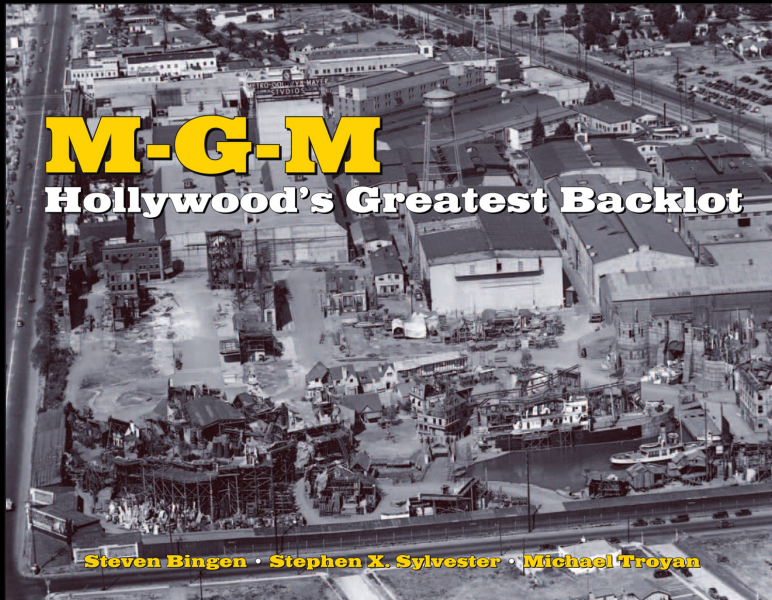


# JUDY ON THE BACKLOT

By Scott Brogan



**M**GM had the greatest backlot in Hollywood history. Actually, it was two backlots. Think of it as a Disneyland for the movies, with dozens of standing sets representing almost every period in history, every style of architecture. The wonderful “M-G-M - Hollywood’s Greatest Backlot” is a comprehensive and expertly researched book that details every square mile of these magical backlots.

**J**udy spent fifteen years at MGM. Naturally she ended up filming on all areas of the backlot. Thanks to this book, we can map out where many scenes from Judy’s films were shot. Some of the locations might surprise you!

**A** big thanks to book’s authors Steven Bingen, Stephen X. Sylvester, and Michael Troyan for their amazing work.



Judy outside her trailer in costume for the Saint Patrick’s day parade/”It’s A Great Day For The Irish” sequence in *Little Nelly Kelly* on the studio’s “Fifth Avenue” street on Lot 2.



# JUDY ON THE BACKLOT - Lot 2





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# JUDY ON THE BACKLOT

## Lot 2

New England/Andy Hardy Street

The “New England/Andy Hardy” street was one of the most versatile sets on the backlot. Its most famous and enduring image is that of “Carvel” the home of Andy Hardy for over twenty years.

Judy spent much of her time on Lot 2 here, filming her guest spots in the Andy Hardy films as well as parts of *Babes In Arms* (1939), *Strike Up The Band* (1940), and *Presenting Lily Mars* (1943).

Right: Judy as “Betsy Booth” visits her “Grandmother Draper’s” home in *Love Finds Andy Hardy* (1938). The home was next door to the left of the Hardy home.

Below: This composite of screen grabs from *Presenting Lily Mars* (1943) shows how the street doubled for the fictional Indiana street that Lily Mars (Judy) and her family lived on. Lily’s little brother is followed by the camera as he rides from the church at the end of the street to the Mars home, hence his magical appearance in four spots in the image.





# JUDY ON THE BACKLOT

## Lot 2

New England/Andy Hardy Street



Left: Betsy Booth (Judy) is chauffeured up to Andy Hardy's home in *Love Finds Andy Hardy* (1938). Andy's father (Lewis Stone) greets her.



Right: Also in *Love Finds Andy Hardy*, Andy (Mickey Rooney) and Betsy (Judy) visit Polly Benedict's (Ann Rutherford) home.



# JUDY ON THE BACKLOT

## Lot 2

### Small Town Railroad Depot



Opening scene of "The Trolley Song" in *Meet Me In St. Louis* (1944).



