

The History Of NBC West Coast Studios

(Created June 2016, Updated May 2021)

By Bobby Ellerbee and *Eyes Of A Generation.com*

Preface and Acknowledgement

This is a unique look at the events that preceded the need for NBC television studios in Hollywood. As in New York, the radio division led the way. This project is somewhat different than the prior reports on the New York studios of NBC and CBS for two reasons. The first reason is that in that in those reports, television was brand-new and being developed through the mechanical function to an electronic phenomenon. Most of that work occurred in and around the networks' headquarters in New York. In this case, both networks were at the mercy of geological and technological developments outside their own abilities: the Rocky Mountains and AT&T.

The second reason has to do with the success of the network's own stars. Their popularity on radio soon translated to public demand once "talking pictures" became possible. That led many New York based radio stars to Hollywood and, in a way, Mohamed had to come to the mountain.

This story is told to the best of our abilities, as a great deal of the information on these facilities is now gone...like so many of the men and women who worked there. I've told this as concisely as possible, but some elements are dependent on the memories of those who were there many years ago, and from conclusions drawn from research. If you can add to this with facts or photos, please contact me as this is an ongoing project.

Eyes of a Generation would like to offer a huge thanks to the many past and present NBC people that helped, including Bob Meza, but most especially to television historian and author David Schwartz (GSN), and longtime LA Director and historian Joel Tator. Thanks as well to Mark Durenberger and John Schneider for their incredible photos and writing on early radio and the telephone lines that connected the continent, Burbank alum Richard Wirth for his detailed research and photos on the videotape history, Snooks Higgins for the rare images and clarity shared, and KTLA veteran Bob Maslen.

This presentation is presented as a public service by the world's ultimate destination for television's living history...*The Eyes of a Generation*. –Bobby Ellerbee

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The Beginning of RCA and NBC

The Birth of RCA

In the beginning, there was David Sarnoff. By 1919, Sarnoff was the commercial manager of American Marconi in New York. That same year, British Marconi had made an offer to General Electric to buy the worldwide rights to their Alexanderson Alternator technology which was vital for transatlantic communication. The prospect of a foreign company controlling international communications set off alarm bells in Washington and the government approached GE with a counter offer. If GE would place the Alternator in a new subsidiary company, they would be allowed to operate the international wireless circuits for both government and commercial traffic. To sweeten the deal, the Navy agreed to turn over all the wireless patents it received through its wartime research. Who could refuse?

The new GE subsidiary company was named the Radio Corporation of America. At the helm was Owen Young as Chairman, Ernst Alexanderson as Chief Engineer and David Sarnoff as General Manager. Within months, AT&T, Westinghouse and a big customer of international wireless services, United Fruit Company, bought up all the RCA shares.

By 1921, things had gotten interesting on another front...radio stations. Twenty eight sprang up that year, including the Westinghouse-owned WJZ in New Jersey. With the July 2, 1921 World Heavyweight Championship fight between America's Jack Dempsey and France's George Carpentier looming, the nation was anxious for a speedy way to know the details and outcome. David Sarnoff decided RCA should broadcast the fight on WJZ. It was a radio first, a publicity coup for RCA and Westinghouse, and it sold lots of radios! With Westinghouse in a good mood, Sarnoff convinced them to allow RCA to take over WJZ. Later that month, RCA built and installed a powerful new transmitter atop Aeolian Hall in New York for its first station.

By the end of 1922, 430 more radio station licenses had been granted and Sarnoff was paying attention, but had a different train of thought. To him, it seemed the bigger opportunity was not in owning local stations, but in creating a national network. **In a memo to Chairman Owen Young, Sarnoff said that RCA should provide “a national broadcasting company” that would entertain a nation with high quality programs of news, sports and music.** The plans for the National Broadcasting Company were in place now, but it would take a few more years.

Part of RCA's original corporate mandate was to issue and collect licensing fees from those manufacturing wireless radio equipment. That meant everyone, including one of RCA's major shareholders: AT&T. Even though the company would be rewarded by its stock ownership, AT&T began to chafe at the bit and in early 1923, began manufacturing receivers without paying the license fees to RCA.

On top of that, AT&T had also refused to allow RCA to lease phone lines to begin a network for WJZ. RCA's only alternative was to use telegraph lines, which had very poor voice quality.

In the summer of 1924, there were some anti-Semitic remarks aimed at Sarnoff by AT&T head Walter Gilbert. Things got pretty heated, but that actually worked to RCA's advantage. After that embarrassing flap, AT&T's management began to consider getting out of the radio business, and in July 1926, AT&T agreed to sell their New York City station, WEAF, to RCA. The sale came with the stipulation that from then on, they would rent AT&T lines, which is what Sarnoff wanted all along.

The Beginning of NBC, September 9, 1926...NBC Was Incorporated By RCA

The incorporation process was the first step on a long and profitable road for RCA's new broadcast division. The nation's first major broadcasting network came to life on **November 15, 1926**, with a gala four-hour radio program originating from the ballroom of the original Waldorf-Astoria Hotel at 5th Avenue and 34th Street, which is now the Empire State Building's location.

After NBC was created, the network's two stations became the centers of its two semi-independent networks: NBC Blue, based at WJZ, and NBC Red, based at WEAF, each with its respective links to stations in other cities.

RCA became the network's sole owner January 1, 1930, when former partners General Electric and Westinghouse were bought out. Many believe that NBC created the first radio network, but that is not exactly the case. RCA's old partner AT&T had the first radio network, and its first network radio broadcast was January 4, 1923, between WEAF in NYC and WNAC in Boston.

RCA's WJZ also had also begun to build a small network in late 1923 over telegraph lines, but abandoned the attempt due to the low signal quality a few months later. Their first real network broadcast was in December 1926, between WJZ and General Electric's station WGY in Schenectady, on the newly-available AT&T lines.

Below is a photo from November 4, 1924, showing Will Rogers (far right) with The Waldorf Astoria Orchestra on "The Eveready Hour". This was the AT&T network's top show and came from WEAF, which would soon become the flagship for NBC's Red Network. Remember, back then, most radios were powered by Eveready dry cell batteries. I think Alternating Current electric radios were first introduced in late 1923.

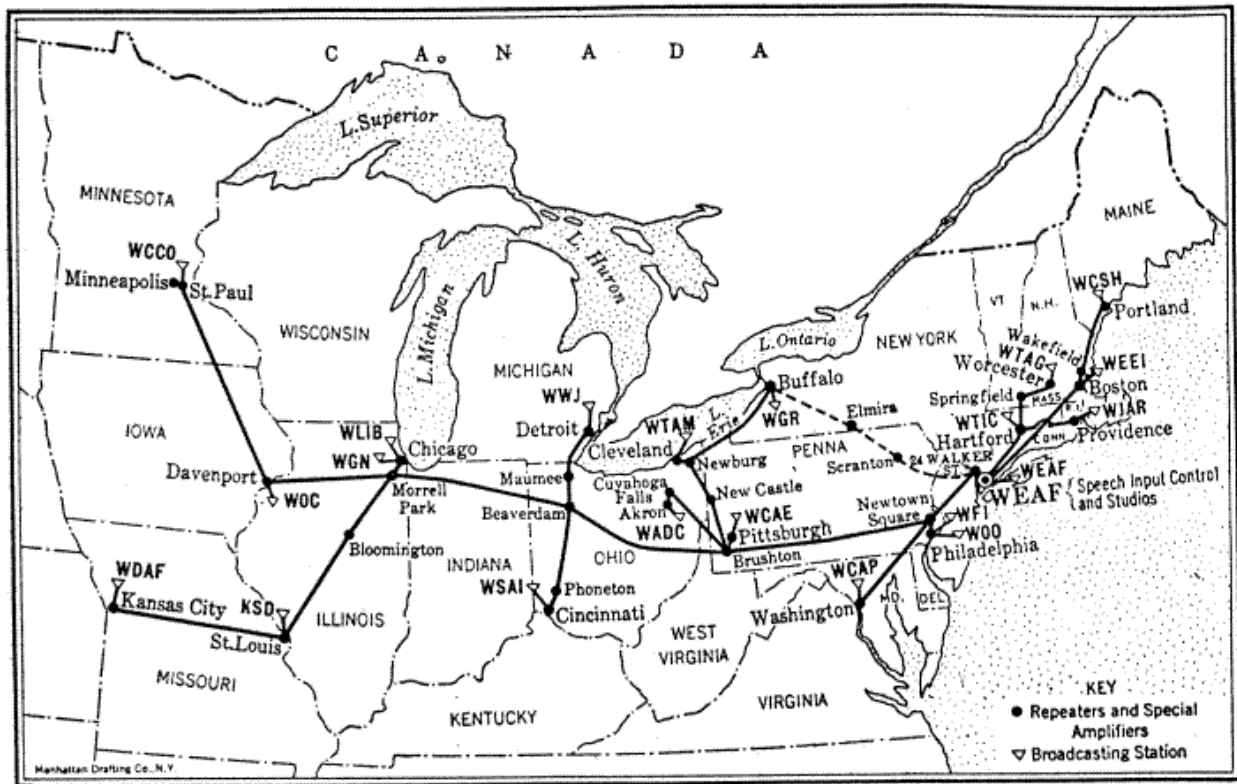


The First NBC Radio Network Broadcast, November 15, 1926

NBC's first radio broadcast, on November 15, 1926, was a four-and-a-half hour presentation of the leading musical and comedy talent of the day. It was broadcast from New York over a network of 25 stations, as far west as Kansas City. Close to half of the nation's four million radio homes tuned in.

The inaugural program originated from New York City, Chicago, and Independence, Kansas. The "official" part of the broadcast came from New York's WEA F, where David Sarnoff and other leaders of RCA, Westinghouse and GE spoke. The new National Broadcasting Company was divided in ownership among RCA (50 percent), General Electric (30 percent), and Westinghouse (20 percent). From Chicago, the popular vaudeville comic team Weber & Fields did their act, and in Kansas, columnist and all around "fun poker" Will Rogers spoke for a while. **Both became regulars and were the first-ever network stars.**

Below is a map of the 17-station WEA F network. The WJZ network connected New York, Schenectady, Washington, and Springfield. By the time of the November 15 broadcast, five more stations were added to the lineup.



The demand for a network service among local stations was mounting so rapidly that, less than two months after its first national broadcast, NBC split its programming into two separate networks: the Red and the Blue networks, to give listeners a choice of different program formats. That happened on January 1, 1927.

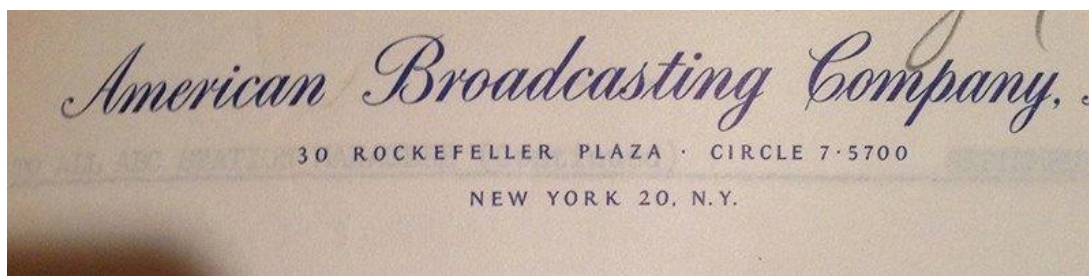
By 1941, these two networks blanketed the country; there were 103 Red subscribing stations, 76 Blue, and 64 supplementary stations using NBC programs. The Blue Network provided mostly cultural offerings: music, drama, and commentary. The Red featured comedy, variety, games and the more popular types of entertainment shows.

NBC Red was the larger radio network, carrying the leading entertainment and music programs. In addition, many Red affiliates were high-powered, clear-channel stations, heard nationwide. NBC Blue offered most of the company's news and cultural programs, many of them “sustaining” or unsponsored, but remember...the object of the RCA game was to sell radios, not air time.

How did they arrive at the names Red and Blue? Legend says it was either from the red and blue pencil marks on the engineering map, or the red and blue push pins on the management's maps at AT&T. NBC White was NBC's Religious Programming network, also referred to as The Watchtower Network, and operated from about 1928 to 1936.

NBC's Orange Network was made up of west coast affiliates KGO, KFI, KGW, KOMO, and KHQ. It began operations in 1931 and carried the NBC Red programs. NBC also operated a Gold Network on the west coast that carried the Blue programs; it was comprised of KPO, KECA, KEX, KJR, and KGA, which was soon disbanded and absorbed by the Orange Network in 1933. In 1936, these would become Pacific Coast Red and Pacific Coast Blue Networks. There will be much more on this below.

When the Federal Communications Commission declared in 1941 that no organization could own more than one network, NBC sold the Blue system, which became the American Broadcasting Company. NBC's Blue Network became ABC in 1943, due to a landmark Supreme Court Ruling that held that NBC had specifically maintained the Red and Blue networks for the express purpose of stifling competition. NBC subsequently extricated itself by selling NBC Blue to Edward Noble of the Life Savers Candy Company, who first called his new network simply "The Blue Network". That name was followed by "The Blue Network of the American Broadcasting Company." In 1945, the Blue Network reference was dropped it became the American Broadcasting Company.



Notice the interesting address on the ABC letterhead! It seems the sale of the Blue Network to ABC included a 10-year lease on telephone lines, equipment and office and studio space in New York, Hollywood, San Francisco and Chicago. **We'll see more of the ABC Hollywood history when NBC builds Radio City West in 1938.**

The Desire to Move West vs. the State of Technology

Until December 24, 1928, live network radio could only go as far west as Denver, as AT&T had no broadcast quality lines that crossed the Rocky Mountains.

The first American radio program to actually be broadcast live from coast to coast (east to west) was "The General Motors Party" on Christmas Eve, 1928. Via AT&T, it went to the 51 stations east of the Rockies and the seven west coast stations that now made up the 58-station NBC radio network. The broadcast originating from New York was routed all the way to NBC's Orange Network headquarters at **111 Sutter Street in San Francisco**. From there, the first-ever live radio program from the east coast to the west coast was distributed to the seven affiliates:

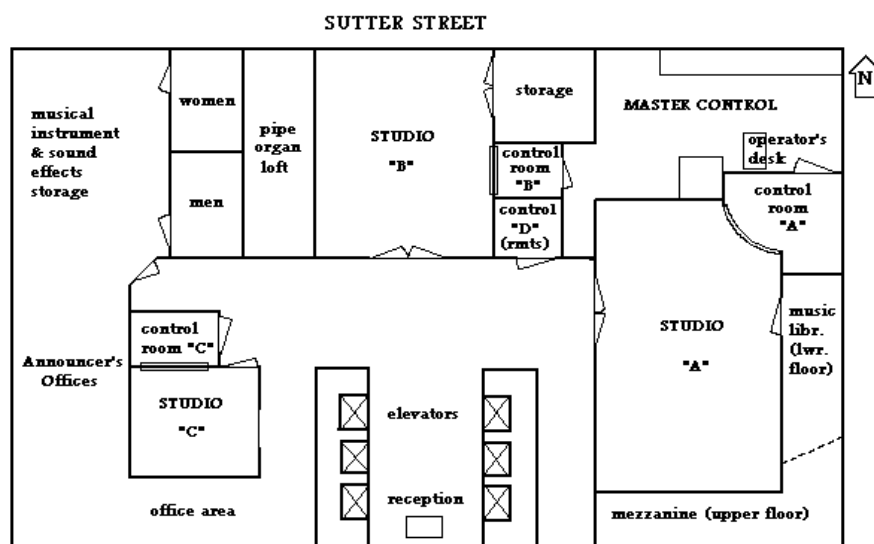
KPO and KGO in the Bay Area, KFI in Los Angeles, KFOA in San Diego, KGW in Portland, KOMO in Seattle, and KHQ in Spokane.



This is The Hunter-Dulin Building at 111 Sutter Street. It would serve as the home of NBC Master Control from 1927 till 1942.

NBC was on the 22nd floor and below is a diagram of the space. Also housed on these floors were the music library, the largest of its kind west of New York, and the master control room, the distribution point for incoming and outgoing programs.

NOTE: There was another NBC Radio City Built in San Francisco after Radio City West opened in Hollywood, but we will not be covering that in this document. As mentioned here, Hollywood's star power and new AT&T lines diminished San Francisco's role in network operations.





This photo shows Master Control at NBC in San Francisco, used from 1927 to 1942. At the extreme left is the Morse code operator's position, where the NBC Pacific Division communicated with New York, Chicago and other cities in the network.

In the center is a panel containing the studio amplifiers, bridging equipment, power and testing equipment. Also in this location is a panel with the incoming broadcast lines and audio lines from other points in San Francisco. Thanks to John Schneider for the photo. For many more great historic photos, San Francisco's Radio City and much more, here is a link to our friend John's website <http://www.theradiohistorian.org/>

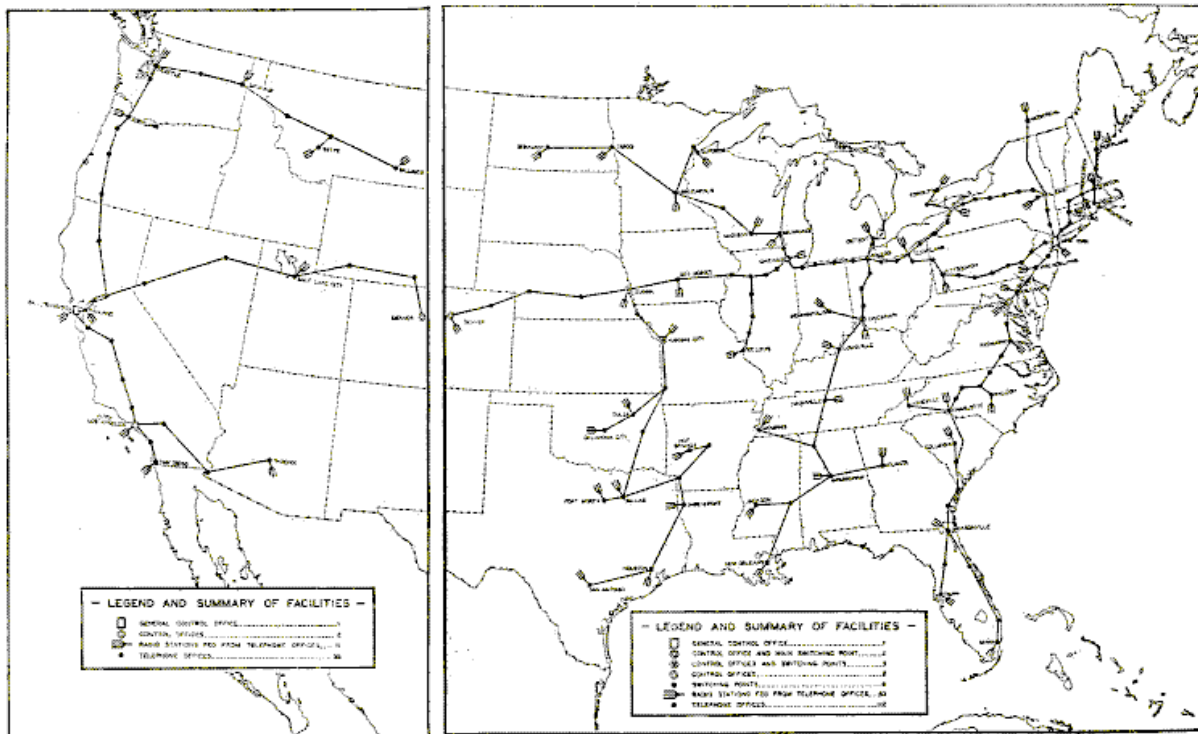
Everything you could possibly want to know about early radio, network history, AT&T lines and MUCH MORE is at the link below. Thanks to our friend Mark Durenberger for his incredible effort in creating the ultimate text (with lots of rare photos) on the subject. Chapter 4 (starting on Page 65) is where much of this sections topic is covered.

<https://eyesofageneration.com/att-ebook/>

Since April of 1927, NBC's Orange Network had served the west coast with local and network programs, but up till Christmas of 1928, it could only **duplicate** the network's shows. When I say **duplicate**, I do not mean they played a recording of that show...I mean the scripts, music charts and director's notes were rushed via rail express to San Francisco, where a whole new set of actors and musicians would restage the live radio performance exactly a week later for the

west coast audience. CBS had to do this too. With the inauguration of the new transcontinental radio service, the process of duplicating the programs of the eastern networks in San Francisco by both NBC and CBS was discontinued, **but the large cadre of artist and technicians there were now needed for original programs that were broadcast after 8 PM Pacific and 11 PM Eastern, when the east coast network signed off.**

This is a map of the Orange Network (left) and Red Network (right) in 1934.



RADIO BROADCASTING STATIONS CONNECTED BY BELL SYSTEM CIRCUITS FOR THE NATIONAL BROADCASTING CO. (RED NETWORK, RIGHT; ORANGE NETWORK, LEFT) EARLY IN 1934.

Because only one broadcast quality circuit had been installed to California, the Red and Blue networks could not be fed simultaneously. Instead, a selection of the best programs from both networks was fed to San Francisco, where they were relayed to the western affiliate stations.

But what about CBS? Well, that is an interesting question since the only broadcast line to San Francisco was leased by NBC. Fortunately, though, CBS had formed a partnership with Don Lee to create the Don Lee-Columbia Network. Until 8 p.m. local time, CBS was recreating east coast network shows out of KFRC in San Francisco. After 8, another huge staff of actors, musicians and technicians at Don Lee's KHJ in Los Angeles, took over the programming until 11 PM.

The first west coast to east coast broadcast was New Year's Day 1927 when the Rose Bowl Game was carried by NBC, but it was sent from Los Angeles to Denver over regular telephone lines, and over equalized broadcast lines from there. The first west to east, coast to coast broadcast over high quality lines was NBC's "The Del Monte Program" in April 1930, which came from San Francisco.

In the first years of the west coast network, it was necessary for Hollywood stars to travel to San Francisco to broadcast, **because AT&T's broadcast lines fed only one circuit from San Francisco TO Los Angeles, and there was no broadcast quality line the other way.**

Programs were typically fed nationwide from city to city on one way serial hookups, but Los Angeles was literally at the end of a single circuit line. Finally, a return broadcast line from Los Angeles to San Francisco was installed in 1934. In order for entertainment programs to be fed nationally on a regular basis from San Francisco, they would have to be fed by a separate first class broadcast circuit, which did not exist until 1936.

Around 1931, while making a movie in Hollywood, Rudy Vallee broadcast his weekly NBC program from San Francisco and introduced his audience to film star guests. The eastern audiences liked this and this trend advanced rapidly. There were no less than 20 network programs released from Hollywood over NBC and CBS during the 1934/35 season on the new return circuit from Los Angeles to San Francisco. From there, shows could be broadcast east, but on low quality telephone lines – and, as there was still only one broadcast quality circuit over the Rocky Mountains, if a broadcast was going from west to east on that line, no programs being broadcast from the east could be heard on any of the west coast stations because “the line was busy.” Literally. **On rare occasions, when west to east broadcasts were done on the radio quality line, a great deal of preparation had to be done, as AT&T engineers all along the line had to stand by for a cue and hand patch the amplifiers to feed the other way. If only one relay station missed the cue or made a bad patch, the broadcast could not be heard.**

All this, and the desire for both CBS and NBC to build major production centers in Los Angeles, put big pressure on AT&T to up their game, and **in 1936, two big things happened. A second broadcast quality circuit over the Rockies was constructed to bring the Blue Network to the coast, which terminated in Los Angeles instead of San Francisco. Also that year, AT&T incorporated a new system called the “quick reversible” circuit. Under this arrangement, the operation of a single key would reverse the direction of every amplifier in the line between Los Angeles and Chicago, so that the same line that formerly fed westward could now move programs from west to east. The circuit could be completely reversed in less than 15 seconds, well within the time of a station break.** Thus, in 1936 it became economical to produce national programs in Hollywood on a wide scale for the first time. Big Hollywood names like Al Jolson, Bob Hope and Clark Gable were regularly heard on NBC and CBS after that year.

A Closer Look At The Orange Network...

The NBC Board of Directors voted on December 3, 1926, to establish a third NBC network: the Pacific Coast Orange Network. NBC assembled a full duplicate of the New York program staff in San Francisco, and the Orange Network began originating programs for seven Pacific Coast stations: KPO and KGO in the Bay Area, KFI in Los Angeles, KFOA in San Diego, KGW in Portland, KOMO in Seattle, and KHQ in Spokane. The seven stations were connected by 1,709 miles of telephone lines.

The inaugural program for the NBC Orange Network was April 5, 1927, less than five months after the first NBC broadcast in New York. The program originated from temporary studios in the Colonial Ballroom of the St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco, as permanent studios in the new Hunter-Dolin Building were not yet ready for occupancy. The program opened with an address by Henry M. Robinson, the Pacific Coast member of the NBC Advisory Board, and president of the First National Bank of Los Angeles. Robinson spoke from the studios of NBC affiliate, KFI in Los Angeles. The program was then turned over to San Francisco for the broadcasts of music by Alfred Hertz and the San Francisco Symphony, and by Max Dolin, the newly-appointed West Coast music director, conducting the National Broadcasting Opera Company.

