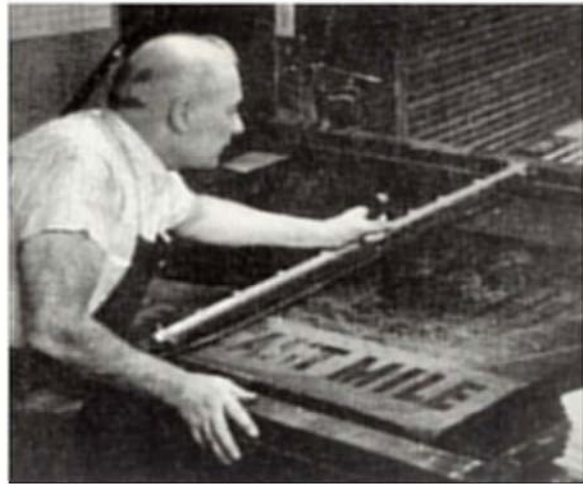


National Screen Service

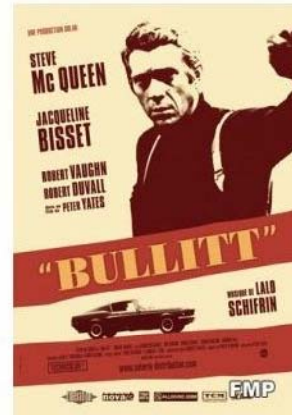
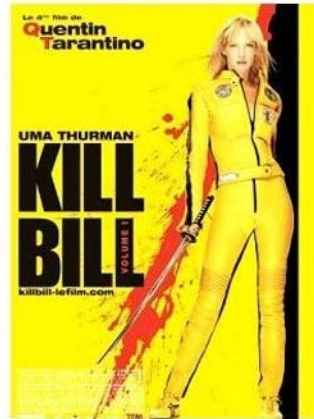
Poster & Accessories Number Log



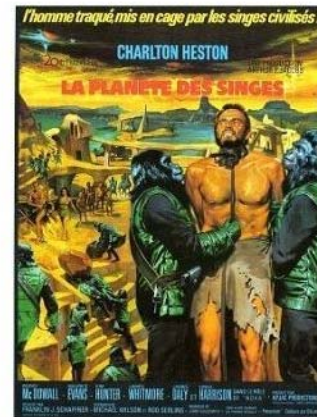
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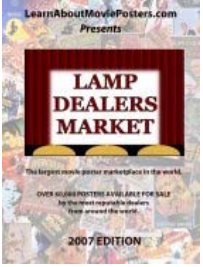

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National Screen Service Poster & Accessories Number Log

By
Ed and Susan Poole

2010 Edition

*A Must Reference Tool For Anyone
Who Handles Collectible Movie Posters & Accessories*

A Publication by
LearnAboutMoviePosters.com
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**National Screen Service
Poster & Accessories Number Log**

2010 Edition

Published by:

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This publication is the result of years of gathering National Screen Service numbers from a variety of sources. We started with our own poster collection and gradually collected several thousands of numbers from various collectors and dealers. However, they were many holes and inconsistencies. We did not feel comfortable publishing a book like this based on this limited information.

This situation changed significantly when we were able to acquire an NSS trailer log for the years 1930-1962, and an NSS inquiry report dated 1999. These two logs, along with several major number contributors, led us to believe that we could finally release a comprehensive NSS number log. Without these contributions, there would be no *National Screen Service Poster & Accessories Number Log*. So we take this opportunity to thank the following individuals:

Jeff Joseph – SabuCat Productions – Thank you for providing us a copy of the NSS Trailer Log – 1930-1962;

Bruce Hershenson – emovieposters.com – Thank you for providing us a copy of the NSS Inquiry Report.

Andy Schoenhorn – Over 3000 numbers submitted. Lou Ann Wooley – Over 400 numbers submitted. Frances Brewer – Over 200 numbers submitted. Christopher Jones – Over 200 numbers submitted.

