

King Kong

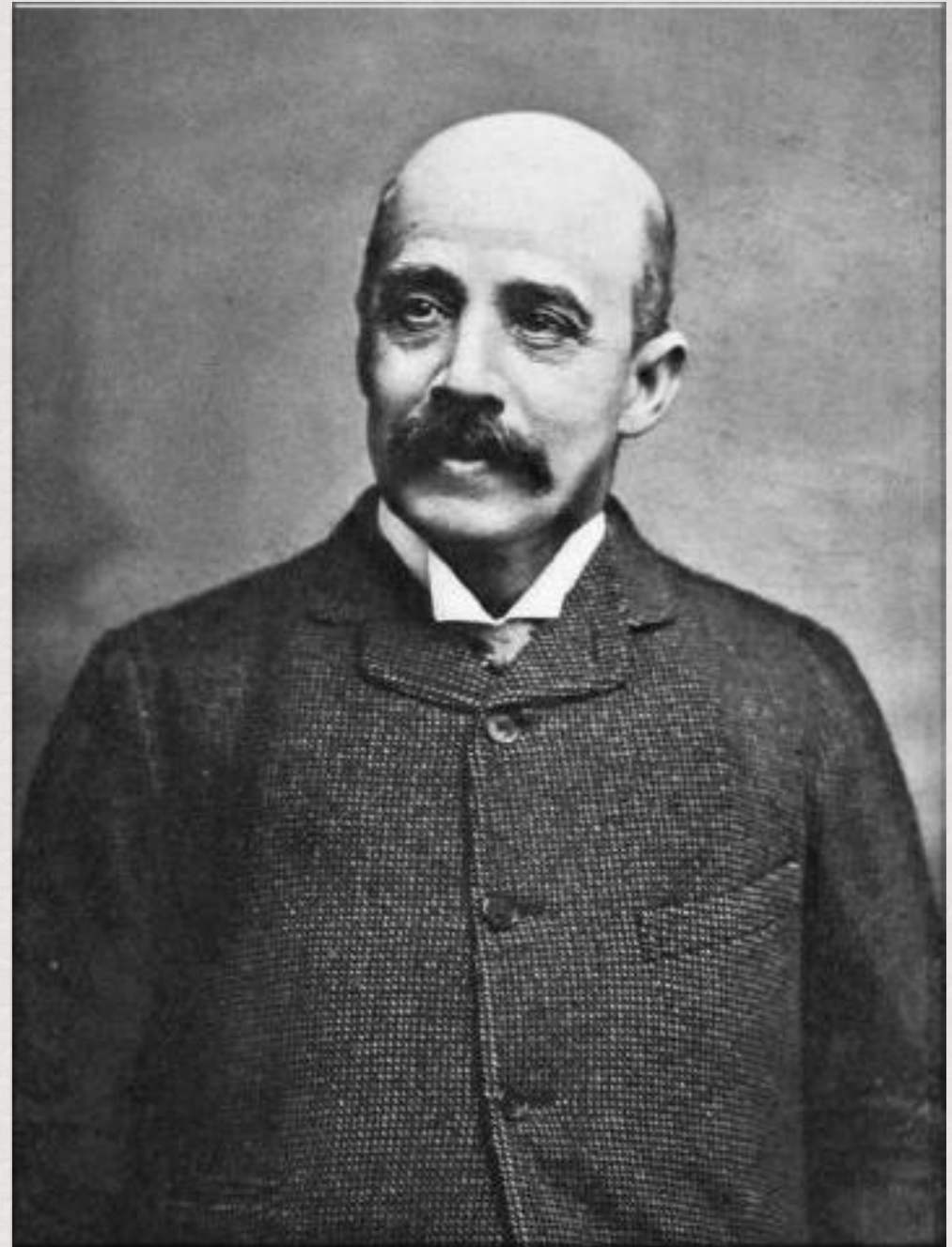
The Eighth Wonder of the World

Origins and the Making of the 1933 film

Paul Belloni Du Chaillu

July 31, 1831 – April 29, 1903

*He hid the fact his mother
was French-African.*



The Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia

- *The same place that would one day employ the real James Bond.*
- *In 1855, it sent Du Chaillu to Equatorial Africa to explore. He went on an expedition lasting four years.*