On April 11, 1927, the network began regular broadcasting with the program “Eight Neapolitan Nights”, sponsored by the Shell Oil Company. The initial network schedule was 8 to 9 p.m. Monday and Saturday, and 9 to 10 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, giving the network a total of six hours of programs weekly. At first the networks operated only in the evenings because circuits could not be spared from the standard telephone service during the busy daylight hours.

In 1936, a second broadcast quality circuit over the Rocky Mountains was completed to bring in the Blue Network on a full time basis. This time, the link was to Los Angeles, making possible two-way broadcasts and easy access to talent during the Golden Age of Hollywood. With the opening of the second circuit, now with an instantly reversible feed, the need for the Orange Network disappeared.

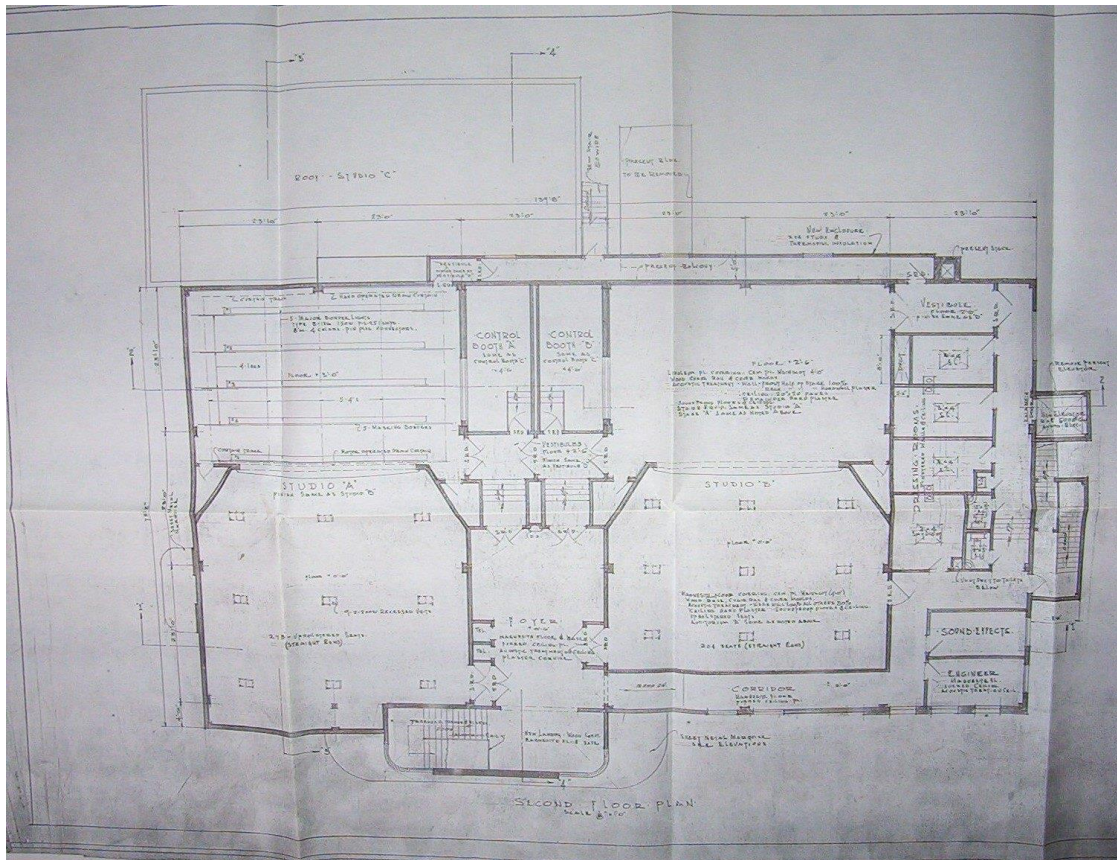
The original NBC Orange Network, with the exception of KGO, became the Pacific Coast Red Network. KGO, along with KECA Los Angeles, KFSD San Diego, KEX Portland, KJR Seattle, and KGA Spokane, formed the new Pacific Coast Blue Network, which was inaugurated with the broadcast of the Rose Bowl Game from Pasadena on New Year's Day, 1936.

In Los Angeles, NBC did not own a radio outlet, and instead used KFI-AM as an affiliate of the NBC Red Network. In 1936, KECA-AM became the NBC's Blue Network affiliate. Both were owned by Earl C. Anthony, who had a lot in common with Don Lee...both were huge car dealers, and both began broadcast empires.



This is NBC's first real home in Los Angeles. The building at 5515 Melrose was originally built to house the Consolidated Film Laboratories, before the National Broadcasting Company turned it into audience studios and production facilities to broadcast NBC radio shows from Hollywood for coast-to-coast entertainment shows. This was used from December of 1935 till October of 1938. As more and more NBC shows began moving from New York City to Hollywood, NBC wanted to expand studio space, so the network began planning its new Radio City offices and studios at Sunset and Vine, which opened in 1938.

Below (top) is a diagram of the first floor of this building, and below it, the second floor layout. Bob Hope and Jack Benny began using these studios before the big new Radio City West was ready in 1938. Studios A and B were upstairs and C and D were on the first floor. The downstairs studios were the smallest, and C had a client booth. NBC called studios with no audience "blind" studios and I think the downstairs was "blind." As for the larger A and B studios, I can't tell (even with magnification) what the diagrams say, but it looks like they may have been able to accommodate possibly 100 or so people for an audience.



Below is the three-page NBC press release on the opening of the Melrose office, with **studio descriptions on page 3**. Thanks to our friend David Schwartz for these.

R259

GALA PROGRAM TO MARK OPENING
OF NEW NBC HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS

Giving to Hollywood a setting for radio broadcasts that will stand alone in the West in luxury and technical excellence, the National Broadcasting Company will formally open its new Hollywood studios on Saturday, December 7, before one of the most brilliant gatherings of stars of the screen, stage and radio ever assembled. The ceremonies will be broadcast over a coast-to-coast NBC-WJZ network from 10:30 p.m. to Midnight, E.S.T.

David Sarnoff, president of the Radio Corporation of America; M.H. Aylesworth, president of the National Broadcasting Company and chairman of the Board of Directors of Radio-Keith-Orpheum Corporation; Will Hays, president of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America; and Richard C. Patterson, Jr., executive vice president of NBC, and Don Gilman, vice president of NBC in charge of the Western Division, will take part in the dedication.

(more)

- 2 -

Mr. Sarnoff will speak from New York; Mr. Aylesworth and Mr. Hays, extending the congratulations of the movie industry to NBC on its half million dollar addition to the cinema capital, and Mr. Patterson will talk from the new studios, and Ruth Etting, famous singing star, will send her greetings from Hawaii.

Other outstanding members of the entertainment world who will appear will include Gladys Swarthout, Marion Talley, Irvin S. Cobb, Jack Benny, Mary Livingstone and Company; Al Jolson, Wallace Beery, Anne Jamison, Ginger Rogers, Nelson Eddy, Edgar A. Guest, Phil Regan, Bing Crosby, Joe Penner, Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy, and George Jessel.

Meredith Willson, musical supervisor of the Western Division of NBC, is in charge of music for the program, and will share his conducting duties with Victor Young, Johnny Green, Harry Jackson and Josef Pasternack. The announcing will be done by James Wallington, Don Wilson and Sam Hayes.

NBC's new Hollywood studios are at 5515 Melrose Avenue, in the massive building formerly occupied by the Consolidated Film Industries studio. It has been completely refinished along conservatively modern lines, and now is both fireproof and earthquake-proof.

(more)

- 3 -

All construction has been in accordance with the principles followed and developed in Radio City, and the latest technical, soundproofing and air-conditioning equipment installed. RCA apparatus is used throughout.

The main building, two stories high, houses three studios and various offices, and is 140 feet long and 75 feet deep. Its exterior is of white stucco, with chromium and black metal trim. Over the entrance is a large vertical "NBC" sign, black and chromium and neon-lighted. A second, smaller adjacent building has been converted into a single studio for auditions, and is of similar construction.

Across the front of the main building are eight offices--for Don Gilman, NBC vice president in charge of the Western Division, when he visits Hollywood; for Studio Manager John Swallow, and the Program Department. Offices for the Artists Service, Legal, Press and Sales departments, the Music Library, and the Accounting Department, are also on this floor.

The center of the main floor is Studio D, 35 feet long and 23 feet wide, with control and observation rooms. Studios A and B form the entire second floor; the former seats 276, the latter 210. Studio C is in the smaller building.

- - -

In this NBC press release, we see the line up of stars that will perform at the gala broadcast in Hollywood, as well as other parts of the country, and even Hawaii via shortwave radio.

National Broadcasting Company
NBC Building
30 Rockefeller Plaza, N. Y. C.

December 5, 1935

R 293

STARS SALUTE OPENING
OF HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS

Outstanding artists in every field of radio entertainment, one of the greatest assemblies of stars ever to combine their talents on a single radio show, will take part in the dedicatory exercises as the National Broadcasting Company formally opens its new Hollywood studios on Saturday, December 7. The ceremonies will be broadcast over an NBC-WJZ coast-to-coast network from 10:30 p.m. to midnight, E.S.T.

Leading officials of radio and the movie industry also will participate, including M. H. Aylesworth, president of NBC and chairman of the board of RKO; Will Hays, president of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America; and Richard C. Patterson, Jr., executive vice president; Don Gilman, vice president in charge of the Western Division, and John F. Royal, vice president in charge of programs, of NBC.

Artists in other parts of the United States and Hawaii will take part as well. From New York, Paul Whiteman and his orchestra and Jimmy Durante will go on the air from the stage of the Hippodrome Theater, where they are starred in "Jumbo;" Ben Bernie and his lads will play from the Paradise Restaurant, and Jane Froman will sing from Radio City.

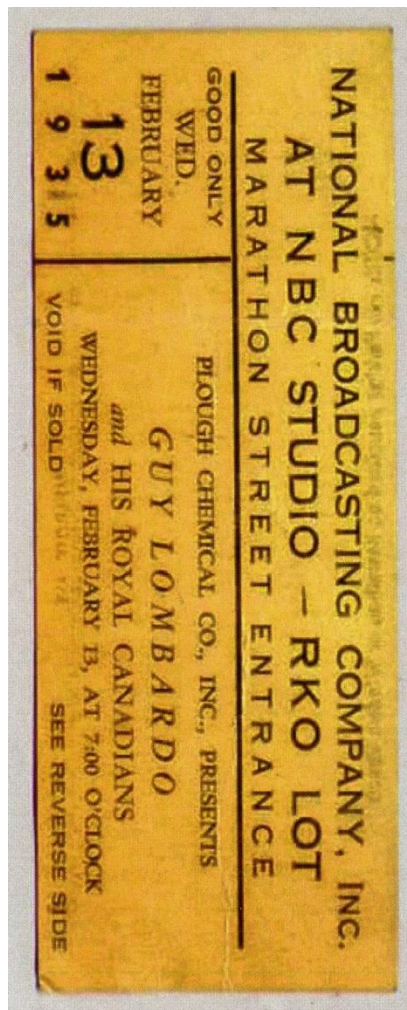
Rudy Vallee and his orchestra will go on the air from Pittsburgh, James Melton from Baltimore, and Ruth Etting, vacationing in Hawaii, from Honolulu.

In Hollywood will be a group that will include Irene Rich, Al Jolson, Wallace Beery, Gladys Swarthout, Marion Talley, Irvin S. Cobb, Jack Benny, Mary Livingstone, Anne Jamison, Sim Simeon, Ginger Rogers, Nelson Eddy, Jan Kiepura, Edgar A. Guest, Marta Eggerth, Phil Regan, Bing Crosby, Joe Penner, Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy, and George Jessel.

Meredith Willson, musical supervisor for NBC's Western Division, will be in charge of the music on the program, and will be assisted in conducting by Victor Young, Johnny Green, Harry Jackson and Josef Pasternack. The announcing will be done by James Wallington, Don Wilson and Sam Hayes.

What do RCA, Joseph Kennedy, and the Rockefellers have to do with this ticket? They all owned part of RKO Pictures! Before 5515 Melrose opened, NBC (which was owned by RCA) was using a sound studio at RKO for some network shows. Thanks to David Schwartz for the images here.

These two pages are part of a report to New York on the costs and leasing of the new Hollywood Studios building on Melrose Ave. On the second page is a list of the first shows originating there.



HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS

COST OF STUDIOS

The construction of the new studios in Hollywood was first approved by the Board of Directors on April 19, 1935, at which time the present lease with Consolidated Film Industries for space in that building was accepted and an appropriation of \$95,000 granted for construction and equipment. The studios were completed and officially opened on December 7, 1935. The total capital cost on the books October 1, 1936, including construction and equipment added since the original opening is as follows:

1. Speech input Equipment	
2. Technical apparatus in studios -	\$ 46,746.56
3. Leasehold Improvement	
4. Construction and decoration -	14,451.81
5. Studio Furniture	
6. Furniture, pianos, organ, etc. -	22,771.57
7. Office Furniture	
8. General office equipment -	20,950.67
TOTAL	\$105,120.61

Depreciation on this total is being written off at the rate of approximately \$1,700 per month, or \$20,500 per year starting next year.

TABLE B.

FIXED CHARGES

	8 mos. 1936	Full Year 1936	Est. for 4 Yr. At Present Rate
Lease with Consolidated Film Industries Inc. Dec. 1, 1935 to Nov. 30, 1940. This is a gross figure without deduction for the revenue from the sublease to J. Walter Thompson - \$2,100 per year which is shown in the Income Account.	\$18,000	\$27,000	\$27,000
Wire Connections Permanent connection and loops connect- ing studios to network wires.	2,133	3,200	3,200
Taxes Los Angeles County personal property tax.	471	1,300	1,200
Depreciation and Amortization Write off of capital cost.	5,777	12,600	20,500
TOTAL	\$26,380	\$43,900	\$51,900

TABLE F.

HOLLYWOOD OPERATIONUSE OF STUDIOS1. Originated Programs

During the first 8 months this year, a total of 898 studio and field programs were put on the networks through the Hollywood studios with a log of 356 2/3 hours. These figures were taken from the Engineering records which did not segregate the Commercial and Sustaining programs. No other figures are available.

2. Present Schedule of Programs

During the week of October 11 the following programs will be broadcast from Hollywood:

NetworkCommercial

			E.S.T.	
General Foods - Jello	Red	Sunday	7:00 - 7:30 PM	1 1/2 hr.
Malston - Purina	"	"	5:00 - 5:30 PM	1/2 "
Packard	"	Tuesday	9:30 - 10:30 PM	1 "
Indians	"	"	10:30 - 10:45 PM	1/4 "
Kraft-Phoenix	"	Thursday	10:00 - 11:00 PM	1 "
Campans	"	Friday	10:00 - 10:30 PM	1/2 "
Shell	"	Saturday	9:30 - 10:30 PM	1 "
			per wk.	4 1/2 "

Sustaining

Sebastian Club Orch.	Blue	Tuesday	12:30 - 1:00 AM	1/2 hr.
Transcendence Orchestra	"	Wednesday	11:30 - 12 MN	1/2 "
			per wk.	1 "

Pacific LocalCommercial

				Wk. Total
Richfield Oil	Red	5 days wk	10:00 - 10:15 PM	1 1/2 hrs.
Langendorff Bakeries	"	5 " "	4:45 - 5:00 PM	1 1/2 "
Heiner Brewing	"	Friday	6:00 - 6:30 PM	1/2 "
Ellis Laboratories	Blue	6 times wk	9:00 - 9:15 PM	1 1/2 "
				4 1/2 "

Sustaining

Ambassador Hotel Orc.	Red & Blue	5 times wk	1/2 hr various	2 1/2 hrs.
Biltmore Hotel Orch.	Blue	5 "	10:30-11:00 PM	2 1/2 "
				5 - "

3. Prospective Additional Programs

Definite - Oldsmobile program - 1/2 hr. Friday on Red beginning Oct. 17.

Pending - Sales Department reports further sales now pending with:

American Can (B. BERNIE)	1/2 hr. pgm. per wk.
Jergens (Winchell)	1/2 " " " "
Best Foods (Dr. Kate) 5x1	1 " " " "
Gen. Foods - Postum (J. Brown)	1 " " " "
	2 1/2 " " " "

There is also further probability that Fleischmann (Vallee) will again originate programs from the Hollywood studios which would give an additional 1 hour per week.

An Interesting Take on Broadcasting

In the October, 1929 *Popular Science Monthly*, Frank Parker Stockbridge interviewed NBC's first president, Merlin H. Aylesworth, about NBC's daily task of feeding 13,000,000 radio sets. Aylesworth noted that at this stage, **"The main purpose of broadcasting is not to make money. It is to give the public such increasingly better programs that people will continue to buy and use radio sets and tubes."** This attitude would soon change as CBS became more of a competitor.

In the United States, two communications technologies - long distance telephone lines and radio stations - were joined to create national broadcasting. R. T. Barnett, in [Network Broadcasting: Historical Summary](#), from the April, 1934 *Bell Telephone Quarterly*, noted that "Broadcasting is the child of the telephone," and detailed the vital but largely unappreciated role of telephone lines in distributing programming. "It is the telephone wire, not radio, which carries programs the length and breadth of the country. For 3200 miles the telephone wire carries the program so faithfully that scarcely an overtone is lost; for perhaps fifteen miles it travels by radio to enter John Smith's house. And then he wonders at the marvels of radio!"

With the coasts now connected, and Hollywood's siren call for radio stars to "go west" and become film stars too, it was time to begin to build major production facilities in Los Angeles. Like CBS, this meant dismantling the huge investments both had made in San Francisco, which was the early gateway to Tinsel Town.

NBC Outgrows Studios In Hollywood in a Year

ALTHOUGH only a year old on Dec. 7, the Hollywood studios of NBC have become too small for present needs and extensive additions are planned, Don Gilman, NBC vice president in charge of Pacific Coast operations, announced at a press conference in Hollywood Dec. 4. At the same time he announced that the San Francisco studios of NBC will be entirely remodeled and extended to take care of expanding needs. NBC engineers are now surveying the situation, he stated.

Mr. Gilman, who returned the week before from New York where he watched the RCA-NBC television demonstrations, voiced the belief that Hollywood will eventually be one of the five or six locations where television will be started because of its talent supply and also because the high hills nearby are well suited for television transmitters.

NBC's Radio City West...Opened October 17, 1938

NBC STARTS BUILDING IN HOLLYWOOD



Design of New NBC Structure Planned in Film Colony

TO REPLACE its present Hollywood studios, already outgrown although built only two years ago, NBC will begin immediate construction of its new Hollywood home at the famous intersection of Sunset Blvd. & Vine St., site of the original Famous Players-Lasky film lot.

The new structure will provide for the immediate needs of NBC, occupying about half of the five-acre tract, comprising two city blocks, and leaving ample room for future expansion as well as for television studios when needed. Designed by O. B. Hanson, NBC chief engineer, and the company's design unit, working in cooperation with the Austin Co., which will erect the building, the studios will be patterned after the motion picture unit plan.

Four large individual studios under separate roofs, each with an audience capacity of several hundred persons and four non-audience studios will be used for broad-

casting. Executive offices will be housed in a central office building at the corner of Sunset and Vine, which visitors will enter through a three-story lobby from which a huge master control room with its intricate panels and apparatus will be visible. Modern in every respect, with the latest lighting facilities, air conditioning, acoustical treatment, the studios will also represent the latest development of NBC engineers, including an automatic pre-set switching system.

"This development," said President Lenox Lohr, "marks a definite step in the importance of Hollywood as a center for the radio industry. That Hollywood is important in radio is borne out by the fact that less than two years ago we opened the most modern broadcasting center we could construct. Already we have outgrown it."

It is expected that Don Lee Broadcasting System, Los Angeles, will take over the present NBC Hollywood headquarters.

From the November 1, 1937 issue of *Broadcasting Magazine*, this (above) is the first news of the new facility to be built at the corner of Sunset Blvd. and Vine Street in Hollywood. **Amazingly, it was completed in under a year!**

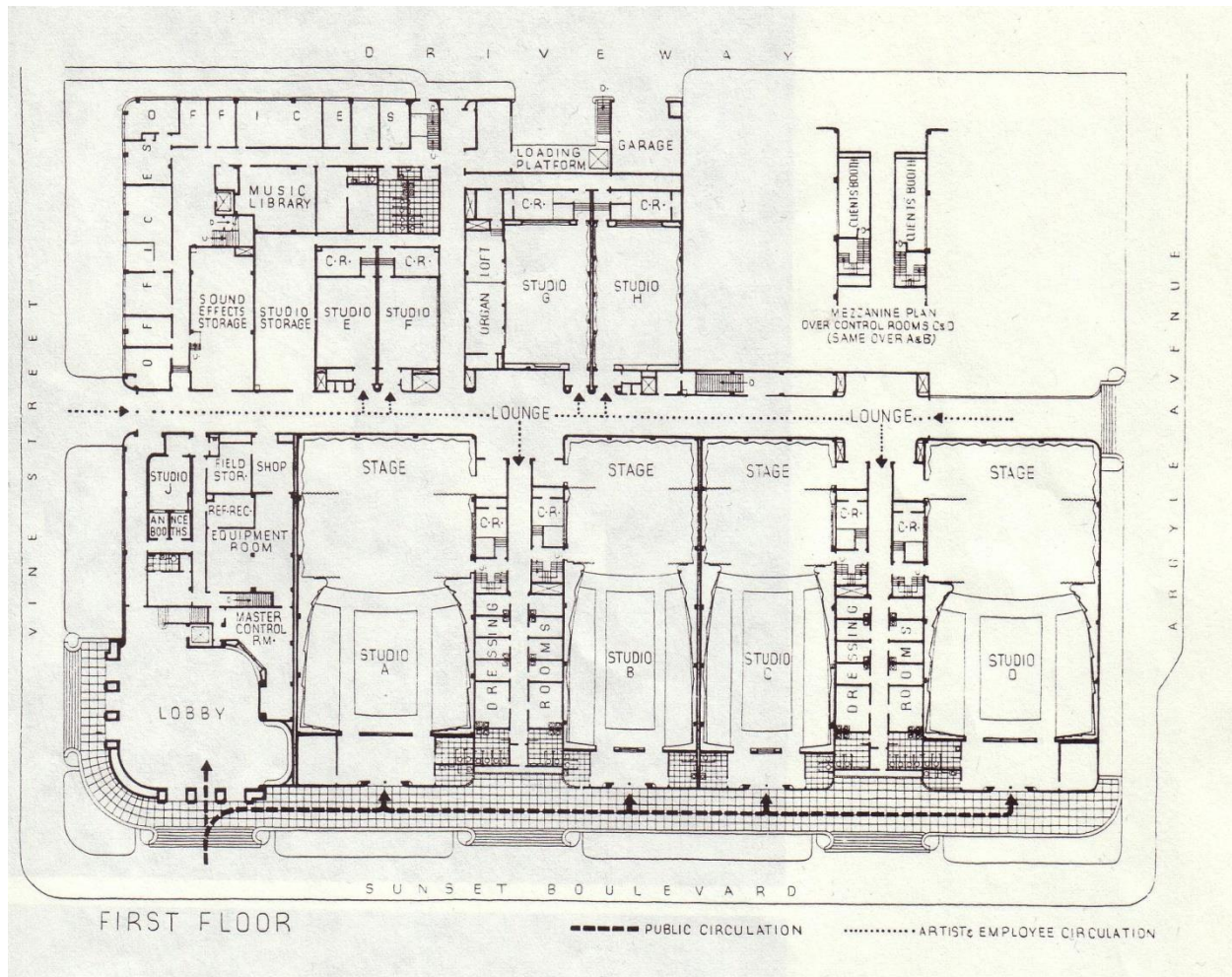


Above, on the 4½ acre tract, the building is under construction at lightning speed. Notice on the far right, you can see the tower of CBS's Columbia Square, which is also under construction. Make no mistake...it was a race! Below, stars like Jack Benny, Andy Devine and Edgar Bergen are hamming it up for the camera on opening day.



To set the stage, so to speak, and get you in the mood, take a look and listen to this short video on one of the biggest show to come from Studio A...“Fibber McGee and Molly”. The great soundtrack was recorded there too!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IjAxMK8GqXw&ab_channel=MUSICOMPRODUCTIONS



With many thanks to our friend Snooks Higgins, one of the most knowledgeable Los Angeles broadcast historians around; we are able to see an ultra-rare diagram of the original configuration of NBC Radio City West Studios.

This diagram and the details (below) of the addition of two new studios and some renaming after WW II, is very valuable in our understanding of the reconfigured complex as most knew it. While creating the illustration below, it was quite confusing to compare photos and studio names taken before and after the war, but thanks to Snooks, now we understand.

Here are her notes on this: “Outgrowing their very small building at 5515 Melrose, NBC opened their Hollywood Radio City at the corner of Sunset and Vine in 1938. There were four auditoria, Studios A to D facing on Sunset Boulevard. Studios A and D were mirror images of each other with stages 50 feet by 60 feet deep. Studios B and C were narrower and also mirror images of each other. Their stage areas were 45 by 45 feet. All four studios held audiences of 340 people.

Studios E and F were identical and quite small with only room for a piano, an electric organ and a few actors. Studios G and H were larger and used for major dramatic shows. Studio G contained a massive pipe organ.

Because it operated two networks, NBC, lacked sufficient studio space. To help on the overcrowding, often, shows like Bob Hope and Bergen & McCarthy would do remote shows from various locations like military bases and community halls from cities and towns surrounding Los Angeles. NBC also continued to use a studio built into an MGM soundstage, as it did when NBC was located on Melrose Avenue.

