



United Artists Theatre 1928

# **HOLLYWOOD & LOS ANGELES THEATRES 1917-31 STUDIOS 1912-28**

## **Part Six: PICTURE PARADE**

**Eur Ing BRIAN ROBERTS CEng Hon.FCIBSE  
Life Member ASHRAE**

**CIBSE HERITAGE GROUP**



Broadway at corner of Fifth Street Los Angeles 1920s



**HOLLYWOOD  
& LOS ANGELES  
THEATRES 1917-31  
STUDIOS 1912-28**

**Part Six: PICTURE PARADE**



Warner Bros. Downtown Theatre 1929



The Orpheum Theatre at Broadway 1963. Early movie theatres were not owned by the Hollywood Studios, that came later

## **HOLLYWOOD & LOS ANGELES THEATRES**

**1917 Rialto Theatre**

**1918 Million Dollar Theatre**

**1921 Loew's State Theatre**

**1922 Grauman's Egyptian Theatre**

**1923 Metropolitan Theatre**

**1926 Belasco Theatre**

**1926 El Capitan Theatre**

**1926 Orpheum Theatre**

**1927 Grauman's Chinese Theatre**

**1927 Mayan Theatre**

**1927 United Artists Theatre**

**1931 Tower Theatre**

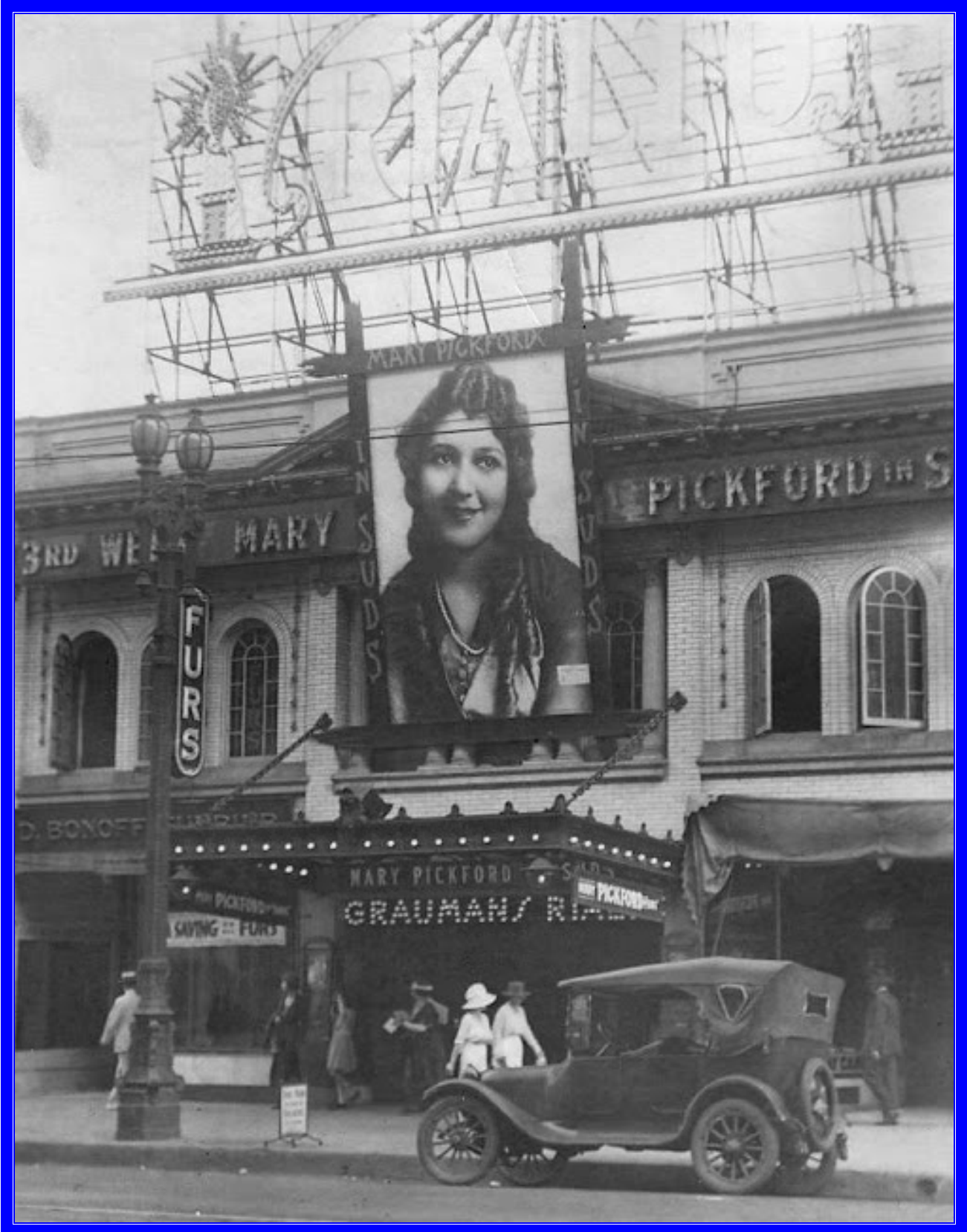
**1928 Warner Theatre**

**1930 Pantages Bros Theatre**

**1931 Los Angeles Theatre**

**1931 Wiltern Theatre**

# RIALTO THEATRE



Purchased by Sid Grauman 1912

## MILLION DOLLAR THEATRE



Operated by Sid Grauman

# STATE THEATRE



## LOEW STATE THEATRE AND OFFICE BUILDING LOS ANGELES

*Architects:*  
*Wicks & Day*

Metal Lathing Construction:  
Benjamin Schonfeld Co.  
*Page 76*

Plastering:  
Fred E. Potts  
*Page 76*

Reinforced Composition  
Roofing:  
Pioneer Paper Co.  
*Page 63*

Heating System:  
Illinois Engineering Co.  
*Page 75*

Linotile:  
Van Fleet-Frerar Co.  
*Page 69*

Metal Doors:  
California Fire-Proof  
Door Co.  
*Page 68*

Ornamental Tile:  
B. B. Bell & Co., Agents  
*Page 55*

Brick:  
L. A. Brick Co.  
*Page 64*

Hollow Tile:  
L. A. Brick Co.  
*Page 64*

Line Mortar, Lime Finish-  
ing Putty:  
Blue Diamond Materials  
Co., Inc.  
*Page 67*



