

# Alec Lorimore and Paramount Pictures in Australasia



Alec Lorimore, c. 1914<sup>1</sup>

Image courtesy of Media History Digital Library

## First Frederick Cribb

The man later known as "Alec Lorimore" was originally Frederick Cribb.<sup>2</sup> He was born on 13 May 1876 at Camberwell, Surrey, the first child of Frederick Cribb and Charlotte Mulliss, who had been married at St. James Pentonville, Clerkenwell, Middlesex (later London) on 27 February of that year (in what was obviously a shotgun wedding). At the time of their marriage Frederick Cribb gave his profession as groom; Charlotte has no occupation listed.

The family moved around in Camberwell civil parish on the south side of the River Thames. At the 1891 census<sup>3</sup> they were at 87 Banstead St, Peckham hamlet; Frederick junior is listed as being employed as a printer's layer on. (And he had 7 siblings, with at least one more to come.)

On 19 July 1896 20-year-old Frederick Cribb and 28 (or almost 28)-year-old Amy Price (daughter of Robert and Sarah Price) were married at the parish church of Immanuel at Streatham, London. He was a bachelor and she a spinster, and his profession is given as

cheesemonger. (In the 1891 census Amy is listed as a domestic servant.) They both gave their residence as Barrow Rd.

On 5 January 1901 Frederick and Amy's daughter Amy Marguerite Cribb was born at Streatham. But at the 1901 census on 31 March Frederick, and Amy and daughter, were at different addresses (though both at Streatham);<sup>4</sup> Frederick was a boarder where he was staying, and Amy is listed as head of the household. Amy Marguerite was baptised at the church of St. Peter, Streatham on 4 September 1902.

If by now the marriage hadn't fallen apart it soon did. On 19 October 1908 Amy Cribb wrote and executed her last will, in which she left all her property to a younger sister as trustee to use it for the maintenance and education of Amy Marguerite,

Provided always that if any time after my death the father of my daughter shall claim possession of her then I direct that as from the time of obtaining such possession as aforesaid no part of the income or Capital of my said property shall be paid to him or applied in or towards the maintenance and education of my said daughter ...

Whether either of them had any further contact with or knowledge of Frederick Cribb, or even knew his new name, is not known.

Amy Cribb did not remarry, and kept the surname "Cribb" till her death on 25 February 1939 at 9 Aberdour Rd, Goodmayes, Essex, the home of her then-married daughter, Amy Marguerite Bridgman.

At some time *circa* 1905 Frederick Cribb may have married Winifred Forwood (in which case he would have been guilty of bigamy). She was born on 16 February 1881 at Aston, near Birmingham, second daughter of Edward Forwood, a fishmonger, and his wife Elizabeth. At the 1901 census Winifred was working as a housemaid in Kensington, London.<sup>5</sup> Also in the household was Swiss-born footman Joseph Kumin (or Kummin); in February of the following year he and Winifred were engaged to be married, but the wedding did not take place. Their daughter Nora was born on 4 September 1902 and her surname was registered as "Forwood". What became of her and Joseph Kumin is not known.

When and where Winifred Forwood met Frederick Cribb (and he may have been using yet another name at this time) are not known. On 2 October 1906 their first son, Reginald, was born, supposedly in London. The record of his birth has not been traced because the family name was not yet "Lorimore".

## **Later Alec Lorimore**

On 25 September 1908 their second son, Max Lorimore, was born at Swansea, south Wales; this is the first time the name "Lorimore" has been found in the record of this family. At the 2 April 1911 census<sup>6</sup> the Lorimores – Alec, Winifred, Reginald, and Max – were living (as boarders) at 26 Mansel St, Swansea; Alec was a Life Insurance Official; Inspector of agents, which agrees with Frederick Cribb's profession of Insurance Agent at the 1901 census.

## **From Britain to North America**

On 31 December 1912 Alec Lorimore departed from Southampton as a second class passenger on board the s.s. *Ausonia* for Portland, Maine, USA, where he arrived on 13 January following. He was an insurance inspector, and his final destination was Montreal, Québec; his contact address was c/o Royal Insurance Co., Montreal. Presumably this visit was for a job interview which was successful, because he returned to Liverpool, England on 20 April 1913 on board the

*Victorian*, and by the same ship the four Lorimore family members arrived at Québec on 7 May. What the job was is not known, but Alec is referred to as a "Secretary" on the manifest of the family's voyage to Canada.