Set reference still of the St. Louis trolley car station.

Another versatile set, the "Small Town Railroad Depot" appeared in several of Judy's films: *Love Finds Andy Hardy* (1938) (as the Carvel station), *Strike Up The Band* (1940) (as Riverwood station), *For Me And My Gal* (1942) (various railroad stations), *Girl Crazy* (1943) ("out west"), *Meet Me In St. Louis* (1944) (the opening of the "Trolley Song" sequence as shown here), and *The Harvey Girls* (1946) in which it was combined with Lot 3 locations for a western look - but not the famous train arrival during "On The Atchison, Topeka, and the Santa Fe," that number was filmed on Lot 3 ([see page 28](#)).



# JUDY ON THE BACKLOT

## Lot 2

### Small Town Railroad Depot



The depot became “Clifton Junction” in *For Me And My Gal* (1942) (left). The two-story building in the far background is the location of the scene in which Gene Kelly’s “Harry Palmer” convinces Judy’s “Jo Hayden” to listen to his song (below left). When they enter the coffee shop, they’re back at one of the MGM soundstages on Lot 1 for the interior scene, including the classic performance of the title song.

Below: Judy, Milton Kibbee, Virginia Brissac, Mickey Rooney, Ann Shoemaker, George Lessey and June Preisser in *Strike Up The Band* (1940).





# JUDY ON THE BACKLOT

## Lot 2

The “Small Town Square” and “Small Town Street” sets were also used in dozens of MGM films, but are perhaps (like the “New England” street) most famously known today as the town of “Carvel” in all of the Andy Hardy films. Other Garland films shot scenes here as well: *Listen Darling* (1938); *Babes In Arms* (1939); *Strike Up The Band* (1940); and *In The Good Old Summertime* (1949).

Below Left: The square becomes “Carvel” for *Love Finds Andy Hardy* (1938) and *Life Begins For Andy Hardy* (top right). Below Right: The dilapidated square prior to demolition (photo provided by Mike Zaroff).



## Small Town Square/Street





# JUDY ON THE BACKLOT

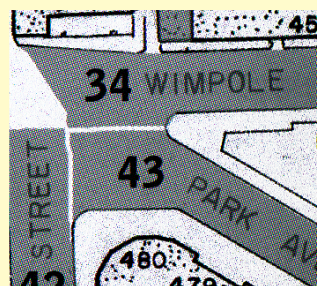
## Lot 2

New York Streets/Park Avenue



*L*ittle Nellie Kelly's (1940) final scenes were shot on Lot 2's New York streets at the intersection where "Wimpole," "Park Avenue," & "Cullem" streets meet. Matte paintings add the rest of the New York skyline. The following scenes show Judy's father (Charles Winninger) losing control of his horse and buggy, and ending up on the "Fifth Avenue" street.

Below left: Close-up of Judy and co-star Douglas McPhail standing on "Wimpole" street at the intersection.





