

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

A Global Province?

**The Development of a Movie Culture in a
Small Provincial City 1919-1945**

Pauline Knuckey

2012

A Global Province?

The Development of a Movie Culture in a Small
Provincial City 1919-1945

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the Degree of Master of Arts in History at Massey University

Pauline Knuckey

2012

Acknowledgements

While the writing of a thesis involves many hours of solitary activity, it cannot be done without the help and support of others. My thanks go first and foremost to my supervisors, Associate Professor James Watson and Dr John Griffiths, who have provided extremely valuable support, encouragement, and comment, and have ensured I have kept steadily working toward the end goal.

To the staff of and services provided by Massey University Library, Palmerston North City Library, Alexander Turnbull Library, Ian Matheson City Archives and the New Zealand Film Archives, I give my appreciative thanks. To Sara McKinley at the Muncie Public Library in Indiana, many thanks for the time you took in helping a stranger, half way around the world. To those who gave up their time and invited me into their homes to share their movie-going memories, I hope I have done your memories justice.

To my colleague and fellow researcher, John Annabell, I give my thanks for his interest in my project and for our many enjoyable discussions that provided focus and a renewed commitment to the task at hand.

To my parents Shirley and Trevor, I give heartfelt thanks for their early encouragement of my passion for reading and their words of support throughout this project. To my partner Craig, who calmly fixed any computer or software crisis, and who never complained when I turned down suggestions to actually attend a movie, because I was too busy writing about them. This thesis is dedicated to the three of you.

Contents

Acknowledgements		i.
Contents		ii.
Figures		iii.
Tables		iv.
Introduction		1
Chapter One	The Importance of Movies	12
Chapter Two	Buildings	38
Chapter Three	Cinema Control and Film Distribution	63
Chapter Four	The Films	86
Chapter Five	An Escape Hatch into Another World	105
Chapter Six	Criticism	121
Conclusion		143
Bibliography		147

Figures

Figure 1.1	'Give-away' Chevrolet Car outside Hoosier Theatre	19
Figure 1.2	Kosy Tearooms, Palmerston North, c. 1936-7	22
Figure 1.3	Liberty Theatre, Muncie, Indiana, 1944	22
Figure 1.4	George Formby in <i>New Zealand Listener</i> advertisement	30
Figure 1.5	George Formby in United Kingdom cigarette card series	31
Figure 2.1	Opera House, Palmerston North, 1905	42
Figure 2.2	His Majesty's Theatre, Palmerston North, c. 1937	50
Figure 2.3	Manawatu Stables, Palmerston North, c. 1912	51
Figure 2.4	Palace Theatre, Palmerston North, c. 1915	51
Figure 2.5	Regent Theatre, Brisbane, c 1955	53
Figure 2.6	Regent Theatre, Palmerston North	54
Figure 2.7	Meteor Theatre, Palmerston North, c 1937	57
Figure 2.8	Wake Theatre, Raleigh, North Carolina, c 1940	57
Figure 4.1	Mickey Mouse Popular in Palmerston North	93
Figure 5.1	The Rivoli Theatre, Muncie, Indiana, 1941	119

Tables

Table 1.1	Palmerston North Theatres from 1911-1964	35
Table 2.1	Palmerston North Theatres Operating In Sample Years	58
Table 3.1	Cinematograph, Bioscope, and Kinetoscope Film Imports to New Zealand	76
Table 3.2	Percentage of Feature Films Exhibited in Palmerston North According to Country of Production	77
Table 3.3	Feature Films Released in NZ Showing Country of Origin	84
Table 4.1	Top Movie Genres in Palmerston North	95