

# Hollywood Builds World's Largest Movie Set

## Thousands Of Celestials Employed In Filming New Spectacle Depicting Life In Manchuria

By Linda Lane

FOR those of us who share in the occupation of recording and disseminating the news and information of the cinema world, it is with renewed and pleasant enthusiasm that we go about our chores—we now herald the imminent film releases instead of, as before, glibly reporting of the "good pictures" to come.

We have just returned from a visit to the ranch of Columbia pictures, where we spent a day of bewildered wonder on the set established for the mounting of "The Lost Horizon," which stars likeable Ronald Colman under the direction of Frank Capra whose remarkable contributions to the progress of film making seems to lead the pace.

Of most significance is the set representing the fantastic Shangri La, construction on which began in March and which required 150 workmen over two months to complete. It is regarded the largest unit set ever to be built in Hollywood. Occupying a space more than 1,000 feet in length and 500 feet wide, the set comprises a gigantic lamasery surrounded by mountains and a great patio, the center of which is occupied by a large pool with fountains playing their sparkling water on hundreds of water lilies. Two hundred doves were oriented to the set weeks in advance of actual shooting as an added touch of beauty.

Supplementing this big set is a complete Tibetan village to represent the Valley of the Blue Moon. Houses, bridges, cultivated fields, artificial lakes and streams are spread over many acres, with native touches of sacred tombs of lamas and hundreds of other authentic bits of Tibetan atmosphere.

BUT the set on which activity reigned was the one representing the Baakul flying field. Here Chinese coolies raced frantically about carrying their beggarly possessions. Pompous mandarins and their ladies gave their impression of haste. Airplanes whirled in the background, kicking up blinding dust that almost obscured the bamboo hangars of the airport. A band of mili-

tary rebels was descending upon them, leaving in their wake death and destruction. Here was bedlam, here was grief-ridden Manchuria.

Fully one quarter of the Chinese population of Southern California was on the scene acting as extras, all attuned to the "business" required of them.



John Howard, as George Conway, meets Maria, the charming Tibetan girl, played by Margo. They give the best of their histrionic talents to their latest vehicle.

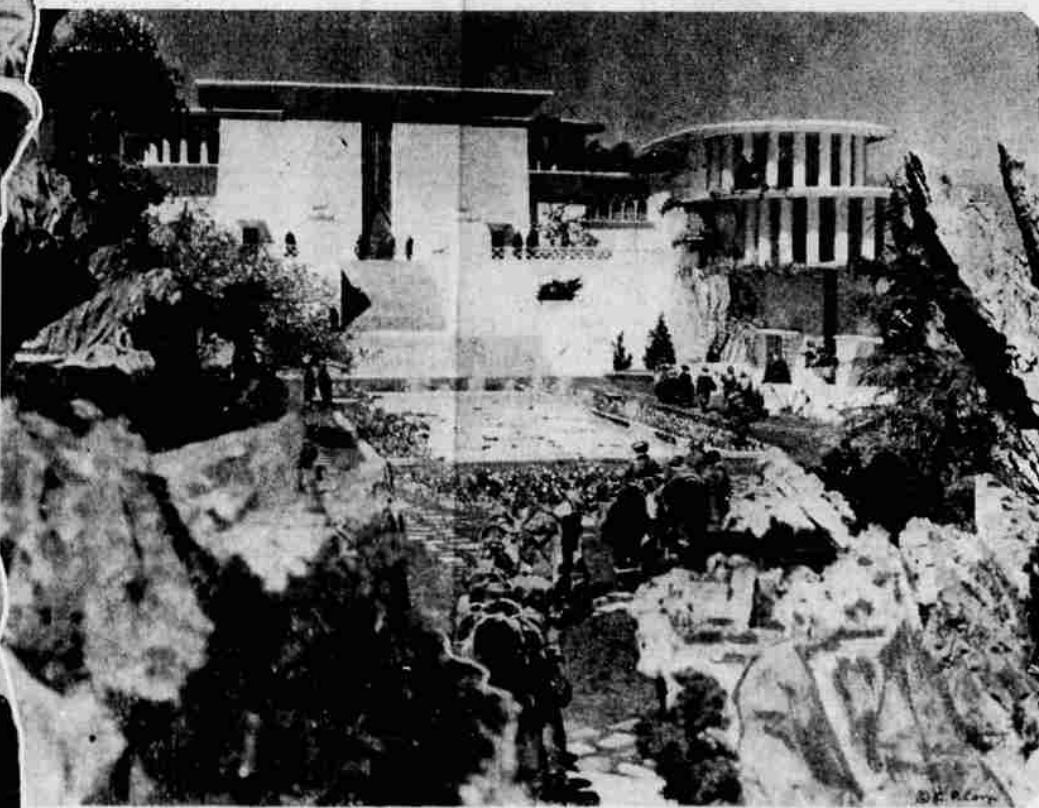


Chosen from among scores of applicants, lovely Jane Wyatt, stage and screen actress, plays opposite Ronald Colman in "Lost Horizon." A set 1,000 feet long by 500 feet wide has been created for the scene.