# JUDY ON THE BACKLOT

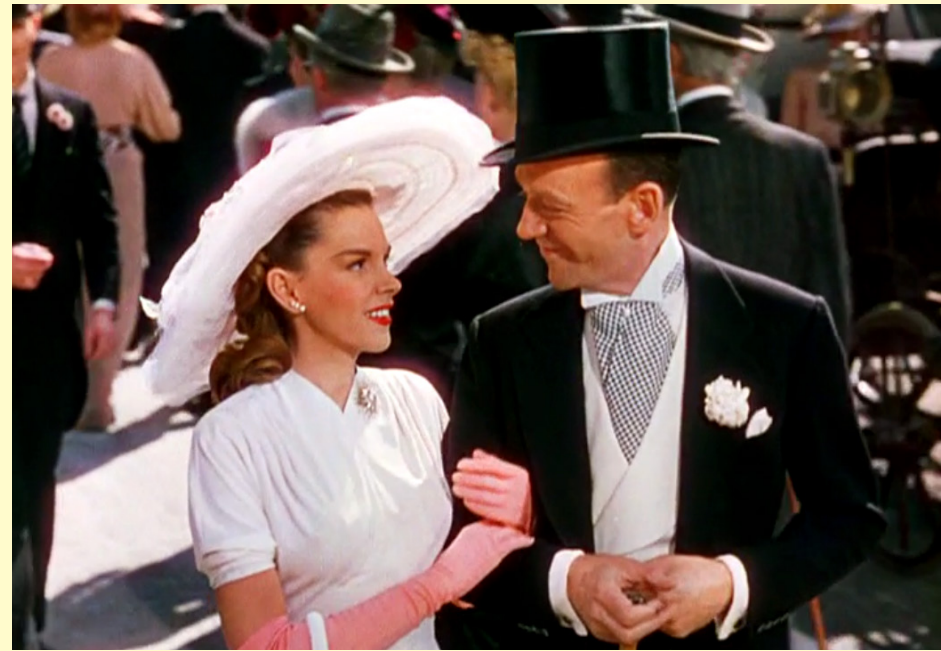
## Lot 2

### New York Streets/Fifth Avenue

The “Fifth Avenue” set was by far the most used set on all of Lot 2. Judy’s films were no exception, with scenes from the following films shot there: *Little Nellie Kelly*; *Life Begins For Andy Hardy*; *Babes On Broadway*; *Girl Crazy* (as New York); *The Clock*; *Easter Parade*; and *In The Good Old Summertime*.

Part of the finale to *Easter Parade* (1948) was shot here. The other side of the street as seen in the final long shot was filmed on Lot 3 on a special set created specifically for the film ([see page 29](#)) and then blended with matte paintings.

Below, a policeman pesters Judy in a scene from *Life Begins For Andy Hardy* (1941). The film’s plot was about Andy’s (Mickey Rooney) adventures in New York City. Naturally, scenes were shot on “Fifth Avenue” as well as the “Small Town Square” and the “Brownstone” street.





# JUDY ON THE BACKLOT

## Lot 2

New York Streets/Fifth Avenue



*Easter Parade* (1948): After their first rehearsal, Don Hewes (Fred Astaire) and Hannah Brown (Judy) leave the rehearsal hall and walk down the “Fifth Avenue” street. However, when the cut is made to an overhead shot of the two of them rounding a corner, they’re now rounding the corner on the intersection of the “Church” and “Brownstone” streets, which is where they see Nadine (Ann Miller) and her dogs ([see page 13](#)).

“Fifth Avenue” was used in many, many films at MGM. The following Judy films had scenes filmed here: *Little Nellie Kelly* (1940) (the Saint Patrick’s Day Parade & “It’s A Great Day For The Irish” as seen on the left), *Life Begins For Andy Hardy* (1941), *Babes On Broadway* (1942), *Girl Crazy* (1943), *The Clock* (1945), and *In The Good Old Summertime* (1949).

