



C. Francis Jenkins, Pioneer of Film and Television (History of Communication)

Donald G. Godfrey

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This is the first biography of the important but long-forgotten American inventor Charles Francis Jenkins (1867-1934). Historian Donald G. Godfrey documents the life of Jenkins from his childhood in Indiana and early life in the West to his work as a prolific inventor whose productivity was cut short by an early death. Jenkins was an inventor who made a difference.

As one of America's greatest independent inventors, Jenkins's passion was to meet the needs of his day and the future. In 1895 he produced the first film projector able to show a motion picture on a large screen, coincidentally igniting the first film boycott among his Quaker viewers when the film he screened showed a woman's ankle. Jenkins produced the first American television pictures in 1923, and developed the only fully operating broadcast television station in Washington, D.C. transmitting to ham operators from coast to coast as well as programming for his local audience.

Godfrey's biography raises the profile of C. Francis Jenkins from his former place in the footnotes to his rightful position as a true pioneer of today's film and television. Along the way, it provides a window into the earliest days of both motion pictures and television as well as the now-vanished world of the independent inventor.

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