



John Carbonell, one of five sons of Juan Carbonell, stands with the famous Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer lion, a familiar, long-time symbol of Hollywood and the movies.

Ticket to the Stars

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Carbonells brought movies to Key West

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KEY WEST — Key West is brimming with excitement about movies and their stars lately, what with the arrival of Planet Hollywood and the promise of celebrity appearances. But the island is no stranger to the film industry, boasting a colorful theater and location-shoot heritage.

Aurelio Torres opened the Bijou moving picture house or the nickelodeon — in 1910, but real movies hit Key West in 1912 with the opening of the Monroe Theatre by Juan Carbonell. A Cuban immigrant of a cigar-making family, Carbonell promised his viewers “an exclusive program with features of quality, a courteous treatment, a ventilated house, a sanitary theatre, and a true friendship.”

“We cater to the best and the best we offer,” touted the proprietor’s fliers.

Movies at the time were



Juan