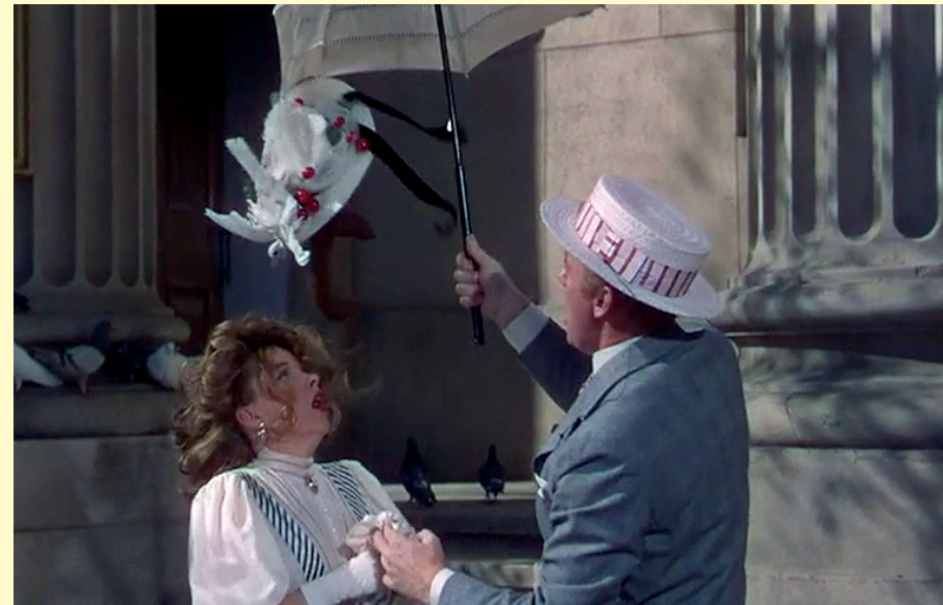


# JUDY ON THE BACKLOT

## Lot 2

New York Streets/Fifth Avenue

On the southwest end of the “Fifth Avenue” street was the “courthouse” building. It was the setting for one of the best examples of Judy’s underrated comedic abilities, the “meet cute” scene in *In The Good Old Summertime* (1949). The scene was brilliantly choreographed by silent film comedic master Buster Keaton (who is also a supporting player in the film). It’s a minor masterpiece of comedic staging. Judy and Van Johnson deliver the scene with expert timing.



Judy turns the corner of “Cullem Street” onto the “Fifth Avenue” street on her way to the courthouse doubling for the Chicago Post Office in *In The Good Old Summertime* (1949).



# JUDY ON THE BACKLOT

## Lot 2

The “Brownstone” street is also seen in dozens of MGM films. In *Easter Parade* (1948) (right), Judy and Fred begin their walk on the “Fifth Avenue” set, then unbeknown to the moviegoer, the scene continues on the “Brownstone” street which is where they witness Ann Miller’s “Nadine Hale” in the early representation of the famous New York Easter Parade.

In *The Clock* (1945) (below) the bulk of the scenes showing Judy and Robert Walker delivering milk were also filmed on the “Brownstone” street.

New York Streets/Brownstone Street



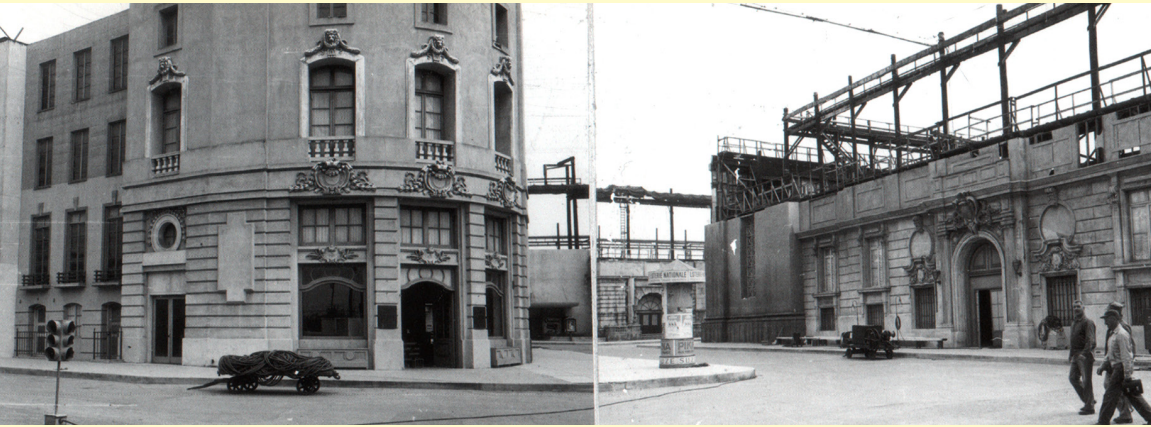


# JUDY ON THE BACKLOT

## Lot 2

New York Streets/Cullem Street

“Cullem” street connects the “Fifth Avenue” and “Wimpole” streets. It’s a short street, but long enough to be the location of one of Judy’s most famous comedic scenes: The “bloopface” scene in *Easter Parade* (1948). The scene starts as Judy and Fred exit the building on the corner of “Park Avenue” (right) moving southeast on “Cullem” street (bottom row). The image below shows the same corner from the front in 1959.