Many Offices Furnished by Barker Bros. *Page 73*  
Hotel Ranges: Madsen Foundry Works *Page 78*



Exterior Lighting Fixtures: The Meyberg Co. *Page 61*  
Temperature Regulation: Johnson Service Company *Page 68*



# GRAUMANS EGYPTIAN THEATRE



Operated by Sid Grauman

# METROPOLITAN THEATRE



Operated by Sid Grauman

# BELASCO THEATRE



Owned by Edward Belasco

## EL CAPITAN THEATRE



Owned by Charles F Toberman ((Father of Hollywood)

# ORPHEUM THEATRE



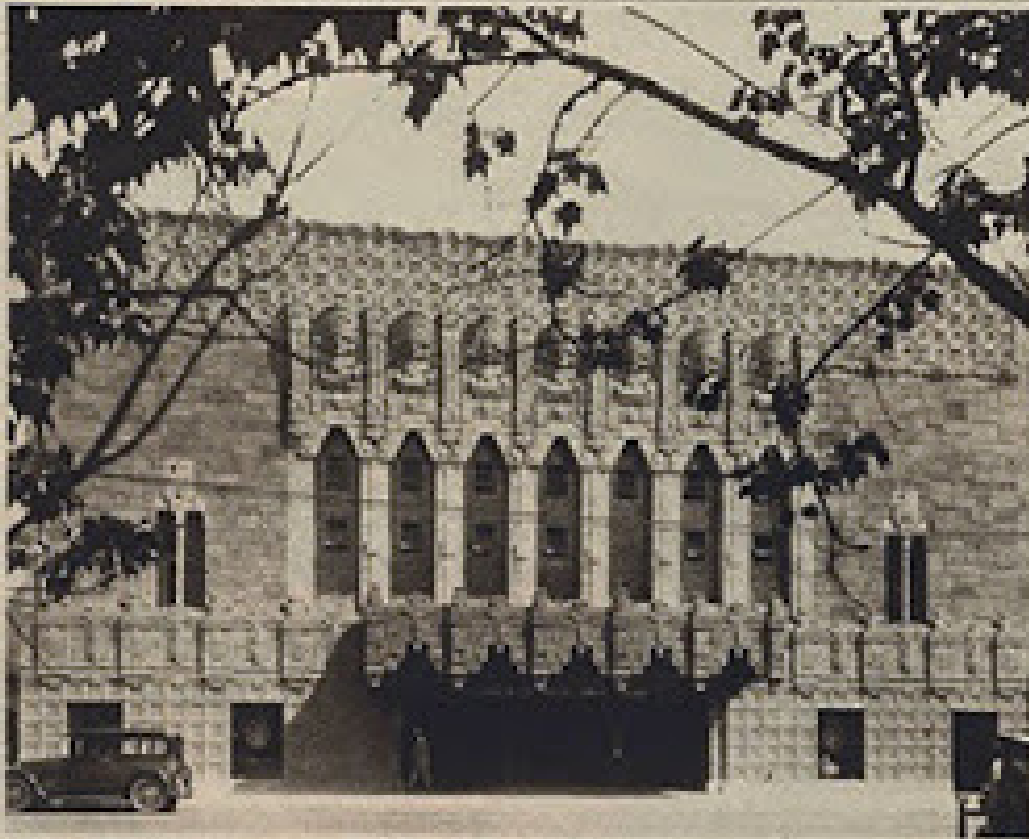
Owned by the Orpheum Vaudeville Circuit

## GRAUMANS CHINESE THEATRE



Operated by Sid Grauman, part owner with Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks & Howard Schenk

**MAYAN THEATRE**



*Mayan Theatre*  
*Morgan, Walls & Clements*  
ARCHITECTS  
*Los Angeles*

# UNITED ARTISTS THEATRE



Owned by D W Griffiths, Charlie Chaplin, Mary Pickford & Douglas Fairbanks



# TOWER THEATRE



Owned by H L Gumbier

## WARNER THEATRE



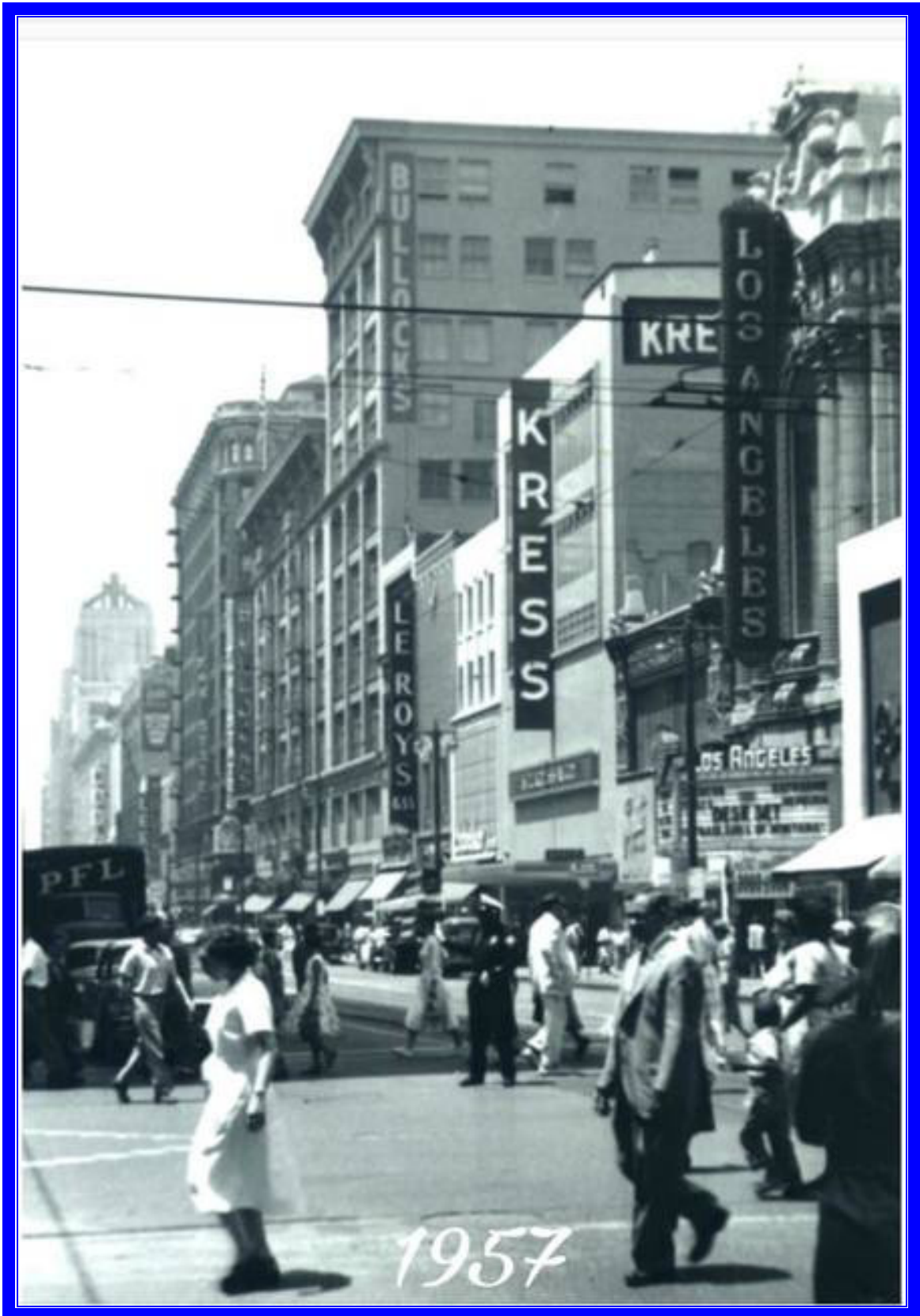
Originally owned by Alexander Pantage (left photo) before being acquired by Warner Brothers