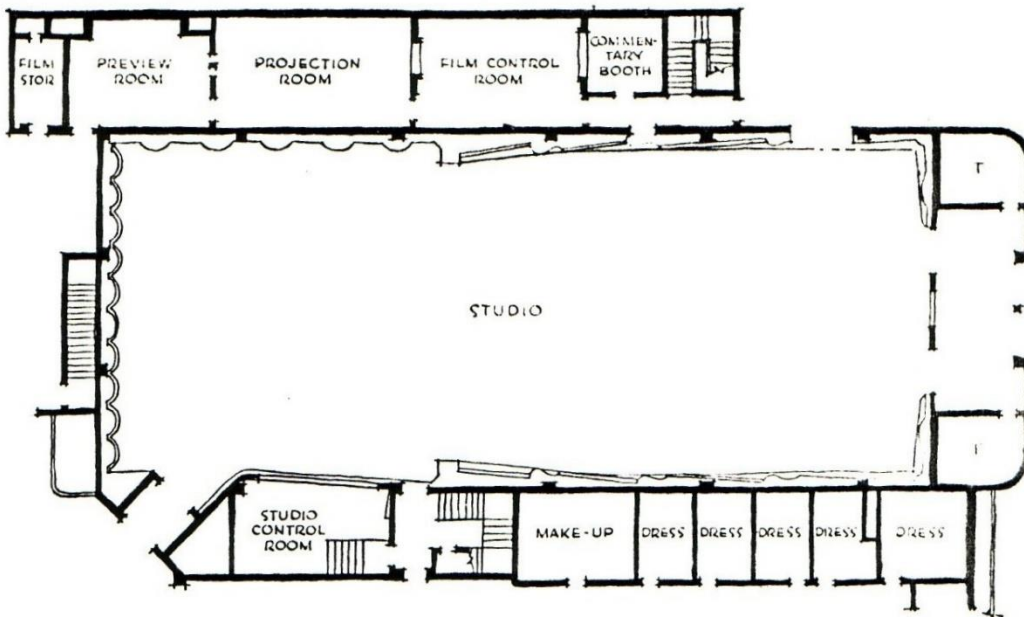
After the war, two additional audience studios were constructed at the main complex facing Argyle Avenue and behind Studio D (upper right in the diagram above). They were given the letter designations of Studios E and F, while the former small Studios E and F were renamed Studios K and L. There was a Studio J, which was used only as an announce booth/disc jockey type arrangement.

With the arrival of KNBH Television, Studio F was converted into a television studio with a technical suite built along the north side of the studio (seen below).

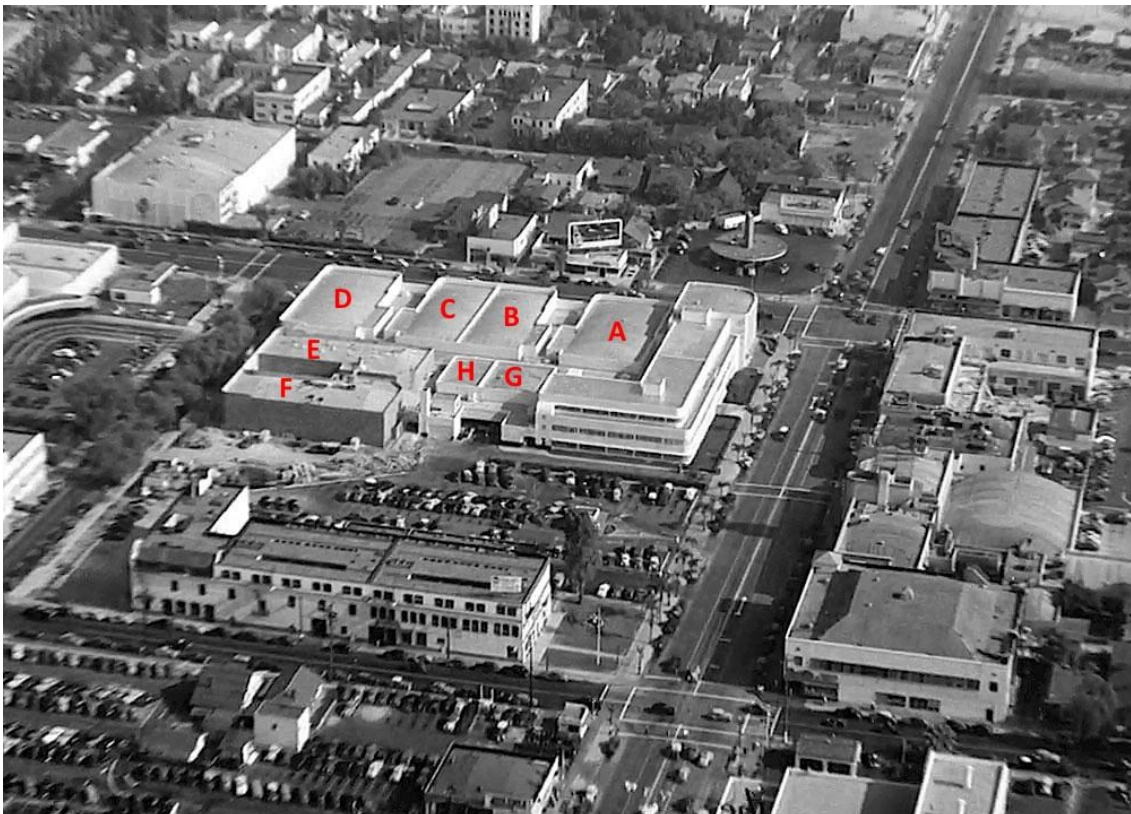
Next to be converted for television was Studio D. The audience area was rebuilt to rise above the stage area (the stage itself was removed). The sponsor's booth above the control room was gutted and made into a lighting booth. Dinah Shore did her first television show from Studio D".
—Snooks Higgins

Below, circa 1950 is a shot that shows the post war and best known configuration of studios, complete with the technical annex on the north side of Studio F. The building on the top right is on Selma Street and houses the RCA Regional Offices, NBC's Film Exchange and KRCA's sales offices.





This is a rare diagram of Studio F. Notice here, and in the photo above, we can see the technical suite on the north side of the studio. In the photo below, from around 1946, we see the new studios E and F being built, but the technical suite has not been added. That would come with television a couple of years later.





Above, thanks to Dennis Degan, is a custom color view. The audience entrances to studios A, B, C and D were on the Sunset (right) side of the building. Below is a rehearsal of “The Dinah Shore Show” in the converted Studio D.



From *Broadcasting Magazine*, here is a two-page article on the opening of Radio City West.



ENTER here, it being the corner of NBC's new Hollywood Radio City leading into the three-story main foyer.

CBS Already Planning More Room in Hollywood

CBS, having already outgrown its present new West Coast headquarters at Columbia Square, Hollywood, is reported to have bought adjoining property on El Centro Ave., between Sunset Blvd. and Selma St. and is planning construction of additional facilities which will include three intimate studio-theatres, each with seating capacity of between three and four hundred persons. Production quarters will also be provided.

Columbia Square building now contains 7 studios and an auditorium which seats 1050. CBS also has outside accommodations in Hollywood. Besides its Radio Playhouse on Vine St. and Columbia Music Box on Hollywood Blvd., the network rents one of the KFWB studios located on the old Warner Bros. lot on Sunset Blvd. Sponsors of several shows which now originate in Columbia's outside theatres are seeking smaller and more intimate quarters for their studio audience programs. CBS erected its Columbia Square building on Sunset Blvd. between El Centro Ave. and Gower St., less than a year ago.

Texas Net Expands

ELLIOTT ROOSEVELT, president of Texas State Network, on Oct. 25 signed contracts for erection of a second floor on the main building of the headquarters office. A second building will also be added to house additional studios, control rooms, music library and additional office space. The second floor of the main building will be devoted entirely to office quarters, the main floor housing only executive offices, studios and control operations.

Hollywood Radio City an Ideal Plant

NBC Gradually Moving Operations Into New Site

By DAVID GLICKMAN
WITHOUT premiere or fanfare, NBC on Oct. 17 officially "opened for business" its new ultra-modern RCA-equipped western division headquarters in Hollywood. Making news by the very absence of blazing lights and fanfare, NBC executives, headed by Don E. Gilman, western division vice-president, were present to open the massive doors of the structure at Sunset Blvd. and Vine St. and the staff went to work.

"We complete this link in an ultra-modern chain of broadcasting plants with faith in Hollywood's future as a center of radio," Mr. Gilman said. "NBC Hollywood Radio City is doubtless the most beautiful and practical broadcasting plant in the United States. With the facilities now at our command, NBC from its West Coast headquarters is in a position to broaden the scope of its service tremendously and adequately meet all likely demands of this rapidly expanding production center for the next few years. Our western division headquarters are the most modern that science has produced. No effort or expense has been spared to provide a practical working network unit on a major scale."

No Interruption to Business

Move-in has been gradual, starting in early October when the network began using its first completed auditorium-studio on Sunset Blvd. and also started shifting production units and other departments from the former headquarters on Melrose Ave. to the new plant. Although it will be some days before the entire plant is completed, all departments are now housed in the new edifice, the shifts being made without interruption of routine.

The structure, representing an investment of \$2,000,000, is officially tagged Hollywood Radio City. It occupies half of a 4½-acre tract and is bound by Sunset Blvd.,

Selma St., Vine St. and Argyle Ave. The three-story executive building and eight broadcasting studios are of modern classical design. Four large auditorium-studios, built as individual units on a modified motion picture sound stage plan but actually linked together with glass brick walls, seat 350 each. Two of the stages, largest ever constructed for radio, are 3,000 square feet each.

Stages of the other two large auditorium-studios are 2,000 square feet each. Four smaller studios, which do not include audience accommodations, are also located on the main floor. Large studios are similar except in color scheme and detail of design. Each has its own lounging rooms and sound-proof glass panels which permit visitors to see rehearsals from the individual lobbies. Client's room in each studio, visible to the audience, overlooks the stage and is directly over the control room.

Three-Story Foyer

At the rounded apex of a triangle, on the northeast corner of Sunset Blvd. and Vine St. is a three-story foyer which links the executive office building and the four main auditorium-studios. Daylight is admitted to the foyer through glass brick panels, running 40 feet up to the ceiling. By night the foyer is suffused with indirect light. The ceiling is acoustically treated with mica tile. The public enters the auditorium-studios from Sunset Blvd. Artists and employees use a private corridor entrance opening directly to the network's rear parking lot.

Erected by Austin Co., nationally-known builders and contractors, the structure and engineering design throughout reflect the ultimate scientific development in broadcasting facilities at this time, according to O. B. Hanson, NBC New York vice-president and chief engineer, under whose supervision it was designed and built. He pointed out that the edifice was planned according to strictly functional requirements to assure highest efficiency for the working per-

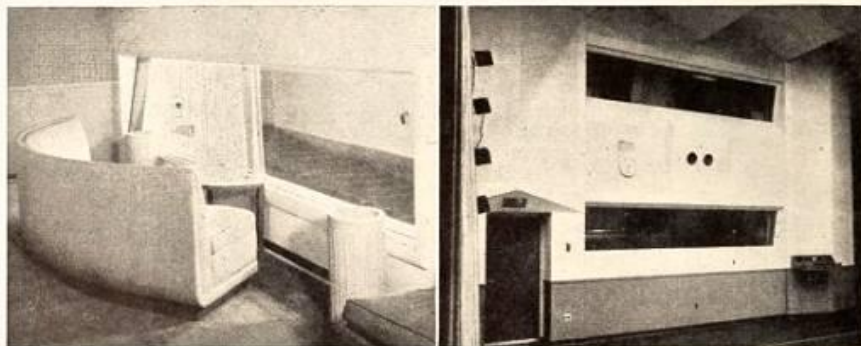
sonnel, but with equal emphasis on public convenience and comfort.

A Dream Realized

"Hollywood Radio City is an answer to the radio engineer's dream of an ideal broadcasting plant," he said. "We have always considered the sound stage type of construction an ideal plan, but until now we have never had an opportunity to depart from the conventional studio design of building the auditorium in steel buildings and on separate floors. Spread horizontally in sound stage design with all studios located on one working floor, this is the ideal broadcasting plant. Acoustically, the studios are as perfect as knowledge of man can make them."

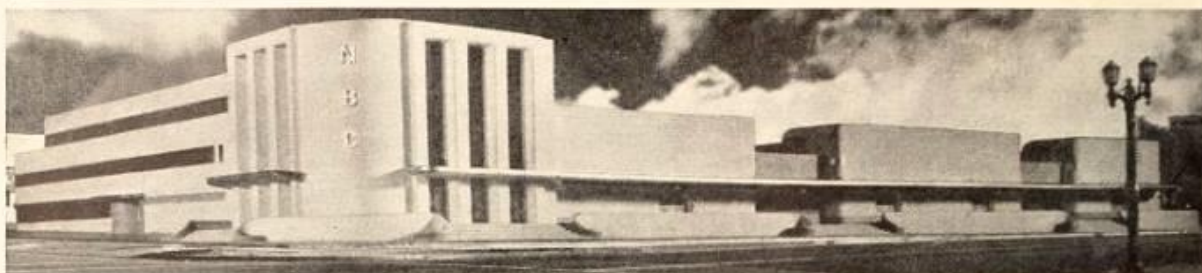
The edifice was built without a rivet. The steel skeleton of the structure was put together with electric torches. The welded steel construction is ultra-modern and stronger than rivet binding, according to J. G. Strang, NBC engineer in charge of construction. He declared that during erection of the building, through this new process, practically all noise was eliminated. Building exterior is painted a soft blue green, chosen scientifically to reduce the California sun glare and to blend with blue of the sky and green of landscaped grass, palm trees and shrubbery. The 300-foot terrace wall which graces the Sunset Blvd. side of the building and leads to the auditorium-studios, is painted a deeper green, with a floor of red cement and steps of terracotta quarry tile. Only exterior decorations are aluminum strips on rounded corners, huge illuminated metal NBC and RCA signs and three colored neon tubes paralleling the terrace on Sunset Blvd. The flat-domed roofs of the individual studios and office building are painted with aluminum to deflect heat rays of the sun and increase air-conditioning efficiency. Functionalism is stressed throughout. Walls and ceilings have been treated to absorb or dis-

(Continued on Page 58)



FROM the nifty quarters at the left, radio and advertiser executives watch the performance of programs in NBC's Hollywood Radio City. A sound proof glass panel separates observation rooms from auditorium studios. At right is a portion of Studio D, showing control room below, observation room above. V'd ceiling surfaces scatter sound. Announcer's panel is at the right. Baby spotlights are mounted in the upper left.

NBC's MAGNIFICENT NEW HOLLYWOOD RADIO CITY



Canada Complete

RADIO COLLEGE OF CANADA, Toronto, starts a 15-minute transcription show about Nov. 1, which will gradually be placed on practically all Canadian stations, according to R. C. Smith & Son, Toronto, recently appointed advertising agency for the school, which formerly placed its advertising through Norris-Patterson, Toronto.

BROADCASTING facilities are incorporated in the Earl Carroll Theatre-Restaurant, being erected in Hollywood. Acoustical treatment similar to radio studios has been drawn into plans. A master control and an 80-foot revolving stage are included. Carroll is negotiating with both NBC and CBS to use the 1000-seat auditorium for audience shows. The building, to open Dec. 25, is near NBC and CBS on Sunset Blvd.

Hollywood Radio City Ideal Plant

(Continued from Page 22)

perse all unnecessary sound, insuring perfect broadcasting conditions. Studio walls have been built with "V'd" surfaces—a series of flat triangles which scatter sound and eliminate what is technically known as "discreet reflections". Studio ceilings have also been built with "V'd" surfaces which serve ingeniously as valances for lights and air-conditioning outlets.

All parallel surfaces which remain flat for acoustical efficiency were treated with a heavy layer of rock wool hidden behind perforated composition panels.

The concrete floor of the main corridor from where artists enter the auditoriums is so delicately mounted on cork that should a truck rumble over it, the studio walls will not be jarred. The organ studio also floats on acoustical material which prevents transmission of vibration. To insure uniform acoustical quality whether a studio is empty or audience filled, all seats are covered with a special sound-absorbing fabric.

Varied color schemes distinguish the business and production offices ranged on the three floors of the executive building which are reached by three stairways and two elevators. Sound-absorbing acoustical plaster and carpet covered office floors deaden noise and spare employees nerves. A special paneled conference room is provided for studio executives near the second floor office of vice-president Don E. Gilman. There are also special audition rooms for clients.

Visible Control

Besides incorporating several architectural innovations, there are numerous other improvements within the studios, control rooms and executive building. The public may watch the "heart" of the studios—the master control—through a brilliantly lighted, sound-proofed shadowless double-glass invisible 20-foot window in the foyer. Master control, like all other engineering facilities of the plant, was especially designed for Hollywood Radio City by NBC engineers. Carried out in full view of the public, the intricate operations are explained by electric signs indicating the sections of the Red and Blue networks to which programs

are being sent. Visitors are able to "see" the sound waves of programs being transmitted. Shamel Electric Co., Los Angeles, installed all RCA broadcasting equipment and sound wiring for the studios.

Final note will be a mural, 25 feet high and 40 feet wide. It will cover a curved wall of the main foyer's interior. The dominant painting, executed by Ed Trumbull, Connecticut artist, portrays the far-flung activities of radio. It is centered by a heroic genie, representing the Spirit of Radio. Around him dramatic scenes illustrate the wide functions of the science. The mural was damaged in the recent New England storm and installation has been delayed while repairs are being made.

Hollywood Radio City is air-conditioned throughout with more than 85,000 gallons of water utilized daily. H. C. Alber, who supervised installation of New York Radio City air-conditioning, has been made engineer in charge of that division in the west coast plant.

Programs going on the air from Hollywood Radio City are virtually foolproof against power failure such as that which threatened several broadcasts during the disastrous Southern California flood and storm of last winter. In addition to regular and emergency power lines from the power company plant, NBC engineers have installed an automatic gasoline-driven generator powerful enough for normal broadcasting operation. Should the regular power lines fail, one automatic switch instantly throws on the gasoline driven generator while another turns on the emergency power line, with only a split second loss of time. Should the emergency power line also fail,

the gasoline generator is ready to take over the job.

Although there was no formal opening, it is expected that after the building is entirely completed NBC will hold open house for the trade, as great interest is being shown by Pacific Coast agency and radio executives in the many innovations incorporated. For the general public, NBC in late November will inaugurate a 40-cent tour of Hollywood Radio City.

Executive personnel in the new structure, besides Mr. Gilman include Lew Frost, assistant to the vice-president; Sydney Dixon, sales manager; John Swallow, program director; Marvin Young, assistant to Mr. Swallow; Walter Bunker, Hollywood production manager; Hal Bock, press relations manager; Alfred H. Saxton, division engineer; Donald De Wolf, engineer in charge of Hollywood studios; Walter Baker, in charge of building maintenance and general service; Frank Dellett, auditor; Paul Gale, traffic supervisor; Henry Maas, sales traffic manager; William Andrews, night manager. Dema Harshbarger is manager of the NBC Hollywood Artists Service.

In a "Salute to NBC", west coast executives of the network on Oct. 19 were guests of honor at a luncheon meeting sponsored by the Los Angeles Junior Chamber of Commerce and held in the Biltmore Hotel, that city. The luncheon, attended by executives of CBS and Don Lee Broadcasting System, as well as those from independent Los Angeles stations, was to compliment NBC on the opening of its new Hollywood Radio City.

SO MANY golfers associated with Don Winslow of the Navy on NBC for Kellogg Co. played golf at a Chicago course that the course name has been changed to the Don Winslow Golf & Country Club with club privileges at a reduced rate for members of the show.

THE OTHER 28% SAID "NIX"!

A WAVE local talent feature recently won, hands down, an overwhelming 72% preference as Louisville's favorite daytime program! Nor was it mere happenstance, either! The program is one of several WAVE staff-prepared shows that are today building bigger audiences—yes, and bigger business, in Louisville—at minimum cost to their sponsors. . . . If you want to make the best of Louisville via radio, you'd best use WAVE! May we tell you ALL?

An N. B. C. Outlet
National Representatives
FREE & PETERS, INC.

**STATION
WAVE**
INCORPORATED
LOUISVILLE, KY.
1000 WATTS... 940 K. C.

We Salute...

NBC HOLLYWOOD RADIO CITY



Broadcasting Equipment Installed by

Shamel Electric Co. Inc.

1515 W. Jefferson Blvd. • Phone: Parkway 4146 • Los Angeles, Cal.

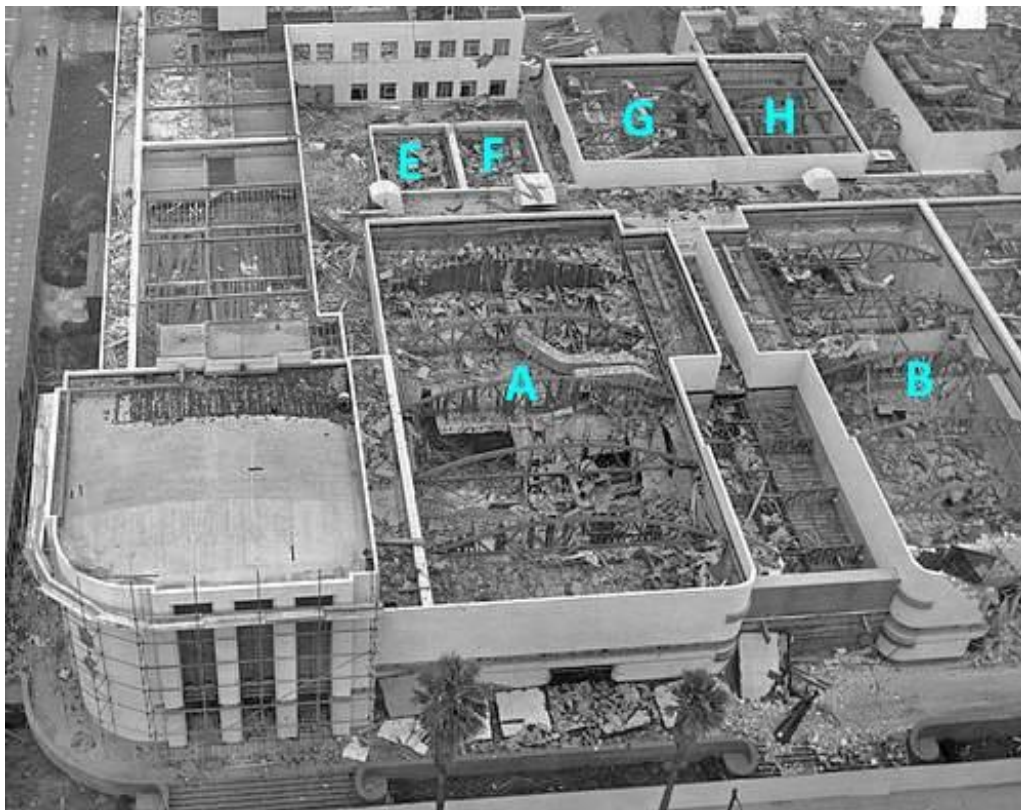
As mentioned in the *Broadcasting* story above, here is the 40-foot mural in the lobby, with a genie in the center representing the spirit of radio, surrounded by far-flung activities of radio from the north, south, east and west, that radio brought to each listener's home.



Left is Master Control, as seen from the main lobby. **On the right, ABC announcer Roger Carroll on his first day introducing “Ozzie & Harriet” in Studio J, the ABC announce booth.**



Sadly, Radio City West was demolished in 1964. In this photo, we can finally see the original location of Studios E and F. As I understand it, E and F were basically ABC’s studios but occasionally, I think they used G or H for small audience shows, with folding chairs. ABC may have done Bing Crosby from Studio B.





Above left is the original Studio G. G and H were mid-size blind studios and their names never changed. The two smallest blind studios were originally named E and F, and we see the original F on the right. When the two new large studios were added after the war, those new studios took the E and F designations, and these small radio studios were renamed K and L. Below is the new Studio F under construction. Above right was home to “Amos ‘n Andy” when they moved west.





Above is the Argyle Avenue entrance to the new studios E and F. **KNBH-TV debuted on January 16, 1949.** Below is a shot from that debut night with Peggy Lee singing in Studio F.



The first TV shows from the converted D were “Truth Or Consequences” and “You Bet Your Life” with Groucho Marx, which both debuted in October, 1950. Both shows were unique in that a year before “I Love Lucy” debuted on CBS on film, both these were film shows too! Actually, “Truth Or Consequences” started live, but sponsor Phillip Morris would not allow a kinescope rebroadcast in the east so, it was done live twice a day. In short order, Ralph Edwards and NBC came up with a new filming system, developed by Jerry Fairbanks. Even Desi Arnaz credits Fairbanks for the system’s invention. At this link is Edwards’s description of that, and all the problems associated with moving from radio to TV. <https://youtu.be/rvQ2yjPPNbY?t=660>

“You Bet Your Life” was also shot on film and never broadcast live on TV. Later, Groucho moved to Studio A, which was converted around 1955, but only film work and live radio were done in the converted A; there were never live cameras there. At the link is a hilarious classic from the show, with a disguised Jack Benny.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3wNK1Jt4JLg#t=130&ab_channel=GaryPeterson

Although “Do You Trust Your Wife,” hosted by Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy, aired on CBS, it too was filmed in NBC Studio A, and those were the only two known to come from Studio A. As of March 1957, radio was gone from Studio D which was then used to televise the live shows from Eddie Fisher, Geroge Gobel, Dinah Shore and “Truth Or Consequences”. By June 1957, radio was only using Studios G and J.

