



# Mooreville's Movie Mogul: Leon Adler





Video:  
"Mooreville  
Moments  
#18:  
Leon Adler,  
Mooreville's  
Movie Mogul"

- <https://youtu.be/nEKuwj7gW8s>



# Origin Story

Born in Shelbyville, Indiana in 1906, Leon Adler graduated from Indianapolis Arsenal Technical High School in 1923. He excelled at public speaking and was an excellent student.

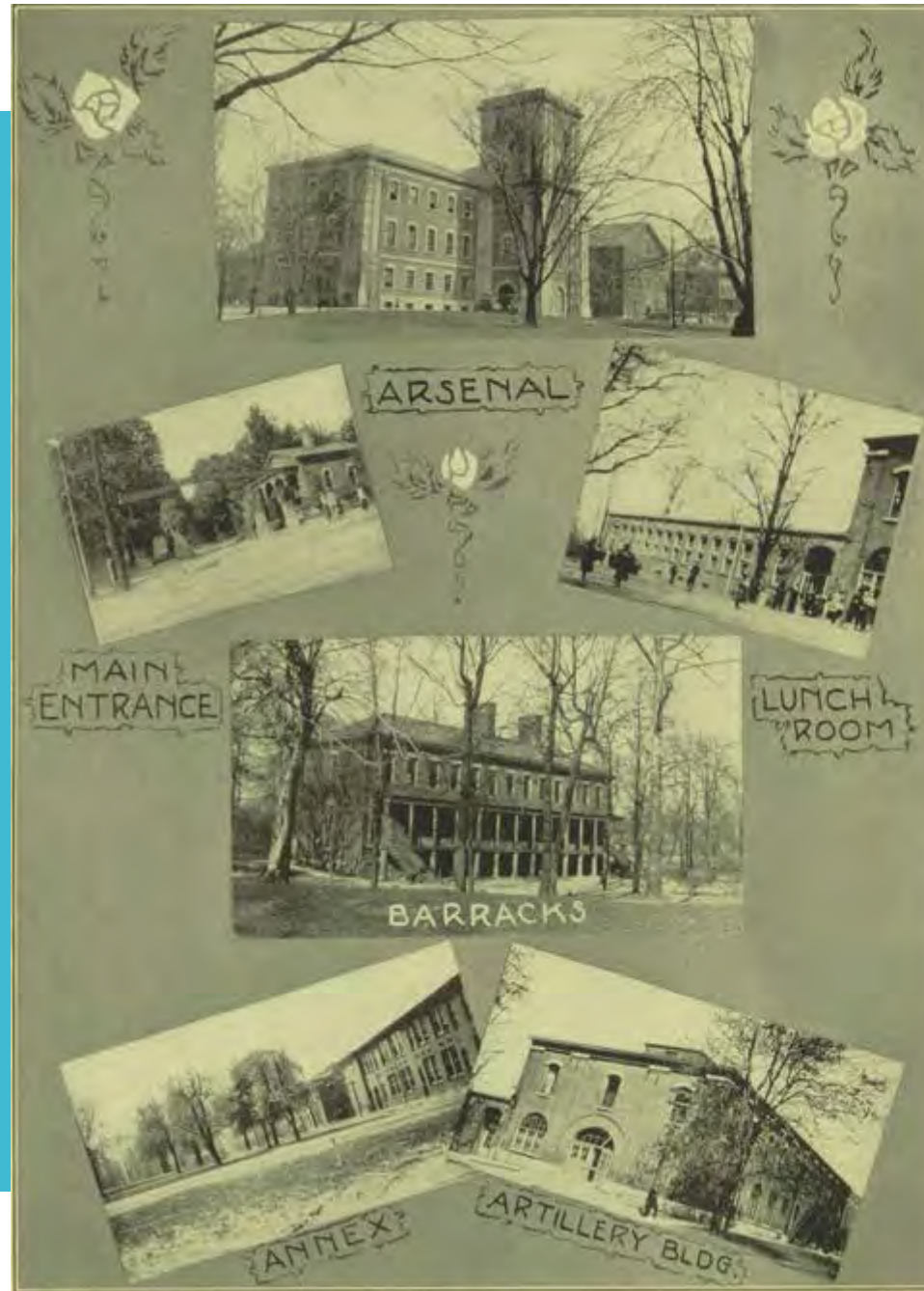
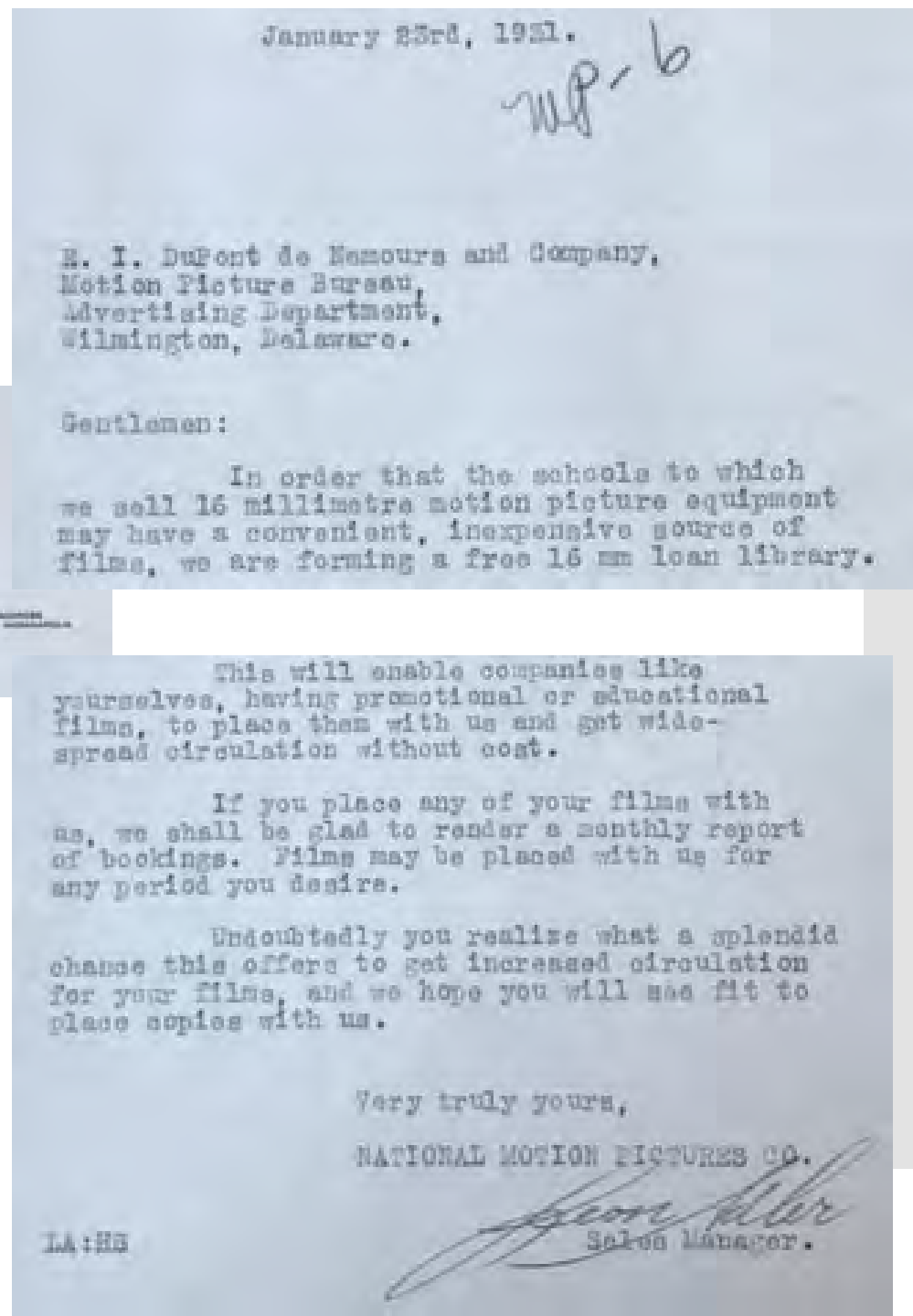