# PANTAGES THEATRE



Owned by Alexander Pantage

# LOS ANGELES THEATRE



Owned by H L Gumbier

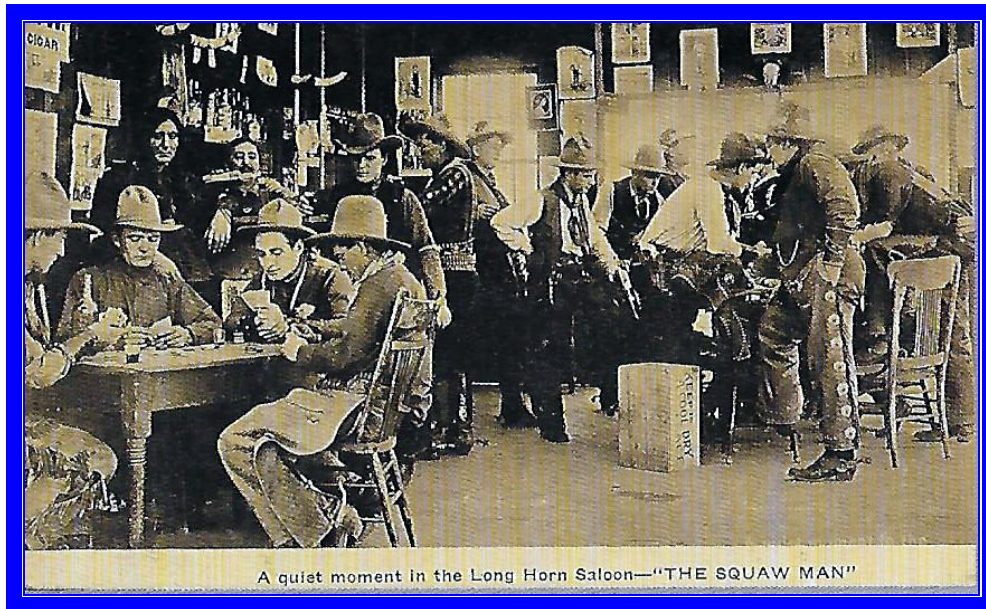
# WILTERN THEATRE



## WILTERN THEATRE



The Pellissier Tower was named after the Family that owned the land



The first feature film to be shot in what is now Hollywood was the silent epic "The Squaw Man" in 1914 (Hollywood in Vintage Postcards)

## **HOLLYWOOD, LOS ANGELES & CALIFORNIA MOVIE STUDIOS**

**1912 PARAMOUNT STUDIOS, Hollywood**

**1912 UNIVERSAL CITY Studios, California**

**1915 FOX Beverley Hills Studios, Hollywood  
Became Twentieth Fox in 1935**

**1919 UNITED ARTISTS STUDIOS, California**

**1923 WARNER BROTHERS First National Studios,  
Hollywood**

**1924 COLUMBIA Studios, Hollywood**

**1924 METRO-GOLDWYN-MEYER Studios Culver City**

**1928 R-K-O Studios, Los Angeles**

## THE EARLY MOVIE FILM STUDIOS



1928 (Masters of Starlight)

## The Big Five and Others

In the earliest years of the motion picture industry the functions of production, distribution and exhibition were controlled separately. But the film makers realised that profits could be improved if they took control of all these functions. So in the decade 1920 to 1930, between the end of the Great War and the start of the Depression, the *Studio System* evolved.

Film historians record that eight studios located in Hollywood, California, five of which were major organisations, came to dominate the industry, making not only the films but building or becoming owners of the theatres that showed their films. And of course they controlled the distribution by showing their most important films in their theatres. Between 1930 and 1948, the eight majors controlled 95% of films exhibited in the USA.

The big five studios were **Warner Bros Pictures, Paramount, RKO (Radio-Keith-Orpheum) Pictures, Loew's Incorporated** (which became **Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer**) and **Fox Film Corporation**. The three smaller, but important, minor studios were **Universal Pictures, United Artists and Columbia Pictures**.

Movie Theatres became decorative palaces, designed by leading architects who became experts in ways to impress the viewing audience. The big-five went on to control about 50% of the seating capacity in the USA in mostly *first-run* houses in major cities.

At their peak in the 1930s Paramount (Paramount-Publix) had over 1000 theatres; Warner and Fox each had some 700, Loew's (MGM) had somewhere between 150 and 200, while RKO also had about 200 (In 1936 RKO became the operator of the world's largest movie theatre- the 5940 seat Radio City Music Hall in New York which had opened in 1932, though one source claims the Roxy in New York had more seats).