Below is Studio D being converted for television. The radio stage was removed and the audience area was raised. The sponsor booth was gutted and became the lighting booth. After conversion, Studio A would have looked the same as Studio D. Thanks to Snooks for the photos.



NBC's First West Coast Color Show Came From Radio City West?

Believe it or not, it did! At this link is an entire 15 minute “Tony Martin Show” which originated in Studio D.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l_VQGJjO4G0&ab_channel=MoondogsBallroom

RCA sent its new color remote units to Los Angeles for the historic Rose Bowl color broadcast on January 1, 1954. In June, July and August of '53, the NBC Color Caravan did live color shows in the east and midwest. In the fall, they headed further west on a swing that took them to Los Angeles. While they were in town, they did a color broadcast of an entertainment show too, which was mostly for the east coast viewers. They picked the 15-minute “Tony Martin Show.” They may have colorcast “The Dinah Show Show” too, which was also a 15-minute show from Studio D.

Martin’s show was on Monday nights from 7:30 to 7:45, just before “The Camel News Caravan,” and Dinah was on at the same time on Tuesdays and Thursdays from Studio D.

Why not Burbank? Well, there was no color there till 1955, but the studios were bigger, and the answer is...who knows? Below is a rare color shot of the two broadcast trucks and the utility truck in Detroit at The Henry Ford Museum, where they did a live colorcast of “The Howdy Doody Show” on the way back to New York from California.



Speaking of firsts...here is the NBC announcement of the first kinescope shows for the east coast audience to come from the west coast.



News

MR JACK TRACY
ROOM 423

June 20, 1949

D-H

RCA BUILDING • RADIO CITY • NEW YORK

PR 24

TWO WEST COAST TELEVISION PROGRAMS TO BE SEEN
REGULARLY IN EAST AND MIDWEST FOR FIRST TIME
THROUGH NBC-DEVELOPED KINESCOPE RECORDINGS

For the first time in television, West Coast programs will be seen on the Eastern and Midwestern interconnected networks on a regular basis through the medium of NBC-developed kinescope recordings.

"Nocturne" and "Sunday at Home," two programs currently televised over NBC's Hollywood station KNBH, will start on the interconnected network Saturday, July 9 (10:00 p.m., EDT) and Sunday, July 10 (10:00 p.m., EDT) respectively.

This will mark the first kinescope recording service from the West Coast since the widely-accepted recording method of NBC's was started in the East a little over one year ago. The first complete half-hour television show ever put on sound film from a kinescope tube was made in March, 1948. Since then, the system has been expanded to such an extent that last year a total of 3,500,000 feet of 16 mm. film was taken. In addition, the production of kinescope recording at NBC is now outstripping, on an annual average, the total production of the major motion picture studios.

(more)

AMERICA'S NO. 1 NETWORK • THE NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY

Below, a Studio D rehearsal of “The Tony Martin Show”. When he was still with NBC, Red Skelton’s show came from Studio D too.



Here’s a quick look at the audience in Studio D. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gr0OmdB7oXg>



FIG. 1. Operating space of Studio D stage area includes this recess into audience seating area which allows movement of cameras for stage or audience shots.

Above is a photo from Studio D when used for television. **Starting on page 13 at the link below is a very nice article on the television situation at Radio City West, AND, just after it, another nice spread on The El Capitan Theater's conversion to TV for NBC's "Colgate Comedy Hour".**

<http://www.americanradiohistory.com/Archive-RCA-Broadcast-News/RCA-69.pdf>

Below, a shot from the El Capitan conversion article. This is from page 20 of the linked article. In addition to Colgate's Comedy Hour, surprisingly Tennessee Ernie Ford's show came from here too.



FIG. 1. View of the El Capitan stage and operating areas. An RCA PT-100A Theatre TV Projector is used to show the picture being transmitted on the large screen above the stage. Note the camera "pit" at the lower right.

 NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY, INC. NBC Television Theatre 1735 N. VINE STREET		
Thur. July 19 See Reverse Side	NBC Presents The TENNESSEE ERNIE FORD Show WITH MOLLY BEE, DORIS DREW, SKIP FARRELL DICK WILLIAMS & JACK FASCINATO'S Orch. And Guests ★ CHILDREN ADMITTED ★	Doors Open 11:00 A.M. Doors Close 11:15 A.M.

This is the NBC Press Release on the debut of KNBH-TV. Notice that in the first paragraph of the second page, Studio F is designated as the originating studio.

NBC Television

WNBT NEW YORK

NEWS

January 13, 1949

GOV. WARREN, L.A. MAYOR BOWRON, NBC'S DENNY AND STROTZ
WILL GUEST ON OPENING OF KNBH, HOLLYWOOD JAN. 16

HOLLYWOOD, Jan. 13 -- Sidney N. Strotz, administrative Vice-president in charge of television for the National Broadcasting Company and vice-president in charge of the network's Western Division, will introduce the honored guests during the opening presentation of KNBH (Channel 4) Sunday, Jan. 16 at 7:45 p.m., PST.

Guests on the program will be Governor of California Earl Warren, Mayor of Los Angeles Fletcher Bowron, Charles R. Denny, executive vice-president of the National Broadcasting Company, and Ed Murry, Managing editor of The Los Angeles Mirror who will represent the mirrors editor and publisher Virgil Pinkley, who is out of town.

KNBH is NBC's Hollywood television station on Channel 4. The studios for KNBH are located in NBC's Hollywood radio and television city at the corner of Sunset Blvd. and Vine Street. The transmitter is located atop Mt. Wilson, and the station operates with video power of 27,500 bolts and audio power of 13,750 watts.

The station will begin operations on a Sunday through Thursday basis, approximately three hours per day, 14 hours per week.

A star-studded hour-long program will inaugurate the station Sunday, Jan. 16, at 8:00 p.m., PST.

(more)

AMERICAN NO. 1 NETWORK - THE NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY

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(Continued)

Set in a night club built for the television show on the stage of studio F in NBC's Sunset and Vine Streets Radio and Television city, the show will feature Eddie Bracken, Abe Burrows, Jerry Colonna, Cass Daley, Peggy Lee, Art Linkletter, Aubry the Magician, Robert Lamoret and Pierre Andre with Lora and Judith.

Bracken will fly in from New York, where he has been talking with producers of a Broadway musical, to present his famous pantomime boxing act for the KNBH cameras. Bracken's latest picture is the as yet unreleased "Girl From Jones Beach."

Burrows will present some of the humor-at-the-piano type of material which he writes himself, and Colonna will step onto the television screen to present some of his typical high-pitched wit.

Miss Daley will be featured singing "A Good Man is Hard to Find" in the manner which brought so much laughter to the audience on NBC's "Two Hours of Stars" Christmas Day.

Miss Lee, star of the Thursday Night "Chesterfield Supper Club" broadcasts will sing two numbers on the KNBH "Special Program," and Art Linkletter will present some of the stunts which have proved most popular on his NBC "People Are Funny" radio program.

Aubry, a 16-year-old Magician, will bring televiewers the same prestidigitation which has made him well known throughout Southern California.

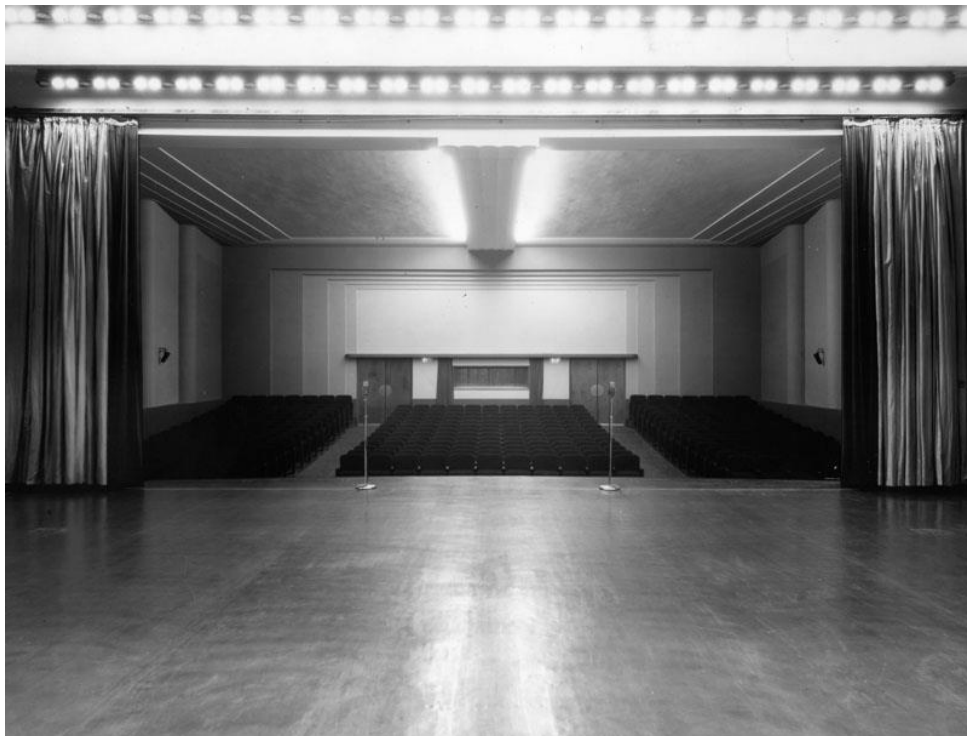
Lamoret will present the same comedy-novelty act which is currently giving many laughs to customers of Earl Carroll's Hollywood Theater Restaurant.

The dancing of Pierre Andre with Lora and Judith, who will be seen on "Starlight Time" over KNBH (Channel 4) each Tuesday beginning Jan. 18, will be featured in a preview of the choreography which will be viewed on "Starlight Time."

(more)



Above is Studio A; below, Studio D. Both were the largest; they had 3,000 feet of space on stage, and each seated 340 people. Except for different color schemes, they were the same. A and D were mostly used for musical shows with big orchestras and casts. The window at the rear allowed visitors to see in from the lobby; control rooms were on the stage walls as seen on the next page.





This is Studio B. B and C were identical, smaller audience facilities and, like A and D, also seated 340, with smaller 2000 square foot stages. Notice a second window above the control room; that was the client viewing room, and here's the view inside.





Above is a look at the control rooms for Studio B, and below is a shot of B from the back of the auditorium. Bing Crosby came from B and Charles Boyer from C. Each seated 340 people.



Wanted to follow Rudy, a non-industrialist, and to play with Hope when he was in town.

HOPE, BOB
Comedian

*BLUE
*CBS

1 -

June 8, 1933	STANDARD BRANDS (Vallee)
Mar 22, 1934	
May 31, 1934	
Dec 24, 1936	
Mar 25, 1937	

* Jan 4, 1935-Apr 5, 1935	EMERSON DRUG - Intimate Revue
Fri 8:30-9:00 pm	(Bromo Seltzer)

* May 9, 1937-Sep 26, 1937	JERGENS-WOODBURY - Ripplin Rhythm
Sun 9:00-9:30 pm	Revue (soap & face powder)

* CBS Dec 14, 1935-Sept 3, 1936	ATLANTIC REFINING COMPANY
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Dec 29, 1937-Mar 23, 1938	AMERICAN TOBACCO "Your Hollywood
Wed 10:00-11:00 pm	Parade"

June 26, 1938	RCA MAGIC KEY
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Let's flash back for a moment, shall we? With thanks to NBC, here is the first of Bob Hope's "bible cards". By the time he retired, there must have been a hundred or more of these cards that recorded every appearance artists made on each network.

Bob Hope, fresh from Broadway, came to NBC Radio in 1933. His first appearances were with Rudy Vallee on "The Fleischman's Yeast Hour," which was owned by Standard Brands. If you remember, earlier on we talked about Rudy as the guy that kind of started the interest in shows from the west coast and especially Hollywood, because of the film star guests he had on his weekly show. By 1934, Vallee was second only to everyone's favorite... "Amos 'n' Andy."

Vallee was a popular singer and was becoming a film star too, but he introduced the American listening audience to many people that would become legends. Heard on his radio show for the first time were Bob Hope, Milton Berle, Burns & Allen, Alice Faye, the Mills Brothers, Kate Smith, and Red Skelton. Movie stars that made their radio debuts with Rudy were Gloria Swanson, Ray Bolger, Fannie Brice, Ilka Chase, Helen Hayes, Bert Lahr and A. A. Milne, Edgar Bergen and many more. In 1937, at his insistence, Louis Armstrong hosted the show during Vallee's summer vacation. This made Armstrong the first African American to host a national network program.

Bing Crosby Enterprises, Audio Tape, and ABC...

This is a section that will surprise you in many ways! Bing played a role in the birth of **audio tape recording**. Below, Bing with The Boswell Sisters at NBC affiliate KHJ's studios promoting "The Big Broadcast" in 1932...a Paramount Pictures movie starring Bing as a radio singer, costarring George Burns and Gracie Allen.





This is Bing Crosby Enterprises Chief Engineer Jack Mullin at NBC Radio City West in an ABC control room. On the left are two Ampex 200 audio tape recorders, and in the foreground is the first Ampex 300.

Remember, when ABC bought the Blue Network in 1943, NBC agreed to give them space, some AT&T long line leases, and technological help for 10 years, so ABC studios were operating inside NBC properties in New York, Chicago, San Francisco and Los Angeles.

http://ethw.org/First-Hand:Bing_Crosby_and_the_Recording_Revolution

At the link above is the whole story of audio tape and Bing's involvement! It is a firsthand story, told by the man Jack Mullen hired to help him, Robert Phillips! Below are several pages that get to the heart of the matter as told by Mr. Phillips.

"Bing Crosby was one of the pioneers of the radio music show. Beginning in 1935 the "Kraft Music Hall" on the NBC Red Network was a standard. It was a quality live production that held a high position in the ratings over the years. However, the summer of 1945 was a turning point in this standard. Bing decided that doing a live show every week was too demanding, and it did not permit him to pursue his other interests and to be with his family. During one period the show had to be done live twice, once for the east coast and once for the west coast, which also

added to the work load. It also was confining, since it all had to be done within a certain regime that took away Bing's casual side. The adlibs and jokes had to be done according to the script; there was no editing to remove mistakes.

The show Bing hosted aired on the elite Red Network of NBC, and they would not permit recorded shows; they had to be live broadcasts. So, the 1945 – 1946 “Kraft Music Hall” program began without Bing because of the dispute on the live only policy. NBC and Kraft sued him for not appearing. He returned to finish the season beginning with the February 7, 1946 program, but that was the end of Bing on the NBC Red Network. This time Bing had set his mind to having a prerecorded production. However, his current Bing Crosby Productions organization headed by his brother Everett did not have the talent to establish a prerecorded show operation and the technical support it needed. In December of 1945 Bing hired Basil Grillo to help him with this task and improve the operation of Bing Crosby Productions.

In 1941 the US Government broke up the NBC empire and made it sell its Blue Network, and in October 1943 NBC sold it, but it took several years for ABC to develop its own programs. The network **shared studios in the NBC facilities at Sunset and Vine in Hollywood until at least 1948**, which is where Bing and ABC crossed paths. ABC needed programs with high ratings and they told Bing that if he joined ABC he could record his show but the quality had to be equal to the live broadcast. The show was to be a 30 minute program known as the “Philco Radio Time”.

A number of events happened during January 1946 before Bing accepted the ABC offer. Bing Crosby Enterprises was reorganized, and a division of it was dedicated to the production of the prerecorded radio show, which brought in Frank Healey, to supervise the technical parts of the production. Prior to this Bing did not have his own technical staff, since the NBC engineers provided that support. By the end of January 1946, Bing had settled with NBC and was well on the way to having his own prerecorded show on ABC.

The new 1946 – 1947 “Philco Radio Time” program began with Bing Crosby recording his show on transcription disks using the NBC recording facilities assigned to ABC and supervised by Frank Healey. However, all was not well with this new production. The recordings on the disks lacked the quality of the live show and the editing process was difficult. The show was done as a live production, but with additional recorded material that could be used if there was a problem. While it took two disks (15 minutes each) for the thirty minute show, the recordings were edited before the show was played at the appointed time on the ABC network.

The editing process was difficult, since it required recording from one disk to another several times. At least two or three playback units were required to permit the different parts to be merged on to a new recording disk, and with each copy the sound quality dropped. At times this process took over forty disks and many days to complete the edit. The result was the recorded show was less than desirable, and the radio audience noticed the difference. The ratings dropped, and ABC began to question if they should not return to the live broadcast.

The Recording Revolution

While the Crosby show was struggling with the disk recordings, a new technology had arrived. Jack Mullin had returned from his World War II service with parts for two German Magnetophon magnetic tape recorders that he had shipped back in mail sacks over a number of months. Instead of going back to the telephone company, he joined a friend, William Palmer, in a recording and movie business. William Palmer had a machine shop where they restored and modified the Magnetophon. Jack made new electronics using standard American parts and replaced the DC bias with AC bias to improve the tape signal-to-noise and added pre-emphasis for the high frequencies. These rebuilt Magnetophon recorders were then used in their recording business.

In May 1946 Jack Mullin demonstrated the modified Magnetophon recorder at an IRE (IEEE) show in San Francisco with the help of William Palmer. This demonstration caused a number of people to take notice of the quality that could be obtained from a magnetic tape recorder. There were other tape recorders at that time, but none of them had the outstanding quality of the rebuilt Magnetophon. During the following months William Palmer set up a number of demonstrations of the recorder for Jack to various movie, recording and broadcast people. The demonstrations showed that the recorder could reproduce sound as if it were live. Not only that, the magnetic tape could be edited by cutting it with a pair of scissors and splicing it with Scotch tape.



Jack Mullin (l) and Murdo McKenzie (r) with the two Magnetophon recorders in 1947.

These demonstrations were more of a novelty to the industry than a major step forward. After all, there were only two recorders and only 50 rolls of tape that no longer was made. The movie companies had made other agreements for their sound tracks, and the recording companies were happy with their recording process. During the demonstrations in the summer of 1947 Frank Healey, who was involved with technical production of the Crosby show, heard a demonstration and encouraged Murdo McKenzie, the producer of the Bing Crosby show, to investigate them for the show. Murdo arranged for a demonstration in San Francisco where Jack and Bill Palmer had their business. This demonstration was after the bad experience with the disk recordings, and Crosby now was faced with the prospect of finding a new way of recording the show or reverting to live broadcasts again. **Murdo was so impressed with the tape process that he arranged for Bing to hear the demonstration, which took place about the first of August 1947 in Los Angeles.** When Bing heard the sound quality and saw the editing, Jack Mullin was asked to do a test recording of the first Bing Crosby show of the 1947 – 1948 season. It was only a week away, and the Crosby people expressed concerns that Jack had only two recorders and a limited amount of tape. There needed to be way forward other than just the Magnetophon.

Jack had made an agreement with Colonel Ranger of Ranger Industries a year earlier to provide him with information so that Ranger could build a version of the Magnetophon and supply tape for it. Tests had shown that the Minnesota Mining (3M) tape would not work with the German recorder. By this time 3M had developed a black oxide plastic backed tape that evolved from their paper backed tape. It was the Scotch Magnetic Tape No. 100 designed for the Brush recorder, which was an early tape recorder. However, the Magnetophon needed a tape that could record a stronger magnetic field and have a better signal-to-noise ratio. The research group at 3M realized this need and set out to develop a higher grade tape using a red oxide, not knowing what the target machine would be.

During this period Ampex also had decided to build a broadcast quality tape recorder and asked Jack for assistance, but Jack could not help due to the agreement with Colonel Ranger. As the date for the Crosby recording session approached the tension grew. Colonel Ranger did come to Los Angeles with his two recorders but no new tape. His tape recorders were set up alongside the Magnetophon recorders in the recording department of NBC who was still supporting ABC. The show was held on the evening of August 10, 1947, and the moment of truth had come. The NBC engineers recorded the show on the standard disk lathes, and Jack Mullin and Colonel Ranger also recorded on their respective machines. Murdo asked Ranger to play his recording first, and it was terrible with distortion and noise. Jack was next, and history was made. The first radio show to be recorded on magnetic tape was broadcast on October 1, 1947.

Jack, who was still working for Palmer, was given an old studio and control room in the NBC (ABC) facilities where he could set up his machines and do the recording and editing of the show. It also served as his office. The 1947 – 1948 season was the first time a radio program was aired from a magnetic tape recording even though the program was transferred to disk for

broadcast. This transfer was due to the need to preserve the tape and insure that a tape break would not disrupt the broadcast. The quality of the show had improved even though disks were used, since the show was only transferred in final form and not edited on the disks. However, more important, the ratings of the show improved and the prerecorded show was preserved. The first step had been taken, but a bigger problem still needed to be addressed – new recorders and tape.

Alexander M. Poniatoff, the head of Ampex, heard one of the early demonstrations of the Magnetophon. He was in need of a new postwar product and was so taken by the recorder he decided to build one. He put his chief engineer, Harold Lindsay, in charge of the project and asked Jack Mullin to help them. Unfortunately Jack had already made the agreement with Colonel Ranger by that time, but Ampex decided to go ahead with the project anyway. After the poor showing of his recorders to the Crosby group, Colonel Ranger was persuaded by them and Jack Mullin to give up his agreement with Mullin. Jack was now free, and a call was placed to Ampex in October 1947. Minnesota Mining (3M) also was brought in as the tape supplier.



“Mr, Ampex,” Alexander M. Poniatoff (r), and Harold Lindsay, his chief engineer, in 1948 with the first Ampex 200 recorder. (Ampex stood for Alexander M. Poniatoff Excellence.”)

Ampex, by the spring of 1948, had developed its first prototype but lacked finances to bring it to market. The banks did not have any idea about venture capital at that time. Pressure once again began to build because the Bing Crosby show needed new recorders and tape for the 1948 -

1949 season. Everyone was convinced that Ampex was the answer, and **Bing sent them a check for \$50,000 in just an envelope without any cover letter.** It was what Ampex needed to begin production of the Ampex 200. In late 1947 Jack Mullin visited Minnesota Mining (3M) to see if they could provide the required magnetic tape to work with the Magnetophon and the future Ampex recorder. By then, they had started development of their new red oxide tape that would work with the Ampex recorder. Jack Mullin began to work with Robert Herr and William Wetzel of 3M conducting tests to help develop a high quality magnetic tape for audio recording. His work resulted in the Scotch Magnetic Tape No.111 brand. For these efforts by Bing and Jack, Bing Crosby Enterprises (BCE) was awarded in 1948 the distributorship west of the Mississippi River for the Ampex recorders and the 3M tape.

Harold Lindsay led the team to produce the Ampex 200 for Alex Poniatoff and Bing in 1948. It was housed in a polished black wood console with a stainless steel top that caused it to be called the most beautiful recorder to be made. The Crosby show received the first two of them, serial numbers 1 and 2, in time for the 1948 - 1949 season. Later the only two portable Ampex 200 recorders built, serial numbers 13 and 14, were delivered. Each of them consisted of two wooden boxes with handles. It took at least two people to carry each case, but they were taken everywhere the Crosby show went during the later part of the 1948 -1949 season, even to Canada. Jack Mullin described how they had to push and pull the four boxes up a spiral staircase to reach one of the upper dressing rooms where the recorders were set up. The audio mixing was done at the stage level using the RCA equipment. The output was fed over a telephone line to the recording location.

By the 1949 - 1950 season the Bing Crosby show had moved to CBS, and BCE had to establish its own recording-editing facility. It was a small facility located in the CBS Columbia Square Complex at 6121 Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood. It was on the second floor in the east wing of the complex. The recorders were located in the front of the building. There were two windows that were open most of the time, and people on Sunset Boulevard could hear the editing process. The three Ampex 300 recorders were on a waist-high shelf with a special tape speed control unit and acoustical equalizer at one end. In the hallway outside the room, there were shelves of indexed tapes of past recording sessions. By 1950, others like Robert McKinney were involved in the recording and editing of the show. In Hollywood, the live show was done at the CBS studios and in a theater behind CBS. The microphone placement and mixing of the show was done by Norm Dewes. He was a true professional held in high esteem by Jack Mullin. It has been said that the balance of the shows recorded was outstanding. There were no multiple tracks, just one channel that was fed to the recorders.

During the first two seasons that used the magnetic tape recorders, the Crosby radio show was recorded in front of a live audience when Bing was available. There were recorded rehearsals, but the editing process was limited by having only two recorders. The first season that was recorded on the old Magnetophon tape had to be transferred to transcription disks because of

concerns about the old tape breaking. With the new Ampex recorders and 3M tape, this transfer was no longer required, but the editing was still limited by having only two Ampex 200 recorders.

With the recording of the show, Bing was more relaxed and the audience had more fun with the ad-libs, since mistakes could be repaired. The quality was equal to a live show, and the broadcast version was mistake-free. By early 1949 Ampex had begun to produce the Ampex 300, which was smaller and lighter than the Ampex 200. The big plus was that the Bing Crosby show now had three recorders for the 1949 - 1950 season. These changes opened the door to new innovation, and the Crosby show did not lose time in coming up with new ways to record a radio show.”