In addition, we'd like to thank Ritchie Alexander; Norm Allen; Bernadette Allen; Evan Bernstein; Cindy Boutin; Jim Bryan; Andrew Campbell; Diane V Carleton; Parsin Churvongse; Tom Cook; Joe DePasquale; Tom Desmond; Dale Dilts; Andy Dobson; Richard Ducar; Ken Furlong; Hargon; Ed Inman; Jack Johnson; Widge Johnson; Rob Jones; Sean Linkenback; John Long; Richard Madden; Evan Maxon; Jerry McManis; Jim Mossey; Lynn Naron; Tomoki Nishikawa; Robert 'Toby' Oden; Randall Petersen; Richard Proldsorfer; Scott Reed; Andrew Roberts; Bill Ryden; Matthew & Jennifer Schwenning; Grey Smith; Nick Snider; Sarah Sutherland; Lynne Thompson; Randi L. Waddell; Jessica Wethington; and Frank Zoccano for their contributions.

As always, we must thank our wonderful LAMP sponsors, dealers and members, for without their support, LAMP and its publications would not be possible.

Ed and Susan Poole

LETTER FROM THE AUTHORS

Unlike other hobbies like comics, stamps, or coins that have documented and detailed books about every single item ever issued in their hobby, movie posters have no accurate information at all. The majority of the hobby for decades has had to rely on older dealers and collectors passing down bits and pieces of information. And while we recognize the efforts of these hobby forefathers, a great deal of information is being lost. Fortunately, for movie poster collectors and dealers, there is an alternative.

Unlike other countries, there was one company in the U.S. film industry which dominated the distribution of posters for the majority of the century – National Screen Service (“NSS”). For the last half of the century, NSS controlled about 85 percent of the major studios’ distribution. And when they didn’t distribute for the independent and minor distributors, they were the PRINTERS for them.

In order to control the creation, distribution and storage of the posters and accessories, the NSS devised a numbering system which dated and documented the trailers, posters and accessories as they were issued. These numbers were contained in work logs. And in the majority of cases, the number was printed on the movie paper.

Poster collectors and dealers have long since recognized the value of these numbers in terms of dates of issue and reissue. These records also give an account of the film’s exhibition history – from original release to subsequent re-releases. They also provide information as to the film’s distributors through the years.

These NSS numbers are important to collectors and dealers because they provide an historical blueprint of U.S. films and their accessories for over 50 years. For over ten years, we have been gathering as many NSS numbers as possible. And while we have not been able to gather ALL of the NSS numbers, we are confident that this publication is the most comprehensive list of NSS numbers available anywhere.

It is our hope that this publication will become an invaluable tool to all poster collectors and dealers.

Ed and Susan Poole



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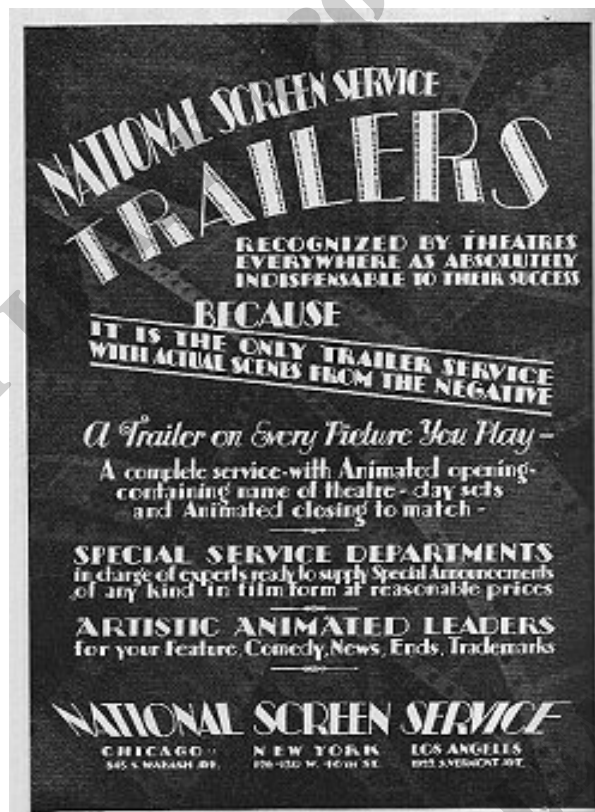
NSS OVERVIEW

Before you begin using the logs, please read this brief overview of the National Screen Service (“NSS”) and how it operated through the years. We believe that if you are familiar with the circumstances, it will help to understand the logs better.