### Antitrust Proceedings

In 1948, after some ten years of argument and litigation, the United States Supreme Court in an antitrust case changed the way that the Big Five produced, distributed and exhibited their films. The result was that the Big Five gave up the ownership of their theatre chains and concentrated running their studios to make films.



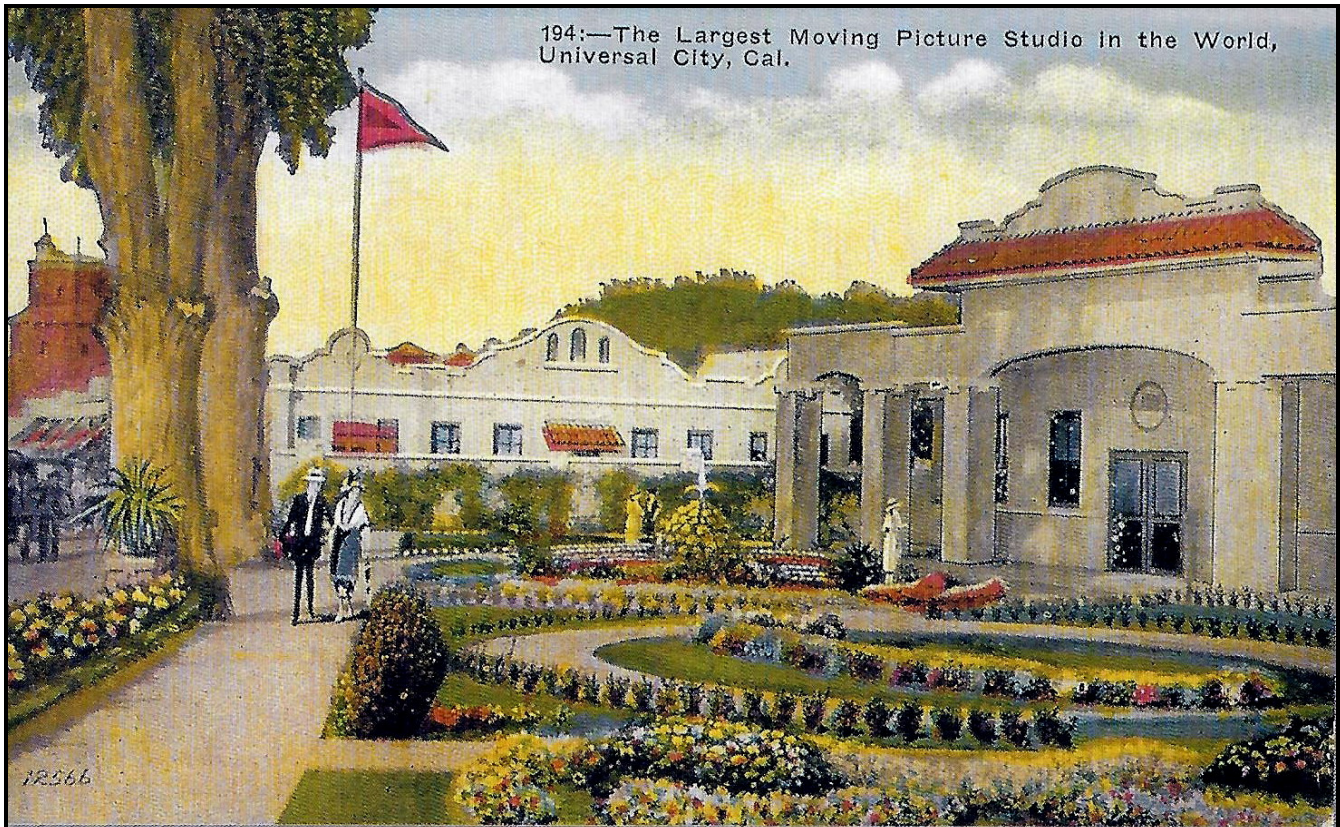
## THE EARLY MOVIE FILM STUDIOS PARAMOUNT



### Paramount Famous Lasky Studio, Hollywood

Originally a distributor for the Jesse L. Lasky Co. and Famous Players, Paramount was absorbed by these producers and, under them, became one of the top five studios in Hollywood. Adolph Zukor from Famous Players was responsible for the financial success of the studio, a great deal of which came from building up the theater chain. Jesse Lasky was the creative force behind the studio, signing on directors such as Cecil B. DeMille and James Cruze and such stars as Rudolph Valentino, Wallace Reid, Pola Negri, and Gloria Swanson. Paramount's studios were on Sunset Boulevard and Vine Street until 1926, when the company moved to its present location on Melrose Avenue. The famous Paramount Gate, visible here and immortalized in *Sunset Boulevard* (1950), among other movies, is still part of the studio.

## THE EARLY MOVIE FILM STUDIOS UNIVERSAL CITY



### Universal City

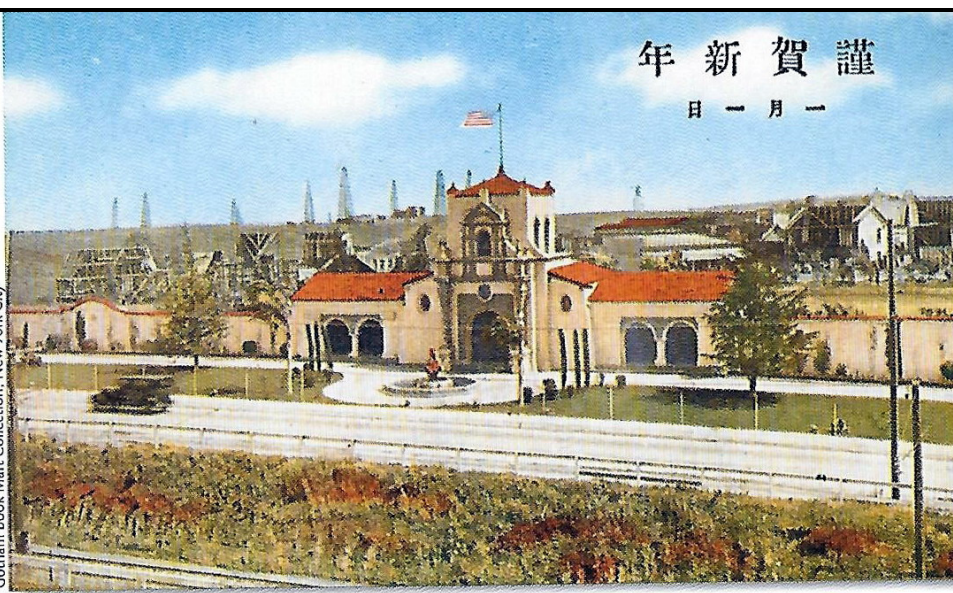
In 1912, movie mogul Carl Laemmle bought a 230-acre chicken ranch in the San Fernando Valley and in a short time, turned this property into the now-famous Universal City. Adding almost two hundred more acres of diverse types of terrain to the back lot and building numerous soundstages on it through the years, he created the largest movie studio in the world. In the 1920s and 1930s, Universal perfected the horror genre with such films as *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1923), *The Phantom of the Opera* (1925), *Dracula* (1931), and *The Mummy* (1932), and made actors such as Lon Chaney, Bela Lugosi, and Boris Karloff legends.