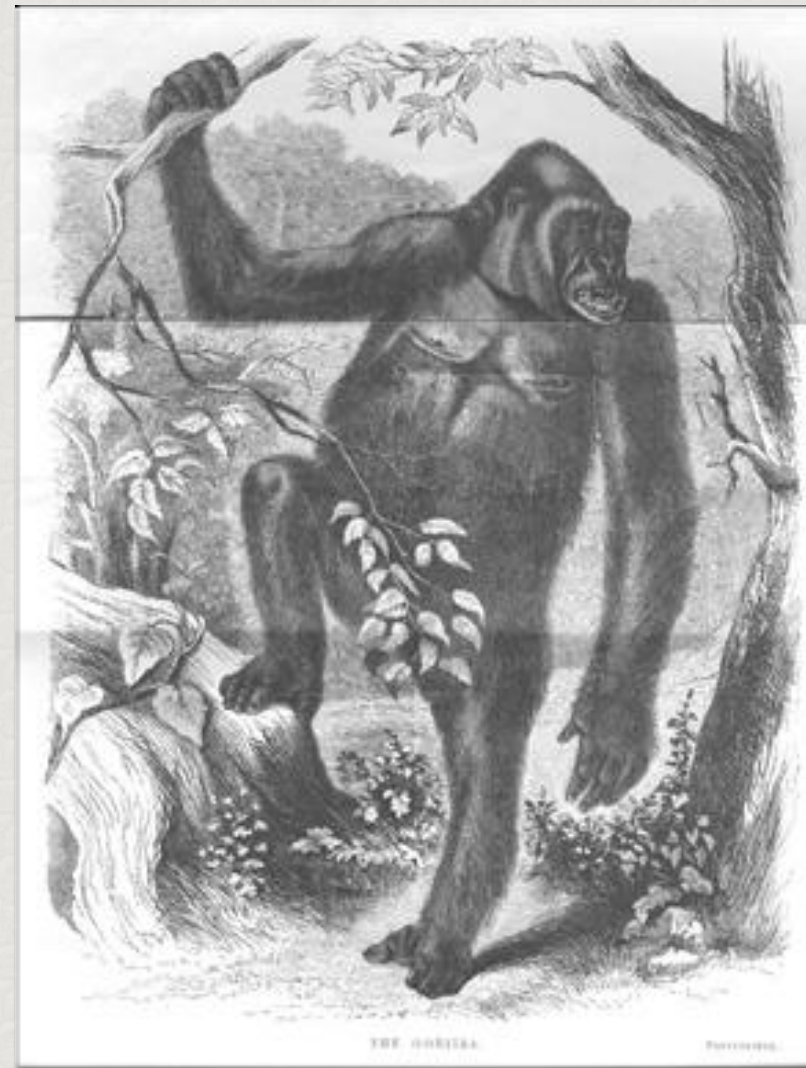
His Expedition to Africa

- ✿ *He found (and claimed to be the first white European) to see and study the gorilla, bringing back dead gorillas that could be put on display.*
- ✿ *The Academy has them there.*



