

ABRAMS, Hiram, financier, producer and distributor of photoplays, was born in Portland, Me., Feb. 22, 1878, son of Isaac and Dora (Marcus) Abrams, and grandson of Isaac Abrams, who came from Russia and settled in Portland, Me., in 1851. His father was engaged in the real estate business and previously in the retail dry goods business in Portland. Hiram Abrams was educated in the public schools of Portland, and at sixteen years of age became a traveling salesman for a large house manufacturing ladies' garments. When the Victor Talking Machine Co. began its advertising and sales campaign he joined their New England sales force, later becoming its Portland jobber. After selling out this franchise he became a salesman for M. Steinert & Sons, music publishers. While here he became interested in providing slides for theatres, making arrangements with a New York manufacturer, and entered the slide business in a store adjoining that of the Steinert company. It was not long before he was doing business with Walter E. Greene, former president of Artcraft Pictures Corporation, and Vice-president of Famous Players-Lasky Corporation, but then president of the film exchange in Portland which bore his name. In 1907, three months after he had embarked upon the slide enterprise, Mr. Abrams became identified with Mr. Greene in the film exchange. This partnership developed into a broad extension of activities in the merchandising of motion picture film in New England. Offices were opened in Portland, Boston and New Haven, and several thousand theatres were served in the territory. In 1914, on the formation of Paramount Pictures Corporation, the principal film exchanges throughout the country consolidated. Mr. Abrams then assumed control of the New England distribution, and his election in 1916 to the presidency of Paramount Pictures Corporation was only a natural step forward in its meteoric progress. Thus it was that a chance inquiry led him into the motion picture industry, in which field he stands today the most conspicuous single personality and creative force, having brought about in 1919 the formation of the United Artists Corporation, known as the "Big Four," for the distribution of the productions of Mary Pickford, Charlie Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks and D. W. Griffith. Possessed of a robust physique, of charming manners, and easy of approach, he is one who impresses all who come within the circle of his influence as a leader of men. By appointment of the mayor of New York city and of the governor of the state of New York he has served on a number of important committees, and was at one time active in the National Association of the Motion Picture Industry. Mr. Abrams' favorite diversion is baseball, and in 1917 he purchased the Portland franchise of the Eastern League in order that his home town might continue its place in the baseball world. He is a member of the Friars Club, Progressive Club of New York city, Young Men's Hebrew Association (New York city), Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks and the Masonic fraternity. He was married July 1, 1904, to Florence Hamilton, daughter of George Hamilton of Toronto, Canada, and has one daughter, Grace Abrams.