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Screening ‘Good Neighbors’: The Educational Uses of Julien Bryan’s Latin American Shorts Along the US Circuits of 16mm, 1940–1947

Abstract

From 1941–1945, the educational filmmaker and travel-film lecturer Julien Bryan (1899–1974) produced 23 documentary shorts on Latin American ‘Good Neighbors’ for Nelson Rockefeller’s Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, which distributed them widely across US sites of formal and informal learning during World War II. Although cultural historians in the past twenty years have provided considerable insight into the production mandates of Julien Bryan’s films and their alignment with soft power discourse, the distribution and exhibition history of these shorts remains underexamined. This essay describes my research on this history in its intersection with the longer US history of US non-commercial, and specifically educational, film. Looking at digital governmental and local newspaper archives, non-commercial trade and amateur film magazines, educational film journals and curricula and Julien Bryan’s personal archive at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, I trace the travels of these shorts along the circuits of wartime 16mm, examining their appropriation by social studies teachers, Spanish language instructors, art historians, and African American and Latinx activists at universities as sources of Latin American knowledge along a spectrum of ideological perspectives on Pan-Hemispheric relations and ‘Good Neighbor’ understanding.

Keywords

Julien Bryan; CIAA Motion Picture Division; New Cinema History; educational film history; the travel lecture film circuit

On the first Saturday in February of 1941, the educational documentary producer Julien Bryan screened his new footage on Brazil at the White House. ‘The possibilities for production and interchange of goods appeared before us and our opportunities for better cultural relations were made evident by the pictures,’ Eleanor Roosevelt wrote in her syndicated column “My Day” two days later. Juxtaposed with Bryan’s images of transport, industry and hard-working farmers (Figure 1), however, was the

Figure 1. Julien Bryan, still from OCIAA footage on Brazil, Educational Screen (September, 1942).

filmmaker's shocking evidence on Brazil's Nazi presence: 'It is easy to see,' Roosevelt continued, 'that Germany has put more thought and money into her relationship with Brazil, at least, than we have.'¹

Bryan's screening at the White House was a showcase for Nelson Rockefeller's new wartime information agency, the Office of the Coordinator of Commercial and Cultural Relations between the American Republics, harnessed in 1940 to the Good Neighbor Policy to stem the rising Nazi tide in Latin America and strengthen hemispheric political and economic arrangements.² Julien Bryan, who was a prominent travel film lecturer and producer of war documentaries, including *Inside Nazi Germany* (March of Time, 1937) and *Siege* (Pathé, 1939), had just contracted with Rockefeller's agency in 1940 to produce a series of educational shorts on Latin America for distribution in the United States. Using footage Bryan and co-workers Kenneth Richter, Jules Bucher and Miriam Bucher took in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Peru and Venezuela from 1940-1942, the OCIAA produced

the film compilations *Americans All* (dir. Bryan, 1941) and *Schools to the South* (dir. Irving Lerner, 1942) and *Good Neighbor Family* (Bryan, 1942) and shorts on discrete countries *Argentine Primer* (Bryan, 1942), *Colombia: Crossroads of the Americas* (Bryan, 1942) and *Venezuela Moves Ahead* (Bryan, 1942) (see Figures 2-4).³ In 1943, Bryan renewed his contract with Rockefeller's agency, which had been renamed the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (OCIAA). By the end of the war, Bryan had produced 23 shorts about the democratic and industrial nations of Latin America for the agency, which the OCIAA distributed widely across the US.⁴

When Eleanor Roosevelt praised Julien Bryan for revealing the movement of both goods and Nazis in Brazil, she revealed the high stakes of the OCIAA's investment in his films. Thanks to the 'cultural turn' in the humanities and social sciences, the meaning of these stakes in the context of the agency's larger cultural production of film and other media has received considerable scholarly attention in the last twenty years.⁵ Cultural historians of the OCIAA have revived interest in the filmmaker and the films of Julien Bryan, whose work (which was neither politically radical nor formally innovative) has been largely overlooked or marginalised by auteur-based approaches in film history.⁶ Because scholars of the OCIAA have been focused on the agency's larger mandates,

Figure 2. *Americans All* (Julien Bryan, 1941).

Figure 3. Good Neighbor Family (Julien Bryan, 1942).

Figure 4. Colombia: Crossroads of the Americas (Julien Bryan, 1942).

they have tended to take production and text-centric approaches to Bryan's films for the agency, although they have also provided insight on the agency's national distribution directives and the connections between agency personnel and power elites in the 16mm film industry.⁷

This essay builds upon the extant distribution and exhibition history of Julien Bryan's OCIAA films, revealing its intersection with the longer 20th-century US history of non-commercial film – specifically educational film. Drawing on digital archives of government, local historical newspapers, non-commercial trade and amateur film magazines, educational film journals and curricula and Julien Bryan's personal archive at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, I historicise the OCIAA's launching of Julien Bryan's Latin American educational shorts onto older circuits of non-commercial 16mm that the agency operationalised for Pan-Americanist education.⁸ Through the lens of educational 16mm, Julien Bryan's White House screening comes up against another screening Bryan made with his Brazil footage a year later at the Historically Black College (HBC) Hampton Institute in Hampton Roads, Virginia, where students were training to contribute to the US war effort – even as the US military, the state of Virginia and the nation remained deeply segregated. At Hampton, Bryan screened documentary evidence on Brazil's cultural nationalism and multi-racial military, stimulating students' discussion on transnational struggles for race equality. Very differently from the White House screening, then, Bryan's screening of his Brazil footage at Hampton turned on Brazil's leadership of the United States – not the other way around.⁹