In 1919, Herman Robbins, a former employee of Fox, traveled the country selling projector lamps to theaters. Understanding the various needs of theaters, he came up with the idea for a service to provide trailers to the theaters as a middle man between the studios and the theaters. In 1920, he formed National Screen Service and began creating crude 35 mm film ads from transferred film stills (quite often without the studios approval) which were sold to theaters to show after their feature film, thus coining the term “trailers.”

This trailer service became so popular that by the mid 1920s, NSS had exclusive contracts with all the major studios. The studios supplied NSS with clips of major scenes captured during the filming. NSS then created the trailers and sold them to the theaters. The studios LOVED this because it was promoting their films with NO cost to the studio at all. NSS made their money strictly from the exhibitors.

NOTICE: this early NSS poster showing their 3 national offices.



The introduction of sound only solidified NSS's dominance. However, the increased demand on NSS created a tremendous control issue. To address this problem, NSS created a simple control system that would have a MAJOR impact on the industry for the next 60 years.

Sound gave a much needed boost to the film industry. But as studios expanded their distribution, it also expanded their overhead. Since most films stayed on the market for two to three years, studio exchanges, whose major business was releasing NEW films, struggled to maintain older films. They would continually re-release the films in order to bring in additional revenue to help cover the costs. The warehousing and distribution of the accessories, however, were such an overwhelming additional burden that independent poster exchanges began taking control of the accessories market.

The Takeover

In 1937, NSS was approached by Loew's to print and distribute their "specialty" items, which consisted of larger sizes such as 3 sheets, 40x60's and banners. The test worked fairly well, and NSS began supplying theaters with these specialty accessories for films produced or distributed by United Artists, Loew's and Columbia. Again, the NSS would face creation, distribution and warehouse problems since, at that time, they only had six regional outlets and a very small art department

By 1939, distribution problems for the studios had multiplied. Warehousing overhead for national distribution, rising labor costs, rising legal battles PLUS the realization that the United States was headed for war, became more than studios could bear. Studios were losing huge amounts of money with their accessories.

Paramount approached NSS with the proposition to take over their entire accessories distribution but ONLY under the condition that NSS would open branches in all major markets that Paramount had an exchange. As part of the agreement, Paramount would provide all of the artwork to NSS. On December 22, 1939, Paramount and Advertising Accessories, Inc (a then subsidiary of NSS) signed a 5 year exclusive contract.

RKO, which had also suffered losses from its accessories business, was approached by NSS to take over the manufacture and distribution of their movie paper. On January 31, 1940, RKO entered into an exclusive 5 year contract with Advertising Accessories. This contract was later extended to January 31, 1950 by a supplemental agreement dated October 6, 1944.

In order to meet their new contractual obligations, NSS approached the National Poster Service Association, the largest and most reputable poster exchange association in the country at that time. On February 17, 1940, in a brilliant maneuver, NSS BOUGHT the 21 largest poster exchanges in the Association, plus an additional 7 poster exchanges in the other cities needed. This move immediately gave NSS 28 independent poster exchanges, with management and staff already in place. In addition, each poster exchange had hundreds of thousands of posters already

in stock and set up in major cities across the country. In addition, it eliminated some of the studios' legal battles.

These exclusive contracts set off a barrage of lawsuits by the remaining independent poster exchanges. For more details, visit the website www.LearnAboutMoviePosters.com

In 1940, Advertising Accessories approached Universal Studios and Columbia, but they could not reach an agreement with either studio. They did, however, sign a one year non-exclusive license agreement for the distribution of Warner Brothers movie paper on September 26, 1940. This agreement was extended by a letter agreement for successive yearly periods up to and including August 31, 1945.