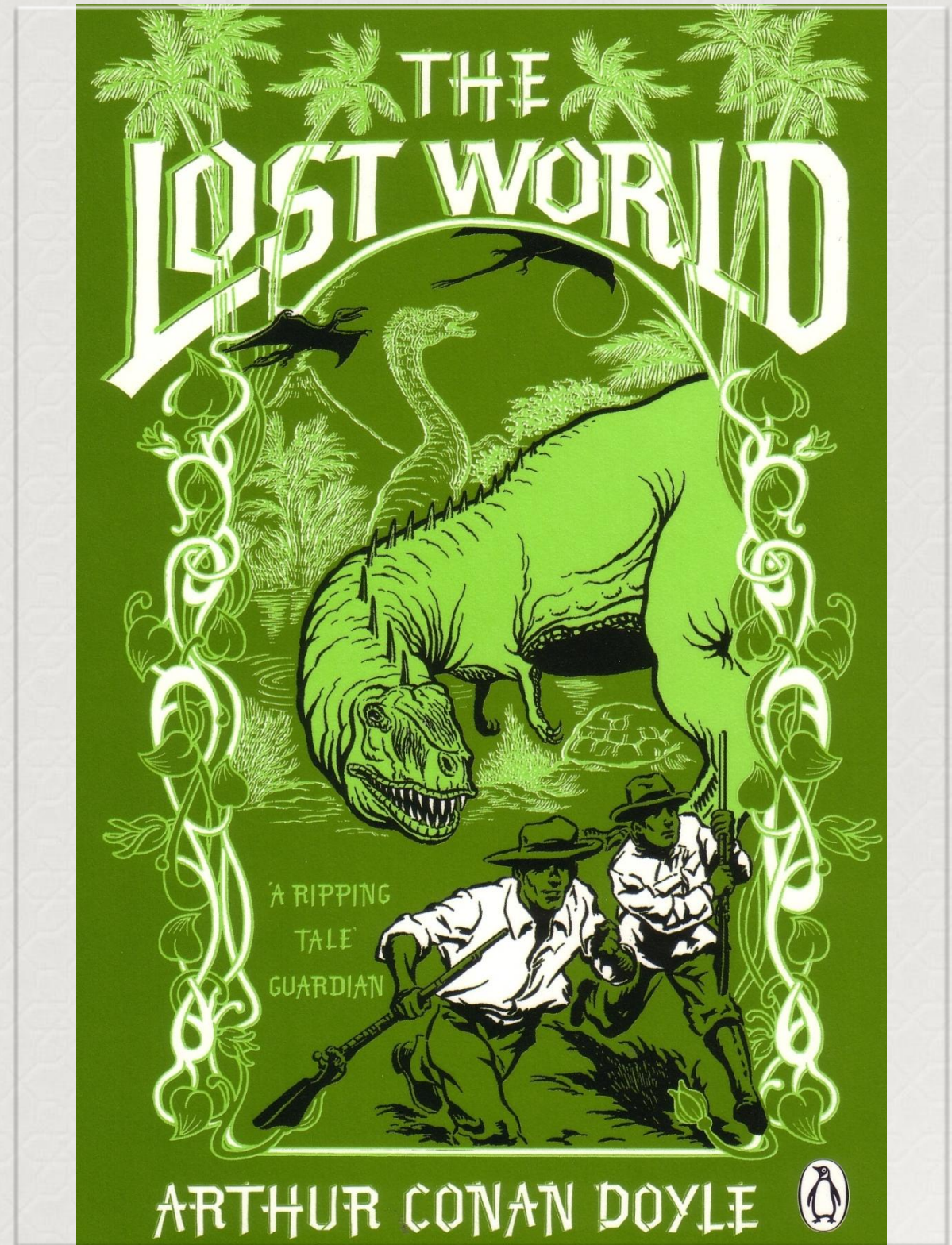
Explorations and Adventures in Equatorial Africa

- ✿ *Du Chaillu went on a second expedition from 1863-1865.*
- ✿ *He wrote about both trips and published them.*



Arthur Conan Doyle

- ✦ *Creator of Sherlock Holmes.*
- ✦ *In 1921, he wrote a book called The Lost World about adventurers who find a prehistoric world.*



Merian C. Cooper

1893-1973

*As a boy, his father gave him a
copy of Explorations and
Adventures in Equatorial Africa
by Paul Du Chaillu.*



Cooper the Pilot

- ✦ *His DaHavilland DH-4 bomber was shot down over France in World War One.*
- ✦ *He was captured and spent the rest of the war in a POW camp.*
- ✦ *He later served in the Polish Air Force and was again shot down.*



Cooper as a Filmmaker



- ✿ *In 1927, Cooper went to the jungles of Laos and filmed the native's struggles against living in the wilderness.*
- ✿ *That tiger is still alive.*

Pan American



- ✦ *In 1927, Cooper founded Pan American Airways with profits he made from his films.*
- ✦ *We saw a Pan Am Clipper in Raiders of the Lost Ark.*

Cooper's Adventure Movies

- ✿ *He would go to exotic places and shoot film of real animals and people.*
- ✿ *While shooting film for The Four Feathers in Africa, Cooper thought of gorillas again.*
- ✿ *He had a dream about a gorilla running loose in New York.*



