

Edgar and the Teacher's Pet

US : 1920 : dir. : Goldwyn Silent : ? min
 prod: : scr: Booth Tarkington : dir.ph.:
Johnny Jones; Buddy Messinger; Lucille Ricksen
 Adult cast unknown

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω □ € Z ⚡	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
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Phrenology on the curriculum in the 1920s. Buddy Messinger has his head examined while Edgar (Johnny Jones) suggests radical invasive surgery. Lucille Ricksen looks on from the left. Source: The Silents Majority website

The Moving Picture Boy entry on Jones:

"Charles Edward Peil, a vigorous, keep-fit boy with rather bulging blue-grey eyes, was the son of actors. His father, Edward J Peil (1888-1958), was a beefy and often menacing stalwart of thrillers and Westerns - he played, for instance, "Evil Eye" in D.W. Griffith's "BROKEN BLOSSOMS" - while his mother, Etta Raynor, was a more graceful performer.

Though young Charlie had graced the board at six months, and been in films with Constance Talmadge (several times) and Mary Pickford (once), besides non-starring roles with the Franklin Kiddies, his identity was kept a strict secret - presumably in the interests of "real, typical American boy-next door quality" - when he was chosen to play **Edgar**, hero of some stories written specially for Goldwyn by Booth Tarkington of "Penrod" fame. (Author, also,

incidentally, in 1918, of "The Magnificent Ambersons".)

Edgar is very much a rehash of **Penrod** – the good bad boy with an over-lively imagination – and Charles Peil became plain Johnny Jones for the duration of these twelve two-reelers and some time after. (Confusingly, Edgar's kid brother Charlie was played by Charlie's kid sister Virginia.)

Changing his screen name to Edward Peil Jr, Charles/Johnny remained in movies till the 1930s."

The Silents Majority website note on Lucille Ricksen:

"Lucille Ricksen (1907-1925) was well on her way to a promising career when she contracted tuberculosis and died at the age of 17."

- Diane MacIntyre

The Moving Picture Boy entry on Buddy Messinger:

"Melvin Joe Messinger was a great bruiser of a boy, inclining to fat though not in the Arbuckle or Joe Cobb class. He and his comelier sister Gertie sprang to fame around their ninth year in the Kiddie Comedies which the Franklin Brothers, Chester and Sidney, turned out for Fox between 1915 and 1918. These delightfully robust romances, with the children taking adult parts and the larger girls sometimes donning moustaches and playing dashing gentlemen, had very much the air of end-of-term school entertainments and often used the traditional pantomime stories.

While Gertie – who had a delicious sense of comedy – played heroines or floozies, her big brother was naturally cut out for bullying or

villainous roles. (Though when they needed a Giant, for "**JACK AND THE BEANSTALK**", the Franklins engaged an enormous adult, Jim Tavers, to make the children look even tinier by comparison.) Buddy could be superbly malevolent, or just touchingly thick. He would have enjoyed playing Long John Silver in the 1917 "**TREASURE ISLAND**", but the part went to barnstorming Violet Radcliffe! After the Franklin series ended, he remained in great demand, and was seen as the hulking bane of Johnny Jones in the **Edgar** comedies and of Ben Alexander in "**PENROD AND SAM**".

His teenage role in "**TRIFLING WITH HONOR**" was a juicy one, and in 1924 he himself became the star of a series of comedy shorts with titles like "**BOYHOOD DAYS**", "**SUNNY GYM**" and "**BUDDY AT THE BAT**". Though he gradually ceased to be a household name, he remained a valuable Hollywood heavy and kept his career going for another twenty years. He also toured in Vaudeville as a pianist-comedian."

[no listing in "Classics of the Silent Screen", "Hollywood in the Twenties", "A Pictorial History of the Silent Screen", "Silent Movies: A Picture Quiz Book", "Halliwell's Film Guide", "Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 2001", ""The Critics' Film Guide", "The Good Film and Video Guide", "Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "Speelfilm Encyclopedie", "The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television", "The Time Out Film Guide", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993", "Video Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

No further information currently available.

The twelve films in “**The Adventures and Emotions of Edgar Pomeroy**” were as follows:

1920	:	EDGAR AND THE TEACHER’S PET
	:	EDGAR’S HAMLET
	:	EDGAR’S JONAH DAY
	:	EDGAR TAKES THE CAKE
	:	EDGAR’S SUNDAY COURTSHIP
	:	EDGAR CAMPS OUT
	:	EDGAR’S LITTLE SAW
	:	GET-RICH-QUICK EDGAR
1921	:	EDGAR THE EXPLORER
	:	EDGAR’S COUNTRY COUSIN
	:	EDGAR’S FEAST DAY
	:	EDGAR THE DETECTIVE

Author Booth Tarkington, now cast into the limbo of “politically incorrect” past writers, was frequently adapted in the silent cinema. His evocations of deep South boyhood resonated well with studios and audiences, and contributed perhaps as much as the writings of Twain to the mythology of the free-spirited outdoors boy, an engine of devilment, enterprise and invention. Tarkington’s “Penrod” was very likely the model for Richmal Crompton’s English counterpart “Just William”. Glancing through the stills from this series we can see that Edgar, like “Tom Sawyer”, had his Becky Thatcher in the shape of Lucille Ricksen, and his detested Cousin Sid in the shape of Buddy Messinger. Another regular in the series, so Holmstrom tells us, was Edouard Trebaol, 15 in 1920, but I have no stills of him to identify him by.

Johnny Jones was 12 in 1920. He was seen earlier in “**THE WALLS OF JERICO**” (18), “**SALOMY JANE**” (19) AND “**THE SHEPHERD OF THE HILLS**” (19), and among his films after this series were “**THE OLD NEST**” (21, with Buddy Messinger again) and “**BROADCASTING NIGHT LIFE IN HOLLYWOOD**” (22). Messinger, also 12, and elder brother of Gertrude, was more prolific yet. See, for example, “**THE STREET URCHIN**” (16), “**ALADDIN AND HIS WONDERFUL LAMP**” (17, where Gertrude seems to have played Aladdin), “**TWO LITTLE IMPS DOING THEIR BIT**” (17), “**THE OLD SWIMMIN’ HOLE**” (21) and “**PENROD AND SAM**” (23, with Ben Alexander in the lead). Lucille Ricksen, so far as one can tell from these stills, was a more spirited character than most Becky Thatchers. Here 13, she died tragically young.

Many other child players 1910-25 were given their own similar series of short programme fillers. See subject index under **SILENT SERIES** (as distinct from serials or sequels) for details of these, and under **COMEDY, SCHOOL, SILENT CINEMA** and **BOOTH TARKINGTON**.