

TRAVELS IN THAILAND

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I recently (January 2024) visited my friend and colleague John Libbey, the renowned publisher of film books, who lives just to the west of Bangkok. He told me that he owns a magic lantern and slides from his grandfather and I had a chance to have a quick look. Here are some photos of the lantern by Riley Brothers. There were also a mixture of slides – slipping, natural history, geographical – which I didn't look at in detail. Perhaps even more interesting is that the original owner, John's grandfather, was the clergyman and published author, Hubert C. Libbey. It occurred to me that here would be a project for someone to research, relating Hubert C. to the surviving slides? If anyone is interested, I would be glad to put you in touch with John Libbey. He is thinking of donating the lantern and slides (along with his



9.5mm family films) to the Thai Film Archive, located near where he lives, in a place called Salaya. We visited the Archive the next day and were given a tour by the current director and founder (Chalida Uabumrungjit and Dome Sukwong). It is a most impressive establishment: the Thai Ministry of Culture has evidently funded it well, and numerous artefacts have come from film industry veterans and from Dome's international purchases. The montage photograph here shows some of the extensive museum and large library. There are many historical exhibits and working models, a discovery area for children and reconstructions of a nickelodeon and kinetoscope parlour – and, yes, some lantern-related items. Dotted around the exterior of the site are statues of international film pioneers such as Chaplin and Muybridge. And that is quite apart from the state-of-the-art film preservation labs on higher floors of the building. If ever you are passing through Bangkok, the museum is well worth a diversion.