Columbia, Loew's, Fox, United Artists, Universal and Warner Studios utilized the services of regional exhibitor exchanges, rather than NSS, to distribute the standard accessories that they produced for their films.

Due to contractual obligations, Advertising Accessories merged with NSS on July 18, 1941.

In 1941, NSS began negotiating a manufacturing and distributing contract with Loew's. By this time, Loew's too was losing money on their accessories. On February 6, 1942, Loew's and NSS entered into a 10 year exclusive contract. Under this contract, Loew's agreed to furnish to NSS the completed artwork and still negatives from which the mats would be prepared.

Timing could not have been better for NSS. As the U.S. involvement in World War II became larger, manpower rapidly became an additional major problem for the studios, almost "forcing" them to NSS. Over the next few years, the remainder of the eight major studios at the time signed contracts giving exclusive rights to NSS to manufacture and distribute their accessories. Universal signed their contract in 1944, Columbia in 1945, United Artists in 1946 and 20th Century Fox in 1947. Warner Brothers, who had signed a non-exclusive contract earlier, gave exclusive rights in 1946. By 1947, EVERY major film studio in the United States had signed exclusive contracts with NSS.

Restructure

After the war, NSS continued to grow and streamline their distribution process. By the mid 1950s, NSS had outgrown its distribution system and made another brilliant move.

In 1957, NSS bought Continental Litho in Cleveland. By 1960, NSS made a transition to regional printing and warehousing to help eliminate huge amounts of shipping costs. Plates were made in Cleveland and shipped to the regional print shops where the posters were printed and stored for regional distribution. This move eliminated the majority of the business for Morgan Litho, who was at the time the largest supplier for the film industry. This shift in business

ultimately caused Morgan to close down in 1960 (see a full article on Morgan Litho at the website www.LearnAboutMoviePosters.com).

The restructure in distribution of trailers and accessories settled NSS with 18 regional offices. In 1962, with the new restructure in place, NSS released a *Master List of Feature Film Titles* which listed the film titles for which NSS provided trailers and accessories. (The 1962 NSS Master List can be seen in the NSS Trailer Logs Section of the website www.LearnAboutMoviePosters.com)

In 1964, the slogan "The NEW NSS" was adopted as a major theme. Here is a clipping of the National Sales Meeting in 1964:



In 1969, NSS made another major adjustment with the purchase of National Theatre Supply which was the largest supplier of theatre projectors and sound equipment.

The Change

The 1960s appeared to be a time of complete dominance for NSS; however, two major developments would soon forever change the industry and lead to the ultimate downfall of NSS.

Multi-Screen Theaters

In the same year that NSS purchased Continental Litho (1957), Nat Taylor, the owner of Elgin Theater in Ottawa, Canada, remodeled his theater to show two different films simultaneously.

Soon thereafter, Stanley Durwood of American Multi-Cinema (now AMC Theatres) pioneered what would become the multiplex theater in 1963. This innovative idea came to Durwood when he realized that he could operate several attached auditoriums with the same staff needed for one by managing the start times for each movie.

During the 1970's, there was a mass exodus from the single screen to multi-screen theaters. This **DRASTICALLY** reduced the need for advertising accessories because a single lobby now had to advertise **ALL** the different films being shown.

Kaleidoscope Films

Andrew Kuehn trained at NSS from 1961-1963 writing and producing trailers. With his distinctive knack for promotion, Kuehn became recognized for his creativity in promoting foreign and difficult campaigns.

In 1963, MGM hired Kuehn to head their new promotional department to handle trailers and TV spots. Kuehn revolutionized the style and approach of trailers.

In 1967, Kuehn left MGM to form his own company, Kaleidoscope Films. Kaleidoscope soon began handling all the blockbuster films, such as: *Airport*, *Poseidon Adventure*, *Sting*, *Exorcist*, *Towering Inferno*, *Jaws*, *Taxi Driver*, *Superman*. This changed the direction of trailers forever and broke the dominance of NSS.