# THE EARLY MOVIE FILM STUDIOS FOX

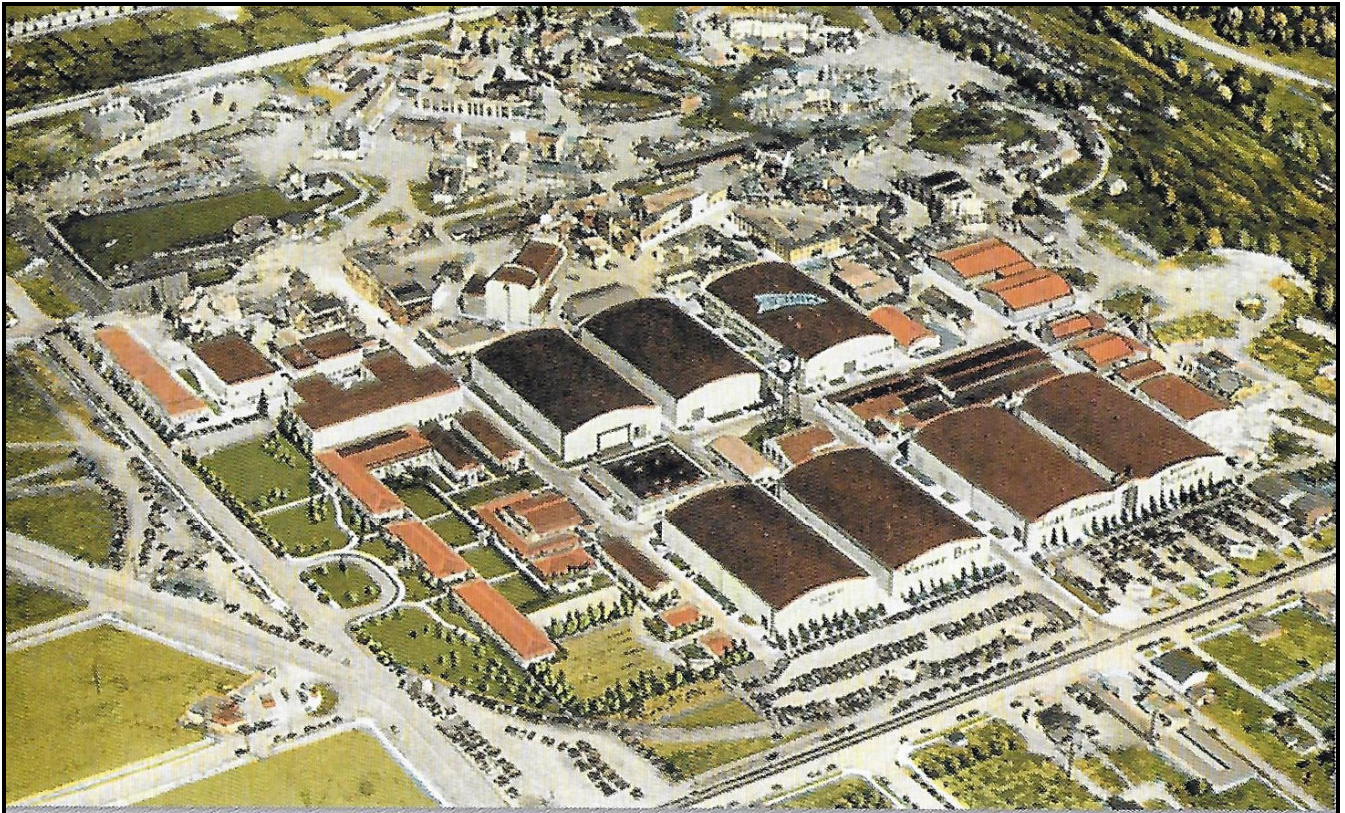
## Fox Studios, Century City

William Fox constructed this studio at 10201 Pico Boulevard in Westwood in 1928 for his Fox Film Corporation. Two years later, he lost control of the company. It was merged with Twentieth Century to form Twentieth Century Fox with Darryl Zanuck and Joseph Schenck in charge. Under these two moguls, the studio flourished. With box-office hits like *Alexander's Ragtime Band* (1938), *Drums Along the Mohawk* (1939), and *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940), it was also the studio that made actresses like Shirley Temple, Betty Grable, Sonja Henie, and Marilyn Monroe household names.