There will be more from Mr. Phillips when we get to videotape! But for now...

Television's Siren Call...



This is the El Capitan Theater at 1735 North Vine Street, just a couple of blocks north of Radio City West. This was NBC's first "spill-over" location for television once AT&T linked the coast with the rest of the country in 1951. **On April 1, 1951 the El Capitan Theatre was leased for fifteen years at a cost of \$30,500 per year. On Sunday, September 30, 1951, "The Colgate Comedy Hour" was NBC's first regularly scheduled west to east television broadcast, and it came from The El Capitan.** Many of you remember this as a later incarnation, The

Hollywood Palace. By the way, the original El Capitan Theater was on Hollywood Blvd., but when it was sold to Paramount, its name became The Paramount Theater. With the name available, The Hollywood Playhouse took the name. When ABC bought it in for Jerry Lewis in 1963, it became the Jerry Lewis Theater and Paramount took the name back to its original location. Jimmy Kimmel does his show at the Hollywood Blvd El Capitan Theater location, and 1735 Vine is now the Avalon Hollywood Theater.

THE SAN DIEGO UNION

TV-RADIO

a-12 MONDAY MORNING, SEPT. 24, 1951

TOWERS PROVE WORTH

Microwave Show Reception Good

By ROBERT MacDONALD

Local television addlets got a chance yesterday to see just what the transcontinental microwave set-up is going to mean in the way of reception when two shows from New York were seen on Channel 8 — one microwaved, the other kinescoped.

Steve Allen and a gang of beautiful models did a "Crusade For Freedom" show from Manhattan which was wafted out here via the towers of the American Telephone and Telegraph Co., and it was sharp as a tack. Immediately following, "Irving Berlin's Salute to America" was shown on kinescope, and there was all the difference in the world.

This Sunday, from the stage of the El Capitan Theater in Hollywood, the first commercial telecast via the microwaves — Eddie Cantor on the Comedy Hour — will be televised, and New Yorkers will get a taste of the same treat.

The first east to west coast to coast broadcast had come on the Sunday before when NBC, with the help of CBS in Hollywood, presented "The Marathon For Freedom". In New York, Steve Allen hosted the show, originated by NBC, but carried by Dumont, ABC and CBS, and his west coast counterpart was Art Linkletter at CBS Columbia Square.

Of course, the first ever west to east television broadcast was a news event, with President Truman's address at the Japanese Peace Conference in San Francisco on September 5, 1951. This is the write-up on the telethon and at the bottom, notice the Comedy Hour news.

Eddie Cantor hosted the debut show from Hollywood. His guests included actress Judy Kelly, pianists Martin Freed and Ernie Stewart, Sid Fields, Ida Cantor, announcer Jack Slattery, and Al Goodman and his Orchestra. Cantor performed songs he made famous, including: "Makin' Whoopee," "For Me and My Gal," "Ida," "Susie," and "Bye Bye Blackbird."

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AyHeW05eGSY&ab_channel=1950classictelevisionshows

Above is a link to Cantor-hosted 1952 show from the El Captain. The show had rotating hosts, and also rotated weekly back and forth with New York. The main Hollywood hosts were Cantor, Abbott and Costello, and Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis. The photo below is at The El Captain, and the video link below is from the 1952 Olympics Marathon at The El Captain. Watch what Jerry does with the camera!

<http://youtu.be/7HOL0n3GdrY?t=3m46s>



Just for fun, here is some beautiful color home movie footage. It starts with a quick look at Burbank under construction, but then gives a lavish look at Radio City West and, halfway through, moves to CBS Columbia Square.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HwkkaUL1icw&app=desktop&ab_channel=PamelaGreyson%27sLOSTLOSANGELESchannel

As we had seen earlier, KNBH-TV's first shows were done in Studio F at Radio City West, but what was next for an ever expanding TV kingdom? As always, it was first, the technology, then the space. **Here is a reminder of the Radio City layout.** As mentioned above, some local shows, including the TV news, came from Studio E and others from F, with network audience shows coming from Studio D.



On Jan. 16, 1949, KNBH, the station now known as KNBC or NBC4, began broadcasting on Channel 4 to the Los Angeles. At that time, it was one of seven VHF stations licensed for operation in the market. **KNBH, which stood for National Broadcasting Hollywood,** was one of three stations in the market representing a national broadcasting chain.

The station debuted with three hours and forty minutes of programming, and was followed a 15-minute test-pattern-and-music session. Inauguration night launched with an 18-minute newsreel, "Review of 1948," and the market's first variety program, "On With the Show," hosted by Peggy Lee. Also seen was the station's first live program, "The Pickard Family," featuring Dad and Mom Pickard and their four children singing familiar American songs.

By October 1949, KNBH had extended its operating schedule from five to seven days a week, with approximately 26 hours of television programming each week. The station continued to make major technical advances and in October 1950, KNBH transmitted the first commercial telecast of a sports event, a Los Angeles Rams football game, via the Los Angeles/San Francisco inter-city microwave relay.

KNBH again made history in April 1951 when the first telecast to originate in the East and aired the same day in the West was accomplished by an air express kinescope. The station broadcast General Douglas MacArthur's speech before Congress less than five hours after it had been originated in Washington, D.C. **In 1954, the call letters changed to KRCA. In November of 1962, when the station relocated to the NBC Burbank facilities, the call changed to KNBC.**

When the station launched in 1949, Los Angeles was the fifth largest city in the United States, with only 80,000 television sets within 100 miles of the station's Mount Wilson transmitter.

The Start of Something Big...The NBC Burbank Studios



Above is a shot of NBC Burbank's famous Studio 1 under construction in 1952. Among the many stars that called this home were Bob Hope, Steve Allen, and Johnny Carson.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zbxoF4F0TrY&ab_channel=NoMercy

“The Start of Something Big”...indeed! There is not a better way to start this section than with the video above...please click the link and watch as technology merges Steve Allen’s famous 1958 stroll through NBC Burbank with the same route retraced in 2012.

The song was written by Allen and in this clip he is joined by Ann Sothern, Steve Lawrence, Eydie Gorme, Dinah Shore and a special mystery guest singing Steve's theme song.

They walk the halls of NBC singing, starting from Studio 1 (home of “The Steve Allen Show” and Johnny Carson’s “Tonight Show”) and ending over at Studio 4 (“The Dinah Shore Show,” “Laugh-In,” “The Dean Martin Show,” and “Midnight Special”).

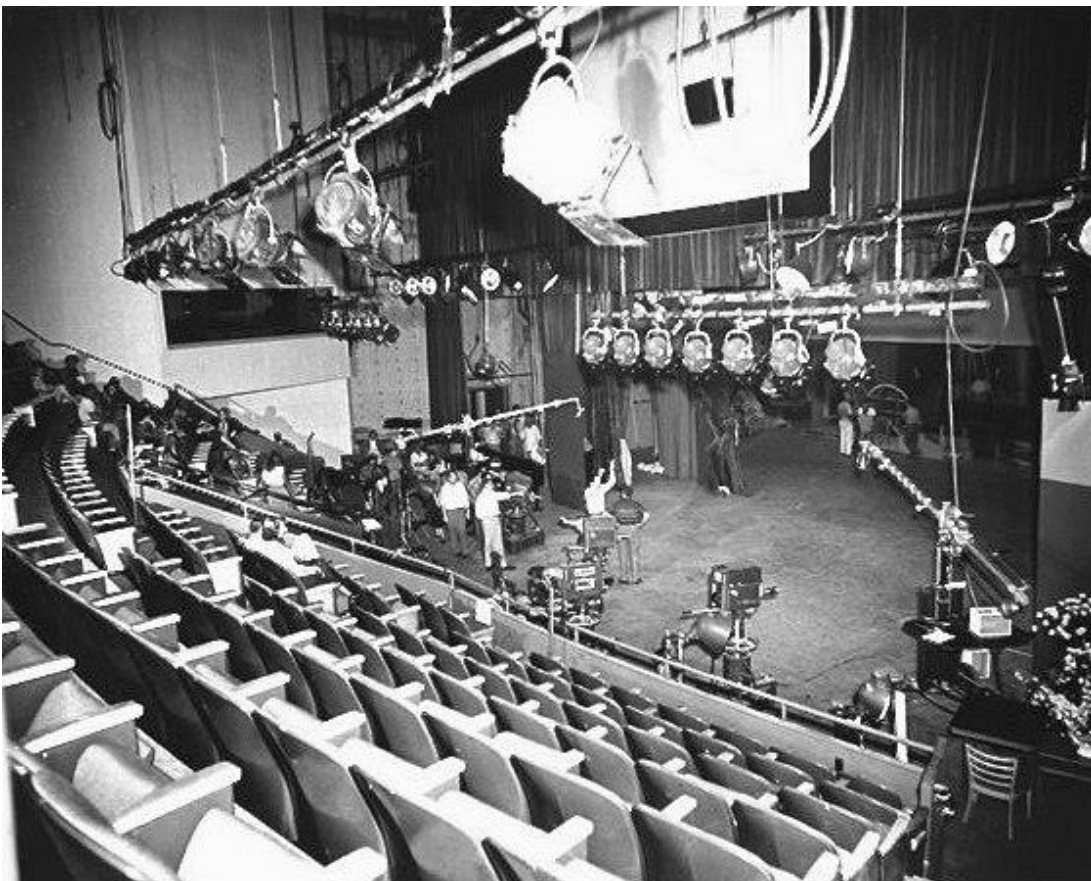
In this special version, new video of the same path these performers walked at NBC is inserted so you can see how the halls of the studios looked in 2012. You will see that hall pass through what was pretty much just a warehouse with sets and props.

By the way, “The Steve Allen Show” ran from June 1956 to June 1960 on NBC and from September 1961 to December 1961 on ABC. When at NBC, it originated in Studio 1, which at the time was a black-and-white studio. The programs between September 1957 and June 1960 were some of the first to be telecast in color from the newly color-equipped Studio 1.

Below is a shot of the 48-acre complex in 2012. Since then, NBC has moved operations to the Universal Studios lot a few miles away.



But in the beginning, there was this... Studios 1 (r) and 3 (l). The first two years were all black and white. At the bottom is the new Studio 1 in use in 1953. The name changed to Color City when Studios 2 and 4 were added in 1954.



Above is Studio 1; below is Studio 3. They were mirror images of each other. If you imagine yourself in later years sitting at Johnny Carson's desk in 1, the control room window on the second floor was on the right, as was the hall between 1 and 2. The most famous footage of that hall is in this 1976 clip, when Johnny takes the mic and the cameras follow him from Studio 1 to Studio 3, where Don Rickles is taping "CPO Sharkey". The historic clip is at this link.

<https://youtu.be/fyxjEuFfxV0?t=1m40s>



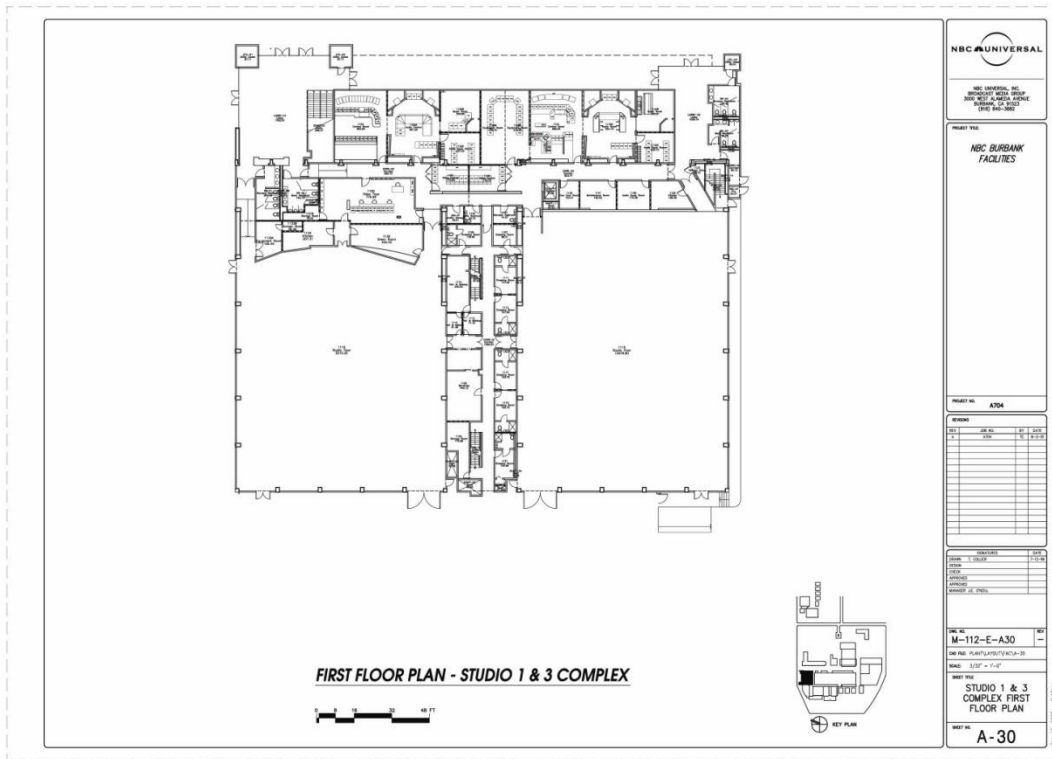
NBC TV CENTER

Sees January Start

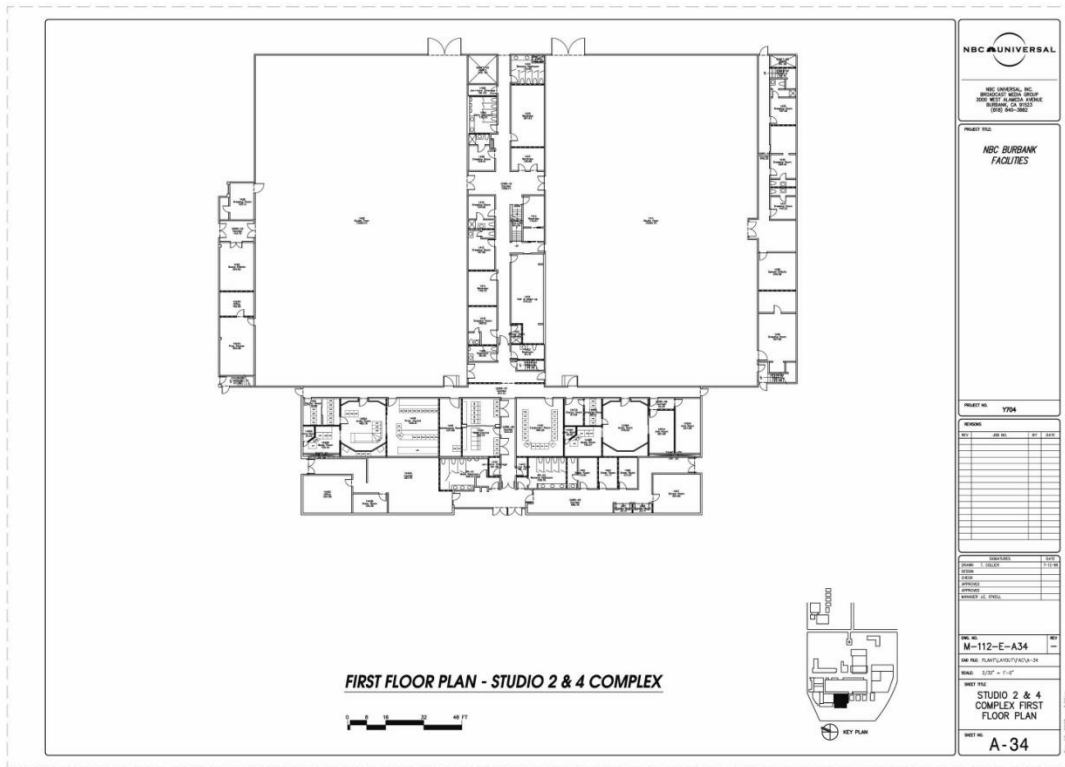
WITH building permit and materials clearance from National Production Authority in Washington expected by mid-January, NBC will break ground for its proposed new West Coast \$25 million radio-TV center in Burbank, Calif., late next month, according to present plans.

NBC has earmarked around \$2 million for the first unit of the project which will front on Alameda and California Sts., it was said.

Before we get too far ahead of ourselves, **here is what is basically the start of Burbank.** From October 1950, here is the first public mention of NBC's intentions in a small *Broadcasting Magazine* mention. Even before they bought the land, they had to make sure they could get the copper wire, aluminum and steel from the National Production Authority; the U.S. was at war in Korea, and defense contractors got the first crack at these items.



Thanks to our friend David Schwartz, here are diagrams of NBC Burbank Studios 1-3 and 2-4.



From the October 1952 issue of *Radio Age*, here is a two-page story on the completion of the first phase. Amazingly, CBS Columbia Square and NBC's Radio City West were built in one year, too.

NBC's New TV Center on West Coast Finished in Record Time

*Roomy Studios and Service Quarters Embody
Latest Advances in Design and Construction*

ONLY a few weeks ago two huge slabs of concrete rising like monoliths amidst piles of lumber, a contractor's hut, scattered building materials and debris, dominated a 48-acre site at the busy intersection of Alameda and Olive Streets in Burbank, California. Today, passing motorists see in the same spot two large television studios and a vast service building operating at high speed. This is the first unit of NBC's new West Coast TV headquarters.

Unlike the usual motion picture theatre with its small stage and maximum seating capacity, the NBC studios have been designed in reverse. While the stages are large, each auditorium has seats for only 500. The remainder of the 90- by 140-foot studios has been set aside for scenery, acting, an operating area for cameras, booms and associated equipment.

As the result of a suggestion by NBC star Red Skelton, arrangement of the seating area varies slightly from the normal. Skelton suggested that seats in the west studio start from seven feet above floor level, so that cameramen could move farther back underneath the seats for long shots.

In addition to the production space, the first floor of each studio includes a foyer, a conference room, properties room, producers' offices, an echo chamber, lens storage closet, lighting and technical equipment storage rooms, and a sound effects room.

Spacious Facilities for Stars

Other facilities will include five dressing rooms for stars, equipped with showers, three makeup rooms, two quick-change rooms, one large wardrobe room, a steam room, a rubdown room with showers, and rest rooms at each end of the main corridor. The dressing room section occupies a space 33 feet by 140 feet.

A second floor has seven additional dressing rooms, the control rooms, equipment rooms, engineers' lounge and more rest rooms. Another 10 dressing rooms—four for choruses, which also can be used as rehearsal halls—a makeup storage room and telephone equipment area are housed in the basement between the adjoining buildings.

The one-story service building, 140 feet by 180 feet,

contains two large rehearsal halls, a carpentry shop, paint shop and large storage areas for scenery and other materials. The overall dimensions of the TV Headquarters are 305 feet by 210 feet.

Shows televised in the new Burbank studios normally will go onto the coaxial cable through NBC's "Radio City" at Sunset and Vine in Hollywood. If normal relay facilities should fail, however, Burbank will be able to beam its programs direct to the NBC transmitter atop Mt. Wilson, northeast of Los Angeles, for telecasting. Large dish-type transmitting antennas are being installed on the roof of the studio building to provide this safety factor. A five-mile extension to the transcontinental video cable has been installed along the Cahuenga freeway through the Hollywood mountains, connecting NBC-Burbank with NBC-Hollywood.

Concrete Walls Built on Ground

Structural innovations speeded up the construction work. For example, instead of erecting lofty wooden forms for walls and columns, the reinforced concrete panels—a total of nearly 150 units—were poured in advance on the ground and lifted into place by giant cranes, a feat in itself. Erecting the panels—each weighing 16 tons—one on top the other, required ingenuity. This was accomplished by lifting one panel, or half-wall, turning it sideways, inserting it between the columns, then turning it back and bringing it into position.

To Gordon Strang goes much of the credit for completing the job on schedule, according to John K. West, vice president in charge of NBC's Western Division. Strang joined NBC in 1927, soon after he had visited WTAZ, NBC's original New York outlet, to install telegraph facilities for handling election returns. He liked what he saw of the company, applied for a job and a few weeks later, much to his surprise, was invited to join the network, then only one year old. Since then, he has participated in setting up most of NBC's owned-and-operated radio stations outside of New York. In recent years he has been concerned with the construction of NBC television plants in Washington, New York, Chicago and Hollywood.



One of the two main studios at Burbank as it neared completion. Elevated control room is at the right.

Before Strang's arrival in Burbank, the project already had been launched by Joe Arnone as supervisor of construction, working under O. B. Hanson, NBC Vice President and Chief Engineer. Earl Rettig, chief of TV operations for the Western Division, and Ed Sobol, production executive, contributed ideas on the required staging facilities and on the layout of the service building. Howard Johnson, TV production facilities supervisor in Hollywood, and his assistants, Joe Tichener, chief scenic artist, and Brice Reid, carpentry chief, were consulted on makeup rooms, wardrobe quarters and the arrangement of shop facilities. Control rooms, technical equipment and lighting came under the supervision of Bob Clark, chief video engineer for the Western Division; Paul Gale, head of station relations and traffic, handled details on wire and telephone facilities.

The new TV Headquarters, which is expected to expand through the years, is the result of a decision NBC executives made in 1951 to go ahead with its own television center rather than continue to invest increasingly more in leasing and buying theatres for its expanding video network. Property was purchased from nearby Warner Bros. Studios and the City of Burbank. In February, 1952, pencil was first put to paper but it was not until last April that ground actually was broken and plans made to complete the project this Fall.

12 RADIO AGE



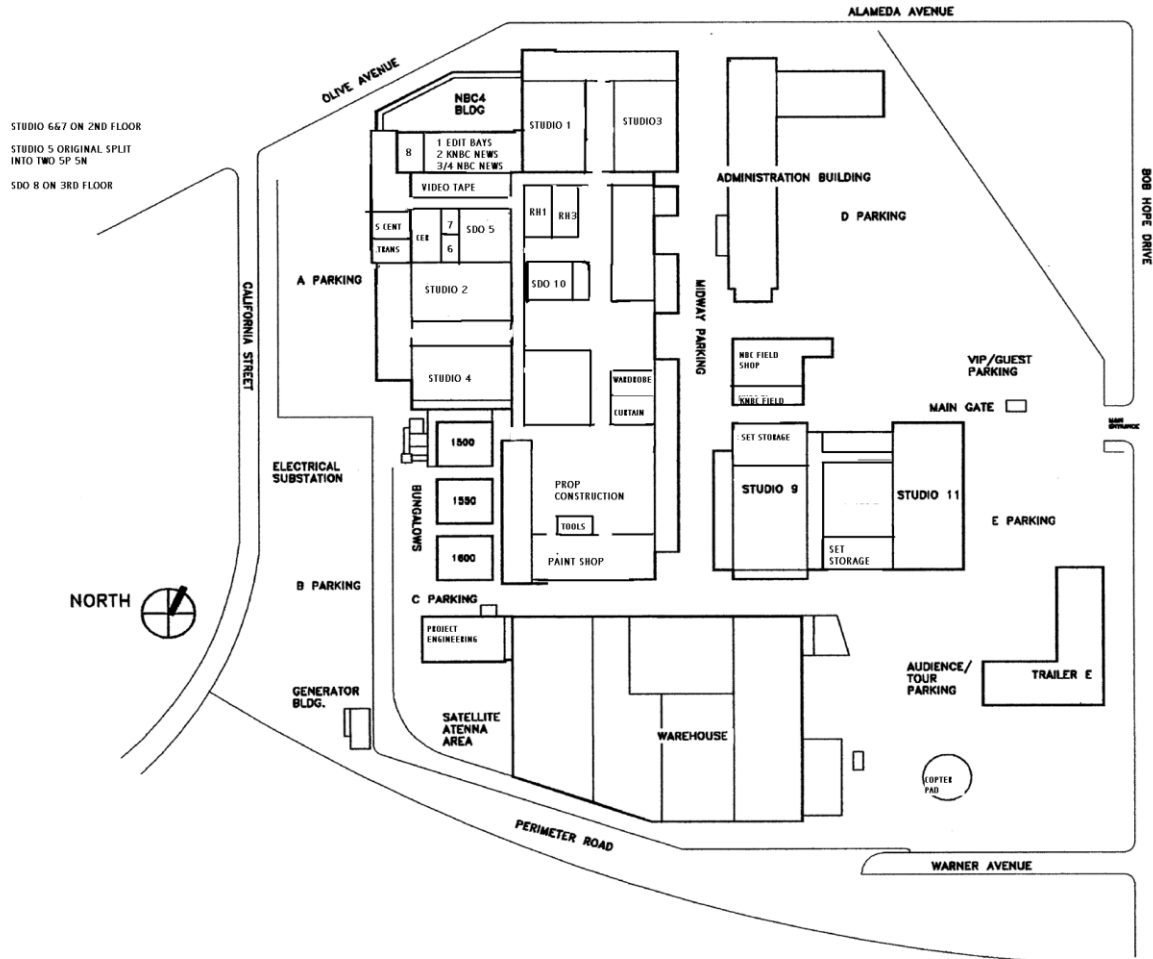
O. B. Hanson, NBC vice president and chief engineer checks a line on the Burbank site. With him are Roy Ward, engineer-builder; William Homby, design consultant, and Sol Kornberg, NBC production executive.