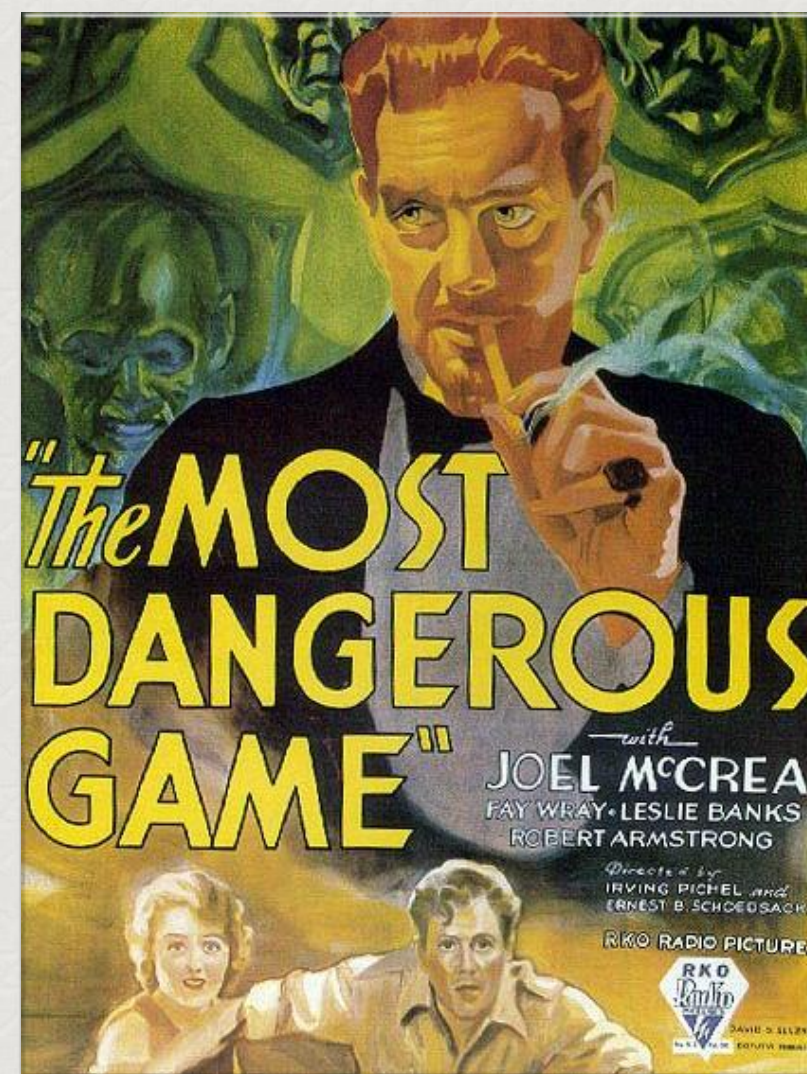
The Beast

- *Cooper was hired to produce movies at RKO, a studio in financial trouble.*
- *He took his ideas from Du Chaillu's book and from his dream and came up with a film idea called The Beast.*



Fay Wray and Robert Armstrong

- *The actors starred together in 1932's The Most Dangerous Game.*
- *Cooper had Wray do a test screening for The Beast while shooting. She worked 24 hours straight.*



King Kong

- *Cooper's first screenwriter died, but he came up with the idea of the Empire State Building in the finale.*
- *Cooper told Wray that she'd be starring with the tallest star in Hollywood.*
- *When Wray read the script, she died her hair blonde to contrast better with Kong's dark hair.*



Carl Denham

- ✿ *The film has a filmmaker who wants to go to an exotic jungle to find a mysterious ape.*
- ✿ *Carl Denham is the character's name, but he might as well be Merian Cooper.*