These two screenings present very different frames of Pan-Americanism. As I hope to show, this is a difference that is explained not only by the filmmaker's positionality vis-à-vis his audience, but by the particular way that Julien Bryan's shorts were appropriated within US classrooms, lecture halls and at universities like Hampton for academic purposes in the 1940s. Recent calls in the *New Cinema History* have encouraged the use of rigorous comparative perspectives in our research on historical movie going and exhibition.¹⁰ In the spirit of these calls, I trace here the travels of Bryan's shorts along the wartime circuits of 16mm, looking carefully at ways in which educators approached these shorts as sources of learning. The travels of Bryan's shorts meander from a large audiovisual institute at a land-grant university in Indiana to an anthropology museum in Santa Fe, New Mexico, to an East Texas high school in the Jim Crow South, as well as to Hampton's campus in Virginia and the US Office of Education in Washington, D.C., the centre of the OCIAA's curricular projects for K-12 (primary and secondary school) classrooms. In these spaces, Bryan's work was appropriated across a spectrum of ideological distinctions of Pan-Americanism: the ahistorical approach to shared lifeways

across the Americas in 1940s elementary school classrooms; the developmentalist perspective of political and economic ‘Good Neighbors’ in secondary school history teaching; the critical hemispheric approach to racial and class solidarity in Latinx and African American communities.

Although my focus here is on the different educational appropriations of Bryan’s Latin American work for various meanings of Pan-Americanism during the discrete period of World War II from 1940-1945, I am also interested in how these appropriations overlap in their common approach to Bryan’s shorts as *knowledge sources* on Latin America. As I will show, even as social studies teachers evacuated Bryan’s films of their historical and material contexts, teachers of the OCIAA’s Inter-American curricula prioritised ‘Good Neighbor’ developmentalism as a learning objective. When Spanish instructors used his work for teaching Latin American cultural capital, their primary material was Bryan’s documentary evidence on Latin America. In this, educators of mainstream and hegemonic Pan-Americanisms aligned with critical educators, who also came to this evidence as a source of knowledge, albeit one grounded in historical and materialist thinking. Taken together, the myriad educators who used Bryan’s documentary evidence as a source of knowledge forged a pattern of appropriation of the shorts for mid-century social studies and history teaching, which in turn helped to lodge the shorts firmly into the US educational film archive. In my conclusion, I will outline ways in which this pattern of appropriation left the shorts open for further, more broad-based critical appropriations in the civil rights era and the ‘social turn’ of Ethnic Studies and history classrooms in the 1960s and 1970s.¹¹

In the next section, I address the beginnings of Julien Bryan’s career as a 1930s travel-lecture filmmaker that led to his hiring by the OCIAA. In this period, there is evidence of a career-long interest that Bryan held in documenting the mundane, workaday activities of social life. As we will see, this concrete attention to details would become the source of his hiring for the OCIAA’s information campaign. It would also help propel the dynamic process through which teachers and professors across ideological positions would repurpose his Latin American films for the World War II classroom.

‘Human people swarmed the film’: Julien Bryan’s lecture screenings on the 1930s travel film circuit

Julien Hequembourg Bryan was born in Titusville, Pennsylvania, in the last year of the 19th century. He first picked up a photo camera on the French front in 1917, where he volunteered as a medic.¹²

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Original from
 UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Figure 5. Julien Bryan, *Ambulance 464: Encore les blessés* (New York: McMillan, 1918), <http://www.ourstory.info/library/2-ww1/Bryan/464TC.html> (July 9, 2019).

Returning to the United States at his parents' insistence in 1918, the teenager immediately turned the photographs into a lantern slide lecture in his hometown, and published them in his coming-of-age memoir *Ambulance 464: Encore Les Blessés* (1918). In this book, Bryan juxtaposes the modern technology of war and its consequences with concrete details of French daily life, the experience of French people at work, play and worship amidst the ravaged countryside.¹³ The photographs evidence a very early drive in Julien Bryan to document the historical world not as an aesthetic or radical

concern, which was true for other filmmakers of his generation, but as a source for teaching US Americans to be less insular and parochial.

As a student at Princeton University from 1917 to 1921, Julien Bryan took numerous trips abroad, returning each time to screen and lecture on the photographs he taken of local peoples.¹⁴ Although he would not pick up a 35mm camera until 1929, after graduate school stints at Union Theological Seminary and Columbia University and a job as a social worker at the Brooklyn YMCA, it was a watershed moment. From 1930 to 1933, Bryan took three arduous trips to the Soviet Union with writer Maurice Hinds to research and film changes to social life under communism in large swaths of the region.¹⁵ After returning to New York in 1933, he sought the evaluation of experts at the H.E.R. (film production) Laboratory in New York. Bryan reflected later that even though their praise was minimal, it set the course of a lifetime commitment to making the peoples of the world visible on film: ‘They liked my natural, un-posed shots of people. I never looked back.’¹⁶ Julien Bryan would go on to produce over 200 films about world nations and cultures in the course of his lifetime, the footage for many of which Bryan took himself or supervised shooting, as illustrated on the map below, ‘Routes Followed by Julien Bryan’s Film Expeditions’ (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Emmett Edwards Jr., Frances Lee Studios, “Routes Followed by Julien Bryan’s Film Expeditions.” Source: International Film Foundation.