A huge crane swings a 16-ton concrete panel into place as part of the studio's outer wall.

Just to help us keep perspective, here is our exclusive custom-drawn studio diagram!

NBC BURBANK



Notice the big studios are 1 and 3, 2 and 4 and at the bottom right, 9 and 11. But what about the rest, and where were they? Here is a one-of-a-kind map from our friend Bob Meza, who joined KNBC in 1985. He has included the interior studio locations, the videotape department location, and more.

Studio 5 was created by taking the rehearsal hall built for Studios 1-3 and giving it to KNBC as Studios 5N, for news, and 5P for production, when they moved here in November of 1962. Studios 6 and 7 were small single-camera studios for local and network news cut-ins. Studio 8 was an NBC Radio voice booth, but it was called a studio nonetheless. Studio 9 was originally a warehouse, and in 1969 was converted to a space that was big enough for four-camera shows like “Saved by the Bell” and “The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air”. 11 was built in July 1984 for “Santa Barbara,” and Jay Leno called 11 home for years too.

On October 4, 1952, the debut broadcast went out over the entire NBC Television Network. It was "The All Star Revue" from Studio 1. This rare copy of the guest program handed out that day comes from Ken Shapiro, whose dad was one of the writers. The show aired at 4:30 Pacific Time, 7:30 Eastern. **Don't miss Page 2...lot of details there!**

DEL MONTE FOODS KELLOGG'S

and

PET MILK

PRESENT

THE ALL STAR REVUE

FROM THE NEW NBC-TV STUDIOS • BURBANK



Starring

MILTON BERLE • PHIL HARRIS • GEORGE JESSEL
HARPO MARX • ROSALIND RUSSELL • DINAH SHORE

NBC-TV STUDIOS

• BURBANK

• OCTOBER 4, 1952



the brand you know puts flavor first

Salutes

NBC Television Studios • Burbank

Today you are participating in a historic "first." The All Star Revue of Saturday, October 4, 1952, is the premiere program to originate in the new NBC Television Studios in Burbank — one of the first buildings in the world to be constructed especially for television.

These studios have the area of motion picture sound stages to provide space for such television extravaganzas as the All Star Revue; they have the height of the highest scenery loft so that scenery may be changed in a split second; they have the audience seating capacity of a theatre so that you may help give today's production the spontaneity which will project to 50,000,000 viewers throughout the United States.

Boiled down to statistics, this means that the two new studios which make up this unit are 140 feet long by 90 feet wide by 48 feet high, and they seat 492 persons. These studios are not complete, but because of the many shows originating on NBC in this Burbank-Hollywood area, it became necessary to have at least one studio available for October 4th.

There is much behind the scenes — the dressing rooms, conference rooms, offices, storage rooms, control booths, lighting bridges, make-up rooms, wardrobe facilities, and all the other adjuncts to a modern television production. In addition to the two studios, there is a service building, 140 by 180 feet in area, which houses two huge rehearsal halls, a carpentry shop, paint shop, storage area for scenery, props, wardrobe, etc.

The new NBC Television Studios stand upon a 49-acre plot which the network purchased last year from Warner Brothers Studios and the City of Burbank. It was not until April of this year that construction began, and since that time building history has been made by the crews of men who have put this studio "on the air" in less than six months. In the construction of the buildings, the new "tilt-up" method was used. Nearly 100 reinforced concrete panels, weighing 16 tons each, and more than 50 gigantic columns were poured in forms on the ground and then lifted into place by great cranes to form the walls within which you are now sitting.

Thus, as the house lights dim and the producer signals the cast to stand by before the show begins, you are witnessing the beginning of a new era in the amazing history of this century's electronic miracle — television!

DEL MONTE FOODS KELLOGG'S

and

PET MILK

PRESENT

THE ALL STAR REVUE

Starring

MILTON BERLE

PHIL HARRIS

GEORGE JESSEL

HARPO MARX

ROSALIND RUSSELL

DINAH SHORE

NELLE FISHER and JERRY ROSS

THE NOTABLES

Produced and Directed by

JOSEPH SANTLEY

Executive Producer

SAM FULLER

Production Supervisor

JOE BIGELOW

Head Writer

MANNIE MANHEIM

Written by

STANLEY DAVIS

ELON PACKARD

Phil Harris Material by

DICK CHEVILLAT

RAY SINGER

Additional Material by

JAY BURTON

Special Lyrics & Music by

DANNY SHAPIRO

HAL BOURNE

Musical Director

ROY BARCY

Settings by

MAX RÉE

Costumes by

ANCE DAVIES

Television Director

SID SMITH

Associate Producer

BILL HARMON

Assoc. Television Director

DICK McDONOUGH

Announcer

HAL SAWYER

Choreography by

AL WHITE, JR.

Technical Director

SIL CARANCHINI

Audio by

ROBERT JENSEN

Lighting by

PARKER OLIVER

Casting

HOWARD ROSS



As you may have heard, there was a lot of competition between CBS and NBC, and here is more proof! When CBS, which was building Television City a few miles away, learned the debut date for NBC's Burbank studios, it rushed a production of "My Friend Irma" into a not-fully-finished Studio 31 the day before, just to beat NBC. CBS's original debut date for Television City was November. CBS also beat NBC to the "Television City" name. There was the sound of the gnashing of teeth at 30 Rockefeller Plaza! (Thanks to Joel Tator for the ticket images.)

Now, chronologically, it's a bit early for me to show you this, but I thought you would enjoy a rare 360 degree tour of Studio 1 and Studio 3. These videos were done sometime after NBC had left the building, probably around 2012 or so. You can use your mouse to control these, too!

<http://www.dermandar.com/p/cRYgKD/inside-studio-1-upper> A 360 tour of Studio 1

<http://www.dermandar.com/p/bwWhwM/studio-3> A 360 tour of Studio 3

A few seasons into "The Andy Williams Show" in Studio 3, the seats were removed so he could do the show "in the round." The seats in the video look permanent, but they are removable.



By the way, when NBC was designing these two studios, they asked Bob Hope how he wanted Studio 1 to look, and Red Skelton advised on the design of Studio 3. In particular, it was how they wanted the audience seating laid out. Bob Hope, who cut his teeth in Vaudeville and on Broadway, wanted to see the audience, and the only way to do that with all the cameras was to be able to see over them, which is why the grade is so steep. Skelton's background was similar, and after he and Hope compared notes Red advised the same for Studio 3, which had fewer seats than Studio 1. Before he could do his show from here though, CBS scooped up Skelton and laughed all the way to the bank. Gnash!

Phase Two...The Color Studios 2 And 4



The great gap in time, between the October 4, 1952 debut of the studios and the official dedication of the entire facility on March 27, 1955, is an important pause in progress. Why the two and a half year gap? Perhaps the best way to answer that question is with this video. On Friday afternoon, December 17, 1953, something very important happened in television land. NBC held the news until the next night, and right in the middle of its top show, the network made this big announcement! It was about 9:15 Saturday night when most Americans with TV sets were watching Sid Caesar and Imogene Coca on their 90-minute live blockbuster, "Your Show of Shows." Here is the link. (Above, "Dean Martin Show" in Studio 4.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ojJCJIaDp9Q>

NBC Burbank had been in operation a year and a half, broadcasting in black and white before the FCC had approved the RCA/NBC Dot Sequential Color System, (also called the Compatible Color System). That was what NBC was waiting for to start construction on the color phase at Burbank.

Interestingly, on the east coast, this same problem had kept NBC from transforming their Brooklyn Studio to a color facility. They had bought it in 1952, and it sat there empty for two years. When the FCC gave its approval, renovation went into high gear and Studio 1 in Brooklyn debuted September 4, 1954 with the live color broadcast of “Satin and Spurs” starring Betty Hutton. That was also the first ever “Producer’s Showcase,” which were all color extravaganzas; all together, there were about 14 or so. The first of these to come from Burbank was “The Petrified Forest.” It was Humphrey Bogart’s first-ever live television appearance, and his last. Below, we see Bogie taking a look at of the RCA TK-41 color cameras in Studio 2.





This is another shot of “Petrified Forest” with the other two stars, Henry Fonda and Lauren Bacall. **At the link below is the entire presentation, recorded on kinescope May 30, 1955.** This was also the first dramatic color presentation from Burbank. The mushy look is because it was a color program, but recorded on the only media available at the time.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=riylfh_9ir8

Before we continue with the completion of Studio 4, we need to address some color issues and some technology, so we are going into a brief “time shift” before we get back to the building details.

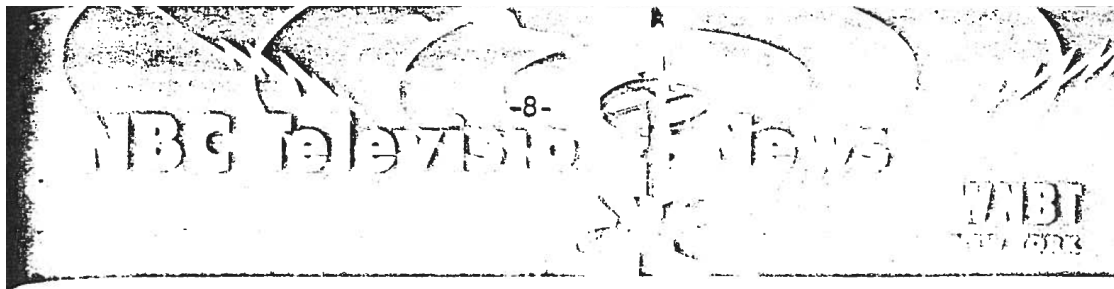
Speaking of Kinescopes, Time Shifting and Color...

Believe it or not, the thing at the top of the network television wish list was a way to “time shift”...a way to capture and delay programming from one coast to the other. In radio, this was not a problem thanks to the creation of audio tape recording. Experiments in video tape recording had started years before, but progress was slow.

This answer was not perfect, but until videotape came along, there was this... the kinescope recorder (photo below). These special speed film cameras were trained on modified cathode ray tubes and recorded their output on film, for broadcast 3 hours later.



This NBC Press Release from June 17, 1948 introduces the kinescope process.



* ————— *

KINESCOPE RECORDING TO BE USED BY NBC FOR FIRST TIME
AT GOP CONVENTION IN REGULAR PROGRAMMING SERVICE

* ————— *

NEW YORK, June 17 -- The kinescope recording system, enabling stations not yet interconnected to the NBC Television network by coaxial cable or micro-wave relays to telecast important programs, will be used as an integral part of NBC's programming for the first time during the Republican national convention in Philadelphia the week of June 21, O.B. Hanson, NBC vice president and chief engineer, announced here.

Designed and engineered by NBC, the kinescope recording system was put into operation several weeks ago. All recordings made to date, however, have been on an experimental basis.

Use of the recording cameras will provide television programs for non-interconnected midwestern and west coast NBC stations and affiliates in less than a day after the action occurs. The programs will be recorded as they are presented to the NBC video network. The recordings will be made and the film processed in New York, and prints will be ready for shipment by air within 12 hours after the conclusion of each program. Planes will rush the film to stations across the country.

(more)

AMERICA'S NO. 1 NETWORK • THE NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY

- Kinescope Recorder

-9-

"By use of the kinescope recording system, we are in effect providing coast-to-coast television service before we are actually linked by coaxial cables or micro-wave relays," Hanson said.

The 16mm. motion picture films made available in this manner are superior in quality to similar film footage made for home movies, he said. The cameras, according to Hanson, cost \$10,000 a piece.

Highlights of the NBC-Life Magazine programs, originating in Philadelphia and telecast on the NBC East Coast network, will be kinescope-recorded and made available for other NBC video stations and affiliates.

-----O-----

(NBC - June 17, 1948)

As we saw above in the “Petrified Forest” kinescope of a color program, the image was quite mushy, and of course, in black and white. For a company that was investing \$250 million in color television’s future, this was not a good solution, so NBC tried something new: Lenticular Color Kinescope Recording.

On Sunday, November 29, 1956, NBC Brooklyn’s Studio II made its debut with a “Producer’s Showcase” presentation of “The Esther Williams Aqua Spectacular,” a 90 minute color special. On the east coast, the live show aired at 7:30. That made it 4:30 in California, which is not an ideal time for a “prime time” show...and is at the heart of the problem.

To make things more interesting, with the broadcast of the Williams special, NBC introduced the use of a lenticular film color kinescope process. The color kinescope machines were in Burbank, where this color spectacular was carried live, but it was also recorded in color for a west coast “encore” three hours later. The playback was not spectacular.

NBC had introduced the lenticular color film process to the press in September 1956 in Burbank with “not so great” reviews. In a nutshell, this color process was like the black and white “hot kine” process, but unlike the long process of developing color negative film, NBC’s film could be processed rapidly using standard black-and-white methods.

The lenticular color kine system was much like the diachronic optical prism filters in the RCA TK-41 color camera, which separated out the colors (red, green, blue) feeding into the three Image Orthicon tubes. The special film from Kodak was loaded into three kine recorders shooting a negative polarity monitor with either a red, blue or green color filter in front of each kine, which basically produced a color separation negative. After processing, the three film strips (that now had a positive print quality in red, blue and green) were fed into a special synchronized Vidicon film chain for broadcast.

The Los Angeles Times said “it did not show off color at its best. The blues were purplish and the images were blurry. Overlapping and bleeding of colors was quite evident and generally inferior to the black and white kinescope process.”

Interestingly, the same week that Brooklyn II debuted, Ampex shipped its first VRX 1000 video tape recorders, which were of course monochrome. NBC Burbank got three, New York got one, RCA got one and CBS Television City got five. On November 30, 1956, CBS used one of its machines for the first-ever tape delay, which was of Douglas Edwards presenting the news.

By the way, this is a good time for a horizontal look at what was happening network-wide. We’ll do that with this article from *Broadcasting*’s August 20, 1956 edition. Notice in the middle column, the Burbank Facilities headline which marked the opening of Studio 4.

NBC ACCELERATES ITS COLOR EXPANSION

Network's yearlong \$12 million project to hit high mark this fall with opening of new facilities in New York, Brooklyn and Burbank.

THE BULK of NBC's \$12 million expansion of its color facilities within the past year—three new color studios and other new color facilities—will be placed into service this fall.

NBC is reporting today (Mon.) that the Ziegfeld Theatre, "Brooklyn Two" and "Color City Four" at Burbank, Calif., are included as well as the installation at Color City of a recording system using lenticular film (new development of NBC, RCA and Eastman Kodak Co.).

The latter system, according to NBC, will be operating at the start of the fall season and will permit the network to present color programs on the West Coast on the same time-delay basis now standard for black-and-white.

The plans for these studios and other expansion which will double NBC's color production had been disclosed last fall by Brig. Gen. David Sarnoff, board chairman of RCA and then also of NBC (B•T, Nov. 7, 1955).

The Ziegfeld Theatre in the Broadway section of New York that has been converted into studios by NBC has its facilities concealed, thus retaining the theatre's traditional appearance. The network said the Ziegfeld will make "an ideal showplace for televising big entertainment events that call for a 'first-night' atmosphere."

As described by NBC, the theatre when completed will have a studio control in the basement of the theatre for production people to view stage action through two vidicon cameras. For rehearsal convenience a "Director's Delite"—a small portable control console set up temporarily on the stage floor—will be used.

A removable fore-stage floor, fore-stage lighting and an aerial camera attachable to the balcony's front will be available for larger tv productions. A large-screen monochrome monitor as well as regular color monitors will be used for audience viewing. A lighting system handling 900,000 watts of current and containing 450 lighting outlets will be employed.

The new major color studio in Brooklyn is adjacent to the color studio currently used. Brooklyn Two is said by the network to be the largest studio "ever built from the ground up specifically for color." It will have 13,500 sq. ft. of floor space, exceeding in size only that of the adjacent studio that originally was a film studio before conversion to color tv. The lighting system is described as the "most powerful" in the industry, having a capacity of 1.2 million watts and 850 outlets. Enough current will be used by the studio alone to light a city of 4,000 homes.

Burbank Facilities

On the west coast, the new Burbank Color City Four will be the second such studio and will have 12,600 square feet of floor space. This is approximately the same size as Color City Two (NBC's first color studio in Burbank).

NBC described its lenticular system as working in this way: "electronic information is reg-

istered on black-and-white film through minute lenses which form a portion of the film itself. The film can be processed rapidly with normal black-and-white techniques and then played back as a color tv program."

Breach of Contract Suit Filed Against NBC by Martin, Lewis

DEAN MARTIN and Jerry Lewis filed a \$3 million breach of contract suit against NBC in the U. S. District Court at Los Angeles last week attacking the network's refusal to carry out a five-year personal appearance agreement made earlier this year.

The comedy team charged that its production firm, York Pictures Corp., a New York corporation, signed a contract with NBC Feb. 15, 1956, covering a series of tv programs to begin this September. The complaint said the agreement covered four programs each season for five years with NBC to pay \$250,000 for each show, live or on film. The contract specified that NBC would notify York of the telecast dates for the next season by July 1 of each year, the court suit explained, although the deadline this year was extended to Aug. 1.

The complaint charged that on July 25 NBC notified York in writing that it would not comply with its obligations to York and repudiated the contract. The suit said that on or about Aug. 1 York informed NBC of its continued "readiness, willingness and ability to fully perform its obligation under said agreement" but about the same date NBC "unequivocally and in writing reaffirmed to York, NBC's repudiation of the aforesaid agreement."

The suit was filed in behalf of York by the Los Angeles law firm of Pacht, Ross, Werne & Bernhard.

Notice all the things that are going on at the same time in the network's new big push into color. Mentioned here are NBC's newly-converted Ziegfeld Theater, the debut of Brooklyn II, Lenticular color kinescopes installed at Burbank, and Burbank's newly completed color Studio 4. We are about to return to Studio 4, but before we do, here is a rare look at one of the only surviving examples of color kinescope recording. At the link below is a clip of a classic sketch from "The Ernie Kovacs Show" from Burbank. The Martin - Lewis law suit blurb above is interesting, too.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?t=33&v=IEBg6ansaJA>



Back to the drawing board, so to speak, with Studios 2 and 4...



Above is part of Studio 2 being built in Burbank. It was the third studio there, and the first-ever studio built specifically for color. Below is Studio 4 under construction.



These are some of the specifications and detail of Studio 4, the second color studio there.

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PAGE 08/08

FACT SHEET FOR NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY COLOR STUDIO IN BURBANK

Site:	48 acres, Olive and Alameda Streets, Burbank, California
Construction Technique:	Structural steel frame with concrete reinforced walls, precast on the floor slab and tilted into position. Weight of concrete panels 41,000 lbs. each. Lifted into position by crane.
Architectural Effect:	Extreme simplicity. Relief afforded by device of accentuating construction joints between the panels. Application of superficial embellishments were avoided. Feeling of continuity is accomplished by a contrasting color band around the base line of building. Color also is used to identify studio entrance.
Studio:	90 ft. x 140 ft. --12,600 sq. ft. Clear height 42 ft. to lower chord of roof truss.
Technical Wing:	50 ft. x 139 ft. 2 floors, -- 11,500 sq. ft.
Dressing Room Wing:	32 ft. x 139 ft. 2 floors, basement and third floor penthouse (15,300 sq. ft.)
Service Corridor:	25 ft. x 272 ft. -- 6,800 sq. ft.
Utility Basement:	9,700 sq. ft.
Cubic Yards of Concrete:	3,150
Miles of Copper Wire:	160 miles installed by Austin Company NBC installed at least 160 more miles of electrical wiring.
Structural Steel:	190 tons
Reinforced Steel:	150 tons
Connected KW Lighting:	1,150 KW lighting, 400 KW power, 650 KW air condition power.

This is a very informative page from NBC's History of Color Television. Notice all the things that start to happen at RCA and NBC after the second item on the page...the December 17, 1953 FCC approval. **Notice also the first entry is on video tape, and that is where we are headed next. But on the way, let's drive by to see how NBC Burbank looked in 1958!**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Us2flcoPut0>

I-14

December 1, 1953	--	RCA publicly demonstrates magnetic tape recording of both black-and-white and color TV.
December 17, 1953	--	FCC adopts all-electronic compatible color TV standards recommended by RCA and NBC and NTSC.
January 1, 1954	--	NBC makes first national network colorcast. The Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena, Calif., is viewed by audiences throughout the nation on the screens of RCA color receivers.
March 17, 1954	--	RCA's Bloomington, Ind., plant starts a limited commercial production of a color TV receiver, and NBC announces that 31 stations are equipped for colorcasting. Color TV studio facilities on both East and West Coasts are expanded by NBC.
September 15-16, 1954	--	Color TV Symposium at Princeton, N.J. at which time an improved 21-inch color tube was shown.
November 15, 1954	--	Announcement of RCA-21AXP22 color picture tube.
December 6, 1954	--	RCA demonstrates 21-inch color picture tube to be used in sets to be marketed early in 1955.
December 31, 1954	--	NBC reports a total of 68 hours of colorcasts for 1954, as against 46 hours for CBS and no colorcasts by ABC. NBC opens \$3.5 million color studio in Brooklyn, N.Y.
January, 1955	--	RCA introduces two color TV receivers using the new 21-inch round color picture tube priced at \$895 and \$995.
March 27, 1955	--	NBC opens "Color City" at Burbank, Cal., a \$7-million project and the first studio built from the ground up for color TV.
May, 1955	--	NBC transmits first color TV programs on tape.
December, 1955	--	RCA offers first complete line of color TV receivers, with suggested list prices ranging from \$695 to \$995. NBC reports a total of 215 hours of colorcasts for 1955.

Videotape Arrives in Burbank, and Burbank Invents the Rest...



This is NBC Tape Central. These are the four RCA TRT-1A color prototypes. Primary use for these and the Ampex machines below were for Time Zone Delay. The Ampex room (below) held eight VR1000s, modified by NBC/RCA to record and play color.



With the help of our friend Richard Wirth (NBC Burbank alumni, now with USC's School of Cinematic Arts), we are going to take a close look at the history of videotape and its development. After all, **it changed everything! And so did Art Schneider! His nickname was Mr. Jump Cut and in this video, you will see him over and over again editing (sweater and white glove). He is the man that practically invented videotape editing and he did it at Burbank, and this is one of the best videos on the history of editing you will find.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?t=1&v=SzZ4S2gkxal>

I could fill a dozen pages on the importance of video tape, but if you take a look at the videos here, you'll learn just as much.

As mentioned in the audio tape segment above, Bing Crosby did have a hand in videotape recording too, but NBC had been working on tape since the late 1940s. By 1953, RCA had demonstrated a system that ran at 360 inches per second, like the first Crosby machine in 1951. RCA's had better quality using video compression, but even large reels could only capture 4 minutes. In 1953, David Sarnoff and his RCA board of directors visited Bing Crosby Enterprises to see if they could buy their recorder, but there was no sale.



Above, RCA's David Sarnoff with RCA's first experimental videotape machine in 1951. It used 1 inch tape and moved at 360 inches per second. Notice the size of the take up reel at the bottom.

After more years of work, Bing Crosby Enterprises came up with the new recorder, which operated at 100 ips with half-inch tape using longitudinal recording and no scanning. It recorded color video and sound with three heads - video, color, and sound/reference. The recorder also employed video compression techniques, and an early version was demonstrated in February 1955. The recorder was further refined and demonstrated in June 1955. Based on the performance of this new recorder, CBS ordered three of them. In late 1955 Bing asked Jack Mullin to visit Ampex to see their video tape recorder. Crosby, who had worked closely with Ampex on the development of audiotape recording technology, was not working with them on videotape. He knew that they were working on one, but did not know how far they had come.

Jack went to Ampex near the end of the year and came back with the news that it was over...that Ampex had a much better recorder. Ampex demonstrated its first prototype videotape recorder to the broadcasting industry at the National Association of Broadcasters Convention in April 1956. Ampex was overwhelmed at the reaction to its invention.

As the 1956-1957 television season got underway, the company was still filling initial orders for the machines. **As late as November 1957 there were only 13 videotape recorders in the United States. According to the Chicago Daily Tribune, CBS had five of them and NBC had two, all on the west coast. A third one was sent to Camden, New Jersey, for RCA engineers to reverse-engineer so RCA could enter the videotape marketplace. ABC had three machines, but they were based in Chicago.**

At the beginning, tape was considered a transmission device. Unless a show was originated on film, all programming continued to be live to the eastern and central time zones. When the networks finally received their full complement of tape machines, the immediate planned use was as a tool for Time Zone Delay (TZD) with much-improved video quality over kinescopes for the western states. It allowed huge savings for the networks, which would no longer be burdened by the expense of film stock and processing fees the kinescope process demanded. Live was still the way the public would see their favorite shows if they lived in the east or the midwest.

By the way, **as late as 1964, 23 of the 48 states did not have any form of Daylight Savings Time, which added an extra layer of complications for tape delayed playback** for all networks. If the network news ran at 6:30 PM in the Eastern Time Zone, and at 5:30 Central, the networks wanted it to be seen at those times, and at 6:30 Mountain and 5:30 Pacific time. Without DST delay, it could wind up running an hour earlier or later, depending on the state. This was a key issue as sponsors were paying for specific day-part audiences. Keep this in mind when you see Daylight Savings Time mentioned below. California and New York were DST states.