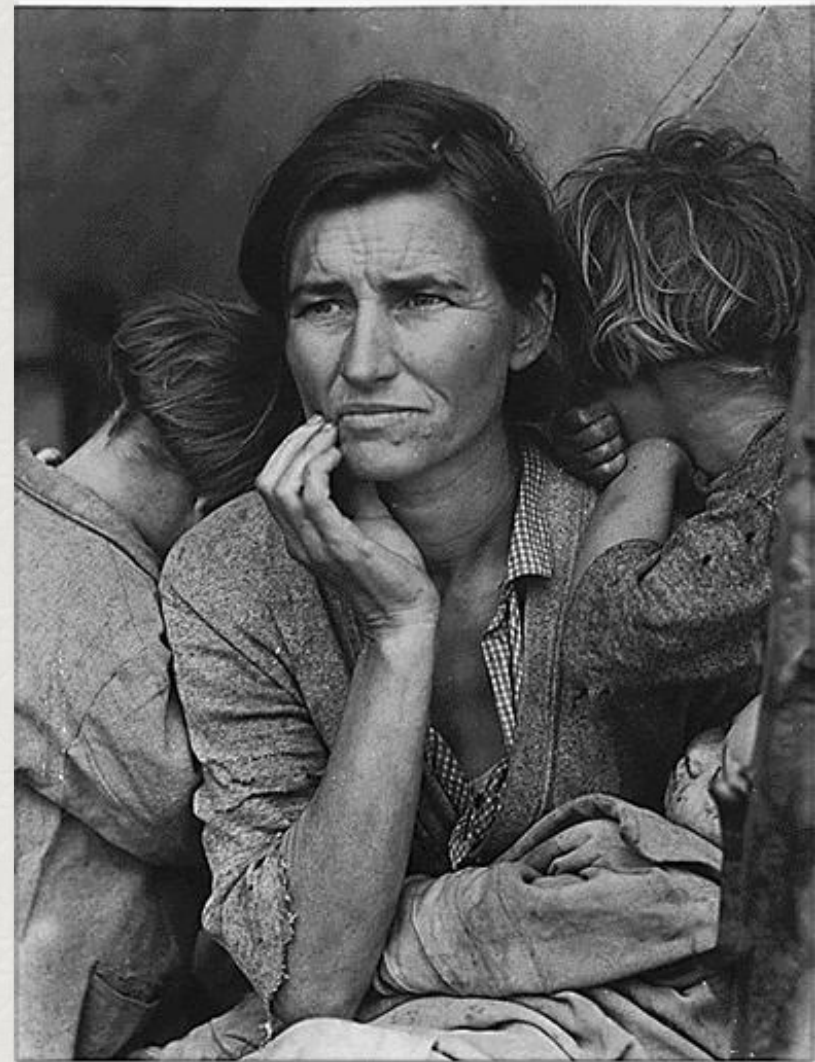
Storyboards

After the script was completed, the storyboards were drawn so that the Cooper could visualize each scene.



Money

- ✿ *1933 was the height of the Great Depression, and RKO Studios was struggling.*
- ✿ *Cooper wanted to film the movie in Africa with real apes, but RKO could not afford it.*



Shooting

- ✿ *To save money, everything was shot at RKO Studios in Hollywood.*
- ✿ *Special effects were used extensively.*



Kong

- *The actual King Kong was a model eighteen inches tall.*
- *Here he is. The clay and rabbit fur deteriorated over the years, and this is all that's left.*



Finished King Kongs

(They made two moving models.)