In the decade of the 1930s, Julien Bryan took extensive footage of not only the Soviet Union but also filmed in China, Japan, occupied Manchukuo, Turkey, Nazi Germany, occupied Poland and Finland. Bryan helped to finance these trips by producing the footage in 20 'Teaching Films' for Eastman Kodak; the March of Time also bought some of Bryan's footage for eleven episodes in the eponymous newsreel series.¹⁷ Bryan's production work for Kodak and March of Time established his career path as an educational filmmaker: in the 1940s he went on to produce OCIAA's Latin American shorts and he then found his own production and distribution company the International Film Foundation (IFF) immediately after World War II in 1945.

At the same time that Bryan began producing films for the classroom in the 1930s, he began to pursue a second lifetime career on the US travel-lecture film circuit, a cross-country itinerary of public speakers on foreign travel who supplemented their lectures with films they had typically produced independently. Emerging in the second half of the 19th century on the Lyceum and Chautauqua routes of popular education, public speakers on these circuits began to adopt photography in lantern slide or 'illustrated lectures,' in which the topic of foreign travel quickly became the most popular. In 1897, Burton Holmes (1870-1958), became the first travel lecturer in the US to introduce film to his lectures, which he coined 'travelogues,' and developed a huge following lecturing on places as far-flung as Europe, czarist Russia, Japan, Egypt and South Africa, and as close by as indigenous communities within the continental US. Over the course of his career, Holmes had performed over 8,000 lectures, appearing most frequently in elite cultural venues like Boston Symphony Hall, the Chicago Orchestra Hall, the Brooklyn Academy of Music and Carnegie Hall.¹⁸ In 1933, Julien Bryan launched his career on these prestige sites when Burton Holmes invited the young filmmaker on a joint tour combining their expertise on Russia. From that moment forward, although there is no official record, my research in digitalised historical local newspapers and interviews with Julien Bryan's son Sam suggests that Julien Bryan performed upwards of 1,000 film lectures before he retired from the circuit in 1964, ten years before his death.¹⁹ Bryan typically structured these performances by introducing the film for ten minutes, providing commentary while the film was running and taking questions from the audience at the end.²⁰

On February 29, 1933, the senior and junior travel film lecturers Burton Holmes and Julien Bryan appeared for the first time together in Chicago's Orchestral Hall (Figure 7). Holmes, presenting on 'Russia As It Was,' screened footage from his trip to Czarist Russia in 1901.²¹ Julien Bryan,

Burton Holmes

AT BUSHNELL MEMORIAL HALL
 Thursday, April 20th, at 8:15 P. M.

A JOINT LECTURE
 with MOTION PICTURES

RUSSIA

AS IT WAS—
 By Burton Holmes

AS IT IS—
 By Julien Bryan

? is it true that

millions are starving

all churches are closed

women are nationalized

babies are taken from their mothers

children are regimented

there is no family life

they ill treat their criminals

there is forced labor

their factories are not producing

there is no recreation in Russia

... Mr. Bryan will answer these questions and show the most astounding pictures ever brought out of Soviet Russia by an American.

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TICKETS NOW SELLING 50c-75c-\$1.00 Plus Tax

Figure 7. Daily News, April 2, 1933, p. 116. Source: newspapers.com.

lecturing on ‘Russia As It Is,’ situated audiences in the present, providing insight into 1930s Soviet society through his recent footage on the region.²²

As evident in digitalised historical newspapers, Holmes and Bryan organised this ‘joint lecture’ as a linear account of the ‘vast change effected in Russia between 1900 and the present.’²³ This linear account of historical change depended in no small part on the documentary evidence of their non-fiction film footage.²⁴ Reviews on Bryan’s film revealed the younger filmmaker’s internationalist emphasis on Soviet industrialism, modern buildings, education and recreation. In the context of this study, it is also notable that Bryan engaged his audiences with his documentary attention to social

patterns and processes – the ways that people in other nations performed work, built industry, came together as families, built and tore down their institutions. In December of 1933, a reviewer in *The Christian Science Monitor* noted Bryan's unforced portrayal of historical change in his shots on St. Petersburg workers streaming in and out of the Czars' former residences. '(H)uman people swarmed the film,' the reviewer wrote, 'moved in and out of the famous buildings which they have made their own, and lived before us with almost breath-taking realism.'²⁵ In the following shot from Bryan's Russian footage (Figure 8), it is possible to see how Julien Bryan's travel film lectures on the Soviet Union could convey a sense of 'Russia as it is' as both a current and lived experience:

Figure 8. Julien Bryan, 'Russian Boys,' 1937. Source: International Film Foundation.

Later in the 1930s, Bryan took extensive footage on other world nations experiencing social change and upheaval, including Japan, China, colonial Manchuria, Finland, Turkey, and Nazi Germany and occupied Poland. While debuting his footage on all of these nations on the travel lecture circuit, he also produced the footage as educational shorts for ERPI (Electrical Research Products, Inc., later Encyclopedia Britannica Films) and the March of Time – and the Oscar-nominated documentary short on the fall of Poland, *Siege*, for RKO in 1940.²⁶ Julien Bryan described his experience shooting *Siege* in an essay that documentary filmmaker Lewis Jacobs compiled in the 1971 anthology *The Documentary*

Tradition. In the essay, there are hints of the documentary method that would endure in Bryan's OCIAA documentary shorts, and that would be a source of dynamic appropriation in 1940s classrooms:

(...) here in this Warsaw suburb, one could have used thirty feet of movie film on one refugee family and then moved along. But to me it seemed wiser to spend half a day in the same neighborhood and show not only this family in the pitiful ruins of their home, but also their neighbors, the dogs and the cats, the will to survive, the fear written on their faces, the bedclothes, the food, the ruined little church and the great hospital nearby which they would not have if I went to fifty different localities in Warsaw and in each one took only thirty or forty feet of exciting but unrelated sequences.²⁷

