

You'd Better Get Ready to—

Move Over, Hollywood

By John Wagoner

Move over, Hollywood. The Okies are edging in on your territory. Celluloid flickers bearing "made in Oklahoma" tag are currently showing, and more are on the way.

The Sooner productions don't feature Betty Grable's gams, but they do show some comely co-eds. And if it's travelogues you like—well, there are reels on Oklahoma's forests, lakes and parks.

Ned Hockman, '49bs, 28-year-old war veteran, is the man behind the camera pointed at Oklahoma subjects. His official title is University of Oklahoma motion picture producer.

With headquarters located on the University's north campus, Hockman has been producing movies for the University since February, 1949. His staff now includes a script writer and two cameramen. But when the motion picture unit was launched, he directed, wrote script and did the photography.

The unit's sound stage looks like Hollywood in miniature. All the trappings of the movie industry are there. But they are, Hockman says, the plain, simple variety. A tall tower, used to support lights, rises toward the ceiling of the auditorium. Nearby are the 16mm movie cameras and sound equipment. A large boom, which looks like a metal fishing pole on a tripod, supports a microphone which swings out of the camera's range.

The stage can be changed quickly from a living room to a classroom or business office. However, most of the unit's films have been produced outside the sound stage.

The cameraman followed O.U.'s Big Red football team to every game last year. They often are called upon to film such events as a homecoming parade or to shoot special formations of the University band. And besides producing films for the University last year, the unit took to the state's tall timber and lake areas to shoot four movies for the Oklahoma Planning and Resources Board.

Filmed in color, the Planning Board movies are titled: "Lakes of Oklahoma," "Oklahoma Industries," "Oklahoma Forestry," and "Lake Murray." The movies were produced under contract last summer, a period in which Hockman says his unit "did almost a year's production work in three months." Recently these state films were shown on a national television network.

Producer Hockman, a man of medium build who looks at you intently through plastic-rimmed glasses, learned movie production the hard way. In fact, he came near to having no post-war career.

He left the University of Oklahoma in 1942 to enlist in the Army Air Corps. He got what he wanted—assignment to a combat motion picture unit. An announcer and script writer for university radio station WNAD before enlisting, Hockman was shuttled off to California for motion picture training.

"There I was—a little man from Oklahoma right in the middle of the famous Hal Roach studios," Hockman recalls. He studied movie making in the division of the studio which had been converted into the First Motion Picture Unit of the Air Corps.

Two and a half years of shooting combat film in the China-Burma-India theatre followed Hockman's California training. He flew the Hump with his movie camera, exposed film on Ledo-Burma Road, and covered the Wingate-Cochran long-range glider penetration of Burma. Once he was gone so long on an assignment that his buddies presumed he had stopped a Jap bullet. When he finally made it back to his billet, he discovered they had divided his clothing among themselves.

He got more clothes. And he also picked up a combat commission which raised his rank from staff sergeant to second lieutenant.

After VJ Day, Hockman returned to the University to finish a degree in education. He was working as a part-time technician in the University photography service when the idea for a motion picture unit popped up. James H. Bragg, '36ms, director of the O.U. photography service, and Hockman filmed a 16mm reel on Boys State which was held at the University in the summer of 1946.

"We thought we should show the University what we could do before we asked for money for a motion picture unit," Hockman explains. The national chapter of Boys State liked the film so well that they bought ten copies to be shown to high-school and civic groups.

Hockman got his degree in February, 1949, and the University officially launched the motion pic-

ture unit, naming him as director. Operating on a shoe-string budget, the unit became a part of the extension division of the University.

"We are organized so we have to make films with the necessary instructional quality demanded by the present day audio-visual aid field," Hockman explains. As a part of the University, the unit is able to draw information from professors who are authorities in different fields. And since the unit welcomes the opportunity to make films for non-profit organizations, its work isn't limited to university subjects.

Economy-minded Hollywood producers probably would lift a wondering eyebrow if they heard 10-minute color movies with sound are being produced for \$2,500. But that's what the O.U. unit is doing. Bragg, who handles the financial end of the operation, explains that the University would have to pay a contract price of around \$6,000 to have its films made by commercial companies.