The 1970s brought a constant decrease in both trailer and accessory production. By the late 1970s, NSS had to continually decrease overhead and start closing regional warehouses.

In 1984, NSS relinquished the exclusive manufacture of accessories back to the studios and became a distributor. This had a **MAJOR** impact on the posters and accessories being produced, resulting in the elimination of many of the standard accessory sizes.

Over the next few years, NSS turned full circle and reduced their distribution centers to three again -- just like in the 1920s,

In 2000, Technicolor bought out NSS and closed it down.

From 1920 until 2000, National Screen Service was a major contributor to the success and growth of the film industry. Their records are basically a blueprint of the history and evolution of the entire American film industry. .

THE BOOK

In this book, we cover 50 years of NSS poster numbers (1940 through 1989). There are several important areas that need explaining before you go to the logs.

Sources of information

The source of our information is very important and will be a major point in utilizing the logs. We started by combining three different sources of information. Here they are:

1. First, we acquired from an NSS employee a listing of NSS job numbers in 1999. This list gave a good framework of job numbers issued by NSS from 1930, even including advance jobs past 2000. It was a great source of information for later years, but a lot of the titles released in early years had been eliminated as they were no longer available. Even some major releases, such as *Gone With the Wind*, had been pulled from distribution and therefore eliminated from the list. In the logs, in the Source column, these posters are marked in the Source column with a "B."
2. We then acquired a 1962 NSS Master Index. This was a MAJOR acquisition as NSS had just finished a complete restructure, and this was the first master index showing posters and trailers. It covered the years 1930 to 1962 very well, but we also noticed numerous problems. For example, if a title had originally been released before 1930, the re-release was handled by NSS as if it was the original release (to them it was). So when researching a title, if you don't know for yourself, you can't be sure that it's the original release or not. Along that same vein, when they handled ANY re-release, the earlier number was eliminated. The difference was that if NSS had handled an earlier issue, they normally marked it as a re-release. In the logs, these posters are marked in the Source column with a "N." Consequently, there are NO codes in this column after 1962 except for "R." (re-release)
3. We have been poster collectors for over 30 years. For the last 10 years or more, we have been tracking and compiling NSS poster numbers through the years. We had documented about 15,000 NSS numbers that were taken off the posters. (REMEMBER: the trailer numbers and the poster numbers are the same number just slightly modified). We combined what we had compiled from posters with the two NSS lists that we acquired. This also gave us a batch of numbers that had been

eliminated because of reissues AND numbers from small independent films and shorts that had also been eliminated. Because of THIS addition, you will see a lot of titles with the original release year marked beside the title. In the logs, these posters are marked in the Source column with a "P."

Additional Information

In 1962, when NSS was putting together their 1962 Master Index, they included a large amount of information. It was shown in the logs in the way of Codes. So we have included the Codes column to also give you that information. This legend is in the front of the 1962 Master Index:

You will notice that added to some of the production numbers are letters which designate the following:

- A - "A" designates those pictures for which we can furnish only accessories, since no trailer was made. >
 - C - The letter "C" designates those pictures for which we have trailers in color. Note: Warner and Metro colored pictures are not so designated.
 - D - The letter "D" designates a 3 dimension picture.
 - F - The letter "F" designates a CinemaScope picture.
 - R - The letter "R" designates a reissue and is followed by the new production number, if any, assigned to the picture.
 - S - The letter "S" designates a Serial picture. We now have trailers and accessories on Film Classic serials in addition to Columbia. On all other serials we can furnish only accessories.
 - X - Where a picture plays under 2 or more titles and these titles are so listed in this code book, the titles and variations are designated by the letter "X"
 - T - Whether original distributor has transferred picture rights to a new distributor, trailers not to be serviced unless specifically authorized by Home Office. Accessory service also governed by Home Office approval.
-

THE LOGS

Just one more section of information before you go rushing into the logs.

