

= Kansas Saloon Smashers =

Kansas Saloon Smashers is a 1901 comedy short film produced and distributed by Edison Studios . Directed by Edwin S. Porter , it is a satire of American activist Carrie Nation . The film portrays Nation and her followers entering and destroying a saloon . After the bartender retaliates by spraying Nation with water , policemen order them out ; the identities of the actors are not known . Inspiration for the film was provided by an editorial cartoon which appeared in the New York Evening Journal .

Kansas Saloon Smashers became a success upon its March release , and inspired other films about Nation to be produced by Lubin Manufacturing Company and Biograph Company . It was not the only film produced by Edison Studios to mock Nation ; released the same year , Why Mr. Nation Wants a Divorce parodied the relationship between Nation and her husband . A print of the film is preserved in the Library of Congress , and it was released on DVD in 2007 .

= = Plot = =

A bartender is working at a saloon , serving drinks to customers . After he fills a stereotypically Irish man 's bucket with beer , Carrie Nation and her followers burst inside . They assault the Irish man , pulling his hat over his eyes and then dumping the beer over his head . The group then begin wrecking the bar , smashing the fixtures , mirrors , and breaking the cash register . The bartender then sprays seltzer water in Nation 's face before a group of policemen appear and order everybody to leave .

= = Production = =

After American activist Carrie Nation first attacked a saloon in December 1900 , silent motion pictures dealing with the subject of alcohol began to be produced , a testament to Nation 's national notoriety and her influence over studios at the time . Kansas Saloon Smashers was produced by Edison Studios as a parody of Nation 's crusade . Charles Musser , a film historian , writes that " the front page of the New York Journal was an excellent indicator of events considered worthy of the Kinetograph Department 's attention throughout 1901 @-@ 1902 . "

The director of Kansas Saloon Smashers was Edwin S. Porter , a projectionist who came to work for Edison as a cameraman in 1900 . Eventually , Porter became the director responsible for all of Edison Studios ' output . Porter based the set off of a photograph of a wrecked saloon which appeared in the Journal , while the characters and plot were based on editorial cartoons published in the paper . Porter frequently read the publication when he wanted inspiration on topics that filmgoers would be interested in .

With production supervised by James H. White , Porter was assisted by George S. Fleming during the creation of Kansas Saloon Smashers . Fleming was an actor and scenic designer at Edison Studios , who had joined the studio in January 1901 . Porter operated the camera for the film , and also developed the footage . Kansas Saloon Smashers marked one of the first short films to be created under Fleming and Porter 's partnership . While none of the identities of the people who appeared in the picture are recorded , it is known the women in the film were played by men in drag , rendering them sexually unattractive .

Kansas Saloon Smashers features stop action techniques , used to portray Nation destroying the bar ; it was shot in black @-@ and @-@ white . A copyright was filed for the film on February 2 , 1903 . The finished product comprised around 60 to 65 feet (around 18 m) of 35 mm film . Kansas Saloon Smashers was not the only satire of Nation to be produced by Edison Studios . Why Mr. Nation Wants a Divorce , a comedy picture released the same year , was inspired by news articles on Nation 's husband requesting a divorce .

= = Critical analysis = =

Kansas Saloon Smashers has been categorized as burlesque , re @-@ enactment , and political satire . Being based on a recent news event , it is noted as helping further the " visual newspaper " style of film . The short portrays saloons as positive , sanitary places rather than immoral establishments . In Musser 's book The Emergence of Cinema , he writes that " the women 's invasion of a male refuge is seemingly attributed to sexual frustration and the concomitant need for revenge , " while author Karen Blumenthal opined that Kansas Saloon Smashers suggests women were only attacking due to a few miscreants being present in the establishments .

Film critic Dave Kehr noted in a 2007 The New York Times article that , along with Why Mr. Nation Wants a Divorce , the film now seems dated due to the fact that " the evil influence of liquor is no longer the burning question it was " . Critic Alan Scherstuhl wrote in Village Voice that the film worked as " evidence that the first things our visual mass @-@ media culture sold to its audience were comic licentiousness ? and the impulse to clean such filth up . "

= = Release = =

Initially advertised as Mrs. Carrie Nation and Her Hatchet Brigade , Kansas Saloon Smashers was distributed by Edison Studios and first released on March 16 , 1901 . A unique publicity still was created for the film , a rare occasion at the time . Upon release , the film was screened at Bradenburgh 's Ninth and Arch Street Museum in Philadelphia , where it received an entire bill . Nevertheless , the short made Nation and her followers incensed , and Nation found the view of saloons Porter 's film offered to be " disturbing " .

The film proved to be very successful , inspiring other films about Nation to be produced by other studios ; Biograph Company made Carrie Nation Smashing a Saloon in April , while Lubin Manufacturing Company had produced a film entitled Mrs. Nation and Her Hatchet Brigade by early March . Siegmund Lubin had attempted to capitalize on the success of Kansas Saloon Smashers by making a film where Nation herself appeared ; when he was unable to contact her , an actress was hired to play her . Lubin arranged with a Camden bar owner to film a staged destruction scene ; however , the actress proved so convincing that bystanders began to destroy the bar for real and Lubin was forced to pay up to seven hundred dollars damage .

Kansas Saloon Smashers film is now in the public domain , and a paper print is preserved in the Library of Congress . This paper print was used to recover the film for a 2007 DVD release , as part of the compilation Social Issues in American Film 1900 ? 1934 . The compilation , part of the Treasures from American Film Archives produced by the National Film Preservation Foundation , features several films from the period which had particular focus on common issues at their releases . The other Edison @-@ produced Nation film , Why Mr. Nation Wants a Divorce , is also included .