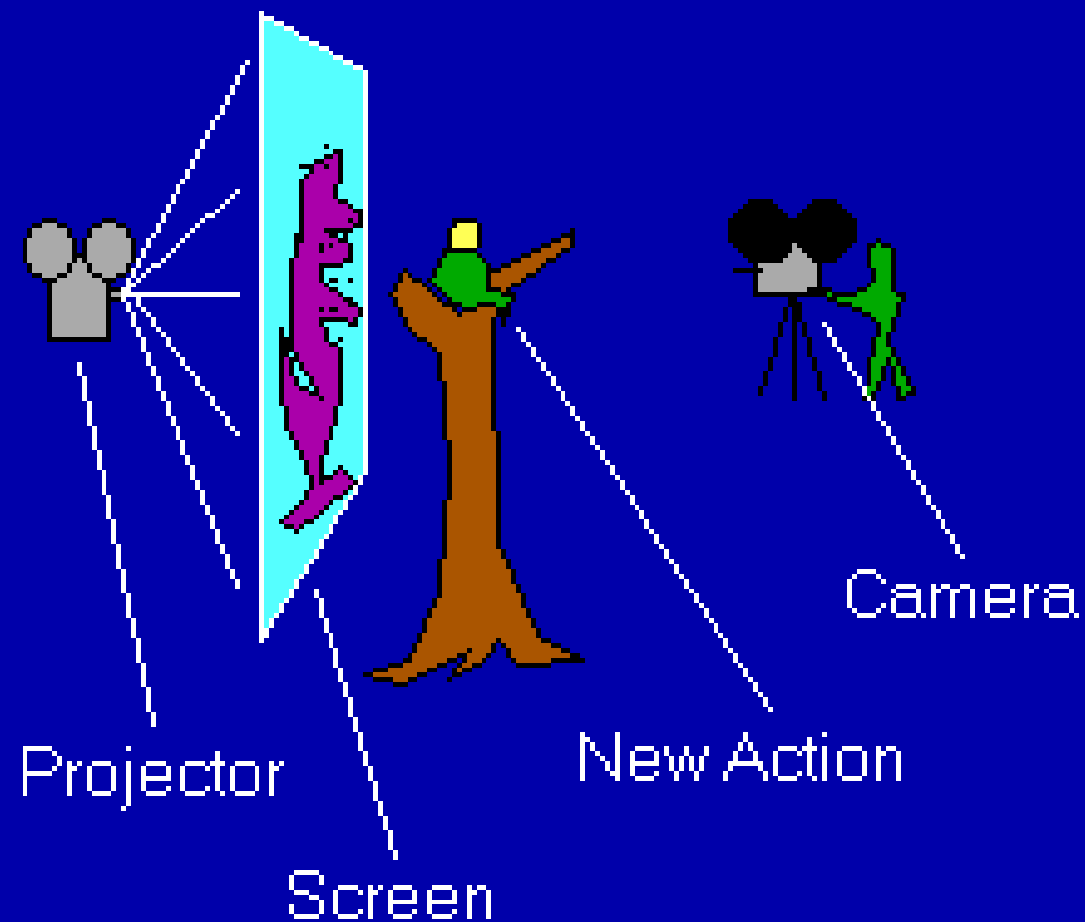
Kong

*The miniature Kong
used stop motion
animation to create a
lifelike effect.*

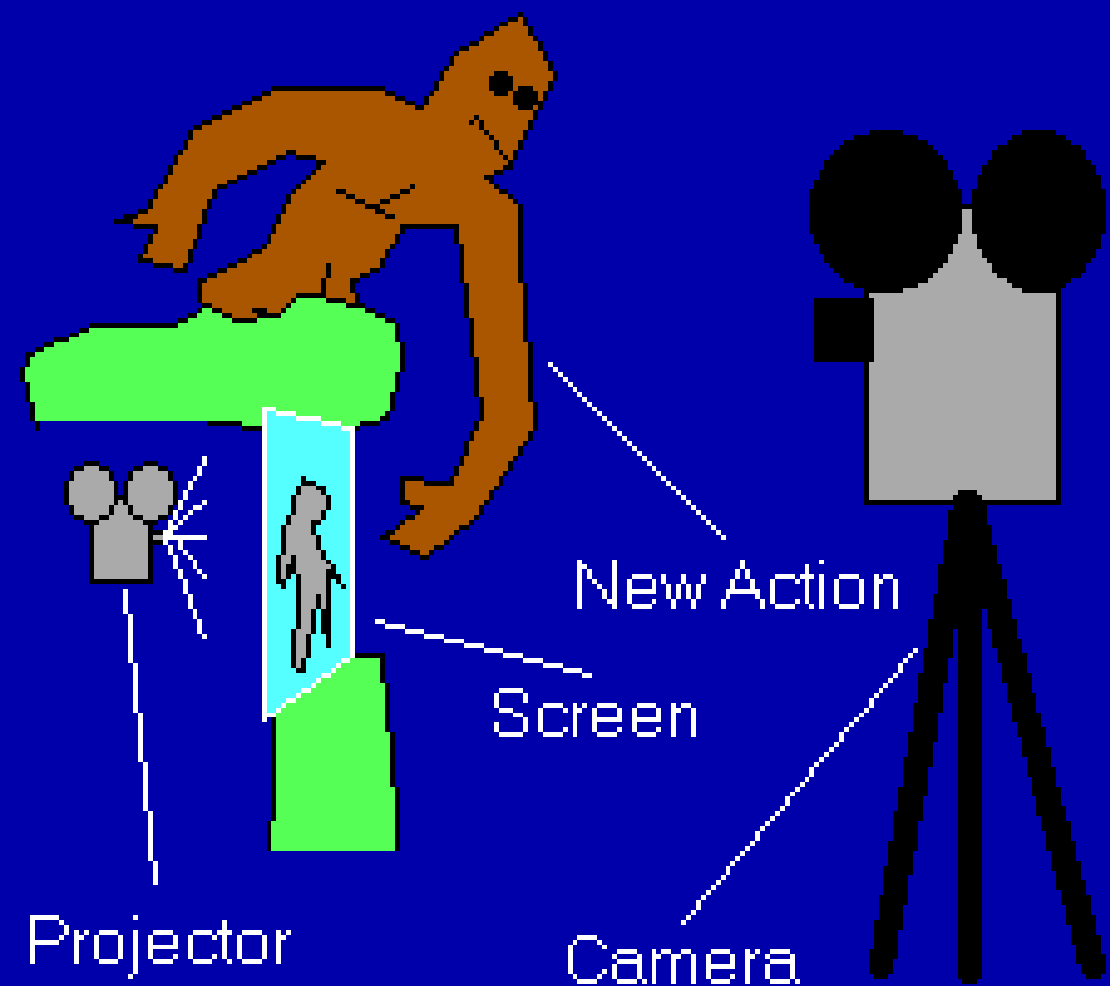


Kong: Combining Real People with Special Effects

Rear Projection



Miniature Projection



Close ups