We have covered the years 1940, which was the initial year for numbering posters, until 1989. In 1990, NSS changed their number system away from a single number for a TITLE to individual numbers for each PRINT JOB (i.e., each size has its own number), eliminating the benefit for collectors and researchers. We have the additional numbers (both for trailers from 1930-1940 and from 1990 until 2000) available on our website, www.LearnAboutMoviePosters.com).

We had always been told and had always proclaimed that the NSS numbers were issued each year by NSS in order of their release. Once you see the logs, you will quickly realize that this is definitely NOT the case. Titles were sent to NSS usually in small batches. Some smaller distributors sent their projected year's material at one time. NSS then recorded them as they were sent from the distribution companies.

IMPORTANT: The number system used in the 1962 Master Log and the 1999 Inventory Log was the previous 6 digit number format ONLY. But we know from the huge amount of posters collected that posters were NOT numbered this way until 1977. For posters, they used a slightly different format. They converted the 6 digits that they used for trailers to 2 numbers for the year, a slash (/) and then the number for that release. i.e. 40/11 for *Invisible Stripes* where the Master Log and Inventory Log will read 40 0011. This system made it easier for warehouse personnel to handle the various sizes with the year divided off with a slash.

Common to All Logs

When you go through the logs, there are a few things to consider.

1. Each source that we used presented their information from a certain perspective. In other words, the 1999 log only included information that NSS had at that time so it only listed the last release that they used. The same applied for the 1962 log. We have used the poster numbers that we have compiled to fill in some of the reissues. We also filled in SOME original release years, but there are a lot that DO NOT have the original release year marked.
2. NOTICE that it was a common practice for NSS to pull the shorts, cartoons, documentaries and specialty films to the bottom of each year and give a different number system, usually starting the numbers in the 1000s. A large number of these had been dropped from the logs and we could only fill in some of the numbers from the posters.

3. The compilation of numbers directly from multiple sources, especially directly from the posters, also shows mistakes. We have tried to mark these as we have found them to bring your attention to them.
4. You will notice that sometimes the distributor is not presented. The NSS logs would have the distributor listed as "Miscellaneous." We tried to fill in as many as possible, but sometimes there was a possibility that it could have been several different films and we weren't sure, so we left it blank. Other times, it appears that they used the working title and we couldn't identify the film, so we left it blank.

FOUR LOGS

We have broken the logs into 4 sections to make it easier to present changes. Here is the breakdown:

Log 1 1940-1941

You must remember that the years 1940 and 1941 produced MASSIVE chaos for NSS. They had acquired exclusive contracts with Paramount and RKO and non-exclusive with several other studios. In February, they had bought out 28 independent poster exchanges WITH their management and were trying to reorganize everything into a system.

NSS was also expanding from only handling trailers and specialty accessories to handling the FULL LINE of accessories. But also remember that the full line exclusive contracts had only been signed at this time with Paramount and RKO. NOTICE: when you look down the source code column for the code "P," (which means that the NSS number was taken off of the poster) the ONLY NSS codes that we have found actually ON the posters during 1940 and 1941 were from Paramount and RKO. The other numbers seemed to have been for trailers and print jobs. WE placed the NSS number in the poster format for those years so it would fit into the book.

ALSO, in all of this chaos, we found that they were experimenting with the number system, NOT in the inventory logs, but on the posters themselves (which is why it is so important to COMBINE all of the logs).

Experiment 1

One experiment that was done only in these 2 years was the adding of a number BETWEEN the year and the slash (/). i.e. *Prairie Law* 406/264 with the 6 added in.

NOTICE: these are only on the posters and NOT in any logs. Also notice that on the title *Arise My Love*, we found posters with 408/476 and posters with 4011/476.

From this we came to the conclusion that they were attempting to mark the scheduled release date by MONTH. NOTICE:

- A. There are NO numbers added in the early numbers of 1940. The earliest number that we have found is 5 (May) which would fit with the exchanges being acquired in February, and requiring several additional months for set up time.
- B. The numbers only go up to 12
- C. In 1941, there are numbers starting over with 1.

But, with the constant changes to release schedules and the addition of other studios, it seems this experiment was abandoned in the middle of 1941, as the last addition we have found in 1941 was an 8.

