



BY MICHAEL DOLAN



“TELEVISION PROGRAMMING WORTH PRODUCING IS WORTH PRESERVING, AT LEAST UNTIL THE PRODUCTION INVESTMENT HAS BEEN RECOVERED AND FULLY EXPLOITED.”

25 Years Ago in the Journal

The October 1999 *Journal* published in: “Extending Video Content Survival Beyond 25 Years—When All Odds Seem Stacked Against It” by E. H. Zwaneveld: “Television programming worth producing is worth preserving, at least until the production investment has been recovered and fully exploited. Many teenaged tapes are orphaned when playback equipment support is discontinued and chemically challenged media no longer sustain them. It is feared that digital encoding dialects will no longer be understood, and decoding and re-encoding translators will be “out to lunch” when required. As with the human condition, the life of old folks is not extended by fresh air and fluffy pillows but by a wholesome lifestyle long before they become aged. The stages of creation, use, and preservation of digital production elements are and must remain interdependent. This paper identifies some principles that enable programming content perpetuation.”

50 Years Ago in the Journal

The October 1974 *Journal* published in: “How To Make Your Super 8 Equipment Run Properly.” “If proper presentation of your Super 8 films is important to you, then your equipment must be in perfect condition. To learn how well your Super 8 system performs, you’ll need an SMPTE Test Film. The four films now available are: 1. Azimuth Alignment Test Film (50 ft) which is used to align the azimuth position of the recording and reproducing heads on magnetic sound equipment. 2. Flutter Test Film (50 ft) to measure flutter introduced by sound reproducers contains an original recording with extremely low flutter content. 3. Signal Level Test Film (50 ft) helps measure and balance the power level output from motion picture sound reproducers. The recorded level does not in itself indicate a program level but provides a reproducible reference from which a recommended program level can be determined. 4. Multi-frequency Test Film (100 ft) is used for testing and adjusting motion picture sound reproducers and projectors. It is calibrated, and correction factors are supplied with each film. For further information, please mail the coupon immediately.”

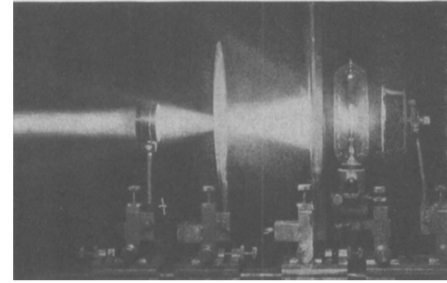
In this column we provide interesting historical briefs from the Journal articles of days past. The purpose of this column is primarily entertainment, but we hope it will also stimulate your thinking and reflection on the Society’s history, how far we have come in the industry, and (sometimes) how some things never change.

75 Years Ago in the Journal

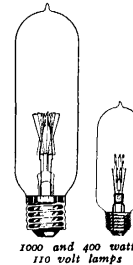
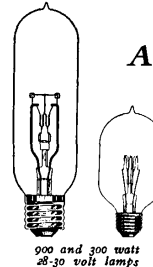
The October 1949 *Journal* published in: "Theater Television Today" by John Evans McCoy and Harry O. Warner:" "There are strong signs that the motion picture industry, in facing the problems created by the spectacular boom in home television and its impact on motion picture attendance, intends to "fight television with television...Theater television involves the exhibition of visual and aural television programs on large screens (about 15 by 20 feet), in motion picture theaters. These programs are photographed outside the theater by regular television cameras; transmitted to the exhibiting theater by television techniques over microwave radio relays, coaxial cables, or telephone wires; and received in the exhibiting theater by television receiving equipment. In the United States, two systems of theater television equipment have been developed for installation in the exhibiting theater for the purpose of projecting the television program as received in the theater to the screen: the *direct-projection system* and the *intermediate-film system*...television broadcast stations licensed by the FCC are intended to transmit television programs to the public generally, primarily for reception in the home, theater television does not come within this definition because its programs are beamed directly by means of closed-circuit coaxial cables or wires or by directional microwave relays to the exhibiting theater, and they are not intended to be received by the general public."

100 Years Ago in the Journal

The September-October 1924 *Transactions* published in: "Presidential Address, Fall Meeting of the Society of Motion Picture Engineers, Chicago, IL., 1924. "Fellow Members and Guests: It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the 19th regular meeting of the Society of Motion Picture Engineers...since it is our custom to meet twice a year, this means we are now in the tenth year of our existence... Many people take great delight and pride tracing their ancestry back to the Pilgrim Fathers or to the time of William the Conqueror... Some months ago, an interesting chronological table was published by Mr. W. Day" in which he gives many interesting references, and I am quoting in part from this publication. We find that the Chinese in 5000 B.C. indulged in shadow shows in which buffalo hide figures were projected as shadows or silhouettes upon parchment screens. The phenomenon of persistence of vision, upon which depends the possibility to produce motion pictures, was noticed and mentioned in the writings of Lucretius, 65 A.D., and this same fact was commented upon by Claudius



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Edison Mazda Lamps (Ad from *SMPE Transactions*, Sept.-Oct. 1924, p. VI)

Ptolemy in 130 A.D. The first lens of which there is any mention in existent literature, was formed by a glass globe filled with water. This is credited to Hero of Alexandria, but no date is given for this work. It is well known that the optical lantern, or projector, in some form, was used by the ancient priests and magicians in the temple of Tyre and throughout Egypt, Greece, and the Roman Empire between the period 4000 B.C. and 200 A.D. and it was by some such means that many of the divine manifestations, occurring in the shrines and temples, were produced..."

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