10. Documentarist as . . . Promoter

Definition(s):
Documentarist as Promoter = Corporate Sponsorship of documentary film
[Question—how does this differ from government sponsorship of the “Advocate” documentarist?]

Key Concepts & Issues:
Sponsorship was rather like an early “corporate responsibility” practice, although with anonymous sponsorship, the full effect could not be felt
The fall of the newsreel, and—
The rise of films distributed under business-subsidized arrangements
Strange bedfellows—e.g., Old Crow Bourbon’s sponsorship of skiing films
Free content for television (in 1956, 99% of TV stations used corporate-sponsored films)
*Corporate Sponsorship vs. Journalism (e.g., Murrow’s work for CBS)?

Key Documentarists:
Shell film unit—stimulated by the influence of Grierson (the “Advocate”), was formed in 1934
The company dissociated their film activities from traditional advertising;
policy against “internal reference” to the company or product in films
e.g., Airport (1935), Powered Flight (1951), History of the Helicopter (1951)

Robert Flaherty
His Louisiana Story (1948), funded by Standard Oil of New Jersey, was an expressed of his love for the unspoiled wilderness and its life (the paradise is left as the oil drillers found it, and the Cajun boy and the oil crew are friends)

Edward R. Murrow
Famed WWII reporter was highly respected for his integrity
His See It Now began in 1951 on CBS with producer Fred Friendly—sponsored by Alcoa
In 1953, See It Now began a series of documentaries on the then-current issue of McCarthyism:
   The Case Against Milo Radulovich, A0589839 (1953)
   Argument at Indianapolis (1953)
   Report on Senator McCarthy (1954)
His involvement as co-writer (with Friendly) and narrator for Harvest of Shame (CBS, 1960) was just before he left to head the U.S. Information Agency; he became ill and died in 1965