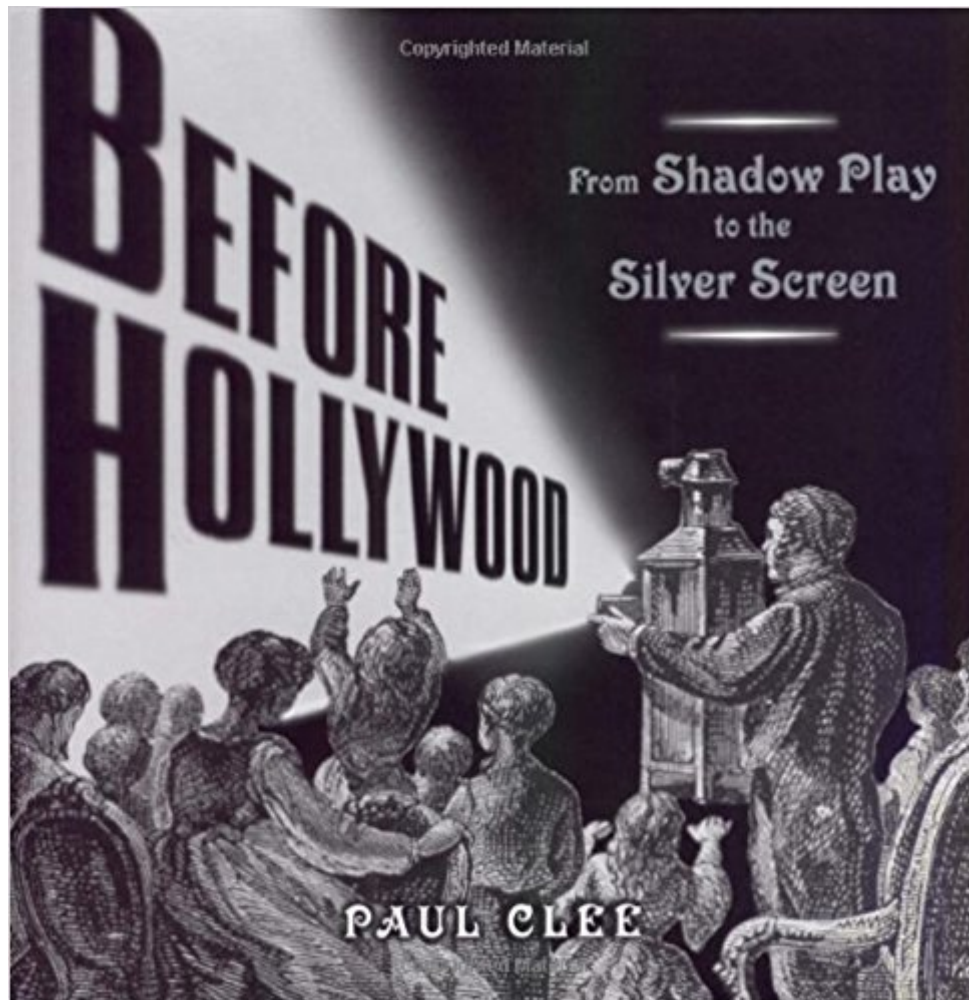




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# Before Hollywood: From Shadow Play To The Silver Screen



## Synopsis

Illustrated with black-and-white archival prints, drawings, and photographs From the simple camera obscura of the 1500s to the 17th century's giant magic lanterns to the early films of Thomas Edison and the Lumiere brothers in the late 1800s, here is an intriguing story of invention and showmanship. Many of the techniques adopted by Hollywood were worked out by tinkerers, lanternists, and magicians in front of shocked and amazed audiences long before the first flickering black-and-white film was ever shown. This fascinating book explains how today's movies—as well as photographs, special effects, and animation—came to be. Peppared with first-hand accounts and newspaper reports, excerpts from the notes of early inventors and filmmakers, and descriptions and diagrams of detailed optical gadgets, *Before Hollywood* provides a window into the world of entertainment before movies were invented. It offers an illustrated tour of the beginnings of technologies that we take for granted today. Sidebars, afterword, timeline, endnotes, bibliography, Internet resources, and index.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Grade 6 Up -In this fascinating account of the inventions and practices through time that led to modern film, Clee offers vivid descriptions of the key players from Giovanni Battista della Porta to Thomas Edison and their influences on the history of imaging from the 16th century to the silver screen. The story is complemented with trivia; biographical facts; and grayscale images of diagrams, film posters, photographs, and sketches, though the illustrations seem surprisingly few for a piece describing the history of playing with light, lenses, and projection. By demonstrating how

early project kaleidoscopes and lighting and lenses combined to create original microscopes, Clee makes certain that readers understand that modern photography and filmmaking are rooted in both science and art.-Jodi Kearns, University of Akron, OH Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

"Lively chronicle of...creative ferment...this entertaining historical panorama will absorb both casual viewers and serious young students." KIRKUS, starred Kirkus Reviews, Starred"...A rich lode of end materials for further research...photos and reproductions abound." THE BULLETIN Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books"The history of visual entertainment...is meticulously detailed, painstakingly documented, and clearly laid out chronologically." THE HORN BOOK Horn Book

For a lot of people, pre-film visual entertainments hold a nominal appeal. They're fun to look at and play with for a few minutes, but they can't command the attention like, say, a game where you crush candy on your cellphone by spamming the # symbol, or whatever it is the kids are doing these days. For a smaller, perhaps luckier group, the old technologies- the camera obscura, puppet theaters, magical lantern slides- continue to exert a dreamy fascination. If you're one of these people, this book is for you."Before Hollywood" takes the reader on a sumptuously-illustrated tour, from the days when science and magic were comfortable handmaidens and children could be amused by projected still images and shadow forms, up to about the time at the beginning of the modern era, where several individuals claimed a partial stake in the invention of the motion picture. The book does a good job of showing how history sometimes does a mean retconning on certain dreamers and scientists who don't get the credit they deserve (one Emile Reynaud is a truly tragic figure) while others are lavished with perhaps a bit more praise than they deserve (it would be unseemly to name names).The book concludes around the time that the bare bones of a film grammar emerged, with the likes of the Lumi re Brothers firing their rocket into the eye of the Moon, and a gunslinger firing from the screen's canvas into the ranks of a distraught crowd, courtesy of Edison Studios. It's not taxing, revelatory history for the most part, but Clee's book provides ample and beautiful photos and illustrations (a definite must for the subject at hand) and regardless of how much you know about the subject, you're bound to come away entertained, if not a bit enriched by the journey. Recommended.

An invaluable book if you're a film buff. Here is essentially the birth and origin of hollywood as we know it today.

Very good introduction to early film and pre film history. The text hits all the important historical events and puts them in a very concise and easy to absorb order. The illustrations are excellent and they enhance this study. Perfect book to teach a class of younger students who really need to know more about how films at the superplex came about.

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