Even before all the orders for machines earmarked for TZD were filled, the purpose of tape began to expand. **NBC received its first videotape machine on December 13th, 1956. According to *Broadcasting's* issues of 12/10/56, 12/17/56 and 12/24/56, it was installed – not**

in Burbank, but in NBC's Hollywood headquarters. A second one soon followed. Even before NBC started running TZDs from tape (officially when Daylight Savings Time started in April, 1957), the technology was put to work in a new way, and there will be more on this below.

When the next daylight savings time rolled around on May 4th, 1958, NBC opened “Video Tape Central” as part of the Burbank technical operation. Initially, it contained one RCA prototype color machine and two Ampex machines converted to color by NBC engineers. More machines from both manufacturers were added as quickly as they could be delivered. By 1959, Tape Central had grown to eight Ampex machines and four RCA machines. A control system was also designed to automate the entire TZD process.

Machines were poised to record and play through a system of timers. One hour programs were treated the same as half hour programs. Even though the machines would accept an hour of tape, it would take them too long to rewind and cue up for playback during the short break between programs at the top of any given hour. Instead, the decision was made to break all programs at the half hour point. In the case of one hour programs, a commercial break about a half hour into the show would be used to switch to another record machine. The first half hour was rewound and cued to standby for playback at the top of the hour while the other machine recorded the second half hour of the show.

As the 50's wore on, more shows began to record in advance. But they had to be done as live - recorded in their entirety in one pass. There was no way to stop and fix mistakes. It didn't take engineers long to begin experimenting with ways to edit the unwieldy and unforgiving two-inch wide quadruplex recordings. Audiotape had been physically edited for years using a metal guide, a razor blade and some special adhesive tape. But television signals were more complicated, particularly in the way they were recorded on the tape.

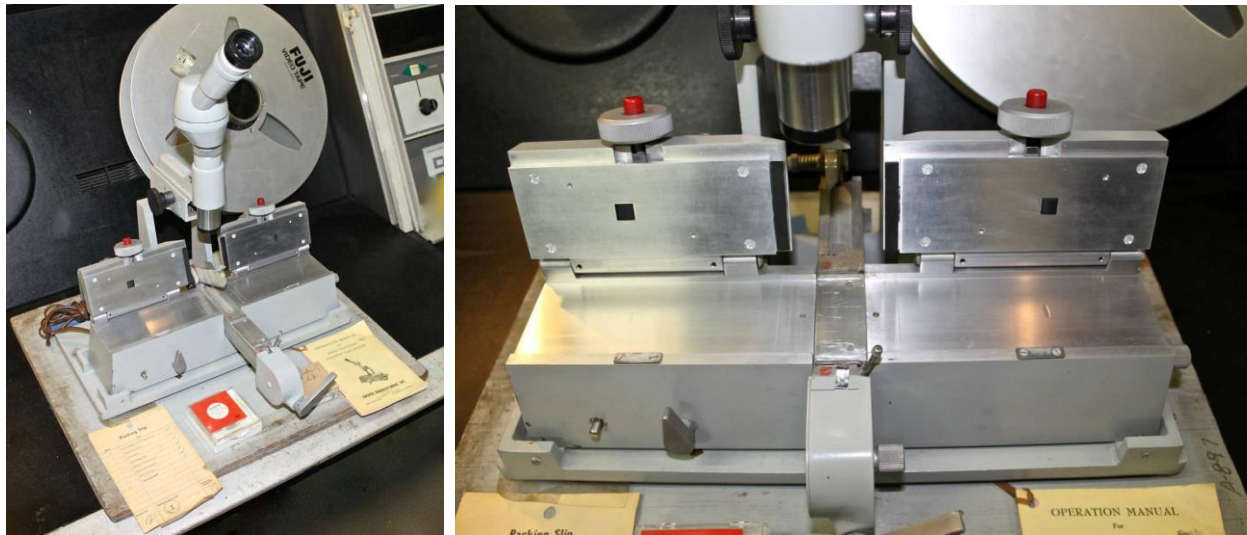
All the machines were two inch quadruplex (quad for short) because it took large reels of two inch wide tape unspooling at 15 inches per second past four magnetic heads revolving at a high rate of speed (14,400 times per minute) to reproduce the quality of a live signal. Four rotations equaled one frame. If a cut was made anywhere but between a complete frame, the picture would jump and roll until it found its control pulse again and stabilized.

NBC Burbank engineers and editors decided they had to come up with a better way than this trial and error method of editing. Eventually, they invented a way to make the edits more accurate. Kinescope equipment was still in use and available, so they developed a system of editing using 16mm kinescope films. After a master videotape was recorded, a 16mm film “work print” would be made of it along with 16mm magnetic sound recordings. On the cue track of the master videotape, the sound area of the kinescoped film and the cue track of the 16mm sound recording **engineers would record the Editor Sync Guide (ESG), a forerunner to what we know now as Time Code. You can hear that audio guide at the link below.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?t=13&v=Ygw3nlzOqio>

ESG consisted of a male voice calling out the minutes and a female voice calling out the seconds. Every 24 frames, there would be a one frame “beep” tone. Art Schneider, an NBC editor involved with the system’s creation, says in his book “Jump Cut” it took three people and a week to create the seventy-three minute master recording.

The program would then be edited with frame accuracy using standard motion picture editing techniques. When complete, the tape was “conformed” to match the 16mm sound cue track. By the time the ESG was put into use, the manual videotape splicer had become more sophisticated to include adjustment dials and a microscope to ensure accuracy. This became known as double system or offline editing. **This is the Smith Block video tape splicer.**

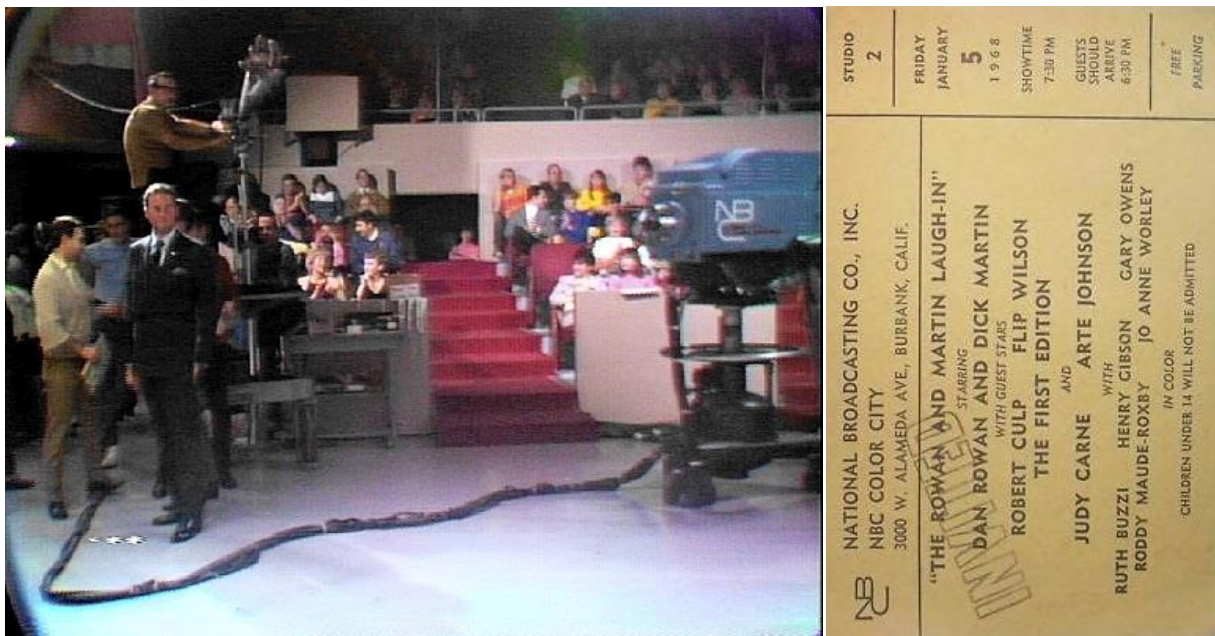


The first official broadcast use of the system aired on October 17th, 1958, on the special “An Evening with Fred Astaire.” It was also one of the first programs to be recorded on color videotape. The show went on to win nine Emmy Awards in 1959, including “Most Outstanding Single Program of the Year.” An unprecedented 10th award was given 30 years later when, in 1988, a technical award went to Don Kent, Ed Reitan and Dan Einstein for restoration of the program for the UCLA Film and Television Archive. Here is the restored video of the show. <https://vimeo.com/261611927>

Art Schneider wrote that the word of mouth about the Astaire program “literally opened up the flood gates to producers and directors who wanted their shows edited at NBC.” Word of its accuracy spread quickly and for about 10 years after, NBC Color City was the place to go to edit your videotaped program! Director Bud Yorkin said, every studio at Color City was used to do the show, and recent research has found all of the dance numbers and commercials were prerecorded, but the rest of the show was done live to the east, and to tape for the west.

The editing on the Astaire program was minimal by comparison to some of the later efforts using the ESG system. Schneider eventually used the system on “Rowan and Martin’s Laugh-In.”

"Laugh-In" was the first show to use very quick cutting, sometimes just a few frames. For some segments, every camera take was a physical cut in the tape. It was said when the “Laugh-In” master tapes were played, they had so many (an average of 400) physical cuts they sounded like a machine gun firing as the tape passed the spinning video heads!



Above, a rare shot of “Laugh In” in production in Studio 2, and a ticket for the mayhem. On the next page is a one-of-a-kind look behind the joke wall that was part of every show.

In these “Laugh In” outtakes, notice this is black and white film we are watching. As mentioned above, kinescope machines were recording the same thing that was being fed to the color videotape machines. This is because film/kinescope work copies were easier to edit and to find the best edit spots of the scenes before Art Schneider began to edit the master tape, using a Smith Block and a razor blade.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jFVAVUoV7gw&ab_channel=Twiceremovedfromyest



A True “Truth or Consequences” Story; A Videotape First...

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GI5MHM1w-5w&ab_channel=pannoni14

At the link is a historic episode of the show from NBC Radio City West, Studio D, which shows creator and producer Ralph Edwards introducing the new host of the new daytime version, Bob Barker. It was Bob’s first job in television.

The evening primetime television version began in October 1950, with “Queen For A Day” host Jack Bailey, but it never set the ratings world on fire, so it was removed from NBC’s evening schedule after two seasons, one live year and one film year. The long running radio version was still quite popular, so four years after leaving the nighttime schedule, NBC tried again with a televised version, but in daytime.

In case you missed it on Page 34, “Truth Or Consequences” was one of the first live audience shows to be shot on film. As a matter of fact, the famous “3 Headed Monster”; a triple headed Movieola editor used on “I Love Lucy” was bought from Edwards’s production company in 1952 to edit Lucy’s show.

The show began its daytime run on December 31, 1956, originating live from Hollywood and alternating from two locations, the El Capitan Theater on Vine Street or Studio D, a radio studio converted to television in NBC’s Radio City West. Quickly, it became obvious there was a problem. The show aired live in the east at 11:30am. In Hollywood, that’s 8:30 in the morning ...hardly a conducive time to have a pie thrown in your face! The *New York Times* reported, “Rounding up an audience of Hollywood tourists at 8:30am in the morning has been a problem.”

On January 22, 1957, less than a month after the New Year’s Eve debut of the daytime version, “Truth or Consequences” became the first entertainment show to be recorded on tape, not for time zone delay, but to assure the show had the studio audience it needed. Even though the big tape buildup would take place in the new Burbank facility, the first prerecorded program made ahead of time to air both in the east and the west from tape was made at the old Hollywood Radio City.

The Accidental Birth of Electronic Chromakey...

Another electronic trick we accept as routine today is Chroma-key. **This is the perfect example of early chromakey, with Milton Berle talking with Milton Berle!**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XoLi3MFMS6c&t=1s&ab_channel=VladmirZworkin

Some may know it as compositing, and there’s hardly a show we see today that doesn’t use it in some form. Motion picture production had been using compositing for years prior to the

invention of television, but it was an involved process requiring optical printers and intermediate film mattes, hardly suitable for the immediacy of live television.

In July of 1957, Chroma-key had its first on-air test on one of NBC Burbank's more ambitious projects, "Matinee Theater," which ran from 1955 to 1958. Every weekday afternoon, a one-hour live dramatic production was presented. The source material varied, but often it was an adaptation of some famous literary work.

As it was told to me by Joel Tator, its use in TV was discovered by accident one afternoon when art director Milt Altman was using different colored cards in a rehearsal for a "Matinee Theater." Seems that one of the color video shading men in the control room dialed out the blue channel completely and by accident...with the blue element missing, you could "see through" the card!

A television version of the H.G. Wells classic "The Invisible Man" lent itself perfectly for the first live use of Chromakey. When the title character's hands and head were wrapped in blue and he stood in front of a blue screen, the Chromakey amplifier would replace the blue parts of the video with an image from another camera. All that would be seen in the composite shot was the man's clothing in front of scenery being shot by the background camera, thus making him seem invisible.

Chromakey was fully developed with the help of Frank Gaskins, NBC Burbank's technical operations supervisor, and Milt Altman, graphics arts supervisor. Together, they pooled their talent to develop what has become standard equipment on live video switchers throughout the world and now can be launched on any home computer. Today, blue has been largely replaced by the use of green, but it's the same process. The key color change became necessary when video started to be compressed and primary colors began to be sampled at the ratio of 4:2:2, with luminance and green being the only fully sampled channel in most cases.

In closing this section on videotape, I leave you with a true rarity...3M's history of videotape!

This is one of only a handful of surviving copies of 3M's 1976 NAB tribute video called "20 Years Of Video Tape" and covers, in amazing detail, the history of video tape starting even before the unveiling of the VRX 1000 at the 1956 NAB convention, and it goes all the way to 1976. This was the 20th anniversary of the introduction of videotape.

This is historic in every way, and this is the only place you will see it. You will see and hear things here that you've never seen or heard before!

<https://eyesofageneration.com/this-is-one-of-only-2-or-3-surviving-copies-of-3ms-1976-nab-tribute-video-calle/>

“The Tonight Show” with Johnny Carson...Studio 1, Burbank

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NSDcQkpb9sE>

At the link above, you can see the only backstage tour Johnny ever allowed. It was done in the last days of his reign as the King of Late Night Television. Below, shots of Johnny in Studio 1 with his custom cue card rack, and a ticket line at the Studio 1 door. He moved the show here in 1972.



The Great Color from Burbank...



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W-RAnkH8Jxc> Oh Holy Night

By the mid to late 1960s, RCA and NBC had color broadcasting down pat. I don't know why or how, but "The Andy Williams Show" from Studio 3 had the best color from the cameras and videotape process ever, and as you can see in the Christmas clip, they knew it and used color lavishly. They also had some special help from the lighting department. By the time Johnny Carson arrived in 1972, they had switched to RCA TK-44 cameras.

This may be an odd place to bring it up, but believe it or not, until 1967, Burbank had RCA TK-60 black-and-white cameras available in Studios 1 and 3, as well as color TK-41s! If you can't guess why...here's a clue: Bob Hope.



<http://aliquippa.tumblr.com/post/34261758536/behind-the-scenes-at-nbc-burbank-1963>

At the clip is a sample of the beautiful images the RCA TK-60s made. This is a good way to see how the audience came in to Studio 1 for this Bob Hope special; notice in the last part, behind the cameraman, is an RCA TK-41 color camera.

It seems that Bob Hope also produced his own shows for NBC, and up until 1965, Hope produced them in black-and-white because he wanted to save money on the color production costs. I think Bob was hanging around Jack Benny too long. Below is another shot of this rare sight at “Color City,” and a shot of Bob with a TK-44 color camera after he was “persuaded” by NBC to go color in 1965.



Say Hello to Studio 11...Burbank's Last Big Addition

NBC

Press Department / 30 Rockefeller Plaza / New York, N.Y. 10020



NBC'S BURBANK FACILITIES UNDERGO MAJOR EXPANSION TO INCLUDE NEW STUDIO AND PRODUCTION COMPLEX

The National Broadcasting Company's Burbank production facility, one of the largest in the world, is being expanded with the construction of a new 62,000-square foot production complex, including NBC's first new sound stage in 13 years, it was announced today by M.J. (Bob) Corwin, Vice President, Program Production Operations, NBC, West Coast.

The new studio, Studio 11, is being built adjacent to Studio 9, the current home of NBC's "Jennifer Slept Here" and former home, for 13 years, of the popular daytime drama "Days of Our Lives."

The 18,000-square foot Studio 11 — to be used primarily for daytime dramas and situation comedies — will be one third larger than its sister Studio 9 and should be operational by mid-June, 1984. Both studios will be linked by a new 30,000-square foot, two-story production building that will include 20 offices, 30 dressing rooms, make-up, wardrobe and conference rooms, technical control rooms and a prop storage/turnaround area of almost 10,000 square feet.

"Because of our increased production demands this solves the shortage of studio space we've faced in recent years," Corwin said of the new complex. "In addition, its flexible design allows for future expansion when — and if — that's needed."

Studio 11 will bring the total number of studios at NBC in Burbank to nine. In addition, NBC leases a studio in Hollywood for "Days of Our Lives." Studio 11 is the first studio to be built at NBC since Studio 9 was converted from a warehouse in 1969.

NBC-New York, 12/5/83





When Jay Leno turned over “Tonight” to Conan O’Brien, he had been in Studio 3 for years and years (below), but when “The Jay Leno Show” started, he moved to Studio 11 and continued from there when he returned to “Tonight.”



The End Is Near For Burbank...

Several years ago, the peacock began the process of closing its feathers for the last time at Burbank. The sale of the historic location was completed to the Worthe Real Estate Property Group in 2008. At the time, the sale didn't have much impact, as NBC continued to lease back the property while preparations went forward to move operations to nearby Universal Studios. But slowly, over the last seven years, things have changed.

Offices emptied out as executives moved over to the Universal lot. The NBC/Universal owned cable networks moved. On July 6, 2012, the curtain came down on the famous NBC Studio Tour. There simply was nothing more to show a curious public other than nostalgic references of shows no longer in production.

When the Winter Olympics begin in February 2014, "The Tonight Show" in Studio 11 ceased production and moved back to New York, 42 years after Johnny Carson first brought the show to California. Ironically, the new incarnation with Jimmy Fallon moved back into the same studio at 30 Rock it left behind, Studio 6B. At the same time, KNBC, the NBC owned and operated station for Los Angeles, moved to new facilities on the Universal Studio lot.

"Access Hollywood" was among the last to leave, but "Days of Our Lives," which is broadcast on NBC, will stay as the show is owned independently. They use Studios 2 and 4.

The most visible transformation came the day the NBC Peacock signage was replaced with the new company's logos for the historic lot – The Burbank Studios.





Almost the end. Lisa Kassner turned off the lights in VT ops for the last time December 21, 2012. That was the last day of NBC's network operations in Burbank.

The end of NBC at Burbank. I got this email message from my friend Bob Meza on June 13, 2014. Bob has been at Burbank since he started with NBC in 1985, and was the last NBC engineer to leave (and that was in June of this year).

Bobby,

Just so you know, tomorrow, June 14, NBC Burbank will broadcast its last live show. Telemundo will move over to Universal starting Sunday. "Days Of Our Lives" is still on the lot, but it is not an NBC owned show. "Access Hollywood" will also remain on the lot in Studio 1 probably for another year.

We will be pulling equipment out next week. Bob

Fortunately, the move wasn't very far. Here is a wonderful shot of Burbank that shows you where the major studios are located. NBC Burbank's location is marked as The Burbank Studios.



The West Coast Television Productions List

From David Schwartz, here is an exclusive listing of shows that came from NBC's studios in Los Angeles. This is the only place you will see this.

<u>Show</u>	<u>Air Dates</u>	<u>Studio Origination</u>
All Star Revue	1951-1953	Burbank-studio 1
All Star Secrets	1/8/79-8/10/9	Burbank-studio 2,3
Amnesia	2/22/08-4/11/08	
And Here's the Show	1955	Hollywood-studio D; NBC Television Theater (1952)
Andy Williams Show	9/27/62-7/17/71	Burbank-studio 4
Annie Get Your Gun	11/27/1957 (special)	Burbank-studio 2
Art Linkletter Show	2/18/63-9/16/63	Burbank-studio 4
Baffle	3/28/73-3/29/74	Burbank-studio 4,9
Barbara Mandrell & Mandrell Sisters	11/18/80-6/26/82	Los Angeles-stage 8, Sunset Gower Studios
Battle of the Network Stars	8/16/03 (special)	
Battlestars	10/26/81-4/23/82	Burbank-studio 3
Battlestars	4/4/83-7/1/83	Burbank-studio 3
Beautiful Phyllis Diller Show	9/15/68-12/22/68	Burbank-studio 2
Ben Jerrod	4/1/63-6/28/63	Burbank-studio 3
Ben Vereen...Comin' at Ya	8/7/75-8/28/75	Burbank
Betty White Show	2/8/54-12/31/54	Burbank-studio 1, 3
Big Game, The	6/13/58-9/19/58	Burbank-studio 4
Billy Crystal Comedy Hour	1/30/82-2/27/82	Burbank
Bing Crosby Show	11/7/1963 (special)	Burbank-studio 2
Blank Check	1/6/75-7/4/75	Burbank-studio 2,4

Blockbusters	10/27/80-4/23/82	Burbank-studio 3,2
Blockbusters	1/5/87-5/1/87	Burbank-studio 3, 4
Bob Hope variety specials		Hollywood-studio D; El Capitan Theater; Burbank Studio 1, 3
Bob Newhart Show	10/10/61-6/13/62	Burbank-studio 4
Bobby Darin Show	1/9/73-4/27/73	Burbank-studio 4
Brains & Brawn	7/10/93-10/16/93	Hollywood-Universal Studios
Breakfast in Hollywood	1/11/54-2/5/54	Los Angeles-Sun Club @ Ambassador Hotel
Bright Promise	9/29/69-3/31/72	Burbank-studio 9
Caesars Challenge	6/14/93-1/14/94	Las Vegas-Caesars Palace
Card Sharks	4/24/78-10/23/81	Burbank-studio 3
Celebrity Golf	9/2/60-5/21/61	Las Vegas-Desert Inn & Country Club
Celebrity Sweepstakes	4/1/74-10/1/76	Burbank-studio 3,9
Chain Letter	7/4/66-10/14/66	Burbank-studio 3
Chain Reaction	1/14/80-6/20/80	Burbank-studio 2
Chesterfield Sound Off Time	10/14/51-1/6/52	Hollywood
Chuck Barris Rah Rah Show	2/28/78-4/11/78	Burbank
Classic Concentration	5/4/87-9/20/91; 10/28/91-12/31/93	Burbank-studio 3
Club Oasis with Spike Jones	9/28/57-9/6/58	Burbank-studio 3
Coke Time with Eddie Fisher	1956-1957	Hollywood-studio D
Colgate Comedy Hour	1951-1955	Hollywood-El Capitan Theater
Colgate Variety Hour	1955	
College of Musical Knowledge	7/4/54-9/12/54	Burbank-studio 1
County Fair USA (Roy Rogers)	special	Burbank-studio 4

Cover to Cover	7/29/91-10/25/91	
CPO Sharkey	12/1/76-7/28/78	Burbank-studio 3
Danny Kayes Show	11/5/1962 (special)	Burbank-studio 3
Dave 'n' Charlie	1/7/52-3/28/52	
Days of Our Lives	11/8/65-	Burbank-studio 9, 2, 4 Sunset Gower-stage 8 (1983-89)
Deal or No Deal	12/19/05-5/18/09	
Dean Martin Show	1965-74	Burbank-studio 4
Dick Clark's Live Wednesday	9/20/78-12/27/78	Burbank-studio 4
Dinah Shore Chevy Show	10/5/56-5/12/63	Burbank-studio 4
Dinah Shore Show	11/27/51-7/18/57	Hollywood-studio D
Dinah's Place	8/3/70-7/26/74	Los Angeles-KTLA
Doctor Dean	6/15/92-1/15/93	SF-KGO-TV
Dog Eat Dog	6/17/02-9/14/02	Los Angeles Studios
Dog Eat Dog	5/27/03-8/26/03	Los Angeles Studios
Don Knotts Show	1970-71	Burbank-studio 2
Dream House	4/4/83-6/29/84	Burbank-studio 3
Eddie Fisher Show	1957-59	Burbank
Endurance	9/12/04-9/17/05	Hawaii
Fantasy	9/13/82-10/28/83	Burbank-studio 2, 4
Fear Factor	6/11/01-2/7/06	
Flip Wilson Show	1970-1974	Burbank-studio 2
Ford Show (Tennessee Ernie Ford)	1956-60	Hollywood-El Capitan Theater; Burbank-studio 3, 4
Fun Factory	6/14/76-10/1/76	Burbank-studio 4
Funny Boners	11/20/54-7/9/55	Hollywood-studio E