They didn't stay long in Canada. About 23 August 1913 Lorimore became publicity manager for the Gaumont Company at their New York offices. He stayed with them until May 1914; by this time he had started to make a name for himself:

Always genial and courteous, Mr. Lorrimore [*sic*] has become a great favorite among those interested in the film business, and with his personality he should become very popular among the State right buyers and exhibitors whom he meets.<sup>7</sup>

This quote is a sign of things to come. His next position was as travelling representative of the State rights department of the Box-Office Attractions Company (which was run by William Fox). Once more this was for only a few months, for by December 1914 he was president of the two newly-formed companies Bishop, Pessers and Lorimore, Inc., and National Movement Motion Picture Bureau, Inc.

At the 1 June 1915 census of New York, the family were living at 283 Amity St, Flushing, Queens, New York. Alec is a "Motion Picture Bureau President".

In September 1915 Lorimore was sued for slander by the World Film Corporation for making statements reflecting upon the solvency and credit of the corporation. The outcome of this case is not known.

On 13 January 1916 he became president of the Colonial Motion Picture Corporation.

In mid-1916 Alec worked for Thomas H. Ince as manager of the new *Civilization* offices in the Times Building, New York.

In November 1916 Lorimore was engaged by the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation as its special representative to Australasia.

On 28 November 1916 Alec Lorimore, without his wife and sons, departed from San Francisco on board the s.s. *Sonoma* for Sydney, Australia.

##### Copy of article from before he left

## **Paramount precursors in Australia**

Paramount Pictures in Australia and New Zealand evolved from the company Biblical Biographs Limited, which was formed in Sydney on 15 July 1913 by Clamor Sudholz, who had toured a variety company that included motion pictures around Australia from early in the twentieth century.

Name changes (by EGM): 1913-07-15: Biblical Biographs Limited 1914-02-06, 1914-02-24: Australian Feature Films Limited 1917-10-01, 1917-10-16: Feature Films Limited 1922-02-14, 1922-03-10: Famous Lasky Film Service Limited

## **To Australia**

1916-12-19: he arrived at Sydney on the *Sonoma*

## A hurried departure

He died in Manhattan, New York on 19 July 1922 ... ###

## References and notes

---

<sup>1</sup> 26 December 1914, *Motion Picture News* [USA], p.48bc

<sup>2</sup> Lorimore's original name was determined through his death certificate: Department of Health of The City of New York, Bureau of Records, Standard Certificate of Death, Register number 19540, Borough of Manhattan, 1922  
His father's name is given as "Frederick Lorimore" (so the surname matches) and his mother's name as "Charlotte Mulliss". The dots were joined by finding the marriage of Frederick Cribb and Charlotte Mulliss in 1876, and the birth of their son Frederick Cribb not long after. Frederick Cribb *films'* biographical details in the historical record fit well with the little that is known of Alec Lorimore's early life.

The article LORIMORE LEAVES! on [page 7 of Sydney's Truth newspaper of 15 January 1922](#) notes the original surname, though doesn't get it quite correct:  
As a matter of fact, his name is not Lorimore. It is Creeg. Lorimore might be called an alias or a business name. ....

<sup>3</sup> The National Archives, London, England: RG 12/478, folio 132 page 63, schedule number 372

<sup>4</sup> For Frederick Cribb:  
The National Archives: RG 13/478, folio 10 page 11, schedule number 73  
For Amy Cribb:  
RG 13/477, folio 23 page 30, schedule number 197

<sup>5</sup> The National Archives: RG 13/19, folio 52 page 41, schedule number 189

<sup>6</sup> The National Archives: RG 14/32765, schedule number 35

<sup>7</sup> ### May 1914, *NY Dramatic Mirror*, p.###c, MOTION PICTURES, LORRIMORE'S [*sic*]  
NEW POST