

Our Children

US : 1913 : dir. : Keystone Silent : ? min
 prod: Mack Senate ? : scr: : dir.ph.:
[Paul Jacobs; Gordon Griffith](#)
 Adult cast unknown

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω □ € Z ♀	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
5513	1	1	0	524	- - - - -	No	Unseen

The Moving Picture Boy entry on Jacobs:

"When he was seven months old, his parents moved to Los Angeles, settling determinedly next to a movie studio. From 1913 he played for Keystone (with Gordon Griffith), Universal (the **Sterling Kid Comedies**, with Olive Johnson and tough-guy Violet Radcliffe) and, from 1915, with the Franklin child troupe. After a while he became better known (and usually billed) as Billy Jacobs, from his much-loved characterisation as "Little Billy" in many comedies of 1914.

Paul was largely trained by the comedian Ford Sterling, who often starred with him for Keystone. He was small for his age, and at four passed for two, a fiction encouraged by his promoters.

A chubby child with golden curls and an "irresistible smile", he was not without artistic pretensions, insisting on cameras turning even while he rehearsed at Keystone. But the public regarded him as "the best little scream ever", and lapped up his jolly pranks:

"Billy smiled his 'Billy grin'
 When he spied the jelly tin..."

He had reason to smile. By 1916, Paul/Billy had joined Lasky and was earning \$10,000 a year. He had purchased his own car, and paid a chauffeur out of his salary to drive him to work in it. The chauffeur's memoirs would have made rich reading."

[no listing in "Classics of the Silent Screen", "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. 1913 was Jacobs' debut year. He was three. Holmstrom lists 47 titles for him over the next five years, but this was among the first. The only stills we have of him show a pugnacious, squat toddler few today would find "irresistible". In 1914 he was in "**KID AUTO RACES AT VENICE**", which introduced to the film world one Charles Chaplin, but he also enchanted us in "**BILLY DODGES BILLS**" (13), "**TEDDY TETZLAFF AND EARL COOPER – SPEED KINGS**" (13), "**THOSE COUNTRY KIDS**" (14), "**LIZZIE'S WATERY GRAVE**" (15) and "**AMBROSE'S CUP OF WOE**" (16). What became of him in later life we do not know. Gordon Griffith (in 1918 the screen's first Tarzan – as a boy) also debuted this year. Gordon was 6, and made a number of the "**Little Billy**" shorts in 1914, but went on to more significant roles, not least in a 1919 tract against the evils of masturbation during puberty – "**THE SOLITARY SIN**" !

See subject index under **COMEDY** and **SILENT CINEMA**.