# JUDY ON THE BACKLOT

New York Streets/Eastside Street

## Lot 2

Judy spent almost as much time filming various scenes for her films on the “Eastside” street as she did over on the Andy Hardy street. At right: The block party sequence in *Babes On Broadway* (1942) utilized the end of the “Fifth Avenue” street just before it turned onto “Eastside” street.



Around this corner to the left and on right side of the street was the location of the earlier scene in the film when Mickey accompanies Judy to her apartment (see next page). It's also the same location as the “Fella With An Umbrella” number in *Easter Parade* (1948) ([see page 18](#)).

Left: The same area as it looked prior to demolition (photo provided by Mike Zaroff).



# JUDY ON THE BACKLOT

## Lot 2

New York Streets/Eastside Street



Above Left: The stairs that Judy and Mickey Rooney jog up to “Penny’s” apartment in the beginning of *Babes On Broadway* (1942) are the same stairs in the background of the screen grab at the bottom left (*The Clock*).

“Eastside” street was the location for several scenes in *The Clock* (1945). The screen grab at the bottom left shows the scene featuring the breakdown of James Gleason’s milk truck, with “Eastside” street in the background. In the foreground, the truck with Judy, Gleason, and Robert Walker are on the right side of the corner of “Warehouse Alley” and “Eastside” street.

Above right: Judy and Robert deliver the milk for James Gleason.



# JUDY ON THE BACKLOT

## Lot 2

New York Streets/Eastside Street

In *The Clock* (1945), Judy and Robert Walker exit the building that James and Lucille Gleason's characters live in (far left, top row), and take a stroll down the "Eastside" street, crossing the "Hester" side street just before the scene ends. What isn't noticeable to viewers is that a few scenes earlier this street is also the street facing James Gleason's milk truck after it breaks down on "Warehouse Alley" and Judy and Robert decide to help him deliver the milk (see previous page).

Note: In the background of the image at the far right of the top row, a woman is sweeping some steps directly behind Judy and Robert. These are the same steps that Judy and Mickey Rooney jog up in an early scene in *Babes On Broadway* (1942) (see previous page).





# JUDY ON THE BACKLOT

## Lot 2

New York Streets/Eastside Street

The very northeast end of the “Fifth Avenue” street turns into “Eastside Street.” This is the location of the “Fella With An Umbrella” number from *Easter Parade* (1948), performed by Judy and Peter Lawford. The number was shot on the southeast side of “Eastside Street” (below) with the very northwest end of the “Fifth Avenue” street in the background (top right).





# JUDY ON THE BACKLOT

## Lot 2

### Verona Square

The only footage the studio ever shot of Judy on the “Verona Square” set was a brief sequence for *The Pirate* (1948) featuring Serafin’s (Gene Kelly) demanding Manuela (Judy) be brought to him, and part of her subsequent march through the town for that rendezvous.

The nearby “Chinese Street” subbed as “Port Sebastian” for Serafin’s arrival, however Judy was not in that scene.



The studio soundstage on Lot 1 is the setting for the beginning of Manuela’s march (“He asked for *me*” top left), then segues into the “Verona Square” set on Lot 2 for the remainder of the scene.





# JUDY ON THE BACKLOT

## Lot 2

The following are some brief scenes in Judy's films that were shot at various other locations on Lot 2. While not as featured as other sets in the same films, they nonetheless give us an idea of the planning and logistics needed to shoot even the simplest scenes on the back lots.



The pool on Lot 2 (later known as the "Esther Williams" pool) was the scene of this cut sequence from the "Swing Mr. Mendelssohn" number in *Everybody Sing* (1938). It also served as the Bellaire pool in the same film, and the public pool in *Love Finds Andy Hardy* (1938).

## Miscellaneous



This scene from *Babes In Arms* (1939) was most likely filmed at the "Eucy Grove" location on Lot 2. It was also used for a few shots in *Summer Stock* (1950).



The "Grand Central Station" set played itself in the scenes in *The Clock* (1945) in which Judy and Robert Walker become separated from each other.