This essay suggests a through-line between Bryan's lanternslides of the 'ordinary (French) landscape,' his 'natural, unposed shots of (the Russian) people' and *Siege*. Bryan's newsreels and shorts, especially *Inside Nazi Germany*, *Siege* and *Manchukuo*, gained both popular and critical acclaim. In the wake of these productions, the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, the information agency on the US' wartime relations with Latin America, hired him as a producer in their film division in 1940. The 23 films on Latin American 'Good Neighbors' that Bryan created for the agency from 1940 to 1943 maintained his consistent documentary interest in social patterns and processes. As we will see, even as his films were harnessed for the OCIAA's soft discourse, the everyday activities of work, play, commerce and industry available in these educational shorts proved to be fairly open texts. In 1940s classrooms and on college campuses, the screening of these films aligned most frequently not with the OCIAA's production mandates, but rather a range of mainstream and critical *educational* discourses on Pan-Hemispheric relations.

'From gaucho picnics ... to debutante balls': Teaching Julien Bryan's films for Pan-Americanism

In January of 1942, two years after Julien Bryan screened his new Brazil film at the White House, Bell & Howell's Filmosound division announced in the Amateur Cinema League (ACL)'s trade magazine *Movie Makers* their distribution of Bryan compilation documentary *Americans All* (1940) (Figure 9).²⁸

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Figure 9. Movie Makers, no. 17 (Jan-Feb 1942).

As I noted in the introduction to this essay, *Americans All* was one of the first films that Bryan produced for the agency when he contracted with them in 1940. Compiling footage from his other productions on Venezuela, Colombia, the Southern Cone and Brazil for the OCIAA, Bryan structured *Americans All* as two parts: a history of Latin America from colonisation to modernisation in the first, followed by a collage of sequences on youth across South America engaging in the modern activities of the family, schooling and socialisation. The promotional shot in *Movie Makers* carries the eye along a diagonal line of smiling Latin American children dressed in white clothing up to their parallel in the white clouds of the landscape (Figure 10).

In the freshness, vigour and organisation of the visual composition, the discursive meaning of *Americans All* is clear: even though colonialism and uneven development have severely challenged Latin America in the past, its modern youth are carrying the regions forward. The shot's caption, 'Latin

Figure 10. Still from Julien Bryan's *Americans All* (1940), *Movie Makers*, no. 17 (Jan-Feb 1942).

American children play games, too,' situates the buoyancy of the shot in the gravity of the film's message: Latin America has modern *institutions* that nurture children's growth and development as modern citizens.²⁹ English teacher Boyd Wolff at the child-centred Dalton School in New York City, reviewing Bryan's short in *The Clearing House: A Journal for Modern Junior and Senior High Schools* in April of 1942, gave voice to this message when he wrote, '*Americans All* does well in accenting the youth of South America – their cultural habits, living conditions, work, play and study; their importance as a resource upon which the present and future of their countries depend.'³⁰

In the last 20 years, Latin American cultural and media studies scholars researching OCIAA media production have located Julien Bryan's *Americans All* and his 22 other shorts for the agency within the soft power discourse of the Good Neighbor Policy.³¹ In the OCIAA's mandate, culture flowed both ways across the Mexican border. Films produced in Latin America, for example, which also included other documentaries and Walt Disney's series of four animated cartoons, poured into the United States to teach US Americans about the commercial and political resources of its southern neighbour. In Hollywood, which had a huge consumer base in Latin America, Rockefeller secured

Latin American advisers to counsel the favourable (albeit stereotypical) representation of Latin Americans in theatrical film. Documentaries about the United States, including the 'Ohio Series' and 'The Bridgeport Plan' that Julien Bryan also made for the OCIAA, headed south to teach Latin Americans about modern US farming, public infrastructure and local rural folkways.³² These parallel flows of film provided audiovisual evidence on the regions' shared political and moral values and similar institutions that vouched for the 'good neighbor' arrangements their states sought at the level of policy. As Eleanor Roosevelt pointed out in her national column I cited at the beginning of this essay, Julien Bryan's material evidence of the Nazi presence in South America confirmed the need for the OCIAA's new and vigorous Pan-Americanism.

As I referenced in the introduction, this expanding historiography on the OCIAA predominantly focuses on the production of Julien Bryan's films. Darlene Sadlier and Pennee Bender have provided significant groundwork for my study in their research on the distribution activities of the OCIAA's domestic wing, the 'Division of Inter-American Activities in the United States' (the Division).³³ As Sadlier and Bender have shown, in April of 1941, the Film Library at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, the Division's East Coast headquarters, assumed the mandate for the domestic distribution of Bryan's shorts and hundreds of other films. The Library arranged for distribution through 187 film depositories, including at 47 universities and the Division's 'Inter-American' regional centres.³⁴ Because they focus on the Division's production and distribution mandates, Sadlier and Bender do not explore the intersections with these mandates with the longer history of 16mm in the US. In my research, this history illuminated the wartime classroom exhibition of Bryan's films in significant ways. As Haidee Wasson has demonstrated, MoMA's Film Library was the most significant of a constellation of US American institutions and associations that arose between the two World Wars to structure 16mm film libraries and depositories into the US social landscape, where they served as nodes lending, swapping, selling and championing 16mm along circuits of 16mm film culture.³⁵