Mob scene after mob scene was filmed and recorded, then preparations for a spectacular shot of the bamboo hangar being burned. No slip-ups could be made in this scene, because retakes would require the building of another hangar and time and money would be wasted. The rehearsals went on for an hour. There are the close shots of Colman and John Howard, who plays his brother. The atmosphere people are put through their paces. All was in readiness for the spectacular fire scene, then—Director Capra calls a halt. It's dinner time and even actors must eat.

Nine hundred men, women and children raced across the airfield to a row of hangars where the lines formed for food.

WITH the exception of Ronald Colman, Edward Everett Horton and H. B. Warner, the cast of "The Lost Horizon" is comprised of actors and actresses whose careers are still before them. Jane Wyatt, who plays opposite Mr. Colman, has appeared in but two pictures. John Howard has been in Hollywood only two years.



The magnificent Shangri La set on which many of the action shots for the new spectacle are taken. It was built on the ranch of Columbia studios.

Isabell Jewell, who gave her most important performance in "Tale of Two Cities," receives her biggest opportunity in this film. Margo, who has shown such possibilities in her few appearances, plays Maria and Thomas Mitchell, although a veteran of the theater as an actor, author and stage director, makes his first screen appearance in this production.

So Hollywood marches on. The dull, drab years of quandry, of hasty production are of the past.

## Sports-Minded Screen Stars Stimulate Interest In Athletics

By Dave Crown

THE ever-increasing sports-mindedness of the film stars has become a healthy stimulant for athletics in Southern California, with many of the film people sponsoring teams in the games that win their interest. Pat O'Brien's Loyolans is a team in one of the softball leagues and furnishes competition to Bing Crosby's Croonerettes, Joe Penner's Quackers and Buck Jones' Cowboys. All the studios are represented on the semi-professional baseball teams, while Ann Dvorak personally outfits a team as does the

Davy Crockett will be indited on celluloid at Twentieth Century-Fox... Gene Raymond has grown a mustache for his role in "Count Pete"... all the mail boys and lot messengers at Universal now wear uniforms....

JOHN BOLES is another screen personality who realizes that the throne of popularity has to be relinquished some day and a new source of monetary income created. Thus, the personable singing star has sent his business manager to San Francisco to negotiate for the purchase of 14 oil stations in and around the bay city. Incidentally, Bebe Daniels' dress shop has proven so successful a venture that she may establish a chain of them when she returns from Europe....

A star in the making is William Hall to whom has fallen the second male lead in "A Fool for Blondes" at Universal. Good looking and a fine baritone singer, Hall reaches a height of six feet four inches, even towering over Victor McLaglen who has the lead in that film....

"Broadway was never like this!" exclaimed comedian Frank Morgan. While working in "The Bowery Princess," the actor donned blackface makeup for the first time, learned a tap dance, played a trombone and did a series of bird-calls. He'll have quite a repertoire of parlor tricks....

Gertrude Niessen, for whom this column presaged early success in flickerland, has been added to the roster at Universal and destined for big things. With added courage we venture the opinion that Doris Carson, a headliner in "On Your Toes" in New York, will find studio scouts beckoning to her....

Jolly, genial Eugene Pallette, now in England, is facing several months of idleness, for word comes to us that he fell and broke his leg while in action before the cameras there....

LITTLE Crown Jewels From the Lots: Comic though he be, friend Jack Benny is always so solemn-faced when not at work. On the set or before the "mike" he's always beaming... at Universal, they call the story department the "bull pen"... Kenny Baker will not loiter on the local scene, but departs for a personal appearance tour about the country... Preston Foster has purchased an interest in a tooth-paste company... Fred Astaire is doing some magazine writing plus his song writing... Alice Faye buys white tailored nightgowns... Henry Armetta's imitation of a "booi" fight should be caught by the cameras... Bob Burns is going to Little Rock for the Arkansas Centennial now under way... the Jack Bennys have signed a lease for Mariens Dietrich's former home... Binnie Barnes has taken to ice skating... Anna Sten can't stay away from the handball courts....

Because of her refusal to take the feminine lead in "God's Country and the Woman" at Warner Bros., Bette Davis has been suspended by the studio. Bette, we understand, is seeking more money and a participation in the selection of her stories....