

LYMAN H. HOWE

“From headquarters in Wilkes-Barre, Howe’s six touring shows introduced motion pictures to rural Americans. Pioneer exhibitor of “high class” film programs with coordinated sound. Filmed world & local events, including Pres. Theodore Roosevelt’s visit here in 1905.”

Lyman Howe (1856-1919) hit the road in the early 1870s as a traveling salesman and worked for the Central Railroad of New Jersey, and then he became a traveling showman, first exhibiting a miniature working coal mine, then presenting “concerts” using an Edison phonograph machine. On Dec. 4, 1896, he premiered in his native Wilkes-Barre the motion picture projector, the Animotoscope, he had built. The Animotoscope allowed Mr. Howe to add films to his concert presentations. He eventually stopped exhibiting, creating road companies to present his shows. Unlike Nickelodeon presentations, Mr. Howe’s “high class” programs showed newsworthy events like the Olympic Games and the wedding of King Alphonse of Spain, and played opera houses, theaters and meeting halls, which played a circuit across the East and Midwest. Mr. Howe also started making his own films in 1901.

— Source: State of PA Historical Signs