Bell & Howells' Filmosound Library and the Amateur Cinema League, the publisher of *Movie Makers*, were two of the oldest and most successful 16mm libraries in the nation.³⁶ If we look more closely at Filmosound's distribution announcement on *Americans All*, we can see that the Library reminded readers to also consider their '(m)any more films on Latin American subjects.' This was in keeping with the growing presence of Filmosound, which produced the famous lightweight 16mm projector the *Filmo* and its classroom offshoot the *Academy*, in the rising educational film industry of the 1930s.³⁷ As educational film historians have shown, the efforts of The Rockefeller

Foundation, The General Education Board (GEB) and the American Council of Education's Motion Picture Project (MPP) to encourage K-12 teachers' use of 16mm for academic instruction had bolstered exponential growth in audiovisual technology and instruction by the end of the 1930s.³⁸ During World War II, the educational film industry and its associates continued to rise. ERPI became a significant and respected producer of classroom films; teachers used educational film journals like *See and Hear* and *Educational Screen* as a go-to source on new films; and leaders in audiovisual instruction bolstered the growth of educational film libraries, library associations and research institutes at major universities. By the outbreak of the war, the Bureau of Audiovisual Aids at Indiana University, Bloomington (IU) had become the nation's foremost institution of educational film production and distribution by the outbreak of World War II.³⁹

Through the historical lens of 16mm, *Americans All* and the rest of Julien Bryan's OCIAA series begin to look like not only government films but also *classroom* films. The Division primed the Office of Education in Washington, DC for their domestic education campaign, maintaining a clearing-house of teaching materials there and overseeing its 25 K-12 test sites of Pan-Americanist curricula, called 'Demonstration Centers,' during the war. With the help of the Office of Education, seventy-five percent of Bryan's OCIAA series went to K-12 schools.⁴⁰ When we consider how teachers and professors approached Julien Bryan's Latin American shorts as sources of learning, it is important to think not only about the governmental mandates on their production and distribution, but also the discourses of education and educational film that intersected their use in 1940s classrooms and on campuses.

We can begin with the Bureau of Audiovisual Education at IU, which became one of the Inter-American Division's most active 16mm distributors. The Bureau provided more than 400 school and university classrooms and campuses, YMCAs and non-voluntary associations with Bryan's series and other OCIAA films on Latin America.⁴¹ From this pride of place, L.C. Larson and Lloyd Evans reviewed *Americans All* in the July 1942 column "New Films of the Month: How Films Look to a Teacher Committee" in *Educational Screen*.⁴² Larson and Evans, who were also specialists in audiovisual instruction, only referenced the short's Good Neighbor discourse in their final 'Committee Appraisal,' and forgo Bryan's focus on youth altogether.⁴³ Focusing instead on the short as a 'presentation of the ways of life (...) in the 20 republics south of the Rio Grande,' they appropriate the short for the dominant 'expanding communities' approach in US elementary social studies education of the 1940s, which guided students to recognise key types of human activities across societies.⁴⁴ Accordingly, teachers could find rich details on Incan engineering ('architecture

and terracing (in) Cuzco’); and raw materials of ‘coffee, bananas, and sugar’ in the Caribbean, cattle ‘ranches in the Argentine,’ wool from ‘herds of llamas in the Andes,’ and ‘mining in Bolivian ‘copper, tin and manganese.’⁴⁵ Cultural traditions spanned the popular ‘Aztec dances,’ ‘gaucho picnics’ and bull fighting’ to the elite ‘*pato* (polo) (...) and the debutante’s ball.’⁴⁶ Students would find rich evidence, moreover, of Latin America’s modern institutions of schools, religion and public health.⁴⁷

As experts in education and audiovisual instruction at IU’s Bureau, Larson and Evans’s motivation to recommend *Americans All* for the social studies was likely rooted in their interest in reaching the widest 16mm consumer base possible. In a similar move, A.A. Wulff, Chairman of the Audiovisual Aids Department in the Manhasset Public School system in Long Island, New York praised *Americans All* in his review for the *Educational Film Guide* of 1943 as not only apposite for teaching world history and social studies, but also noted that the film was ‘immensely interesting as an aid in school projects dealing with South America.’⁴⁸ In this call to the short’s utility in ‘project-based learning,’ an integrative, multi-subject pedagogical approach centred in the social studies and widely implemented in US school systems by the 1940s, Wulff expands upon the short’s attractiveness for teachers. Not only can it be helpful in preparing lessons on Latin America, but also in peppering up students’ project-based assignments.⁴⁹

In Larson, Evans and Wulff’s reviews, it is possible to see the beginnings of a pattern of appropriation of Julien Bryan’s OCIAA series for social studies and world history classrooms. This pattern appears to turn on a central move with Bryan’s film text. Instead of Good Neighbor discourse determining the use of the short, teachers are invited to approach the short’s documentary evidence from other educational discourses they are familiar with in their training and practice. Implicit in these reviews is that after approaching Bryan’s film as a source of social studies, world history and child-centred knowledge production, teachers can then use this knowledge as a platform for teaching Pan-Americanist values. Along the course of war, this strategy was in fact one that the Inter-American Division of the OCIAA encouraged in K-12 as well as college classrooms: teaching *on* Latin America was teaching *for* Pan-Americanism. Latin American studies teachers and professors enriched this pattern, although not always in conformity with larger educational discourses in Pan-Americanism or their own academic disciplines. As we will see, social markers of ethnicity, class and location influenced the way that educators approached Bryan’s shorts as sources of social and historical knowledge and constructing the meaning of hemispheric connections.