For close ups, the crew built a bust of Kong.

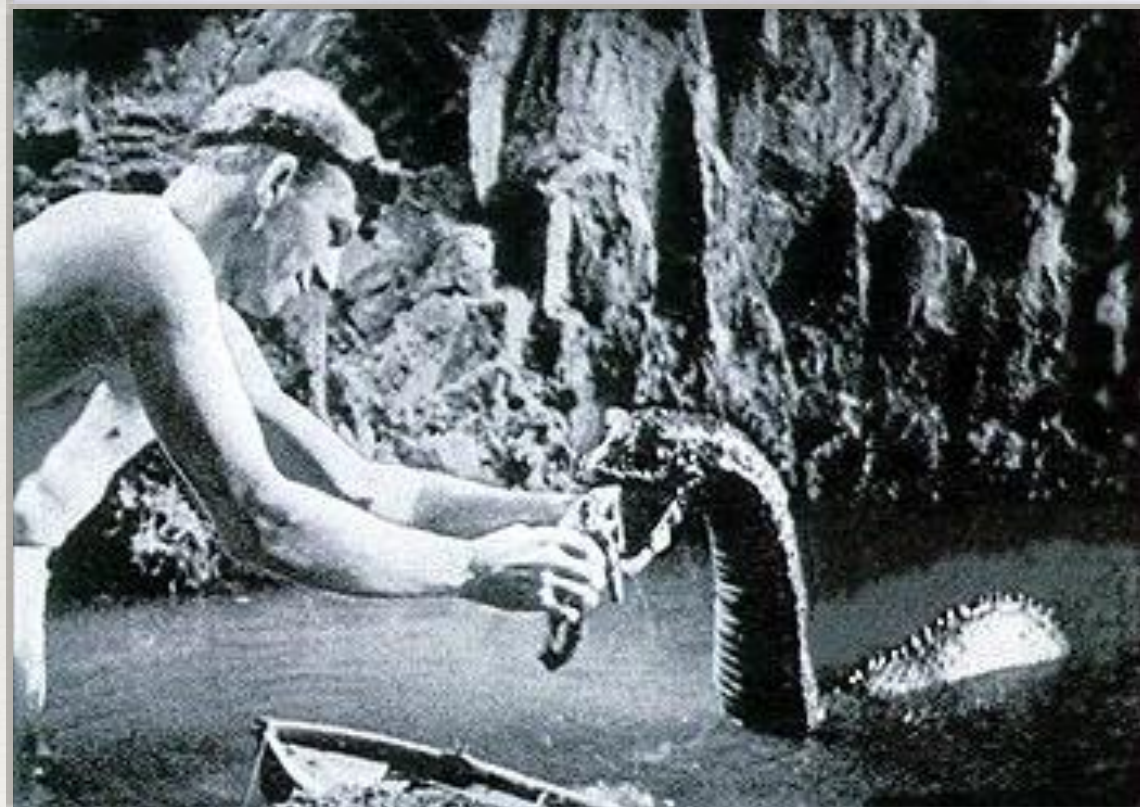


Kong Head

The head was later used outside theaters to help promote the film.



The following page has three pictures of a brontosaurus: stripped model, artist moving it, and what is in the final film.