Funny Side (Gene Kelly)	9/14/71-12/7/71	Burbank-studio 3
Generations	3/27/89-1/25/91	Burbank-studio 11
George Gobel Show	1954-1959	Hollywood-studio D
Gisele MacKenzie	1957-58	Burbank-studio 3
Gladys Knight & the Pips	7/10/75-7/31/75	Burbank
Glamour Girl	7/6/53-1/8/54	Burbank-studio 3
Go	10/3/83-1/20/84	Burbank-studio 2
Golden Touch of Frankie Carle	8/7/56-10/29/56	Hollywood
Gong Show	6/14/76-7/21/78	Burbank-studio 1
Gordon MacRae Show	3/5/56-8/27/56	Hollywood-studio D
Helen Reddy Show	6/28/73-8/16/73	Burbank
Here's Hollywood	9/26/60-12/28/62	on location
High Rollers	7/1/74-6/11/76	Burbank-studio 2
High Rollers (New High Rollers)	4/24/78-6/20/80	Burbank-studio 3
Hit Man	1/3/83-4/1/83	Burbank-studio 4
Hollywood Game Night	7/11/13-	Encino, Calif. (private home);Universal Studios (2015)
Hollywood Squares (daytime)	10/17/66-6/20/80	Burbank-studio 3
Hollywood Squares (nighttime)	1/12/68-9/13/68	Burbank-studio 3
Hollywood Today with Shelia Graham	1/3/55-7/1/55	Hollywood-studio C
Hot Country Nights	11/24/91-3/8/92	Burbank-studio 3
Hot Potato	1/23/84-6/29/84	Burbank-studio 2
Identity	12/18/06-4/27/07	
I'll Bet	3/30/65-9/24/65	Burbank-studio 1
I'm Telling	9/12/87-8/27/88	Hollywood-VIP Studios

Ina Ray Hutton	7/4/56-9/5/56	Hollywood-El Capitan Theater
It Could Be You (daytime)	6/4/56-12/29/61	Hollywood-studio D; Burbank
It Could Be You (nighttime)	7/2/58-9/17/58	Hollywood-studio D; Burbank-studio 4
It Pays to be Married	7/4/55-10/28/55	Burbank-studio 3
It Takes Two	3/31/69-7/31/70	Burbank-studio 2,4
It's Anybody's Guess	6/13/77-9/30/77	Burbank-studio 3
It's Worth What?	7/19/11-9/13/11	
Jack Benny First Farewell Special	1/18/73 (special)	Burbank-studio 3
Jackpot Bowling with Milton Berle	9/19/60-3/13/61	Hollywood Legion Lanes
Jeopardy!	10/2/78-3/2/79	Burbank-studio 3
Jerry Lewis Show	1967-68	Burbank
Jerry Lewis Specials	1957-58	Burbank-studio 2, 4
Jimmy Durante Show	10/2/54-6/56	Burbank-studio 2
John & Leeza	6/14/93-1/14/94	Hollywood-Paramount Studios-stage ?
John Davidson Show	5/76-6/14/76	Burbank
Johnny Dugan Show	5/19/52-9/5/52	
Just Men	1/3/83-4/1/83	Burbank-studio 1
Knockout	10/3/77-4/21/78	Burbank-studio 2
Kraft Music Hall with Milton Berle	1958	Burbank-studio 2
Kraft Summer Music Hall	1966	Burbank
Ladies Choice	6/8/53-9/18/53	Hollywood-Villa Capri Restaurant
Las Vegas Gambit	10/27/80-11/27/81	Las Vegas-Tropicana Hotel

Late Night with David Letterman (Los Angeles shows)	1985	Burbank-studio 9
Later	8/22/88-2/1/01	Burbank-studio 5
Leeza	1/17/1994-9/8/00	Hollywood-Paramount Studios-stage ?
Let's Make a Deal	3/4/03-3/18/03	
Let's Make a Deal (daytime)	12/30/63-12/27/68	Burbank-studio 1, 3
Let's Make a Deal (nighttime)	5/21/67-9/3/67	Burbank-studio 1, 3
Letters to Laugh-In	9/29/69-12/26/69	Burbank-studio 2
Liberace	7/1/52-8/52	Hollywood-studio D
Life with Linkletter	12/29/69-9/25/70	Burbank-studio 2
Lively Ones with Vic Damone	7/26/62-9/12/63	Los Angeles?
Lohman & Barkley's Name Droppers	9/29/69-3/27/70	Burbank-studio 3
Lux Show with Rosemary Clooney	9/26/57-6/19/58	Burbank-studio 4
Mac Davis Show	7/11/74-6/17/76	Burbank-studio 2
Magnificent Marble Machine	7/7/5-1/2/76; 1/19/76-6/11/76	Burbank-studio 4
Make Your Own Kind of Music (Carpenters)	7/20/71-9/7/71	Burbank-studio 2
Many Moods of Perry Como	2/22/70 (special)	Burbank-studio 2
Marie (Osmond)	12/12/80-9/26/81	Burbank
Marsha Warfield	3/26/90-1/25/91	
Match Game-Hollywood Squares Hour	10/31/83-7/27/84	Burbank-studio 3
Matinee Theater	12/31/55-6/27/58	Burbank-studio 2
Mickie Finn's	4/21/66-9/1/66	Burbank
Midnight Special	2/3/73-5/1/81	Burbank-studio 2

Milton Berle Kraft Music Hall	10/8/58-5/59	Burbank-studio 2
Milton Berle Show (color)	9/27/55-6/56	Burbank
Mindreaders	8/13/79-1/11/80	Burbank-studio 4
Minute to Win It	3/14/10-9/7/11	
Morning Star	9/27/65-7/1/66	Burbank-studio 2
Music Shop with Buddy Bergman	1/11/59-3/8/59	Burbank
Musical Chairs	7/9/55-9/17/55	
Name that Tune (daytime)	7/29/74-1/3/75	Burbank-studio 2
Name that Tune (daytime)	1/3/77-6/10/77	Burbank-studio 2
Nancy Wilson Show	1974	Burbank-studio 5
NBC Follies	9/13/73-12/27/73	Burbank-studio 4
One Man's Family	3/1/54-4/1/55	Burbank-studio 3
One to One	9/9/91-6/12/92	
Operation Junkyard	10/5/02-5/10/03	
Other Side, The	10/17/94-10/13/95	Burbank-studio 1
Pantomime Quiz	1/2/52-3/26/52	
Paradise Bay	9/27/65-7/1/66	Burbank-studio 2
Password Plus	1/8/79-3/26/82	Burbank-studio 1,3
Pat Boone Show	10/17/66-6/30/67	Burbank-studio 3
People Are Funny	9/19/54-4/16/61	Hollywood-studio D; Linkletter Playhouse
People Will Talk	7/1/63-12/27/63	Burbank-studio 3
Pink Lady	3/1/80-4/4/80	
Pinky Lee	1/4/54-	Hollywood-El Capitan Theater
Place the Face	7/2/53-8/20/53	Hollywood-studio D
Place the Face	9/18/54-12/25/54	Hollywood-El Capitan Theater

Place the Face	6/28/55-9/13/55	Hollywood-El Capitan Theater
Queen for a Day	1/3/56-9/2/60	Moulin Rouge
Ralph Edwards Show	1/14/52-5/16/52	Hollywood-studio D
Red Skelton	9/30/51-6/52	Hollywood-studio D
Red Skelton	9/14/70-8/29/71	Burbank-studio 3
Regis Philbin	11/30/81-4/9/82	Burbank-studio 3
Return to Peyton Place	4/3/72-1/4/74	Burbank-studio 9
Rich Little Show	2/2/76-7/19/76	Burbank-studio 4
Richard Pryor Show	9/13/77-10/20/77	Burbank-
Roger Miller Show	9/12/66-12/26/66	Burbank-studio 4
Rowan & Martin's Laugh-In	1/22/68-5/14/73	Burbank-studio 4 (first two shows were audience shows in studio 2)
Runaround	9/9/72-9/1/73	
Sale of the Century	1/3/83-3/24/89	Burbank-studio 3
Sanford & Son	1/14/72-9/2/77	Burbank-studio 3
Santa Barbara	7/30/84-1/15/93	Burbank-studio 9
Saturday Night Revue	6/6/53-9/18/54	
Scattergories	1/18/93-6/10/93	Glendale Studios
Scrabble	7/2/84-3/23/90	Burbank-studio 3
Scrabble	1/18/93-6/10/93	Burbank-studio 11
Showdown	7/4/66-10/14/66	Burbank-studio 3
Singing Bee, The	7/10/07-12/28/07	
Smothers Brothers Show	1/13/75-5/75	Burbank-studio 4
Spike Jones Show	1/2/1954-5/54	
Startime	10/6/1959-5/31/60-	Burbank-studio 2

Steve Allen Comedy Hour	10/18/80-1/10/81	
Steve Allen Plymouth Show	9/28/59-6/60	Burbank-studio 3
Storybook Squares	1/4/69-8/30/69	
Stumpers	10/4/76-12/31/76	Burbank-studio 3
Sunset Beach		
Super Password	9/24/84-3/24/89	Burbank-studio 3, 1
Swingin' Country	7/4/66-12/30/66	Burbank-studio 2
Take It All	12/10/12-12/17/12	
Take My Advice	1/5/76-6/11/76	Burbank-studio 3
Tennessee Ernie Ford (daytime)	1/3/55-6/28/57	Hollywood-El Capitan Theater
Tennessee Ernie Ford (primetime)	10/4/56-	Burbank-studio 3
Texaco Star Theater	10/2/54-	LA-Desilu Playhouse
This is Your Life	10/1/52-9/3/61	Hollywood-El Capitan Theater; Burbank-studio 1
Three for the Money	9/29/75-11/28/75	Burbank-studio 4
Time Machine	1/7/85-4/26/85	Burbank-studio 2
To Say the Least	10/3/77-4/21/78	Burbank-studio 3
To Tell the Truth	9/3/90-5/31/91	Burbank-studio 3
Tomorrow Show (Burbank shows)	10/15/73-12/74	Burbank-studio 1
Tonight Show with Jay Leno	1991-2014	Burbank-studio 3, 11
Tonight Show with Johnny Carson	1972-1991	Burbank-studio 1
Tony Martin Show	4/26/54-2/27/56	Hollywood-studio D
Trialwatch	1/28/91-7/26/91	
Truth or Consequences (daytime)	12/31/56-9/25/59	Hollywood-studio D
Truth or Consequences (daytime)	10/26/59-9/24/65	Hollywood-studio D; Burbank studio

1

Truth or Consequences (nighttime)	5/18/54-9/28/56	Hollywood-studio D
Truth or Consequences (nighttime)	12/13/57-6/6/58	
Twenty One	1/9/00-5/28/00	Burbank -studio 1
Ultra Quiz	11/10/81-11/17/81	Burbank & on location
Up to Paar	7/28/52-9/26/52	Hollywood-El Capitan Theater
Van Dyke & Company	9/20/76-	Burbank-studio 4
Vicki (Lawrence)	1991-1993	Burbank-studio 3
Walter Winchell Show	Dec-56	
Weakest Link, The	4/16/01-7/21/02	
What's This Song?	10/26/64-9/24/65	Burbank-studio 3
Wheel of Fortune	1/6/75-6/30/89	Burbank-studio 4
Wheel of Fortune	1/14/91-9/20/91	Los Angeles-Television City studio 33
Whodunnit?	4/12/79-5/17/79	Burbank-studio 3
Who's Still Standing	12/19/11-1/30/12	
Win, Lose or Draw	9/7/87-9/1/89	Los Angeles-Television City studio 41
Winner Is, The	6/10/13-8/8/13	
Wizard of Odds	7/17/73-6/28/74	Burbank-studio 4
Wordplay	12/29/86-9/4/87	Burbank-studio 4
Words & Music	9/28/70-2/12/71	Burbank-studio 2
You Bet Your Life	10/5/50-9/21/61	Hollywood- studio A
You Don't Say!	4/1/63-9/26/69	Burbank-studio 4,9

You Don't Say! (nighttime)	1/7/64-5/5/64	Burbank-studio ?
Your First Impression	1/2/62-6/26/64	Burbank-studio 2
Your Number's Up	9/23/85-12/20/85	Burbank-studio 2

Goodbye, Burbank! Thanks for the memories!



The Historic Universal Studios Lot...



There is a great deal of both film and television history on the Universal lot, and one of the most historic places of all was Stage 28.



Universal Movie Studios began March 14, 1915. Even back then, it was a tourist destination, with studio boss Carl Laemmle opening it to the public shortly after it opened. Admission was nickel, and a chicken box lunch was included. You could even buy fresh produce on the lot

because more than half of the 260 acre property (now over 350 acres) was still a working farm. Around 1930, the tours were discontinued when sound came to film.

Notice that above, I said Stage 28 **was** one of the most interesting places there, as one of the most historic events to take place on this stage was the filming of “Phantom of the Opera.” Stage 28 is gone now. A little over a year ago, in August 2014, it was torn down. Below, I am including two links that give us a last look at the original 1925 set before it was carefully removed and packed away for display at a later date.

This video gives us a look at the set and some interesting history from the presenter, who is the niece of the man who ran Universal and built Stage 28...Carl Laemmle.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=to02CjSibsA>

At the link below is the NBCU story on the Stage 28 demolition and much more on Stage 28, plus a list of the many huge movies and television shows shot here (bottom of the page). Take a look here. <http://www.thestudiotour.com/ush/frontlot/stage28.php>

DO NOT MISS THIS! At the link below is a list of ALL the Universal Stages! Just click on the stage name and a new page will open to give you photos and a list of all the productions done on that stage, complete with dates and the stage’s physical information. Short of being there, this is as good as it gets and offers a wealth of information you will not find anywhere else! For television, everything from “Murder She Wrote” to “One Day at a Time” was done here, and many current shows are still in production on this lot.

<http://www.thestudiotour.com/ush/frontlot/soundstages.php>

To get a better grasp of the breadth and depth of the history made here, take a look at this video...it is a mind blower. This features some of the best ever directors talking about filming on the Universal lot. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CBmmeqZrA4Y>

At this link is another mind blower, but it is a heart-warmer too as this looks at 100 years of Universal film history, and its restoration! You will be dazzled by the digital magic used to do this. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cD9h5pzZ2qs>

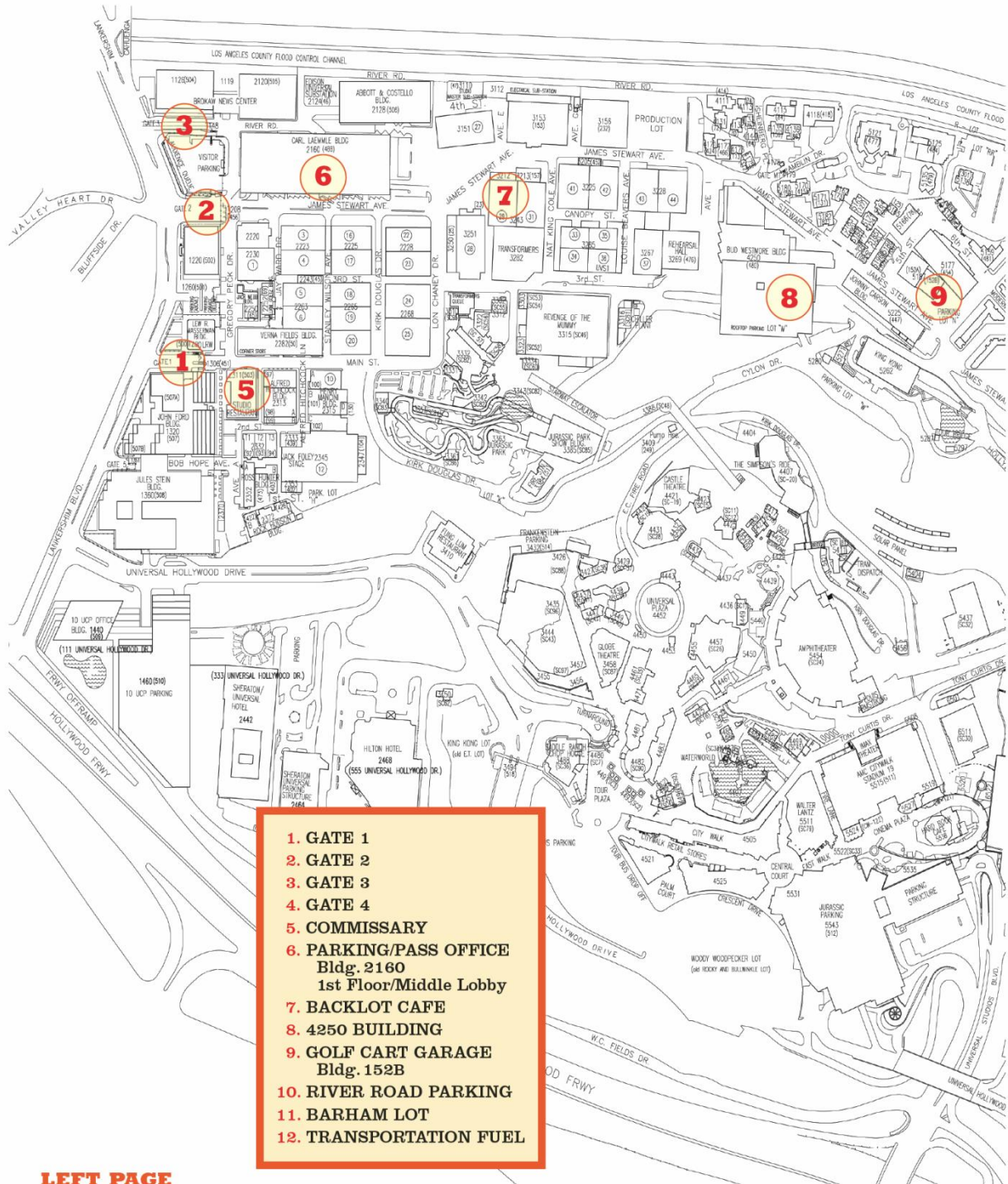
After seeing these videos, I hope you have a deeper respect and understanding of the important film history made here. It is still being made here, but we’ll get to that and the television part a few more pages down. **If you are wondering how NBC and Universal became connected, we’ll “revue” that history soon (hint, hint), and there is a lot of history here!** Along the way, we’ll give you a better look at the place.



This aerial view gives us a good feel for the locations of the working lot and the theme park area. At the top left and right are the stages (l) and the back lot (r) where the real work is done. The theme park is mostly in the center of the photo. Below is a shot of the studio area, taken from Lankershim Blvd., which is the road going top to bottom on the far left in the photo above.



Universal Studios Production OFFICE SERVICES

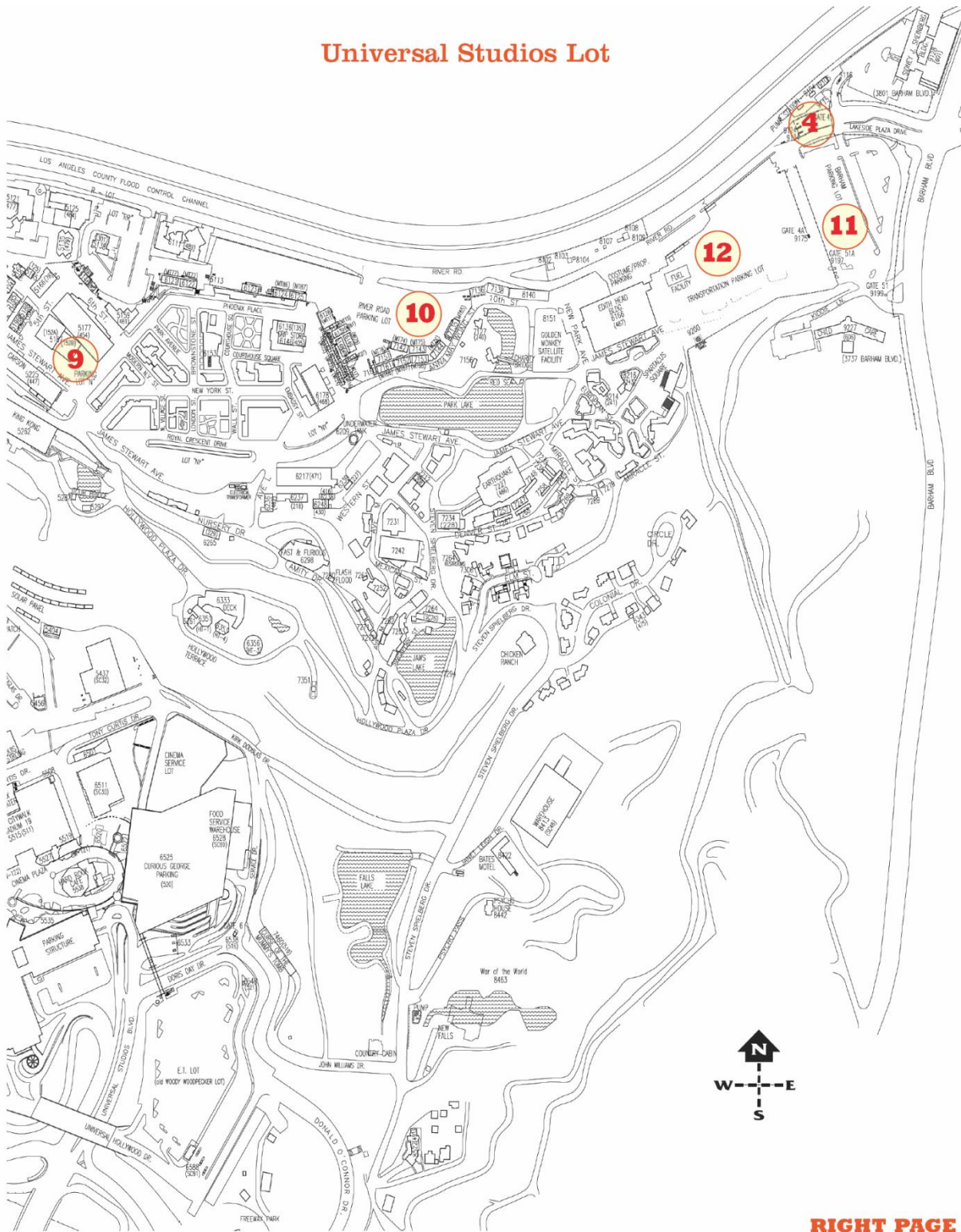


LEFT PAGE

5.14

Here is a map of the studios area, in two parts for better detail. Above is the left page, below the right.

Universal Studios Lot

**RIGHT PAGE**

5.14

From the NBCU website, here is a virtual tour of the back lot.

<http://universal.film-makers-destination.com/home/sound-stages-backlot/virtual-tour/>

In a nutshell, there are 30 studios on the lot ranging in size from 6800 to about 30,000 square feet, with Studio 12 (home of “The Voice”) being the largest. All are large, soundproof boxes with lighting grids that can be used for any type production, be it television or film, with the help of production trucks. With the exception of Studio 1, which was built for “The Tonight Show with Conan O’Brien,” none of these studios has a built in control room. KNBC, Telemundo, NBC News and the west coast operations center for the NBC Television Network are in two new buildings on the northwest corner of the lot.

The Seed that Grew into NBC Universal...



You may not realize it, but NBC and Universal Television go back a long way...all the way back to 1950, when Universal Television's earliest ancestor, Revue Studios, produced a number of shows for NBC, although Revue would have some hits on the other networks as well. This partnership continued throughout a number of name changes and changes of ownership.

Revue Productions was founded in 1943 by MCA (Music Corporation of America) to produce live radio shows and "Stage Door Canteen" live events for the USO during World War II. Revue was re-launched as MCA's television production subsidiary in 1950. The partnership of NBC and

Revue extends as far back as September 6, 1950, with the television broadcast of “Armour Theatre,” based on radio’s “Stars Over Hollywood.” (Armour Meats was the sponsor.)

MCA bought the Universal Studios lot in 1958 and changed the name to **Revue Studios**. In 1964, MCA formed Universal City Studios to merge the film and television arms of both Universal Pictures and Revue Productions, and Revue was officially renamed **Universal Television** in 1966.



During the early years of television, Revue was responsible for producing and/or distributing many television classics including “Leave It to Beaver” and “McHale’s Navy.”

Some of the shows Revue produced for NBC were “Tales of Wells Fargo,” “The Restless Gun,” “Laramie,” “Wagon Train,” and “The Virginian.”

After a number of twists and turns and various owners, Universal wound up in the hands of the Seagram Company (yes, the Canadian whisky maker), in 1995. In 2000, Seagram/Universal was bought by the French conglomerate, Vivendi.

In 2003, amid a major financial crisis caused by over-expansion, Universal Studios’ parent company, Vivendi Universal Entertainment, sold an 80% stake to NBC’s parent company, General Electric. The sale and resulting merger formed NBC Universal. The new company was 80% owned by GE and 20% owned by Vivendi. The joint venture encompassed Vivendi’s US

film interests, including Universal Studios, production and distribution units, as well as five theme parks and cable television channels including USA Network, Sci-Fi Channel, the defunct Trio, and Cloo (formerly Sleuth). Also included were 5,000 movies and over 34,000 hours of television programs...one of which was the “Law & Order” franchise.

On August 2, 2004, the television divisions of NBC and Universal Television were combined to form NBC Universal Television. The formation of NBC Universal saw the establishment of NBC Universal Cable, which oversees the distribution, marketing, and advertisement sales for thirteen channels (Bravo, Bravo HD+ [eventually renamed Universal HD], Chiller, CNBC, CNBC World, MSNBC, mun2, Syfy, ShopNBC [which became ShopHQ after NBCUniversal sold its stake in the network], Telemundo, Cloo, USA Network and the Olympic Games on cable). NBC Universal Cable also manages the company's investments in The Weather Channel and TiVo.





I hope you have enjoyed this and will share it with your friends and colleagues. If you have more information, documents, video, artifacts, pictures and comments, please send them to me. I would love to hear from you, as this is an ongoing project and by no means the final word.

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