"Our university-produced movies are inexpensive because our equipment is reduced to simplicity, and we don't have overhead like commercial companies," Hockman explains. Striving for quality rather than quantity, the department has set up a schedule which calls for the production of four movies a year.

A Sooner-produced movie begins with Hockman and Dwight Swain, script writer, talking over the



On the University sound stage at North Campus, Producer Hockman raises his arm and points toward the actors. That's the signal for action. Dwight Swain holds a clap board which identifies the scene being shot. John Freeman follows the action with a 16mm camera.



O.U.'s motion picture production unit prepares to film a scene for an all-university movie. John Freeman mans the camera at left while Dwight Swain holds the script. Producer Ned Hockman, '49bs, gives some acting directions to Dr. Thurman White, '41ms, director of the University extension division.

subject of a film with the group which wishes to have a movie produced. Dwight takes notes, does some research, and produces a story treatment script. After the story script is OK'd by the client, Dwight goes into a huddle with his typewriter and produces a sequence outline which is the basis for the movie.

Dwight divides his time between the school of

journalism where he's working on a master's degree and the small off-stage office where he writes movie scripts. Sometimes he has real problems.

He's now learning about the "Ph factor" in chemistry. Explanation of the factor is so involved that chemistry professors thought they needed a movie to explain it. The film unit agreed to produce the movie which will be made available to

schools over the nation.

"I'm not a chemist, but after the conferences I've had with chemistry professors I am beginning to feel like one," Dwight quipped. A successful magazine writer, Dwight actually has a scientific background of sorts. He's been publishing science fiction stories for several years. Aside from his magazine experience he's been on the staffs of several newspapers.

When Dwight has the script in order, Hockman organizes a shooting schedule. Then cameraman John Freeman, a senior majoring in physics, and James 'Bud' Elder, another journalism student and part-time producer's assistant, join forces with the script writer and producer. The cameras are started and another Sooner production is on the way.

A recent production of the unit is "Introduction to The Airplane." Filmed at the University's airport, the movie introduces pre-flight students to the airplane's working parts. Another University production is "Your Next Step," which is shown to highschool students who plan to enrol in college for the first time. "It introduces the student to the University and answers a lot of questions which highschool seniors have about college life," Hockman says.

All but one of the movies made by the unit have been filmed in color.

Actual developing and printing of the movies is done in Kansas City and Chicago. A "work print" is returned to Norman, where Hockman and assistants cut and edit the film. After sound is recorded, the edited film and sound track go back to Kansas City to be printed.

What happens to the films when they are finished? If they have been produced for an outside group, the movies are shown and distributed by the client. If they are educational movies produced for the University, they are sent to the audio-visual library of the University's extension division. There they are available to schools all over the nation.

Wherever they are shown, the celluloid flickers bear a "University of Oklahoma Production" tag.

DEVELOPMENT FUND

Nothing Very Complicated

A blueprint for Alumni Development Fund future programs is in full operation in Oklahoma City. There's nothing very complicated about the drive itself. Alumni solicitors are armed with pamphlets and reasons why a state operated institution needs dollars from alumni and friends to better carrying on the purpose of the University.

The sheer mechanics of the drive have been well oiled and each part has begun to mesh in the first major personal solicitation campaign the Development Fund has yet attempted.

In early October, Alumni counselors from every area in the United States gathered at the University to hear plans and projects for the Fund. Ben Head, '42bus, '48Law, counselor for the Oklahoma City area was on hand and there's a beginning of the plan. Head heard the proposals and kept in con-



Oklahoma City Alumni Fund planners are shown with Dr. George L. Cross. They are Dwight Mitchell, Jr., '43ba, Dr. Cross, Fred Barbee, '46ba, S. E. Floren, '41ba, '47Law, Leo Thompson, '45ba, '47 Law, T. Ray Phillips, '35 ba, and David Bridges, '39fa.

