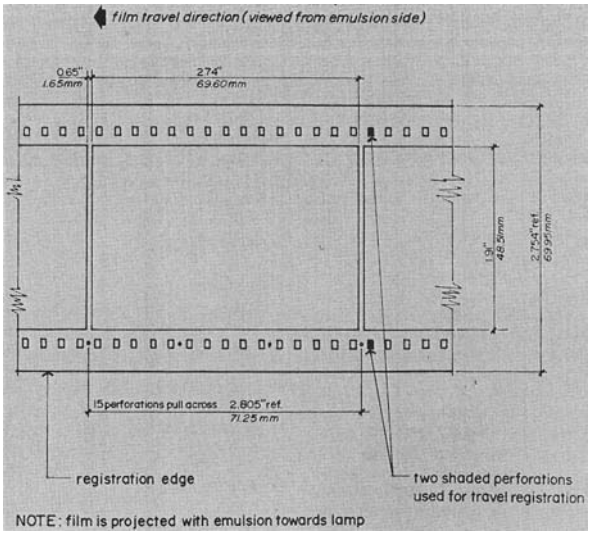
SMPTE Almanac

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 your 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. This column is sponsored by Television Broadcast Technology, Inc.

25 Years Ago in the *Journal*

The March 1983 *Journal* published in "IMAX® and OMNIMAX® Theatre Design" by William C. Shaw and J. Creighton Douglas: "Theatre design for IMAX® and OMNIMAX® presentations opens up a variety of new possibilities and presents a host of problems, some old, and many new. Many traditional concepts of theatre design, such as clear sight-lines to the bottom of the screen, are no longer justified or even desirable... IMAX® is a high-fidelity motion picture system: that means both high-fidelity pictures and high-fidelity sound. High-fidelity pictures are produced by using a large film image area (**Fig. 1**), moderate magnification, and with picture steadiness at least five times better than can be achieved by conventional systems... The traditional planetarium, has a f at f oor, an elevated centrally-located star projector, a concentrically-seated audience surrounding the star projector, and a horizon suggesting an earthbound environment. OMNIMAX® was developed to break away from these constraints and provide a "Space Theatre." The first of these was opened in San Diego in 1973, and has subsequently been duplicated in a number of other locations."



IMAX® projector film format.

50 Years Ago in the *Journal*

The March 1958 *Journal* published in "The NARCOM Plan for Transatlantic Television and Other Wideband Telecommunication Services" by William S. Halstead: "A proposed North Atlantic Relay Communications System (NARCOM) is...a plan for linking the United States and Canada to Great Britain and Europe...A radio-wave transmission method, tropospheric-scatter propagation, has been evolved within the past several years and is now in successful

use in wideband communications relay systems extending over transcontinental distances…With systems of this type, now in operation over long distances in the North American defense network, a single wideband carrier in the ultra-high-frequency (UHF) band above 300 mc can simultaneously accommodate a traffic load substantially greater than can be handled by all of the transatlantic radio and cable circuits now in use…As early as 1930, Marconi reported to the Italian Society for the Progress of Sciences that he had accomplished successful radiotelephone transmission at very high frequencies above 30 mc on over-water paths extending for distances up to approximately 160 statute miles."

75 Years Ago in the *Journal*

The March 1933 *Journal* reported in "Early Stages of Kinematography" by C. H. Bothamley: "…though the name of E. J. Marey, professor in the College of France, is occasionally mentioned, it is doubtful whether the importance of his work is fully appreciated, notwithstanding the fact that his book, Le Mouvement, was translated into English by Dr. Eric Prichard, and published in 1895…Marey restricted himself to his original line of work, the study of the movements of living things, from the scientific rather than from a popular point of view…Marey himself states that the originator of this line of work was the famous astronomer, Janssen, who, in December, 1874, took a series of successive photographs of the transit of the planet Venus across the face of the sun. A rotating circular plate was used, the interval between successive exposures being seventy seconds. Janssen, moreover, suggested that this method of making successive photographs at regular intervals might be applied to the study of the motion of animals, especially locomotion. After Janssen, came Eadweard Muybridge who, about the year 1880, or a little earlier, at the suggestion of a Mr. Stanford, a former Governor of California, applied the principle to the photographic study of the movements of the horse, and who subsequently extended his experiments to other animals and to human beings."