# JUDY ON THE BACKLOT

## Lot 2

Miscellaneous



The “Southern Mansion” was cleverly hidden behind the bandstand in the opening and closing park scenes in *In The Good Old Summertime* (1949), featuring Liza Minnelli’s film debut.



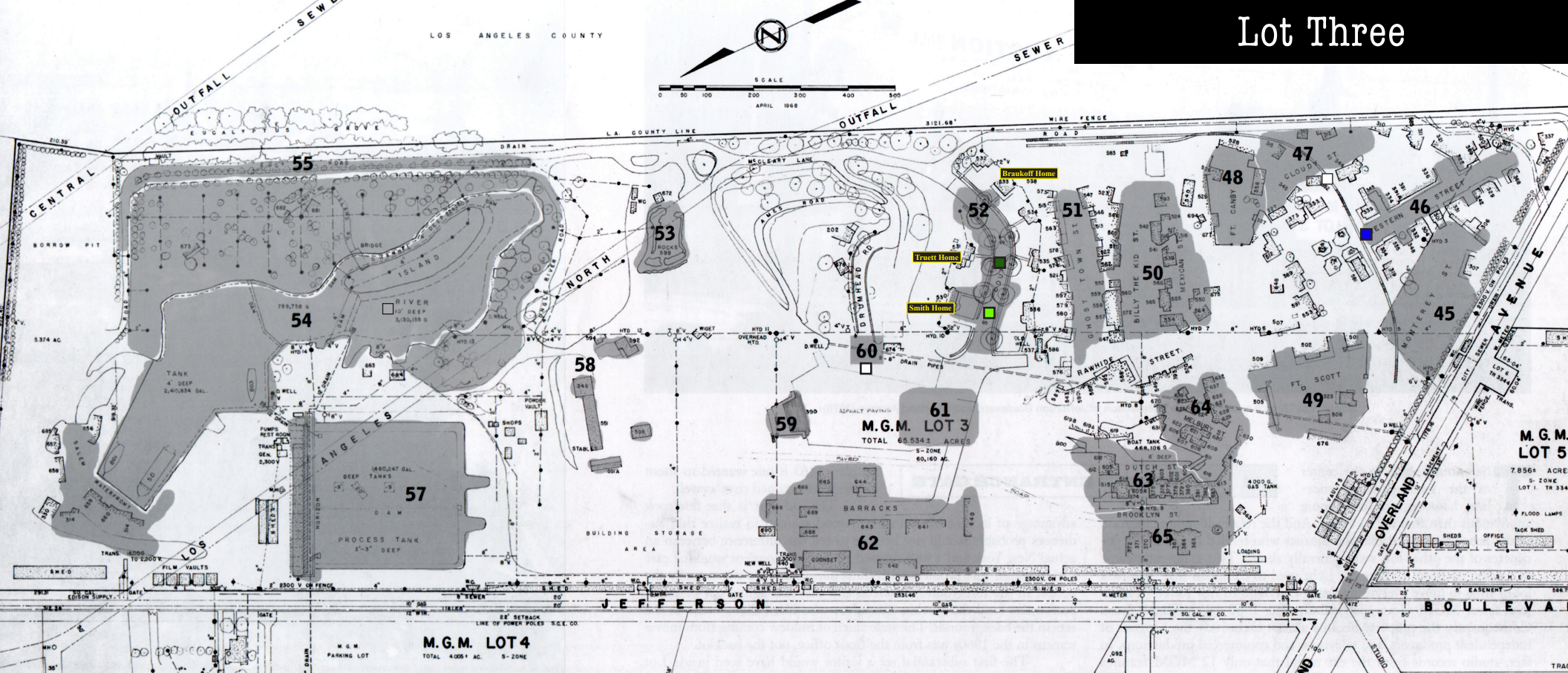
“Eucy Grove” was the location of Judy’s tractor ride while singing “Happy Harvest” in *Summer Stock* (1950)



# JUDY ON THE BACKLOT - Lot 3







Judy didn't spend much time filming on Lot 3, but the time she spent there was substantial. Two of her biggest hits, *Meet Me In St. Louis* (1944) and *The Harvey Girls* (1946) had many scenes filmed there. Check out the guide to the right and the following pages for details.