Max Steiner

- ✿ *Merian Cooper insisted that the film have its own score.*
- ✿ *He paid Max Steiner \$50,000 of his own money to compose the music.*
- ✿ *Steiner had a theory that the score should be a part of the drama of the film, not merely background filling.*



Max Steiner

- ✦ *Steiner's revolutionary work changed films.*
- ✦ *Films today have musical scores that help the audience feel the emotions of the film.*
- ✦ *John Williams does this in Raiders of the Lost Ark, such as when Indy thinks Marion is dead and the music is slowed to make the tone sad.*



Cooper the Pilot and Filmmaker

- ✿ *Cooper the pilot wanted to be in the film, so he made a cameo as the biplane pilot at the end of the film.*



After Kong Kong

- ✦ *After the success of Kong, Cooper took over RKO and worked at other Hollywood studios, including MGM.*
- ✦ *He was a big proponent of Technicolor, which was used a few years later in The Wizard of Oz.*



The Motion Pictures Code



THE FOLLOWING **PREVIEW** HAS BEEN APPROVED FOR
ALL AUDIENCES
BY THE MOTION PICTURE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

- ✿ *The Motion Picture Production Code was created in the 1920s, but studios ignored it.*
- ✿ *It was the forerunner to today's MPAA code.*

King Kong's Release

- *The film was released in 1933.*
- *To better enforce the code, every movie released after July 1, 1934, was required to have a code certificate.*



Rerelease

- *When the film was rereleased in 1938, the MPA insisted on cutting five minutes of film that where Kong eats, crushes, and pounds his victims, and scenes where Kong removes Wray's clothing.*

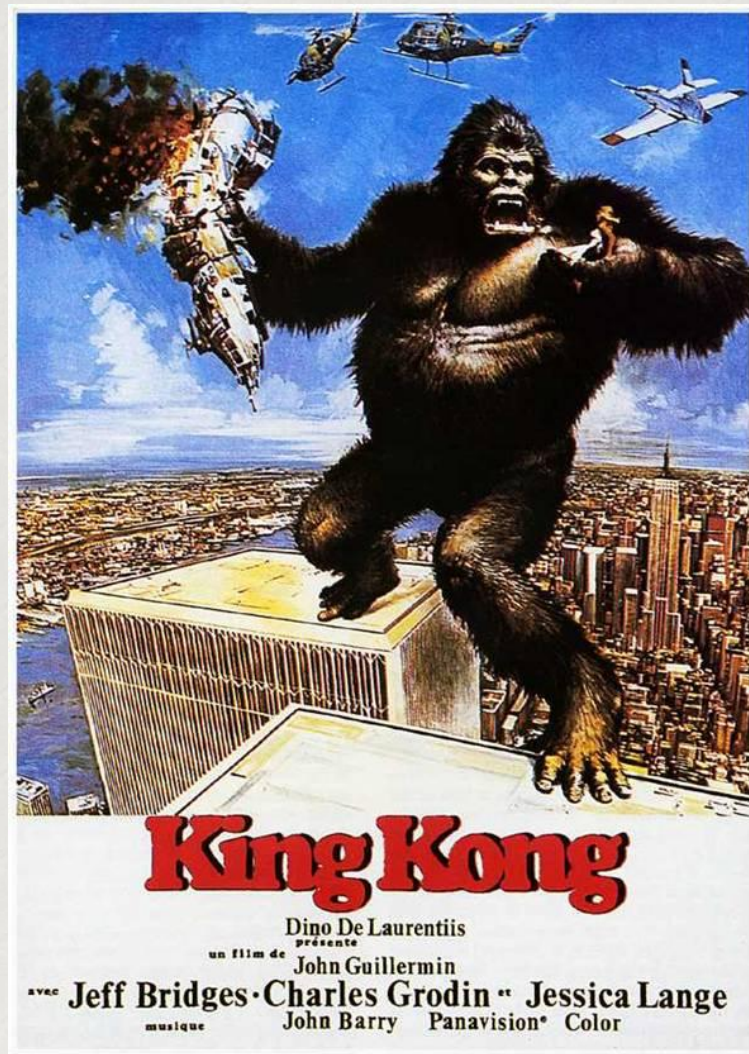


Lost Scenes

- *In 1968, the MPAA revised the film code, making the cut scenes acceptable again.*
- *The film with the scenes that were cut was found in Philadelphia.*



Remakes



1976



2005

*“I'm going out and make the greatest picture
in the world. Something that nobody's ever
seen or heard of.”*

—Carl Denham

King Kong

The Eighth Wonder of the World