Image from the 1922  
*Arsenal Cannon*  
(yearbook)

# Leon Adler's National Motion Pictures Company (1931-1954)



Leon Adler's 1931 letter to the DuPont Company promoting his educational and promotional film catalog.





Mr. and Mrs. Leon Adler entertained a number of friends Wednesday and Sunday with a preview of the motion picture made recently in this community by Mr. Adler.

Martinsville IN Reporter-Times Thursday Oct 27 1938 p 5

## Hollywood Talent Joins Local Talent

1932 Academy Award winning cinematographer Floyd Crosby came from Hollywood to Mooresville to film two health and education movies for Leon Adler in 1935. (*The Indianapolis Star*, Wednesday, May 1, 1935, page 11.)

Adler routinely featured Mooresville citizens and locations in many of his films.

### ACE CAMERAMAN FROM HOLLYWOOD ON LOCATION IN STATE THIS WEEK

One of Hollywood's finest cameramen is "on location" in Indianapolis and Mooresville this week.

Floyd Crosby (no relation to Bing), who won the 1932 academy of **Motion Picture Arts and Sciences** award for the finest photography of the year in "Tabu," is engaged in something diametrically different in theme here—health and educational filming.

Mr. Crosby is filming two health and education **pictures** on milk and germs for the **National Motion Pictures Company** of Mooresville, which is owned by **Leon Adler**, who formerly operated here. The **pictures** will be used by schools and other institutions throughout the world. Much of the work yesterday was taking shots of charts with outdoor work in orchards, barns and dairies. Several Mooresville persons are appearing in the action scenes and they will get to see themselves in a screening in the theater there later.

#### In Indianapolis Today.

Work today will shift to a dairy, sewage plant and hospitals in Indianapolis.

For young, slender, bronzed Mr. Crosby, it is a breathing spell between a trip to Greece and Asia Minor and a venture into Mexico

nine months—and that was not too long. Four white men were in the expedition, led by the late director, F. W. Murnau. The natives proved to be fine natural actors, completely unaffected, especially in actions that were usual to them. Nor were they astounded by the camera and other paraphernalia, for the American movie had already penetrated those remote quarters although none of them had seen a **motion picture** camera before. But to keep the native actors from becoming camera-conscious, they were not invited to the screenings.

#### Learns Quickly.

The leading male at first took a delight in displaying his strength and agility by packing the heavy cameras over rough trails and up mountains. But when he started to realize his own importance—there was none of that for him. He became more temperamental than a few of Hollywood's stars and disappeared for days at a time. But what did it matter? Life was delightful in Tahiti. One hundred and twenty-two thousand feet of film were taken and later cut down to the feature length of 9,000 feet.

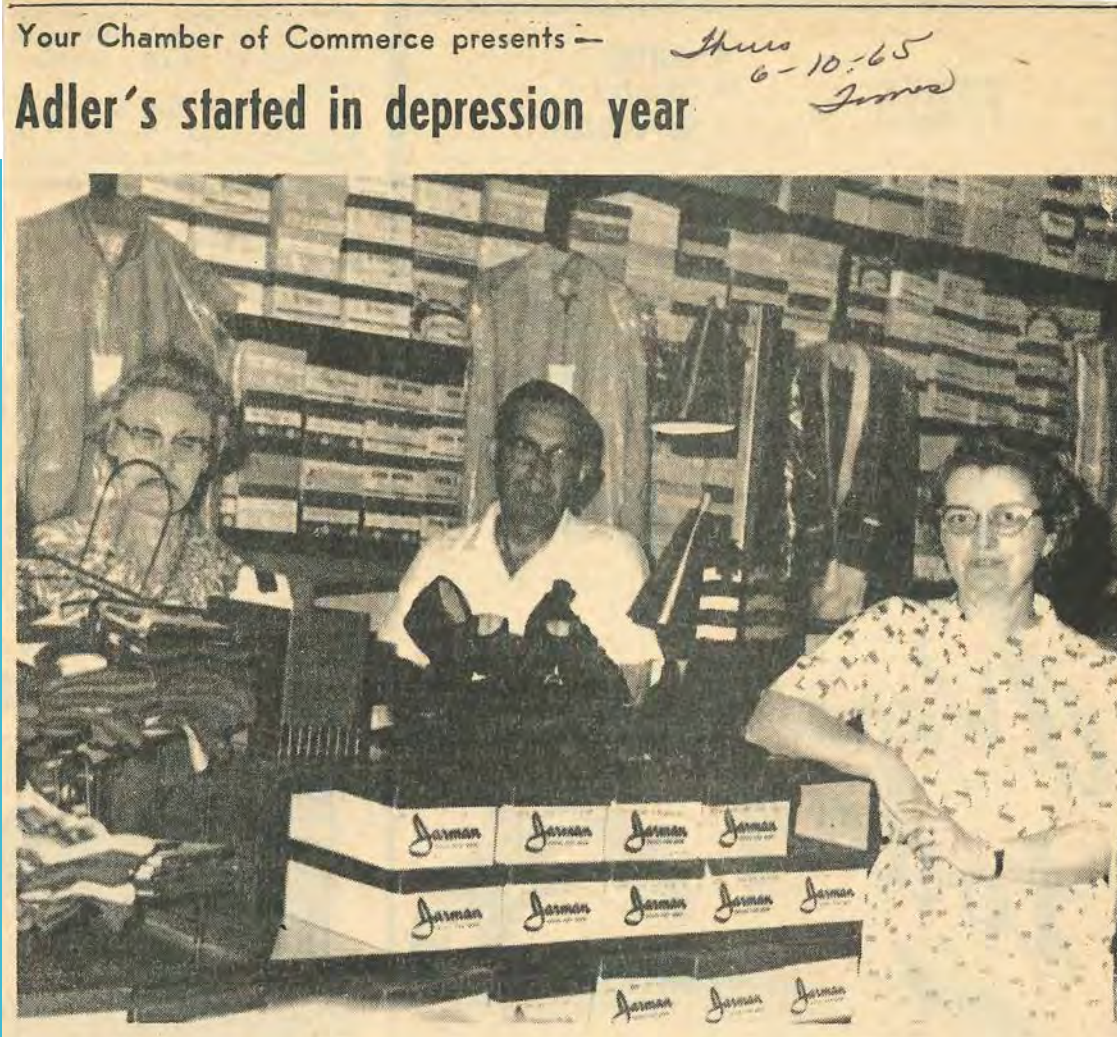
Crosby's most interesting work was in Greece where he photo-