Experiment 2

The other experiment that we noticed is that some releases in 1940 ONLY include 2 digits and a dash BEFORE the regular number, such as *Tom Brown's School Days* **06**-405-220.

Since these are ONLY on the posters and not in any other logs, these same numbers ALSO have the numbers from the previous experiment indicating the month.

If you look over the log, it quickly becomes apparent that the 2 prefix numbers form a pattern, with **05** being Paramount (the first studio signed), and **06** being RKO (the second studio signed). We believe that these 2 numbers were assigned because previous to 1940, when NSS started handling the posters for Paramount, NSS worked with four studios from 1937-1940 when NSS started handling "specialty accessories" (see the above section on The Takeover).

This was abandoned in 1940 with the last number that we have found carrying the number 05-408-349, which was *Mystery Sea Raider*. If our assumption on the first experiment is correct, that would have placed the projected release in August of 1940.

Log 2 1943-1976

Remember from 1943 through 1947, all major studios turned their accessory distribution over to NSS. with 20th Century Fox being the last studio to sign exclusive contracts.

One oddity during this time period is the beginning numbers for 1946 and 1948. For some unknown reason, they started both years in the 400s instead of from the beginning. We have found one exception which was a mistake in 1946 with the lobby card set for *Night and Day*, having the number 46/19.

We mentioned in the Common to All Logs Section (#2) about NSS putting the shorts, cartoons, documentaries and specialty films at the end of each with in its own number sequence. It seems that they tried to organize the numbers each year.

Here are the following sequences that occurred from 1942 until 1974 when it ended:

Year	Number Series
1942	1000 & 1400
1943	1400 & 1500
1944	900 & 1300
1945	2000 & 3000
1946	2000 & 4000
1947	4000
1948	5000
1949	6000
1950	7000
1951	8000
1952	9000
1953	1000
1954	2000
1955	3000
1956	4000
1957	5000
1958	6000
1959	6000 & 7000
1960	6000 & 7000
1961-1967	6000
1968	7000 & 9000
1969-1972	7000
1973	9000
1974	7000

Log 3 1977

By 1977, things were beginning to collapse for NSS. . Multi-screen theaters were drastically cutting into the accessory market, and other companies were taking over the trailer market.

National Screen Service made a bold move in 1977 to try to reorganize the handling of their product lines and streamline the processing..... they computerized.

To do this, they had to make the numbering systems uniform again and a slash (/) in the middle of the number would not work. NSS changed the accessory number BACK to the original trailer number system featuring two numbers for the year and then 4 numbers for the individual number. This was instituted during 1977, but it was not done at a specific point and by all offices at the same time, so it creates an unusual log for the year.

Log 4 1978-1989

By the 1980s, the writing was on the wall. Each year the number of titles declined as fewer varieties of accessories were needed. NSS began shutting down offices and selling off the posters.

In 1984, it was no longer profitable so National Screen Service relinquished exclusivity on the studio accessories and turned the operation over to the individual studios.

In 1987, with business declining, they made a small adjustment to their number system. The regular numbering for the titles remained the same, but they started using the upper numbers (3000 series) for special printing jobs. These were for individual pieces and NOT for titles.

By the late 1980s, NSS had cut down to three offices nationally (just like they had in the 1920s). They did some printing and distributing but each year business continued to decline.

In 1990, NSS changed their numbering system from a single number for a title to a single number for a single item. So if three different items were produced for a single title, it would have three different numbers. This continued until 2000 when Technicolor bought them out and closed down the remaining three offices.

We have the numbers NSS issued from 1990 until 2000 on our website, www.LearnAboutMoviePosters.com.

THE NSS CONTRIBUTION

It goes without saying that the National Screen Service had a direct and positive impact on the film industry, particularly in its growth years from the 1920's to the 1960's. But their contribution does not stop there. The work logs that NSS created, albeit designed for their business purposes, left an undeniable historical blueprint of the film industry in the United States. These records provide an invaluable resource for film and memorabilia collectors, dealers, historians and archivists.