- 44 Lot Three Entrance Gate
- 45 Monterey Street
- 46 Western Street
- 47 Cloudy Street
- 48 Fort Canby
- 49 Fort Scott
- 50 Billy The Kid Street
- 51 Ghost Town Street
- 52 St. Louis Street
- 53 Rock Formations
- 54 Lot Three Jungle and Lake
- 55 Eucy Road
- 56 Salem Waterfront
- 57 Process Tank
- 58 Farmhouse
- 59 Kismet Staircase
- 60 Easter Parade Street
- 61 Circus Grounds
- 62 Army Base
- 63 Dutch Street
- 64 Melbury Street
- 65 Brooklyn Street

The color codes below reflect the sites where scenes for those films were shot on Lot 3 as indicated in the above map.

- The Harvey Girls
- Meet Me In St. Louis
- In The Good Old Summertime
- Easter Parade



# JUDY ON THE BACKLOT

## Lot 3

### St. Louis Street

Perhaps the most famous of all of the backlot sets used in a Judy Garland film, the “St. Louis Street” was built specifically for Judy’s triumph *Meet Me In St. Louis* (1944). Director Vincente Minnelli insisted on building the street despite the objections of the studio’s preeminent set designer Cedric Gibbons who felt that the “New England/Andy Hardy” street could be dressed up.

The new “St. Louis Street” not only added immensely to the success of *Meet Me In St. Louis*, but it became one of the most versatile outdoor standing sets on all the studio’s backlots. It served as part of a few scenes in *In The Good Old Summertime* (1949), albeit scenes that did not include Judy. In fact, the only time Judy was filmed on this gorgeous set was for *Meet Me In St. Louis*.



MGM studio artist Alex Dukelski created this early rendering of the Smith family home that (as seen below) was followed closely by the studio architects.



Left to Right: Studio set reference still; Candid shot of Judy in front of the Smith home; Screen grab featuring Joan Carroll, Margaret O'Brien, and Judy.



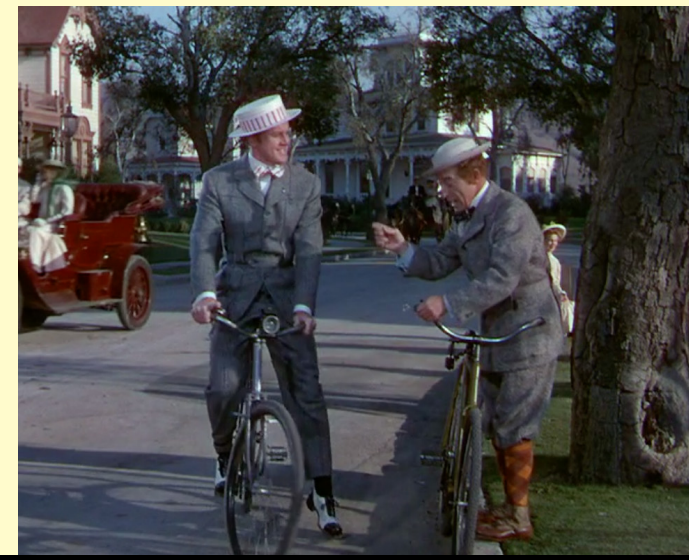
# JUDY ON THE BACKLOT

## Lot 3

The “St. Louis Street” became one of the most popular sets on the backlot, going all the way up to television’s “The Twilight Zone” and beyond. It was famously used in the studio’s last big old-fashioned musical *The Unsinkable Molly Brown* in 1964. Judy only filmed scenes here for *Meet Me In St. Louis* (1944).

For *In The Good Old Summertime*, it was used for the brief meeting of Van Johnson and Buster Keaton (bottom middle and right). Judy was not in this scene. The final scene featuring Liza Minnelli’s film debut was shot on Lot 2 ([see page 21](#)).

St. Louis Street



*Meet Me In St. Louis* (1944) (left) and *In The Good Old Summertime* (1949) (middle & right) feature similar shots. The latter with Van Johnson & Buster Keaton.