“Told by a  
Tooth” (1939)  
by the  
National  
Motion  
Pictures  
Company  
(Leon Adler,  
producer)

- <https://youtu.be/lkR4BWXzkVA>




Adler's  
Department  
Store in  
Downtown  
Mooreville,  
10 West Main  
Street (1933-  
1967)



*Mooreville Times*, June 10, 1965  
(above); September, 1964 (right)

*Sept 1964*


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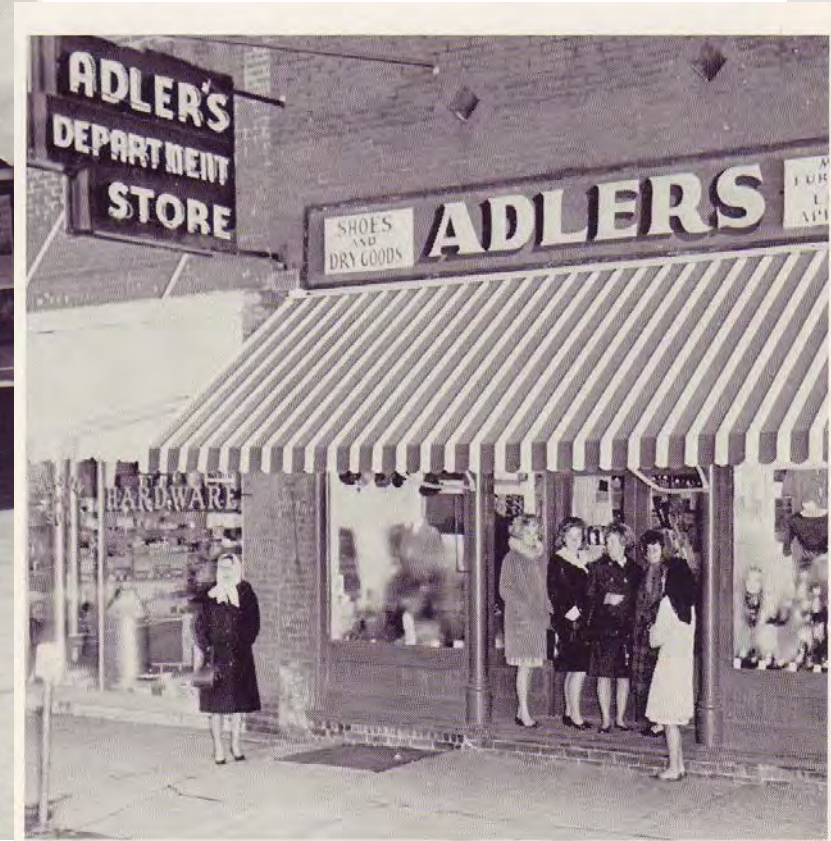
**ADLER'S**  
**DEPARTMENT STORE**  
Downtown Mooreville



**Adler's  
Department  
Store  
10 West Main  
Street in  
Downtown  
Mooreville  
(1933-1967)**



North Side of West Main Street (ca. 1964) (above); Advertisement from 1964 Mooreville High School yearbook, *Wagon Trails* (right)



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Mooreville, Indiana



# Leon Adler Supporting the Mooresville Community

- The Adler family lived in Mooresville from 1933-1955, but they also had a residence in Indianapolis and were active in several charities and organizations. Adler served as president of the Mooresville Chamber of Commerce and the Mooresville Lions Club, and he served on the board of Mooresville's Citizens Bank. He helped establish the Mooresville Development Commission and was instrumental in constructing new homes west of Newby Elementary School in Mooresville, which were vital in easing a housing shortage as the town's population steadily grew during the 1960s and 1970s.