Gotham Book Mart Collection, New York City



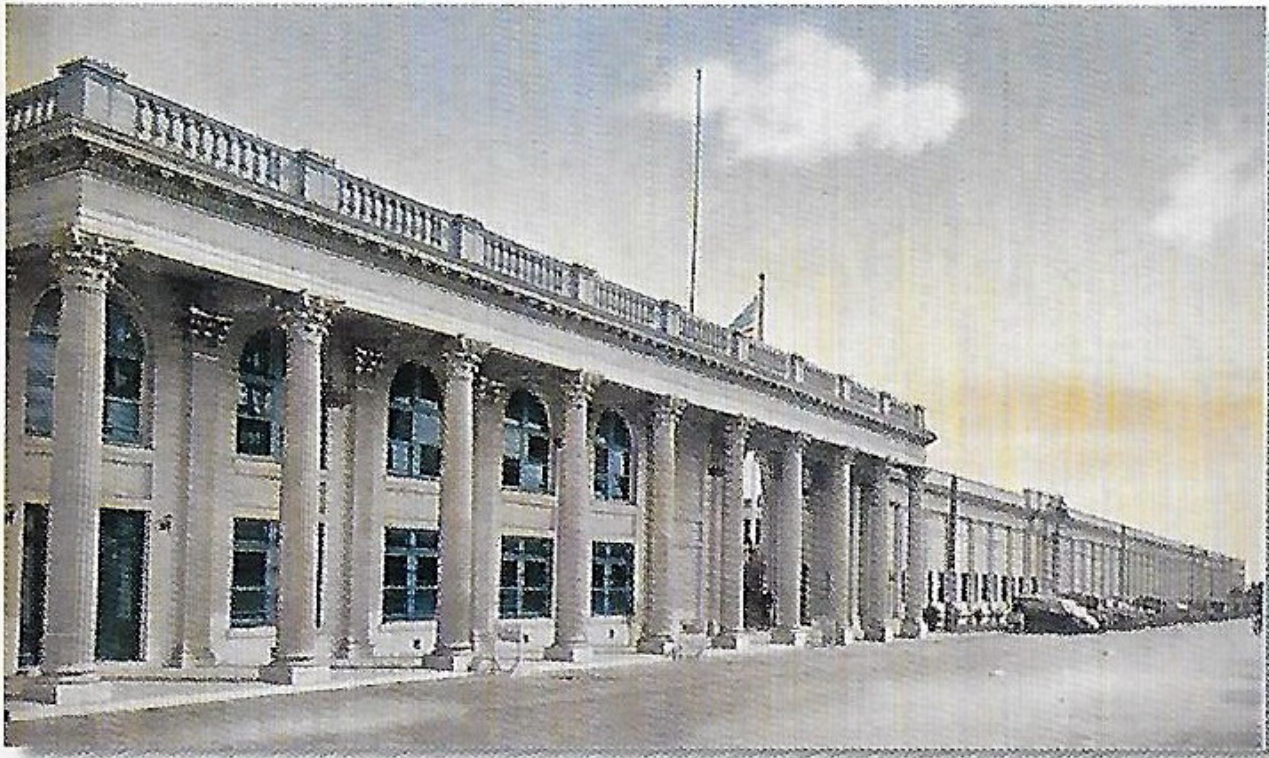
## THE EARLY MOVIE FILM STUDIOS WARNER BROTHERS



### Warner Bros.—First National Studios, Burbank

In 1929, two years after making *The Jazz Singer* (1927), Warner Bros. purchased First National Pictures and moved into the First National Studios in Burbank. The 1930s was the studio's most successful decade, producing musicals (with Broadway choreographer Busby Berkeley), gangster flicks, dramas, action films, and soap operas on the elaborate soundstages and back lot featured on this card.

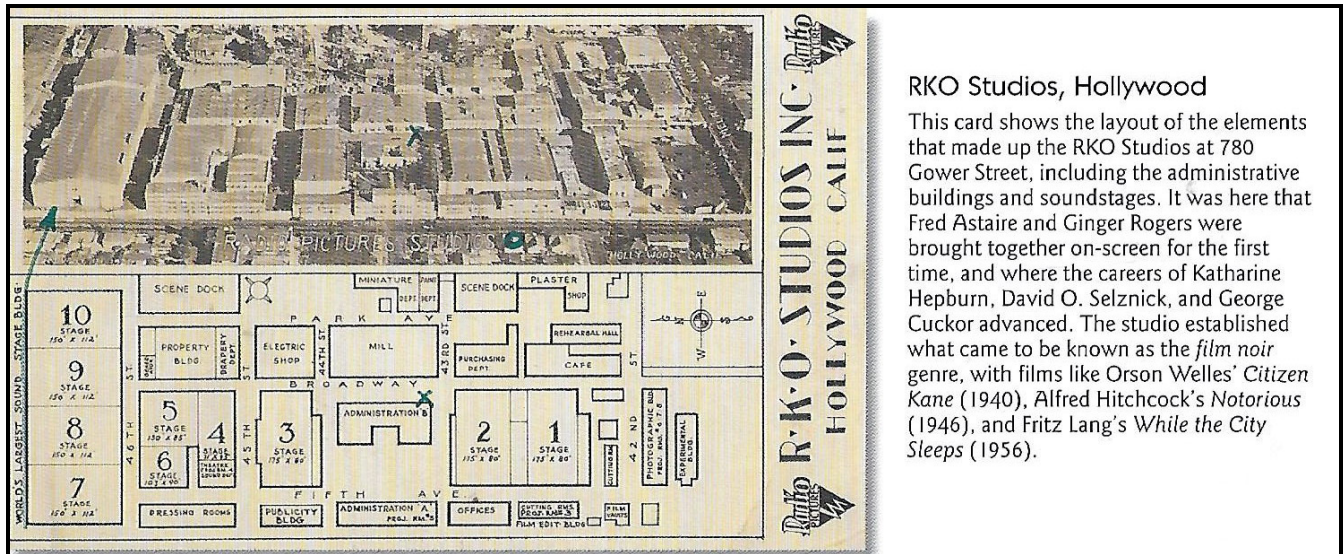
## THE EARLY MOVIE FILM STUDIOS MGM



### Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studio, Culver City

Built in 1915 by Thomas H. Ince as the Ince-Triangle-KayBee studio, this facility at 10202 Washington Boulevard, Culver City, was taken over by the Goldwyn Company in 1918. Following the merger of Metro Pictures and Goldwyn, and with the addition of independent producer Louis B. Mayer in 1924, the studio became the property of MGM. For over fifty years MGM produced lavish fantasies and musicals such as *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), *Easter Parade* (1948), *Singin' in the Rain* (1952), and *Gigi* (1958) from here.

# THE EARLY MOVIE FILM STUDIOS RKO



## RKO Studios, Hollywood

This card shows the layout of the elements that made up the RKO Studios at 780 Gower Street, including the administrative buildings and soundstages. It was here that Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers were brought together on-screen for the first time, and where the careers of Katharine Hepburn, David O. Selznick, and George Cuckor advanced. The studio established what came to be known as the *film noir* genre, with films like Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane* (1940), Alfred Hitchcock's *Notorious* (1946), and Fritz Lang's *While the City Sleeps* (1956).