Over the course of the war, the Inter-American Division of the OCIAA not only worked closely with the Office of Education on their domestic educational campaigns. One of their most successful projects was the buttressing of Latin American studies disciplines at colleges and universities, where they sponsored academic conferences, visiting lecturers from Latin America and grants for research, teaching and outreach programs with local schools and communities.⁵⁰ Hampton Institute, a Historically Black College (HBC) in Hampton Roads, Virginia, in March of 1942, applied for and received a grant from the OCIAA to create a five-month program in ‘Inter-American understanding’ on their campus in the spring of 1942.⁵¹ Along with ‘special South American art exhibits, dance recitals, radio programs, and inter-cultural lectures, conferences, and panel discussion groups,’ Hampton invited Julien Bryan to lecture on five of his new documentary shorts for the CIAA.⁵²

During the war, Hampton students trained to contribute to the wartime effort in the engineering, nursing and defense industries, which rigidly segregated Black people.⁵³ The *Pittsburgh Courier*, reporting on Bryan’s screening of his short on Brazil to an audience that included these Hampton students in late April, noted the screening’s relevance to their influential ‘Double V’ campaign – Double Victory against Nazi oppression abroad and US American racism at home – which the newspaper had begun to wage two months before.⁵⁴ Reviewing Bryan’s screening in “War May Be Entering Wedge for Negroes,” the *Courier* reported that Bryan had pointed out to Hampton students evidence in his film of ‘black, white and mixed race soldiers training and working side by side in Brazil with American soldiers from the United States.’⁵⁵ It is significant that Charles White, the African American painter, began his mural at Hampton, *The Contribution of the Negro to Democracy in America*, on April 23, 1942 – less than a week before Bryan’s first screening at Hampton of his short on Brazil.⁵⁶ Breanne Robertson has demonstrated the intersections of the African American civil rights movement, the Mexican mural tradition and the era’s Pan-Americanist discourses, on White’s mural, describing it as a

synthesis of ancient and modern Mexican art and African American (...) that aligned black Americans’ claims for equal recognition and rights with wartime efforts to build national and inter-American consensus.⁵⁷

In the context of African American history, the Double V and Charles White’s mural at Hampton, Julien Bryan’s screening of his short on Brazil locates his documentation of Brazilian society in a critical framework, explicitly focused on transnational issues of ethnic identity and structural racism. Together with Charles White’s mural at Hampton, the screening helps to provide dimension on how the

University's larger approach to Pan-Americanism in their grant project and during the war might have been sought through real cultural and social connections with the Latin America people, with whom African Americans shared long histories of struggle, survival and community solidarity.

Around the same time that Bryan's OCIAA footage on Brazil became a resource for teaching hemispheric perspectives on black civil rights at Hampton Institute, another critical approach to mainstream Pan-Americanism was developing at the School of Inter-American Affairs at the University of New Mexico, directed by Joaquín Ortega. Hired in this position in 1941, Ortega shaped Pan-American and Latin American studies at UNM in close alignment with the working-class Spanish-speaking community of New Mexico and its historical ties to Latin America.⁵⁸ Ortega successfully lobbied the OCIAA to look beyond their limited vision of Good Neighbor cultural relations, or what he candidly called their 'Pollyanna picture of Latin-America,' and obtained substantial funding from the agency over the course of the war for programming on Latinx educational access, Spanish-language education for heritage (home) learners, building community between monolingual English and Spanish speakers and hemispheric approaches to Latinx labour and land struggles.⁵⁹

In May and April of 1944, Ortega launched a film series of OCIAA shorts acquired from the agency at Santa Fe's Southwestern cultures research museum, the Laboratory of Anthropology.⁶⁰ Called the 'South of the Border Film Travel Series,' the monthly line-up of shorts included Julien Bryan's films *Colombia*, *Crossroads of the Americas* and *Venezuela Moves Ahead*. As reported in the *Santa Fe New Mexican*, Ortega himself gave a lecture on 'Cultural Cooperation in New Mexico' in April.⁶¹ This local Santa Fe journal did not report details on Ortega's talk. It is notable, however, that while Good Neighbor discourse overwhelmingly focused on cooperation *across* the Río Grande, Joaquin Ortega's introduction to the OCIAA series was very much in keeping with his interests in making Pan-Americanism relevant and responsive to the culturally and linguistically diverse Southwest.

The revisionist Pan-Americanism Ortega and his colleagues at UNM sought through community-oriented Spanish-language education was rare. Far more common in 1940s Spanish departments and programs across the country was the position of the national Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP), which seized upon Rockefeller's cultural diplomacy and its primary focus on highbrow Latin American culture as an opportunity to build the cultural capital of Spanish and increase enrolments at schools and universities.⁶² On the eve of the United States' entrance into the war in late December of 1941, newly elected AATSP President Harry Grattan Doyle

pronounced teachers and scholars of Spanish, along with journalists and literary critics, to be the only 'real experts (...) in Latin American studies.'⁶³

The association of the Spanish language with scholarly expertise on Latin America subtended Spanish teachers' approach to Julien Bryan's films, which they viewed as a vehicle of advanced knowledge in their discipline. Bryan himself lectured on a 'film on Colombia,' which was likely *Colombia: Crossroads of the Americas*, at the New York chapter meeting of the AATSP in May of 1942.⁶⁴ Although the historical record is silent on Bryan's lecture, in the context of the national association's discourse on Latin American studies it is likely that the chapter conceived the screening as a performance of the Latin American expertise they sought for their discipline.

