



SMPTE ALMANAC

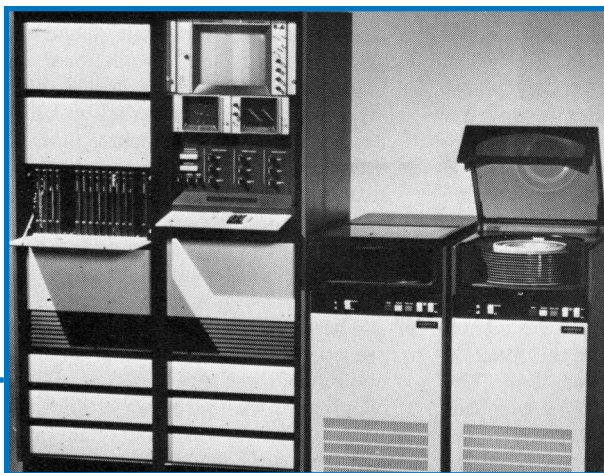
By Michael Dolan

In this column we provide interesting historical briefs from the Journal articles of days past. The purpose of this column is primarily entertainment, but we hope it will also stimulate thinking and reflection on the Society's history, how far we have come in the industry, and (sometimes) how some things never change. This is not meant to be an authoritative reference, and no attempt is made to correct any past errors or omissions of the Journal. We simply hope you enjoy the material.

25 Years Ago in the Journal

The August 1976 *Journal* reported an article on *The Electronic Still Store: A Digital System for the Storage and Display of Still Pictures* by W. G. Connolly and J. Diermann: "More than 300 still pictures are broadcast by a television station in the United States during each broadcast day....The preparation, storage, retrieval, and broadcasting of still (slides and graphics) add up to a significant cost element that must be controlled in the operation of a typical television facility... reserving a studio camera and/or a telecine chain to show stills is inefficient and not cost effective. A new system to overcome the problems, the Electronic Still Store (ESS), has not been demonstrated by CBS and Ampex. The ESS can randomly search an electronic library of still pictures from a number of locations, arrange the stills in the order for playing, play them as fast as 1 still/s, and do these things without physically touching the media. The system makes available a current stock of about 1500 stills (those expected to be needed within the next 100 days) and a long-term stock of about 5000 stills. System control tasks are handled by an LSI-11 micro-computer."

Electronic Still Store (ESS) with Ampex DM331 disc drives



50 Years Ago in the Journal

The August 1951 *Journal* published a new America Standard, PH22.82-1951, *Sound Transmission of Perforated Projection Screens*, "developed by the Society's Sound Committee based on a war standard, Z52.44-1945. The need for this standard was indicated by the occasional installation of screens with excessive transmission loss. Increasing the gain of the sound system as a compensation very often drives the amplifier into its non-linear region and consequently produces excessive distortion. 1.1 The sound transmission characteristics of perforated projection screens shall be such that the attenuation at 6000 cycles, with respect to 1000 cycles, is not more than 2 ½ db and the attenuation at 10,000 cycles, with respect to 1000 cycles, is not more than 4 db. The regularity of the response shall be such that there is no variation greater than

+2 db from a smooth curve at any frequency between 300 and 10,000 cycles. The general attenuation at and below 1000 cycles should be not greater than 1 db."

The 70th Convention was promoted for October 15-19, 1951 at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel, including sessions on Color Processes, Color Aspects, Magnetic Recording, High-Speed Photography, and Stereo Projection. "Emery House, Eastman Kodak Company, will provide the 16-mm arc equipment for use at the hotel."

75 Years Ago in the Journal

The September 1926 issue reported in an article by Carl Louis Gregory (Dean, New York Institute of Photography) on *Trick Photography*: "The movies, our perennially infant industry, is no longer so infantile. Many of its first pewlings have already been engulfed in the oblivion of forgotten things. Trick photography was much employed in the production of the first French films. These were extensively "duped" in this country to feed the maw of the first Nickelodeons and store shows that have almost passed from memory... "The Star of Bethlehem" was the "Ben Hur" of its day, when a thousand dollars spent on a production was more of an event that a million is at present. It was a conception of the birth of the Christ Child, and although the scenes were laid in Palestine and Egypt, the story was produced entirely in New York City and New Rochelle with only a few interiors set up in an old skating rink. The Wise Men of the East tended their flocks of sheep on the Mall in Central Park, and a piece of black cardboard masked out the tall buildings on 59th Street in the background. The Star of Bethlehem was later double exposed into the masked-out sky by means of a spot light photographed through a copper wire screen to give the shimmering rays...."