## THE EARLY MOVIE FILM STUDIOS

# Paramount Studios

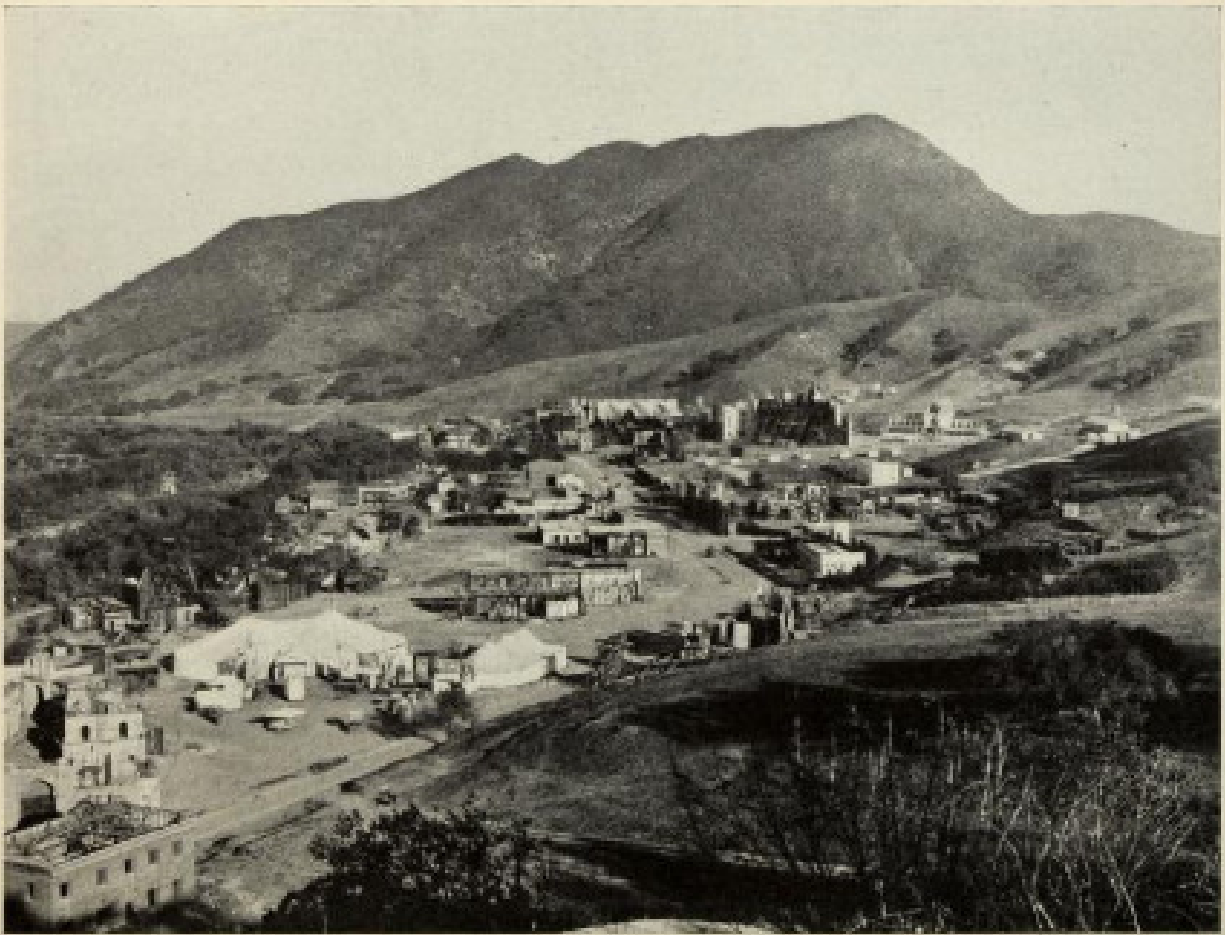


COURTESY PARAMOUNT

THE PARAMOUNT STUDIOS IN HOLLYWOOD.

## THE EARLY MOVIE FILM STUDIOS

# Universal City



COURTESY UNIVERSAL

UNIVERSAL CITY, CALIFORNIA.



## THE EARLY MOVIE FILM STUDIOS

# Fox Studios

Fox Theatres was a large chain of movie theatres in the United States dating from the 1920s, either built by the Fox studio owner William Fox, or subsequently merged in 1929 by Fox with the West Coast Theatres chain. These grand "movie palaces" were built with a wide assortment of architectural styles drawn from Asian, Indian, Persian and Moorish influences.



COURTESY FOX FILM CORP.

THE FOX BEVERLY HILLS STUDIOS IN HOLLYWOOD.

## THE EARLY MOVIE FILM STUDIOS

# United Artists Studios



COURTESY UNITED ARTISTS

THE UNITED ARTISTS STUDIOS, HOLLYWOOD.

## THE EARLY MOVIE FILM STUDIOS

# Warner Bros Studios

In 1904, the four founding Warner brothers started the Duquesne Amusement & Supply Company in Pittsburgh to distribute films. Around 1914 they began producing films and in 1918 they opened the first Warner Brothers Studio in Hollywood.



COURTESY WARNER BROTHERS

WARNER BROTHERS FIRST NATIONAL STUDIOS IN HOLLYWOOD.

## THE EARLY MOVIE FILM STUDIOS

# Columbia Studios



## THE EARLY MOVIE FILM STUDIOS

# Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios

The company was founded in 1904 by Marcus Loew and was the oldest theatre chain operating in the United States. From 1924 (until 1959) it was also the parent company of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios. The successful enterprise grew to include deluxe vaudeville houses and then lavish movie palaces. Loew's theatres were established in cities from coast-to-coast, but primarily in East Coast and Midwest States.



COURTESY M-G-M

THE METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER STUDIOS, CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA.

## THE EARLY MOVIE FILM STUDIOS

### RKO Studios

The business was formed after the Keith-Albee-Orpheum theatre chain and Joseph P Kennedy's Film Booking Offices of America (FBO) were brought together under the control of the Radio Corporation of America (RCA) in 1928.