An article appearing in the AATSP's flagship journal *Hispania* in 1945 written by the visual artist Florence Arquin, a close friend of the famous Mexican artists Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera, more clearly evidences the appropriation of Bryan's work for raising the status of US Spanish education. Arquin reported on her work as director of the Kodachrome Slide Project, a 33-unit kit on Latin American cultures for K-12 schools that the Division also sponsored at the Office of Education.⁶⁵ A number of the Kodachrome slides in these kits were matching shots from Julien Bryan's footage of his films *Colombia*, *Crossroads of the Americas*, *Venezuela Moves Ahead* and other shorts made under Bryan's second contract with the agency in 1943.⁶⁶ Arquin also contributed her own photographs to the collection. In her description of the Kodachrome project in *Hispania*, Arquin claimed an elevated status for the Spanish students who would watch these slides, describing her project as the intention 'to stimulate the study of Latin America and to contribute to the development of a *discriminating appreciation* of the cultural patterns' (emphasis mine).⁶⁷

Writing in a different venue in 1947, Spanish teacher in Texas Georgia Anne Taliaferro took a slightly different tack with Bryan's films when she recommended them in the educational film journal *See and Hear* for their 'realism' on Latin American 'cultural themes.'⁶⁸ This approach, while not common in the circles of the AATSP, was typical of the broad-based approach of the 'Inter-American' curricula that the Division at the Office of Education recommended. The 1943 mid-term report on the Demonstration Centers, test sites of the Division's large-scale K-12 curricular project in schools, school systems and teachers colleges, evidences an attempt to make the Latin American curriculum rigorous. Supervisors of the Centers at the Office of Education stimulated pre- and in-service teacher preparation in Latin American studies within Schools of Education and teachers' access to Latin American courses in other university units; they built networks of state and local libraries and school systems that

circulated current books, films and media to teachers and their classrooms across the country; and they created opportunities for teachers and students to hear from Latin American studies professors at teacher workshops and in schools.⁶⁹ The report also noted that Centers were stressing the diversity of the ‘21 nations of Latin America,’ as opposed to its uniformity; and a deepening of these subjects in the higher grades, where students researched the sugar, coffee, mining and rubber industries in government classes, and regional medicine and public health programs more generally.⁷⁰ Although the report does not mention Julien Bryan’s films specifically, it does note that students frequently used films as ‘supplements’ to learning.⁷¹ Since the report makes clear that curricula should hew closely to Good Neighbor mandates (typical is the recommendation that students stick to Pan-American topics important to ‘authorities,’ like improvements the Pan-American Highway will make to free trade), we can assume that test sites approached (or were encouraged to approach) Bryan’s films accordingly.

‘Los Caminos de Amistad,’ a curriculum development grant awarded to the Texas State Department of Education and on which consulted George Sánchez, a professor of Education at the University of Texas and a civil rights activist, took a different approach to Bryan’s films, which numbered eight in their final report from 1946.⁷² Introducing an Inter-American syllabus for high schools, Grapeland (East Texas) School Superintendent Glenn Eason called upon the ‘people of Texas (...) [to which] Mexico is more closely associated than any state in the Union (...) [t]o adopt the practices that the term, good neighbour, implies (...) [and] end the segregation and economic ill-treatment of Mexicans’ in their state.⁷³ The limitations of Easton’s intervention are evident, both in his construction of the people of Mexican heritage in Texas as Mexican nationals, and in his failure to call for African American equality as well as Mexican American equality in Jim Crow Texas. But ‘Caminos de Amistad’ does represent an approach to Bryan’s films that aligns more closely with a Pan-Americanism within national borders, in contrast to the dominant Good Neighbors that existed somewhere beyond them. In this way, it is possible to see how the appropriation of Bryan’s films for teaching the Texas curriculum could align with the appropriation of his films in Hampton Roads, Virginia and Santa Fé, New Mexico as sources of knowledge on the shared histories of the working people, not the powers, across the American regions.

After the war

My preliminary research in the educational film archive suggests that this pattern persisted. When the OCIAA closed at the end of the war in 1945, twenty of Bryan’s films were re-released by the U.S. Office

of Education in 1949 and distributed by classroom film companies, including Bryan's own International Film Foundation, which he founded in 1945.⁷⁴ Sadlier points out that over 400 of the OCIAA films altogether were in circulation as 'solid documentary films' and 'fillers-in.'⁷⁵ By 1946, the *Educational Film Guide* listed not only Bryan's *Argentine Primer*, *Housing in Chile* (1943, Figure 11), *Bolivia* (1943), *High Plain* (1943, Figure 12), *Lima* (1944, Figure 13), *Lima Family*, *Venezuela Moves Ahead* and *Montevideo Family* (1943) for general Latin American history and social studies teaching, but also for a specialized, Latin American focus in numerous other subjects: *Good Neighbor Family* for 'Family Ethics,' *Atacama Desert* for 'Nitrates,' *Fundo in Chile* (1943), 'Agriculture' and *Schools in South America* (likely an alternate title of *Schools to the South*) for 'Public Schools.'⁷⁶ These subjects, we can remember, were promoted as useful for the teaching of Latin American subjects in the Office of Education's 1943 Inter-American curriculum manual.

Here in the voluminous *Educational Film Guide*, it appears that after the OCIAA folded in 1945, the Office of Education may have recommended Julien Bryan's shorts for these subjects – but without their original, Pan-Americanist frame. My research in journals, teachers' journals and K-12 and

Figure 11. *Housing in Chile* (Julien Bryan, 1943).

Figure 12. *High Plain* (Julien Bryan, 1943).