# JUDY ON THE BACKLOT

## Lot 3

St. Louis Street

The beginning and the end: The Smith home as it originally looked in *Meet Me In St. Louis* (1944) (far left) and in the 1970s prior to demolition (middle and far right, photos provided by Anon).

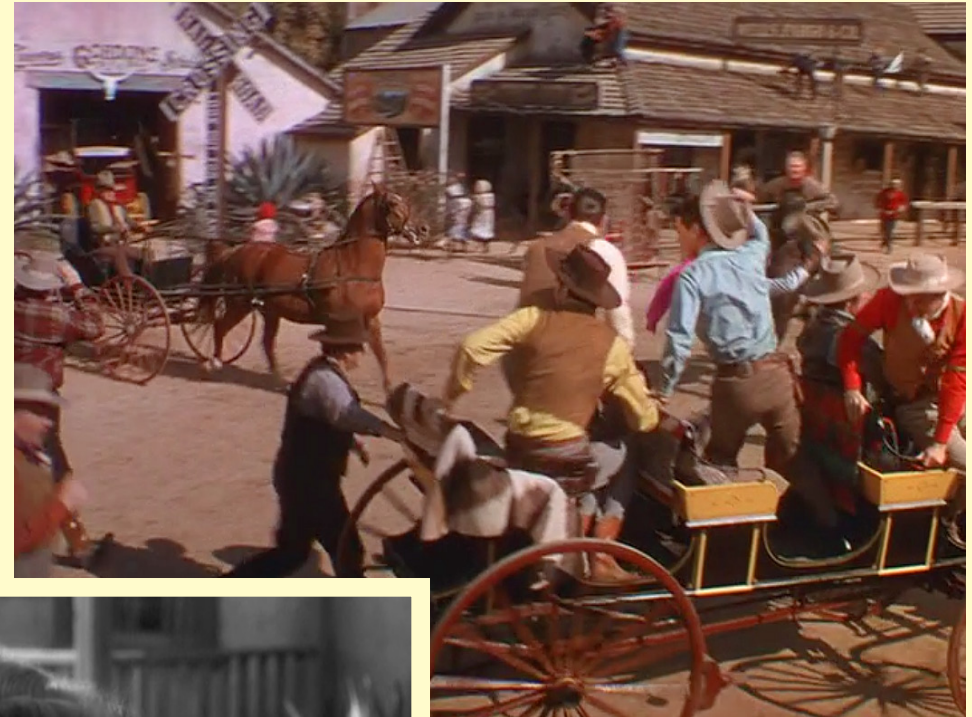




# JUDY ON THE BACKLOT

## Lot 3

Western Street



**T**op Left & Right: A view of the same buildings on "Western Street" as seen in *Girl Crazy* (1943) with Judy and Mickey Rooney, and dressed up as the town of "Sandrock" for *The Harvey Girls* (1946).



**L**eft: The building behind Judy in this shot would later be dressed up as the "Alhambra Saloon" in *The Harvey Girls* (1946) (see next page).



# JUDY ON THE BACKLOT

## Lot 3

Western Street



The “Western Street” on Lot 3 was extensively dressed up to stand in as the town of “Sandrock” in *The Harvey Girls* (1946). The famous train arrival during the big production number “On The Atchison, Topeka, and the Santa Fe” was shot at the street’s entrance. The screen grabs show: The train’s arrival; John Hodiak and Judy in an early scene; Judy leaving the Harvey House garden crossing the street to the “Alhambra Saloon” (see previous page for same area).



# JUDY ON THE BACKLOT

## Lot 3

### Easter Parade Street



Most people assume that the finale to *Easter Parade* (1948) was filmed on the “Fifth Avenue” street in the “New York Streets” section of Lot 2. This is partly true. The shots of Judy and Fred Astaire walking were filmed there, but the other side of the street (as shown in the screen shot on the left) was this special *Easter Parade* street built specifically for the film at the end of “Drumhead Road” on Lot 3. This special set had a height of over ten feet, with a matte painting filling out the rest of the shot. As seen on the left, the matte painting is easy to distinguish from the set, but in the film it’s less noticeable.



