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*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 column is sponsored by Television Broadcast Technology, Inc., since March 2001: <http://ieeexplore.ieee.org/document/7257346>.*

### 25 Years Ago in the Journal

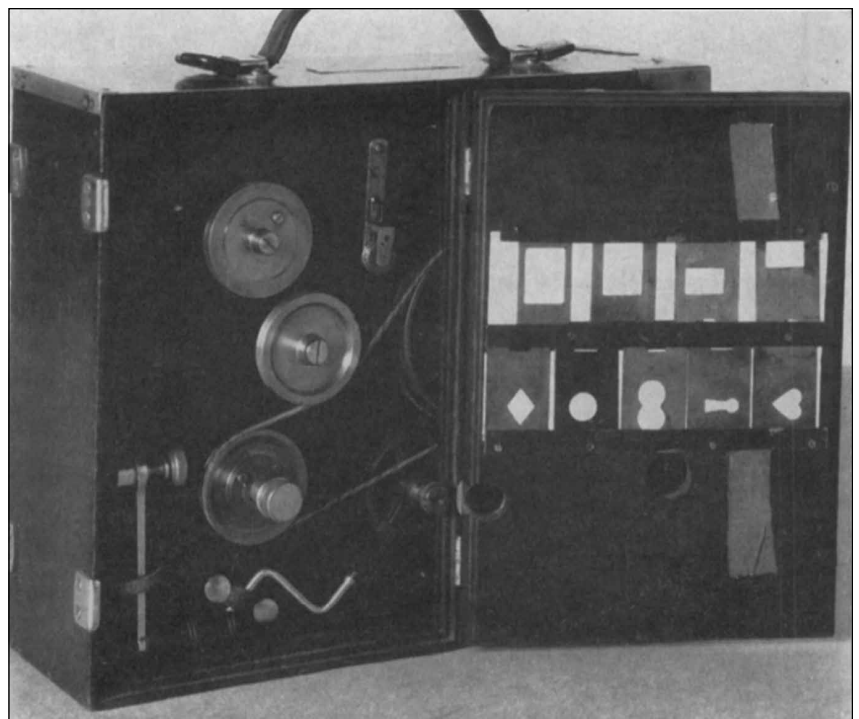
**T**he May 1994 *Journal* published in: “Pixels and Halide—A Natural Partnership?” by David J. Bancroft: “A Los Angeles-based body representing the major film studios, the Technology Council of the Motion Picture and Television Industry, recently proposed a change in the way motion-picture productions are transferred from film to tape for video distribution. The stimulus for the proposal is that the present transfer method is placing an increasing cost and complexity burden on the studios because of the proliferating number of video distribution formats that have to be derived from each film original; to avoid picture-quality compromises, each output variant has typically required a fresh transfer, implying that the full costs of film handling and labor-intensive operations such as color correction have to be borne each time. The Technology Council proposes instead that an electronic representation of the film original be made that is sufficiently generic to all desired output variants that it need be made only once ... Now the problem is becoming worse today, it is not just a question of two or

three distribution formats—there may be dozens, if we consider all the permutations.” For the full article, see: <http://ieeexplore.ieee.org/document/7239375>

### 50 Years Ago in the Journal

The May 1969 *Journal* published in: “Historical Note:” “When Waldon S. (Walt) Ball died in February 1967 at the age of 84, his death marked the end of an era in motion-picture history in the San Francisco Bay

area. In his one-man film laboratory in San Francisco, Ball devised a number of machines which were taken over by Art Reeves of Hollywood and marketed worldwide. They were made by “Walt” primarily for his own needs; through a longstanding friendship, Mr. Reeves had access to them as prototypes to be manufactured under an informal and confidential business arrangement between the two men. Mr. Ball did not care to have any publicity or acknowledgment of his role as the originator of the devices. He established his laboratory in the earliest days of motion-picture production, about 1912, when San Francisco was as thriving a theatrical production center as Hollywood ... Walt came to San Francisco to establish a machine shop after being introduced to



Camera with masks for special effects (Fig. 2, *JSMPT*E, May 1969, p. 368).

motion picture equipment in 1901 when he worked for Thomas Talley as a projector operator in the first-picture theater in Los Angeles.” For the full article, see: <http://ieeexplore.ieee.org/document/7227478>

### 75 Years Ago in the Journal

The May 1944 *Journal* published in: “Notes on Operating Experience Using the Direct Positive Push-Pull Method of Recording” by A. C. Blaney: “The direct positive method of sound recording was discussed at the 1939 Spring Meeting of the Society in Hollywood. That paper discussed the general technical problems involved in the recording of direct positive tracks and also described the details of a particular system having new and outstanding features ... The variable-area method of recording has the fundamental advantage that the original negative can be reproduced directly without appreciable wave shape distortion. The motion

picture industry has always made a somewhat limited use of this advantage usually for the purpose of saving time or the expense of making prints ... It is no longer necessary to spend precious time on rehearsals in order to squeeze the sound into the track limits. Recordings of a large orchestra or other types of material are made at a safe level with very little, if any, attempt by the mixer to adjust the level during the take.” For the full article, see: <http://ieeexplore.ieee.org/document/7252439>

### 100 Years Ago in the Journal

The April 1919 *Journal* published in: “Attachments to Professional Cinematographic Cameras” by Carl L. Gregory, F.R.P.S. and G. J. Badgley: “It is almost as certain as death and taxes that no professional motion picture studio photographer is entirely satisfied with any model of camera that is manufactured today. The Cinematographer does not consider

that he is ready to take a picture until he has camouflaged his camera with more attachments than a Ford owner can buy for his “tin lizzy” ... With the exception of the American built Bell and Howell camera, nearly all of the better makes of motion picture boxes are, or rather were, manufactured in Europe, for with the exception of a limited number of Pathe’s, this production was entirely cut off by the great war ... It seems reasonable to prophecy that the Cine camera of the future will be sold with a number of standard attachments in much the same way as the sewing machine is sold with an equipment for producing all sorts of fancy frills, tucks, pleats and ruffles. In much the same way must the professional camera be provided with attachments for producing dissolved vignettes, fades, irises, etc.” For the full article, see: <http://ieeexplore.ieee.org/document/7229947>



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