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1952

WILLIAM FOX DIES; PIONEER IN MOVIES

Former Head of \$300,000,000
Motion-Picture Empire Lost
Hold in Market Crash

STARTED FILM FIRM IN 1915

'Seventh Heaven' and 'What
Price Glory' His Early Hits
—Also Set Up Newsreel

May 8-1952

William Fox, who once controlled a \$300,000,000 motion-picture empire, died yesterday at Doctors Hospital, where he had been under treatment for a heart ailment and other complications for fourteen months. His age was 73.

One of the pioneers in his field, Mr. Fox was producing movies of a comparatively large scale in his eastern studios when Hollywood was in its cinematic infancy. His early stars included Theda Bara and Annette Kellerman, while among his better known productions were "What Price Glory" and "Seventh Heaven."



Associated Press, 1941

WILLIAM FOX

Fodor Mándor : Kalandok
a Sing Sing fegyházaiban stb
Pécs, Tolnai — 127 p

Wm fox P 47-57

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His empire, however, crumbled after the 1929 stock market crash and there was little left but ruins when his creditors completed years of law suits. Until his illness, he had been living with his wife, the former Eva Leo, at their home in Woodmere, L. I.

Beside his widow, Mr. Fox is survived by three sisters, Mrs. William Fried, Mrs. Herman Livingston and Miss Malvina Dunn Fox; two brothers, Aaron and Maurice, and two daughters, Belle and Mona.

Began With \$1,666

From an unassuming start, William Fox in the first quarter of this century, made himself one of the outstanding leaders of the motion-picture business. He was the owner or controller of hundreds of theatres, a major producer, owner of a newsreel organization, possessor of a private fortune estimated as high as \$35,000,000, and a generous philanthropist — all this he built upon an original investment of \$1,666.66.

In 1930, however, the vast motion-picture empire he created fell into the hands of the banks under circumstances dramatically recounted by Mr. Fox before a Senate Committee in Washington three years later.

In the ensuing years he was constantly in and out of courtrooms in connection with involved bankruptcy proceedings, until Oct. 20, 1941, when he was sentenced to a year and day in jail and fined \$3,000 on charges of conspiring to obstruct justice and defraud the United States in connection with these bankruptcy matters.

Born in Tulchva, Hungary, on Jan. 1, 1879, William Fox was brought to the United States by his parents when he was quite young. He had talked of theatrical ambitions while still a teen-ager, but began earning his livelihood in textiles.

At the turn of the century he entered the arcade and nickelodeon business and became a member of the exhibition firm of Fox, Moss & Brill. This association led to the establishment by Mr. Fox of a film exchange, the Greater New York Film Rental Company. In 1913, he organized the Box Office Attractions Company to rent films both to his own theatres and to those owned by others.

Turned to Producing

With a chain of theatres and a booking-office establishment, Mr. Fox then decided to add to his activities the role of a producer. He rented a studio at Fort Lee, N. J., and the first picture produced was "Life's Shop Window." It was a success.

The Fox Film Corporation, which was to become an industry leader in later years, was formed in 1915. Four years later, he began construction of the studio on Tenth Avenue in which scores of pictures were produced. In 1917, with the shift of production from the East to the West Coast, Fox Films moved into its Sunset Studio in Hollywood.



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In 1926, when sound came to the industry, Fox films used to pioneering efforts of Theodore Case and Earl I. Sponable, who invented Movietone, a sound-on-film process. Three years later, there started a series of reorganizations and financial deals and involvements, most important of which was the purchase by Fox Films of control of Loew's, Inc., for approximately \$44,000,000. By order of the Government, the Fox company's ownership of Loew's was later dissolved and various banking interests acquired control of that stock.

Mr. Fox's connections with the company were discontinued during these reorganizations. In 1935, the Fox Film Corporation was merged with a major producing organization, Twentieth Century Pictures, and the company assumed its present corporate name, Twentieth Century-Fox.

In the spring of 1930, Mr. Fox sold for a reported \$18,000,000 his controlling interest in the vast Fox motion-picture production, distribution and theatre holdings here and abroad.

In 1944, he sought again to re-enter the film field in which he had played such an important role in an earlier period, but without any apparent success. Four years later, he offered as a public service a documentary film on the Sister Kenny concept of polio. The film was shown at Town Hall.