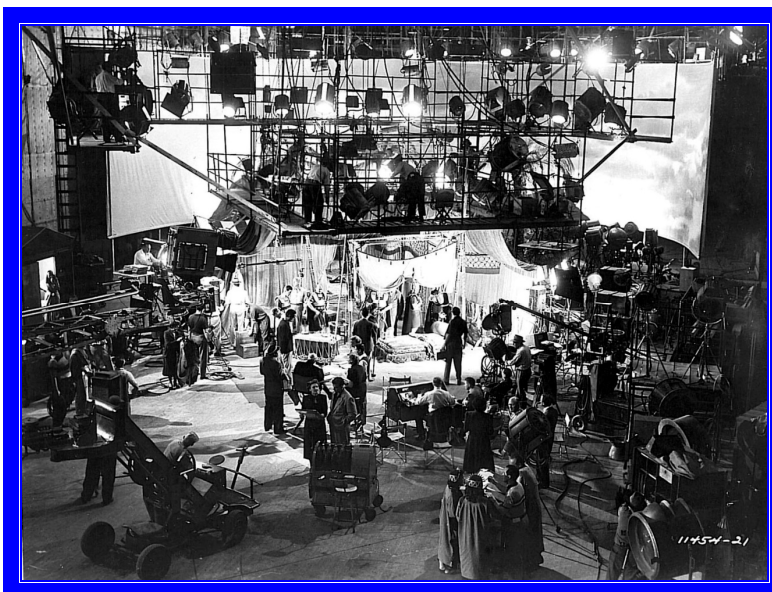
7th Street Los Angeles 1937 with Warner Brothers Downtown Theatre in background

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1982 Movie Palaces: Renaissance and Reuse, Valerio & Friedman, Education Facilities, NYC.  
1998 Movie Palace Masterpiece, Alfred Balk (Ed), Landmark Theatre Foundation, NY.  
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Salt Lake City.  
2004 Cinema Treasures, Melnick & Fuchs, MBI Publishing, St. Paul.  
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2009 American Theatres of Today (reprint 1927-30), Sexton & Betts, Liber Apertus, CA.  
2013 American Movie Palaces, Rolf Achilles, Shire, Oxford.

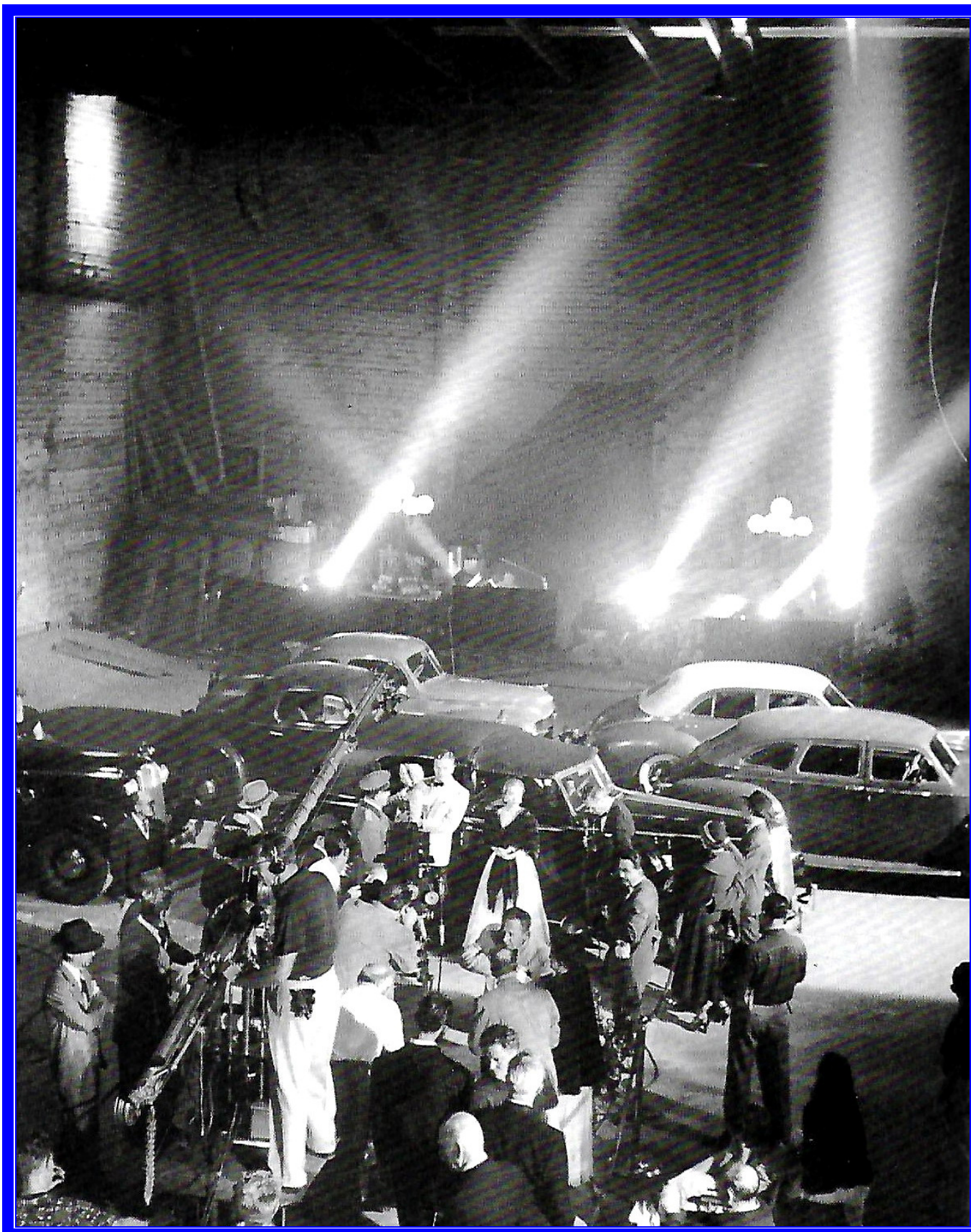
### Some Websites with Theatre and Studio History

[cinematreasures.org](http://cinematreasures.org)  
[losangelestheatres.blogspot.com](http://losangelestheatres.blogspot.com)  
[hevac-heritage.org/e-books](http://hevac-heritage.org/e-books) large



Filming Sunset Boulevard 1950





Studio film set 1927 (Masters of Starlight)



Camera Crew 1931 (Masters of Starlight)