Figure 13. *Lima* (Julien Bryan, 1944).

university curricula suggests that there was some movement, especially in Eastern educational film circles and even by Bryan himself, to repurpose his Latin American shorts for ‘intergroup understanding’ and human relations, a mid-century educational term for multicultural teaching and diversity training.⁷⁷ But this pedagogical approach to his works does not appear to have lasted very long. It is notable that the *Golden Book Picture Atlas of the World 2: South America*, which was published in 1960 under the auspices of the Geography Department at Teachers College, Columbia University, were still circulating Julien Bryan’s Kodachrome slides, which Frances Arquin developed for use in a range of subjects, as sources of Latin American knowledge in the social studies.⁷⁸ Although the frame of Latin American ‘understanding’ no longer appears in the book, the documentary evidence of the shots below on a man of the Auracánía indigenous culture in Southern Chile (Figure 14) and Montevideo’s hydraulic system (Figure 15) are typical of the modernisation discourse in the text:

Figures 14 and 15. Julien Bryan, in Margaret Bevans, *Golden Book Picture Atlas of the World 2: South America* (New York: Golden Press, 1960), 113.

At the same time, my research on the appropriations of Bryan’s Latin American shorts throughout the three decades following the war has revealed a number of social history instructors repurposing the films as historical documents to help students gain a critical understanding of global power relationships.⁷⁹ In November of 1972, Bradford Burns, a social historian and professor at UCLA, chaired a panel of US American historians on at the University of Delaware on ‘The Use of Audiovisual

Archives as Original Source Materials,' which included a visit to the National Archives. Writing in *The History Teacher* in February of 1973, Burns described his discovery of documentaries on Latin America which included Julien Bryan's OCIAA shorts, in the Archives:

Although I had done research in the National Archives before, I had never ventured into the audiovisual sections. I took advantage of this opportunity to explore the photographic holdings related to Latin America. The variety and extent of the material impressed – and excited – me. That brief experience opened new doors of research. I am eager to cross the threshold. The papers in the session 'Teaching and Audiovisuals' strengthened my faith in audiovisual aids in the college lecture hall; the visit to the National Archives awakened me to the extent of audiovisual sources which are yet to be exploited.⁸⁰

Burns would go on to use Bryan's shorts as documents of Latin American social history at UCLA. Later still, in 1981, writing in *The History Teacher* social historian Diana Balmori recommended Julien Bryan's documentaries *Bolivia*, *Good Neighbor Family* and *Lima Family* as primary documents of family history, on a par with the film *Vidas Secas* by one of the founders of the revolutionary Latin American Cinema, Nelson Pereira Dos Santos.⁸¹

I do not want to push this too far here, but I suspect that educators appropriating Julien Bryan's OCIAA shorts for Latin American subjects during the war helped to set a longer pattern for appropriating Julien Bryan's Latin American shorts as academic subjects, and to lodge the films in the educational archive as reliable, sources of teaching, especially in geography, social studies and history. In this sense, they appear to have worked as what Jeffrey Haydu calls 'historical pivots,' or social agents whose activities and mind-sets move historical processes and patterns from one time period to another.⁸²

Conclusion

The approach to Julien Bryan's educational shorts for a more critical Pan-Americanism by Hampton Institute, Joaquín Ortega and 'Los Caminos de Amistad' was far from the dominant way in which K-12 educators and college professors approached (or were encouraged to approach) Julien Bryan's educational shorts on Latin America. At the same time, the constellation of these educators contributed to a consistent pattern of appropriation in the 1940s that is available in the historical

record. From the audiovisual film experts' reviews to the Office of Education's K-12 curricula to the AATSP's flagship journal to film reviews of screenings in local newspapers, educators in the 1940s dependably approached Julien Bryan's documentary films as sources of knowledge on Latin America. *Knowing*, as these educators understood it, was fundamental before 'understanding' Latin America – even as the conditions of that knowledge and the shape of the Pan-American identity it was to foster varied widely between these educators.

In the current historiography of OCIAA film and media production, even as some scholars have provided valuable insight into the sophisticated distribution mandates of the OCIAA, their predominant interest in production – and the admittedly difficult task of researching exhibition – stops at the film text. As a result, cultural historians of the OCIAA have concluded that the engagement of US Americans across the country with these films aligned with their production mandates – with the ideological messages their texts were encoded with at the point of production. By digging deeper into the sites and spaces of education into which these shorts flowed, and placing wartime educators' mind-sets and interactions with Julien Bryan's shorts at centre stage in this history, I have hoped to shift this narrative. As educators approached Bryan's films from the vantage point of their disciplinary and social identities, they appropriated the films variously as sources of Latin American knowledge that could be useful in their classrooms, relevant on their campuses and in their communities and vehicles of their professional and/or activist development. Differently from the dominant scholarship on Bryan's films, this pattern of appropriation suggests that at least in the formal classroom, the ideological frame of the film was less important than the content within the frame.

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observed in Julien Bryan as his employee at IFF in the 1960s. I am very grateful to the Archive librarians at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC, especially Lindsay Zarwell, who gave me background and provided access to Julien Bryan's full collection at the Museum in the summer of 2018. In June of 2019, I was honoured to present preliminary research at the annual HoMER meeting in Nassau, The Bahamas, where colleagues' feedback and their own work helped me to refine my focus. In his work as editor, Thunnis Van Oort has given me invaluable guidance on comparative methods in the New Cinema History that has helped me more generally in my work as a teacher and scholar. Thank you also to my anonymous reviewers for very useful suggestions on moving this essay forward. Lewis, Elizabeth, Samuel and Hannah Grossman have shown enormous support (and forbearance) for my drive to get this history right. And for that I also owe a deep thanks to Robert Caro, whose pages are a validation.

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