# Leon Adler, 1958 Moorevillian of the Year

THURSDAY, JANUARY 15, 1959

## Chamber names Leon Adler 1958 Moorevillian



In one of the most popular choices since the Chamber of Commerce has chosen a Moorevillian of the year, Leon Adler was announced as the 1958 man at the annual dinner meeting Monday night. In announcing Mr. Adler as 1958 Moorevillian of the year, Zane Todd noted that this highest honor the Chamber can give signifies the group's appreciation for outstanding work for the community.

Adler, called on to speak, said that he considered his efforts in the past year worthy of being considered only a down payment, but that he would try to earn the full measure in the future.

Adler has been constantly active in the Chamber of Commerce and Lions club, particularly in seeking new industries for Mooreville. If any single man is to be credited with setting up the businessmen's parking lot in Mooreville, he is the one.

Last July Adler's department store celebrated its 25th anniversary, and in all of those 25 years Leon Adler has boosted worthy efforts in the town. He has worked quietly, and because of the intelligent careful thought he gives to any civic problem, his opinions have always carried weight.

In January, 1959, Adler was selected Moorevillian of the Year for 1958, an honor bestowed annually by the Mooreville Chamber of Commerce in recognition of local civic leaders whose efforts enhanced the Mooreville community. Adler was extremely popular with townspeople.

*Mooreville Times, January 15, 1959*



# Leon Adler's Obituaries (1986)

THE INDIANAPOLIS NEWS  
*Mon. July 14, 1986*

## DEATHS AND FUNERALS

### Leon Adler was retired businessman ✓

Leon Adler, 80, Indianapolis, retired businessman, died today in St. Vincent Hospital.

He owned Adler's Department Stores in Mooresville and Martinsville from 1933-67. In 1931, he bought National Motion Picture Co., which he operated until selling it in 1954.

Adler was a member of Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation and Labor Zionists of America. He was former chairman of the Southeastern Indiana Jewish Welfare Federation.

In 1963, Adler received an award for meritorious service from Israel. He was a former president of both the Mooresville Chamber of Commerce and Mooresville Lions Club.

A Mooresville resident from 1933-55, Adler was named Mooresvillian of the Year in 1954.

An active fighter for liberal causes, Adler worked in support of organized labor, civil rights and Zionism.

He was the widower of Anna Zivien Adler.

Memorial contributions may be made to Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation.

Services will be at 1 p.m. Tuesday in Aaron-Ruben-Nelson Meridian Hills Mortuary. Burial will be in Indianapolis Hebrew Cemetery South.

Survivors — son Herbert L. Adler; four grandchildren.

*S. Dickstein III*

### Leon Adler *TIMES*

Leon Adler, 80, of Indianapolis, a retired Mooresville businessman and "Mooresvillian of the year" in 1954, died on Monday at St Vincent Hospital.

Born in Shelbyville, Adler lived in Mooresville from 1933-55.

He owned Adler's Department Stores in Mooresville and Martinsville from 1933 to 1967, when he retired. In 1931, he bought National Motion Picture Company, which he operated until selling it to Institutional Cinema Services of New York in 1954.

He was a former president of the Mooresville Chamber of Commerce and the Lions Club.

A member of Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation and Labor Zionists of America, he was a former chairman of the Southeastern Indiana Jewish Welfare Federation. In 1963, he received an award from Israel for meritorious service.

Surviving are a son, Herbert L. Adler, and four grandchildren. His wife, Anna Zivien Adler, preceded him in death in September 1977.

Funeral services were on Tuesday in Indianapolis with burial in Indianapolis Hebrew Cemetery South.

*July 16, 1986*

*Indianapolis News, July 14, 1986; Mooresville Times, July 16, 1986*

Questions?

- William R. Buckley, information director, adult reference services, Mooresville Public Library
- [billb@mooresvillepublic.lib.in.us](mailto:billb@mooresvillepublic.lib.in.us)



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